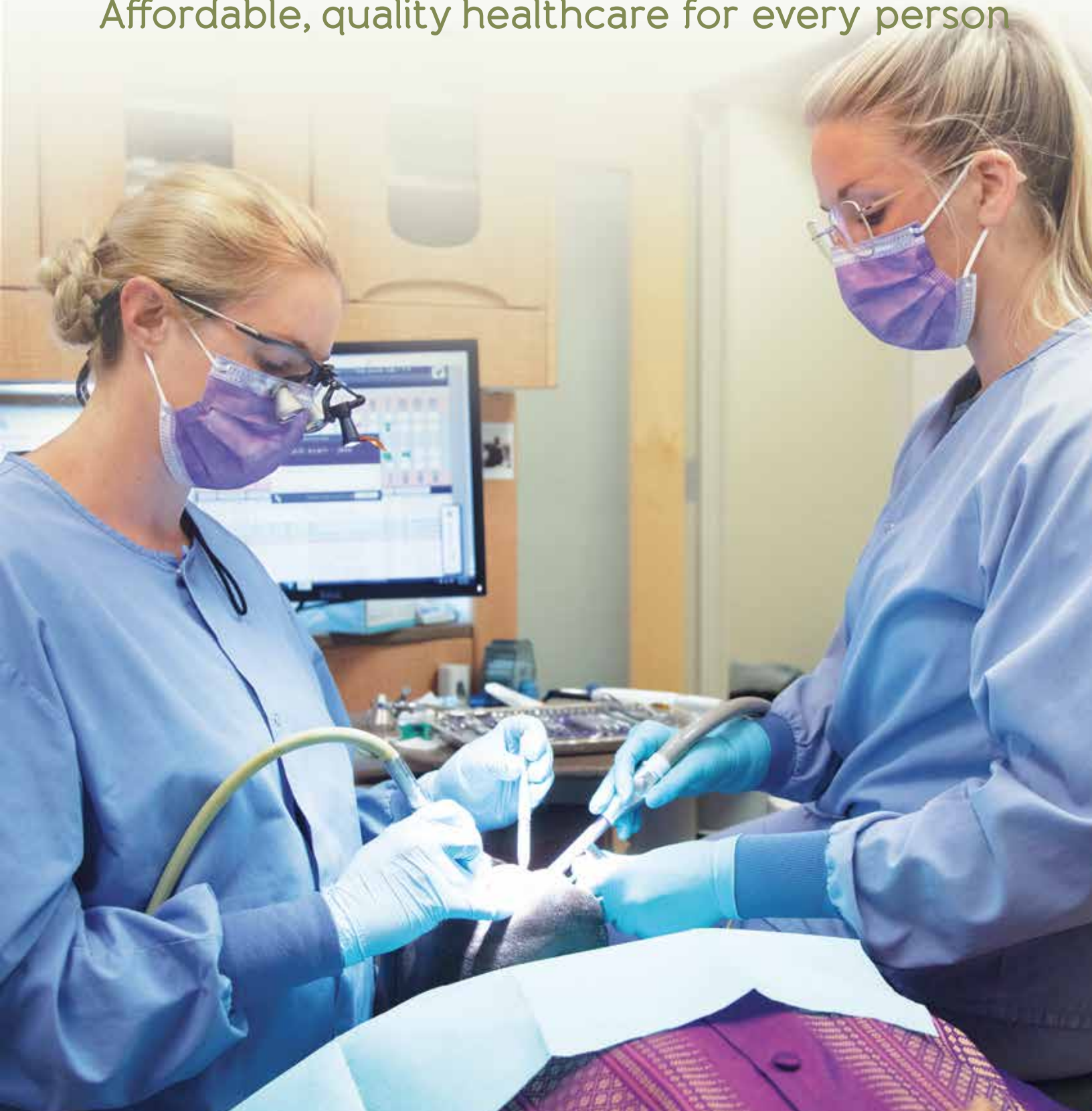


Fall 2019



# FAMILY HEALTHCARE NEWSLETTER

Affordable, quality healthcare for every person



**Tanya Baity,  
Certified Nurse  
Midwife**



## With the Care of a Midwife

### *A More Personalized Pregnancy*

When Christina Diaz-Mendez moved to Fargo, she was five weeks pregnant with her second child and without a provider to visit during her pregnancy. After Christina's sister mentioned her experience with a midwife at Family HealthCare, Christina knew she had to come here.

