

Homegrown provider steps into new role at JMHCC

While Holly Gaugler's role at Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center (JMHCC) has evolved over the years, her commitment to community and family has remained constant.

Today, she dons her stethoscope for her community as JMHCC's newest family nurse practitioner (FNP), caring for patients at the Elgin Community Clinic as a truly homegrown provider.

"I'm invested. I grew up here. My family is going to grow up here," she says.

As a new provider at JMHCC, Gaugler joins Trevor Stavig, who is primarily in Elgin, Rhonda Schmidt, who is at the Glen Ullin Family Medical Clinic, and Maria Aune, who rotates to both clinics. Morris Duffy, Jurgen Weber and Paul Koppinger primarily provide emergency care. Dr. Steve English serves as medical director.

"I have the best team here right now, between all of the providers and Dr. English and administration. I know I'm immediately set up for success, because I have them helping me. They're all in my corner," Gaugler says.

The daughter of Bill Mosbrucker, who is also an Elgin native, Gaugler's path to JMHCC began at the steps of Grant County High School, where she graduated in 2009.

Her journey then took the Grant County native to Bismarck State College (BSC) for an associate degree in medical laboratory science, then she started her career at JMHCC's lab in 2012.

In 2014, she obtained an online Bachelor of Science degree in laboratory science from the University of North Dakota.

"I actually had started pre-nursing at BSC and you had to take a microbiology course. And the professor there was so amazing and I just absolutely loved microbiology. I ended up switching from pre-nursing to medical laboratory science," she says. "I loved that science world."

"I really enjoyed the lab. I loved the background science that goes on," she says.

Gaugler worked in the lab for seven years before transitioning to another part of JMHCC's care team, with a nursing degree in hand.

"I just saw the need for our hospital for nurses from the community. We were having a lot of travel nurses and when I walked into the ER on call as a lab tech, you could see patients just relax when they saw a familiar face. And I knew I wanted to do that as a nurse. I wanted to give them that comfortability, saying, 'OK, I know they've got me,'" she says.

So, Gaugler put her life into overdrive to accomplish that goal.

With the University of Mary offering an accelerated second degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, she was in the first graduating class of that 13-month program in 2019.

"That program was very intense," she describes. "My lab background was so incredibly helpful."

As she earned that degree, Gaugler continued working at JMHCC, going to campus Monday through Friday, then returning home on weekends to be on call in the lab.

In June 2019, Gaugler accomplished her goal of becoming a nurse, soon finding herself working on the COVID-19 floor during the pandemic and expecting her first child.

Then she saw another opportunity to help her community.

“The opportunity came up to be able to be the clinic nursing supervisor. So, after maternity leave, I came back and did that for a while. We just had so much transition of providers, and I could see the frustration in the community and the patients, wanting the stability. I’m like, ‘You know what, that’s something I could do.’ I married a farmer. I know I’m not going anywhere. And I just love learning,” she says.

So, she hit the books a third time, returning to college in 2023 to obtain her FNP degree through Bradley University for the three-year program.

And she continued nursing at JMHCC, working with Schmidt, Stavig and Aune to complete her clinicals.

“I am so thankful they are willing to take students, because they’re all so busy with their patient loads. Having a student, you have to explain things more than if you were just going and seeing the patient on your own,” she says. “I was very, very thankful I could do it here and keep working and stay with my family.”

Gaugler is also thankful not only to have this career opportunity in her backyard, but to have a hospital nearby as well.

“If we wouldn’t have our hospital or our clinics, we’re driving 90 miles to go get healthcare. If my kids are sick, I don’t want to drag them two hours to Bismarck. I don’t want to wait two weeks to get in to see a pediatrician. I want to be able to drive to right here in town, have providers that I trust and know they care about my family more than just being a number on their schedule,” she says. “And I just want to make sure that my community and my family and my friends have that option, too.”

“My neighbors, my community, I want them to know we have a good team here. No matter who I see, I’m going to be happy with the care that I receive,” she says.

As she began working as an FNP this month, she wants that same teamwork with her patients, too, from pediatric to geriatric care.

“I want to make it family centered, where the whole family comes in to see our providers,” she says. “I want patients to realize how much we can actually do here.”

Gaugler and her husband, Emery, have two children, and they farm near New Leipzig.

“I wouldn’t be here without my support system,” she says.

But JMHCC is her family, too.

“I love the relationships that I’ve developed with everybody that works here. It doesn’t matter what position you’re in, everybody is respectful of each other. Everybody cheers each other on,” she says. “It’s like being home.”