

FREE

Community Memorial Welcomes

Dr. Gregory Ripich, MD

The Community Memorial (CMH) healthcare system welcomed Gregory Ripich, MD, who joined the organization's surgery team as a General Surgeon in August of this year.

AREAS OF SPECIALITY INCLUDE:

- Advanced minimally invasive surgery
- EGD – Upper Endoscopy
- Colon and rectal surgery, including colonoscopy screenings



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Dr. Ripich joins Dr. Martin Ernits in the General Surgery Program at CMH; this addition provides the community with a greater scope of care and allows CMH to care for a greater volume of patients. Ripich will perform elective procedures and surgeries, specializing in various surgeries such as colon/rectal, breast, thyroid, skin and wound. Dr. Ernits will continue to perform emergent surgeries and collaborate with onsite hospitalists.

Ripich has started seeing patients in the CMH Family Health Centers of Hamilton and Cazenovia. "The Community Memorial team is excited to bring Dr. Ripich on board. He brings a broad range of skills and experience to our patients," commented Dr. Michael Walsh, Chief Medical Officer. "With his focus on a specialty covering various medical issues, we're confident that patients will be pleased with the care offered here in Hamilton."

Ripich performed his postgraduate training at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Michigan after receiving his Doctorate in Medicine from SUNY Health Science Center at Syracuse. Prior, he studied at the University of Buffalo, receiving his Master of Science degree. Ripich attended Cornell University for his undergraduate degree, obtaining his Bachelor's degree in Neurobiology. His extensive career has defined his surgical interest and experience in advanced minimally invasive surgery and endoscopic procedures. He most recently served as the Medical Director for Surgical Associates of CMA in Ithaca, NY.

"Dr. Ripich brings experience and a wealth of knowledge from larger health systems that will allow patients to receive care locally," noted Jeff Coakley, President and CEO. "CMH is excited for the future of General Surgery in Hamilton. We encourage patients to utilize the expanded services offered here."

"I'm looking forward to joining Community Memorial and establishing patient care," stated Dr. Ripich. "I enjoy working with new hospitals and communities, helping them to grow their general surgery programs with new techniques and ideas."

To learn more about the services, medical staff and more offered at CMH, or to make an appointment, please call (315) 648-6408 or visit CommunityMemorial.org



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CMH hosts a bi-monthly council of past patients and family members of patients in an effort to receive feedback around patient care, engage in discussion and ideas on enhancing care within the hospital and our five primary care offices, and collaborate on patient experience improvements!

We are welcoming new members to this group, to learn more or to sign-up, please call phone number (315) 824-6631.

CEO Update



As we prepare to close another busy year, I'd like to take a moment to thank patients that choose Community Memorial for their healthcare needs.

2022 has been a challenging time for healthcare providers across the state and our nation. Following the pandemic, we have found greater healthcare needs in our community and have fewer providers, nurses and healthcare professionals to support the needs. While wait times have grown in Hamilton, they are a fraction of the time patients are waiting in other Emergency Departments across our region.

Community Memorial has an average wait time of 27 minutes for evaluation by a nurse and approximately 43 minutes to see a provider in the past six months. This is significantly less when considering the average wait time in New York State Emergency Departments is 3 hours, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS). We are proud to be your healthcare provider of choice and ask that you continue to be patient with us as we manage through these challenging times.

I want to thank our medical staff, nurses and other healthcare professionals for what they do every day to create an environment that supports patients as well as their colleagues.

Please read on to learn more about what activities we are doing to enhance our facilities, expand our services and create the best patient experience for our community members.

Community Memorial Reinstates Graduate Nursing Program

Graduate-level nurses can now take advantage of a residency program offered at Community Memorial (CMH), providing real-time orientation and clinical training in a nursing career, before taking their New York State nursing board exam.

Following the pandemic, the shortage of healthcare workers became a nationwide crisis. This program aims to recruit and retain nurses to combat the high nurse turnover that has affected the healthcare industry. "National rates of nursing turnover are the highest they have ever been. Reasons for the turnover rates include emotional/physical exhaustion, fatigue, and burnout. The Graduate Nursing Residency Program provides the new graduate nurses a controlled onboarding and orientation that includes classroom and direct supervision of a Registered Nurse that better prepares them for the current workforce by building skills through competency training and a small patient assignment," remarked Heather Bernard, Vice President of Nursing and Clinical Services.

Until the participants are able to sit for their board exam, they are paid CMH employees and go through a week-long classroom training of policies and procedures and equipment before hitting the inpatient floor for interactive patient care. The classroom portion also features different focus areas, including specialty classes with presenters, such as wound care and pressure ulcer prevention. Initial program attendees were existing CMH staff, working as they attended nursing school. However, future program openings will be filled as available, through direct interest and requests and local career fair participation.

The success of the program will be monitored through collection of retention rates currently measured by the Human Resources Department of CMH.

"Our goal with this program is to really lay the groundwork for future nurses, to prepare them in patient care, as to avoid any overwhelming feelings when they begin working as a nurse," noted Christine Martin, RN, Program Instructor. "Nurses work closely with supervision, and are allowed to care for patients and receive imperative training all at once."

