

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region's Healthcare Health and Wellness program 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 Kyle Richards, CEO at Lake Region Healthcare.

As we are here at the New Year taking time to pause, look back, and look forward to 2019. Thanks for joining me this morning, Kyle.

Kyle Richards: Great. Thank you for having me, Katie. I look forward to talking about a little bit year in review and what's to come.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, it's always nice to pause and do that. So, first maybe looking back on 2018, from your perspective, what stands out to you? Major changes or accomplishments at Lake Region Healthcare in 2018?

Kyle Richards: Yeah, I think there's quite a bit of things that stand out to me as far as Lake Region Healthcare is concerned. Obviously have some new folks in the picture here and been a wonderful addition to our team members here at Lake Region Healthcare and at Prairie Ridge as well. And having that connection with Prairie Ridge and working with them some more integrated-wise. I think from my perspective as well, we've increased our patient experience scores a little bit here this last year. That was one of those that we're very excited about and we're going to continue that patient experience score looking at not only a score, but how do we treat patients and families and their experience here at Lake Region Healthcare. So, we'll be exploring that a little bit more in the upcoming year.

In the past year as well we've done the community wellness challenge. So, we partnered with our community for health and wellness not only with community wellness challenge, but we've done the corporate cup. We've done the Lake Region Run. Some of those types of things, so really partnering with our community there.

We are very excited about some of the accreditations we received. We received an American College of Radiation Oncology accreditation in March and along with the quality oncology practice initiative we're only one of a handful of institutions that have both of those accreditations at the same time for our oncology and cancer center over at our cancer center area. So, that's a huge accomplishment that not many people can say and they've done just an outstanding job over there getting those two pieces of accreditations together.

We've also done from a provider standpoint, ED providers. We've got our full slate of our internal employed from Lake Region Medical Group. Partnering with them. So, it's just been a wonderful addition to see all those providers coming into play and having our own compliment of providers there. So, they're familiar

with us. They're familiar with our community and our patients and so providing that a little extra care down there as well.

Along with so many other things that we can be proud of at Lake Region Healthcare and working hard with our staff and our employees to really further the mission of Lake Region Healthcare.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, those are all great highlights to patients I think. They maybe don't necessarily understand how difficult it is to staff an emergency room and how much we have had to rely on people coming in from other agencies to help us fill that need and to be able to fully staff an emergency department with our own employed providers, that's a big deal to people who end up in the emergency room.

Kyle Richards: Yeah, exactly. I mean, just from providers, like I said, knowing who you are when you come in, living in the community, understanding what needs are out there, what we can accomplish here, and also partnering with those outside that you know, if you need a higher level of care, what resources are available? What can we do locally here, but also what resources are available out there? So, it's a really big deal that we have those providers that are really connected to our community, and I think that's been a really big change. We'll see more big changes in the ED as well in the upcoming months.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, and those are obviously some of the big recruits that we've made in the past year, but we've added a lot of new providers in 2018. Tell me a little bit more about who's joined the team in terms of medical staff.

Kyle Richards: Yeah, definitely. Our provider recruitment staff, Brittany and Luke, are doing an outstanding job of recruiting providers. We have Dr. Dari Orandi in allergy and immunology that has come in and he's doing some really nice work there, some telehealth work there as well. We have our pediatrician, Dr. Kaushik, has joined as well to replace, and you can't ever replace Dr. Mangnuson, but to take the step in that area as well. So, just having that pediatrician come on board. Rebecca Basil, a family nurse practitioner, coming on board as well. Dr. Lindgren in the emergency department coming on board. Alana Deutschlander in the walk-in clinic and she's filled in a couple other areas too. Dr. Andre Genereux, internal medicine. He's doing an outstanding job in our internal medicine department.

Then down at Prairie Ridge. We have Susie Berg and Tim Hovde down at Prairie Ridge, nurse practitioners down there. Then we have Julia Hoffman joining at Prairie Ridge in the Morris location and several other areas, so we're excited about all those providers joining us in the past year. So, we look forward to many more joining us in the upcoming year as well.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, do you have any of the 2019 recruits that you're reading to kind of reveal might be joining our team in the new year?

Kyle Richards: Yes, definitely. You know, one of the areas that we're excited with is Dr. Tahir from neurology will have neurologists on board. So, it's a new service line for Lake Region Healthcare that you may be able to stay right here locally from a neurology standpoint.

Katie Johnson: That's fantastic.

Kyle Richards: Yeah, so we're really excited about that. We also have in our emergency department area, we have two PAs, physician assistants, that will be coming in, Matt Hintz and Cynthia Olson. They'll be joining the emergency room department to be able to have a better flow and access to patients. So, hopefully speed, the through put time for patients in seeing a provider when they want to really see them, because you never know what's out there from an ED standpoint that will come through the doors, and unfortunately some people may have to wait a little bit longer, and that's just because somebody else in the ED is really sick and needs the attention of that provider, that doctor right there and so you may have to wait a little bit longer, but we're hoping with the two new physician assistants that you won't have to wait as long in our emergency department there.

We have Dr. Nyman coming on board from a radiology standpoint, a radiologist, great radiologist coming on board. Dr. Schnurerr from pediatrics, another pediatrician coming on board.