"From my very first appointment at Family HealthCare, I knew I was in the right place," Diaz-Mendez says.

Diaz-Mendez saw a certified midwife throughout the entire term of her pregnancy in 2015 and for her third pregnancy a few years later.

"During each of my pregnancies, I knew that my child and I were getting the best possible care," Diaz-Mendez says.

At FHC, a certified midwife cares for women throughout their pregnancies, including delivery of the baby. Midwives also provide for any gynecological needs, such as Pap smears and birth control.

Midwives believe that the natural process of pregnancy and childbirth should be respected, says Tanya Baity, a certified midwife at the clinic. They offer medical interventions, such as epidurals and inductions, but focus on trusting women's bodies to do what they do naturally.

"We really try to think about the patient as a whole," Baity says. "We offer more personalized care."

The number of FHC patients visiting a midwife has increased in recent years. When Baity started in January 2018, there were 20 deliveries that month. In June 2019, there were 30. FHC currently has one certified midwife on staff and plans to hire another one to replace a provider who is leaving this fall.

Baity says the increase in patients can be traced to a growing metro region and word-of-mouth.

"Our patients, especially those in the immigrant and refugee populations, are part of a tight-knit community," she says.

"If they have a good experience, they'll send all of their friends, cousins, and sisters to that person."

Pregnancy care can be expensive without insurance, so the clinic's sliding fee allows for everyone to receive adequate prenatal care, Baity says.



In addition, the clinic offers same-day appointments, which makes a difference for women who don't have reliable daycare or transportation.

"We strive to make sure every woman feels respected and listened to," Baity says. "If she trusts her provider, she's more likely to come in every month and that makes a difference in outcomes."

That trust carries over to other FHC providers. Diaz-Mendez has been impressed by other staff, including two nurses, Danielle Fuller and Dawn Ackerman. Whenever she visits the West Fargo clinic, Diaz-Mendez brings all three of her children.

"Danielle will bring books and give them stickers to keep them entertained," Diaz-Mendez says. "She doesn't have to do that, but she does. Not all nurses do that. She's very sweet."

Dawn has also shown her patient spirit, especially as she communicates with Diaz-Mendez. "Nurse Dawn would always answer all of my questions," she says. "She was great at emailing me back with answers."

In the past three years Diaz-Mendez's perspective on what healthcare should look like has completely shifted. Her expectations have continually been exceeded and she is immensely thankful for the care she and her family has received at FHC.

"I feel like they're all friends, but they're my doctors," Diaz-Mendez says. "They've invested in my life, and they show this by the care they have given my family and me."



Dawn McCollum, Erin Powers, Governor Doug Burgum, Billie Jo Nelson, Kaylin Frappier

## **Family HealthCare Honored for Improving Colonoscopy Rates**

### *We've Achieved a 28% improvement Since 2015*

Family HealthCare was honored with a 2019 North Dakota Colorectal Cancer Screening Achievement Award in March.

We were one of four honorees identified by the North Dakota Colorectal Cancer Roundtable for improvements and success in colorectal cancer screening. We were named Organization of the Year.

With support from the North Dakota colorectal Cancer Screening Initiative, we've achieved a 28% improvement in colonoscopy rates among our patients since 2015. We've done that by reducing financial, transportation, and language barriers that can keep many of our patients from accessing this lifesaving screening.

It requires creativity and resourcefulness to remove these barriers – and it's worth the effort.

"It is encouraging to see the number and diversity of stakeholders committed to improving colorectal cancer outcomes in our state," says Dr. Donald Warne, NDCCRT chair and associate dean of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

We were honored with the other awardees by Governor Doug Burgum during his proclamation of March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Other recipients of the award included: Rep. Jon Nelson of Rugby, ND (Champion of the Year); Valley Community Health Center (innovators Award), and Standing Rock Indian Health Service (Innovators Award).

# First FHC Patient Cured of Hepatitis C

## *And There's More Work to Do*

A new primary care-based clinical model for treating hepatitis C has resulted in a success story for Family HealthCare: a patient cured of the disease.

"The patient and his family were grateful. It was a sweet victory," says Amber Slevin, a clinical pharmacist at FHC.

And there's more work to do.

Slevin is part of a team of FHC healthcare providers who established a hepatitis C clinic. Currently four patients are being treated for the disease. As of July, two more were approved for treatment and expected to start therapy soon.

