

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 and my guest today is Ellyn Hexum. She is a physician assistant who is joining the medical staff here at Lake Region Healthcare and might be a familiar face and name to many of you, but here to introduce her to our community and welcome her to the Lake Region Healthcare family this morning. Good morning, Ellyn.

Ellyn Hexum: Good morning, Katie.

Katie Johnson: Well, I'm so excited. I always enjoy the shows where we get to meet our new medical staff and get to know a little bit more about you, your background, and what you'll be doing at Lake Region Healthcare, so let's just start with that background. Tell us a little bit more about your education and experience before coming here to Lake Region Healthcare.

Ellyn Hexum: Yeah, so going all the way back, I'm originally from Fergus Falls. I was a CNA here through the end of high school and then through college a bit both at Pioneer Care and at Lake Region.

Katie Johnson: Nice.

Ellyn Hexum: And went to undergrad at NDSU where I studied microbiology and chemistry a little bit and tried to kind of tailor that towards medicine because I knew that I wanted to eventually practice medicine I just wasn't sure really where or what.

Katie Johnson: Okay.

Ellyn Hexum: So in undergrad I had the opportunity to shadow some providers at Lake Region. Again, that kind of steered me towards the direction that I went, which was ultimately towards PA school. I went to Augsburg University in St. Paul Minneapolis now.

Katie Johnson: Okay.

Ellyn Hexum: And did a lot of internal medicine and also dermatology in my clinical experience through that. And so, I'm really excited to be back here now having Lake Region be one of the things that sort of pushed me towards my ultimate career goal.

Katie Johnson: Oh, we always love to hear that when someone has an experience here that helps shape where they decide to practice medicine and how and then particularly when they decide to come back here and for you to come back home and do that. What was it in particular that interested you about pursuing a career in medicine?

Ellyn Hexum: I have always been interested in a career in medicine and it was just really nice to grow up in a community where Lake Region was a huge part of it with providers here that are so willing to help students like me sort of figure out what they want to do with their lives, why healthcare is really a good opportunity if that's something that you're interested in and just providers here that are willing to sort of take students like me under their wing. And I think having that initial drive to pursue a career in medicine combined with providers here that were willing to invest in students like me pursuing that goal was just really what I needed to get that final push through school and ultimately be back here doing what I love.

Katie Johnson: And do I remember correctly that you were one of the recipients of the Lake Region Healthcare Foundation Medical Profession Scholarships as well?

Ellyn Hexum: Yes, that's correct. I received one of those scholarships. Yeah, right when I started PA school, so that was it another huge way that the Lake Region Foundation helped me.

Katie Johnson: Oh, that's so great to hear. You mentioned that you have local roots, so many of our medical staff today have that in common. I'm sure you've found that as you've gotten to know them. What is it about coming back home to practice that was most appealing to you?

Ellyn Hexum: So number one, I'd say the people. Moving away and experiencing different communities sort of makes you realize how much you value your hometown community, at least that's how it was for me. Just the small town rural vibe and everybody's sort of caring for other people, looking out for other people wasn't always something that I experienced other places and I really value coming back. Also, I grew up coming to Lake Region also as a patient and that was really appealing just knowing what I was coming back to, knowing that I loved coming here when I was growing up. And also, it's just really nice to be home.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, yeah. You still have family here, right?

Ellyn Hexum: Yes, yes.

Katie Johnson: Nice to be close to them. You'll be working primarily in internal medicine as I understand, what is it about internal medicine that appealed to you as you kind of went through your education and career making decisions?

Ellyn Hexum: Yeah, definitely. So I really liked the primary care sort of all through school. I liked that I could see a variety of ages, variety of conditions, and really ultimately create a relationship with my patients. Seeing them so often and being able to see whole families was something that I really liked because I feel it's nice to be able to see people consistently through whatever their medical needs are to develop not only a medical relationship but also a personal relationship because I really want to treat the person and not just the condition

and I feel that developing those relationships was really valuable. Learned that a lot in school, learned that a lot just in life, so that's sort of what drew me towards internal medicine specifically. And yeah, I'm just really looking forward to doing that here. Just being able to take the time to learn about patients that want to come see me and that we can meet their medical goals together.

Katie Johnson: Sounds like a perfect fit with the real person centered care philosophy that Lake Region Healthcare embraces. I understand you're also going to be working some in dermatology. You mentioned that that was also part of your education and experience and that superstar we have in dermatology right now, Mary Bressler, I understand you've gotten to work with her a little bit. Tell us a little bit about what it is about dermatology that interests as well.

Ellyn Hexum: Yeah, absolutely. So Mary Bressler is a superstar.

Katie Johnson: Oh, I know it.

Ellyn Hexum: She's been great, great to work with and such an amazing teacher. She was actually a person that I shadowed in undergrad, so she kind of ignited that interest in dermatology. I didn't mention earlier, but I also worked as a scribe in dermatology after undergrad and prior to PA school where I worked with a Mohs Surgeon who also did general dermatology.

Katie Johnson: Okay.

Ellyn Hexum: I also really liked the procedural aspect of dermatology and really understand the importance of that growing up in communities where there is a lot of sun damage, there is a lot of skin cancer, a lot of people at lakes, a lot of people growing up on farms.

Katie Johnson: Right.

Ellyn Hexum: It's a really important area of medicine and it's just another area that I'd really like to develop relationships with my patients.

Katie Johnson: Awesome, that sounds great. Do you have any particular goals or interests as it relates to your practice areas of professional interests inside of internal medicine or dermatology that you especially want to focus on?

Ellyn Hexum: Yeah, so one of my goals with practicing internal medicine is a focus on preventative medicine. That's something that I feel is really important. If you can start off with good habits, good things, good health maintenance, feel free to see me for all of those questions as well, not just when problems arise.

Katie Johnson: Right.

- Ellyn Hexum: I feel that that's a very important thing and it's very important in internal medicine, family medicine, any area of medicine is ultimately prevention and I'm more than willing and love to have those conversations about how people can better their health and wellness.
- Katie Johnson: That's such a great approach to be proactive, right? Rather than reactive as much as we can with our health. What about when you're not working? What do you enjoy doing? Hobbies and interests?
- Ellyn Hexum: So I am so excited to be back in lakes country because that is something that I have really, really missed. Both my husband and I, he's from Fergus Falls as well ...
- Katie Johnson: Okay.
- Ellyn Hexum: ... and we feel like we've been a little lake deprived, so we're very excited. We love spending time at the Lake. We love spending time with family. We're both pretty avid campers, hikers, backpackers. We just love the outdoors, so we're really excited to be back in the area for that.
- Katie Johnson: Awesome. It sounds like a perfect fit. Anything else you'd like our listeners to know about you or that you'd like to share before we wrap up today?
- Ellyn Hexum: Yeah, I just want people to know that I'm really excited to be here and that I really want to get to know you and feel free to have conversations with me.
- Katie Johnson: Ellyn Hexum, a new provider, physician assistant working mainly in internal medicine, a little bit in dermatology as well here in our Fergus Falls Clinic at Lake Region Healthcare. So excited to welcome a local back home to practice medicine and be part of our medical staff here at Lake Region Healthcare. Thanks for joining me this morning, Ellyn.
- Ellyn Hexum: Thank you, Katie.
- Katie Johnson: Ellyn Hexum and Katie Johnson on Apple A Day today reminding you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.