



# A True Team Effort

Care team works together  
to help Nancy Coughenour  
regain her independence



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# Welcome to Source

Annually, the Iowa Hospital Association releases its Economic Impact & Community Benefits report, offering valuable insights into the significant economic contributions and community benefits generated by the state's hospitals. We are proud of the role we play in bolstering the economic health of our community.



**Nate Thompson**  
Story Medical CEO

Specifically, the report shows our economic footprint includes a \$57 million annual impact on Iowa's economy.

Additionally, we provide nearly 300 full-time and part-time jobs. These positions not only support individuals and families but also foster economic stability and growth within the region.

Our commitment to job creation underscores our dedication to enhancing the overall well-being of the community we are so fortunate to serve.

Beyond the hard economic numbers presented in this report, we are committed to going further. We remain focused on delivering an array of services and programs that are focused solely

on improving quality of life in our communities.

It is a great privilege to be one of the largest employers in the community and to serve as an economic engine in Nevada and beyond. Thank you for putting your trust in us. We look forward to continuing to grow and serve you and your family.



## We're Hiring!

If you're looking for a career at an organization focused on delivering the Best Experience Every Time, we want to hear from you. We have a number of clinical and non-clinical positions open now.

**Don't wait! Apply TODAY at [www.storymedical.org/careers](http://www.storymedical.org/careers)**

## Story Medical Source



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### FALL/WINTER 2023

- Welcome to Source..... 2
- Work at Story Medical ..... 2
- Infertility Screening..... 3
- Teamwork Leads to Effective Treatment ..... 4
- Story Medical Earns Accreditation..... 5
- A Testament to Resilience..... 6
- FAQs About Pain Medicine..... 8
- Seasonal Vaccines Available..... 9
- Seeking a Provider for Your Children? ..... 10
- Senior Care Taking Shape..... 11
- Zuercher Joins Foundation..... 11
- Story Medical Clinic Accepting Patients.... 12

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#### ABOUT STORY MEDICAL SOURCE

Story Medical Source is a publication of Story County Medical Center. If you have questions or story ideas, please submit them at [storymedical.org/contact](http://storymedical.org/contact).



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# Innovative Screening Helps Couples Struggling to Conceive

For couples struggling to conceive, the journey toward parenthood can be a challenging and emotional one. Dr. Timothy Leeds, MD, at Story Medical Clinic—Nevada, offers a glimmer of hope to those facing infertility with the innovative Rockford Protocol, a low-cost infertility screening that has been transforming lives and increasing the chances of conception.

Dr. Leeds has offered the screening in Nevada for just more than three years.

“It has quickly gained recognition for its remarkable success rate,” Dr. Leeds says. “We encourage couples who have been unsuccessful in trying to conceive for six months to a year to schedule an appointment.”

The typical evaluation involves a thorough physical examination and a series of lab tests. These tests aim to identify any hormonal or chemical imbalances in the body, which may be hindering natural conception.

The protocol focuses on correcting these imbalances to promote natural cycling, ultimately enhancing the chances of achieving a pregnancy. In most cases, the evaluation is covered by commercial insurance.

“The benefit lies in the simplicity and cost-effectiveness,” Dr. Leeds says. “Unlike traditional infertility treatments, this evaluation can be conducted with minimal interventions—most times just lab tests and ultrasounds.”

Upon study of the results, in many cases generic medications and minor procedures can be used to correct hormonal abnormalities.

“The timing is critical,” Dr. Leeds says. “We like couples to allow three to six months after correcting hormonal imbalances to observe the results. This approach optimizes the chances of natural conception before considering more expensive treatments like in vitro fertilization (IVF).”

The success rates of the method are remarkable. Dr. Leeds says that he has seen the chances of pregnancy for those he has consulted with elevate from a 28% success rate to an impressive 50%.

“We are addressing the root causes of infertility, which in most cases are hormonal imbalances,” Dr. Leeds says. “Using this method of screening, we are allowing couples to explore less expensive and less invasive options before pursuing more aggressive treatments.”



