

# RiverView Health

Optimal  
care blends  
high tech,  
high touch

*Blending technology with  
compassion and personal  
care sets RiverView apart.*

by Debra Boardman, CEO

Cutting edge technology defines health care today. Due to major technological advances and development of new equipment and techniques, many people are recuperating faster and in general, living longer and better. At RiverView Health, we continually ask ourselves how we can maintain a balance that melds “high tech” and “high touch” for optimal patient care.

“High tech” is essential if RiverView is going to continue to grow and meet community needs. But in our quest to provide new technology, we must not forget the importance of continuing the “high touch” reputation that has made RiverView strong. As I look back on this past year, I’m pleased with the ways I see that our staff has blended these two very different, but equally important qualities.

We made a \$350,000 investment in digital mammography, the most advanced breast cancer detection technology available today. It’s very high tech. Our patient surveys indicate women chose RiverView because they wanted this technology, but they loved us because of the way our staff explained the procedure, listened to the women’s concerns and cared for them personally. That’s high touch.

High tech isn’t always massive equipment. Even when the technology is a little thing, it can make a significant difference in a patient’s life. The assistive communications device that Judy Nephew uses allows her to “talk” to other people and control her physical environment. Nephew, who has ALS and has been unable to speak for 10 years, greatly expanded her world when RiverView speech pathologist Marie Johnstad introduced Nephew to this piece of technology. High tech can be as simple as the new oxygen level monitors that clip onto a patient’s finger, providing all the information a nurse needs in a non-threatening, non-invasive manner.

Nor is high tech always about equipment; it may also include specialized services. For example, last spring Dr. Colin Fennell introduced a new platelet treatment technique that heals elbow tendonitis. My husband, Paul, had that procedure. Almost overnight, he experienced real relief from pain and discomfort that had plagued him for months.

Dr. Alex Wong, who joined RiverView this fall, is skilled in minimally invasive laparoscopic techniques that contribute to patients recuperating faster from surgery. While many rural areas lack some specialized services because of physician shortages, we’re fortunate to have qualified, capable medical staff



*RiverView CEO Deb Boardman visits with patients and staff in the Cardiac Rehab Unit. Cardiac Rehab is one of several areas with new technology that enhances patient services.*

members. For instance, despite a national shortage of urologists in rural areas, Dr. Steve Schultz has moved the bulk of his medical practice to RiverView. Pain management specialists are limited in number and in high demand. Dr. Panjini Sivanna, a Fargo pain management specialist, began seeing patients at RiverView in November.

Improved ancillary services also contribute to our high tech focus. With the PACS system, patients get answers faster because their provider can confer with the radiologist even when the radiologist is not in the hospital. The same is true with lab tests. In the past, patients had to wait several days for results from specialized lab tests. Now, patients can have their lab work done at their convenience in Crookston and the tests are couriered to the Fargo Airport and flown to Mayo Clinic for analysis. Patients get their lab results back the following day.

This spring, we will begin installing a new computer system that will make patient medical records completely electronic. Once it’s in, a patient’s medical record can be accessed electronically from any clinic or hospital anywhere.

Technology is certainly improving life for our patients. But old-fashioned, hands-on care remains equally important. That’s our ongoing challenge: to do both and to do both well. High tech and high touch - a great combination that results in great patient care.



*New technology makes a difference in patients’ lives, from simple devices like this one that helps one patient communicate to major equipment purchases that impact hundreds of patients.*

## Grateful families support growth

Do good deeds lead to more good deeds? RiverView Foundation Director Kent Bruun says they do.

“What potentially happens when you have a donor participate in an effort that benefits RiverView is what I call the snowball effect,” Bruun said. “Every week I see increased numbers of families and individuals sharing true stories of how RiverView Health positively touched their lives or loved one’s lives. These families support RiverView through the Foundation and their donations generate new donations from others.”

For instance, an anonymous donor made a contribution to Cardiac Rehab in appreciation of how that service had helped him return to an active lifestyle following a heart attack. That donation triggered other gifts, eventually adding up to over \$200,000 in contributions designated

toward cardiac services.

“People don’t realize how powerful that initial gift is,” Bruun said. “They may think their contribution is modest, but when you look at the potential for future matching gifts, great things happen.”

With increasing

shortages of health care workers and the added difficulty of attracting them to rural settings, scholarships can help local individuals get their education and then return to their home



*The Foundation annually sponsors Philanthropy Day. The event includes free health screenings and health education.*

community to work. Foundation scholarship programs making a difference include the Tom and Pat Lenertz Family Healthcare Scholarship, Bishop Afonya Healthcare Scholarship and Valborg M. Erickson Fund of the Lutheran Community/Care Center Healthcare Scholarship. The latter fund will award \$11,000 to five RiverView Care Center employees for the spring 2009 semester.

Last month Bruun announced that Dakota Medical Foundation (DMF) awarded RiverView Foundation its Certificate of Excellence Award for responsible and accountable management of funds. DMF has also awarded the Foundation a \$12,500 donor match incentive grant toward the Inpatient Renovation Project.

