

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 Kayla Villagomez. She is our newest family nurse practitioner, newest member of the medical staff here at Lake Region Healthcare, working mainly alongside our new neurologist, Dr Reglan. So good morning, Kayla.

Kayla Villagomez: Good morning. Thanks for having me.

Katie Johnson: Thanks for joining me. I'm excited to introduce you to our listeners, help them get to know you a little bit better, get a little bit more information out about our neurology services as well, which we're very excited about. But to start out with, let's just introduce listeners to you a little bit more so that they can learn a little bit more about your background and experience prior to starting here at Lake Region Healthcare.

Kayla Villagomez: Okay. Well, I've been in the healthcare field for many years, going on I guess 13 years as an RN, and I started off as a CNA when I was 16. I worked at nursing homes and then I graduated from M State, Fergus Falls in 2007. And went on to get my BSN through Moorhead MSUM. And I worked at the hospital here for eight years, primarily in the float pool for the first five years, and then in the women and children's health unit for the last three years.

Kayla Villagomez: So I did do some work at NDSCS too as a lab and simulation specialist, where I was working with primarily LPN students, but some RN students too, and some paramedic students. And then I did work as an RN at Pelican Valley Health Center in Pelican Rapids too before I came here.

Katie Johnson: So a long history of an interest in medicine, obviously. What prompted you to pursue that as your career path and particularly to go on to further your education and getting your family nurse practitioner degree?

Kayla Villagomez: Well, I always knew that I wanted to be in the nursing field. So when I was I think ninth grade I took a careers class and I knew I wanted to be a nurse. My mom worked in the nursing field too. So I wanted to help people. It was as simple as that, I wanted to help people. And then as I advanced my work experience in nursing, I realized how many ways we can help our patients. So I developed those skills a little bit, became a little bit more confident, a little bit more independent.

Kayla Villagomez: And then I kept revisiting the idea to go back for my Advanced Practice degree, and eventually I got to a point where I thought it was just time to go for it. And I'm very glad that I made that decision. I was able to do most of my clinicals here at Lake Region. So it's been great.

Katie Johnson: That is great. So what was it that made you decide once you achieved that Advanced Practice degree that you wanted to come back to Lake Region?

- Kayla Villagomez: Well, I'm very familiar with the facility and the way things are run and the staff, and it's just an ideal transition for me into that new role as a nurse practitioner.
- Katie Johnson: Well, it's certainly great to have you back. As we mentioned, you're going to be working primarily with one of our newest physicians, Dr. James Ragland. He is a neurologist and we're so excited to be offering neurology services for the first time here. Can you help us talk a little bit more about some of the common neurological conditions that you and Dr. Ragland expect to address in the practice here at Lake Region Healthcare? And maybe also why neurology is a particular interest to you.
- Kayla Villagomez: Okay. Yeah, so we'll be seeing patients with a variety of neurological complaints or disorders, patients with migraines, MS, seizure disorders, dementia, movement disorders like tremors and Parkinson's Disease and a multitude of other neurological disorders or issues.
- Kayla Villagomez: I'm interested in neurology because I think it's just a very challenging, exciting specialty. And I'm really intrigued by the various different complaints that we're going to see and how we're going to have to piece the pieces together to come up with an ICD diagnosis for the patients.
- Katie Johnson: And from what I've heard of Dr. Ragland so far, what a great mentor to learn with and alongside.
- Kayla Villagomez: He really is. He's very knowledgeable. Yes.
- Katie Johnson: Yeah, he brings so much experience. I think I read in your bio that you're originally from Pelican Rapids. You have an interest in your bio that you mentioned in cultural diversity, and a certification as an English Spanish translator. I'd be interested to hear more about how this came about, and why this cultural diversity is a particular interest of yours also.
- Kayla Villagomez: Yes. Well, I did grow up pretty much in Pelican Rapids, so I grew up with a lot of friends from different cultures. I grew up hearing different languages spoken all the time. On a daily basis I would hear Spanish, Russian, Bosnian, Laotian, Korean and Somalian, and a bunch more that I can't even list.
- Katie Johnson: Sure.
- Kayla Villagomez: So it was very intriguing to me, interesting to me to get to know some of my friends, a little bit about their background and what's different than my background. And it was just a lot of fun. So I picked up on Spanish language pretty much from my friends and classmates and then watching movies in Spanish and reading and listening to music. And eventually I did go to college and studied Spanish also. But I have a real interest in other cultures and other languages, so sometimes I'll try to learn different languages. So pretty much just minor random phrases like, "I love you," or, "Go to sleep."

- Katie Johnson: Oh, sure.
- Kayla Villagomez: Important phrases.
- Katie Johnson: That's great. You also mentioned in your bio, a goal of increasing mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Two such important topics. Why are these areas of special interest to you? And maybe some of the ways that you initially hope to work towards accomplishing this goal in your practice here?
- Kayla Villagomez: Yes. Thank you for this topic up. It is very important topic. Statistics are showing us that we need to pay attention to mental health a little bit more, and that's across the age continuum. It's not just in adolescence, but especially in adolescence where we're seeing rates of depression, anxiety and suicide go up significantly. So I guess initially I'd like to start just promoting that dialogue with my patients, with my coworkers, with my friends and community members. And I think that's where it needs to start, you know?
- Katie Johnson: Yeah. I think you're absolutely right. The more that we just make that a normal part of our conversations with our healthcare providers, with our coworkers, with our friends, with our family. Just the more aware we all will be, and the more we can all feel more comfortable breaking down those stigmas and really making real differences in people's lives. So I appreciate that that's a priority for you. What about when you're not working? What do you enjoy doing, your hobbies and activities outside of work?
- Kayla Villagomez: Yeah, well I like being with my family, so I like just spending time with them, being outside, going to the sporting events, reading sometimes when there is time for that.
- Katie Johnson: Yeah, exactly.
- Kayla Villagomez: Yeah, that's pretty much it.
- Katie Johnson: Great. Anything else that you'd like our listeners to know about you before we wrap up this morning?
- Kayla Villagomez: Yes, I will be doing one week a month in primary care up on third floor. I will be seeing patients for walk-in type complaints, so if they've got a cold or a sore foot, walk-in type complaints.
- Katie Johnson: Oh great, that should make your schedule extremely interesting getting to spend time both in neurology, which I should make sure that our patients know where that is too. Neurology is on first floor?
- Kayla Villagomez: Yes, correct.

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Katie Johnson: Okay, so neurology first floor in the clinic with Dr. Raglan three weeks out of the month, and then some time up on third floor doing some walk-in primary care. Kayla Villagomez, Family Nurse Practitioner, welcome to the medical staff at Lake Region Healthcare. Welcome back to Lake Region Healthcare. We're so glad that you've chosen to join the neurology team and primary care team here, and my pleasure to introduce you to our listeners this morning as well.

Kayla Villagomez: Thank you very much.

Katie Johnson: Kayla Villagomez, Family Nurse Practitioner, joining our medical staff here, working alongside Dr. James Ragland in neurology, and also offering some primary care services to our community here at the Lake Region Healthcare main clinic in Fergus Falls. Kayla and Katie on Apple A Day this morning, reminding you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.