

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'm Katie Johnson, your host, and my guest today is Matt Hintz. He is a Physician Assistant who is joining the Lake Region Healthcare team of medical professionals in our emergency department, and we're here to introduce him to you this morning. Good morning, Matt.

Matt Hintz: Good morning, everyone.

Katie Johnson: Thank you so much for taking some time to introduce yourself to us and to our community as you get settled into your new role at Lake Region Healthcare. Like I said, we'd like to use this show to introduce new providers joining our team to the community. And, let's start by just telling our listeners a little bit about who you are, what's your background and your experience leading up to starting here at Lake Region?

Matt Hintz: Absolutely. I'm excited to be here. Well, I was born and raised in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, it's a small town of about 25,000 right in the middle of the state. I did my undergraduate education at Winona State University here in Minnesota and, then moved down to Atlanta, Georgia for PA school, which I completed in June. Prior to starting PA school, I worked as a CNA in Appleton, Wisconsin, both on a surgical floor and, then for a couple years as an emergency room technician.

Katie Johnson: Very cool. So, what led you to go to Georgia for PA school?

Matt Hintz: Kind of a crazy story. My best friend from college and his wife had moved down there after they got married, were getting ready to have their first child and so, they told me I should come check out the school and they'd give me free room and board in exchange for babysitting.

Katie Johnson: Oh wow.

Matt Hintz: Yeah. Unfortunately, right after I was accepted into PA school, they moved back to Minnesota.

Katie Johnson: So, you still ended up paying room and board.

Matt Hintz: Exactly. So, yes and I'm very grateful to have been there. I learned a lot and I got out of the cold winters for two years, so I can't complain about that.

Katie Johnson: Well, I was going to say I'm kind of surprised you came back, that you must not mind the cold too much.

Matt Hintz: Not at all. I miss having four seasons and it's just not Christmas or the holidays without a little bit of snow.

Katie Johnson: What about your choice to be a physician assistant? What inspired you to take that career path?

Matt Hintz: The biggest thing that inspired me to pursue those careers, I had some pretty big surgeries right after I finished undergraduate. And so, the first surgery I had, the doctor kind of rushed us in and out of the appointments. Nobody really knew what was going on. My parents were super confused, had no idea what was going on and it was all around an awful experience. And then, a couple months later I ended up needing a second surgery and the second surgeon was absolutely wonderful. Sat down with my parents and myself, thoroughly explained everything, answered all of our questions and even shared a couple meals with us while I was in the hospital.

Katie Johnson: What a difference.

Matt Hintz: Exactly. And it's definitely something that I am trying to mimic in my practice.

Katie Johnson: How about emergency medicine? What prompted you to choose that as your specialty?

Matt Hintz: Yeah. Emergency medicine's always been really interesting to me. I liked the variety of patients you get to see. You can be seeing a newborn infant who's having some trouble feeding, turn right around and see in the 80, 90 year old, it's always something different. It keeps you on your toes. And on top of that, I've always felt I work best under pressure. So, it gives me an opportunity to push myself and stay on top of current research and knowledge.

Katie Johnson: Well, I'm so thankful there are people like you that do work well in those situations. How about choosing Lake Region Healthcare as a place to start your practice? What prompted you to land here in Fergus Falls at Lake Region?

Matt Hintz: When I came in for my interview, I absolutely fell in love with the location. It's so beautiful here. All the lakes, so much to do. And, even better was everybody I met was so friendly and welcoming. I couldn't imagine a better place to start my practice and kind of find my way as a provider than in this kind of supportive community.

Katie Johnson: You've talked about this a little bit, but I always like to ask our providers, what is it that just really strikes you as some of the most important things about providing really high quality care? Because it's something that we do value so much here.

Matt Hintz: Absolutely. I mean, patients always have to come first. Without them, we wouldn't be here anyway. So, for me, the most important thing is establishing a relationship with my patients. I want to make sure all of your questions are answered. I want to make sure you understand, not only, what's going on, but why it's happening and why we're treating it the way we're treating it. And,

hopefully, by having those discussions, I can empower you to take responsibility for your own health and hopefully prevent you from having to come back to see me in the emergency room in the future.

Katie Johnson: And that's the ultimate goal, isn't it?

Matt Hintz: Absolutely.

Katie Johnson: How about when you're not working, what do you enjoy doing? What kind of hobbies and interests do you have?

Matt Hintz: So it's kind of a big joke that now that I'm finally done with school for the first time in my life after 20 some years, I'm slowly learning what I enjoy to do for fun again.

Katie Johnson: Nice. I can believe that.

Matt Hintz: But, for the most part, I enjoy doing anything active and outdoors. I love hunting, fishing. I'm attempting to learn how to golf. Not going so well, but-

Katie Johnson: Keep trying.

Matt Hintz: Exactly.

Katie Johnson: Yeah. Anything else that you would like our listeners to know about you, or about your practice philosophy as an emergency provider, as you settle in here in Fergus Falls and in the emergency department?

Matt Hintz: Nothing I can really think of. I guess for patients, the most important thing is if you're unsure or unclear about something, be sure to ask questions. We're here to help you and I don't know what you don't know, so go ahead and ask and I'll explain it.

Katie Johnson: That's a great point. I like that you shared that personal story of your experience and the difference it makes to have someone who really will take the time to listen. Who really does want you to ask good questions and be involved in your care, and that certainly will set you apart as a great provider. We're certainly glad to have you on the team. Welcome to Fergus Falls and welcome to Lake Region Healthcare.

Matt Hintz: Thank you. And, again, I'm so excited to be here and excited to see everybody.

Katie Johnson: Matt Hintz, Physician Assistant, joining the Lake Region Healthcare emergency department team of professionals here at Lake Region Healthcare, and my guest today on Apple A Day. Matt and Katie both reminding you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.