

# Story Medical SOURCE



# Picture Perfect

New Imaging Equipment at Story Medical



Every Patient. Every Story. Every Day Since 1951.





# Welcome to Source

At Story Medical, our mission is rooted in providing a broad spectrum of high-quality care, always delivered with compassion and respect. In this issue of Source, we are proud to share exciting advancements that strengthen how we serve our community — while also celebrating the measurable impact of the care we provide every day.



**Nate Thompson**  
Story Medical CEO

One of the most significant milestones featured in this issue is the completion and launch of our new, permanent MRI suite. This investment ensures advanced imaging is available right here in Story County, reducing travel, improving access, and enhancing coordination between our emergency, inpatient, and outpatient teams.

Alongside this addition, we've introduced Same Day Care services, expanding timely access for patients who need prompt attention for acute concerns. Together, these enhancements represent our continued commitment to meeting healthcare needs close to home.

Beyond new technology and expanded services, this issue also highlights something even more meaningful: recognition of the quality of care delivered by our team.

Our Emergency Department was recently re-certified as a Level IV Trauma Center, reaffirming our ability to provide 24/7 stabilization and advanced trauma life support.

We also share news of strong quality and patient experience performance, demonstrating that our focus on safety, communication, and coordinated care is

producing real results. In addition, our Senior Care facility has received national recognition, reflecting the thoughtful design, compassionate staff, and high standards that define that environment.

These achievements are not isolated successes. They are the result of dedicated providers, nurses, support staff, and community partners working together with a shared purpose.

At Story Medical, innovation and quality go hand-in-hand, ensuring that whether a patient needs advanced diagnostics, urgent care, senior living support, or emergency stabilization, they receive exceptional care delivered with heart.

Thank you for trusting Story Medical to serve you and your family.

We remain committed to delivering the Best Experience Every Time — today and for generations to come.



## SPRING/SUMMER 2026

Welcome to Source.....	2
Putting Patients First .....	3
In, Out & On With Your Day .....	4
Radiology Adds New CT Scanner .....	5
Picture Perfect: New Permanent MRI.....	6
ER Earns Level IV Status.....	8
Overbey Joins Team .....	9
New Cardiologist in Outpatient Clinic .....	9
Recognition for Senior Care .....	10
75 Years of Service.....	11
You'll Love a Career Here .....	11
Senior Care That Offers More .....	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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# Putting Patients First

## Story Medical Recognized for Exceeding Quality Benchmarks

Story Medical recently received exceptional news regarding its performance in the Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP) Core Measure of Patient Experience, specifically the nationally recognized HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers & Systems) survey.

MBQIP exists to improve the quality of care provided in Critical Access Hospitals by increasing quality data reporting and driving meaningful improvement based on that data. The latest results confirm that efforts at Story Medical are working — and that patients recognize the difference.

Story Medical exceeded benchmarks in:

- Communication with Nurses
- Communication with Providers
- Communication about Medications
- Discharge Information
- Cleanliness of Hospital
- Quietness
- Overall Rating
- Willingness to Recommend

In addition to the above, Story Medical outperforms state and national ED patient arrival to discharge times.

These results reflect feedback from the acute inpatient population and show that Story Medical is outperforming both state and national averages across every measured care dimension — an incredible accomplishment.

In addition to patient experience success, Story Medical's commitment to patient safety is producing measurable results. Through prevention efforts related to Catheter-Associated



Urinary Tract Infections, patient falls with injury, infections, and other adverse events, Story Medical is estimated to have avoided \$161,997.88 in related costs in 2025 alone. That figure represents both financial stewardship and, more importantly, harm avoided for patients.

“As a Critical Access Hospital, we take tremendous pride in delivering high-quality, patient-centered care,” says Becca Power, Story Medical Chief Nursing Officer. “These results reflect the dedication of our nurses, providers, and support teams. Every safe discharge, every clear explanation, every extra moment of compassion adds up. Our patients feel it — and the data shows it.”

While quality data is reported and reviewed monthly across areas such as falls, follow-up appointments, opioid stewardship, and infection prevention, the true story is about the people behind the numbers. This achievement belongs to every team member who prioritizes safety, communication, and excellence every single day.

Simply put: Story Medical is delivering outstanding care — and it shows.

