

# GREAT NEWS

NOVEMBER 2020

## Having A Happy Holiday Is All About You



By **Francis Sanchez, MD, DFAPA, CPE**  
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The holidays are coming, and COVID-19 isn't going away yet. The bleakness of winter combined with a change in our usual holiday routines brings a new season of challenge for many people.

The pandemic isn't good for our well-being. Research shows this. Symptoms of depression and anxiety are increasing, and these problems can be worse in vulnerable populations.

How can we sustain happiness and manage a different holiday season? It is important to keep in mind that the main person in charge of your happiness is you.

### Understand happiness

Yale University psychology professor Laurie Santos, PhD, teaches a popular course about the science of happiness and how to effectively apply it. Sixty-five percent of freshman want to take the course, perhaps because those who complete it are measurably happier at the end.

We assume self-care looks like a nice bubble bath, massages or other pleasure-seeking pursuits, but data suggest that the right way to treat ourselves

would be to do nice things for other people. This is altruism.

Studies confirm that even tiny acts of kindness can have profound effects on our happiness, and performing ongoing small random acts of kindness boosts mental well-being. In short, doing more for others and less for ourselves is essential to happiness.

There's more. Kindness isn't just good for your mental health. It's also proven to have a big impact on physical health, including reducing inflammation, and lowering blood pressure and heart rate.

### Make connections

We are social creatures by nature, and we function better when we feel connected to loved ones and our community. This time of isolation is challenging. Here's the key: Although we should be physical distancing, we should NOT be doing emotional distancing.

A simple interaction with another person – even a casual acquaintance – either in person or virtually positively affects your well-being. During this pandemic, we have limited chances for spontaneous exchanges. Therefore, we need to be more purposeful with this. A one- to two-minute conversation with someone in the hospital or the barista at the coffee shop has a positive effect on our well-being.

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Use technology to your advantage. A quick text or Facetime with a loved one makes that person's day. Share happy stories and express gratitude.

Understand that technology also can be detrimental to our relationships. Be mindful of your surroundings and what you're doing. How would a loved one feel if you were answering emails while talking to him on Facetime?

### **Reach for happiness amid chaos**

Don't try to shut off or run away from negative emotions like uncertainty, fear, frustration and anger. It doesn't work. You need to give them space and be mindful of them. Acknowledge them and accept them. Understand that accepting negative emotions is the first step to resolving them. Only then can you begin working on solutions to lead to greater happiness.

## **Tips for Keeping Holiday Spirit**

It is important to come to terms with the fact that this holiday season will be different. Every year, many people envision a perfect holiday, which is rarely possible. Having realistic expectations – especially this year – can help prevent disappointment. Here are some tips for preparing for a happy holiday:

### **Remember why we have the holidays.**

It is easy to get caught up in shopping and our perceived need to buy something for everyone. We lose sight of things that really matter — our friendships, our family, our spirituality, people who may be less fortunate. This year, it is especially critical to give the gift of time to others. Volunteering, participating in community activities or helping one person makes a world of difference.

### **Press pause on family arguments and unhealthy relationships.**

Your compassion, understanding and forgiveness greatly matter to the people in your life.

### **Leave the guilt at home.**

No one is perfect, including you. Avoid overburdening yourself by feeling like you have to do everything and checking all the items on your to-do list. It's OK to say "no."

### **Give yourself a break.**

While rushing around the holidays, we often forget about ourselves. Be kind to yourself. That means taking time for your needs. Take a few minutes of solitude every day to relax and breathe.

### **Be mindful of your limitations and breaking points.**

Stop, take a break and make sure you avoid the things that trigger your stress and worry.

### **When you can tell something is wrong, it's okay to ask for help.**

Sometimes we run into trouble around the holidays because we attempt to do too much. Your significant other, children, friends or family are there when you need it. But they can't read your mind. Direct and honest communication goes a long way.

