

Katie Johnson: Good morning, and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's Health and Wellness Program, 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 Lynn Lundquist. She is the nurse director in our medical/surgical department and our ICCU, and she's here today to share with us some exciting news about our intensive care unit.

Katie Johnson: Good morning, Lynn.

Lynn Lundquist: Good morning, and thank you for inviting me to be part of the show today.

Katie Johnson: Well, thanks for taking time. It is an exciting time at the ICU, as I mentioned, but before we talk about that, let's just let our listeners get to know you a little bit better. Tell me about your role at Lake Region Healthcare, how long you've been here, and what is it that you do, which I know is a lot.

Lynn Lundquist: Well, I have been here for 21 years. I've actually worked in multiple areas of the hospital and now have landed in the last seven years in this role as the nursing director for the med/surg and ICU departments. My role here is to oversee the areas, making sure that they function, that we have staff, that staff are appropriately trained and orientated to those roles. This just allows us to have great, safe patient care for patients as they come in and out of our areas.

Katie Johnson: And that's not an easy task. How many nurses are we talking about that you're kind of managing, scheduling, and not only nurses?

Lynn Lundquist: No. We have nurses, we have certified nursing assistants. We have some social workers and case management and also some supervisors that play into this. We have in my area close to 80 people that we're coordinating on a 24/7 basis to keep our services going and provide safe patient care for everybody as they come through our doors.

Katie Johnson: And we appreciate all of that work. As the nurse director over the ICU, we wanted to invite you in to talk about some updates that have been happening there over the past several months, but before we do that, let's talk about what the ICU is. First of all, sometimes I hear ICU, sometimes I hear ICCU. Which is it? What's the difference?

Lynn Lundquist: I think formally we are calling it an ICCU, but we do multiple things in our ICU. This is a critical care unit. It's a five-bed unit, and it's a general critical care unit, so it can take care of someone who has a cardiac issue, who has a respiratory issue. It could be someone who's come out of a surgical procedure with some critical complications that just need that extra expertise that those nurses provide. It takes care of pediatric patients if they're in any type of a crisis. It also takes care of some people who are, for example, in a diabetic crisis and maybe need to have some medications titrated or adjusted at a real critical timeframe

and in the moment. These nurses have extra certifications to allow that to happen.

Katie Johnson: And this is also on third floor with the medical surgical unit, but is a closed unit.

Lynn Lundquist: Correct. It is sitting right next door to our med/surg three unit, but it is a five-bed unit that has critical monitoring so that you can get hooked up to those monitors and watched 24/7 very intensively. And it is where you are kind of isolated from the general med/surg unit.

Katie Johnson: You mentioned a little bit about the staff there having some special training. Are there certain staff who only work ICU or do they kind of rotate back and forth between med/surg, or how does that work?

Lynn Lundquist: We have cross-trained med/surg nurses, but we also have a great core of intensive care unit nurses that have worked with us for many years, and they have expertise that they bring and allow us to cross-train some of our younger med/surg nurses with their expertise. We have years and years of experience in our ICU and they also have to get some certifications. There's three of them that you have to have in order to work in the ICU.

Lynn Lundquist: It's the TMCC, which is a certification in trauma. There's a certification called PALS, which is a pediatric advanced life support certification. There's also a certification called ACLS, which is an advanced adult life support certification that they need to all end up taking those classes, passing those classes, and then renewing those certificates every two to four years. We also have just RNs working in our ICU. There can be nursing assistants that help as needed, but you do need to be an RN in order to take care of a patient in ICU.

Katie Johnson: And how about the physicians that serve in ICU? Which physicians are they and do they have any special requirements or training?

Lynn Lundquist: Our physicians that serve in the ICU are the hospitalists that are also on med/surg, but they do end up taking some of the ACLS and PALS certifications. So, they too have that advanced life support certification that adds to the expertise that they use on a daily basis.

Katie Johnson: As we mentioned, there's been an investment made by Lake Region Healthcare recently to remodel, redo the ICU. Tell us a little bit about what was done and what drove the decision to do that.

