

Wellness HUB

WINTER 2024

12 ROCHELLE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL: A CONTINUUM OF QUALITY HEALTHCARE



A LETTER FROM THE CEO



Winter Greetings from Your Community Hospital.

As we look ahead to the long days of winter, it can be a time to focus on our family, both personal and in the work environment. The staff at RCH have been focusing on customer service in the last few months, being intentional in action, being kind with our communication, and serving others as we go about our daily work. The blessing of being in a small critical access hospital is that we know our patients as neighbors and friends. It is an honor to serve Rochelle and the larger extended community with a focus on our mission: to improve the health of our community by providing high quality care with competence, excellence, and compassion.

The current issue of Wellness Hub features departments in the hospital that support patient care in a mighty way. Enhancing health is a daily focus of Rochelle Community Hospital. We do not limit our services to only caring for the sick and injured but also provide services that improve the well-being of our community. Nutritional education services are imperative to the holistic care of the patient both in and out of the hospital. An important program to consider is Prediabetes. The aim of this program is to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes through diet and exercise. The group structure is reflective of the CDC's research-based Lifestyle Balance program. If you or someone you love would benefit from delaying the onset of diabetes, I would recommend that you watch for the class schedule starting in spring of 2025.

Working in concert with dietitian services is our Food and Nutrition department. In addition to the obvious benefits of healthy food, Food and Nutrition provides a number of activities to socialize the staff around fun food events. The most rewarding thing about our cafeteria is the number of local citizens who utilize the meal service to grab a quick lunch or take food to their loved ones. It is great to have the public in our midst, enjoying the company of their friends and neighbors.

Environmental Services is also featured in this newsletter. A central component to EVS is their role in keeping the hospital clean with proper disinfection techniques. We can proudly boast that we have one of the cleanest hospitals around, as that is a compliment we receive routinely when meeting with outside professionals. Our team of dedicated technicians take their jobs seriously and are key to decreasing the spread of germs to an unsuspecting recipient.

The last featured article highlights familiar and new caregivers at RCH. The span of care that each of them represent in the past and for the future is vast. Many things have changed in the hospital since Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar started caring for patients in our community. Paper records were the mode for recording a visit instead of an EMR, paper lab requisitions were carried by hand with the lab sample to the laboratory instead of electronically connecting by labels, and ED patients were seen by the on-call doctors who had to be called in and didn't reside in the hospital. But with those differences, the feel of the community, the friendliness of the staff, and the desire to have closer, more meaningful relationships with patients is the common thread that attracted all four of these providers. RCH is a special place, one that continues to foster a professional hometown appeal.

I hope you enjoy this addition of Wellness Hub. We are excited to highlight hospital departments and build awareness of their valuable contribution to our inner workings. It is also important to share the recruiting stories of some of our providers, past and present. We are blessed to attract incredible talent, and it is very affirming to know that they all have chosen Rochelle Community Hospital as their place to be based on our welcoming spirit.

Have a happy holiday season and enjoy time spent with family and friends.

Karen Tracy, RN, Chief Executive Officer

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: JANELLE STEIN, RDN, LDN ENHANCING COMMUNITY HEALTH THROUGH NUTRITION EDUCATION

Twelve years ago, Janelle Stein, RDN (Registered Dietitian Nutritionist), LDN (Licensed Dietitian Nutritionist), joined Rochelle Community Hospital as an as-needed PRN (pro re nata) Registered Dietitian in the Rochelle Community Hospital's Multi-Specialty Clinic, filling in for Rajni Sud, the hospital's long-term Registered Dietitian who has since retired, and collaborating with her on various projects.

Two years ago, Janelle transitioned to a full-time role, where she has since made a significant impact on the community she loves. "Our patients are truly family, friends, and neighbors. We serve the people we live with," Janelle shared. "We have time to listen and to know more of the full person. I hope people leave feeling heard."

In recognition of her contributions to RCH, Janelle was "Positively Recognized" as the employee of the month for November 2023.