“RiverView Foundation’s operating expenses are supported by interest earned on endowments previously donated to the Foundation,” Bruun explained. “This structure allows current financial contributions to be maximized towards enhancing medical services. The Foundation has successfully secured over \$425,000 in grant funding. We’ve really built a model of efficiency.”

Needs and demand for healthcare services also continue to increase. According to Bruun, RiverView serves a market area with over 21 percent of the population age 60 or older compared to a 12 percent average statewide. By the year 2030, the total senior population (65 years or older) in Polk County is projected to grow by 60 percent.

“For us to continue being a competitive hospital that is at the top in services and quality, we really need gifts and help from the community,” Bruun stressed.

Donors have various options for giving. They can designate their gifts to specific projects or toward the Friends for Life program. Bruun also encourages people to look to the future and include the Foundation in their wills. To learn how you can help, call Bruun at 218-281-9249.

## Staff responds to personal needs



*Getting down to a child’s level is one small way staff helps children feel more comfortable in unfamiliar situations.*

RiverView employees often give of themselves and contribute spontaneously in ways that touch patients’ hearts and demonstrate RiverView’s good fortune in having such a dedicated staff.

A child was admitted to RiverView ICU with a respiratory illness. When his condition worsened, the physician recommended transferring the child to a facility with a pediatric care unit. The young parents had made many trips back and forth to another area hospital before bringing the child to RiverView and their finances were exhausted. Hospital nurses and respiratory care staff took up a collection among themselves to give the parents gas money to go be with their child.

“That’s not an isolated incident,” Chief Nursing Officer Vicky Korynta said. “We’ve had numerous occasions where staff members have reached out to help patients with personal needs. Our staff often says they feel like family, and our patients are an extension of this family.”

Recently, RiverView initiated a program that supplies needy families with gas vouchers. Hospitals are asked to document community benefits they provide, but many benefits like these are unseen, said CEO Debra Boardman. “I think our staff’s generosity is a testament to the types of individuals that care for our patients. They are concerned not only about patients’ physical needs, but the needs that go far beyond hospital walls as well.”

That’s the RiverView spirit.

## First in region: Digital mammography

Mammograms aren't at the top of any woman's list of things they want to do. But when Kathi Lindberg talks about having a mammogram at RiverView Health, she has only positive things to say.

"From the very first thing when you enter the reception area, it's a warm, welcoming, relaxing atmosphere - there's not that sterile or clinical feeling," Lindberg said. "And that comfort just continues throughout your whole appointment. I've had various staff members do my mammograms over the years and they are all very qualified in how they explain things and make you feel relaxed."

In December, Lindberg was introduced to RiverView's new Digital Mammography System. Lindberg, who lives in Mentor, began having regular mammograms in Crookston 11 years ago. She has needed follow-up ultrasound examinations three times because of breast tissue changes or areas noted as suspicious.

A National Cancer Institute (NCI) study concluded that digital mammography is superior to film mammography for certain women - particularly women under 50, perimenopausal women and women who have dense breast tissue. Digital mammography takes an electronic image of the breast and stores it directly in a computer so the images, which are clearer than standard mammograms, are instantly available. The patient and mammography technologist can see these images, which are transmitted electronically to the radiologist for interpretation. The digital capability allows the radiologist to manipulate the images for better diagnostic capabilities.

"I did appreciate the new digital technology because I could see on the monitor right there what Janeen was looking at and ask questions and have her explain what we were seeing," Lindberg said. "It's faster too because they can retake the film right away if it's a poor image so it shortens your waiting time."

Mammography Technologist Janeen Brule said patients are often surprised that by seeing the image they subsequently better understand what she is explaining to them. "I just see less apprehensiveness among patients," Brule said. "And if they've been having standard mammograms, we can digitize the old films so the radiologist is still able to compare their digital mammo with previous ones."

Women's breasts are positioned and compressed the same for both film and digital mammography, said RiverView Radiology Manager Dawn Bjorgo.

Lindberg says she doesn't find the procedure painful. "But even if there is discomfort involved for some women, the benefits outweigh it when you think about a bit of discomfort compared to not being diagnosed with cancer until it's too far along," she commented.



*Mammography technician Jennifer Bailey takes time to clearly explain the capabilities and benefits of the new digital mammography system.*

"Another thing I think is a plus at RiverView is that you get your letter with the final results in less than a week," she added. "It's kind of on your mind until you get that letter so it's nice not to wait long."

RiverView's commitment to high touch, high tech is exemplified in its mammography services, Bjorgo said. Many small or rural hospitals can't afford the cost of digital technology, limiting its availability to women. RiverView is the only health care provider in a 60-mile radius offering in-house digital mammography technology.

"We're proud to say we also offer all other related breast biopsy procedures to enhance digital mammography," Bjorgo said.

The warmly decorated mammography suites and the personal attention staff give to patients complement the advanced technology. Digital mammography capabilities have brought many new patients to RiverView, and Brule said patients are very complimentary about the atmosphere and how it differs from the sterile environments in many facilities.

