

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness program, where we feature news and information that you can use to live a healthier life. This is Katie Johnson, your host. My guest today is Luke Draxten. Luke is the Vice President of Administration at Lake Region Healthcare. He is our guest today to talk about Doctor's Day and physician recruiting at Lake Region Healthcare. Good morning, Luke.

Luke Draxten: Good morning, Katie. Thanks for having me.

Katie Johnson: Thanks for joining me. Let's start by telling our listeners a little bit about you. You are not new to Lake Region Healthcare, but relatively new to this role. Tell us a little bit about your background.

Luke Draxten: Sure. I'm originally from Fergus Falls. Grew up, went to high school here. Family still is in the area. Went to college up in the Fargo–Moorhead area. After graduating college from Concordia, in Moorhead, I worked in the investment and banking fields for five, six years, and then relocated to Fergus Falls after getting married to my wife, who is also from Fergus, and continued on in the banking fields. Then jumped into healthcare. That was with Lake Region in 2012.

Katie Johnson: Great, and just recently, have been promoted to the title of Vice President of Administration. What does that role involve?

Luke Draxten: It's a little bit of everything. It's kind of a ever-working and changing position, but my main role is to be tasked with kind of liaising between the Fergus Falls Medical Group, or the Lake Region Medical Group and Lake Region Healthcare. Anything that the providers need, just making sure that their concerns are voiced to administration and it's a collaboration between the two groups to make sure that there's a working back and forth, so they have the materials to practice with what they need, and administration can provide them, so that they work well together. Just being the voice kind of between the two groups.

Katie Johnson: You mentioned your education right after high school. You're also pursuing another degree right now. Is that right?

Luke Draxten: Correct, yeah, it's never, never ending. It's very busy, but I'm getting my Masters in Business Administration from the University of St. Thomas in the Twin Cities. It's a healthcare focused program, so it's going to be very beneficial for the future.

Katie Johnson: For sure. You mentioned when you talked about your role, your role as liaison between providers and administration, I'm not sure that our listeners necessarily know what we mean when we talk about providers. As we think about Doctor's Day, coming up on Thursday, providers are exactly who we're honoring. Give us a definition of a provider.

Luke Draxten: Sure. A provider in the healthcare setting is, you know, typically a medical doctor,

or a mid-level, a nurse practitioner, physician assistant. They are just the ones seeing patients on a daily basis, and providing the medical care.

Katie Johnson: Exactly, so including those advanced practice professionals in with MDs and DOs, kind of makes up that group that you work really closely with, and that we do want to take pause to honor. On March 30th every year, is a Doctor's Day, that day set aside to recognize the contributions that those people make to our lives and our community. We have a fantastic group of medical staff and providers at Lake Region Healthcare. Tell us a little bit about how many, what kinds of specialties are included in our group.

Luke Draxten: Yeah, I think when I started back in 2012, we were around the 60 plus provider range, and now we're upwards of 85. In Fergus Falls alone, we're probably in that 60 range, but we also have outreach locations in Ashby, Battle Lake, Barnesville, and also Prairie Ridge, in Elbow Lake and Morris. Between those outreach facilities, we probably have 20 providers in those locations as well. It's grown. I think the utilization from the community is part of that. It just shows our community support people want to utilize the services locally, and our providers do a great job of providing services to them.

Katie Johnson: They do. It's certainly an advantage to have that community support in order to be able to bring in more and more, not just primary care, but specialty physicians and providers as well. Can you tell us how the organization goes about determining which types of physicians are needed from primary care to specialties?

Luke Draxten: Yeah, every couple years, they do a medical staff development plan. What they do is look at the surrounding area service population in conjunction with the utilization from the community, to determine what actual needs are of the patients. In addition to that, that's kind of the number crunching portion, but we do get feedback from the providers, who are the ones seeing the ... You know, so to speak, boots on the ground ... patients on a daily basis. They know what needs the patients have. There's a lot of conversations back and forth with them to say, "Hey, what are you guys seeing? What are you guys needing? What areas do you think the community can support?"

