

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness show where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson from Lake Region Healthcare and my guest today is Matthew Hayden. Matt is our regional account manager at our Lake Region Home Medical Supply Store here in Fergus Falls and there's been some changes going on at the store and we're going to talk with Matt about that this morning. Good morning, Matt.

Matt Hayden: Good morning. Happy to be here.

Katie Johnson: Well, let's start by introducing our listeners to you. Tell us just a little bit about your background and how long you've been working here at the store.

Matt Hayden: Well, I've been here for about three years and we've seen, like you said, so many changes and we're going to continue to see those changes as we really look at the healthcare landscape and how that's changing over time. And it's great to be able to showcase a couple of them today on the show. I'm really excited to talk about them.

Katie Johnson: Yeah. For people who maybe aren't familiar or even know that we have a medical supply store, give us a little overview. Where's the store located at? What kinds of products do you carry at the store?

Matt Hayden: Yeah, like I said, I've been here for three years and we've been around since 2014 and we still get patients that'll come in and not know that we exist and that we're here. And you really don't need this type, this type of service from a DME standpoint, which is durable medical equipment, until you need it. And so we certainly understand that sometimes it's better not to know us because then you don't need us. But when you do need us, we're here. So we're located over at 1432 West Lincoln Avenue, which is right by Fleet Farm, right by Premier Meats and Seafood, there's a new thrifty white drug. And so those are enough of landmarks and most people probably know where we're at, but really we are a full line DME. And what that really means is we don't specialize in just one thing, which is a good thing because there's so many times that you don't need just one thing, you need many different things from a therapy standpoint or from a recovery standpoint.

CPAP, oxygen, and continence, wheelchairs, ostomy, actual feeding, I mean, you name it. We really want to make sure that we have everything that a patient might need in recovery. And that's what Lake Region was striving for when they put this department together and as you know, the continuum of care that we want for our patients is so important. And so this really kind of hits home on that first inception of a patient kind of going in, seeing their provider, and having some sort of diagnosis to how do you recover. And more and more patients are recovering in the home setting. This department specializes in making sure that that patient has what they need in that home setting. Oh, and by the way, we make sure that the insurance is going to pay for most of it

because we're all paying those health premiums. We want to make sure that insurance is covering it. So we do a lot with the insurances and just really try to make sure that we're taking care of our patients to the standards that Lake Region requires.

Katie Johnson: That is such an important point. So when you think about going into the doctor, whether it's a acute problem, a chronic problem, whatever it might be, but maybe you have to go to physical therapy or maybe the doctor prescribes it right there in the office, but rather than saying, "Go find this." and you're on your own to figure out where you can buy it or looking online, they can connect you right with the medical supply store to find exactly what the doctor is recommending for you.

Matt Hayden: Yeah, and you really hit the nail on the head. We are Lake Region, all of our software, all of our programs, we're so in touch with what the providers... what our providers are looking for and we do education with them to make sure that they have the correct notes. And you think of like what's a doctor's note and what's a prescription? And they're two very different things. And in our world they need to be very precise as far as what type of language is in there to make sure that those insurance companies are seeing what they need to see and saying, "Okay, we ruled out crutches because we need to get a wheelchair. Okay. If they don't mention it, we can't pay for it." The insurance companies can't. And we understand that, but patients, and even sometimes providers don't.

And so the education is a huge piece and we're able to do that because we are the same entity and we're just a different department and just streamlines everything. When you look at other places that you can get services and products that we have, there's a lot of same or similar product, but the service is really what sets people apart and what makes us as good as we are, I think.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, I was going to ask you that. The staff at the store are really customer service experts, financial insurance experts, great problem solvers. And they really take their job to help the patient to be part of that solution for their improved quality of life really seriously.

Matt Hayden: It's a very difficult process. I mean, we have really outstanding people who have been here for a long time and they know that process and the insurance. It's a moving target, insurance, and they're always changing the rules and the regulations, and we get a new president in, and then that changes the whole different landscape of just what Medicare or Medicaid is going to do. And that's our primary insurance source. And so we really take a close look at what they're doing. But to get to your point, the specialization of the product categories that our educated staff know of, it's crazy to me sometimes what they know. I'm learning something new every day and so are we. And that's the important part of making sure that we can take care of our patients because it's such a difficult

landscape to try to make sure that your current on from a knowledge standpoint.

And we do such a great job of it in my mind because our patients that were coming in, we're doing testimonials, we're asking them how the service was. And every time it's, "Hey, this has been such a great experience. I wish I would've known about you five years ago, three years ago." Whatever it might be because that service is at such a high level.

Katie Johnson: Yeah. We should mention too that you don't have to have a doctor tell you that you need something or a therapist. I mean this is a retail store that anyone can come in and buy something.

Matt Hayden: Yeah, absolutely. And you look at the ease of service of getting something maybe like online or at a big box store. And I'm just as guilty of that too for certain things. But when it comes to my health and it comes to the health of my loved ones, there's a certain amount of value in having the customer service, we'll put it that way, to answer questions. Right? Or if there's something wrong with the equipment, we repair it, we replace it free of charge, deliver it to your door, set it up for you, educate you on how to use it. All of these things that you can get the product, but you don't get the knowledge on how to use the product or the support on the back end. And I think that to me from a healthcare standpoint, that's worth more to me even maybe saving \$5 versus having all of the staff and the support that you can have from a retail standpoint, not to mention from a prescription standpoint sometimes.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, absolutely. We definitely want people to know that. We mentioned that there's been some changes happening around here. People who drive by the store might notice it used to say in partnership with Rice Home Medical Supply Store on the sign and that was part of the original partnership. But that's one of the things that's changing around here. Tell us what that means.

