

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 Dr. Luke Holkup. He is a general surgeon and one of the newest members of our medical staff, and he's joined us today to let us help the community get to know him a little bit better. So thanks for taking some time to visit with us, Dr. Holkup.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Thanks for having me.

Katie Johnson:

You bet. As we like to do on Apple A Day, we take this time to just get to know the new providers who've joined our medical group and introduce them to our community. So to start off, just tell us a little bit more about your background, perhaps your education and training up to joining Lake Region Healthcare's Medical Group.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Okay. I grew up originally in Wahpeton, North Dakota, and moved away from there in 2007. I went to Concordia College in Moorhead and in four years I received my undergraduate degree in chemistry and a minor in biology. After that, I took a year off before applying to medical school and decided to work and learn how to become an adult, learn how to pay bills and just to learn how to work because up to that point, I had been a student. So I worked as a CNA at a nursing home in Fargo for two years before applying to medical school. I ended up going to medical school at UND, the University of North Dakota up in Grand Forks, and completed my four years there in 2016. I matriculated into general surgery residency also through UND in 2016 and finished in June of 2021.

Katie Johnson:

That is awesome. I'm really interested to hear what you think about that time that you spent as a CNA and how that maybe prepared you or shaped your decision where you wanted to go with medicine from there.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Yeah. I knew I wanted to go into the medical field, I knew I wanted to go to medical school. But that really gave me a chance to get to know patients at a nursing home at a very intimate level sometimes.

Katie Johnson:

Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

It really introduced me to the medical field and how to communicate and interact with patients, so I think it was an invaluable experience, and I really enjoyed it.

Katie Johnson:

Oh, that's awesome. So what was it about general surgery that made you specifically choose that path?

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Well, it's interesting. Even going back before medical school, nothing was really a straight line like it always ends up looking. Why I chose general surgery, actually, originally I wanted to do family practice, but in my shadowing opportunities, I met a good role model who I really thought I wanted to aspire to be like. So it was actually one individual that kind of pushed me into general surgery, and I ended up really liking it. So it was all kind of a happy accident, really.

Katie Johnson:

That's a really cool testament to how much impact one person can have-

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Yeah.

Katie Johnson:

... when we think about the mentors in our lives and how we can be mentors to others as well.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Exactly.

Katie Johnson:

I know that you've been talking to Lake Region Healthcare and Lake Region Medical Group for a while, and this partnership has been in the works. What was it during that interview process that made Fergus Falls or this organization a good fit for you and you decided to join the group?

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Well, I started interviewing for general surgery positions in my third year of residency so about halfway through, and I actually interviewed at a couple of other places before here. But after I interviewed here, I kind of stopped and knew where I wanted to go. I mean, it's close to my hometown, but it's not my hometown. But it's a small community and it's the place that I've always kind of wanted to serve. So I always felt very welcomed here right away, even from my first site visit and, like I said, I think it just checks off all my boxes as to what I was looking for in a career.

Katie Johnson:

That's awesome. Let's talk a little bit more about the types of procedures you'll be doing here. Can you expound on that for us, what that might include and what the range might be?

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Oh, in terms of what procedures I'll be doing as a general surgeon, really, you can do anything from head to toe, as long as it's not sub-specialized like brain surgery or heart surgery. But I got really good training through UND. I completed almost twice the number of procedures in my residency that are required to finish a general surgery program so I'm very well-trained in a number of different things. But as a general surgeon, I will focus on endoscopy and general surgery procedures, what we call bread-and-butter procedures like hernias, gallbladders, emergency surgery, trauma to some extent as well, but really it's

going to be a pretty broad practice. So if you have a problem, I'm willing to take a listen and see what I can do to help.

Katie Johnson:

Sure. Do you have a favorite procedure? Is that a crazy question for a surgeon?

Dr. Luke Holkup:

I don't know if it's a crazy question. That gets asked a lot. I don't know if there's one procedure in particular that I enjoy the most, but I think the most fulfilling ones are a surgery or a procedure where I can make somebody feel better and both of us get immediate gratification right off the bat. Because that's the whole point of doing what we do as a surgeon or any kind of a doctor is we want people to feel better, so getting people better quick is kind of what is most fulfilling to me.

Katie Johnson:

That definitely makes sense. Could you share a little bit more about your practice philosophy, what's important to you as a physician, as you think about the people that you're serving and how you do that?

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Well, one of the biggest things that I think about when I'm taking care of patients is I understand that when you come in to see me, this is the first time that, or potentially the first time, or you have limited experience with that problem, and a lot of people are nervous or scared to come in and see the doctor. I guess my philosophy is I want you to feel comfortable and I went through 13 years of training in total, so I can do what I do. So just because you don't see it every day, and I may see it every day, I want you to feel like you understand what's going on from your perspective.

Katie Johnson:

That's definitely reassuring to the patient, I'm sure. For a patient that is preparing for surgery, do you have any advice about maybe good questions that they can ask to make sure their surgeon or their care team is helping to ensure that they are well-prepared for surgery? Obviously, assuming it's not emergency surgery.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Well, when we're preparing for surgery, like I said, I think it's very important that as a patient that you ask questions and try to get an overall understanding from your side and get all your questions answered. It's always good to ask about what can I expect after surgery? Because a lot of people go into surgery thinking is this going to be successful or not, but they don't always think about what should I expect afterwards. That's one thing that I really try to communicate with people is what the expectations going forward. But those are always the questions that seem to be maybe not missed, but not expounded upon enough. So I think that in preparing for surgery, obviously, ask questions about the procedure and what the problem is, but try to ask questions about what can I expect going forward because that's what's, in my mind, pretty important.

Katie Johnson:

I think that's really good insight, setting the expectation, realistic expectations for what to expect, and also what your part is in successful recovery and healing is really a good point.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Correct.

Katie Johnson:

How about when you're not working, what is it that you enjoy doing outside of medicine?

Dr. Luke Holkup:

That's kind of a funny question because over the last five years of residency, there was no free time.

Katie Johnson:

You've got to learn how to find some new hobbies!

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Yeah. No, I grew up playing many different sports, so I think that just being outside and being competitive and playing sports is something I've always liked to do. I always like trying new things when it comes to that as well. I just recently married the love of my life a couple of months ago.

Katie Johnson:

Oh, congratulations.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Thank you. I had to throw her into this, too. If I get free time, I like to spend it with her, and we like to do things like travel, time permitting. She's also a physician, so sometimes it can be difficult. But just getting home and spending time with her. And now that I'm out of residency, hopefully I have time to spend more time with family and friends that are in the area as well.

Katie Johnson:

Absolutely. I'm sure your family is happy to have you back close to home as well.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

Yeah.

Katie Johnson:

Yeah. That's a good thing. Anything else you'd like us to know about you or your practice at Lake Region Healthcare?

Dr. Luke Holkup:

I'm very happy to be here, and I'm very happy to be able to serve a community like that, that I grew up in. I'm just so happy to be here and to be a part of this community. I'm really looking forward to it.

Katie Johnson:

This transcript was exported on Oct 27, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Well, we are certainly happy to have you here as well, Dr. Luke Holkup, a Wahpeton native coming back home and serving in the general surgery department here at Lake Region Healthcare. Thanks so much for taking some time to join us and welcome. We're glad you're here.

Dr. Luke Holkup:

I'm happy to be here. Thank you so much.

Katie Johnson:

Dr. Luke Holkup and Katie Johnson on Apple A Day today reminding you there's so much to do here, stay healthy for it. Have a great day.