I think in total, 13 specialties in Region Healthcare, so it's a multi-specialty clinic group that, you know, you don't have to go outside of Fergus Falls to get the care that you need.

Katie Johnson: Right. How difficult is it to recruit those specialty physicians and providers to our community?

Luke Draxten: Well, you have the physician recruiting process is a never ending cycle. You've got people retiring, people moving on just due to life circumstances. Then new people coming out of college. Fergus Falls, it's somewhat of a rural area. It's not a Twin Cities or a big metro hub, so it's a little bit difficult to get people to come here, not being familiar with the area. You know, we got recruiting firms. You just, a lot of

word of mouth, internal referrals from people that have recently come on board, and you know, their friends from medical school, and that's the best type of referral you can get is internally.

Katie Johnson: You said it's difficult sometimes to get them to come to the rural area. Once they get here, we have a lot to offer.

Luke Draxten: Yeah, especially with the new clinic building. We're just wrapping up the first, or did wrap up the first year, in the new building, and it's just a beautiful asset to Fergus Falls, and the providers as well. The hardest part is getting them to come here. Once they see Fergus Falls, the community itself as a whole, the school system, and just the provider group in general. It's kind of a great family atmosphere. Once they're here, they never leave, so if you can get them ... Like the Field of Dreams say, "If you build it, they will come." That's kind of where we're at.

Katie Johnson: From that perspective, I think we could even tell our listeners they can be a part of our recruiting department, right? You have family, you have friends, that you know are either pursuing medical careers, or have medical careers in other communities, to get them to think about Fergus Falls is a part of our recruiting process.

Luke Draxten: Yeah, I think everybody knows somebody that's either just in the provider field. If you guys, anybody's aware of somebody that is interested in practicing back in the Midwest, Fergus Falls, our surrounding outreach facilities, we're definitely interested in talking to people that have local ties. Those are the people that you want for the long term.

Katie Johnson: We're blessed with some very skilled and caring providers here. Do you have any examples that stand out in your mind of unique or especially compassionate and caring, some of our medical here are?

Luke Draxten: Yeah, I know we have a few providers that do once, twice a year, they go to Haiti and provide medical services to the underprivileged areas, build medical clinics, provide supplies that people don't otherwise have. I would say weekly, just in Fergus Falls, you go to the grocery store, at the YMCA, I'll hear somebody come up to you and say, "Hey, I had a great interaction with Dr. Jones, and he took great care of my mother, and my father, and my grandparents." Being a smaller community, you hear that. I think people really feel connected to the providers that we have as a whole. It's not just a big system feel. It's a real tight knit community atmosphere.

Katie Johnson: I think you're absolutely right. We do hear that all the time. Perhaps our doctors and our providers don't hear that as often as they should. That's exactly why we celebrate Doctor's Day on Thursday, and why I wanted to have you as a guest here, to really highlight our medical staff and the amazing work that they do every day, caring for each patient as if it were one of their own family. Anything else that you want to add from your perspective about Doctor's Day, about our medical staff, or what our listeners can do to recognize those medical professionals in their life?

Luke Draxten: Yeah, I would like to say that we've got over 85 providers. We've got 85 great ones. I know that they like to be involved with the community, and the community likes to be involved with them. If you bump into your physician, primary care provider, specialty care provider, at the grocery store or anywhere within town, shake their hand, tell them thanks, and let them know that you appreciate what they do, because they appreciate you as a citizen as well.

Katie Johnson: Absolutely, and we appreciate you, Luke Draxten, Vice President of Administration, doing that role at Lake Region Healthcare. Thanks for being my guest this morning as well.

Luke Draxten: Thanks for having me.

Katie Johnson: Luke Draxten, Vice President of Administration and Katie Johnson reminding you to thank your medical provider on Thursday, Doctor's Day, and why not throughout the rest of the year as well. Luke and Katie both reminding you this morning that there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.