

MMC Recertified as Comprehensive Stroke Center and  
Now the Second Busiest in Michigan

*The Witham Family Comprehensive Stroke Center prepares for a period of increased risk as winter weather and the holidays approach.*

The Witham Family Comprehensive Stroke Center (WFCSC) at Munson Medical Center is proud to announce its recertification from The Joint Commission as Northern Michigan’s first and only Comprehensive Stroke Center (CSC).

Since 2020, the number of stroke cases accepted at WFCSC has more than doubled to over 1,200 each year making it the second busiest of 16 CSCs in the state. The American Stroke Association (ASA) has cited research indicating that strokes are more common November through February due to winter weather and the holidays. Access to the highest level of stroke care including endovascular intervention is critical but also very unique for a region like Northern Michigan.

“There remain significant disparities in stroke care across the country and around the world, with rural areas typically underserved with advanced stroke therapies,” said Gary Rajah, MD, Neurovascular/Cerebrovascular Neurosurgeon and WFCSC Medical and Surgical Director. “Time is brain and the over 500 emergent stroke procedures we’ve performed over the last five years are helping to improve outcomes, but our work is never done.”

Dr. Rajah completed the region’s very first thrombectomy in 2020 but prior to his arrival patients requiring that procedure had to be transferred downstate, delaying care a minimum of two hours due to travel time. Stroke is the world’s leading cause of disability with each minute of delay potentially causing

the loss of four disability-free days and each hour equivalent to aging 3.6 years.

“It’s been incredibly rewarding to bring this high level of stroke and neurovascular care to Northern Michigan, and the program continues to grow,” added Rajah. “CSC status not only reassures our patients and their families that they are receiving the very best evidence based, innovative care, but also helps with recruitment and retention of staff system wide.”

The success of the CSC has helped expand neuro care overall with the launch of Munson Neurosciences in Fall 2024. Over the last five years, Munson Healthcare has recruited six neurosurgeons and nine neurologists to the region with additional providers set to join the program this coming summer.

There are upwards of 300 Comprehensive Stroke Centers in the United States certified by The Joint Commission which represents the gold standard in stroke care. Each delivers care across the entire stroke continuum including:

- Pre-hospital coordination at smaller hospitals/critical access locations
- Emergency evaluation, and acute treatment (including IV thrombolysis and mechanical thrombectomy)
- Neuro intensive care
- Rehabilitation planning
- Long-term follow-up

Additionally, stroke related research is also a core element of CSC health, which can help provide Northern Michigan communities with treatment options beyond the standard of care for complex cases.

For more information on The Witham Family Comprehensive Stroke Center visit [munsonhealthcare.org/stroke](http://munsonhealthcare.org/stroke).



Stroke Club Meets for Open Discussion

*Grand Traverse Bay Area Stroke Club meets at Presbyterian Church on January 14*

The Grand Traverse Bay Area Stroke Club will host an open discussion during the meeting on Wednesday, January 14 from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church, located at 701 Westminster Rd. in Traverse City.

Melinda Hollands, L.M.S.W., with Munson Medical Center’s Patient Care Management Department, will facilitate the club meeting.

The Grand Traverse Bay Area Stroke Club is open to the public and meets on the second Wednesday of each month. The group offers stroke survivors and support persons the opportunity to learn, share, and connect through speakers, demonstrations, and discussions.

For more information, please contact Hollands at 231-935-6380.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY



Cell - (231)-633-2323  
Fax - (800)-531-6503  
Toll Free - (800)-977-3386  
Email- GaryScheitler@gmail.com

[www.ppusa.com](http://www.ppusa.com)



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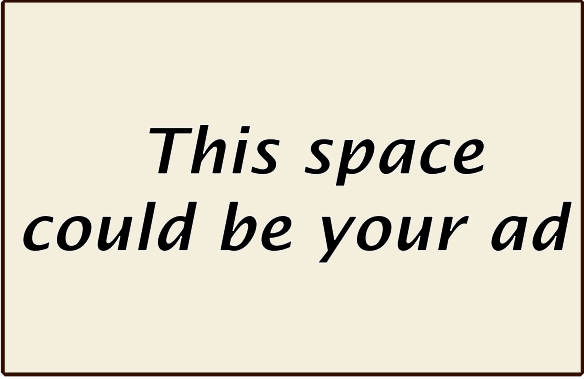




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= MENTAL HEALTH CORNER =

Growth, Meaning and Self-Mastery Part 2:  
The Bear and The Dragon

The commitment to personal growth will come with many thresholds to break through. There are two forces that live within us: The Bear and The Dragon.

These are not enemies to be destroyed. They are our teachers.

THE BEAR:

The Bear represents the outer-world challenges life throws at you:

- Sudden loss or changes in direction
- The ending of a relationship(s)
- Financial pressure or setbacks
- A world that shifts faster than you can comfortably adapt

The Bear asks you: “Do you really want to grow?”

Every time we climb to a new level in our personal development and go outside our comfort zone, we encounter a new and stronger Bear than the last one. Each Bear is a reminder that we are growing. Each Bear invites us to practice patience, courage and faith in the process of our own growth.

It’s not punishment. It’s preparation.

THE DRAGON:

The Dragon lives inside us. It represents the inner struggles we carry. This might show up as:

Unresolved pain or hidden grief from losses

Habits that show up as self-sabotage

Limiting beliefs that can whisper, “You’ll never be enough.”