Dietary Education & Initiatives

As a Registered Dietitian, Janelle works with hospital providers to address patient nutrition needs. "One of the things I love about RCH is that we are small enough to communicate directly with primary care providers to create a cohesive dietary plan for patients," she shared. For example, a provider identifies and refers a patient to her for nutritional education, and Janelle works with the patient to create a personalized food plan. "We communicate back to the provider so that they may know and reinforce teaching," explained Janelle. "We also assess the inpatients for nutritional concerns and provide education when needed or requested and communicate recommendations to the primary provider."

Janelle and her team also educate patients through dietary programs. The Prediabetes program,

established by Rajni nearly 30 years ago, is a community favorite that is foundational to RCH's dietary outreach. This three-month program is structured around the CDC's research-based Lifestyle Balance program "designed to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes through diet and exercise," Janelle explained, and includes topics such as dietary changes, meal planning, increasing physical activities, and others. Waylaid by the challenges of COVID, the Prediabetes program will start up again in spring 2025.

In addition to reinvigorating the Prediabetes program, Janelle and her team educate through the Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) and Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) initiatives. "Our DSME program is recognized by the American Diabetes Association as meeting the national standards for DSME," Janelle shared. "We aim to provide best practice care and individualized education to people with diabetes." The MNT program helps patients manage chronic conditions like heart or kidney disease.

Community Resources

Food access is at the heart of Janelle's approach to nutrition—her unofficial motto is "Let them eat!" Sponsored by RCH, several mobile pantry events were hosted last year at the hospital with the Northern Illinois Food Bank, and the hospital cafeteria is open to the public, offering affordable, healthy meals.

Janelle, who started her career in a University of Illinois Extension program that supports low-income families, learned first-hand, and early on, how nutrition research meets the realities of daily life. "I worked within the reality of people's lives. That was a real gift," explained Janelle. This experience gave her a deep understanding of lifestyle challenges that people may face, including food insecurity and physical abilities.

Bringing this awareness to her role at RCH, she and her team focus on initiatives that "meet community members where they are at" in their health journey. "Rajni and our Food and Nutrition Department Manager, Ross Pullom, had been planning a series of programs demonstrating healthy cooking that was paused for Covid," she explained. "Ross and I would like to revisit this, as I believe there are people who desire and would benefit from increasing their skills at healthy home cooking and meal preparation."



Another idea Janelle hopes to implement is discharge meals: "After a person has stayed in the hospital, it would be nice to be able to provide a healthy meal or two to take home in order to support recovery." Additional ideas include collaborating with the Cardiac Rehab and Congestive Heart Failure programs to help patients manage dietary habits for these conditions as well as increasing community conversations and workshops.

As Janelle emphasized, it can be beneficial to approach dietary changes as small "course correction" adjustments rather than a major overhaul: "Even if you make a small change, down the road, it makes quite a difference. Progress, not perfection."

This past spring, Luis Cano, Assistant Dietitian, joined the dietary team to help out as-needed with patients. He is a valuable addition to the team, said Janelle, offering innovative ideas and Spanish language skills, both of which improve patient access and care: "I love having him here. He has a lot of neat ideas, and we bounce concepts off each other."

Together with her team, Janelle is dedicated to health promotion and advocacy through community programming with a "whole body" approach that empowers and educates people: "My goal is to be a supportive partner, educator, and cheerleader who meets clients where they are, enhancing their health within their means and abilities."



EVS DEPARTMENT: CREATING A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT AT RCH

The Environmental Services (EVS) department at Rochelle Community Hospital raises the bar high for cleanliness both locally and nationwide. “Recently, Terry Foster, an ER nurse, came to speak at our staff development institute,” shared Debra Whitman, EVS Manager. “When he did a tour of the hospital, he stopped at my door just to commend how clean the hospital is. It is always amazing to hear, and it is the best feeling to share these compliments with my team.”