Hepatitis C is caused by a virus that you can catch if you come into contact with contaminated blood. It's the leading cause of liver cancer and liver transplants.

The disease has been treatable in the past, but cure was not easy nor likely.

Less than a decade ago, the primary medication for treating hepatitis C was essentially a form of chemotherapy that caused severe side effects.

Patients administered shots for a year and still only had about a 50% chance of a cure.

"It was very difficult to tolerate and many patients were not eligible to receive the treatment because of pre-existing health conditions," Slevin says.

The early 2010s brought the introduction of drugs that attacked the virus directly by working in the liver where it reproduces. Eventually, researchers developed all oral, direct-acting antiviral treatments, which are more effective and tolerable.

"These agents are effective against all types of hepatitis C and we can use them in populations that couldn't use the older medications," Slevin says.

The new drugs make it easier for patients to complete treatment. Therapy can be managed effectively in a primary care setting, meaning that patients can see their regular healthcare providers instead of a specialist. Drugs are taken daily for 8 to 12 weeks in most cases, so patients are more likely to stick with the protocol.

And, most patients have a 95% or greater chance of being cured if they follow through with their treatment plan.

"A cure for patients who go on therapy is no longer rare," Slevin says.

FHC is the first primary care clinic in North Dakota to offer hepatitis C treatment and hopes to be a model for other federally qualified community health centers across the nation.

With an effective treatment and clinical model established, the FHC team now focuses on increasing access to treatment. That means addressing barriers such as medical insurance and increasing the number of patients who are screened for the disease. A significant number of patients who have hepatitis C don't realize it until their liver is damaged, Slevin says.

"It's a relatively silent disease," Slevin says. "The earlier we can identify and treat it, the less likely people will experience severe liver disease or pass along the virus."





**Whitney Fear,  
RN Case  
Manager**

## Addressing Mental Health

### *A Regular Part of Peoples' Healthcare*

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Whitney Fear dreams of a time when addressing mental health is as accepted as taking care of one's diabetes or heart disease.

Fear has spent a lifetime among people whose mental health needs are unmet – either through lack of access to healthcare or because they're ashamed to admit they need help. It's one reason she decided to become a psychiatric nurse practitioner.

When Fear finishes her education this summer, she'll become the only behavioral health professional at Family HealthCare who can prescribe medications and see children. She will join a team that includes a social worker and counselor.

"There's a large population who is not being served; they're square pegs trying to fit into round holes," she says. "Family HealthCare has a reputation for doing what needs to be done to meet peoples' needs. I feel so positive about what we're going to be able to do."

Fear decided to pursue the graduate degree after hearing that it could take up to nine months for someone in the Fargo-Moorhead community to see a behavioral health prescriber.

She's worked in the nursing field for more than 10 years, five of those at FHC. She currently serves in the FHC homeless clinic where she has learned to appreciate patients for who they are.

"We support people as they determine what health changes they're willing to make," she says.

That may mean helping patients who have substance abuse disorders reduce the health effects of drug or alcohol use instead of nagging them to quit.

It also means looking at all the other factors that affect health outside of healthcare.

"I grew up in poverty on a reservation (in South Dakota)" Fear says. "I've seen firsthand how things like lack of resources, unemployment, and discrimination affect health."

She's also aware of how her personal background may help reach more patients.

"Science shows us that we are taken better care of by people who are like us, who have our background," she says. "I've heard Native people say they wish there were more healthcare providers like them. Maybe I was meant to be that person."

As a behavioral health professional, Fear's interests are in substance use disorders, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress syndrome, and other disorders associated with trauma. She designed her clinical experiences to better connect with the patients at FHC who face these diseases and disorders.

"I know that there are higher incidences of depression and anxiety among those living in poverty, which describes a lot of our patients," she says.

Addressing mental health could be as simple as encouraging a patient to practice yoga or as complicated as combining drugs and therapy for better health. But, when mental health issues are addressed, other health factors improve. For example, Fear says a person who abuses drugs or alcohol is more likely to maintain sobriety if he or she addresses the underlying mental health issues.

"There's so much we can do to make mental health a regular part of peoples' health care," she says.

## “It Became My Heart’s Mission”

### *Marlene Espejo Retires After 22 Years*

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Marlene Espejo knows how to say at least one greeting and “thank you” in more than 15 languages. She learned the phrases so she could better connect with her patients. It was a simple way she could be a welcoming presence in trying times.

This summer she retired after 22 years at Family HealthCare – 17 of those as the refugee health nurse case manager.

