

BeWell

SPRING
2024

A LAKEWOOD
HEALTH SYSTEM
PUBLICATION



Game Changer

LAKEWOOD ANNOUNCES:
DEVELOPMENT OF
NEW CANCER CENTER
FOR COMPLETION IN 2025

ALSO INSIDE:
Longbella Drug by Lakewood
Orthopedic Urgent Care Now Available
TCO Staples – Therapy Opens

The Best is Yet to Come.

Lisa Bjerga, President & CEO Lakewood Health System

The Road Ahead.

There are so many words I could use to describe the past year, but I would quickly run out of space in this article. For this edition of Be Well, I'm going to go with, humbling, extraordinary, and bright!

Humbling. As I look back on 2023 and my first full year in my role as CEO, I am quickly brought back to the dedicated and passionate Lakewood team I am fortunate to work with each and every day. I am consistently amazed at the talent, care, and professionalism our staff and providers bring to patients and residents each day and it is truly humbling to lead an organization like this. I have the best seat in the house to witness this and it is a privilege I don't take lightly!

Extraordinary. I believe what we have accomplished this past year is nothing short of extraordinary. Expanded service lines, new providers, community and school collaborations, and best-in-class employer recognition are unbelievable accomplishments! Our culture has never been stronger and to see Lakewood "orange" find its way into all areas of our community and service area is a tremendous source of pride for myself, our patients, and staff.

Bright. This is exactly what the future at Lakewood is - BRIGHT! The recent announcement of the Lakewood Cancer Center, the opening of Longbella Drug by Lakewood, the addition of TCO Staples - Therapy, and the upcoming completion of Staples-Motley School District's "The Nest" complex, are not only wins for Lakewood, but HUGE wins for our community and our region. We are watching in real-time a new level of care being brought to our region, with each of these additions providing first-class opportunities and services to our children, patients, and communities for years to come.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, 2023 WAS A YEAR I WILL NEVER FORGET. HERE'S TO THE BRIGHT AND AMAZING ROAD AHEAD!



DEVELOPMENTS

Longbella Drug by Lakewood opens its doors in new Plaza location.

It's official! Longbella Drug by Lakewood Health System opened its doors January 2nd, 2024 under new ownership by Lakewood.

Moving from its location downtown to its new home as part of The Plaza construction project located on Highway 10 next to Ernie's, the new pharmacy space is approximately 4,200 square feet and features a large retail space, convenient drive-thru, and patient consultation areas.



Pictured for the Longbella grand opening are Lakewood CFO, Joe Reycraft; Lakewood Director of Retail & Specialty Pharmacy, Mark Carlson; Pharmacist, Lani LongbellaRoberts; Staples Mayor, Ron Murray; Lakewood System Board Chair, Curt McIlravy; Pharmacist, Tanner Roberts; Lakewood System Board Chair, Mary Theurer; Staples City Administrator, Jerel Nelson; Lakewood VP of Strategy & Development, Brad Anderson; and Lakewood President & CEO, Lisa Bjerga.

"Having the opportunity to add the service, expertise, and tradition Longbella has long-offered the Staples community has been a perfect continuation of Lakewood's mission to provide quality, personalized healthcare for a lifetime," said Lisa Bjerga, Lakewood president and CEO. "It not only allows us additional opportunities to improve the health and wellness of our community, but contributes directly to the economic growth and health of Staples, as well."

New PROVIDERS JOIN LAKEWOOD



David Gesensway, MD
TCO Orthopedic Surgeon



Peter Holmberg, MD
TCO Orthopedic Surgeon



Olivia Castello, MD
Family Medicine

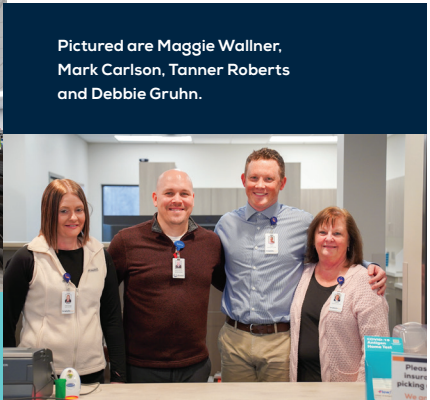


Jessica Nybakken, AOCNP
Oncology

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO READ THEIR FULL BIOS](#)



Interior and exterior views of Longbella by Lakewood's Plaza location.