This significant accolade comes from none other than the renowned Terry M. Foster, RN, MSN, FAEN, CCRN, CPEN, TCRN, and CEN. Terry, an in-demand speaker and hospital humorist, travels to healthcare centers throughout the United States and knows a thing or two about hospital hygiene. He was so impressed with our facility’s sparkle that in addition to complimenting Debra in person, Terry mentioned it in a Facebook post, calling RCH “one of THE cleanest” hospitals he has ever seen.

Debra, who has been with the hospital since December 2016, was instrumental in changing the department’s name from Housekeeping to Environmental Services. With the support of a former CEO, RCH was quick to change the department’s name to reflect the vital role it plays in hospital operations.

“We’re so much more than changing garbage, stocking bathrooms, and cleaning floors,” Debra emphasized. “My team members are in the patient rooms—including where there are isolation cases such as COVID, flu, or MRSA—multiple times a day to clean and disinfect in order to keep patients, visitors, and staff safe and healthy.”

For her dedication, Debra was awarded Employee of the Year in December 2023.

Protocols and Safety Measures

Currently, the EVS team comprises twelve full-time technicians who are divided between first and second shifts. Each technician is assigned to a specific hospital area for one month, at which time they rotate to a different area to allow familiarity with every aspect of RCH.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, masks, and gowns are an important component for safety, especially during flu and COVID seasons and when the teams enter isolation case patient rooms. EVS also recently switched over to an environmentally-friendly hydrogen-peroxide disinfectant and purchased Moonbeam devices that use powerful UVC light to improve disinfection on flat and high-touch surfaces. "I make sure my team has the tools and knowledge to keep themselves safe and perform their jobs to the best of their abilities," noted Debra.

These protocols keep everyone healthy. A top priority at RCH is that when you leave, you don't take home any unwanted germs.



Education and Collaboration

RCH invests in continuing education for EVS staff, including on-the-job training, educational videos, and routine reviews of hospital policies and procedures. Debra is looking into certification for technicians to expand knowledge of their field. Additionally, the team works closely with nursing and clinical staff on disinfection best practices and collaborates with Janine Sobin, Infection Preventionist, to ensure compliance with Joint Commission standards and IDPH and OSHA regulations.

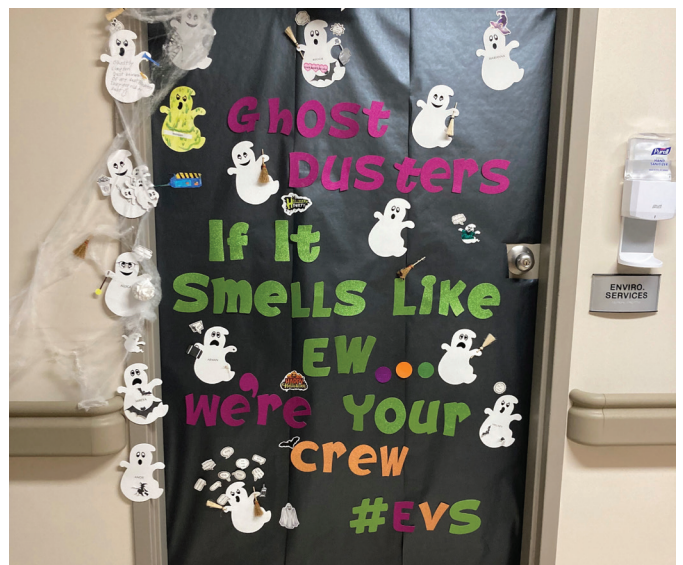
Team involvement in decision-making processes also contributes to the EVS department's commitment to hospital operations. "The technicians have a voice in nearly every aspect of the department. It's like a family," Debra expressed. "It's a group effort. It's their department, their hospital, their investment."

An important member of the EVS family is Reggie Velu, a technician who has worked at RCH for eighteen years. "She knows what she's doing, and she's good at it," said Debra, who often encourages new employees to consult with Reggie to learn her "amazing tips and techniques."

