

Bulletin

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Mercy earns top rating from Better Business Bureau of Greater Iowa



Earlier this week, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) of Greater Iowa announced Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines earned the group's highest

accreditation rating as a result of meeting or exceeding 16 standards of business excellence.

On Jan. 12, Mercy received an "A+" on the BBB's new letter grade scale, which replaces the "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" system the non-profit organization previously used to rate businesses' reliability and trustworthiness.

The high grade reflects the BBB's confidence in Mercy in a number of areas – including fair advertising, prompt resolution of disputes, years of experience and compliance with local, state and federal laws.

Mercy has been accredited by the BBB since 1992. To view its Reliability Report™ and learn more about the new rating system, visit <http://iowa.bbb.org>, click on "Check Out a Business or Charity" and type "Mercy Medical Center" in the search field.



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New cancer radiation therapy offers numerous benefits to Mercy patients

Many patients at Mercy are now taking advantage of High Dose Rate (HDR) brachytherapy, a relatively new radiation therapy intervention used in the treatment of cancer.

Brachytherapy involves placement of a protected sealed radioactive source directly within or near a tumor site in order to deliver radiation to a specific location. It is sometimes also called internal radiation therapy. Traditionally, the radiation dose delivered in this manner has been very low, therefore referred to as Low Dose Rate (LDR).

Whereas LDR brachytherapy places radioactive materials inside the body for extended periods of time, the radiation source used in HDR brachytherapy allows physicians to deliver equivalent doses of radiation in just a few minutes by inserting and then removing the radioactive beads right after each treatment. Thus, HDR brachytherapy is usually performed as a short series of outpatient procedures.

"We started HDR treatments at Mercy in late November," said George Voynov, M.D., radiation oncologist with Mercy Cancer Center Radiation Oncology. "So far, we have treated 19 patients and expect most of our LDR population to be treated with HDR brachytherapy in the future."

HDR has many benefits, including the fact that it can be performed on an outpatient basis. This saves patients time and money by avoiding unnecessary



(L-R) George Voynov, M.D., radiation oncologist, and Roy Wood, Ph.D., have been instrumental in bringing HDR brachytherapy to Mercy Cancer Center Radiation Oncology. The new technology allows qualifying cancer patients to receive radiation treatments over a shorter period of time than with other treatment options.

hospital stays. Overall treatment time for patients is also greatly reduced. For example, qualifying breast cancer patients can be treated in one week versus the six weeks required with traditional external beam radiation therapy. With HDR, patients are also able to leave the office right after their treatment without fear of exposing health care workers or family members to radiation over time.

"This is a tremendous boost to our treatment options for cancer patients," Dr. Voynov said. "Not only are treatment times shorter, but patients' quality of life during treatment is greatly increased."

Mercy launches new green initiatives

In an effort to become more environmentally friendly, Mercy is launching a number of new initiatives to reduce waste and consume less energy and water.

“The Stewardship pillar of Mercy’s strategic plan requires us to be as earth-friendly and environmentally responsible as possible,” said Ron Muecke, vice president of Facilities and Support Services. “Not only do green initiatives improve the health of our environment, but they can also decrease operating expenses.”

One practice recently implemented by Environmental Services involves the use of microfiber mops to clean floors in patient rooms and public areas. Microfiber technology uses less chemicals and produces less waste than traditional mopping methods.

“The microfiber mops are more absorbent than cotton loop mops,” Ron explained. “They use a special cleaning solution instead of water and the mop head can be easily changed after cleaning a floor, which significantly decreases the risk of cross-contamination. Microfiber mops can also be laundered up to 400 times – a significant savings over the cotton mops that only stood up to about 20 washes.”

As another part of its effort to be more environmentally responsible,



Mercy’s Environmental Services Department recently started using environmentally friendly microfiber mops like the one pictured above to clean floors in public areas and patient rooms. The mops use less chemicals, produce less waste and improve infection control by decreasing the risk of cross-contamination.

Mercy is actively partnering with vendors known for their leading-edge green practices. For example, Mercy purchased carpet for the East Tower from Milliken, a manufacturer whose plants have zero recorded waste-to-landfill since 1999. In addition, Mercy Medical Center – West Lakes is being constructed as an environmentally friendly facility using the latest in green building materials.

If you have suggestions for other green practices Mercy could adopt, please call Facilities at x-73110.

New display reflects Mercy’s achievements

On Monday, Jan. 12, Mercy’s Public Relations and Marketing Department updated the photo wall in the hallway outside the Marketplace and Grille. The display – which reflects each of Mercy’s six strategic pillars – features photographs and brief captions about the organization’s most meaningful awards and achievements over the past 18 months.



Mercy welcomes record number of babies in 2008



For the third year in a row, Mercy set a record for the number of babies born at a single Iowa hospital. In 2008, Mercy’s Women and Infants’ Center delivered 4,948 infants – including 135 sets of twins and six sets of triplets.

“Nothing is more rewarding than seeing patients and their families with a new baby,” said Jackie Frost-Kunnen, senior vice president of Hospital Operations. “The record volume of deliveries is a signal of strong community support and an endorsement of the quality of care provided by our physicians and staff.”

Designed to provide state-of-the-art technology to mothers, babies and families throughout the birthing and post-partum experience, Mercy’s Women & Infants’ Center consists of a specialized Maternity Triage and Treatment Unit, a Birthing Unit with three C-section suites and a Mother/Baby Unit with a well-baby nursery.

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