MISSION STATEMENT

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals is a Catholic hospital system that provides physical medicine and rehabilitation services to children and adults throughout the nation. We rehabilitate those who have sustained injuries or disabling conditions so they can fully participate in life. We lead research to improve outcomes and prevent physical disabilities and promote wellness through community programs.

Core Values
Our core values reflect Madonna’s history, mission and beliefs.

- Collaboration
- Hospitality
- Respect
- Innovation
- Stewardship
- Teaching

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.
A letter from the President & CEO

In this issue of the INDEPENDENT, we showcase Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals’ Pediatric Specialty Program. Our journey to establish this program spanned decades and at times seemed an insurmountable challenge. Vision, perseverance and community support paved the way to success.

The children Madonna serves are some of our most vulnerable patients. When a child faces a serious injury or illness, their family is in crisis. They often go through difficult trials of faith and struggle to cope with situations at hand.

Madonna staff open to the call of those in need recognize the importance of specialty pediatric physicians, expert pediatric rehabilitation clinicians and resources unique to children. Together we work to make every day meaningful and create an environment that nurtures the body and spirit of the children as well as their families. Our goal is to return these children to the activities that give their life meaning—play, friendships and school.

We are committed to this service and the stories of recovery on the following pages only reinforce our dedication.

Paul Dongilli Jr., Ph.D.,
President and CEO

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Focusing on VISION REHABILITATION
Madonna's pediatric rehabilitation program has served thousands of children the past 20 years. Growing numbers highlighted the need to create a secure, dedicated unit to deliver high-quality care. Madonna's leadership team, in partnership with Lincoln pediatrician Dr. Brad Brabec, led the charge to make this dream a reality. A Nebraska native, Dr. Brabec completed his residency at Children's Hospital in Seattle, Washington, which housed a rehabilitation unit. Dr. Brabec's three-year experience in the acute care setting gave him comfort and confidence to work with children and families who had recently experienced traumatic events and illnesses.

Dr. Brabec brought that experience and skill to Lincoln, establishing Complete Children's Health, P.C., in 1995. As he continued to build the pediatric practice, Madonna approached Dr. Brabec in 2003 to bring the practice's services to the rehabilitation hospital and work in tandem with our physiatrists.

In 2010, the state-of-the-art, 14-bed Alexis Verzal Children's Rehabilitation unit was built, consolidating all inpatient and outpatient pediatric services into this hospital area. "When you step back, it's incredible visioning on everyone's part to bring this together. I had interest and involvement and I'm thankful to have been a part of that," Dr. Brabec said.

Madonna leaders drew from Lincoln's established framework and success when creating the Omaha Campus pediatric unit, partnering with Children's Hospital & Medical Center Specialty Physicians.

Nine years later, Madonna's pediatric rehabilitation program has seen a 61% growth in the treatment of regional children for medical and physical illness or injury.

Families directly influence each child's rehabilitative program working side-by-side with Madonna's physicians, nurses and clinical teams. Additionally, we offer neuropsychology, therapeutic recreation, school and community re-entry opportunities. A child's progress toward a new normal occurs as he or she transitions from hospitalization to inpatient rehabilitation to outpatient services. Madonna's mission to return children to school, recreation and play is a living example of our continuum of care. As a licensed hospital, we are able to deliver multiple levels of care, meeting the needs of children and adolescents who have been afflicted by illness or injury.
Return to play is important for pediatric patients of all ages including toddlers like Harley Swanek. The Wood River, Nebraska, native spent three months recovering at our Omaha Campus after a congenital heart defect caused an anoxic brain injury. Harley worked hard to re-master typical infant milestones, participating in physical, occupational, speech, feeding and aquatic therapies.

Brad Brabec, M.D., drew from his residency experience when working with Madonna to help establish secure, dedicated pediatric units delivering high-quality services and care to children from throughout the region.

Learn more about our pediatric programming at: madonna.org/pediatrics
On July 19, 2018, 16-year-old Daisy Pippett, Hayden’s sister, was driving the young girl and her 3-year-old brother, Braxton, to their hometown swimming pool in LeMars, Iowa. Moments later, all three siblings were involved in a car crash that claimed the life of Daisy and forever changed their family circle.

