

Loring Hospital



Your Family Health Center

An Affiliate of  UnityPoint Health

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Sac City, IA 50583

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# better TOGETHER

The Hospital of Choice for Patients and Staff  
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM LORING HOSPITAL SUMMER 2020

## Attentive Staff Create “Family” Connection with Patients



Just before healthcare workers around the world became frontline fighters of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, nurses at Loring Hospital received a vibrant bouquet of flowers to serve as a much-needed reminder that the work they do makes an impact. But it was the note with the flowers that really struck a chord. It read:

“If everybody treated everybody else the way you treat your patients, what an amazing world we would have.”

The gesture was sent by Gene Wassom, who had been admitted to the hospital on February 5 for severe abdominal pain that turned out to be acute diverticulitis, or inflammation in a part of his colon wall.

“I felt safe in their (the staff’s) hands,” Wassom recalls of his weeklong stay. “They did everything possible to make my stay as comfortable as possible given my condition.”

Wassom felt that from every staff member, from the receptionists to the nurses and Dr. Zoltan Pek.

He says Pek created a detailed care plan for him, and everything was completed with care and compassion for his well-being. He saw this time and again, from staff immediately being there if he needed something to putting an IV into his vein.

“I’m getting up in years, so that’s not the easiest thing to do, but the nurses were very meticulous about their work,” Wassom says. “They wanted to make sure it didn’t leave any marks or scars, and they took their time to get it done right.”

He adds everyone was dedicated and attentive to even the smallest details, which made him feel like they cared and that their work mattered to them.

“Dr. Pek doesn’t miss a thing, and the nurses were so aware, looking for anything that might possibly be wrong and things going right, too,” he says. “Everybody was alert and on their toes.”

Impressive, but not surprising, Wassom says. He’s been going to Loring Hospital for various appointments, including physical therapy after hip replacement surgeries and a colonoscopy, for nearly 20 years now, and he says the thorough care and friendly staff have earned his trust.

He also appreciates the feel of the small, rural hospital as opposed to bigger facilities.

“People treat you with more respect, courtesy and care here,” he says. “It’s more like being at home, where people know you.”

Sending the flower bouquet isn’t the first time he’s shown his appreciation to Loring Hospital nurses. He’s been delivering a plate of sweet treats to staff each Christmas Day since at least 2004, he estimates.

“When you get that kind of treatment – and I’m at the age now I’ve had enough experiences to know – you realize that’s really a blessing,” Wassom says. “They deserve to know that patients like me know of a job well done. It’s an affirmation that what they’re doing is having an effect. And they need that, especially now with all the things going on in the world and COVID-19. We need a positive outlook.”

Wassom has since recovered and is doing well, but there are some days he misses being around such bright, personable and compassionate people.

“I wanted to get out and be healthy, but I almost hated to leave,” he adds. “There’s nothing to fear at Loring, I’ll tell you that.”



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## It’s Not Too Early to Schedule Year-End Procedures

If you are planning on having elective surgery around the winter holidays, it’s best to plan early as this is the time of year doctors’ schedules tend to fill up quickly.

An elective surgery is a procedure that is planned in advance, rather than one that is done in an emergency situation. Common elective surgeries at Loring include colonoscopies, hernia repair, hysterectomy and other surgeries that may not be deemed medically necessary. At Loring, general surgeries are the most commonly performed elective procedures and are often done the last quarter of the year.

“Since COVID-19 delayed elective surgical procedures earlier in the year, we anticipate being very busy in the coming months,” said Sally Mason, Loring Hospital’s outpatient center/surgery manager. “We encourage our patients to schedule any elective procedures as soon as they have met their deductibles and before scheduling options decrease. We look forward to seeing patients in the upcoming months.”

Health plans increasingly have design features that are tied to a 12-month cycle, including annual deductibles, free yearly preventive checkups and flexible-spending accounts. Consumers who don’t pay attention to the calendar risk wasting fully covered benefits and paying more than they have

to for medical procedures delayed until next year. The amount of money at stake keeps getting bigger, as people with health coverage are forced to pick up a growing share of the cost of their care.