The Dragon feeds on our fears, shame and tendencies to avoid difficult things. It whispers in an attempt to keep us small and safe. It will show up in the stories that we tell ourselves to shrink from joy or when we doubt our own self-worth.

If the Dragon is not tamed, it will be content to burn down the whole village.

Taming the Dragon is not about using force. It’s about bringing awareness and self-compassion to your journey. It’s choosing to stay present when everything in you wants to quit or run away.

You overcome the Dragon when you:

- Learn to keep showing up.
- Learn to keep breathing through the fire.

In time, you will discover a quiet strength that will outlast your fear. You will begin to live from purpose instead of pain.

EMBRACING THE JOURNEY:

Our growth is not about perfection. It’s about participation.

When we learn to meet the Bear with our courage and the Dragon with our self-compassion, it ceases to feel like a test or hardship and begins to transform into a training ground. You begin feeling more grounded, wise and deeply alive. This builds our resilience and our ability to face anything life brings. This is another way we win at life.

-Adam DeVaney, LCSW, CECF

Adam DeVaney is a clinical social worker and therapist with over a decade of experience working with clients with a diversity of challenges from addiction and anxiety to overcoming trauma and helping people to learn what it takes to live their best lives. Along with his wife, Mandi, he founded Life’s Work Clinic in Kalkaska, Michigan, and Life’s Work Coaching with a local and global footprint. Adam has dedicated his life to serving others and walking with them on their healing journeys.



Additional Obituaries on pages 4, & 5

James "Jim" McClurg

March 30, 1932 ~ December 7, 2025

James Edson (Jim) McClurg passed away on December 7th 2025 at his beloved cabin on the north end of Torch Lake in Eastport, Michigan. Jim was born in Dearborn, Michigan in 1932 and was fortunate to live a full rich life for 93 years. His early years were divided by living and attending school during the fall and winter in Dearborn and spending spring and summer at the family cabin on Torch Lake.

As a boy Jim, his twin brother Bill, and the other kids on the Torch Lake beach entertained themselves with water skis, home-made diving helmets, paddle boards, water ski jumps, and diving towers. They canoed, rowed, and sailed all over the lake, including rowing a rowboat from Eastport to Elk Rapids (31 miles). They then turned around and rowed the 31 miles back. Their antics earned them a reputation and they were invited to put on the first community water ski show.

Jim was very athletic and he enjoyed many sports throughout his life. In high school he used a bamboo pole that he had cut from a grove in Florida so that he could compete in pole vault. He loved many sports including tennis, handball, racquetball, squash, skiing, hockey and softball. His

passion for sports included coaching high school swimming, tennis and diving. He enjoyed backpacking all of his adult life and instilled a love of the outdoors in his children and grandchildren.

Jim earned Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Michigan. In the 1960’s he spent a summer doing geology fieldwork in Mexico for Pemex, driving a 1945 army jeep across Mexico. He later taught the UM Geology Department’s summer field course in Boulder Colorado and later in Jackson Hole Wyoming. Jim fell in love with the West and in the early 1970’s made his home there. He spent the majority of his career at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, beginning in 1972 and retiring in 1997. Jim conducted research into the origins of coal, which included touring many of the swamps of the southeastern U.S. He published his findings and shared them with other interested researchers.

Jim enjoyed many aspects of being a college professor but his first love and true gift was teaching. Early in his career he produced and taught over 100 TV programs for both the U of M Television



Station and the National Education Television (NET) Science series “Through Children’s Eyes.” He made science interesting (doing things like drinking a glass of water while upside down to prove that gravity wasn’t necessary to swallow).

He received teaching awards everywhere he taught. At the University of Wyoming he won every teaching award offered, some a number of times. He was well known for his popular Introduction to Geology course, and was responsible for inspiring many students to pursue geology or science careers. After retirement he was recruited by the Wyoming Geological Survey to mentor new hires and to edit publications. Jim continued his love of teaching and was a sought after presenter, giving talks on history and geology in both Wyoming and Michigan.

He had a lifelong interest in building and woodworking. He constructed several additions to the cabin in Eastport enlarging it in order to make room for his growing family. He was eager to help anyone in need with home improvement projects. Always the teacher, he taught his children

how to fix and build things.

Jim’s biggest legacy may be his grandchildren and great grandchildren, and they loved him dearly. He was never too busy to spend time with them. No request went unanswered, no matter how trivial. He spent hours in his wood shop with them, helping them create projects. He and his wife, Pat, created a sense of home for his far flung family on the shores of Torch Lake, where they gather together every summer.

Jim is survived by his wife of 53 years Patricia (Pat) Hatch McClurg; children Jon (Caroline), Tom (Susan), and Karen Sheffres (Bob); grandchildren Sam (Liza), Ryan (Taylor), Jacob, Lauren, Audrey, Michael, Jackson (Eve), Benjamin; and great grandchild Ezra. His twin brother Bill and parents Howard and Louise McClurg preceded him in death.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Torch Lake Conservation Center, <https://conservetorch.org/donate/> , or Doctors Without Borders, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/get-involved/ways-to-give> .

Arrangements are in the care of the Central Lake Chapel of Mortensen Funeral Homes.