"I'm just thankful we have the facility we do," Lindberg said. "They are excellent."

# RiverView Health

## Meet our RiverView babies

Visit our web site:

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



**ALLISON PATRICIA**  
Date of Birth: 11/10/2008  
Time of Birth: 7:51 a.m.  
Parents: Jody & Nathan  
Delivered by: Drs. Hanson & Afonya



**JULIANA JEAN**  
Date of Birth: 11/10/2008  
Time of Birth: 8:21 p.m.  
Parents: Kathleen & Josh  
Delivered by: Dr. Hanson



**JACK AARON JOSEPH**  
Date of Birth: 11/11/2008  
Time of Birth: 1:39 p.m.  
Parents: Robbie  
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



**LEAH RANAЕ**  
Date of Birth: 11/12/2008  
Time of Birth: 12:27 a.m.  
Parents: Jodi & Daniel  
Delivered by: Dr. Kazmouz



**ETHAN ROBERT**  
Date of Birth: 11/16/2008  
Time of Birth: 10 a.m.  
Parents: Stacey & Jason  
Delivered by: Dr. Kazmouz



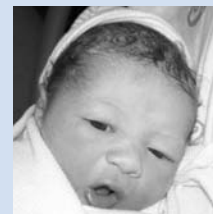
**BRAYDIN WAYNE**  
Date of Birth: 11/19/2008  
Time of Birth: 4:10 p.m.  
Parents: Trisha & Steve  
Delivered by: Dr. Hanson



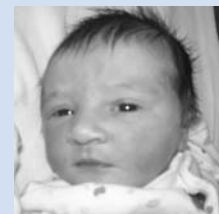
**SKYLAR JEAN**  
Date of Birth: 11/25/2008  
Time of Birth: 7:51 a.m.  
Parents: Ashley & Jeremy  
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



**JADE SCOTT**  
Date of Birth: 11/26/2008  
Time of Birth: 12:43 a.m.  
Parent: Emily  
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



**ELLOWYN OPHELIA**  
Date of Birth: 11/28/2008  
Time of Birth: 5:51 a.m.  
Parents: Kimberly & Chris  
Delivered by: Dr. Bell



**ADELYN JULLETTE**  
Date of Birth: 11/30/2008  
Time of Birth: 1:43 a.m.  
Parents: Jamie & Ryan  
Delivered by: Dr. Bell



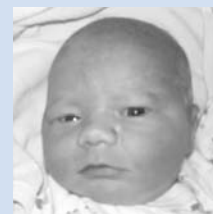
**JOSHUA PETER**  
Date of Birth: 12/1/2008  
Time of Birth: 9:55 p.m.  
Parents: Julie & Adam  
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



**SOPHIA GRACE**  
Date of Birth: 12/11/2008  
Time of Birth: 00:45  
Parents: Kaitlyn & Casey  
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



**SAMUEL PAUL JR.**  
Date of Birth: 12/11/2008  
Time of Birth: 2:02 p.m.  
Parents: Cameren & Sam  
Delivered by: Dr. Hanson



**EVELYN MARIE**  
Date of Birth: 12/12/2008  
Time of Birth: 3:12 p.m.  
Parents: Gina & Grant  
Delivered by: Dr. Hanson



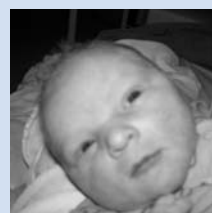
**ALYSON LEE**  
Date of Birth: 12/17/2008  
Time of Birth: 8 a.m.  
Parents: Jami & Shaun  
Delivered by: Drs. Afonya, Kanten & Wong



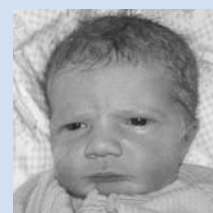
**EASTON MICHAEL**  
Date of Birth: 12/21/2008  
Time of Birth: 8:13 p.m.  
Parents: Kacie & Edward  
Delivered by: Dr. Bell



**BENJAMIN KEVIN**  
Date of Birth: 1/1/2009  
Time of Birth: 4:55 a.m.  
Parents: Lorraine & Kevin  
Delivered by: Drs. Afonya & Bell



**CODY SCOTT**  
Date of Birth: 1/2/2009  
Time of Birth: 9:50 p.m.  
Parents: Laci & Jamie  
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



**LUKE OLIVER**  
Date of Birth: 1/5/2009  
Time of Birth: 4:55 p.m.  
Parents: Becky & Travis  
Delivered by: Drs. Afonya, Hanson & Wong



**ISAAC JULIEN**  
Date of Birth: 1/7/2009  
Time of Birth: 12:13 p.m.  
Parents: Jessica & Julio  
Delivered by: Dr. Shamsi

**RiverView Health**  
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[www.riverviewhealth.org](http://www.riverviewhealth.org)

**RiverView Health  
encompasses:**  
Glenmore Recovery Center  
RiverView Hospital  
RiverView Care Center  
RiverView Home Care  
RiverView Rehab  
RiverView Clinics