



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Lewis County Native to Bring Surgical Expertise to Hometown Hospital**

LOWVILLE, NY - Lewis County Health System (LCHS) and Lewis County Surgical Associates look forward to welcoming General Surgeon and Lewis County native Rachel B. Zehr, M.D., to the medical staff in September 2023. She will join General Surgeons Jon Baker, M.D., Steve Kwon, M.D., and David Vivas, M.D.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Zehr back home to Lewis County," stated Gerald R. Cayer, LCHS Chief Executive Officer. "Patients have enjoyed the personalized, quality care they receive at Lewis County Surgical Associates, and Dr. Zehr will further enhance local access to surgical services for the communities we serve."

Mr. Cayer states, "The timing is wonderful as we are scheduled to start providing care in the new surgical pavilion in August 2023. With the support and encouragement of the Board of Legislators and the Board of Managers, the health system invested significantly in its surgical services infrastructure, doubling the current surgical capacity with three operating rooms and one procedure room. Modernizing our facilities ensures LCHS can provide local access to quality surgical care for future generations."

Dr. Zehr graduated in 2002 from Lowville Academy Central School and completed her undergraduate degree in Biology at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA. She then completed a Mennonite Voluntary Service assignment in San Antonio, TX, before beginning medical school at SUNY Upstate Medical University. Dr. Zehr earned her M.D. degree in May of 2012 at SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, NY, and her General Surgery Residency at Bassett Medical Center, Cooperstown, NY. She is Board Certified by the American Board of Surgery and an Associate Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

"Dr. Zehr's compassion, work ethic, and commitment to Lewis County make me hopeful that the surgical needs of our neighbors will be met with excellence for another generation," stated Sean Harney, MD, Chief Medical Officer for Employed Practices.

Dr. Zehr spent time at Lewis County Health System during her third year in medical school through the Rural Medical Scholars Program at Upstate in 2011-2012. RMED places third-year medical students in rural or small communities to work and learn under the supervision of family physicians and other specialists. Students are matched to teaching sites based on their preferences and academic interests. Knowing she wanted to practice medicine in a rural area, Rachel chose Lewis County Health System as her training site, spending five months with doctors Dan and M. Lynn Pisaniello as her primary preceptors. Following her time at LCHS, she pursued surgery as her specialty and continued her education and training.

"The RMED program is a great opportunity for medical students to work, learn, and engage directly with rural communities and see the key challenges in rural health that prepare them to serve as future rural health leaders," stated Dr. M. Lynn Pisaniello. "Rachel was able to see the depth of the patient and physician relationship in a smaller area, which is a key factor for those of us who love practicing rural medicine."

Dr. Rachel Zehr was born and raised in Lowville and is the daughter of Evan and Amy Zehr of Lowville.

She is currently practicing in Oneonta and Cooperstown, NY, and has over 11 years of experience providing a broad range of surgical care, including minimally invasive Laparoscopic Surgery.