

HEALTH CONNECTIONS

BUTLER COUNTY HEALTH



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UNDERSTANDING AUDITORY PROCESSING: WHEN HEARING IS NORMAL, BUT LISTENING IS DIFFICULT



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Many people think hearing problems only involve volume — whether sounds are loud enough to hear. However, some children and adults hear sounds normally but still struggle to understand what they hear. This may be related to an auditory processing disorder (APD).

Auditory processing refers to how the brain interprets and makes sense of sound. Individuals with auditory processing difficulties

may have trouble understanding speech in noisy environments, following multi-step directions, remembering verbal information, or distinguishing similar sounds. In school-aged children, these challenges can significantly impact classroom learning, reading, spelling, attention, and overall academic performance.

At our clinic, auditory processing evaluations are available for both children (over age 7) and adults. We utilize the Buffalo Model, a specialized approach to identifying specific auditory processing weaknesses and developing individualized treatment plans. Testing helps determine how the brain processes auditory information and which areas may benefit from therapy and intervention.

Helping Children Succeed in the Classroom

Children with auditory processing difficulties are often bright and capable, but may struggle in busy classroom settings where listening demands are high. Parents or teachers may notice behaviors such as:

- Frequently asking for repetition
- Difficulty following spoken directions
- Trouble hearing in background noise
- Poor listening skills
- Reading or spelling difficulties
- Easily becoming overwhelmed in noisy environments

While these symptoms/characteristics can

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certainly be due to other conditions as well, auditory processing deficits can be one of the considerations. Following an APD evaluation, targeted auditory therapy can help strengthen listening and processing skills. Therapy based on the Buffalo Model focuses on improving how the brain interprets sound, helping children become more confident and successful listeners both in school and everyday life.

Auditory Processing Therapy for Adults

Auditory processing challenges are not limited to children. Adults may also experience difficulty understanding speech clearly, especially in noisy environments or group conversations. This can occur even when hearing tests show only mild hearing loss or hearing aids are already being used.

For hearing aid users who continue to struggle with speech understanding, auditory training programs can provide additional support. One option available through our clinic is the LACE (Listening and Communication Enhancement) program. LACE is a self-paced auditory training program that can be completed at home on a personal computer. The program is designed to improve listening skills, word understanding, communication confidence, and overall auditory processing abilities in real-world listening situations.

Many patients find that combining hearing technology with auditory training provides improved communication success and greater confidence in daily conversations.

Thank You!

Patty Vaca retired from the Butler County Health Foundation Board of Directors in April after several years of dedicated service and leadership.

Patty joined the board in 2020 and quickly became a valuable part of the foundation's success. Throughout her time on the board, she played an important role in several successful fundraising campaigns and events that helped support hospital programs, equipment, and patient care initiatives.

Fellow board members praised Vaca for her commitment, leadership, and passion for serving the community.

Please join us in thanking Patty for her time, dedication, and service to the Butler County Health Foundation. Her contributions and support have made a lasting impact on the organization and our community.

HONORING THE PAST

2026 INDUCTEES

Butler County Health developed the Honoring the Past program in 2020, to recognize the contributions that have been made by the individuals through the development and growth of the organization. There have been many individuals that have served as County Supervisors, Hospital Board Members, Medical Staff Members and Employees that have contributed to the success of Butler County Health. Past inductees include: Rita Homan, John Klosterman, Paul Kosch, Dr. Lawrence Rudolph, Janice Struebing, JoEllen Vrbka, Wilfred Kozisek, Jack Tarr, Dr. Victor Thoendel, Mary Ann Vybirl, Jean Glock, Jeanne Jakub, Allan Steinberger, Dr. Jack Kaufmann, Norma Jean Kovar, Beverly Steager, Ron Vaca, Kathy Bongers, John Dehner, Dr. Gerald Luckey, Martha Fiala and Mary Svoboda. In 2026, Honoring the Past Inductees were Connie Kershner and Connie Schmit.