**Timothy Leeds, MD**  
Story Medical Clinic - Nevada, Women's Services

**“This approach optimizes the chances of natural conception before considering more expensive treatments like in vitro fertilization (IVF).”**

—Dr. Tim Leeds, Women's Care, Story Medical

If you are a couple who has been unsuccessful in conceiving for six or more months, Dr. Leeds is accepting new patients. Call (515) 382-5413 and mention you'd like to see Dr. Leeds for an infertility consultation.



Marlys Barker has lived with a rare condition since middle school. In recent months, she has worked with Story Medical Clinic provider Jyl Wonnell, PA-C, and a group of specialists to manage the condition.

# Teamwork Leads to Effective Treatment

**After decades of dealing with bouts of what felt like choking, Story Medical providers help Nevada woman find relief**

As a middle schooler, Marlys Barker had an experience she will never forget. In a nail-biter of a softball game, she ripped a ball to the fence. Knowing she had a chance to round the bases she sped from first to second and around third. Heading for home, with her teammates roaring in anticipation, Marlys felt like her throat was going to close. As she crossed home plate, she had the sensation that she was choking and passed out right there on the field.

Aid was rendered immediately and she recovered quickly. There were a number of theories on what may have caused it.

“It was a hot day, so they thought it was heat related,” Marlys remembers. “It happened again a year or so later

at a track meet. But it was hot that day too, so again, they thought it was just some form of exhaustion.”

Marlys never really got an answer to what had occurred—she just hoped it wouldn’t happen again. But through her 20s, 30s and 40s she continued to have infrequent battles with the issue, most often when she was eating or chewing. As the episodes had gradually become more frequent into her 50s, she became more and more uncertain about her own well-being.

Eager to finally get answers, Marlys made an appointment with her primary care provider, Jyl Wonnell, PA-C, of Story Medical Clinic—Nevada.

“At one of my annual wellness visits I mustered the courage to confide in Jyl about what I was experiencing,” Marlys says. “I admitted when it happened—or when I even thought about it happening—that I had a fear of choking to death. Jyl immediately showed concern and was attentive,

compassionate, and assuring. She understood that the occurrence of these episodes was unsettling, even if they were infrequent, and she was determined to get to the bottom of it.”

Jyl ordered an array of tests and consultations. Marlys met with specialists where she underwent a scope procedure to get a look at her throat and completed a breathing test. Neither yielded conclusive results.

However, Jyl didn't stop. She referred Marlys to throat specialist Sarah Moyle, PA-C, of McFarland Clinic. Sarah, who provides outpatient services at Story Medical in Nevada, suspected a rare condition related to Marlys' vocal cords was triggering the episodes. Marlys' speech therapist confirmed that when her vocal cords malfunctioned, they were suddenly closing off, causing a sensation that Marlys only had a pinhole for air. While this condition was rare, it was treatable.

In speech therapy, Marlys completed a swallow study that, while uncomfortable, provided valuable insights. Armed with the information, Marlys' speech therapists taught her breathing techniques and strategies to manage future episodes.

It wasn't long before her newly learned techniques were put to the test. Alone in her office one evening, eating a small snack, Marlys experienced another episode as she attempted to swallow.

“I'll be honest, I panicked for about 20 seconds. I stood up, I tried to get to my door. There was nobody around and I was freaking out,” Marlys recalls. “But it just hit me that I needed

**“She understood that the occasional occurrence of these episodes was unsettling, even if they were infrequent, and she was determined to get to the bottom of it.”**

—Marlys Barker, Nevada

to practice the techniques I was taught. I sat down, did what I learned and in a matter of seconds it was under control.”

Now with an effective plan to address the episodes going forward, Marlys says a tremendous weight has been lifted from her—all thanks to her provider's determination to figure out what was happening.

“Jyl's unwavering support and the collaborative efforts of Story Medical and my specialists has been amazing,” Marlys says. “It is empowering to know that even though I have a rare condition the proper guidance and treatment are available locally to help me manage it.”

