

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, your host, and my guest today is Dr. Desiree Holzer. She is an emergency department physician, and she's the newest member of our medical staff here at Lake Region Healthcare. And I'm pleased to welcome her to Lake Region and introduce her to all of you this morning. Good morning, Dr. Holzer.

Dr. Desiree Holzer: Good morning. Thank you.

Katie Johnson: Thank you for taking some time to join me today. As I said, I'm excited to welcome you to the Lake Region Healthcare family and introduce you to our listeners. So let's just start by hearing a little bit about your background and getting to know you better. Where are you from originally and what is your career looked like leading up to arriving here at Lake Region Healthcare?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: I'm originally from Wheaton, Minnesota, which is west of here, very small community. I went to college in Grand Forks, North Dakota, as well as the Twin Cities and did medical school in Duluth and then back in the Twin Cities. I did residency in Rochester, New York at Strong Memorial Hospital, so I spent three years out there. When I finished, I came back to Minnesota to St. Cloud Hospital and it worked there for a two and a half years. And then I moved up to the Brainerd Lakes area and I've been there for five years. And now I'm coming back here closer to home, closer to family.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, very nice. So what was it that inspired you to pursue medicine and particularly emergency medicine?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: Pursuing medicine? I got interested back in high school. There wasn't a lot of job opportunities in a small community. And I started working at a nursing home as a certified nursing assistant, and watching the nurses and caring for the elderly, just very much interested me and kind of put me on that path. Emergency medicine in particular, I did not actually get interested in until later on in my medical school career. I had planned on becoming a pediatrician because I love working with kids and I still do, but when I rotated through the emergency departments at Regions Hospital and Hennepin County Medical Center, very busy ERs, and you got to see such a broad depth of cases. And it was just very exciting to see different things every day and not know what you're going to experience that day. And it was just a lot of fun.

Katie Johnson: Oh, I can imagine. When you got to this point in your career, what was it about a Lake Region Healthcare? You mentioned being closer to family. Are there other factors that made you just feel like this was the right fit for you right now?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: Yeah, there's a lot of things that brought us to this hospital. And one being closer to family. I have parents that live in the area. My husband went to college at Morehead and he loves hunting and fishing, and he's always wanted to come

back to this part of the state. He grew up in Southern Minnesota. And so that's another draw. Lake Region, in particular, really intrigues me because it's a small community hospital, it's an independent hospital and it's the type of workplace that I would enjoy working at.

Katie Johnson: The size of the hospital and the size of community that you're from, I would imagine offers you that opportunity to connect with people that you kind of live side by side with.

Dr. Desiree Holzer: Exactly. Yeah.

Katie Johnson: Yeah. Nice. You mentioned in the question prior about the broad depth of cases you see coming through an emergency room, and I can imagine that the range of knowledge that you need to know for all those things that you might encounter in the emergency room and having to think so quickly would be a major challenge. Is that part of what you like? What is it that you like most about the emergency setting?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: That is exactly what I like about it. I liked knowing, I'm not an expert. I feel I'm not an expert in any one thing. I have to know enough knowledge of so many different things to know how to start management and make the proper referrals. But seeing such that broad depth, it's exciting to have to know so much about so many different things. And it's a challenge to me that I really enjoy.

Katie Johnson: Right. What kinds of things do you do to stay current? Is it basically you kind of learn on the job or are there things that, as an emergency physician, you do to continue your education and your learning and your preparedness for the emergency room setting?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: Yeah. I do a lot of things when I'm on the job, if I see a case that I'm not real familiar with, then I will spend some time reading a little bit more about the management of that, just kind of reminding myself of how to work this up, how to recognize it, how to treat it. And then we do continuing medical education and oftentimes I'll choose courses that are either very intriguing to me or something that I just feel like I could use a little extra education on. And then I read about things sometimes in my spare time as well, just to keep up to date.