To learn more about the comprehensive services delivered at Story Medical, visit us online at [www.storymedical.org](http://www.storymedical.org).

# In, Out & On With Your Day

## Same Day Care Designed with Patients in Mind

Wake up with the sniffles? Is your youngster running a fever? Did a family member turn an ankle or tweak a shoulder?

If you or a loved one needs to be seen, but isn't sick or injured enough to require an Emergency Department visit, Story Medical Clinic — Nevada is ready to deliver care ... *today*.

Kara Buckingham, PA-C, began serving as the clinic's Same Day Care provider last September.

"I am available for patients who need timely attention but don't necessarily require an ER visit," Buckingham says. "School physicals, urgent medication refills, or quick evaluations—those are just a few examples of what I handle here."

Her mission? To create access and avoid unnecessary Emergency Department visits, giving our community fast and convenient care.

### Fast, Friendly, and Close to Home

Story Medical has offered same-day appointments in the past—with providers rotating a designated overflow day each week—to catch urgent cases when regular schedules were full. Now, Buckingham's dedicated role brings consistency and predictability.

"Previously, if a patient's usual provider's schedule was full, we put them into an overflow slot and they saw whichever provider was available," says Brenda Smith, Director of Story Medical Clinics. "With Kara in this role every day, we're covering that demand from the start, giving us room to better meet patients' needs immediately."

This setup enhances not just access for patients, but also improves scheduling flow for primary care providers.

"If a provider's schedule is full, we can offer an appointment with Kara instead of sending patients to urgent care or the ER," Smith says. "That's ideal for things like earaches, sore throats, minor injuries—care that should happen in the clinic rather than the ER."

### Bringing ER Expertise to the Clinic

Buckingham brings 12 years of experience in emergency medicine, urgent care, and orthopedic urgent care.

"I've sutured lacerations, stabilized fractures, and managed pediatric traumas—it's a wide variety," she says. More than that, she maintains all her certifications including Basic and Advanced Life Support and pediatric trauma, and attends annual conferences to keep her skills sharp.

"That background gives me confidence that I can manage whatever walk-in need comes through the door," she says. "No day is the same—that's what I love about medicine. Helping folks through their acute concern, and knowing I made it easier for them to get care—that's what motivates me in my practice each day."

Buckingham is a familiar face to Story Medical, having filled in at the Maxwell Clinic and delivering care in the Emergency Department in recent years. In 2024, she joined the Emergency team full-time, drawn by Story Medical's small-community feel.

"I love working in a close-knit setting where everyone knows your name. Serving a small community means making a big impact," she says. "Sometimes, that's more rewarding than working at a big system."



**Kara  
Buckingham,  
PA-C**

## Access, Flexibility, and Continuity of Care

This move reflects Story Medical's ongoing mission of delivering the "Best Experience Every Time." By providing same-day, non-emergent access in the clinic—even when primary providers are booked—patients benefit from:

- More timely access to care at the clinic
- Consistency of remaining within their clinic medical home
- Expanded availability for acute concerns
- Reduced strain on Emergency Department resources

Buckingham's arrival also streamlines clinic operations.

"Providers will benefit from a reduction in squeezing same-day patients into their already-full schedules," Smith says. "Our regular appointment slots stay organized, and acute needs get handled swiftly in the right setting. That is a win for providers and patients."

**"I love working in a close-knit setting where everyone knows your name. Serving a small community means making a big impact."**

—Kara Buckingham, PA-C

If you're in need of a new primary care provider or would like to learn more about Same Day Care at Story Medical, visit [storymedical.org/clinics](http://storymedical.org/clinics)

## Radiology Adds New CT Scanner

As part of the expansion that brought a permanent MRI suite to campus (see Page 6), Story Medical also invested in a new CT (computed tomography) scanner — further strengthening advanced imaging services. The new machine replaces a CT scanner that was nearly two decades old.

The new Siemens SOMATOM go.Top CT system is located adjacent to the MRI suite, creating a modern, fully integrated imaging space designed to improve workflow, efficiency, and patient experience.

CT scans play a critical role in evaluating trauma, stroke, internal injuries, lung disease, abdominal pain, and more. The SOMATOM go.Top platform delivers high-resolution imaging with advanced dose management technology, helping to minimize radiation exposure while maintaining exceptional image quality.