“ As soon as you walk in the door, you see how much my team cares about this community by their thoroughness and commitment to keeping people safe and healthy. ”

- Debra Whitman, EVS Manager

The EVS department is essential to creating a clean, welcoming environment for all patients, visitors, and staff at RCH. "This hospital is amazing. We're small but mighty," Debra shared. "As soon as you walk in the door, you see how much my team cares about this community by their thoroughness and commitment to keeping people safe and healthy."



FOOD & NUTRITION IN THE COMMUNITY

In addition to being extremely hard workers, the staff in our Rochelle Community Hospital Food & Nutrition department encourages creativity and pays close attention to even the smallest details, always with the intention of brightening our days. The manager and coordinator also are great about listening to input and being open to trying new things. F&N is dedicated to bettering our community through food, which sometimes can be the easiest way to people's hearts!

Hospital Week



Each year during Hospital Week, F&N takes great care to provide a delicious, complimentary meal for employees. This past year, they went above and beyond, offering a choice of steak, sides, and dessert.



Salsa Bar



As a fun, new way to spread cheer, F&N served a salsa bar with many different variations, even fruit. We had a great time trying all the options!



RCH's Annual Cookout Brings Together Staff and Residents

In September, the F&N department hosted its 3rd annual community and employee cookout, providing nutritious and delicious food options including entrees, sides, and desserts. The cookout is a way for RCH to celebrate our hard-working staff and to express our gratitude to the community for their year-round support.



Salad Bar and To-Go Cooler



F&N is dedicated to accommodating everyone—our hospital cafeteria is never short on variety and healthy choices. Each weekday, we offer a full salad bar and a to-go cooler stocked with assorted fruit, veggies, and



prepared salads. Staff also prepares meal options for our after-hours employees. Our cafeteria is open to the public for lunch and dinner, providing healthy food at an affordable price. Come check it out!

Sustainability

A few times a month, RCH encourages employees to forgo the Styrofoam and eat a plated lunch in the cafeteria. At this networking lunch, coworkers get to know each other better and contribute to lowering our carbon footprint. Everyone who participates in this initiative receives \$1 off their meal that day. In November, we held a well-received Friendsgiving "Give Gracias" event with Mexican-themed food options.



Farmers Market



The RCH Food & Nutrition department spent a lot of time planning and preparing for our Farmers Market: ordering and organizing produce, setting up cash registers, and arranging for an on-site taco truck to provide lunch for everyone. Although it was a very hot day, the event was a huge success, so much so that

many community members asked if we could do this weekly! So many people showed up to corral their colorful, delicious & nutritious bounty. It was really fun to see everyone grabbing their goodies and socializing in the sunshine.

ROCHELLE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL: A CONTINUUM OF QUALITY HEALTHCARE



Since its establishment as a private, nonprofit hospital in the 1960s under the Rochelle Community Hospital Association, Rochelle Community Hospital has been committed to providing exceptional healthcare to our community. Throughout its history, the hospital has demonstrated a commitment to evolving with advancements in medicine while retaining its core values of personalized, accessible care.

In the 1970s, the hospital's medical staff recruitment efforts were focused on ensuring access to specialized care for their patients without the burden of traveling out of town. This goal was achieved when Dr. Juanito Delfinado and Dr. John Prabhakar joined the staff in 1972 and 1974 respectively. In addition to their surgical skills, Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar brought with them a visionary spirit and a strong desire to provide quality healthcare for the people in their new community.

Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar both were introduced to medicine as young children. Dr. Delfinado, who was born and raised in the Philippines, lived at a PCSO Hospital established by American soldiers during World War II because his mother was a nurse there. He assisted his mother with general care, from taking blood pressure readings to helping deliver many babies. There are several medical providers in his family, including an uncle who was a physician, and his sister who is a pharmacist. His daughter, Leah Chapman, MD, OB/GYN, is a surgeon and did a 3-month internship at RCH where she performed surgeries alongside her father.