Katie Johnson: Sure. You're joining Lake Region Healthcare, and obviously it's not unique to our organization, but at a very unique time in history. I'm wondering what you have seen in your experience or what your perspectives are on this idea that people are avoiding seeking care when they need it, and sometimes emergency care, because they're afraid. They're afraid of encountering the virus when they get to the facility or they're just unsure, extra cautious. So as a physician practicing at this time in history, just what are your thoughts or your advice to people who might be feeling that way about seeking care, either routine preventative care or emergency care?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: Yeah, we do see that. And especially early on in this COVID crisis, I saw several patients that should have come in weeks ago and didn't, and some of them didn't have great outcomes. And my advice to people is that we have to be cautious and healthcare settings, especially, are being cautious and we're using precautions. We're washing hands, we're using hand sanitizer, we're using masks, we're cleaning rooms, so we're taking those cautions so that we can take care of people appropriately. And I don't want people to stay at home because they're afraid of it, especially those with chronic medical problems or the elderly. They stay home too long and then sometimes it's too late. I've also seen people that need to be hospitalized for things like chest pain or blood clots, and they're afraid to stay in the hospital. And so then they go home and they're putting themselves even at higher risk because they're not seeking that proper medical care.

Katie Johnson: Right. And I think what you said is so true, we are taking the precautions. Even before COVID, we're around infectious disease all the time. And we do know, and we've learned so much about COVID and adjusted our practices as needed. So really want to just echo what you said that you can avoid a second crisis by, by getting care on time. You're also in one of the most challenging and susceptible areas when it comes to COVID and exposure as a health care worker. How are you finding yourself dealing with that stress or do you find that an extra stress?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: I do. I do. You know, I think things have gotten a little bit less stressful now that it's been around, it's not quite as new, but it's still a very new disease that we just don't know enough about. Early on in the crisis, we were quarantining ourselves. I would go to work and that was kind of all that I did. My husband was taking extra precautions because that I have those potential exposures. My kids were also, we were kind of isolating ourselves from family and friends because we didn't want to put others at risk, and that's definitely stressful. It's nice to see things opening up and that we're doing more things outside with this warm weather, but it's definitely stressful, but I think that we're using the precautions that we need.

We wear masks when we go out and public, use hand sanitizer and keep our six feet distance so that we could still of our lives.

Katie Johnson: Right. And that's so important. I think that we all figure out how to live our lives, experience the mental health benefits of living our life going forward. Summer, you mentioned is a helpful time in terms of being able to get outside and get active, but oftentimes that also means more trips to the emergency room. Summer can be a busy time for accidents and emergencies in general. What are some of the most common reasons that you've seen as an emergency room physician that causes these visits in the summer in Minnesota? And what kind of advice might you have for listeners to maybe avoid that?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: I think the biggest uptake that I see, especially in the Lakes Region is accidents, boating accidents, swimming accidents, falls, car accidents, because everybody's out and about, and oftentimes these are alcohol related. So avoiding drinking if you're driving the boat, avoiding drinking and driving in general and wearing your seatbelt. Make sure your kids are wearing their seatbelts, just make smart choices.

Katie Johnson: Right, right. It's it should be common sense, but there's something about summer and just the extra activity and I think maybe in particular, after we were cooped up from quarantine, just the anticipation of being out and about, it's a good reminder to pause and make good decisions. What about you when you're not working? What are your hobbies? What do you and your family enjoy doing?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: We love the outdoors. We go out and play at the beach with the kids. We go for walks, take the kids on bike rides. My favorite pastime is just to be outside in the summertime and we are soaking up the sun.

Katie Johnson: It's a great summer for that. Anything else you'd like us to know about you or about your practice at Lake Region Healthcare, as you prepare to join the emergency team here?

Dr. Desiree Holzer: I'm really excited to be here. I can't wait to get started. I can't wait to become a part of this community. We recently made the big move here and we are already enjoying the lakes in this area. And I just look forward to being here.

Katie Johnson: We are so excited to welcome you to Lake Region Healthcare, Dr. Desiree Holzer. She is an emergency room physician joining the Lake Region Healthcare emergency department, and worth a mention to our listeners that we really have a full scope of emergency providers here now that are local. We used to have to contract out some of our emergency room coverage, but it's really reassuring to know that the full team is here, living here, invested in your community, caring for you as neighbors. And that's one thing that I'm extremely proud of at Lake Region Healthcare to be able to say that, so welcome to the team. Thanks for being part of that crucial component of a strong, independent healthcare system, having a good emergency room and that excellent trauma care for patients and families when they need it.

So welcome again, Dr. Desiree Holzer, emergency physician, the newest member of our medical staff here at Lake Region Healthcare. Thanks for joining me today.

Dr. Desiree Holzer: Thank you. Thanks for having me.

Katie Johnson: Dr. Holzer 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.