

Katie Johnson: Good morning, and welcome to Apple A Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness segment where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier lifestyle. This is Katie Johnson and joining me as my guest today is Joel Anderson. I am pleased to introduce Joel as a new nurse practitioner at our walk-in clinic and introduce him to the community and welcome him to the Lake Region Healthcare family. Good morning Joel.

Joel Anderson: Hi, good morning Katie. Thank you so much for having me.

Katie Johnson: Well thanks for joining me. As I said, this is a great opportunity to introduce you to the community and get to know a little bit more about you. I'd like to start way back with what inspired you to pursue medicine as a career.

Joel Anderson: Initially out of high school, I began taking pre-med classes after my AP courses in high school. I attended Augustana College in Sioux Falls and essentially started bouncing around major to major, undecided of what I wanted to be when I grew up, going from marine biology and ecology to history to English. Eventually left Augustana and started taking business courses in the Twin Cities. Following business school, entered the business field and did some inventory control and corporate work and found that that was not the lifestyle for me as the long seated love of nursing and medicine was always there. I grew up in a long line of caregivers, nurses, midwives, and started taking my nursing training at that time.

Katie Johnson: What, then, was involved with your medical education from that point?

Joel Anderson: I did it in a ladder step process. When I was still working and living in the Twin Cities, I started by just simply getting a nursing assistant course completed and a certificate, and then began taking the general ed courses to work my way up. Eventually an LPN, then RN school. Became an RN in 2005 and walked right into an excellent opportunity in Montevideo, Minnesota in the operating room, not only assisting surgery and learning things like suturing, but also doing perioperative care for patients. Learned real quick that I was in love with the process. I really enjoy seeing my patients improve and see them down the road, see them on the street after they've had an excellent outcome.

Katie Johnson: You mentioned Montevideo. Is that where you're coming to us from?

Joel Anderson: I am not. Following Montevideo, I left Montevideo, Minnesota in 2009, and I took a contract position in perioperative care in southeast Washington, DC in an underserved neighborhood where I was hired on as the director of surgical services where we opened up and became credentialed to provide surgical service and care, wound care for an 82 bed, long-term acute care wound hospital in the eighth ward of Washington. I stayed with that position for several years. Then met my wife in Washington, DC where we decided we were going to start a family and moved the family out to Denver, Colorado. Denver, Colorado was my last move until we came back home, and I began working at Perham Healthcare at the surgical center there.

Katie Johnson: What prompted you to choose Lake Region Healthcare?

Joel Anderson: My wife and I both live in the area or have lived in the area. It was a convenient fit, and we've had excellent experiences with Lake Region. Both of our children attend primary pediatric care here in the clinic and we fell in love with the caregivers, the providers. We've both utilized the walk-in services at the clinic before, had excellent results, positive experiences, and I think it was a no-brainer for me to at least throw my hat in the ring, and I had some conversations about when I did finish the nurse practitioner degree, would there be any room for me to start work.

Katie Johnson: Thinking about the setting in the walk-in clinic, what are some of the common and not so common things that you see in a walk-in clinic setting versus the question even when is it not appropriate to be at the walk-in clinic, and you should be at the ER instead. I think that's a common question that the general public has.

Joel Anderson: First and foremost Katie, we'll be very happy to tell you or give you a ride to the emergency room if it's to that degree of acuity. Of course, we see many, many forms of inflammatory diseases, upper respiratory illnesses, tonsillitis, ear infections in young ones, of course, are common. We see everything from debris in the eye, which we can take care of, to small, simple lacerations. We also perform DOT physicals, which are a requirement and even a more important factor for all of the trucking companies and school bus drivers and any commercial drivers in the area that are required to go through that process.

As far as issues that if you're wondering about whether or not you should set foot in the walk-in clinic versus the emergency room, if it has to do with chest pain, severe abdominal pain, something that is so critical that you're thinking you may even need more, a higher level of care, or transfer out, attend the emergency room. It's going to save you a little bit of time and effort. We're happy to attend and triage those needs, but you save yourself some very important time in the process if you make the appropriate step toward the hospital side.

Katie Johnson: So often, it is about time. That's obviously one of the benefits of going to the walk-in clinic. We have the extended hours and no need to make an appointment, but it shouldn't replace that ER visit or the primary care visit either, the regular primary care provider relationship that's important as well.

Joel Anderson: Yeah, that's correct, and that is an important aspect. I didn't quite mention this before, but if you have an issue with, say, your current medication schedules, you need a correction on a long-term, say, wound care treatment plan, something that requires a great deal of follow-up, that is something that you're going to want to attempt to follow your primary care provider or at least get in to the clinic and see a primary care physician, PA, or NP about the issue simply for the fact that as many patients as are seen in the walk-in setting daily, we are not able to perform the follow-up that you're going to need. We want to make sure that you're well taken care of. That being said, the providers at Lake Region Clinic, the base clinic in the

hospital area, are more than willing to take on new patients for those needs if you do not have a primary care person in the area.

Katie Johnson: You mentioned taking the best care possible of your walk-in clinic patients. What is important to you in providing quality care in a walk-in setting?

Joel Anderson: For myself having been a patient unfortunately in lots of settings across the country and having to make that late evening trip with the children, I feel that it's most important to, first and foremost, have an open mind and a listening ear to trust the gut instincts and judgment of my patients. They, after all, know themselves and how they're feeling. I can't answer that for them. My job is to precipitate a plan of action and differentiate between different disease processes and collaborate with the patient and hopefully get to the bottom of the problem and provide some options, whether it be for pain relief, pain control, or the need for medications to treat an infection as an example.

Katie Johnson: What about when you're not working? What do you like doing?

Joel Anderson: In my spare time, historically, I grew up in rural Minnesota myself. Originally, my family is a long line of Scandinavian immigrants and farmers from Kittson County, and so we still retain some inherited land up in the northwest part of the state, which we plant every year for wildlife maintenance and management. I am not an avid hunter, but I do enjoy getting up and out in the woods and watching the deer herd grow, and there's tons of wildlife in this area to enjoy as well from ducks, water fowl. I enjoy fishing when I get a chance to be on the lake. I also enjoy hanging out at home in the backyard playing with the kids. I like sitting down and watching a good movie. I'm a simple man.

Katie Johnson: You're certainly a great addition to our staff at Lake Region Healthcare and specifically at the walk-in clinic. Very happy to have you join the team. Anything else that you would like our listeners to know about you or the walk-in clinic before we wrap up today?

Joel Anderson: At this time Katie, I really have nothing else to add, but I would like to say thank you so much to the Fergus Falls community for being so welcoming to my family. I look forward to meeting a lot of you in the future, and if you ever need anything in particular medically related, feel free to stop on by the clinic, and I'll be there.

Katie Johnson: Joel Anderson, nurse practitioner, new to the staff at our walk-in clinic and introducing him to the community here today on Apple A Day. Thanks for your time today Joel.

Joel Anderson: Thank you so much Katie.

Katie Johnson: Joel Anderson and Katie Johnson on Apple A Day today reminding you that there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.