Lifeflight helicopters flew Braxton and Hayden to Sanford Children’s Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Braxton sustained a concussion and bruises, but 5-year-old Hayden suffered a near-fatal traumatic brain injury requiring emergency surgery. Her parents Colette and Craig Pippett, numb with grief for Daisy, never left Hayden’s side. Their daughter survived a coma and a 43-day hospitalization with a legion of fans supporting her cause—#Haydenstrong.

Physical Therapist Sarah Economides remembers when Hayden was admitted to the Lincoln Campus pediatric unit in August. “She could barely sit up, was on a breathing tube and couldn’t speak or eat.”

Hayden Pippett has a personality as bright as the white hairbow hugging her blonde ponytail. A tragic accident last summer silenced her sweet voice while she struggled to survive.

“\textit{This place makes miracles happen...they brought our little girl back.}”

Queen of the Lokomat triumphs over BRAIN INJURY
Family and friends provide a major source of comfort and support during rehabilitation. Their involvement is important in helping a patient successfully achieve therapy goals. Madonna involves the patient and family in each step of the recovery process. Research shows that patients whose families are actively involved in their recovery have better outcomes. Hayden’s family, especially her brother, Braxton, provided daily motivation during her recovery. When Braxton participated in therapy, Hayden would light up and say, ‘I’m going to do it!’

Hayden’s team devised a creative, age-appropriate plan to re-engage her brain and restore her mobility. Economides introduced the Lokomat, a robotic device, to help restore Hayden’s gait and posture. Soon after starting therapy on the Lokomat, Hayden spoke her first word and took her first bite. Wearing her signature hairbow and flashing her beautiful smile, Hayden quickly earned the title “Queen of the Lokomat.”

Hayden’s therapy also included using the iPad to work on memory and cognition skills, simulating school work by reading books and shopping for groceries with her own cart in Madonna’s Independence Square, a simulated community practice space. Her favorite aquatic therapy sessions allowed Hayden to kick and walk in the pool just like a typical kid.

The hands-on involvement of Hayden’s family and the close bond with her treatment team motivated the young girl to achieve every goal. “Family has been huge, but the family at Madonna is there, too; nurses, everybody, it all just seems like a big family,” Craig said.

Hayden returned home to celebrate Halloween, a party in her honor and rejoin her first grade classmates. Today, Hayden walks independently, recently participated in dance camp and enjoys teasing Braxton. Her parents feel blessed. “This place makes miracles happen...they brought our little girl back.”

Hayden Pippett relearned to walk aided by repetitive sessions on the regions only pediatric Lokomat, robotic assistive therapy. With her bright smile and signature hairbow, Hayden was dubbed “Queen of the Lokomat.”
Custom devices, adaptations lead to greater INDEPENDENCE

Customized equipment is critical in pediatric and adult rehabilitation. Children with physical disabilities and special mobility needs are often so unique that everyday tools and devices are not applicable. And their growing bodies can make custom-fitted prosthetics cost prohibitive to replace for many families.

Madonna’s Institute for Rehabilitation Science and Engineering has the tools and the know-how to design and build custom devices and adaptations for children with special needs. Equipped with a 3D scanner, 3D printer and a shop full of tools and materials, devices are designed, built and put to use every day. This capacity is fueled by the expertise of a gifted team of clinicians.

Customization is not limited to prosthetic devices. It extends across all facets of these children’s lives. One of those areas is assistive technology. Computers, tablets and smart phones are a common and efficient way for people to communicate, control smart-home technology and provide entertainment. That technology is only useful if you are able to access it.

Malik Paulson suffered a spinal cord injury, preventing movement below his neck. The occupational therapists at Madonna introduced mouth sticks for Malik to access his computer and smart phone. Malik preferred different mouth sticks for different devices based on their length and geometry.

The team developed a light-weight device that easily attaches and detaches from Malik’s wheelchair acting as a docking station for his mouth sticks. Now Malik can have his tools at the tip of his tongue and be ready for whatever situation arises.
Addy Schienemann has always loved swimming, but an accident resulted in her right arm being amputated above the elbow. Addy’s dream of swimming did not subside with this accident, but instead evolved into a dream to compete in the Special Olympics.