Pictured are Maggie Wallner, Mark Carlson, Tanner Roberts and Debbie Gruhn.

"The transition has been great," said Mark Carlson, director of retail & specialty pharmacy at Lakewood. "Customers really enjoy the new space and having the experienced Longbella Drug team on staff has provided continuity and made this entire transition process easier. We are excited to serve the community, while continuing to grow and expand our offerings in the future."

The addition of Longbella Drug to the Lakewood organization is an extension of service and products, and does not take the place of any existing Lakewood pharmacy or retail offerings.

Hours of operation for The Plaza location are Mon-Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., and closed on Sunday. Online prescription refills are available for customers at lakewoodhealthsystem.com under its Pharmacy tab. If customers have any questions, they are encouraged to contact the Longbella staff 218-894-2242. Lakewood also continues to offer pharmacy services at both its Pillager and Staples clinics. Hours of operation for these locations are Mon-Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., and closed on Saturday and Sunday.

Lakewood Cancer Center a Game Changer

By Wade Swenson, MD



Concept rendering of Lakewood's newly announced cancer center to be located off the southwest corner of Lakewood's Staples clinic.

As an advocate for advancing rural healthcare and a proud member of the Lakewood Health System team, I stand at the beginning of a new chapter in healthcare for central Minnesota. We are embarking on a significant project: establishing a state-of-the-art cancer center right in our community. This initiative is more than just a medical advancement - it's a commitment to bringing top-tier oncology care to our area.



Pictured are Lakewood oncology providers Jessica Nybakken, AOCNP; Alyssa Manning, FNP; Wade Swenson, MD; and Mariah Nieman, FNP.

The 19,270 square foot addition will be located off the southwest corner of Lakewood's Staples clinic and will include a dedicated reception and waiting area. The center will also include 14 infusion bays, 10 medical oncology and 2 radiation oncology exam rooms, a procedure room, in-house PET/CT, and a linear accelerator, used for radiation treatments. Additionally, oncology case managers will be

located within the new space for easy access to patients. It is well documented that access to specialized healthcare services, particularly in oncology, is often limited in rural areas like central Minnesota. This lack of access can lead to delayed diagnoses, treatment challenges, and a heavy emotional and financial burden on patients and their families. The Rural Oncology Home Model, which Lakewood has championed, addresses these challenges head-on by bringing high-quality cancer care closer to home. This model is revolutionary in integrating palliative care and nurse navigation services, ensuring patients receive comprehensive, compassionate, and coordinated care throughout their cancer journey.

Establishing a community-based cancer center is a game changer for the region. Traditionally, patients in rural areas have had to travel long distances for cancer treatment, adding stress and inconvenience to an already difficult time. Our new cancer center will alleviate this burden, allowing patients to receive top-tier oncology services within their community. This convenience is more than a matter of logistics; it's about providing care in a familiar, comforting environment, surrounded by the support of family and friends.

Moreover, this program's focus on palliative care is a testament to our commitment to treating patients holistically. Palliative care is crucial in oncology, as it focuses on relieving

symptoms and stress, and improving quality of life for the patient and their families. By integrating this into our community-based oncology program, we are acknowledging and addressing the complex needs of our patients beyond their medical treatment.

The nurse navigation services are another cornerstone of our program. Navigating the healthcare system can be

daunting, especially when coping with a cancer diagnosis. Our nurse navigators guide patients through every step, from understanding their diagnosis and treatment options to coordinating appointments and care plans. This personalized approach aligns perfectly with Lakewood Health System's mission to provide quality, personalized healthcare for a lifetime.

