

# ENGAGE

*Connecting the community to health*

**PRIMARY CARE.**  
YOUR *NEW*  
*HEALTHY*  
STARTS HERE.



**Howard**Memorial  
hospital

*Fall 2020*

# Due for a Primary Care Visit?

## There's No Better Time than Now

We know that in the busyness of life—or in the uncertainty of the last few months—going to the doctor for a primary care visit might not always be at the top of your to-do list. But waiting to seek care until you're already sick can turn a preventable or minor issue into something much worse.

**Kaitlyn Gunn, Clinic Director** at Howard Memorial Hospital, acknowledges that the ongoing pandemic has resulted in a reduction in the number of people coming in for primary care appointments. "We've had less people coming in for their regular check-ups, but we are open and ready to provide care to everyone who needs it. Our office is taking all precautions to keep patients and staff safe."

HMH offers a wide range of primary care screenings that can help with early detection of many medical issues and can be administered as part of a regular wellness visit.

### These include:

- Mammography
- Colonoscopy
- Bone density screening
- Lab work
- Cervical cancer screening
- Depression screening
- Blood pressure monitoring
- Fall prevention
- Tobacco cessation
- Advanced direction discussions

"A regular wellness visit with a provider takes only 20-30 minutes," Kaitlyn shared. "In that short amount of time we can help stop a small problem from turning into a large problem in the future."

Kaitlyn emphasized that it's important for everyone to stay on top of their primary care visits, but acknowledged one demographic in particular often needs the most encouragement. "Our hardest population to get to come in for primary care is younger adults. Often they only come in when they're already sick, which we don't recommend. Coming in for regular check-ups is so important to maintaining overall health."



To help make primary care as accessible possible, HMH is offering extended hours. First appointments of the day start as early as 7 a.m. and the last appointment is at 5 p.m., to help work with people's busy schedules. Telehealth and phone visits are available for eligible patients to ensure they can still receive the care they need even if coming to the clinic isn't an option.

Our team at HMH is well equipped to provide the highest quality primary care and screenings. The clinic is part of Comprehensive Primary Care Plus (CPC+), which has trained all staff on how to provide better quality care to patients. And a select team specializes in keeping patients out of the hospital, meaning that their care is less invasive and overall easier to manage.

### Make your health a priority.

We're open and ready to provide you the preventive care you need safely. Call to make an appointment today at **870-845-6060**.

# Dealing with Anxiety?

## You're Not Alone – Get Help at HMMH

Anxiety has long been a part of being human—from financial worries or relationship struggles to major life changes and grief, many things trigger anxiety. As we continue to grapple with the ongoing pandemic, coping with anxiety is more important than ever. Fortunately, our team at Howard Memorial Hospital can help.

Vanessa Sampson, LMSW, a licensed therapist specializing in geriatric therapy, believes strongly in helping people with anxiety and mental health issues. “Many people are experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression as a result of increased isolation and uncertainty,” she said. “These people are now, more than ever, aware of the struggles that come with mental health issues.”

### **Anxiety symptoms include:**

- Racing thoughts that won't stop
- Rapid heartbeat even when inactive
- Chronic fatigue
- Chest pressure
- Being startled easily or a sense of being “on edge”

Treatment is customized for each patient. People meet as often as necessary—from multiple times a week to once a month—to receive the right care for their needs. “A lot of it is about slowing down and focusing on yourself,” Vanessa said.

### **Outside of therapy, Vanessa recommends coping mechanisms like:**

- Exercising
- Deep breathing
- Limiting caffeine
- Focusing on a project or hobby
- Spending time with pets
- Talking to a trusted confidant
- Cleaning or organizing

Vanessa urges people to get the care they need. “If I could speak to anyone considering help right now, I would tell them their feelings are REAL, their feelings are VALID, and their feelings are SHARED by so many,” she said. “Reaching out for help with mental health can be intimidating; however, what can be scarier is the thought that part of your life may never heal if not addressed appropriately.”

### **Therapy doesn't require a physician's referral.**

Call **870-845-6060** for an appointment or more information. If you're uncomfortable with an office visit, visit with a therapist using Telehealth.