The rehabilitation engineering team met with Addy and her occupational therapist to understand her needs from both a functional and rehabilitation perspective. A prosthetic fin that maximized Addy’s capacity to use her remaining shoulder muscles was designed and created using the 3D printer.

This process has since been repeated for other pediatric patients who also want to perform better in the pool while strengthening their bodies.

The ability to solve the problem, develop the adaptation and implement the solution highlights why Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals is a leader in rehabilitation. The use of 3D modeling software and 3D printing allows the team to develop solutions quickly and move patients to independence faster.

Generating customized solutions rapidly is vital to ensuring children and adults achieve their best rehabilitation outcomes as they transition back to their homes and communities.

Advances in locomotor technology and the neurological and exercise sciences have created unprecedented opportunities to help individuals with neurologic injuries and illnesses. The sold-out inaugural Locomotor Training Conference, hosted at the Lincoln Campus on April 5, gave Judith M. Burnfield, Ph.D., PT, Madonna’s Research Institute director, and her team the opportunity to share their expertise. Partnering with SportsArt, an international leader in innovative design and manufacturing of premium quality medical fitness and fitness technology, Madonna welcomed exercise physiologists, clinicians and fitness trainers from national and international locations.

Attendees gained valuable insights regarding emerging neurologic and exercise science recovery approaches. Sessions focused on the practical application of scientific principles and innovative technology, preparing participants to better help individuals meet their rehabilitation goals.

Attendees used sophisticated sensors to evaluate how different ICARE training parameters influence muscle demands in the legs.
Kansan overcomes devastating crash to earn
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

A young woman’s decision to drink and drive last summer hijacked the senior year of a Wichita, Kansas, teenager. No one could have predicted the accident, but Chantel Johnson felt a nagging, mother’s intuition. “All day she kept asking me if I was okay, and I didn’t understand it, but I do now,” her husband, Lemuel Ford, said. “It’s a day I will never forget.”

On Aug. 19, 2018, their son, BriLei Ford, was a passenger in a car hit by a suspected drunk driver who ran a red light. The high-speed impact shoved the car door on top of 17-year-old BriLei, nearly crushing him. Rushed to Wichita’s Wesley Medical Center, he was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury, internal bleeding and underwent emergency pelvic and bladder surgeries. BriLei suffered severe injuries to his spleen, kidney and liver, along with lung failure. His family kept vigil as machines pumped life and nutrition into the teen’s battered body. BriLei emerged from a six-day coma unable to breathe or eat on his own.

Two weeks later BriLei was admitted to Madonna’s Lincoln Campus, unable to walk and struggled with brain fog. “One of my first memories was them [nurses] picking me up out of my wheelchair with a lift,” BriLei said. His limited mobility and cognition frustrated the basketball player and honor student. Each day the young athlete pushed himself to surpass his therapy

BriLei Ford is all smiles after earning his high school diploma. Last August, he was a passenger in a car hit by a suspected drunk driver. The teen spent months recovering from a traumatic brain injury.
Photo courtesy of Eddie Legacy
goals. Within six weeks, BriLei was shooting baskets from his wheelchair as part of Madonna’s adaptive recreation program, transferring himself in and out of his wheelchair and solving algebra equations in the Therapeutic Learning Center.

“I had a great support system—family, nurses, therapists—everyone keeping me going.”

The teen bonded with other patients and celebrated their progress, too. “I met a lot of kids that had been through worse things,” BriLei said. The morning he discharged for home, the young Kansan’s T-shirt expressed his appreciation in bright blue words: “THANK YOU MADONNA.”

BriLei’s parents are grateful to have their son back. The accident and his recovery left a lasting impact on their close-knit family. “It’s forever changed our lives; BriLei is our hero, the family’s VIP,” Lemuel said.

It’s been an emotional journey for BriLei. In May, the 6-foot-4-inch survivor proudly crossed the stage to accept his high school diploma. He’s excited to start college this fall. “I will never take life for granted.”