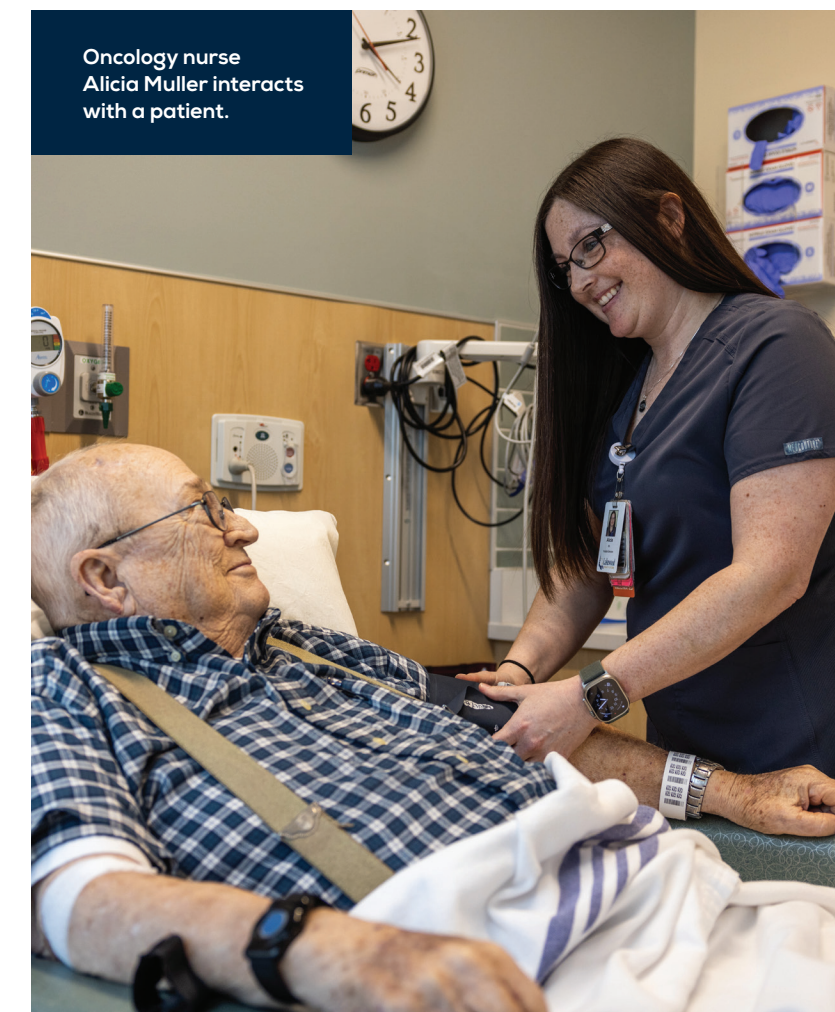
The impact of this project extends beyond the immediate healthcare benefits. It signifies a commitment to the long-term well-being and development of central Minnesota and the

Lakewood communities. By investing in such a facility, we are improving healthcare access and contributing to the region's economic and social vitality. The cancer center will create jobs, foster community engagement, and position central Minnesota as a healthcare innovation and excellence hub.



Lakewood medical lab technician Rosa Prill.

The new cancer center and Rural Oncology Home Model embody the essence of Lakewood's mission and vision. They represent a significant leap forward in providing quality, personalized healthcare and empowering health and well-being in our community. As a medical professional committed to this cause, I am incredibly proud to be part of this transformative journey. Our collective efforts today will pave the way for a healthier, more resilient community tomorrow, where high-quality cancer care is accessible to all in the heart of central Minnesota.



Oncology nurse Alicia Muller interacts with a patient.



LAKEWOOD OPENS

Orthopedic Urgent Care

In an expansion of its orthopedic service line, **Lakewood Health System** recently launched orthopedic urgent care as of January 1st, 2024. This service is a natural progression for Lakewood, building on the rapid growth of its orthopedics program and partnership with **Twin Cities Orthopedics** in the fall of 2021.

Conveniently located at Lakewood's Main Campus in Staples, orthopedic urgent care provides specialized treatment for minor orthopedic injuries and conditions. Patients can access expert care without the need for an appointment or referral, streamlining the process for those in need.

"Orthopedic urgent care is a natural expansion of our orthopedics service line and also a true area of need in our local communities," said Lisa Bjerga, Lakewood Health System president & CEO. "We are not only excited to offer this to our local athletes, sports teams, and parents, but anyone experiencing an orthopedic injury that cannot wait to be seen."