## Working on the Front Line of a Pandemic:

# HMH Heroes



Recent months have revealed the true determination of our Howard Memorial Hospital family. The dedication and compassion our teammates have shown while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic is truly awe-inspiring. We're grateful for the days—and nights—spent caring for patients during this unprecedented time. Here are some of our their experiences.



### Jessica Disotell, RN

Jessica's spent her entire career at HMH after graduating in 2012. But, as the novel coronavirus spread and made its way to Nashville, it felt a bit like starting over. "The virus itself was overwhelming for the community as well as the hospital," she shared. "It was a change, and people fear change."

Used to working as a close-knit team, treating COVID-19 patients is different; only one registered nurse cares for these high-risk patients per shift. "I'm responsible for many tasks such as completing their assessments, monitoring vitals, medication administration, and more," Jessica said. "I work on the night shift and frequently on the COVID unit by myself. It's hard to be in multiple places at once if a

patient calls out. It teaches you time management and to be prepared."

Seeing patients endure their own isolation is also hard. "One of the biggest struggles as a nurse is watching each patient go through this alone," she shared. "They are in the hospital for several days in isolation, scared of the unknown, and are not allowed to have any family or friends in the room for support or encouragement."

One patient stands out and continues to inspire Jessica. "At the beginning of the pandemic, I cared for a middle-aged patient. She was an alert, oriented, ambulatory lady," she said. "Her vitals were stable. She had a low grade fever and a little cough and weakness but otherwise fully independent. A couple days after she was discharged...she took a turn for the worse and had to be intubated. I found out she later passed away."

This was a very eye opening and heart wrenching experience and what made me first realize, 'Okay, this is real. This is serious.'"

Jessica is a champion for all of her patients. "Now that we have had multiple COVID patients, we understand their symptoms, their labs, and the way they present. I am becoming more comfortable with providing care," she shared. "As their nurse, we are their sole caretaker and support system. It makes me proud to be involved and is very rewarding."



### **Dylan Lacefield, RN**

Dylan's five years of experience prepared him for the challenging work of caring for COVID-19 patients. Even though the number of patients grew slowly, an unprecedented medical event like this requires thorough preparation to keep patients and staff safe.

"All staff were thoroughly educated regarding this new virus. We have also been kept up-to-date with education as research has taken place and things have changed," Dylan shared. "In addition to keeping a separate unit for COVID patients on the patient care unit, there is also a room available in the emergency department for COVID patients or those that are suspected (positive)."

Even with preparation and education, there was still a transition period for those caring for COVID-19 patients. "There were many changes to our usual work that we had to adapt to," Dylan said. "The main one is having to wear a mask for the entire workday. It is also very different being separated from my coworkers whenever I am the nurse response for COVID patients."

Now a few months in, Dylan has had time to reflect on his role caring for COVID-19 patients—which is both inspiring and challenging.

"Working with COVID patients has truly been an interesting learning experience. I have felt grateful for my health as well as being able to be involved in healthcare during such an evolving time," he explained. "But since the virus, I have distanced myself from my family, especially my older relatives. When I come home I have to sanitize myself and do extra cleaning around the house to ensure there is no trace of the virus."

Even with the sacrifices, seeing patients recover makes the work worthwhile. "When we get most patients they are very ill," Dylan shared. "It's very rewarding to get to care for these people and watch as they get better and overcome the virus."

While certainly a dark time, Dylan has a positive reminder. "We can overcome this and, as a group working together, will heal from this if you use recommended guidelines and keep your faith and spirits up."



### **Kelsi Frachiseur, RN**

Kelsi joined Howard Memorial Hospital one-and-a-half years ago and has positively impacted patients ever since. Now, more than ever, her dedication and compassion is an inspiration.

"I can remember our first COVID-19 patient vividly," she shared. "We're a small hospital so when something big like this happens it unfolds right in front of your eyes."

Kelsi is thankful for how the HMM team worked together and prepared to keep patients and staff safe. "I feel like you could say we were over prepared, which is awesome," she said. "It helped us navigate an otherwise overwhelming situation."

For Kelsi there are struggles—especially caring for a COVID-19 patient without the usual help of fellow nurses. "It's more stressful because you're by yourself," she said. "You're used to always being able to ask for help. You need to be constantly aware of what your patient needs and you need to ensure they get proper care while you minimize the risk of exposure."