See more of BriLei’s recovery at: Madonna.org/BriLeiFord

Madonna’s Pediatric Specialty Program, located on the Omaha and Lincoln campuses, offers family-centered rehabilitation in separate and secured units to meet the unique needs of children and adolescents. Children are not little adults, but have special medical considerations. Patients are seen daily by a physiatrist, a physician who specializes in rehabilitation, and a pediatric hospitalist, a pediatrician who manages the intensive medical needs of the child, in addition to rehabilitation nurses, therapists and rehabilitation psychologists.
Guests at the 2nd Annual Dish & Bloom luncheon were served a heaping helping of Southern hospitality. Featured speaker James T. Farmer shared his early influences of growing up in Georgia, which inspires his work today as a floral and interior designer, cook, professional gardener, author, lifestyle expert and media personality. The event was held April 24 at the Country Club of Lincoln.

Farmer recounted stories of the colorful characters, who populated his childhood and how they all helped define his work. The Auburn University graduate said he was the only college freshman that left home for the dormitory armed with a cast-iron skillet. It was during those college days of frying chicken for himself and an ever-expanding group of friends that he had what he calls his “fried chicken moment.” It occurred to him that many in his generation don’t know how to fry chicken or set a table. That realization fueled his passion for sharing the lessons he learned from his family and upbringing through a series of books on gardening, cooking and decorating, including “A Place to Call Home.”

“We feed people, body and soul. Get out your heirloom dishes. Celebrate who you are,” he said.

The Madonna Foundation extends special thanks to Dish & Bloom event sponsors Marilyn and Paul Dongilli Jr., Ph.D, Madonna’s president and CEO. Additional thanks goes to Paige Flynn of pkflynn for her table and room design. Committee members who helped make Dish & Bloom a success include Marilyn Dongilli, Paige Flynn, Mary Ann Hedderman, Kris Love, Lauren Pugliese, Alison Ritter and Kimberly Shirk.
Miracle Night donations
IN ACTION

Thanks to some special donors, Madonna is putting their dollars to work—right where they are needed by our patients.

During the inaugural Miracle Night for Madonna, many donors and friends raised funds to purchase three AlterG Bionic Legs for our patients. Our clinical teams use this cutting-edge technology for rehabilitation therapy including stair climbing, home entry and transfer training.

One person who knows the value of Madonna’s world-class rehabilitation, both from a patient and physician point of view, is Paul J. Schenarts, M.D., chief of trauma, Surgical Critical Care & Emergency General Surgery, Department of Surgery, University of Nebraska, College of Medicine.

Schenarts was one of the first patients to use the AlterG at the Omaha Campus after a quadricep tendon tear. “The device was able to break down my gait into a series of discrete movements. The therapists could add or subtract specific levels of assistance for each movement,” Schenarts said. “It’s a very scientific approach to correcting small elements of each step into smooth movement,” he added.

Your gifts make a difference in our patients’ lives. Many of their journeys are as daunting as climbing a mountain but can begin by climbing a stair.

EMBRACING THE VISION
by Kris Love
Madonna Foundation Board Member

A friend recently recovered at Madonna following a stroke. He really wanted to continue his outpatient therapy after discharge but lived 120 miles away. So, he improvised by parking his camper in the Madonna parking lot, which allowed him to spend another two months in outpatient rehabilitation.

When I first saw him after his stroke, he was using a wheelchair. Recently, he came into my office, walking without assistance. He said, “If I ever win the lottery, Madonna would be the first place I would share it with.”

The facilities on the Omaha and Lincoln campuses are unbelievable but the caring staff members are what truly make Madonna so special to so many people in their greatest times of need.

Madonna is a forward-thinking organization that continually pushes research and development. There are so many stories of triumph over tragedy. I am honored to have a seat on the Board to do whatever I can to help further the vision.

“‘If I ever win the lottery, Madonna would be the first place I would share it with.’

Dr. Schenarts is one of the first patients to use the AlterG, a walking device purchased by charitable donations to Madonna.
Like many typical 3-year-olds, Jude Walz loves cars, trains and baseball. Unlike most kids, Jude suffered a stroke in February 2018 due to complications from a bacterial infection.

Jude’s pediatric inpatient and outpatient care teams on Madonna’s Omaha Campus worked seamlessly with him in speech, as well as physical and occupational therapies, over many long months getting him ready for his first day of preschool in August 2018. A huge team of supporters quickly became part of Jude’s journey.