Connie Kershner, RN
1975-2014

Connie Kershner began her career as a registered nurse with Butler County Health in 1975. Over the years, she provided care to patients throughout numerous departments of the hospital, including the inpatient floor, obstetrics, emergency department, surgery and outpatient services. Connie was known for her unwavering compassion, reliability and calm presence in high-pressure situations. Connie was always committed to providing the highest quality care. She took great pride in building strong, trusting relationships with her patients and their families, often caring for them throughout their entire journey, from scheduling, pre-registration, surgery to post-surgical recovery. Connie's dedication to her patients and her profession has left a lasting impact on the hospital and those she served.



Connie Schmit, RN
1974-2019

Connie Schmit began her career as a registered nurse with Butler County Health in 1974. Throughout her career, she cared for patients in many areas of the hospital including the inpatient floor, obstetrics, emergency department, cardiac rehabilitation and ambulance transfers. She was known for her "get the job done" attitude and her confidence, which made her a strong role model for her colleagues. A dedicated lifelong learner, Connie constantly sought to understand the "why" behind treatments, ensuring the best possible care for her patients. She developed a deep passion for diabetes education and became Butler County Health's first Certified Diabetes Educator and later held the position as Diabetes Coordinator. Connie was a steadfast advocate for ensuring the hospital kept up with the latest standards in diabetes care. Her expertise helped prevent countless emergencies and significantly improved the quality of life for many patients with diabetes. While Connie's skills were diverse, she truly excelled in diabetes management, both in her own education and in sharing that knowledge with her patients.

TRANSITIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

AT BUTLER COUNTY HEALTH

Butler County Health has participated in the Medicare Swing Bed Program since it was first authorized in 1980. Over time, the term “Swing Bed” has often caused confusion for patients. To provide greater clarity, Butler County Health now refers to this service as the Transitional Rehabilitation Program.

The Transitional Rehabilitation Program serves as the next step following an acute inpatient hospitalization and can be an alternative to skilled nursing facility placement for patients who are not yet ready to return home. The term “transitional rehabilitation” reflects the change in level of care patients receive once they no longer require acute hospital services. Admissions to the program are intended for patients who still require skilled nursing care and/or rehabilitation services as determined by their physician. These services may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, wound care, IV therapy, and other specialized care. To qualify, patients must have an acute care stay that included at least three overnights.

“Patients who return home following a short-term acute hospitalization and later experience challenges that require additional care may be eligible for transitional rehabilitation services, even without another three-night hospital stay,” explained Kelli Stara, Social Services Coordinator. “Eligibility is based on individual circumstances, including insurance coverage and Medicare guidelines, but our team is here to help patients understand their options and navigate the process.”

While acute care is designed to treat illness or injury, the Transitional Rehabilitation Program is designed to help patients recover and prepare for their return home. “This ensures continuity of care, as patients continue receiving support from the same nurses, physicians and therapists who cared for them during their acute stay at Butler County Health. It also allows individuals who received acute care at other facilities, such as Bryan Health or UNMC, to return to Butler County Health for their recovery,” explains Kristin Hartman, RN, Director of Nurses. Patients who may benefit from the program include those recovering from surgery, accidents or injuries, stroke recovery, respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia or COPD, chronic

condition reconditioning, wound care, pain management or long-term IV therapy.

One patient and wife shared their experience with the program. “I brought my husband, Dwight, to the ER at Butler County Health with stroke-like symptoms. Due to the severity, and the fact that it was his eighth stroke, he was transferred to Lincoln,” explained Jeanne Rasp. “After Bryan Health, we transferred Dwight back to Butler County Health for the Transitional Rehabilitation Program. It was so convenient having him cared for close to home so I could continue managing things at home and see him regularly. If he had stayed in Lincoln, I would not have been able to visit him as often.”

Jeanne also shared that during Dwight’s stay, staff assisted with bathing, dressing and feeding, making the caregiving experience easier for her. He received physical, occupational and speech therapy three to five times per week, up to three times daily. Dwight and Jeanne also participated in care staff meetings with his physician, Dr. Daro, nursing staff and therapy teams. These meetings reviewed his progress, discussed goals and helped determine when he could safely transition home.