## **Practice Kindness**

Being kind to others boosts your own happiness. Consider these suggestions:

- Use these and other positive words often – "Please," "thank you," "hello," "good job!"
- Be a listening ear to a friend. Ask your friend how his or her day was, and actually listen.
- Leave a large tip for someone.
- The holiday season is distressing for people who have weak immune systems or are disabled or frail. Be mindful of those who may need a helping hand. Offer to pick up food or supplies, walk the dog or do other tasks.
- Commit to a few random acts of kindness every week. When possible, make them anonymous.
- Remember those who are forgotten. There are many in the community – even our own families – who feel alone. Make yourself available. Regular communication is one of those touchstones that keep us grounded.

# Self-Screening for COVID-19 Coming to Hospital

Self-screening kiosks will be implemented soon at these Great River Medical Center entrances:

- Main
- Emergency Department
- Mercy Plaza

The kiosks will streamline the entrance process and reduce the need for hospital staff from a variety of departments to work at the screening stations. However, one screener will be stationed at these entrances to help.

Using the automatic hand sanitizer dispenser in the kiosk triggers the beginning of the screening process.



## Have you gotten your flu shot yet?

Protect yourself and others.



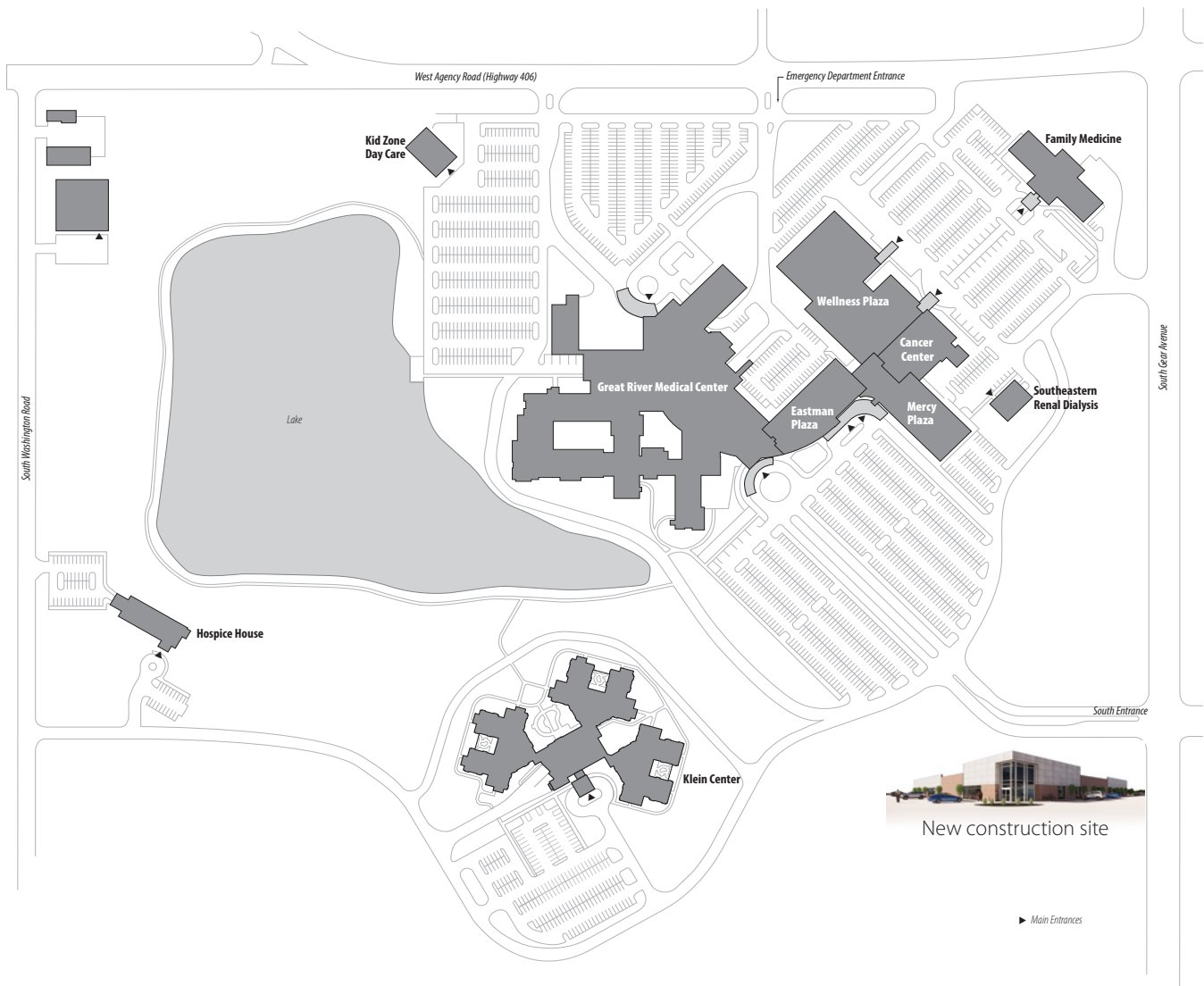
## QuickCare Returns to Roosevelt

Great River QuickCare has returned to its original location at 624 S. Roosevelt Ave., Suite 101, Burlington. The clinic offers same-day appointments for minor illnesses and injuries. Call 319-768-4320. [Get more information.](#)

## November Casual Days

Employees purchase \$2 stickers for the opportunity to wear jeans to work on designated Fridays. The November casual days and organizations they benefit are:

- Nov. 6** Toys for Tots
- Nov. 13** Burlington Homeless Shelter
- Nov. 20** Hats and Mittens Drive
- Nov 25** Kayla's Cupboard  
(Wednesday)



## Health System to Increase Services

Earth-moving equipment will roll onto Great River Health's West Burlington campus next week for the initial stage of the health system's new building project. The 25,000-square foot outpatient plaza will be located on Gear Avenue near the main entrance to Great River Medical Center.