## Story Medical Earns Accreditation

Story Medical has been awarded Exemplary Provider® accredited status by The Compliance Team, Inc. healthcare accreditation organization. The Compliance Team is the only accreditation organization to offer the Exemplary Provider designation.

Exemplary Provider®-accredited status is granted to healthcare providers who demonstrate outstanding patient care practices and compliance to The Compliance Team's comprehensive Safety-Honesty-Caring® quality standards. Recipients must demonstrate outstanding healthcare delivery practices during a rigorous on-site facility evaluation. The Compliance Team's accreditations are valid for a 3-year period.

Story Medical's Rural Health Clinic survey was hosted in July and the accreditation notice in August.

“We are proud to earn this recognition,” says Story Medical CEO Nate Thompson. “Gaining this level of accreditation speaks to the teamwork we expect from everyone at Story Medical in delivering excellent patient care and the best experience every time to all who enter the medical center.”





Jerrod McCormick, RRT, with Nancy and Gary Coughenour of Nevada.

# A Testament to Resilience

Efforts of dedicated healthcare professionals play a pivotal role in transforming Nevada woman's life

When Nancy Coughenour first arrived in the Emergency Department at Story Medical, she was in urgent need of medical treatment. Transported by her husband, Gary, she was struggling to breathe, her body was filled with fluid, and her overall health was deteriorating rapidly.

The Emergency staff was able to get Nancy stabilized, but the trip to Story Medical was only the beginning of her journey. Uncertainty loomed as she was transferred between hospitals and nursing homes seeking a breakthrough that

would enable her to get back to independent living.

It was a challenging and bewildering time for Nancy, marked by confusion and fear.

## The Road to Recovery

It wasn't until she returned to her primary care provider, Adrian Palar, MD, at Story Medical Clinic—Nevada, that she felt like she began to make progress.

Dr. Palar was assisted by Art Check, DO, FAAFP, in caring for Nancy. It was determined that she could benefit from an inpatient stay. During that stay, her breathing treatments were administered by Jerrod McCormick, RRT, Respiratory

Therapy Supervisor. During one of Nancy's regular treatments, Jerrod asked her how she had been sleeping.

Nancy's answer was simple: Not very well at all.

Jerrod suspected that Nancy's inability to sleep was due to sleep apnea and she could benefit from either continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) or bilevel positive airway pressure (BiPAP) therapy. Similar therapies, the two help those with respiratory conditions maintain proper breathing while they sleep.

Nancy was administered a sleep study while in the hospital. It showed intervention was warranted.

## Getting Tuned In

"We had tried a bunch of stuff and none of it was really working," Nancy recalls of the weeks-long ordeal that started with the visit to the Emergency Department. "We tried a CPAP and that was kind of hard for me. It wasn't until we got the BiPAP that I really started to sleep. And, boy, did I sleep well."

"No two patients are the same," Jerrod says. "With Nancy, it required a little fine tuning, but once we got it locked in she began to show improvement almost immediately."

The role of sleep in Nancy's recovery cannot be overstated. Undiagnosed sleep apnea had a profound impact on her overall health, leading to cardiovascular issues, irregular heart rhythms, and excessive fatigue. Jerrod says Nancy's experience highlights the importance of addressing sleep disorders in older adults, as sleep quality directly influences daily functioning and overall well-being.

The BiPAP machine played a pivotal role in helping Nancy regain her energy and motivation. Quality sleep provided her with the vigor she needed to engage actively in her rehabilitation, leading to a positive ripple effect throughout her recovery process.

Within days, Nancy was well enough to return home. With her breathing issues under control, Nancy set her sights on getting out of her wheelchair and walking independently again.

"Having the sleep study and getting the BiPAP greatly improved my ability to breathe and sleep, and that led to a better overall quality of life for me," Nancy says.

**"No two patients are the same. With Nancy, it required a little fine tuning, but once we got it locked in she began to show improvement almost immediately."**

—Jerrod McCormick, RRT, Story Medical Respiratory Therapy

## Building Strength

As Nancy regained strength, she began to participate in physical therapy provided by the 21st Century Rehab team at Story Medical in Nevada. Initially, she relied on a walker for mobility, but her determination knew no bounds. With time, she transitioned to using a cane and even walked impressive distances during her recovery. Her resilience and commitment to rehabilitation set new standards in the therapy department, inspiring everyone around her.