Born and raised in India, Dr. Prabhakar was just five years old when he lost his mother. She gave birth to his younger brother and passed away 39 days later. This profound loss was the impetus for his career in medicine. With his father's support, Dr. Prabhakar trained in morphology and biology and became the local physician, as there were few providers in town. Dr. Prabhakar's children also entered the medical field, including his son, Dr. Larry Prabhakar, who previously was a surgeon at RCH.

Journey to Rochelle Community Hospital

After they and their families visited the hospital and the town of Rochelle, Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar knew RCH was the place for them.



For Dr. Delfinado, RCH's rural location appealed to him immediately. "I liked the small hospital atmosphere. I was able to do a lot of surgeries here that I wouldn't have been able to do with a bigger hospital. I performed a large volume of surgeries in this hospital," he shared, "including delivering babies." Despite being offered a job at a larger hospital, he attended a job fair in Chicago where he was introduced to RCH; additionally, his wife had a friend who was a nurse at the hospital. As soon as he met RCH at the job fair, Dr. Delfinado knew Rochelle was the right place for him and his family.

Similarly, Dr. Prabhakar found that larger hospitals did not have a need for cardiovascular surgeons, which was his specialty, but RCH did. He also was introduced to the hospital at a job fair in Chicago, where he said they sweetened the deal by sharing Del Monte corn and pudding, and was excited for the opportunity to expand his skill set. "People ask me what kind of surgeries I performed," he explained, "and I tell them, well, I did everything!"

With the arrival of Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar, Rochelle Community Hospital became a leader in the surgical field. "It's not expected of a smaller, rural hospital necessarily, but we were at the forefront of new technology at the time," said Dr. Delfinado.

Starting with just one camera and one screen in the surgery center, he and Dr. Prabhakar built a first-class surgical center. They used their own money and bank loans to procure equipment for the surgical center and emergency room. As the medical devices grew, so did the ability to perform a wider range of procedures, including angiograms, biopsies, knee and foot replacement, and prostate, among numerous others.



Dr. Delfinado and his daughter Dr. Chapman

To continue providing the best possible care for the community, both doctors stayed up-to-date on technological advancements in surgical techniques. For example, they trained at the renowned Texas Laser Institute in Houston and learned how to perform laparoscopic surgery—gallbladder, in particular—ahead of some large regional hospitals. Reflecting on the quality of healthcare services at RCH, Dr. Prabhakar, confidently stated that “Our care is as good as Mayo Clinic and other places in terms of infection rate, in terms of recurrence rate of the surgeries.”

Collaboration

Dr. Prabhakar emphasized the importance of strong ties within the healthcare setting, where nurses play a vital role in patient care. “The nurses were everything to me—They were like a family to me. Every day, they made the rounds together with us. They would call me if they noticed changes with a patient. The operating room brought us all together.” The nurses became highly intuitive during surgery, anticipating his needs.



Dr. Prabhakar and his son Dr. Larry Prabhakar

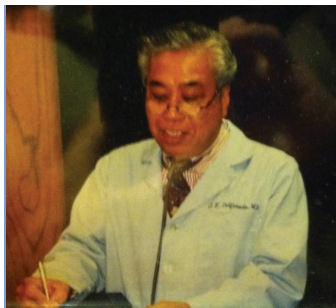
In the early days, Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar were grateful for the hospital’s collaboration with external healthcare providers, especially with OSF St. Anthony’s Medical Center, a relationship that continues to this day. “We did not have any cardiologists, we did not have neurosurgeons, we did not have orthopedists,” said Dr. Delfinado, “but surgeons would come from Rockford to help our patients.” Dr. Prabhakar credits RCH’s administration for its advocacy and support.

These supportive professional relationships allowed for well-organized, highly successful healthcare but also cultivated an environment of fun at the hospital, shared Dr. Prabhakar. On one Nurses Day, he dressed up as Elvis and serenaded his colleagues. Another time, he and a group from the surgical crew performed the Weird Al Yankovich parody song “Like a Surgeon” for the local 4th of July festival.