Katie Johnson: Great.

Kyle Richards: So, we're excited to have her. Then Dr. Mabanta, radiation-oncology joining with Dr. Barnes in that field as well and having some overlap there. Just a lot of new recruits coming on board. We've got some other ones that I can't really reveal yet, but they are coming and we're really excited to have those folks come aboard as well.

Katie Johnson: So, why is recruitment such an important part of the growth and the planning at Lake Region Healthcare? And maybe if you could shed a little bit of light on how you decide who to recruit and what the community does need in terms of medical providers.

Kyle Richards: Yeah, we work with the Lake Region Medical Group. Really partner with them, and we go out and we have a look at our data. So, what positions, what specialties do we need? What things that are patients are wanting to experience here to stay locally? So, we look at that. We look at other input from the community. So, we really focus in on our data and what that's telling us, and then trying to provide those providers, those physicians out there that we think

will complement the providers that are already here. Making sure that we have access to providers is a big thing for us as well so that people can really get that if they need somebody to come on board and say, "I need a doctor's appointment today." And really having that. So, we look at our data from that perspective as well.

So, all those things coming together, we tie that all together and we make a plan. We make a plan for the upcoming year, and subsequent years and say, "You know, these are the providers that we're going to recruit or try to recruit." It's a tough field out there to recruit providers, 'cause there's so much demand for physicians out there right now across the country. So, we're really working to try to get some really great providers in town and making sure that we provide that specialty services and primary care services to our patients and communities.

Katie Johnson: And if our listeners are ever wondering what areas we're recruiting for, we have a page on our website that kind of lists the specialties that we're currently actively recruiting for and we love your help. You know, if you have family members or acquaintances that you know, maybe people that want to eventually move back to the area, we take local help for recruitment, right?

Kyle Richards: Exactly. We do. Any information you can provide to us, you know somebody that's going to medical school would be a great person to come back. We've gotten some great individuals to join our group, and our program, a real physician program, that we have here. We've signed the last five, I think, RPAP students on board and so they're not going to be here tomorrow, but they're going to be here in the future. So, we really look at that and we really screen our providers to make sure we get the best providers we possibly can here.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, absolutely. We've talked a little bit about the providers at Prairie Ridge and you mentioned that integration that happened a few years ago that's really broadened the reach of our service area. How's that impacting the growth and our ability to recruit and really be competitive in a pretty broad region of Minnesota?

Kyle Richards: Yeah, with Prairie Ridge and our partnership we like to say, "Stronger Together." That's really what it is, stronger together and being able to provide specialties back and forth, being able to provide coverages back and forth has been a good thing. Our partnership with Lake Region Medical Group with those providers as well has been really outstanding and having that sort of broad specialty and broad reach that we can now provide with our specialty services, we have outreach services that go out to Prairie Ridge on a regular basis and so that's one of those areas that I think "stronger together" really sums it up and being stronger together in the future, now and in the future.

Katie Johnson: And speaking of expanding our reach. We dipped our toes into telehealth a little bit in the past year in a couple of areas. You mentioned one. Do you foresee that expanding in our future?

Kyle Richards: You know, the telehealth program, we will probably be seeing that expand actually in the future. A lot of providers are interested in it and I think we'll be able to see that expand in several different areas that we're looking at. Right now we have it in psychiatry and Dr. Orandi's doing some things in allergy and immunology. I think it's gonna just expand for us, and you're gonna see much more growth in that area as far as telehealth is concerned on a lot of different fronts, whether you're trying to see a primary provider or not, we're going to be exploring some of those options in the upcoming year.

Katie Johnson: It's going to be exciting to see. What about other things on the horizon for 2019? When you look at what our patients and communities might be interested as you look into the crystal ball for the new year, what do you see?

Kyle Richards: Yeah, there's lots of things that are coming up in the new year. I think one of the things that we'll see is our patient-centered model journey developing. We're really focusing on that patient-centered model trying to make sure that the patients' and family experience Lake Region like they've never experienced before. It's gonna be really a great journey. It's nothing that you can say, "Today we're going to start and tomorrow we're gonna finish." It's nothing like that. It's a journey that's going to last and continue on for many, many years to come, and I'm really excited to see that.

We have some new services that are going to be coming in 2019, and so like I mentioned, neurology and some of the others, we have podiatry with the nail care services, easy for me to say. Nail care services and we also have the wellness challenge coming up again this year. So, partnering with that community as well in the wellness challenge and just partnering in the community in several different areas too. I think we're gonna see a lot of things developing in 2019 and I'm really excited to see how that develops.

Katie Johnson: Well, we definitely are too and we'll be talking a lot more about that community health challenge starting next week as we begin the sign-ups and January 14th the official kickoff date for the 2019 Challenge. So, Kyle, thanks for taking time to look back and look forward about all the exciting things happening at Lake Region Healthcare. We appreciate your time and your leadership in healthcare in making it the best it can be in this community.

Kyle Richards: Great. Thank you so much, Katie. I look forward to partnering with the community in 2019.

Katie Johnson: Happy New Year to you all from Kyle Richards and Katie Johnson, both reminding you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.

