

# THE Importance of Caring

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my journey into health care



**Zoann Braasch, MLS(ASCP)**  
 DIRECTOR OF LABORATORY SERVICES

For Zoann Braasch, accepting a position as Columbus Community Hospital’s laboratory director felt like coming back home.

Braasch was raised in Columbus and grew up in her childhood home, located a few blocks from the hospital’s main campus. But her ties to the hospital don’t end there. Braasch’s mother, Betty Plankinton, worked as a cardiac intensive care nurse and house supervisor at the hospital for 25 years.

Braasch’s brothers were born with a congenital disability that kept their blood from clotting properly. Therefore, many of her earliest memories include rushing to the hospital because one of her brothers needed a transfusion. These experiences showed Braasch the impact health care can have on a family. She decided to attend college to become a doctor, but life led her down a different path.

She received her Bachelor of Science degree in industrial chemistry from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. Upon receiving her degree, she moved back to Columbus and accepted a position with Behlen Manufacturing’s environmental and safety department. Still, health care was pulling her in its direction.

**“When I decided to leave Behlen, I knew the medical field was where I belonged,”** she said.

Braasch knew she was ready to make a career change, but felt going back to school was not the best option for her and her family. After talking with colleagues, she learned she could use her current degree and support from her supervisor to work in a medical laboratory.

She began her career in the medical field by working for East Central District Health Department until it stopped laboratory services at its location. After that, she spent 16 years working at the Schuyler hospital, now CHI Health.

Braasch knew she wanted to continue her education in medical laboratory studies, and decided to receive her certification as a medical laboratory scientist from the American Society for Clinical Pathology in 2009.

She continued her work at CHI Health in Schuyler and spent the last six years of her tenure with that organization as the laboratory supervisor and coordinator.

**“From the beginning of my time at CHI Health, my supervisor prepared me to take over as the laboratory supervisor,”** she said. **“Right away, she saw something in me that made her think I was right for the position.”**

She later left CHI Health to pursue an opportunity as a laboratory manager at Merrick Medical Center in Central City, until a position opened up at the hospital. She accepted the director of laboratory services position at CCH in February 2022.

**“Columbus is my home,”** she said. **“This position will allow me to do both the job I excel at and be a bigger part of the community where I grew up.”**

As the laboratory director, Braasch oversees the laboratory operations, including billing patients, troubleshooting equipment and supply issues and ensuring compliance with testing guidelines.

While there are difficult days, Braasch knows she can lean on her team for support.

**“CCH has a strong culture built on support and a passion for helping others,”** she said. **“Throughout my time at CCH, I have always felt welcomed and supported by everyone in the laboratory — my peers and senior leaders. I’m excited to be here. It’s a great place to work!”**

**For more information on Columbus Community Hospital and its laboratory, please visit [www.columbushosp.org](http://www.columbushosp.org).**