Patient Care

Reflecting on their careers as surgeons at RCH, Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar noted the difference between patient care in the past and healthcare today. For example, the doctors were on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for many years. “We did not have cell





phones then or even beepers until later,” noted Dr. Delfinado. He also added that they would treat patients at their homes or at accident sites instead of waiting for them to come to the hospital.

“The relationship between patients and doctors also is pretty different,” said Dr. Prabhakar. “People wouldn’t mind calling you at night to ask questions. We were in the phone book. People knew how to find you when they needed you. The police would come to the tennis court to find me.”

When it came to communicating difficult news, both doctors recalled how the closeness they shared with patients created a relationship of compassion and trust. “Everybody knew me. They knew me at church, at school functions, at city events, and so forth. And so when I had to give them bad news, I shared this sorrow and their difficulty. You experience all the emotions that the patients go through,” said Dr. Prabhakar.

For Dr. Delfinado, an experience that stands out as one of his greatest accomplishments while at RCH is when he saved the life of a man in cardiac arrest: “I went to his home, where I performed CPR until the fire department arrived. We got him to the ICU, and I continued to care for him there. The next day, he was breathing again. He lived about five more years. We became good friends.” Recently, the man’s daughter shared this story on social media, stating that she is eternally grateful to Dr. Delfinado for giving her more years with her father.

Another example is when Dr. Prabhakar and Dr. Delfinado treated a patient with a stab wound that pierced the heart and lung. They performed surgery on the heart, lung, and arm. The next day, the patient was alert, and within a few days, they were discharged without any lasting disabilities.

Worldwide Impact

RCH’s commitment to its community extends beyond the hospital. Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar attended

mission trips to under-resourced countries around the world, providing equipment, supplies, and care. During their mission trips, the doctors assisted with procedures such as delivering babies, gall bladder surgeries, and skin grafts, among others. The mission trips and medical supplies really highlight RCH’s far-reaching positive impact.

As Dr. Delfinado explained, “Rochelle Hospital is not just a small rural hospital. You’re really reaching lots of people outside in the medical community. We bring back all the experiences to our own community and share that with people.”

“I went on a mission trip with suitcases,” explained Dr. Prabhakar, “like Santa Claus! All of the practicing supervisors and the administrators would come and open my suitcases, and they were so grateful for the equipment and supplies.”

Dr. Prabhakar recalled that in 2003, he received a request for medical supplies for African hospitals. He gathered most items but struggled with Ob/Gyn instruments and a portable X-ray machine. Fortunately, RCH provided surplus Ob/Gyn equipment, and the X-ray department supplied an old portable unit. With support from Global Health Ministries and the local Rotary Club, the supplies were shipped to Africa. In 2005, during a mission trip to Tanzania, Dr. Prabhakar had the joy of seeing the X-ray machine and other equipment in use!

Community Engagement

Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar have a long-standing history of involvement as physicians, including as medics for team sports and as presenters in high school science classes. It is a testament to the community that both doctors stayed in Rochelle after their retirement 20 years ago.

Importantly, both doctors raised their families in Rochelle and are still here! Impressed with Rochelle’s warm welcome, Dr. Prabhakar shared that “the hospital was very community-minded, and everyone was so inviting. It’s a very good place to raise your family. Our children received great educations.” Dr. Prabhakar and his wife are deeply involved in their church, St. Paul Luthern, at the local and national level, as well as the Christian Women’s Club. After



*Left: Dr. Graham Isaacson, DO
Right: Chenin Congrave Rude, NP*

retirement, he joined the Rotary Club and is chairman of the city's Zoning and Planning Commission.

"Getting involved is important," said Dr. Delfinado. "I think it helps make people feel like you're approachable and accessible." He has participated in many extracurricular activities throughout the years, including 30 Men Who Cook, in which he won first place for five years in a row!