## The Heartwarming Support System

Throughout her journey, Nancy received unwavering support from her family, especially her husband, who kept her motivated and encouraged her to persevere. Their dedication to her well-being was a driving force behind her determination to regain her independence.

Additionally, Nancy praised the medical professionals who cared for her throughout her recovery and the roles they played in guiding her towards a successful recovery.

Nancy is quick to point out that her experience sheds light on the importance of community-based, high-quality, compassionate healthcare. She is grateful that she had such easy access to the warm and personalized care she received at Story Medical.

The sense of belonging and familiarity in the community played a significant role in her emotional and physical healing.

"The support and encouragement I have received from my doctors, therapists, and everyone here has motivated me to regain my ability to walk," Nancy says. "I've felt so well cared for here from the word go."

**If you suspect you or a partner may be struggling with a sleep disorder, please visit with your primary care provider and ask for a referral to Story Medical Sleep Medicine.**

# Offering Insight on Managing Chronic Pain



Pain, a universal human experience, often prompts us to seek relief to regain our quality of life. Dr. Keith Barnhill, PhD, CRNA, ARNP, of Heartland Pain Management, offers specialized care at Story Medical. He says understanding pain is vital for his patients.

“Pain is a deeply personal and subjective experience,” Dr. Barnhill says. “Unlike objective medical measurements, pain relies entirely on individual perception and description. As healthcare providers, we depend on patients’ reports and descriptions for assessment and treatment. The more we can build a trusting relationship with our patients, the more likely we are to have a successful outcome.”

## Types of Pain

Pain comes in various forms, including muscle pain, nerve pain, visceral pain (related to organs), and bone pain. Recognizing the specific type of pain is crucial for effective treatment.

## Chronic Pain Prevalence

Dr. Barnhill says that one in three individuals experiences chronic pain for more than three months, emphasizing the need for specialized care. While acute pain responds to simple measures, chronic pain often demands a tailored approach.

## Pain Management Approach

Dr. Barnhill outlines a comprehensive pain management approach with three key components:

- **Conservative Therapy:** Many patients benefit from conservative measures like over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drugs, physical therapy, and chiropractic care. These treatments aim to reduce pain and improve function.
- **Interventional Procedures:** When conservative therapy falls short, interventional procedures become

an option. These include injections, such as epidurals for different

regions, joint injections (shoulders, hips, knees), and radiofrequency ablation, which numbs painful areas by burning tiny sensory nerves.

- **Holistic Approaches:** Focusing on lifestyle changes, holistic approaches include adopting an anti-inflammatory diet, regular exercise, and stress-reduction techniques like relaxation exercises. These lifestyle changes significantly impact pain management.

## Home Pain Management

Dr. Barnhill emphasizes the importance of diet and exercise in managing pain.

“An anti-inflammatory diet, such as the Mediterranean diet, proves beneficial,” he says. “Regular exercise, especially for muscle strength and mobility maintenance, is crucial. Staying hydrated to flush out toxins and maintaining social connections to combat the emotional toll of chronic pain are also recommended.”

## Consulting with a Pain Specialist

For persistent or chronic pain, Dr. Barnhill recommends you consult your primary care provider first. They can evaluate your condition, order necessary tests, and provide initial guidance. If conservative therapies prove insufficient, a pain specialist can offer a more tailored approach.

“Seeking professional help and adopting a holistic approach can empower individuals to regain control over their lives and reduce the impact of chronic pain,” Dr. Barnhill says. “Remember, pain management is a personalized journey, and understanding the type and cause of your pain is the first step toward relief.”

To make an appointment with Dr. Barnhill, please call the Story Medical Outpatient Clinic & Surgical Services Department at (515) 382-7738.