“It became my heart’s mission,” she says. “I’ve never tired from learning about other people and learning how we can live better together.”

Over her career, Espejo witnessed numerous success stories as former refugees integrated into the Fargo-Moorhead community. She also helped shape a health program that better meets the needs of new Americans.

In the 1990s, when she started working with the new American populations, more than 700 refugees were resettled into the community each year.

At the time, there was no streamlined process for addressing their health needs. Healthcare providers had to rely on friends and family members to translate.

In the years since, much has been accomplished. Family HealthCare now offers health orientation for new Americans, which addresses everything from budgeting for healthcare to demonstrating how to use a body thermometer. New Americans are connected with a health mentor who can help them navigate the health system. Family HealthCare also has a team of medically certified interpreters.

Even as things have changed, one thing hasn’t.

“It’s always been about relationships,” Espejo says. “We want to be among the people who welcome and help refugees live their best lives.”

Espejo played a big role in leading that mission. We will miss her as she moves on to explore new ways to use her passions and interests.

## **Alex Stern Family Foundation, FM Area Foundation Grants Expand Access to Behavioral Health Services**

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### *“We’re Thankful for the Support From Two Longstanding Partners”*

Family HealthCare received two grants to help implement telehealth capabilities in our clinics.

We received a \$10,000 grant from the Alex Stern Family Foundation and a \$5,000 Basic Human Needs Grant funded by the FM Area Foundation.

The grants will be used to purchase technology that will expand our patient’s access to integrated behavioral health services – a key service

to treat opioid use and addiction.

Family HealthCare is a primary provider of medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction in the Fargo-Moorhead area. This means we combine behavioral therapy and medications to treat the substance use disorders. (continued on next page)



## Behavioral Health Services

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*(Continued)*

As the number of individuals in the region who need treatment grows, we have worked diligently to expand needed services.

“We are thankful for the support from two longstanding partners,” says Patrick Gulbranson, chief executive officer at FHC. “With their assistance, we are better able to meet the needs of the community.”

In the past year, we added two providers who specialize in behavioral health. They are primarily focused on treatment of trauma, depression and anxiety, chronic illness, pain management, and substance abuse. Patients seeking behavioral health treatment must receive a referral from one of our primary care medical providers.

The grants and telehealth technology will allow us to provide even more high-quality services to populations that find access to care challenging.

The Alex Stern Family Foundation supports the arts, social welfare/human services, education, youth recreation, civic projects, and health issues for the benefit of the greater Fargo-Moorhead area. Since 1977, the Foundation has invested over \$15 million in nonprofit organizations in Cass and Clay counties.

The FM Area Foundation was created by and for the people of Cass County, North Dakota, and Clay County, Minnesota. The foundation manages charitable funds and provides grants to qualified nonprofit organizations.

## Intern Spotlight

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*Brianna Gruenberg*



Concordia College gave me many opportunities during the past four years. I grew as a person through the variety of classes I took, stepped out of my comfort zone through my semester study abroad experience in Italy, built confidence as a student-athlete on the Cross Country and Track teams, and helped many people through my involvement in Habitat for Humanity and volunteering in the Fargo/Moorhead community.

Growing up in a Christian family that values serving others and helping them in whatever ways we can is what led me to the healthcare industry during the end of my freshman year. I quickly realized the positive difference you can make in people’s lives and I was excited to be part of that. With my family living in Moorhead, I knew I wanted to complete my summer internship in my hometown community. Family HealthCare was my top choice after I heard Pat Gulbranson, CEO, speak about the mission of the organization during one of my classes, junior year.

Over one year later, I was excited to hear I had been placed at Family HealthCare. The mission and vision align perfectly with my values and goal of serving others. I believe every human being has a right to healthcare, and Family HealthCare does this by delivering quality and affordable care to every person who walks through their doors.

Thank you Family HealthCare – Brianna Gruenberg

## Family HealthCare Board of Directors

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### *Big Decisions Are Best Made From Multiple Points of View*

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Will Wright, CPA - Vice President  
Steve Skoblik, BA - Treasurer  
Dr. Stephen Nelson, MD - Secretary  
Sandy Holbrook, Ph.D, MS  
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Melissa Longtine, M.Ed.  
Mary Fischer, MPH  
Wanda Roden, BS

#### **Become a Board Member**

Learn more about how to apply  
Call: 701.551.2440  
Email: [jsorby@famhealthcare.org](mailto:jsorby@famhealthcare.org)

## FHC Establishes The Family HealthCare Qualified Endowment

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### *Make an Even Bigger, More Lasting Difference*

"Did you know there is a way you can make an even bigger, more lasting difference? With significant tax savings, you can give more and give forever. Through the North Dakota Charitable Income Tax Credit, you can claim a credit of 40% on a minimum donation of \$5,000 to a qualified endowment; Family HealthCare has such an endowment set up at the FM Area Foundation.