The Transitional Rehabilitation Program is not intended for permanent placement. The length of stay in the Transitional Rehabilitation Program is dependent upon each individual patient. Medicare does allow a Transitional Rehabilitation Program stay for up to 100 days; however, most stays are less than 30 days.

“Dwight stayed for 21 days at Butler County Health. During that time was our 47th Wedding Anniversary,” explained Jeanne. “Dwight called me that evening and invited me to supper at the hospital. When I arrived, I was surprised to find a table set in the sunroom with twinkling lights, flowers and a catered dinner from Northside. The staff went above and beyond to make our anniversary so special,” she said.

“When Dwight mentioned that his wedding anniversary was approaching, our team immediately came together to create a meaningful celebration. Staff from therapy, nursing and marketing collaborated to plan a special evening, gathering some of Jeanne’s favorite things with Dwight’s guidance,” explained Hannah Wurl, Occupational Therapist.

“The excitement was evident when he called Jeanne to invite her to dinner, and her joyful response made the effort even more worthwhile. Helping the Rasp’s celebrate their 47th wedding anniversary during Dwight’s stay was a powerful reminder that BCH care extends beyond rehabilitation. This experience was about preserving meaningful roles, honoring relationships and creating moments that bring comfort and purpose,” Hannah added. Celebrating Jeanne and Dwight’s years together brought joy, normalcy and connection during a challenging time, reinforcing the importance of person-centered care in our rural community.

Eligibility in the Transitional Rehabilitation Program is evaluated on a constant basis, as the patient must be making progress in order to qualify for transitional rehabilitation status. The skilled nursing care provided by the Transitional Rehabilitation Program is generally paid for by Medicare or Medicaid or by private insurance carriers. Medicare will cover up to 20 days at 100% for skilled nursing care at the hospital. After the first 20 days, if the patient continues to qualify for skilled care services, they are responsible for daily coinsurance up to the 100th day, the same as in a nursing home facility. Sometimes patients may experience a break in care which may change their eligibility for coverage. For example, if a patient leaves the skilled services for less than 30 days and then needs to return to skilled care for the same medical condition, they will not need another three day hospital stay to be eligible for skilled care coverage. If the break lasts for 60 consecutive days, the skilled benefits will be renewed for transitional

rehabilitation only if another three day hospital stay occurs.

“We had the option to be transferred to Madonna, but we chose to stay close to home with our provider, Dr. Daro, and the staff at Butler County Health who know us and care for us,” Jeanne said. Dwight added, “It’s like a family at Butler County Health; it’s really like being with family.”

The primary objective of the Transitional Rehabilitation Program is to provide patients and their families with extraordinary care and assist them in achieving their goals. Butler County Health strives to get you back home in a timely manner by providing exceptional health care and service. For more information about our Transitional Rehabilitation Program please contact us at 402-367-1200.



Pictured are Dwight and Jeanne Rasp at their anniversary dinner while Dwight was at BCH.

MARYELL WHITE

JOINS BUTLER COUNTY HEALTH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Butler County Health is excited to announce that MaryEll White has joined the hospital Board of Directors! MaryEll is a lifelong resident of Butler County. She graduated, with honors, from Bryan College of Health Sciences with a bachelor’s degree in Cardiac and Vascular Sonography. She is employed with Bryan Health, providing sonography services throughout Nebraska. MaryEll brings frontline clinical insight and experience, collaborating with physicians and healthcare teams across the state.

“I am honored to serve on the Butler County Health Board of Directors. I am passionate about high quality healthcare for rural communities. I believe local hospitals play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of families in the area.”

MaryEll and her husband, Mitchell, reside in rural Rising City with their twin daughters, McKinley and Maven and dog, Caine.

“I look forward to contributing to the continued strength of healthcare services for current and future generations in Butler County and the surrounding communities.”



DETECTING HEART DISEASE EARLY:

CORONARY CALCIUM SCANS AT BUTLER COUNTY HEALTH

Heart disease continues to be a leading cause of illness and death in the United States, but catching it early can make a real difference. Since 2019, Butler County Health has offered the coronary calcium scan, a noninvasive test that can help identify heart disease risk before symptoms appear. Also called a coronary artery calcium (CAC) test or heart CT calcium scan, this test measures calcium-containing plaque in the coronary arteries which is an early sign of coronary artery disease.