For years, insurance plans have been structured to encourage waiting until the end of the year to have elective procedures done, once the person has met his or her deductible. At Loring Hospital, we want to remind you to check your plan and schedule non-emergency elective surgeries, year-end checkups and screenings as appropriate for your plan.

Our trained, professional and caring surgical staff at Loring Hospital provide, but are not limited to, the following surgeries:

- Abdominal hysterectomy
- Adenoidectomy
- Appendectomy
- Arthroscopic knee surgery
- Bowel resection
- Breast biopsy
- Carpal tunnel
- Chemotherapy ports
- Colonoscopy
- Ear tube insertion
- EGD
- Hemorrhoidectomy
- Laparoscopic assisted vaginal hysterectomy
- Laparoscopic gallbladder



- Laparoscopic or non-laparoscopic hernia repair
- Laparoscopic supra-cervical hysterectomy
- Laparoscopic tubal ligation
- Mastectomy
- Myringotomy
- Pain injections
- Pelvic surgeries
- Pilonidal cysts
- Skin lesions – benign or cancerous removal
- Tonsillectomy
- Vasectomy

And many more; please ask before you drive to another facility!

For more information, visit [loringhospital.org](http://loringhospital.org) or call Loring Hospital’s Katie Youberg Outpatient Center at 712-662-6379.

# COVID-19 Update *Here's what we're doing to make sure you're safe when you visit us.*

Please continue to check our Facebook page and website at [loringhospital.org/covid-19](http://loringhospital.org/covid-19) for updates and information.

Loring Hospital has resumed normal operations with a series of proactive and enhanced safety measures in place to maintain a safe environment for our patients and staff. Please rest assured knowing our facility remains safe for you to confidently receive exceptional care!

Following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and public health officials, safety measures include a mandatory screening station at the hospital's main entrance for patients and staff; the requirement of all patients and staff to wear a mask or cloth face covering while in the facility, regardless of symptoms; limited and reoriented seating in waiting areas to ensure appropriate social distancing; readily available hand sanitizer for patients and staff; cleaning the facility throughout each day with medical-grade sanitizers and antibacterial agents; designated waiting areas for healthy and sick patients; a no-visitor policy; and more.

Whether you visit one of our departments or our Katie Youberg Outpatient Center, know that we will always stand ready to deliver safe and high-quality care to you and your family.

**Below is a partial list of services.** Please visit our website at [loringhospital.org](http://loringhospital.org) or contact us at 712-662-7105 if you are uncertain if a clinic, service or surgery is available at Loring Hospital.

- 24-hour emergency services
- Cardiac rehabilitation
- Community education
- Diabetes education
- Inpatient services
- Laboratory
- LifeLine
- Lymphedema therapy
- Nursing services
- Nutrition education
- Oak Terrace Estates (independent senior living)
- Outpatient physician clinics
- Pharmacy
- Pulmonary services
- Radiology services
- Rehabilitation services
- Respiratory therapy
- Sleep studies
- Surgical services

## Help Loring Do Even More for Our Community

### Your Support Makes an Immediate Difference

During these unprecedented times, your donation dollars matter more than ever before! Please consider supporting Loring's programs and services for the greater good of our community. We truly appreciate your donations, which are a direct gift to all of those who rely on us for everything from emergency care to improved quality of life.

Thank you to our past, present and future donors for making Loring Hospital the hospital of choice for patients and staff.

With your support, we are able to continue to offer you many healthcare services right here in Sac City and keep current with technology and equipment – all while providing you top-notch care from staff who truly care about you and our community.

**Tax-deductible donations can be mailed to:**  
The Loring Healthcare Foundation  
211 Highland Avenue  
Sac City, IA 50583

## Did you know September marks Healthy Aging Month?

The body naturally loses stamina as it ages, but there are a number of things you can do to keep yourself healthy and independent for many years to come. Follow these tips to lead an active and healthy lifestyle well into your golden years.