This credit is on top of the savings you can receive on your federal return by itemizing your qualifying charitable donations."

"If you'd like to learn more about the 40% tax credit and how you can turn this year's giving into a forever gift, please contact **Julie Sorby at 701-551-2450 or [jsorby@famhealthcare.org](mailto:jsorby@famhealthcare.org)**."

## Your Donation Makes A Difference

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### *We Need Your Help to Offer Quality Healthcare to Every Person*

#### **DONATION**

Family HealthCare depends on donations from people like you to provide a wide variety of services, from general medical exams and X-rays to vision and dental care. We need your help to make sure our efforts go even further and continue our mission of providing affordable quality healthcare for every person.

- A \$25 donation will provide one comprehensive health care patient visit.
- A \$40 donation could give a child his or her first dental exam.
- A \$100 donation would cover all chronic care appointments for an elderly diabetic patient.
- A donation of any amount is appreciated.  
To donate securely online, visit our website.

#### **HOW TO GIVE**

##### **Online**

[www.famhealthcare.org/donate](http://www.famhealthcare.org/donate)

##### **Phone**

701.551.2450

##### **Mail**

Family Healthcare  
Attn: Julie Sorby  
301 NP Avenue  
Fargo, ND 58102

#### **CONTACT US**

##### **Email**

[jsorby@famhealthcare.org](mailto:jsorby@famhealthcare.org)

##### **Phone**

701.271.3344

# Meet Our Dental Providers

*The brightest smiles at Family HealthCare*



**MATTHEW EATON, DDS**  
Doctor of Dental Surgery



**MATTHEW HIEB, DDS**  
Doctor of Dental Surgery



**PEDER ARNESON, DDS**  
Doctor of Dental Surgery



**DEVIN WALKER, DDS**  
Doctor of Dental Surgery



**NICOLE REARDON, DDS**  
Doctor of Dental Surgery



**AMANDA TERVEEN, DDS**  
Doctor of Dental Surgery



**JEFF GOODRICH, DDS**  
Doctor of Dental Surgery



**JESSICA OCHSNER, RDH**  
Registered Dental Hygienist



**JILL O'KEEFE, RDH**  
Registered Dental Hygienist



**REBECCA LOMMEN, RDH**  
Registered Dental Hygienist



**TANTINE MULASI, RDH**  
Registered Dental Hygienist



**TRAVIS SWENSON, RDH & RDA**  
Registered Dental Hygienist



**KAITLIN SILLERUD, RDH**  
Registered Dental Hygienist



# FAMILY HealthCare

301 NP Avenue, Fargo, ND 58102

701.271.3344

[www.famhealthcare.org](http://www.famhealthcare.org)

## Contact and Locations

### Main Clinic & Pharmacy

301 NP Avenue, Fargo

Clinic: 701.271.3344

Pharmacy: 701.271.1495

Monday - Friday

Clinic: 7:30 am - 5:00 pm

Dental: 7:00 am - 5:30 pm

Pharmacy: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

### Homeless Health Services

311 NP Avenue, Fargo

701.271.3344

Monday - Friday

7:30 am - 12:30 pm

### Moorhead Dental

715 North 11th Street  
Suite 106B, Moorhead

701.271.3344

Monday - Friday

7:00 am - 5:30 pm

### West Fargo Clinic

726 13th Ave. E.,  
West Fargo

701.271.3344

Monday - Friday

8:00 am - 12:00 pm

1:00 pm - 4:30 pm

### South Fargo Clinic

4025 9th Ave. S., Fargo

701.271.3344

Monday - Friday

8:00 am - 5:00 pm

### Valley City

City-County Health District  
415 2nd Ave. NE., Valley City

701.271.3344 (main office)

Wednesday & Friday

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

## Get Involved

Become a Family HealthCare patient or volunteer.  
Visit us and tour our facility, or use it for service club  
meetings or other organizations.

[www.famhealthcare.org](http://www.famhealthcare.org)