To avoid the illness herself Kelsi said, "I call myself the 'super cautious nurse' now. I've never seen this level of sickness before and can't be too careful."

As time goes on, Kelsi has adjusted to a new normal and is more comfortable. "When I took care of my first COVID patient I was scared," she said. "But it's becoming more routine. I know who to call and what to watch for, and am able to provide better care because of it."

Kelsi feels a strong connection with every patient she's cared for, something indicative of her dedication. "I can vividly remember everyone's faces and names and their exact problems," she shared. "I can remember if they were super sick, or if I was scared. You spend 12 hours a day with them. They all stick with you because their life is in your hands."



# For Compassionate Primary Care, **Alana Day, APRN,** Has You Covered

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At Howard Memorial Hospital, we're fortunate to have an extremely talented, dedicated and compassionate team caring for the health of our community.



**Alana Day, APRN**, embodies all these wonderful qualities, and more, in her third year providing primary care at HMH. Her vast knowledge and ability to connect with her patients make her a top-notch healthcare professional and the perfect person to provide primary care to our patients.

As we say goodbye to one of our primary care providers, Alana is stepping up as a leader of our primary care services.

"I hope to provide the community with a positive experience when coming to our clinic for care," she shared. And with her extensive education and experience, she is certainly living up to that expectation.

After 17 years as an RN, Alana went back to school for her Master of Nursing Science at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and passed her boards in 2017 to become an advanced practice registered nurse.

Once certified, she was thrilled to start this new chapter in her career at HMH.

"I hoped and prayed for a job close to home. The market for nurse practitioners has become flooded so jobs are often scarce and one that was close to home is even harder to find," she shared. "I was blessed to be contacted and hired by Howard Memorial Hospital as the first nurse practitioner at the medical clinic."

For Alana, the transition from RN to APRN was both exciting and challenging.

"It was difficult to return to a novice after having been so comfortable in my role as an RN in a hospital," she said. "But I feel I have finally adjusted to my new role. I love teaching and educating my patients about their illnesses, and prevention and treatment options."

Beyond her vast medical experience, Alana is able to connect with many patients based on her own experience managing diabetes, a condition she has lived with for many years.

"I feel this allows me to really connect with diabetic patients. Whether it is a new diagnosis or one they have struggled with for years, I feel the frustration and ups and downs of managing a chronic illness with them. I love educating them and helping them improve their management."



We are fortunate to have had some improvements in our diabetic services that allow Alana and our team to provide the best primary care available to our community. With the addition of retinal eye exams and in-clinic hemoglobin A1cs, patients can get all their diabetic needs in one visit.

Additionally, we were fortunate to receive funding from grants that allows us to help provide supplies and tools to diabetics that they may not otherwise be able to afford.

**“This has allowed some of our diabetics much better control to help prevent complications from poorly controlled diabetes. It is rewarding to have patients see the results of their hard work and offer them encouragement and support for better management.”**

Through her work as a primary care provider, Alana continues to make a positive impact on her patients and our community. She provides thorough and thoughtful care that patients can trust, and we are thrilled to have her as a member of our HMH family.

When Alana's not helping people live their healthiest lives, she loves simply spending time with her husband and two sons on their farm.




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- Swing Bed Program

- **Surgical Services: (870) 845-6978**

- General
- Cataract
- Gynecology
- PICC Lines
- Injections & Infusions

- **Radiology: (870) 845-8070**

- CT (128-Slice)
- 3D Mammography
- Ultrasound (*diagnostic, vascular and ABI*)
- Nuclear Medicine
- Mobile MRI
- Mobile PET/CT
- Bone Density Testing

- **Inpatient & Outpatient Rehabilitation:  
(870) 845-8161**

- **Clinical Laboratory & Blood Bank: (870) 845-8062**

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- **Cardiopulmonary: (870) 845-6942**

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- Pulmonary Function Testing
- Arterial Blood Gases
- EEG
- Sleep Lab
- Cardiopulmonary Rehab: **(870) 845-8026**

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- **Allergy Clinic: (870) 845-8095**

- **Wound Care: (888) 835-6946**

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