“We’re so grateful to be able to offer this service to our community,” says Julie Schultz, Radiology Director. “Over the years, we’ve heard wonderful stories from patients and their loved ones who were able to make lifestyle changes or receive interventions before a heart attack occurred. While this isn’t a diagnostic test, it’s a great screening tool that can provide peace of mind.”

Why a Calcium Scan Matters

Calcium deposits in the arteries can narrow or block blood flow, increasing the risk of heart attack or stroke. The scan produces a calcium score, or Agatston score, which helps your healthcare team understand your risk.

On the radiology report, coronary calcifications are marked as signs of coronary atherosclerosis. The more calcifications detected, the higher the likelihood of obstructive coronary disease. Keep in mind, the scan only detects calcified plaque, not non-calcified or “soft” plaque, so the total plaque burden may be underestimated. The calcium score estimates your chance of a cardiac event in the next 2–5 years and should be reviewed alongside other risk factors, like high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking history, family history, and cholesterol levels.

Calcium Score Guide

0: No evidence of coronary artery disease

1–10: Normal

11–100: Low probability

101–400: Intermediate probability

Over 400: High probability

Who Should Consider a Scan

This test is best for adults who have not had a heart attack or been diagnosed with heart

disease but have one or more risk factors, such as:

- High cholesterol or LDL (“bad”) cholesterol
- Low HDL (“good”) cholesterol
- High blood pressure or diabetes
- Smoking or past smoking
- Family history of premature coronary artery disease
- History of blocked arteries in the legs or stroke

Since this scan isn’t for everyone, it’s important to discuss your personal risk factors with your doctor before scheduling.

What to Expect During the Procedure

Preparation: Avoid caffeine and smoking for four hours before the test, and don’t apply powder or lotion to your chest.

Arrival: Register at the front desk and pay for the procedure (\$165 payable to BCH; \$50 for the radiologist interpretation payable to Columbus Community Hospital). Most insurance plans do not cover this test. If you have a provider in David City, you may self-refer; otherwise, a doctor’s order is required. Self-referrals are not submitted to insurance.

During the Scan: You may need to change into a hospital gown. EKG electrodes are placed on your chest and will monitor your heart rate. The CT table moves in small increments while images are taken. You’ll be asked to hold your breath for 20–30 seconds and stay perfectly still. The actual scan only takes about 20–30 seconds, with the full appointment lasting 10–15 minutes.

After the Scan: The radiologist reviews your images and sends the results to your doctor, who will discuss them with you and decide if any follow-up steps are needed.

A coronary calcium scan gives you a snapshot of your heart’s health before symptoms appear. For adults with risk factors or a family history of heart disease, it’s a valuable tool to guide prevention, lifestyle changes and early interventions.



PLAN FOR YOUR

Future

Like You Plan for Your

Vacation

1



Before taking a vacation you carefully pack your bags to ensure you have everything you need.

2



Packing often requires planning or making a list.

3



With planning, you can make sure you don't forget something important - such as shoes, personal care items, or medicine.

There is another area of life that requires good planning. That has to do with

your estate plan.

A good estate plan can also help ensure you are prepared so that you have what you need when you need it.

What do You Own?

You may own real estate or have personal property such as furniture, cars and other items. Perhaps you have an insurance policy or retirement, bank and investment accounts. You should ensure that your plan accounts for all that you own.

One approach that may help you with your planning is to think about the who, the what and the how of your plan.

How Should You Give?

There are many ways for you to provide for the people you love, using what you own. You may want your plan to include charitable vehicles, such as gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts. These can accomplish your charitable goals, give you income and tax benefits, and can provide for your family and friends.

Who Matters to You?

Your will or living trust can be used to provide for family, friends and cherished causes. Consider who is important to you and the legacy that you want to leave.



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No matter what your goals, we can help you. We have information that can help you put together a plan that is right for you. Please call or email us so that we can assist you.



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Donald T. Naiberk
Administrator/CEO
Butler County Health

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