

# Lake Region Health’s Barnesville Area Clinic Reflects On Past Year

By: **Katie Johnson, VP of Marketing and Communications**

As the one-year anniversary of the COVID pandemic approached, we asked our team at Lake Region Healthcare’s Barnesville Area Clinic to reflect on the past year and what it has been like serving on the healthcare front lines. Like you, they faced many unknowns and a rollercoaster of highs and lows. Here’s what your local healthcare heroes had to say about the past year:

What was the hardest part of working at the clinic during the past year of COVID?

- The unknown. I remember being really, really afraid of seeing patients initially when COVID first began. Nobody really knew what it looked like, who was susceptible, or how fast it would spread.
- Not being able to go to the nursing homes to see our patients who reside there to provide their care.
- Just making sure that people get the care they need while maintaining safety for other staff and patients has been challenging.
- Having to put signs up at the front door to DO NOT ENTER unless you have an appointment. It was very hard to send this message to our

patients and others who we normally warmly welcome into our place of work.

- Not being able to be face-to-face with our patients—we missed them.
- Not seeing smiles on peoples’ faces due to everyone needing to wear masks.
- Trying to stay safe and healthy to be able to stay open and have a safe and healthy environment for those we are able to care for.
- Patients getting angry with us about things out of our control and the “rules” we need to enforce.
- Honestly, I think the hardest part of working during this past year was the skepticism of some people. When you ask that someone put their mask on and they roll their eyes because they don’t believe that COVID-19 is an actual health crisis. I have seen what COVID can do to people. I have seen the lingering effects long after one has “recovered”. COVID-19 is scary, it is real, and it doesn’t care if you believe.
- It has also been a challenge just to continue our day-to-day operations. Just making sure that people get the care they need while maintaining safety for other staff and patients has been challenging.

What was the most rewarding



Katie Martin, NP of the Barnesville Lake Region Health clinic getting a dose of vaccine earlier this year.

part of working at the clinic during the past year of COVID?

- When we had the COVID vaccine clinic here. It was sense of relief for so many people and I was so grateful to be involved in giving the injections.
- Being able to contribute something to the pandemic when there was so little anyone could control.
- Being able to be here for those who we could provide care for and staying safe and maintaining a safe environment to provide that care.
- Patients thanking us for being able to get the vaccine.
- The most rewarding part is the hope I have seen lately. The excitement people have for the vaccine and the end of all of this. People are looking forward to seeing family again. You can see the hope and the smiles in their eyes.
- Working with a great team--with a common goal to all stay safe and healthy and provide the best care we can possibly provide.
- Being able to keep the clinic open

to be there for our patients and community in the best way that we

can.

What do you wish people knew about what you & your team do at the clinic and how it may have changed due to COVID?

- I wish that people were not afraid to come to the clinic for routine procedures and care. There is still some fear out there but we are making sure that we provide care safely. We know that many of our patients are part of the vulnerable population. We have and always will put patient safety and health first.
- We are a team who cares very deeply for our patients and try to do our very best to take care of their needs. In “normal” times we have many barriers to overcome in order to provide that care. COVID has made each barrier even more difficult to provide the service our patients want and need yet we remain committed to making it happen.

It certainly has been and continues to be a challenging time in many ways for many businesses and also for people personally—and it’s no different for our clinic and our team members. What stays constant is that we are here to provide the best care possible to you, our friends and neighbors.

About the Lake Region Healthcare Enterprise

The Lake Region Healthcare enterprise is comprised of Lake Region Healthcare, an independent community-governed non-profit headquartered in Fergus Falls, the Mill Street Residence Assisted Living Facility in Fergus Falls, and the non-profit critical access hospital, Prairie Ridge Hospital and Health Services headquartered in Elbow Lake. With over 100 medical staff and over 1,000 employees, we are dedicated to serving the healthcare needs of our communities with values of Excellence, Person-Centered, Collaboration, Stewardship, Integrity, Respect and Innovation. Together we bring specialty and sub-specialty services to patients at hospital locations in Fergus Falls and Elbow Lake and at clinics in Ashby, Barnesville, Battle Lake, Evansville, Herman, Hoffman, and Morris, MN. For more information visit: [www.lrhc.org](http://www.lrhc.org), [www.prairiehealth.org](http://www.prairiehealth.org) or [www.millstreet.lrhc.org](http://www.millstreet.lrhc.org).



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**22321 Highway 10 • Hawley, MN**