# Seasonal Flu, RSV Vaccines Available

Story Medical Clinics in Nevada and Maxwell will begin offering the seasonal flu shot on October 2 by appointment. You are encouraged – especially if you fall into a high-risk category – to get your shot as soon as possible.

“Flu season typically peaks between December and February, but significant activity can occur earlier than that,” says Dr. Arthur Check, Story Medical Clinic, Nevada. “We are especially encouraging those in high risk categories, including older adults, young children and those with chronic conditions to get vaccinated now.”

For millions of people every season, the flu can mean a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, fatigue, and miserable days spent in bed. However, you may not realize that each flu season, flu also causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and thousands or sometimes tens of thousands of deaths.

But there is a vaccine that can prevent flu. While how well the vaccine works can vary, the benefits from vaccination

are well documented. Studies show that flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors’ visits, missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations.

This is why CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Those falling in high-risk categories include young children, pregnant women, people 65 and older and people with certain medical conditions, like asthma, diabetes or heart disease.

“Those who care for anyone at high risk, including babies younger than 6 months because they are too young to get the vaccine should also make it a priority to get the vaccine,” Dr. Check says. “Getting the flu vaccine is simple, and it’s the most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your family from the flu.”

In addition to the flu shot, Story Medical Clinics will offer the RSV vaccine to adults 60 years and older. Those with Medicare part D will need to get this vaccine from their pharmacy.

For more information or to schedule an appointment call the Nevada Clinic at (515) 382-5413 or the Maxwell Clinic at (515) 387-8815.

## COMPLETE ORTHOPEDIC CARE IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK



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Kakade, MD**

Story Medical offers high quality orthopedic care close to home. Gautam Kakade, MD, offers an array of treatment options, including surgery for those dealing with sports-related injuries, total joint replacements and more. In addition, we can help you recover with a full range of rehabilitation services in partnership with 21st Century Rehab.



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**For more information or to make an appointment, call us at (515) 382-7738.**



**Learn More Online at [StoryMedical.org/orthopedics](http://StoryMedical.org/orthopedics)**

# Seeking a Provider for Your Children?

## Regular checkups with a primary care provider are a cornerstone of keeping your children healthy

As parents, one of our most important responsibilities is ensuring the well-being of our children. This includes not only their immediate health but also their long-term development. One key to maintaining the health of your children is establishing a relationship with a primary care provider and putting a priority on regular well-child checks.

“These routine appointments are vital to ensure children are hitting developmental milestones,” says Audra Poterucha, DO, Story Medical Clinic - Nevada. Rachel Frederick, PA-C, Story Medical Clinic-Nevada adds that finding a provider you trust is important when it comes to caring for your kids.

Several Story Medical Clinic providers in Nevada and Maxwell serve children. In addition to Dr. Poterucha and Frederick, Dr. Arthur Check, Dr. Adrian Palar and Physician Assistants Shane Higgins, Jyl Wonnell and Michelle Jans all see pediatric patients.

“Regular visits to the same healthcare provider allow your child to build a trusting, comfortable relationship with that provider,” Frederick says. The benefits of establishing care and attending routine appointments with a primary care provider include:

### Early Detection of Health Issues

Regular checkups allow healthcare professionals to identify any potential health issues early on, often before symptoms become noticeable. Early detection allows for prompt intervention and treatment, which improves outcomes.

### Tracking Developmental Milestones

From infancy through adolescence, children reach various developmental milestones. Your provider tracks these milestones, including crawling, walking, talking, and cognitive development. Identifying delays or issues early allows for early intervention, which can significantly improve outcomes.

### Providing Guidance for Parents

“In addition to these key areas, regular checkups offer an opportunity for parents to ask questions, and for us to offer insight on healthy activity levels and nutrition, and to keep track of any chronic conditions that may be affecting your child’s overall health and well-being,” Dr. Poterucha says.



In addition to caring for patients, Story Medical Clinic providers regularly participate in community service events. Above Dr. Poterucha visits with children at Lil’ Cubs Childcare Center and Preschool in Nevada.