This service is particularly beneficial for individuals who have experienced musculoskeletal injuries, offering a dedicated and expert approach to acute conditions. Patients receive individualized treatment promptly, without the prolonged wait times often associated with emergency departments.

Beyond convenience, Lakewood's orthopedic urgent care also addresses affordability concerns. Emergency department visits can be costly, and the specialized orthopedic urgent care provides a cost-effective alternative for those seeking timely treatment without unexpected financial burdens.

Conditions treated include:

- Simple bone fractures
- Acute injury with crunchiness when moving or touching
- Muscle and tendon strains and ligament and joint sprains
- Broken collarbone, AC joint sprain or separated shoulder
- Torn biceps, triceps or quadriceps tendon
- Wrist and forearm injuries
- Hamstring injuries
- Lower extremity injury with an inability to put weight on it

Orthopedic urgent care at Lakewood is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Patients can walk in and register through Lakewood's Main Entrance for prompt access to an orthopedic specialist.



Lakewood orthopedic urgent care providers Chelsey Leuschke, PA-C and Ryan Skoog, PA-C.

ORTHOPEDICS

TCO Staples Therapy

NOW OPEN

Twin Cities Orthopedics has officially opened **TCO Staples – Therapy**, expanding its presence in Staples and the central Minnesota lakes area!

Conveniently located off Hwy 10 and 12th St NE, TCO Staples – Therapy features physical therapy, hand therapy, and sports performance. With 7,000 square feet of top-of-the-line equipment and technology, TCO Staples – Therapy is able to provide more comprehensive care to the community and elevate their outcomes. TCO's commitment to the area started in September 2021 when its partnership with Lakewood Health System brought world-class orthopedics care right here to Staples. Since that time, Lakewood's orthopedics program has seen unprecedented growth and the opening of TCO Staples – Therapy brings even greater services and resources to our area.

TCO surgeon, Dr. Paul Diekmann says it best: "This new facility is more than just a physical space, it represents a commitment to the community and our partners at Lakewood. It's been my privilege to serve patients in the Staples and Brainerd Lakes area for over two years, and in that time, I've seen firsthand the opportunity for TCO's expanded services. Whether a patient is recovering from an injury, looking to improve athletic performance, or simply wanting to get back to their daily routine, TCO Staples – Therapy has everything they need to reach their goals. We're incredibly excited, and I know the community is, too."

Talk with your Lakewood provider to see if a referral to TCO Staples – Therapy is right for you.



TCO Surgeon, Dr. Paul Diekmann, Makes Lakewood Home

A familiar face at Lakewood Health System since August 2021, Paul Diekmann, MD, orthopedic surgeon for Twin Cities Orthopedics, will begin the process of transitioning his practice to Lakewood full-time, effective July 2024. While he will remain a partner physician of TCO, Dr. Diekmann will see orthopedic patients at Lakewood full-time, increasing his time here from every fourth week, to every week. Thoroughly enjoying Staples and the surrounding community during his short time here, Dr. Diekmann, his wife, and son will be moving to the Staples area where they look forward to further integrating themselves into the community. This move nearly doubles the orthopedic coverage at Lakewood, as the other TCO physicians will continue to provide care on a regular weekly rotation, while Dr. Diekmann's time will increase, providing dual coverage most weeks.





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LAKEWOOD ORANGE MAKING WAVES



Did you know that in **2023 Lakewood Health System** made the **Star Tribune's list of top workplaces** for the fourth year in a row? We believe we do healthcare differently – including the people-first culture we've created amongst our staff. Join the orange revolution where:

- Our employees have access to free employee-only health insurance, annual tuition assistance, 401k matching and best-in-region HSA contributions.
- Flex and wellness time off allow you to balance your role at work with your responsibilities and passions at home.
- Employees wear their tokens of recognition with pride, with free sneakers, apparel and more redeemed through our Bucketlist recognition platform.

With ample opportunities for growth within the system, and support as you pursue your personal goals, it's safe to say Lakewood Health System is a great place to launch or continue your career in healthcare!

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OR APPLY TODAY!**

Scan the QR code to go
to our **careers page**.