Investing in the Future

By prioritizing specialized medical staff recruitment, the hospital minimizes the need for community members to travel, reinforcing our mission to deliver comprehensive healthcare locally and treat every patient as family, making sure that every visit, no matter the reason, is a supportive, caring experience.

One of the ways in which Rochelle Community Hospital remains at the forefront of patient-centered care is with the addition of two new medical providers. RCH is excited to welcome Dr. Graham Isaacson, DO (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine) and Chenin Congrave Rude, NP (Nurse Practitioner) to our hospital.

Dr. Isaacson provides comprehensive family medicine for patients of all ages, from newborns to seniors, in both clinic and hospital settings. As a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, he diagnoses, treats, prescribes medication, performs surgery, and manages chronic and acute diseases. Emphasizing a holistic approach, he also offers hands-on techniques to relieve pain, improve function, and promote healing for conditions like muscle and joint pain, migraines, neck pain, back pain, and hip or pelvic pain.

"I wanted to make a difference in people's lives and help them" explained Dr. Isaacson of his desire to become a physician. "I initially went to school to become a pharmacist but quickly realized that I wanted to have more contact with patients and build stronger, longer lasting relationships. After I started shadowing physicians to test that, I fell in love with the idea of becoming a doctor, learning how to help and heal people, and becoming a trusted advisor and friend to my patients." He and his wife have four young children under the age of nine, and he focuses on family time once he gets home from work.

Congrave Rude, who recently joined RCH as a full-time Nurse Practitioner in the hospital's Convenient Care department, was raised in a family of healthcare

workers: "My mother and father were both nurses, and my stepmother worked as a recreational therapist. It was through exposure to their professions that I became interested in nursing." With 22 years of experience in healthcare, she holds a CNA certificate, a BSN, and a MSN. Congrave Rude shared that "I was drawn to RCH's commitment to partnering with patients to meet their health goals and live their best lives." Outside of the hospital, Congrave Rude enjoys spending time with her husband, two children, and four dogs. In her spare time, she also likes to bake.

Much like Dr. Delfinado and Dr. Prabhakar, Dr. Isaacson and Congrave Rude immediately felt at home when they first visited RCH. They were impressed with the kindness of the staff.

"When I interviewed here, I saw that RCH was the perfect place for me to practice family medicine the way I wanted to practice," said Dr. Isaacson. Every person I met seemed genuinely happy to be working for this organization and taking care of patients, family, and friends in their home community. There was a lot of pride in being able to work for the community hospital."

As Congrave Rude shared, "Rochelle Community Hospital stood out as the friendliest hospital I have visited. When I walked through the front door for my interview, a staff member kindly asked me, 'May I help you?' I learned later this is part of the RCH culture. It seems like a small thing, but it can make a big difference in a patient's experience. RCH staff are not only friendly but happy to be here."



Healthcare at a Rural Hospital

Medical providers in a small, rural community develop lasting relationships with patients—as evidenced by Dr. Delfinado's and Dr. Prabhakar's experiences—allowing for individualized attention and a deeper understanding of their medical history, lifestyle, and needs. This close-knit environment creates a sense of trust and comfort, making healthcare more accessible and approachable for community members.

"One of my goals going into my schooling was to address disparities in healthcare. Until I heard about the RCH Convenient Care position," explained Congrave Rude. "I had never considered practicing in a rural community. When I became aware of the need, I felt the community and the hospital would be a great fit."

For Dr. Isaacson, practicing medicine at a rural hospital was a "no-brainer." While earning his undergraduate degree, he shadowed in a small-town in Iowa. This experience showed Dr. Isaacson the fulfillment of patient-provider relationships in a small hospital. "Most bigger hospitals and cities don't have family physicians that round on their own patients in the hospital or do any office procedures," he explained. "I can do many things right then and there, increasing patient care access and continuity of care."

