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ELYRIA

Doctor plays unique role

Clinical psychologist and behavioral consultant helps mind, body and spirit for patients

By Kaylee Remington
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Mercy Health Partners has brought in its first licensed clinical psychologist and behavioral health consultant, and she has found a home at Mercy Health — Elyria Primary Care office at 1120 E. Broad St.

Dr. Amber Hill already has established patients at the office and helps patients have better access to behavioral health services. She said it helps create an internal resource for primary care physicians to help look at patients' psychosocial and/or behavioral health issues.

Hill is a full-time member of the primary care team — not a specialist or specialty referral — and offers intervention to address psychosocial aspects of primary care at the point of care. She said her patients aren't just adults but also children, families and senior citizens. Hill is able to concentrate on wellness, managing chronic illness and cognitive behavioral interventions.

"Dr. Hill's role is a little bit unique and it's also new to our system," LeeAnn Hastings, marketing and communications manager at Mercy, said. "It's really based on a collaboration



KAYLEE REMINGTON — THE MORNING JOURNAL
 Dr. Amber Hill stands in the lobby of Mercy Health-Elyria Primary Care Sept. 14 at 1120 E. Broad St., in Elyria. She is a behavioral health consultant.

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ELYRIA

Moms get some advice

Breast-feeding expert shares knowledge with Lorain County mothers

By Kelsey Leyva
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Working with moms and babies and educating new parents on the importance of breast-feeding and other childcare techniques has been the passion of Tina Schulin for 33 years.

The lactation consultant and childbirth educator describes her job as the best in the world.

"I talk breast-feeding with anyone who will listen," she said.

Schulin, who was born and raised in Amherst and currently resides in Lorain, joined the University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center team in 2006 after spending the first part of her career at University Hospitals' main campus in Cleveland. She started her career as a postpartum nurse in 1983, but it wasn't too long before she started earning additional certifications.

In 1992, Schulin became internationally board certified as a lactation consultant, which is a health professional who helps mothers and babies find success with breast-feeding. Schulin said she wasn't one of the nurses chosen to become board certified at the time but took it upon herself to learn the material and take the test.

"I came within the first seven years of the profession," she said. "I self-studied with the help of some other friends and I passed.



ERIC BONZAR — THE MORNING JOURNAL

Tina Schulin, a lactation consultant and childbirth educator at University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center, right, meets with new mom Stacey Olive, 32, of Wellington, Sept. 15, 2016. Olive — who recently had her third child — said with her first, she was apprehensive when Schulin approached her about the possibility of breast-feeding, but has nursed all three of her children and has seen the benefits associated with the natural form of feeding.

The rest is history."

Schulin said she decided to get the extra certification because there wasn't a lot of help for breast-feeding women back then and she wanted to learn more.

Kangaroo care, which is the practice of a mother and a newborn touching skin-to-skin, and hypnobirthing, which is a natural birthing process, are just two of the many certifica-

tions Schulin has obtained. "I'm a lifelong learner," she said.

But the importance of breast-feeding was instilled in Schulin by her paternal grandmother, Alice

Hignett, who insisted that Schulin breast-feed her children.

"She just felt very strongly about it," Schulin explained. "I said 'I'm not going to let you be disappointed in me,'

so I nursed my first daughter for a year back before the majority of people even nursed. Then I went on to have five kids and got better and better at it."

MOMS » PAGE 3

+ **Online:** For more information on University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center and all its services and programs, visit UHHOSPITALS.ORG/ELYRIA

Unique

FROM PAGE 1

between the Mercy Health Behavioral Health Institute and the Mercy Health physicians to embed psychologists in the primary care practice."

Hill said she is right by the primary care physician's side which integrates behavioral health within the primary care team.

"I'm a member of the primary care team and this is pretty unique and it's a really great example of how behavioral health is evolving," she said. "They're really supporting mind body and spirit. I actually have a lot of versatility with that (different cases)."

Hill said patients come in and see their primary care doctor, who is always their first point of contact. Some patients come in because they have insomnia, or concerns related to anxiety and depression; more of the traditional cases with behavioral health.

Rather than referring patients out, primary care doctors bring Hill into the treatment team.

"We begin to work on their behavioral health concerns as it relates or impacts some of those medical things," she said. "Because so often they go hand in hand."

People come in regularly with chronic illness and they are told they need to change their behavior, which is when Hill steps in to help whether it be chronic disease management, weight management, or other situations.

"The primary care physician is usually going to be that first stop and they are kind of considered the gateway," she said. "So at that first contact, that primary care provider can link them to give them support for their emotional wellness, you know, psychological concerns, behavioral concerns. Then we are talking about increased access to those services and how to really improve just quality of life all around."