Lynn Lundquist: ICU was looking tired and a little bit worn out, so the executive team decided to invest in redoing the ICU. We actually moved our ICU beds to a temporary location for a few months while they actually shut down our ICU and totally remodeled it with a facelift. The footprint didn't really change in our ICU, but they all were allowed to get into some of the structure and make sure that everything was heating and cooling properly. Then we ended up getting new

ceilings, new walls, new floors, new lights, so it's much brighter. It actually looks like a brand new ICU. At that same point in time, we were also able to remodel our bathroom, and we made that into a handicap-accessible bathroom, which is much nicer for that unit as well.

Katie Johnson: Then there's something to be said about having the right working conditions, the right environment to being able to provide the best possible care.

Lynn Lundquist: That is so correct. When people feel confident in their areas and confidence in the equipment and everything that's there to help them provide the patient care, yes, it increases everybody's positive experience.

Katie Johnson: Now something else I know that you've been very busy with these days, kind of as an aside, is our transition to a new electronic health record, and we'll be talking more about that on future shows and what that will mean to our patients, but I thought maybe you could give us just a glimpse of what's involved for you and your staff and the doctors you work with in ICU and med/surg to learn about and implement this new system. It's no small undertaking.

Lynn Lundquist: It is not a small undertaking. We've been working for many months, and it takes that long just to build a new electronic health record. But our goal is to get all of Lake Region on the same platform. We have had to look at every aspect of what Lake Region does from clinic appointments, surgical appointments and procedures, to lab and radiology orders as well as any inpatient type setting. We've had to look at what we do and rebuild that into a new electronic health record. A lot of us have to look at new workflows. A lot of us have to look at how we chart things or things that we do on a daily basis and be adaptable to change, take this on in a real positive way and look at the details that it all takes and working together to accomplish this.

Lynn Lundquist: So, it's been a huge undertaking for Lake Region. I think we've all learned a lot. Some of it's been an eye-opener for us, but I think that we are making positive strides to roll this out and to continue providing the safe patient care that we do for our patients.

Katie Johnson: I know one of the major benefits. In the past, it's been your clinic visit. If your clinic visit maybe ends up in a hospital stay later or you're in the hospital and something that happened in the clinic visit prior really were difficult for the doctor or the nurse to tie together and to kind of bring those loose threads together for patients, really will make a difference in being able to provide that continuity of care.

Lynn Lundquist: That is so true. I think it was frustrating for all of us, how difficult at times it was to find out the details of prior visits and connect those dots, and I think it was also frustrating for some of our patients because we continually asked the same questions over and over again. I think having us all on the same platform will

allow the continuity of patient care flow from outside ambulatory visits to an inpatient stay.

Katie Johnson: It is definitely a lot of work, but with the patients at the center of it all, that's the reason we do what we do and want to keep trying to do it better. I appreciate the work that you and your staff are doing on that front, both in your new space in the ICU and in the long and dedicated effort you're putting into our new electronic health record.

Katie Johnson: Anything else you want our listeners to know about our new ICU space or any of the things that you and your staff are doing on med/surg and ICU?

Lynn Lundquist: We're hoping that we could have a small open house to show everybody, so you wouldn't have to be a patient in ICU but be able to see a glimpse of what the new ICU looks like. We're just putting the finishing details on some of the fixtures, and then we're hoping to put that together yet this fall. So, we would invite people to stop in and take a peek at that.

Katie Johnson: Well, we will definitely let our listeners know when that happens. Lynn, thanks for taking some time today to share with us the information about the new remodel of the ICU at Lake Region Healthcare that has recently happened and to just share more about what you and your staff do to help keep our community safe and healthy, especially in those times of need for critical care.

Katie Johnson: Thanks again for being with us today.

Lynn Lundquist: Thank you for inviting me.

Katie Johnson: Lynn Lundquist, nurse director of our med/surg and ICU, my guest today on Apple a Day. Lynn and Katie remind you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.