- **Make healthy dietary choices.** Eating protein, fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, vitamins and minerals reduces risk for many diseases, increases energy and helps lose weight. Aim to drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of water daily.
- **Move more throughout the day.** Whether it's group classes, going for a run or just a stroll through the neighborhood, the goal is to activate the muscles in your body. Aim for moderate physical activity, like walking, at least 22 minutes a day, and try to incorporate muscle-strengthening activities at least two days a week.
- **Don't use tobacco.** If you do, take the first step toward quitting by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free help. Tobacco use is linked to cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, problems of the immune system and so much more.
- **Get regular checkups.** Visit your doctor for preventive services at least yearly so you can find and treat diseases, if they occur, early.
- **Keep your brain active.** Work your brain by playing music, doing crosswords and playing educational games like Scrabble with your friends and family.
- **Stay connected.** Being social is an important part of feeling human, so maintain relationships with close friends and family – even if that means downloading a social media app to stay in touch with those grandkids.
- **Protect your mental health.** Activities such as meditation, yoga or simply getting outside can promote mental well-being.
- **Get enough sleep.** Experts recommend 7-8 hours per night. Quality sleep is linked to improved overall mood, attention span and memory.

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



Please note events may be cancelled or rescheduled due to the status of COVID-19. Please continue to check our website, [loringhospital.org](http://loringhospital.org), for event updates and information.

CLASS/EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT
<b>BLS, ACLS and PALS</b>	By appointment only	Call for scheduling information	Loring Hospital	Ashley Dahlberg, 712-662-6445
<b>Discounted Wellness Screening</b>	Every Wednesday all year	7:30 am to 11:00 am	Loring Hospital Laboratory	Loring Laboratory, 712-662-6312
<b>Stop the Bleed</b>	By appointment only	Call for scheduling information	Loring Hospital	Ashley Dahlberg, 712-662-6445
<b>Medicare Open Enrollment Counseling</b>	October 15 to December 7	By phone or face-to-face appointment	Loring Hospital	LeAnn Olhausen or Lori Mentzer, 712-662-6371
<b>Quarterly Health Beat: Virtual Diabetes Info 101</b>	November 2020, date TBD	Call for more information	Virtual	Ashley Dahlberg, 712-662-6445

## Other Happenings

*Although the COVID-19 pandemic altered many summer events and community involvement activities, our team still found a number of ways to give back and have fun – all while being safe.*



Loring Hospital's CEO/CFO, Stacy Johnson, and Mike Eral, director of information systems, grilling hot dogs and hamburgers for staff to celebrate Hospital Week in May.



Staff preparing and distributing nutritious meals as part of the community's Summer Lunch Program.



While we didn't have our usual number of float riders this year, Loring still found a safe way to participate in area parades.



Tenants at Oak Terrace Estates enjoying surprise "grab and go" hot fudge and strawberry sundaes on a hot summer day.

## Blessington to retire after four decades in healthcare

After 42 years in the healthcare field, Kay Blessington, ARNP, FNP, is set to retire in September.

Blessington started her career as a registered nurse at Loring Hospital in 1978. After working as a nurse and in the public health sector for nearly 20 years, Blessington went on to earn a master's degree and nurse practitioner credentials in 1996 from Clarkson College in Omaha.

"After working as a hospital nurse and providing home care where one must really learn to think independently, I thought 'I can do this,'" Blessington says. "I wanted to make more of an impact on the health of others and learn more about the healthcare system as a whole."

Later in 1996, Blessington began providing patient care by splitting her time between the clinics in Sac City and Lake View – working as a provider in Lake View exclusively in recent years.

Although Blessington spent the past 24 years providing care to a variety of patients, she focused her interests on women's health and hormone replacement therapy early on in her career.

"As I got older and more personally understood the different stages of women's health, I knew that was a space in the provider sense that needed to be filled," says Blessington. "I wanted to be a resource and an advocate specifically for women as they navigate through different milestones and changes in health."

In addition to working as a clinic provider, Blessington took calls for Loring Hospital's Emergency Department for several years.

"I enjoyed my time working in the ER because you never know what's going to walk through the doors," Blessington recalls. "Loring Hospital is very family-oriented, and the doctors are exceptional. I've never worked with better providers, and I've worked in healthcare for a very long time."

Although Blessington – who plans to spend more of her time traveling, quilting, golfing and with family – is looking forward to the next chapter, she says the patient interaction is what she will miss most about working in healthcare.

"I've taken care of multiple generations in the same family," Blessington says. "You really get to know and build personal relationships with patients. That's what I'm going to miss most – the day-to-day patient interaction and the close relationships I've built with those patients over the years."