Although RCH is a small, rural hospital, the hospital maintains strong relationships with larger medical centers to ensure patients receive the appropriate continuity of care, noted Congrave Rude.

Rochelle Community Hospital minimizes the need for community members to travel, reinforcing our mission





to deliver comprehensive healthcare locally. This continuity of care creates strong support networks, where healthcare teams work collaboratively with other local services, enhancing the overall quality of care and ensuring that patients feel supported beyond just their medical needs.

RCH has upgraded essential equipment (including a CT scanner and breast MRI machine), added board-certified physicians, and transitioned to board-certified anesthesiologists, all of which ensure that patients receive the highest quality care close to home. Additionally, visiting medical specialists regularly see patients in our Multi-Specialty Clinic whether a few days a week, a month, or a year. Although these specialists are not employed by RCH, the hospital's contract with them gives our community access to expert care without traveling a long distance.

As Dr. Isaacson emphasized, "Having specialists like cardiology, nephrology, dermatology, podiatry, and neurology, among others, is an amazing demonstration of the hospital's teamwork and willingness to provide patients with access to these

necessary specialists. Any time you can increase access to care and healthcare resources, it increases the health of the community."

"RCH is focused on providing excellent care for our patients. Our goal is to provide high-quality, compassionate care," shared Congrave Rude. "Making sure we get it right doesn't stop after the visit is over—in the Convenient Care, we call patients a few days after their visit to see how they are doing. I think this is what sets us apart."

Holistic Approach

When asked to share advice for current and future healthcare providers at RCH, Dr. Delfinado advocated for thorough physical examinations that consider each patient as a whole person rather than relying solely on technology: "Providers should be thoughtful and listen to patients rather than rely only on machines."

As an osteopathic physician, Dr. Isaacson provides this holistic approach to patient care: "I always strive to be



a good listener for my patients. Allowing a patient to be heard is the most fundamental aspect of forming a strong patient-doctor relationship. Listening helps build trust, and having trust allows me to better care for people. Each patient communicates in different ways, likes to hear information in different ways, and interprets healthcare and results differently. I try very hard to understand the nuances of each patient when I care for them and to listen to what patients want in their life to help them make informed decisions about their healthcare."

Congrave Rude's philosophy of healthcare also mirrors this approach: "What I hope to achieve throughout my career at RCH is to build strong relationships with my patients. Each time they come to the Convenient Care, I want my patients to feel understood and to play an important role in deciding their treatment plan."

Importance of Community Care

Rochelle Community Hospital is dedicated to treating every patient as family and making sure they have a

supportive, caring experience. An important aspect of this approach is to provide support and opportunities for our medical team. "Here, you can perform everything that you're capable of and everybody will support you," Dr. Prabhakar expressed, "so you can follow your passion."

Dr. Isaacson already has recognized this gift: "The things I'm most looking forward to are forming strong relationships with my patients for years to come, becoming a part of this great community that I have the opportunity to care for, and working with a great group of dedicated individuals. I'm just here to share the knowledge I received from great teachers, connect with people, and then help people live better, healthier lives."

"I look forward to serving the Convenient Care patients of RCH," shared Congrave Rude. "Each time they come to the Convenient Care, I want my patients to feel understood and to play an important role in deciding their treatment plan."

Long-Term Goals

Chenin Congrave Rude and Dr. Isaacson are excited to be integral members of the community served by RCH. Their shared enthusiasm reflects a deep commitment to the well-being of local residents. As they engage with patients and families, they are excited to build meaningful connections and make a positive impact within the community.

"My short-term goal is to improve upon my Spanish language fluency to better serve my Spanish speaking patients," said Congrave Rude. "A long-term goal I hope to achieve is to build strong relationships with my patients."

As Dr. Isaacson shared, "I want to become a trusted physician in this community where patients know they can come to me and be listened to and cared for on a personal level. I want to be able to take care of entire families and make a positive impact in people's lives by providing compassionate care that is also up to date and evidence-based."



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