Urgent care, X-ray, MRI, mammography, automated breast ultrasound (a new service) and DEXA bone density scanning will be available. About half of the space in the building will be reserved for later use.

"The timing is right for this new facility," said Jim Kammerer, chief administrative officer, Great River Health. "We are aware that patients have left the community for diagnostic imaging procedures. Besides providing convenience for them, this is an opportunity for us to recapture lost revenue. This is part of Project Synergy, our plan to improve the financial well-being of the health system."

The new building, which will cost an estimated \$5.93 million, is expected to open in late 2021.



# Employee Profile

## Brian Anderson

Pharmacist  
Heritage Park Pharmacy and  
Heritage Family Pharmacy



### Start date:

July 1993

### What a typical day looks like for me:

I arrive at work early to go through emails and prepare for the day. My day is spent filling and verifying prescriptions, answering patient questions and counseling patients on their medications. As pharmacist-in-charge, I also ensure we are compliant with Board of Pharmacy rules and regulations.

### What I wanted to be when I grew up:

A farmer. I was born and raised on a farm, and I have been helping my dad on the farm for years. I'm fortunate to have the opportunity to start farming this spring because my dad is stepping down from the farm operation.

### Hometown / Where I live now:

Mediapolis

### Family:

My wife, Heather, and I have been married for 18 years.

- Parents – Larry and Wilma Anderson
- Brother – Paul Anderson
- Sister – Terri Dowell

### Things I enjoy:

Spending time with my family, being outdoors as much as possible and doing landscaping projects

### People would be surprised to know ...

I love to scuba dive. My wife and I plan most of our vacations around locations that allow us to scuba dive.

### Given a chance, I would be this person for a day:

My father. He's a strong, hardworking person. I respect him so much.

### Who I root for:

Iowa Hawkeyes, Chicago Cubs

### Hidden talent:

Singing. I use to sing in weddings, and I have been involved in several community theater productions over the years. I don't sing as much as I used to when I was younger.