This program was previously paused at CMH over a decade ago, as there was not such a pressing need to fill frontline staff positions. "I'm excited for Community Memorial, and for the nursing graduates to have this opportunity, and I look forward to this new endeavor," added Kelly Kahler, Hospital Education Coordinator.

To learn more about the Graduate Nursing Program at CMH in Hamilton, please call Human Resources at 315.824.6134 or visit the 'News / Events' section of [CommunityMemorial.org](https://www.CommunityMemorial.org).

Team Care Medicine Launched At CMH



After months of review, preparation and planning, Community Memorial (CMH) launched a new patient care approach within some primary care offices, implementing a Team Based Medicine Model. Beginning mid-October, this program started with a core group of providers and hopes to expand to all of primary care throughout the CMH network, once levels of success are measured.

The overall goal of team based care is a start-to-finish comprehensive healthcare model, offering patients support and collaboration, along with full participation, in their care needs. Working with multiple healthcare providers and office staff, the model aims to coordinate efforts across all settings of care required for each individual patient.

Teams within primary care settings have demonstrated value with regards to both patient and provider outcomes. “Our main goal is always our patient care and experience; this model will provide that but also improve clinician well-being,” noted Dr. Michael Walsh, Chief Medical Officer. “This care delivery model will also allow better access to your healthcare provider, more focused attention on the patient, and an improved level of care provided.”

Currently offered in Hamilton, Morrisville, Munnsville and Cazenovia office locations and spearheaded by three physicians and two nurse practitioners, this program centers around key players treating a patient, requiring they work together to drive optimal care outcomes. Engaging patients in their care and health outcomes while encouraging providers to utilize all aspects of their education and experience is a key component of this team approach. At CMH, a nurse or office assistant will remain in the room with the patient throughout their visit, collecting information before the provider enters, documenting while the provider focuses on the patient, and remaining in the room after the provider leaves to provide care instructions, education and answer any questions.

“The implementation of this new program will ultimately have a positive impact on our patients,” stated Dr. Sunny Nelson, Primary Care Provider and program champion. **“Through effective communication and collaborative care, clear and common goals will lead to better patient experiences – and allows for more accurate office visits.”**

Extensive training was attending by all staff participating in the program in preparation for launch. Success of this program will be measured through a combination of review of quality of care, patient satisfaction, provider and office staff satisfaction, and increased patient access to care.

All of the Family Health Centers of Community Memorial are accepting and welcoming new patients. With office locations in Hamilton, Cazenovia, Morrisville, Munnsville and Waterville, Community Memorial’s primary care team is here for patients of all ages. To learn more about specific providers or office locations, or to become a new patient, please visit CommunityMemorial.org/family-health-centers.

Who is part of my healthcare team?

Members of your care team may include doctors, nurses, physician assistants, specialists and other non-clinical professionals that all collaborate from start to finish in your healthcare journey!

CMH Cardio Team Expands For Patient Care



The Community Memorial Health Network (CMH) continues to expand, adding a Nurse Practitioner to its Cardiology Practice in Hamilton.

Rebecca Dorn, FNP-C, recently joined the Cardiology Department with Avneet Singh, MD, at the Hamilton Family Health Center of CMH, located on the hospital campus.

Dorn earned her Associate's degree in Applied Science in Nursing from Fulton Montgomery Community College and her Bachelor of Science Nursing degree from SUNY Plattsburgh. She also obtained her Master of Science in Nursing as a Family Nurse Practitioner from SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. Dorn came with more than 30 years of nursing experience, most recently specialized in providing urgent care services. She has also provided care to patients as a Hospitalist and previously served as an Emergency Department Director.

"I'm excited about Rebecca joining Hamilton Heart Center. She brings a vast breadth of experience with her as a med-evac nurse and a seasoned nurse practitioner," remarked Dr. Singh. "I'm certain her addition to our cardiology team will help us deliver prompt, high quality and modern cardiology care to our community."

"Cardiovascular care at Community Memorial has grown exponentially, and the addition of Rebecca will support even more growth in Cardiology," noted Jeff Coakley, President & CEO. "Community Memorial is committed to ensuring patients receive access to cardiology services close to home and adding a Nurse Practitioner to Dr. Singh's practice will make this possible."

"The opportunity to join a team with plans to grow their cardiology program was very intriguing to me. The growth of the program, in turn, offers growth in knowledge. What better combination could there be," remarked Dorn. "The ultimate success lies in the awesome people who make up the team here in Hamilton."



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Community Memorial Continues to Offer SANE Program

Community Memorial, in conjunction with Colgate University and Madison County's Liberty Resources/Help Restore Hope Center, launched the Sexual Assault Program in 2017. The SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners) program provides specialty-trained nurses, who offer all residents of Southern Madison County comprehensive medical and psychological services specifically related to sexual assault. Additionally, victims of domestic violence that may need forensic evidence collection or psychological care are assisted. Prior to 2017, survivors of sexual assault were required to travel 30 to 60 miles from Hamilton to access SANE services.