Hill said her integration in the primary care team shows how behavioral health is evolving, and that is the direction it is going.

"I am very excited to get involved in this evidence supported model," she said. "This is the first one for Mercy in this region."

There are 15 behavioral health consultants hired across the Mercy system, but Hill is the first in the Lorain region.

"That's been really, really exciting, just to be able to get involved with this from the very beginning and help develop this," she said. "It's been really, really well received by the primary care providers, by this office and by the patients. That has been just been something that I've just been excited to be a part of."

Hill's area of focus is on behavioral changes, chronic disease management, depression and anxiety, stress and relaxation, insomnia and weight management. She has 10 years of experience in psychological and emotional treatments. She received her doctorate degree in clinical psychology from Walden University before she spent 10 years working in community mental health with an underserved population.

She also served the military as a medical service officer, working in a combat support hospital.

She serves on the Suicide Prevention Coalition for Lorain County.

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Moms

FROM PAGE 2

In 2004, Schulin became the first designated lactation consultant at University Hospitals MacDonald Women's Hospital in Cleveland. She said University Hospitals realized the importance of the position and in 2014, became baby-friendly.

The Baby-friendly Hospital initiative was launched by the World Health Organization and UNICEF in 1991 and is a global effort to "implement practices that protect, promote and support breast-feeding," according to the World Health Organization's website. Schulin said there is a list of 10 steps hospitals much complete to become baby-friendly, including not providing pacifiers to breast-feeding infants and mothers attempting to breast-feed within a half-hour of birth.

Schulin said the Elyria hospital recently received a grant for around \$15,000, which was used to help pay for the fees associated with being baby-friendly. She said the process of becoming baby-friendly takes a couple of years and she's hoping to reach the achievement by 2017.

"My goal is to be the second UH hospital to be baby friendly, and the first in Lorain County," Schulin said.

The benefits associated with breast-feeding are numerous, Schulin said, and are part of why she's an advocate for the practice. Some of the benefits babies who are breast-fed can experience include an enhanced immune system, a reduced likelihood of childhood cancer, obesity, and diabetes, a reduced risk for SIDS, autoimmune disorders, asthma and allergies and an increased IQ.

"I think if we educate moms, more would try it," Schulin said, noting there are 200 properties in breast milk that are unable to be replicated in store-bought



ERIC BONZAR — THE MORNING JOURNAL

Stacey Olive, 32, of Wellington, "kangaroo"s her child before breast-feeding him, Sept. 15. Research studies of Kangaroo Care, which requires skin-to-skin contact between mother and child, has shown to increase breast milk supply and have other developmental benefits, Tina Schulin, a lactation consultant and childbirth educator at University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center, said.

formula.

Other interesting facts about breast-feeding Schulin mentioned are that

moms can burn 500 calories a day by breast-feeding and children can be breast-fed for longer than a year.

But Schulin did admit that breast-feeding isn't exactly easy.

"Breast-feeding is a chal-

lenge," she said, explaining that every mom is different and "success" is somewhat redefined. "Any is bet-

ter than none. We have to focus on what we can do."

Stacey Olive, 32, of Wellington, said she was wary about breast-feeding when she gave birth to her first son, Lucas, in 2008, but Schulin helped her work through the issues. On Sept. 13, Olive gave birth to her third child and for the third time had Schulin there to walk her through any questions she may have.

Olive said she and her husband, Tristan Olive, 34, attended the breast-feeding support group when they had their first son, who is now 8 years old, but decided the classes were unnecessary three years later when Scarlett, 5, was born.

"I'm for sanity, but I firmly believe they're healthy because they got the right start," she said, adding that her oldest son has only been prescribed an antibiotic once.

The couples' youngest son came a bit earlier than expected and a name hadn't been decided as of Sept. 16. Olive said breast-feeding can be tiring and make moms feel pressured, but believes it's worth it.

"I'm happy things are shifting back to show what moms can do," Olive said.

For those expecting or considering breast-feeding their children, Olive offered a few words of advice:

"Trust in your body and trust that you can provide what your child needs."

Schulin said nothing makes her more excited than watching a mother and a baby connect. She said she's honored to have the trust of so many moms.

"It's a very empowering experience," she said. "It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen."

Although Schulin said she doesn't plan too far in advance, she estimates that she's about seven years from retirement. But that won't stop her from talking about breast-feeding.

"All I know is I will always help whoever comes to me," she said. "I'm never not going to help somebody."





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