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The Clarion-Plainsman

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Washington County Hospital and Clinics welcomes Pulmonology Provider, Nicole Alsaker, ARNP

By Greta Clemons, WCHC

Washington — Washington County Hospital and Clinics (WCHC) is pleased to announce the addition of Nicole Alsaker, ARNP, as a pulmonology provider joining Dr. Andrew Ashby in expanding specialty care services for the community.

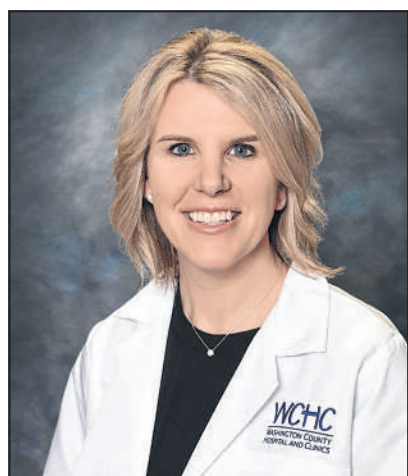
Nicole is a board-certified Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner and brings years of clinical experience in pulmonology and sleep medicine, along with a strong background in acute care. Most recently, she served as a Pulmonology and Sleep Nurse Practitioner at Mercy Hospital in Iowa City and University of Iowa Downtown Campus, where she supported patients through comprehensive evaluation, treatment planning, and long-term care management.

Nicole was recently recognized at University of Iowa Health Care for her patient-centered approach, ranking in the top 10% nationally for patient experience scores.

"We are excited to welcome Nicole to our specialty care team," said Todd Patterson, CEO of Washington County Hospital and Clinics. "Her experience and dedication to patient-centered care will help strengthen our pulmonology services and increase access for patients in our region."

Nicole will see patients beginning Jan. 30, in the Ken and Rosemary Hanson Specialty Clinic, located at Entrance 8 at Washington County Hospital and Clinics.

Patients can access pulmonology services through referral from their health care provider. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 319-863-3936



Nicole Alsaker, ARNP

Packwood Fire and Rescue's Pancake and Sausage Breakfast Jan. 31

Packwood Fire and Rescue will be holding their annual fundraising Pancake and Sausage Breakfast on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 7-10 a.m. in the Packwood Community Building, 122 N. Main St., Packwood.

Everyone is invited to come enjoy pancakes, French toast, sausage, bacon, coffee, and juice. This breakfast is a fundraising event sponsored by the Packwood Volunteer Fire Department to raise funds for the equipment needed to provide fire and rescue coverage to the community. The funds raised will be put toward new protective turnout gear, firefighting tools, and apparatus as the need arises.

Special recognition will be given to Garry Dickey as he retires from the fire department after more than 50 years of dedicated service to the Packwood community.

Free event to learn about Advance Directives

Submitted by Tiffany Crawford, HWC

Hospice of Washington County (HWC) is hosting a free event to learn about Advance Directives on Friday, Jan. 23 at 10:30 a.m. at HWC, 948 E. 11th St., Washington.

You will gain general knowledge on how to plan for your future needs; complete DPOA paperwork, IPOST forms and SAFE folders; learn about future events planned for 2026.

This event is open to all ages.

Learn the Art of Fruit Tree Care

By Andy Miller

WASHINGTON — Home gardeners and orchard enthusiasts are invited to a hands-on Fruit Tree Pruning and Training Workshop on March 18, 2026. Hosted by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, the event will take place from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at 2722 Ginkgo Avenue, Washington, IA.

The workshop features Patrick O'Malley, an ISU Extension and Outreach Field Specialist, who will provide expert instruction on essential techniques to maintain healthy trees and maximize fruit production. Participants will see live demonstrations on established apple and pear trees.

"Pruning and training are critical steps for anyone looking to get the best harvest from their trees," says the ISU Extension team. Attendees are advised that parking is limited and should wear appropriate footwear for an outdoor setting. Cost is \$10 per person. Preregistration is required.