Jude’s aunt, Margaret Schorgl, rallied many of those same supporters as she embarked on a half marathon to celebrate Jude’s recovery while raising funds for Madonna’s Omaha pediatric unit. Margaret encouraged friends and family to become part of “Team Jude” to support her run in the March 3, 2019, “Seaside School Half Marathon and 5K Race” in Seaside, Florida.

On her fundraising page, Margaret recounted Jude’s complicated medical journey from diagnosis through recovery. “As promised by his therapists, Jude ran out of the doors of Madonna. It was truly a miracle to witness how far he had come. After the work I witnessed at Madonna, I can promise that your donation will be going to a great cause,” she added.

Donations poured in from far and wide. In total, Margaret raised $14,620 from 117 donors representing 36 cities, 18 states and one foreign country in a little more than a month. Twelve family members were on-site for the day of the race and extended the trip into a family vacation. The race also marked Margaret’s first half marathon. She usually just runs for fun but this time Margaret wanted to do something special to mark Jude’s recovery. Cheering from the sidelines, Jude got the chance to cross the finish line too, symbolically marking his successful recovery.

The Madonna Foundation salutes Margaret and Team Jude for their generous support in honor of an inspiring 3-year-old.
Retired Madonna nurse supports
TECHNOLOGY & RESEARCH

Imagine having a front row seat to the emergence of groundbreaking treatment, technology and research for individuals recovering from stroke and brain trauma.

Retired nurse and long-time donor Marilyn Baker not only witnessed critical developments but helped usher in new rehabilitation programming during her 30-plus years at Madonna.

Inspired by a beloved aunt who was a nurse, Marilyn entered Lincoln General Hospital School of Nursing at age 17. After graduating in 1960, Marilyn cared for medical/surgical patients at Lincoln General Hospital for five years. In 1966, she joined the nursing staff at Bryan Hospital where she worked as a psychiatric nurse. When she began her nursing career at Madonna in 1980, she started working in the stroke unit.

“I thought the stroke unit sounded interesting,” she recalls. She believes her experience in psychiatric nursing and her understanding of the brain helped her in working with patients with neurological conditions.

Marilyn holds the distinction of being Madonna’s first Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse (CRRN). The CRRN designation represents a high-degree of specialization in the field of rehabilitation nursing. Currently, there are 36 nurses with CRRN certification at Madonna.

During her career at Madonna, Marilyn also earned her bachelor of science in Nursing from Nebraska Wesleyan University. She understands the balancing act that people often face earning a degree while working full time. Her last years before retirement were spent using her nursing knowledge as a case manager at Madonna.

“Nursing is a very rewarding career,” Marilyn said. “You not only get to work closely with patients but with their families as well. You are part of a team working toward the best possible outcomes.”

While Marilyn has planned an estate gift to Madonna, she feels strongly about being able to see the benefits of giving while one is still living. That’s one of the reasons she has been a consistent donor. Madonna’s focus on technology and research to help patients with neurological conditions is appealing to her.

“It is exciting to see the progress and how support can make a difference.”
Calla Ohlrich was born with a rare, genetic disease. Thanks to family support and Madonna's follow-up clinic model, Calla is making huge gains in growth and development after taking time off from therapy.

Photo courtesy of Sherri Harnisch
“Mom does a wonderful job of taking our activity suggestions to complete at home to further address skills she is working on in therapy. I truly believe that this is why Calla was so successful during this recent break from therapy,” Mandi Weiner, Madonna TherapyPlus pediatric physical therapist, said.

Using Madonna’s follow-up clinic model, Calla recently returned after a two-month break, refreshed, ready to grow, develop and show off the skills she honed during her time away. Cruising across raised therapy mats, developing feeding and fine motor skills by picking up and eating Cheerios, taking “big girl” steps using body weight-supported treadmill training while watching “Teletubbies” and exploring Madonna’s hallways to see fish in her gait trainer, showcase Calla’s progress.

Time away also gives mom new perspective, too. “I shifted my focus away from the number of seizures Calla was having daily to the positive gains she continues to make every day,” Angie said.

