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Henry County
HEALTH CENTER

Celebrating 100 years of excellence

When Henry County Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hospital was built in 1921, who would have envisioned the little hospital in Saunders Grove growing into the health center that is here today? This centennial anniversary is a time to reflect on a tradition of excellence in health care and look forward to a promising future.



photo from 1924

It is unknown when the idea of a hospital for Henry County originated, but the dedication of the hospital in December 1921 marked the finished product of at least 10 years of promotion and planning. In the early 1920s, Mount Pleasant was bustling with activity that included work on a high school, Iowa Wesleyan College and a public library. Adding the construction of a fledgling hospital to that list was ambitious. However, the need was obvious and forward-thinking individuals in the county realized the need must be met.

As the people of Henry County assessed their needs, they gave those leaders wholehearted support for their vision, and they were named as the proposed hospital's first board of trustees. The community support was obvious as Henry County voters authorized the bond issue of \$100,000 for the construction and equipment of a county hospital in Mount Pleasant by a clear majority of 283 votes. The work of several committed people made the dream of a local hospital become a reality.

The City of Mount Pleasant showed support of the hospital by unanimously voting to donate the site in Saunders Grove with land for future expansion. Water, electricity, sewer connections, permanent sidewalks and streets also were provided at the expense of the city, and free of all costs to the county. By February 1920, an architect had been contracted to build a 20-bed hospital. With the building underway, plans were made for a ceremony to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone, which failed to arrive in time for the ceremony. The building was completed in late November 1921.

Miss Margaret Stoddard, RN, was hired by the board as combination administrator and director of nurses, beginning her duties in September 1921. Miss Stoddard, with the help of the community, supervised the furnishing of the rooms. Hospital staff was assembled, and on December 12, 1921, Henry County Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hospital opened. In June 1953, the hospital began doing business as Henry County Memorial Hospital. The trustees approved the name Henry County Health Center on October 18, 1976; however, the legal name remains Henry County Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hospital.

What began as a dream to build a local hospital to meet the health care needs of area residents has most likely surpassed even the highest expectations of the first trustees and supporters. Even in this dynamic health care environment 100 years later, Henry County Health Center continues the important work that began in 1921 – providing high-quality health care close to home.



Expansion projects focus on meeting patient needs

Since 1921, Henry County Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hospital has undergone several building and health service expansions. Thanks to this progress over the past 100 years, HCHC continues to meet the health care needs of area residents.



1921

The tremendous community support for building a local hospital was evident as Henry County voters, by a clear majority of 283 votes, authorized the bond issue of \$100,000 for the erection and equipment of the county hospital. On December 12, 1921, Henry County Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hospital was opened. On December 14, 1921, the first medical patient was admitted by Dr. George Smith. Later that day, the first surgical patient was admitted and an emergency appendectomy was performed by Dr. Walter Sternberg.

1949

By 1936, it was obvious that the hospital needed to expand. But it was not until 1949 that the first addition of 12 beds was dedicated. This 4,428 square-foot, three-story addition also included new space for laundry.



1957

May 19, 1957, marked the opening of a 16,000-square-foot addition with 23 beds, X-ray, Laboratory, Pharmacy, doctor's "dressing room," Emergency Room, two surgical suites, offices and a boiler room. Air conditioning and emergency electric generators were part of the project.





1969

The Norene Short addition, a 44-bed extended care facility, opened in November. The board of trustees voted to name the addition after Short, who donated \$153,000 to the hospital. The addition increased the hospital's number of beds to 98, which were staffed by 13 doctors. That year also marked the opening of the Renal Dialysis Unit. At the time, HCHC was the only hospital in southeast Iowa to provide renal dialysis.

1981

A 24,000-square-foot addition provided a new hospital entrance and improvements to these areas: Laboratory, Radiology, Operating Suite, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Respiratory Therapy, Emergency Room, Maternity Services, Special Care Unit and Admissions.



1990

A 34,000-square-foot addition included a medical office building, a new area for dialysis, a home health care area for Henry County Public Health, a new lobby, gift shop and retail pharmacy. Changes were made to Radiology to accommodate a permanent CT scanner. The need to recruit additional physicians prompted the building project. This project led to the formation of Family Medicine of Mt. Pleasant, PC, and the relocation of several physician offices to the campus. This also marked the beginning of HCHC offering specialty services with providers coming from other locations. In addition, enhancements were made to Physical Therapy and outdoor improvements to landscaping and parking.



1996

The hospital opened Park Place Elder Living, a freestanding 49-bed long-term care center connected to HCHC by an enclosed walkway. A new cafeteria and kitchen were added to the hospital. Rehabilitation Services was relocated and expanded to include water therapy, and a new ambulatory surgery clinic and outpatient clinic area were developed. Central Sterile Supply was relocated to next to the operating rooms and the ambulance garage was moved near the Emergency Department. Patient Accounting and Admissions were relocated for patients' convenience and staff efficiency.



2000

A new Emergency Department was constructed, as well as new departments for Emergency Medical Services (ambulance) and Imaging Services. The 45,000-square-foot building project also included Park Pavilion. Family Medicine of Mt. Pleasant, PC, moved to that space in 2001. The areas formerly occupied by these departments were remodeled to accommodate other outpatient services. Consistent with previous building projects, the new areas were built due to increasing use of and need for health services by area residents. Also in 2000, HCHC unveiled a new multislice CT scanner, making HCHC and the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics the only two hospitals in the state to offer this technology.