Register at <https://go.iastate.edu/3ZCP55> or call the Washington County Extension office at 319-653-4811.

For more information or accommodation inquiries, please contact omall@iastate.edu or visit <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/washington/>



Pictured at the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors' meeting on Jan. 19, 2026, are, from left: Supervisors Susie Drish and Joe Ledger, Assistant County Auditor Abbie DeKleine, and Supervisor Lee Dimmitt. (Andy Hallman/The Union)

Jefferson County Supervisors discuss cloud phone system

By Andy Hallman, Southeast Iowa Union

FAIRFIELD — The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors met Monday, Jan. 19 and discussed a proposal to swap out the county's landline phones for a cloud-based phone system.

Gordon Flesch Company representative Andrew Longfellow addressed the supervisors over Zoom to talk about the services his company offers and what it was willing to provide for the county. Just as the supervisors were about to dig into the price quote and details about the phone systems, County Engineer DeWayne Heintz asked the board if they wanted to get quotes from other companies, too, before revealing Gordon

Flesch's quote.

The supervisors noted that they weren't required by law to put such a project out for bids because it was under the limit, though supervisors Susie Drish and Joe Ledger were open to taking bids from other companies. Supervisor Lee Dimmitt said that soliciting a Request for Proposal (RFP) would require the supervisors to first establish what they want the phone system to do, or else the county would receive quotes for different projects. He said he wasn't sure there was another local company that could do what Gordon Flesch Company was proposing, and that going out for bids would itself entail expenses.

The supervisors agreed that

they should first find out from their department heads what they need in a phone system, and then they can revisit the issue at a later meeting. The supervisors will be meeting with all the department heads this week for budget planning purposes.

Dimmitt asked Longfellow what would happen to the county's phone system if Gordon Flesch "went away," and he said the company is worth \$220 million and has branches in seven states.

"We're not going anywhere," he said.

Gordon Flesch Company has an office at 406 W. Burlington Ave. in Fairfield.

Call Andy Hallman at 641-575-0135 or email him at andy.hallman@southeastiowaunion.com

Jefferson County Health Center announces opening of JCHC Clinic | Ottumwa

By Amy Vetter

FAIRFIELD — Jefferson County Health Center (JCHC) is announcing the planned opening of a new primary care clinic, JCHC Clinic | Ottumwa, located at 1000 Wildwood Drive, to open April 20, 2026.

JCHC Clinic | Ottumwa will be a primary care clinic designed to serve patients through scheduled appointments. The clinic will initially be staffed by Shelbi Dexter, ARNP, with

ongoing recruitment efforts underway to add a physician and an additional provider. Details regarding scheduling at the new clinic will be shared as the opening date approaches.

In addition to primary care services, JCHC supports continuity of care for patients who require specialty services. At JCHC's main campus in Fairfield, JCHC offers access to Oncology Care, General Surgery, Orthopedic Surgery, and a variety of visiting

specialists allowing many patients to receive specialty care in our region.

"Our goal is to be a reliable and trusted health care partner for this community by offering accessible primary care and helping patients navigate next steps in their care," shared Curtis Smith, Chief Operating Officer at JCHC.

While JCHC Clinic | Ottumwa prepares to open, JCHC encourages patients seeking immediate primary care access to consider the

following options:

- JCHC Clinic | Fairfield, 641-472-4156 — Accepting new primary care patients
 - JCHC Clinic | Richland, 319-456-2058 — Accepting new primary care patients
 - JCHC Walk-In Clinic | Fairfield, 641-472-4156 — Open 7 days a week for non-emergent conditions
- JCHC can also assist patients with transferring medical records from their current health care provider. A Release of Information form is available

at: www.jeffersoncounty-healthcenter.org/recordstoJCHC

JCHC remains focused on long-term reliable access, continuity of care, and meeting the evolving health care needs of the region.

Community members are encouraged to follow Jefferson County Health Center on Facebook and visit www.jeffersoncountyhealthcenter.org for the most up-to-date information as the opening date approaches.



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