In its over five years existing in Hamilton, the SANE program has been supported by the CMH Auxiliary, who donated funds to support the Emergency Room Department in purchasing clothing items for patients that were victims of sexual assault. **"When a patient comes to our facility for sexual assault treatment, we often have to collect their clothing as evidence, for forensics. With the funds donated from the Auxiliary, we were able to purchase clothing to have available for patients to wear home in those situations,"** stated ER Director of Nursing **Bernie Casscles**. "This option can make a world of difference in such a sensitive time, and we're so fortunate to have such a supportive Auxiliary."

Additionally, when neighboring hospital Oneida Healthcare implemented the SANE program within their facility in 2019, CMH was a welcoming partner as Oneida came onboard, offering even more care options in Madison County for sexual assault victims. The renovated and expanded Emergency Department of CMH, which opened its doors almost a year ago to patients, Community Memorial is able to offer more private treatment spaces, a private shower within the department, more room to maneuver equipment, and increased space for private consultation amongst the SANE nurse, advocate and law enforcement.

SANE services include STD/STI testing, advocate support, counseling, follow up care and forensic medical examinations that collect and secure evidence in the eventuality a survivor chooses to do so and in order to prosecute the perpetrator. Treatment and recovery from such a traumatic event, along with SANE advocates offering longtime care, is extremely vital for any patient that needs it. The SANE program recently expanded their services in August of 2022 to include response assist with medical/psychosocial/ and forensic care of victims of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, non-fatal strangulation, human trafficking, and neglect.

To learn more, or to support the services offered at Community Memorial, please visit www.communitymemorial.org.

Community Memorial Hosts Drive-Flu Event

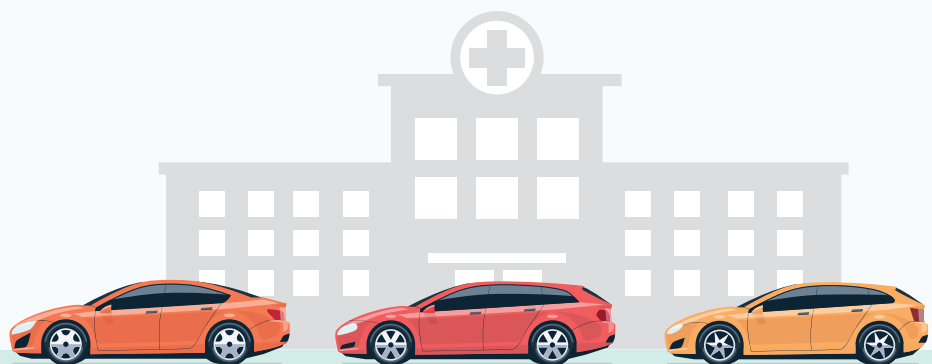
Community Memorial Hospital continued its popular community event on September 16th, with the 4th annual Drive-Flu Clinic. This year, over 270 flu shots were provided for area residents.

Offered in the south parking lot of the organization's main campus, staff was prepped and ready to go for the first session at 7am on a blustery day. Patients ages 18 and over were able to pull in, fill out a simple form, and get their annual flu shot – all while remaining in their vehicle. This safe, convenient and easy access to a flu shot has continued to be a success, and provided a seamless process for patients. "Community Memorial has offered a free flu clinic for years for our area residents, as a resource to combat seasonal flu outbreaks," stated Shelly Trost, RN, Infection Preventionist at Community Memorial. "We encourage everyone to utilize as many preventative options as possible with their personal healthcare."

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine each year. Seasonal influenza is associated with large numbers of illnesses, which can impact school attendance, worker absenteeism, and daily productivity.

Patrons were excited to again see the Drive-Flu event, noting how the convenience benefit encourages vaccination. "Each year, our community residents line up bright and early for this event," added Trost. "And, it's a bonus that no appointments are necessary, and household members can come together. We're happy to continue to provide this important service."


To learn more about services offered or to make an appointment with your Community Memorial primary care provider for your annual flu shot, visit: CommunityMemorial.org/family-health-centers or call at 315-824-4600.





Community Memorial

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Urgent Care Hours

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Capital Project Update



Community Memorial is working through plans to resume our transformation of our facility. Our first two phases converted our previous skilled nursing facility into modern, private inpatient rooms and created a brand new Emergency Department. The remainder of the project will provide necessary updates to our medical imaging equipment and centralize our Radiology Department within our facility. The project will also modernize our exterior with a brand new main entrance, and update our laboratory service department.

Like many other organizations, CMH has been met with unique challenges brought on by the economic impact of the pandemic. We have been working with our construction management company, architects, the USDA and lending firm to finalize project details. We're excited to continue to transform our facility and heighten the patient experience. These new spaces will also allow our organization to continue recruiting talented staff to our team. Every dollar raised through philanthropic efforts positively impacts healthcare in Hamilton, and we encourage everyone to learn more about our future by visiting communitymemorial.org/foundation/capital-campaign.