After contracting AFM last November, 2-year-old Rosie Kubik is making tremendous strides in her recovery using the Snoezelen Sensory Room at the Lincoln Campus. The multisensory room is outfitted with colored lights, soothing sounds and varying textures to help children cope with sensory processing problems or manage pain.

Madonna is taking an innovative approach to helping children recover from acute flaccid myelitis (AMF). In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control confirmed 223 cases in 41 states, including five in Nebraska. AFM causes polio-like symptoms and while rare, can have devastating effects for patients, many of those under age 18. Early symptoms include fever and respiratory issues followed later by sudden muscle weakness that may affect the arms, legs, face, eyes, speech, swallowing and breathing. For patients who’ve experienced weakness in their limbs, customized rehabilitation is key to their recovery.
Aiden Melia, 6, is imaginative, playful, into wrestling and Captain America. He’s a superhero in his dad’s eyes after battling cancer and winning.

“He’s fought through everything including his body not working properly,” Patrick Melia said.

Diagnosed with posterior fossa medulloblastoma in February 2018, Aiden underwent three surgeries to remove tumors on his brain stem and spine. He left Omaha for six weeks of cancer treatment, followed by six months of additional treatment at Omaha’s Children’s Hospital & Medical Center. He returned to Madonna just before Thanksgiving extremely weak and tired. But Aiden’s attitude had transformed.

“It was so great to see him smiling, playful and laughing, though weak and not eating,” Rachel Stonacek, speech-language pathologist at Madonna, said.

Stonacek helped Aiden conquer his food anxiety, a chemotherapy side effect, by incorporating therapeutic techniques, structured mealtimes and Aiden’s love of pandas. “He loved wearing his panda mask. So we wore our panda masks [at mealtime] and we would eat like pandas and take big panda smells and little panda smells and use our paws to play with the food. Incorporating creative games and imaginary play during mealtimes together really took away the anxiety for him and he started eating more and more as he explored a variety of foods.”
Aiden’s imagination stretched from speech to warm water pool therapy and occupational therapy. He even pretended to be a robot while using the Lokomat. Patrick said specialized technology customized to Aiden’s small size combined with a playful, knowledgeable care team helped Aiden thrive. “It’s been tough, but every day this little superhero stood up to the challenges presented with courage and resilience,” Patrick said.

Aiden completed his inpatient rehabilitation program just before the New Year, receiving his shield for hard work in the form of a Madonna Spirit Award. “Aiden’s attitude and his fun, creative personality helped him continue to improve. He’s a super happy, fun-loving kid who wants to do well and keep up with his peers,” Patrick said.

Now in Madonna’s comprehensive pediatric outpatient program, he has continued to make slow, but steady gains and has increased appetite and energy levels. He’s also looking forward to heading back to school. Patrick said the care team instilled confidence in his young son while helping him see, “It’s going to be hard work and it’s not easy, but he can do it by pushing himself.”

The most common childhood cancers are leukemia, brain and spinal cord tumors, and neuroblastoma. A team of physicians, rehabilitation nurses and clinicians comprise the interdisciplinary team essential to meet the needs of children who are being treated for cancer. Through this approach, we focus on functional gains, preventative and restorative strategies to help each child achieve the highest level of independence possible.
Dr. Adam Kafka, physiatrist, says his first interest in medicine was job-shadowing a dermatologist for a fourth grade project. “His job seemed really interesting,” Kafka said. During high school and college, Kafka, a native of Lincoln, Nebraska, shifted his academic focus to math. “But I always had a feeling I would enter medicine.”

Kafka’s path to rehabilitation began in his third year of medical school. He hadn’t declared a specialty yet when a senior resident suggested physiatry. A rotation with Dr. Paul Krabbenhoft, on the spinal cord unit at Madonna’s Lincoln Campus, sealed his decision. “The combination of inpatient and outpatient medicine, with a focus on neurology, orthopedics and rehabilitation, was appealing to me,” Kafka explained.

Kafka graduated with a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. After an internship in Internal Medicine at Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines, he completed the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residency program at the University of Wisconsin. In 2009, Kafka began as a physiatrist with the Alexis Verzal Children’s Rehabilitation Unit. He focuses on restoring a patient’s maximum independence lost after injury, illness or disabling conditions. “My primary responsibility is to serve in patient care,” Kafka said. “I am fortunate to

Dr. Adam Kafka enjoys witnessing the resilience and strength of patients like 3-year-old William Habluetzel who is recovering from a lawn mower accident.
work with two great inpatient teams serving pediatric and adult patients."

