

Lockport hospital introduces new model for health care in Niagara County

BY PATRICK J. BRADLEY

Senior Contributing Writer

Health care in eastern Niagara County entered a new era Tuesday, Oct. 10, when Catholic Health began welcoming patients to its new Lockport Memorial Hospital.

Hospital officials say the \$70 million facility, located at 6001 Shimer Drive in the Town of Lockport, will greatly improve accessibility to high-quality care for an estimated 80,000 residents in the eastern part of the county. Its 18-bed emergency department and 10-bed inpatient unit replace services that had previously been offered at the former Eastern Niagara Hospital.

A blessing and dedication ceremony attended by nearly 200 people heralded completion of the \$70 million project. The new hospital is a campus of Mount St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston.

"This is an exciting time for Catholic Health, Mount St. Mary's Hospital and families throughout eastern Niagara County," said Catholic Health Vice President and Mount St. Mary's President CJ Urlaub. "We are proud to expand our services across Niagara County."

"We had a vision," said Joyce Markiewicz, president and CEO of Catholic Health. "Now that vision is a reality."

At 60,000 square feet, the new Lockport Memorial is by far the smallest hospital in Niagara County. It becomes the fifth operated by Catholic Health, joining Mount St. Mary's Hospital, Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Sisters of Charity Hospital and Mercy Hospital of Buffalo.

Planning and construction of the new hospital took three years. From the beginning, it was envisioned as a faith-based response to severe cuts in health care services at the debt-ridden, 110-bed Eastern Niagara Hospital. Eastern Niagara filed for bankruptcy in 2019 and closed in June of this year.

Markiewicz said the neighborhood hospital model adopted by Lockport Memorial Hospital creates a multipurpose health care facility to meet the needs of area residents.

"While this has been a challenging time for health care providers everywhere, rural hospitals have been hit particularly hard because the old models of the past are simply not viable today," she said. "We knew we had to create something for the long term."



Chief Nursing Officer Susan Brooks, MS, BS, RN, NEA-BC, said Lockport Memorial Hospital will ensure that people in the eastern end of Niagara County will have more convenient access to hospital health care. Brooks also oversees nursing services at Mount St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston.

More About Lockport Memorial Hospital

Lockport Memorial Hospital, a campus of Mount St. Mary's Hospital, opened its doors this week. Catholic Health first announced plans to build the new "neighborhood" hospital in Lockport nearly three years ago to ensure more than 80,000 residents in the surrounding community would continue to have access to health care following the closure of Eastern Niagara Hospital. All services are fully operational, except for the medical offices, which are slated to open by the end of October.

Mount St. Mary's temporary emergency room, at 5875 S. Transit Road, Lockport, has closed to coincide with the opening of the emergency department at Lockport Memorial.

The hospital is located at 6001 Shimer Drive on a portion of land that was previously part of Hall's Apple Farm, a local landmark in the Lockport community. Catholic Health secured bond financing, public and private grants, and charitable donations to help fund the \$70 million project.

Plans are currently underway to create an emergency vehicle access road from Route 93, the Lockport Bypass, to expedite hospital access for ambulances and other emergency vehicles.

(Sidebar information courtesy of Catholic Health)

In his opening remarks at the dedication, the Most Rev. Michael Fisher, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, said Lockport Memorial was built with the promise of care to the most vulnerable in the community and compassionate service to all its patients.

"Bless all who labor here to bring the healing power of Jesus," Fisher said.

In addition to emergency and inpatient care, Lockport Memorial offers a range of diagnostic imaging and laboratory services. It has enough room to expand the emergency department by another 18 beds and will make outpatient care available in its clinical

offices by the end of this month.

"We'll deliver health care in a different way, with a focus on preventative care," said Susan Brooks, the chief nursing officer at both Lockport Memorial and Mount St. Mary's Hospital. "Offices on the clinic side will allow us to offer outpatient specialty medical services not currently offered in his area."

Those services will include primary care, women's care, cardiology and neurology, she said.

"With this hospital, people in the eastern end of Niagara County won't have to drive so far to receive those services," Brooks added.

Veterans Day chicken BBQ

Ransomville event to benefit Porter veterans



BY TERRY DUFFY/Editor-in-Chief

First District Niagara County Legislator Irene Myers invites the River Region community to her annual Chiavetta's Veteran's Day chicken barbecue. The event will benefit VFW Lake Ontario Post 313 in Youngstown and the American Legion O. Leo Curtiss Post 830 in Ransomville. It will take place from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 11, at Post 830, located at 2589 Youngstown Lockport Road.

"It's our fifth annual barbecue to benefit Town of Porter veterans' posts. Tickets are \$15 presale and at the door," Myers said. "Tickets are available at businesses in Ransomville and Youngstown."

Sponsored by KiPo Chevrolet in Ransomville, the event will feature Chiavetta's chicken dinners with all the trimmings plus a basket raffle with all proceeds to benefit veterans' posts in the Town of Porter.

"We are looking for baskets," Myers said. "KiPo will accept baskets during their business hours and give people who donate baskets \$10 gift certificates that can be used for any type of service or sale at the dealership. We hope that we get a nice variety of baskets. KiPo is also graciously buying the tickets once again for the veterans at the Heritage Manor."

In addition, she said law enforcement is also welcome to stop by that day for a quick lunch.

"Any men in blue who are working that day are welcome to come and have lunch on the veterans," Myers said.

Tickets are on sale at Patti's Cut Above, Stevenson Hardware and Porter Empty Return in Ransomville, plus Anchor Spirits in Youngstown.

Myers said, "The good thing with this is it helps the veterans' posts stay afloat throughout the year. This is a nice gesture for the community to support our local veterans' posts."

Myers is pictured in a 2023 Chevy Corvette at the Ransomville KiPo dealership. Joining her are Cmdr. Ed Jackson of Youngstown VFW Post 313 and Cmdr. Rick Newman of the Ransomville American Legion Post. (Submitted photo)

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Headaches at work

"Tension" headaches are a common complaint in office work. Work postures which cause prolonged tension on the neck muscles can tug and pull on the small neck bones in a way that create fixation (loss of mobility) or misalignment. As most of the nerves that wrap around the head come from the base of the skull and upper neck, this can cause pressure and irritation of the blood vessels and nerves of the head, resulting in pain.

If you hold your head forward with your chin toward your chest, your neck and upper back muscles are working hard to keep your head from falling too far forward; this straightens or reverses the curve in the neck. Turning your head to one side excessively, or holding a telephone between your neck and shoulder frequently can contribute to muscle fatigue, spinal misalignment, and headaches.

Proper posture, chair support, work station fit, stretching throughout the day, arrangement of equipment and regular chiropractic adjustments can reduce the effects which may be causing or contributing to your headaches, neck, or back pain.

Headaches may also be due to electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure from computers, cell phones, or other electronic equipment. Other symptoms include: sleep disorders, vision problems, sensitive skin, dizziness, chest pain, and nausea.

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