2012-2013

HCHC worked on a three-phase building project to serve the future health care needs of our communities. Phase I, completed in summer 2012, was excavation for HCHC's new Energy Center. In Phase II, the Energy Center was equipped to provide the infrastructure to the health center. A groundbreaking ceremony was held October 2, 2012, to celebrate the start of Phase III, which included construction of a new Surgery Department and expansion of outpatient and specialty clinic areas. The Surgery Department features 10 private preoperative/recovery rooms, two operating rooms, an endoscopy suite and surgery waiting room. Phase III was completed in 2013. It also provided enhancements to Patient Registration, Outpatient Services, Laboratory, Cardiopulmonary Services, Specialty Clinic, the Radiology Women's Center, the Health Education Center, and an exterior canopy for Radiology.

2016

A canopy was added to the Rehabilitation Services and Administration entrance to shelter patients from inclement weather. The parking lot for this area also was improved.

Enhancements continued in 2021 with development of a new Pharmacy and Central Sterile area, and updates to the medical office building and infrastructure within the health center. Just as health care is ever-evolving, so is the physical structure of Henry County Health Center to continue meeting the needs of the patients we serve.



Longstanding partnerships benefit area residents

Friends of Henry County Health Center and the Henry County Health Center Foundation have been instrumental in contributing to the success of the health center.

Friends of Henry County Health Center celebrates 60 years

In 2018, the name of the HCHC Auxiliary was changed to Friends of Henry County Health Center. This organization has had an enormous impact on the health center over the last 60 years. In 1960, longtime friends and community leaders Mrs. Warren Rogers and Mrs. Wayne (Mae) Peterson began planning for an auxiliary to the hospital.



In February 1962, 200 women registered as charter members at the Have a Heart Hospital Auxiliary Membership Tea Drive.

In February 1962, an organizational tea was held in the Henry County Courthouse, and charter members were accepted. The executive board was established with 12 members, one from each township, and Mrs. Rogers was the first president. The first executive meeting was held April 16, 1962. In May, the auxiliary sponsored an open house at the hospital for American Hospital Week. The first bazaar was held December 1, 1962, earning \$628.15 for the hospital. The 1971 bazaar raised \$1,700. The first years were busy with sewing and mending, running a service cart, helping with polio vaccine clinics, and purchasing hospital equipment with bazaar proceeds.

By 1966, membership had increased to 300. The bazaar had grown so large that it was moved to the high school gym the following year. In 1968, the reception service, and gift and coffee shop were added. In 1971, the membership numbered 526. In its first nine years, the auxiliary donated nearly \$15,000 to the hospital for equipment. Thousands of bibs for newborns were made, countless sewing and mending tasks were completed, and thousands of volunteer hours had been given to help the hospital serve its community.

Sixty years after it began, Friends of HCHC continues to support the health center and its associates. Members contribute each year by donating their time, talents and resources. The Friends of HCHC Scholarship/Loan Program, which began in 1978, helps students who are pursuing health care careers. Since 1985, Friends' Lifeline Program has helped seniors and people with disabilities stay in their homes by providing personal emergency response systems. All of this, plus HCHC volunteers, play a vital role in helping the health center provide high-quality health care to area residents.

HCHC Foundation

The HCHC Foundation was established in May 1990 as an independent, not-for-profit organization. Its mission is to promote and enhance the health and well-being of Henry County residents. The foundation's vision is to be the premier catalyst for generating financial resources to create a healthier future for all.

The foundation relies on the generosity of families, friends, corporations and organizations for donations to support its mission. Those gifts have funded major construction projects, equipment purchases, scholarships for students pursuing health-related professions, grants for local health and wellness programs, and physician recruitment to HCHC and Family Medicine of Mount Pleasant. As a result of the foundation's efforts, HCHC can offer newer technology, more services and easier access to health care providers than many other hospitals of the same size.



The Auxiliary Sewing Group contributed greatly to hospital operations by making and mending many hospital items. These items ranged from curtains and embroidered pillow cases for patient rooms to patient gowns and baby bibs.

Looking to the future

In 1921, the first board of trustees looked at the opening of Henry County Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hospital with excitement and anticipation. Now, 100 years later, as Henry County Health Center embarks on an expanded partnership with Great River Health, we welcome the centennial milestone with optimism, knowing quality health care will remain close to home for years to come.

On March 2, 2021, Henry County residents voted to authorize the HCHC Board of Trustees to pursue an operational lease agreement between HCHC and Great River Health. On July 1, 2021, Great River Health began leasing HCHC's facilities and assets and it now operates the health center. The expanded partnership provides financial stability to the health center and Emergency Medical Services. It ensures the health care we provide continues to be managed locally.

The partnership has brought visible changes to the health center, such as a new logo and new signage. Other outcomes of this relationship may not be as obvious. As part of the health system, HCHC shares resources with Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center campuses in West Burlington and Fort Madison to meet the regional health care needs of our communities. The collaboration also has helped with the workforce

challenges that health care organizations are experiencing across the nation. This partnership has enabled HCHC to continue offering the high-quality health care and outstanding customer service that our patients expect and deserve.

"We have found that this expanded public-private partnership is working well for HCHC to address financial and industry-related challenges that so many rural hospitals face," said HCHC CEO Robb Gardner. "We are excited for what the future will bring as we work together to care for our community and strengthen our region's health care delivery system."



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