For patients, this means faster exams, improved comfort, and quicker answers. For providers, it means enhanced diagnostic confidence and improved efficiency — particularly in urgent or time-sensitive situations.



To learn more about the array of advanced imaging services at Story Medical, visit [storymedical.org/radiology](http://storymedical.org/radiology)

# Picture Perfect



Story Medical's New  
MRI Now in Use

For years, the mobile MRI trailer parked outside Story Medical served an important purpose — bringing advanced imaging to Story County and sparing patients the need to travel out of town. But today, a new chapter has officially begun.

Story Medical's permanent, state-of-the-art MRI suite is now open and serving patients, marking a significant advancement in local healthcare and expanding access to high-quality diagnostic imaging close to home.

“Installing a fixed MRI is a strategic investment in our community's health,” says Nate Thompson, CEO of Story Medical. “It provides convenient access to advanced imaging technology right here in Nevada, something our patients and providers have long hoped for.”

## Why MRI Matters

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is considered the gold standard for evaluating soft tissues. Unlike X-ray or CT scans, which use ionizing radiation, MRI uses powerful magnets and radio waves to produce detailed, cross-sectional images of the body.

This high-contrast imaging is especially valuable for examining the brain, spinal cord, joints, abdominal organs, and blood vessels. Common studies include:

- Brain and spine imaging for stroke, tumors, or disc disease
- Knee, shoulder, hip, or ankle scans for sports injuries and joint pain
- Breast MRI for high-risk patients
- Abdomen and pelvis imaging to detect liver or organ abnormalities
- Vascular exams (MRA) that map blood flow — often without intravenous dye

“Our technologists have always delivered excellent imaging,” says Lance Ackerman, Director of Radiology. “But having the MRI under our own roof changes everything. We control the schedule. We can offer same-day or next-day appointments. It just helps us take another step forward in providing our patients the best level of care, close to home.”

## From Mobile Coach to Fully Integrated Care

The mobile MRI trailer that visited Story Medical for more than a decade was invaluable. Yet its limited schedule and the realities of Iowa weather created challenges for patients and staff alike.

Now, with a dedicated suite built directly into the campus, the MRI is fully integrated into Story Medical's radiology services. The permanent installation eliminates weather-related concerns preventing the mobile unit from traveling, increases availability, and improves coordination between departments.

The new MRI joins a comprehensive suite of imaging services already available on campus, including digital X-ray, CT scanning, ultrasound, bone-density testing, and nuclear medicine.

## Designed With Patients in Mind

Beyond the advanced technology and greatly improved access, the new MRI suite was built with one priority in mind: patient comfort.

The spacious addition includes a dedicated control room, a comfortable patient-prep area, and private changing suites. The scanner itself features a wide-bore design and shorter tunnel to help reduce feelings of claustrophobia.

But perhaps the most innovative comfort feature is the Siemens InnoVision in-bore infotainment system. This integrated audio-visual experience is designed to ease anxiety and make exams feel shorter. Story Medical is among the first hospitals in Iowa to offer this feature.

The system includes a specially designed display and mirror configuration inside the scanner bore, creating the impression of a larger, more open space. Patients can watch movies, view calming video content, or listen to music during their scan. High-quality, noise-canceling headphones reduce the sound of the machine while allowing clear communication with technologists. The system even displays remaining scan time, helping patients feel more informed and at ease.

“Comfort is paramount,” Ackerman says. “From children to seniors, we want every patient to feel safe, informed, and relaxed during their exam. This feature truly enhances the experience.”

## Investing in Community Health

The completion of the MRI suite reflects Story Medical's mission of delivering the Best Experience Every Time. It removes barriers of travel and time while ensuring patients receive timely answers from trusted providers in their own community.

“Our vision is simple — high-quality care delivered with compassion right here in Story County,” Thompson says. “Bringing a permanent MRI under our roof benefits our imaging team, our providers, and most importantly, the families we serve.”

For Ackerman and the radiology team, the opening of the suite represents both progress and promise.

“From sprained knees to complex neurological cases, having MRI on demand elevates the level of care we can provide,” he says. “We're proud to offer this capability to our community.”