### Keeping Up-to-Date with Vaccinations and Immunizations

Childhood vaccinations protect your child from preventable diseases. Your provider will ensure your child is up-to-date with immunizations. Keeping vaccines current safeguards your child while contributing to the overall community immunity, helping to prevent outbreaks of contagious diseases.

### Tuning into Behavioral and Emotional Health

Children’s emotional and behavioral health is just as important as their physical well-being. Regular checkups provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns and intervene to address anxiety, depression, or other behavioral disorders.

### So, How is Story Medical Clinic Different?

“We are able to offer full spectrum care at your convenience,” Frederick says. “You are able to see your provider for acute visits and well visits. We reserve times for our sick kids with Kids Clinic hours and availability throughout the day. We also have close relationships with a variety of pediatric specialists.”

Story Medical Clinic providers are also committed to giving back to the community.

“Providers are regularly in the stands at local sporting events, participate in parades, offer talks at local daycares, and attend events like Downtown Trick or Treat night,” Frederick says. “Our goal is to ensuring the community knows we are invested in the health of our youngest residents.”

We are accepting new pediatric patients at Story Medical Clinic. To establish care for your children, please call us (515) 382-5413.



# New Senior Care is Taking Shape

Little by little the new Story Medical Senior Care is beginning to take shape. The overhead view from a drone flyover this Fall clearly shows where the houses that form the new facility will sit.

When complete, the 59,000 square foot facility will enhance independence, comfort and security, while meeting individual needs. It includes:

- 60 spacious private rooms
- Memory care support
- Home-like, inviting porch entries
- Family gathering spaces
- Enclosed gardens for each house
- Therapy room

The project broke ground in the Spring and it will be completed late in 2024. The facility will replace the current Senior Care located in the

original Story County Medical Center building just south of downtown Nevada.

The facility incorporates a number of features that make it feel like home for residents and those who love them. An added benefit is that the facility is located adjacent to the Story Medical campus, making it convenient to access comprehensive care.

The Story Medical Endowment Foundation is raising funds to support the construction of the facility. To learn more about the scope of the Senior Care project, making a gift to the project and naming options for donors, visit [storymedical.org/foundation](http://storymedical.org/foundation).

Keep up with the project on our social media channels at [storymedical.org](http://storymedical.org).

## Zuercher Joins Foundation

Liz Zuercher recently joined Story County Medical Center as the Foundation Coordinator and Grant Writer. With



more than 25 years of experience in non-profit management, fundraising, grantsmanship, and operational leadership, Liz brings a wealth of expertise to her new role.

Liz has more than ten years of experience in hospital operations and management, including directing a hospital foundation. This experience gives her valuable insights into the healthcare industry and the unique challenges faced by hospitals and foundations.

“I am excited to work in partnership with the Foundation Board to meet the needs of the hospital and the community,” Liz says. “I am drawn to Story Medical by the organizational commitment to ensuring access to equitable healthcare for patients. This is a true community hospital living its mission and values and I am excited to work closely with the hospital and foundation leaders as well as the community to direct the Foundation into its next chapter of philanthropy and fundraising priorities.”

For information on making a gift to support Story Medical, please contact Liz by email at [lzuercher@storymedical.org](mailto:lzuercher@storymedical.org) or call (515) 382-7728.

To learn more about our new facility or to reserve a room for a loved one, call Story Medical Senior Care at (515) 382-7019.



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# NEED A PROVIDER? WE'RE TAKING NEW PATIENTS!



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*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Adrian Palar, MD  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Timothy Leeds, MD  
*Nevada*  
Women's Health



Audra Poterucha, DO  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Kelly Check, DPM  
*Nevada*  
Podiatry



Shane Higgins, PA-C  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Jyl Wonnell, PA-C  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Rachel Frederick, PA-C  
*Nevada*  
Family Medicine



Michelle Jans, PA-C  
*Maxwell*  
Family Medicine



Valerie Stallbaumer,  
LAc, MSOM  
*Ames*  
Natural Health

## Story Medical Clinic Locations

Story Medical Clinic  
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(515) 387-8815

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