In 2018, Kafka added a new role as medical director for the Lincoln Campus rehabilitation hospital. "I help represent the other physicians in Lincoln and work with administration to further Madonna’s mission."

On the outpatient side, Kafka is the medical director of the occupational health program, Fit For Work, helping injured workers recover. Kafka provides diagnosis and non-surgical treatment of spine and orthopedic injuries. He also performs electrodiagnostic exams to help identify disorders of the peripheral nervous system.

Outside of work, Kafka’s top priority is his family, including his wife, Tiffany, and five daughters. “Tiffany and I have a passion for foster care and three of our children are adopted,” Kafka said. He’s equally enthusiastic about work life. “I get satisfaction watching patients take on new challenges and seeing their strength,” Kafka said. Team members who are dedicated to their jobs inspire him. “There’s never a shortage of smiles or encouragement around Madonna and that tends to be contagious!”

PHYSIATRISTS—
REHABILITATION PHYSICIAN SPECIALISTS

The physicians group office of Madonna Rehabilitation Specialists is located northeast of the Lincoln Campus at 5445 South Street. Physicians serving the inpatient and the outpatient practices include: Dr. Adam Kafka (pictured far left), medical director; Dr. Paul Krabbenhoft (upper left), spinal cord program medical director; Dr. Morgan LaHolt (lower left), brain injury program medical director; and Dr. Jackie Tran (not pictured).
Following a severe injury or illness, it’s not uncommon to experience visual challenges. Children and adolescents may struggle with poor balance, double vision, difficulty with driving, reading and memory. Addressing vision issues early in rehabilitation is often the key to improve outcomes.

The Vision Program serves inpatient and outpatient individuals suffering from neurological injuries like traumatic brain injury, acquired brain injury, stroke, aneurism, concussion, post-traumatic vision syndrome and cervical trauma syndrome.

Vision rehabilitation starts with a comprehensive consultation by a neuro-optometrist. The doctor collaborates with the occupational therapist in creating a tailored treatment plan that may include specialized technology and adaptive strategies to enhance hand-eye coordination, reaction time, recognition and other cognitive and visual responses. Madonna’s neuro-optometrists monitor the patient’s visual progress throughout his or her recovery.

Madonna’s rehabilitation team is fortunate to include Dr. Tanner Gates and Dr. Samantha Bohl who specialize in neuro-optometric care for patients with acquired neurological injuries.

Dr. Gates graduated with a Doctor of Optometry degree from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and completed a residency in Vision Therapy/Rehabilitative Optometry in Bethesda, Maryland. Additionally, he completed a fellowship in Vision Development/Rehabilitation.

Dr. Bohl graduated with a Doctor of Optometry degree from the University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry in San Antonio, Texas, and completed a residency in Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation in New York City.
Madonna is the only hospital in the region to provide an extensive vision rehabilitation program delivered by specially trained experts, including Dr. Tanner Gates (left) and Dr. Samantha Bohl (right). The team uses state-of-the-art technology to help patients of all ages with visual impairments resulting from illness or injury. The vision program is vital to returning children and adults to work, school, recreation and play.
Windows of the Lincoln Campus pediatric unit get a superhero makeover thanks to volunteer Lee Bokma, a comic book style artist.

Learn more about our volunteer program at: Madonna.org/Volunteer

At Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals, we combine heartfelt hospitality with unmatched innovation and education. Our rehabilitation programs are world class. Our clinical expertise, rehabilitation research and state-of-the-art equipment provide the tools to help all patients, even those whose diagnoses pose the most complex challenges. Our investment in exceptional talent, groundbreaking technology and progressive treatments is changing the face of rehabilitation.

On the cover: Cancer survivor Aiden Melia stands tall with Mandi Weiner, PT. The 6 year old channeled his inner Captain America during his battle with brain cancer. Learn how Aiden’s care team used imagination and play to propel him forward during recovery.

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madonna.org