With the MRI now in use, Story Medical continues its commitment to advancing healthcare, ensuring that when answers are needed most, they're available right here at home.



# ER Earns Level IV Status

Story Medical's Emergency Department has been officially recertified as a Level IV Trauma Center by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of EMS, reaffirming its critical role in providing 24/7 emergency stabilization and advanced trauma life support for Story County and surrounding communities.

Level IV trauma centers in Iowa are designed to provide Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) prior to a patient's transfer to a higher level of care. Staffed around the clock with trained nurses, paramedics, and providers, Level IV centers focus on rapid evaluation, stabilization, and coordinated transfer for patients requiring specialized trauma services.

Recertification is an extensive process requiring documentation of trauma education, staff competency, clinical protocols, and continuous performance improvement. The effort at Story Medical was led by Trauma Coordinator Amy Stark and Emergency Services Director Andrea Bacon, who guided the organization through the comprehensive review.

"Maintaining our Level IV Trauma designation demonstrates the strength of our emergency team and our commitment to rural healthcare," Bacon says. "Because of the training required,

we are able to rapidly assess, stabilize, and treat patients close to home. It also allows for better coordination with higher-level trauma centers when needed."

For rural communities, timely stabilization can significantly improve outcomes. Story Medical's proximity to patients — combined with structured trauma protocols and access to regional trauma networks — ensures high-risk injuries are recognized quickly and managed effectively.

"As a Critical Access Hospital, being able to stabilize trauma patients around the clock is essential," says Nate Thompson, Story Medical CEO. "Our readiness saves time, improves outcomes, and strengthens rural access to emergency care. I am incredibly proud of the leadership shown by Amy and Andrea, and of the entire Emergency Department team for maintaining this important designation."

Story Medical's Level IV Trauma Center designation underscores its mission to provide high-quality, compassionate care close to home and ensures patients receive immediate stabilization and coordinated access to advanced trauma services when needed.

Learn more about our Emergency Services at [storymedical.org/emergency](https://storymedical.org/emergency)

# Overbey Joins Team

Keegan Overbey, ARNP, is the newest provider in the Story Medical Emergency Department. Overbey, who joined the hospital full-time earlier this fall, brings a strong background in critical care and emergency medicine to his new role.

A nurse practitioner since 2018, Overbey began his career at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, spending four years in the Surgical Neuro Intensive Care Unit before transitioning to emergency medicine.

Most recently, he worked with UnityPoint Health in Des Moines, gaining experience across a range of acute and complex patient care settings.

“I’ve always enjoyed the process of working up patients and identifying what’s really going on,” Overbey says. “Emergency medicine challenges you to think quickly and act decisively—sometimes a single intervention can completely turn a patient around.”

Having served at Story Medical in a part-time capacity since late 2023, Overbey says he was drawn to the hospital’s close-knit atmosphere and exceptional staff.

“The team here is incredible—our nurses, paramedics, and physicians all

work together seamlessly,” he says. “That collaboration makes a huge difference for our patients, especially when every minute counts.”

Story Medical CEO Nate Thompson says Overbey’s skill set and experience make him a natural fit for the organization’s emergency care model.

“Keegan’s background in both intensive and emergency care brings valuable depth to our team,” Thompson says. “He’s committed to providing efficient, compassionate care and exemplifies the teamwork that defines Story Medical’s approach to serving our community.”

A California native, Overbey earned his undergraduate degree from Central College—where he also wrestled—and his Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Iowa. He and his wife now live in the Des Moines area.

Overbey says he appreciates the opportunity to deliver care to patients in urgent need.

“It’s a great feeling to be part of a hospital that values community and teamwork,” he says. “I’m excited to keep growing with this group and providing the best care possible for our patients.”



**“It’s a great feeling to be part of a hospital that values community and teamwork.”**

—Keegan Overbey, ARNP

## New Cardiologist in Outpatient Clinic

Cardiologist Esteffania Villegas, MD, is now seeing patients at Story Medical’s Outpatient Clinic in Nevada. Dr. Villegas offers diagnostic, office-based services focused on helping patients manage and recover from heart-related conditions.

Dr. Villegas provides comprehensive cardiology care and works closely with patients and their primary care providers to support heart health, recovery, and long-term wellness.

