

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 Matt Ecker. He is a family nurse practitioner and one of the newest members of our medical staff here to reintroduce himself to our organization and our community. Good morning, Matt.

Matt Ecker: Good morning, Katie. Thanks for having me.

Katie Johnson: Well, thanks for joining us, and like I said, reintroduced because we're welcoming you back to Lake Region Healthcare in a new capacity. Tell our listeners a little bit about your history and your background.

Matt Ecker: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I am coming back. I started out here as an LPN, worked my way up to an RN, got my BSN, I think it was about seven years I spent here, six, seven years prior to moving down to Rochester.

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Great. And what was it that made you decide to want to take your career to the next level and become a family nurse practitioner?

Matt Ecker: You work within a team of healthcare providers when you're working in a hospital, working in a clinic, and just the idea of being able to kind of help drive medical care was really interesting to me. And the challenge of learning something new.

Katie Johnson: Sure. Tell us a little bit more about your background. You're originally from Fergus, is that right?

Matt Ecker: That's correct. Well, seventh grade, I moved here back when I was 13.

Katie Johnson: Okay.

Matt Ecker: So yeah, I consider it home, absolutely.

Katie Johnson: Nice.

Matt Ecker: We came from Maple Grove, moved up here and I went through high school here. Spent most of my younger working years here so I certainly do consider Fergus home.

Katie Johnson: Fergus is home. So welcome back home. What is it about coming back to Lake Region Healthcare that was important to you? You were in a good place in Rochester as well, but besides coming home, what is it about Lake region healthcare and becoming a member of the medical staff here that interested you?

- Matt Ecker: Honestly, rural medicine, we serve certainly a rural population, that's always been close to my heart.
- Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Matt Ecker: Rochester Mayo was great. It was a huge facility. I learned a lot. But coming back to the community I grew up in, the people that I grew up with, and being able to work with this population was really important to me.
- Katie Johnson: Now, you're going to be working mostly at the Walk-in Clinic from what I understand. I mean, that's kind of a whole different kind of care in itself as well. What is it about working in that setting and with that team that you're most looking forward to, and maybe what do you see as the important elements of providing good care in a walk-in clinic setting?
- Matt Ecker: I'm looking forward to the walk-in because there's a diverse group of people that you see every day. You never quite know what's going to walk in through the door, anything from a simple cough to something that we end up having to send to the ER.
- Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Matt Ecker: Every patient's different, every day is different and that variety is really important to me, something that I'm really looking forward to. The other aspect of the walk-in is you're not a primary care provider for these individuals so you really have just this onetime shot to see a patient, see somebody, talk to them and really kind of help push them into doing the things that are good for their health.
- Katie Johnson: Right. You're right, it is a unique opportunity to kind of be there at one moment in time and really make a difference in that person's life for that moment in time. Do you have any particular areas of medical interests as you've kind of developed throughout your career?
- Matt Ecker: My favorite has always been emergency medicine. When I worked as an RN here, I spent I think a majority of my time here working in the emergency department.
- Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Matt Ecker: And I absolutely developed a love for that setting. And the urgent care I think is going to kind of help fill that need for me.
- Katie Johnson: Absolutely. It takes a special kind of person who can really think on their feet and be ready to pivot and change with, like you said, whatever happens to come through the door.

- Matt Ecker: Yeah, that's exactly right. You have to be willing to adapt what you're doing. You have to be willing to adapt your day to whatever walks through the door. Nursing, there's just so many niche fields and everybody kind of finds their place and I feel like emergency medicine, urgent care is my place.
- Katie Johnson: Well, we're certainly glad that you chose Lake Region to be your place to do that. What about when you're not working? What are the things that you enjoy doing in your spare time?
- Matt Ecker: Well, when I'm not going to school?
- Katie Johnson: Yeah, that'll be a change for you, huh?
- Matt Ecker: It will be. It will be. I've got four kids I love spending time with, a great wife that takes care of them, takes good care of me, thankfully, but really just spending time with them is my goal going forward. They really have been very supportive for the last 10 years of constant school and change. So I'm looking forward to just settling down and having a nice gentle schedule so that I can spend time with them.
- Katie Johnson: Sure. And being closer to some other family, I would imagine too, they're probably glad to be welcoming you and your family back home too?
- Matt Ecker: Yeah, they're pretty excited. My whole family is here. It puts us closer to my wife's parents. We are leaving my brother in law and his family, which is, it's sad.
- Katie Johnson: Sure.
- Matt Ecker: But this'll be a good change. This will be a very good change and a good place to be.
- Katie Johnson: Great. Anything else that you'd like our listeners to know about you or the practice that you'll be having out at the walk-in clinic?
- Matt Ecker: Other than I'm just excited to be here, I really thank Lake Region for allowing me to be a part of their community and I'm just looking forward to helping the people in our community here.
- Katie Johnson: Nice to have you on the show this morning and to welcome you back to Lake Region Healthcare and to our walk-in clinic and to the medical staff here. Matt Ecker, again, the newest member of our medical staff, a family nurse practitioner working at our walk-in clinic on the West side of Fergus Falls. Matt, thanks for joining me this morning and again welcome back.
- Matt Ecker: Thank you, Katie.

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Katie Johnson: Matt Ecker 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.