Matt Hayden: Yes, so Rice Home Medical was... and I'll give you the short version. Rice Home Medical is a DME company out of basically the Willmar area in multiple branches and they were owned by their hospital kind of like we are with Lake Region Healthcare. And then that hospital, Rice Memorial Hospital, was purchased by CentraCare. And CentraCare is an entity out of the St Cloud area. And that's as simple as that. Central Care bought Rice. And it's kind of a good thing, you think about resources and that's really where the conversation needs to go towards because the resources that we have available to us through our partnerships allow us to provide better service, better value to our patients from both a products and services standpoint, but also from a purchasing power standpoint. So we can pass those savings along to our patients and we can give them from a retail standpoint, like we just touched on, but also from a prescription standpoint, better products.

We can move, and we can groove, and we can do things at a higher level that allow us to be more nimble, more fluid, and really give a better service and better outcome to our patients and so that that relationship isn't going to change much as far as a resource standpoint. It's a different name, but it's basically the same component. We're going to be looking at how do we work with them to basically give us a better outcome for our patients while keeping in mind that we're very centered and focused on our community because we are Lake Region, but we can pull in those extra resources. So really it's just a win-win across the board.

Katie Johnson: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. They do provide us with great resources, that great buying power, like you said, and it's been just a win-win. Are there some new products, or services, or other things you've kind of got in the works of the story you want to let listeners know about too?

Matt Hayden: We're reintroducing our wound care program for negative pressure wound therapy and it's not too interesting for a common listener, but from a skilled nursing facility standpoint in the wound care centers, it's a pretty big deal. There's not a lot of opportunity outside of some of the traditional options and what we're going to be able to do from again, being able to service our patients the way we know we want to and having that ability to basically work really closely with our providers and make sure that we're doing things that they want us to do so that we can meet the needs of their patients.

That's a little bit more big picture, but we're also continuing to expand our CPAP and oxygen program, which is really exciting for more of the traditional listener because the new masks that we have, the new supplies, the programs that we have in place to make sure that patients are getting the supplies when they can and as soon as they can because the new equipment and the supplies replenishing is actually really beneficial from a health standpoint to the patient.

And we're also introducing portable oxygen concentrators. They're going to allow us to meet the needs of oxygen patients with portability that may not want to have the traditional tanks or E-tanks as they're called. The units aren't for everyone, but there's a limitation to the type of patient that's going to qualify from a liter flow perspective, but for the ones that do, it's going to make the world of difference. So that's really exciting for us and for a lot of the facilities around the area.

Katie Johnson: Oh, for sure. I know that you mentioned the CPAP and oxygen are a really big part of the business. Oh, when I walked around the store last time I was in, it really amazes me, the variety of things from the traditional canes, and crutches, and ankle braces, and ice packs to the scooters and the lift chairs. It really is impressive what diversity of supplies that are available to the public care.

Matt Hayden: That's a wide range definitely.

Katie Johnson: Yeah. So even if you don't need it, stop in and check it out so that you know what's available once you do need it, right? Anything else you want our listeners to know, Matt?

Matt Hayden: We're an extension of Lake Region, and so working with us is the same as working with our outstanding hospital and clinic. We have the service and patient care expectations that are consistent across all of our departments. We take care of our patients. It's never a simple transaction. It's a partnership truly in the pursuit of their health and wellbeing. And so if you're thinking about us, ask someone who maybe is already working with us, we separate ourselves through our service and taking care of our patients. And it's word of mouth too because they're going to be able to tell you just exactly how it is working with us.

I also want to mention that we have 24 hour on-call service. And so what that means is when a patient is let's say on oxygen and they for whatever reason, maybe they're just going on oxygen or they have something happened in the middle of the night on Christmas Eve at midnight, whatever it might be, we're there for you. 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year on-call service for the emergency service items that would include oxygen and so on. So that's important. It gives peace of mind too to a lot of people and we want to make sure that people know that we're here for them. And lastly, we're running a sale, so I want to make sure people know about it. Through July 12th, there's 20% off all walk aids, all scooters and power chairs, 20% off.

And so those are more commonly out of pocket, private pay, not insurance because here's a lot of things that aren't. Insurance companies want to give you the bare minimum and walk aids, and scooters, and power chairs, they kind of are in that gray area for do you truly need to? Do you truly not? But a lot of people truly do need it, but insurance companies don't see it that way. So it kind of falls into that basket of private pay. But this is a great time to be looking at it because like again, through July 12th, 20% off all walkie, and scooters, and power chairs. So the exciting time, we do a lot of sales throughout the year, so give us a call or stop in and talk to your provider about some things that might be available because again, we're always kind of changing and making sure that we're giving value back to the community in ways that we can save a little bit of money too.

Katie Johnson: Well, we are certainly very fortunate to have you and your team, part of the Lake Region Healthcare family offering medical supplies to our community here at Lake Region Home Medical Supply Store. Again, right on Lincoln Avenue by Fleet Farm, Premier Meats. I like that better than the actual address by the new thrifty white-

Matt Hayden: Yeah.

Katie Johnson: Yep. Right on that corner. So Matt Hayden, regional account manager, thanks for taking time to share all this information about the new and exciting things happening at the store and the great service that you do provide to our patients in our community.

Matt Hayden: Thank you for having me Katie.

Katie Johnson: Matt Hayden, regional account manager at Lake Region Home Medical Supply Store. My guest today on Apple a Day. Matt and Katie remind you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.