By offering services in the Nevada outpatient clinic, patients can receive specialized cardiology care without the need to travel outside the community.

Patients are seen on a referral basis. Those who believe they may benefit from cardiology services are encouraged to speak with their primary care provider about a referral to see Dr. Villegas at Story Medical.





# Story Medical Senior Care Earns National Recognition

Story Medical Senior Care has been named to Newsweek and Statista’s “America’s Best Nursing Homes 2026” list—national recognition that reflects outstanding quality outcomes, resident satisfaction, and strong peer reputation. The honor places Story Medical among a select group of top-rated organizations in Iowa.

It’s a milestone made even more meaningful following the opening of the new Story Medical Senior Care in November 2024. The purpose-built space was designed around comfort, dignity, and safety, with features residents notice every day: private rooms with in-room bathrooms and showers, abundant natural light, carpeted resident rooms for confidence and traction, and step-free access—no elevators or stairs.

The flexible dining model allows residents to enjoy meals in the dining room or in their rooms, and the restorative/therapy room supports daily exercise and functional independence. Families also appreciate on-campus medical access and the ease of quick connections to clinic and emergency services when needed.

“This recognition is a testament to our exceptional team and to the vision behind our new building,” says Melissa Opperman,

RN, LNHA, Senior Care Administrator. “From private baths to brighter spaces and a thoughtful floor plan, every detail was chosen to support safer care, easier mobility, and a genuine sense of home.”

The environment also strengthens staff responsiveness and resident engagement. More intuitive care stations and clear sightlines help team members remain visible and available, while social spaces encourage everyday connection.

“You feel the difference as soon as you walk in,” Opperman says. “Residents are more active, families feel at ease, and our staff can deliver highly personal care without the barriers that older facilities often present.”

Story Medical joins a small group of Iowa organizations recognized by Newsweek for excellence. For residents and families, the designation offers additional reassurance that high-quality, person-centered care is available close to home.

“Being named to Newsweek’s list affirms what our families tell us every day,” Opperman says. “We’re proud of this honor—and even more proud of the people and place that make it possible.”

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Learn more about Story Medical Senior Care at [storymedical.org/seniorcare](https://storymedical.org/seniorcare)

View the Newsweek list at <https://rankings.newsweek.com/americas-best-nursing-homes-2026>

# 75 Years of Service

Pictured here is the original Story County Hospital, which opened in 1951 just south of downtown Nevada.



Every Patient. Every Story. Every Day Since 1951.

## Marking Our 75th Anniversary in 2026

In the years following World War II, leaders in Story County recognized the growing need for local access to hospital care. After the Iowa Sanitarium in Nevada was lost to fire in 1943, the community came together with a shared vision. In 1944, residents passed a \$100,000 bond issue to build a new, non-profit hospital, representing an extraordinary investment in the health and future of their neighbors. That vision became reality on September 10, 1951, when Story County Hospital officially opened its doors.

Seventy-five years later, that same spirit of community commitment continues to guide us.

Throughout 2026, Story Medical will celebrate this milestone anniversary by honoring the people, progress, and partnerships that have shaped healthcare in Story County. From humble beginnings to advanced imaging, emergency services, senior care, and specialized clinics, our story has always been one of growth, innovation, and service close to home.

We invite you to follow along as we share weekly historical highlights on our social media channels, featuring photos, memories, and milestones from the past 75 years. Be sure to stay tuned

for announcements about special events and community celebrations planned throughout the year.

This anniversary isn't just about looking back. It's about honoring the generations who built this hospital and celebrating the future we continue to build together.

Seventy-five years of care. And we're just getting started.

## Share Your Story with Us!

Throughout our 75th anniversary year, we will be sharing memories, milestones, and personal reflections that highlight the impact Story Medical has had on generations of families. Help us celebrate by sharing your Story Medical memory. Snap the code to share TODAY!





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# Save the Date!

We are hosting an Open House to show off our expanded imaging suite, which includes our new on-site MRI and advanced CT Scanner. The event includes lunch, tours, a staff meet-and-greet and more!

**11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**  
**Saturday, May 16**  
Story Medical  
**640 S. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Nevada**

Every Patient. Every Story. Every Day Since 1951. 1951-2026