

# Bulletin

JAN. 23, 2009

## Casting call for women affected by heart disease

As part of the 2009 Go Red For Women campaign, the Des Moines affiliate of the American Heart Association (AHA), Jordan Creek Town Center and Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines are looking for local women who represent the various faces of heart disease – including survivors, family members, friends and clinicians.

Interested women are invited to take part in an open casting call scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 5, from 5-9 p.m. in the food court at Jordan Creek. Participants will be asked to share their stories about the ways heart disease has affected them personally and talk about their efforts to lead heart-healthy lifestyles.

The interviews will be videotaped and reviewed by a panel of judges comprised of staff from AHA and the Mercy Heart Hospital. The top entries will then be sent to the AHA's National Center for possible inclusion in nationwide marketing campaigns and network television programming. Additional casting calls will be held across the country.

For more information or to register, please call (515) 246-4580 or visit [www.GoRedForWomen.org](http://www.GoRedForWomen.org). Registration is required.



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## Mercy, DMU partner to conduct landmark study on causes of premature birth

In August 2008, Mercy and Des Moines University (DMU) announced a new partnership for research and medicine known as the Iowa Center for Translational and Clinical Research (ICTCR). Since then, partnership participants have been busy starting new research projects and presenting at conferences, and are currently working to launch a Web site for use by researchers and the general public later this winter.

One of the projects underway is a first-of-its-kind study on the causes of premature birth led by Bryan Larsen, Ph.D., dean of University Research and Biomedical Graduate Studies at DMU and director of ICTCR, and Joseph Hwang, M.D., perinatologist with Perinatal Center of Iowa. By examining bacteria and gene variations in pregnant women, Drs. Larsen and Hwang hope to better understand the ways genetic and environmental factors affect a mother's inflammatory system and contribute to a baby's risk of being born prematurely.

"While physicians have a clear understanding of some cases of premature birth, the reason for the majority of cases of prematurity cannot be pinpointed," said Dr. Larsen. "However, as the human inflammatory system has become better understood, the connection between the mother's immune system and the beginning of normal and premature labor has also been realized. What we are trying to find out is if inflammation leads to premature birth due to genetic factors, or if factors in the mother's environment – such as



Above, Dr. Joseph Hwang, perinatologist with Perinatal Center of Iowa, consults with a patient about her pregnancy. Dr. Hwang is working with Dr. Bryan Larsen on a special research project to better understand the connection between a mother's inflammatory system and her baby's risk of premature birth. The study is one of many currently being conducted by the Iowa Center for Translational and Clinical Research – a partnership of Mercy and Des Moines University.

the bacteria normally carried in the body – lead to premature birth."

The project has received international attention and the team expects to receive patient samples from 15 medical centers around the world. Dr. Larsen said he expects the study to take at least three years in order to collect sufficient data to finalize conclusions.

In the meantime, ICTCR is making headway in developing a variety of interdisciplinary and interinstitutional teams that will bring together the ideas and expertise needed to address important research questions that will ultimately benefit the health of the community.

## Pediatric surgical caps bring comfort, smiles

Surgery can be unnerving for anyone, but for children it can be quite frightening – especially when they are too young to understand what is happening to them or are scared of being separated from their parents.

To ease the anxiety of their pediatric patients, staff from Mercy's Surgery Department started sewing special caps for the children that mimic the ones the surgical staff wear. The caps, which often feature colorful patterns or cartoon characters, help distract and comfort young patients.

The project was the idea of Elizabeth DiTomaso, a Surgery nurse who decided pediatric patients should have caps of their own to wear and take home from the hospital. Last summer, she brought some of the caps she had made to a staff meeting and invited her colleagues to help with the effort. Jennie Ganzer, Patti Nutting, Diane Filmer and Dee Johnson quickly volunteered to help, and the group began sewing caps using materials they purchased or that was donated by other staff members.



Melanie Troster, RN, poses with a young patient in the surgery cap he picked out to wear. The caps are made by nurses to help alleviate pediatric patients' anxiety.

"This has been such a positive thing," said Elizabeth. "The children love the caps and enjoy picking one out that makes them smile. As a result, our patients and their families are calmer."

"We've even heard about some patients taking their caps to school to talk about their surgery," Elizabeth added. "Knowing they have positive memories of their experience at Mercy makes us all feel our efforts are worthwhile."

For more information about the project or to donate fabric or materials, contact Elizabeth at [editomaso@mercydesmoines.org](mailto:editomaso@mercydesmoines.org).

## Angels of Mercy program offers grateful patients a way to recognize excellence

### Angels of Mercy

Every day, Mercy employees are approached by patients and family members who are grateful for the care they have received and want to show their thanks. As a result, Mercy Foundation developed the Angels of Mercy program so patients can express their appreciation for the excellent care they received at Mercy.

The program enables patients and their loved ones to make contributions to Mercy Foundation in honor of a staff member who provided exceptional service. Caregivers recognized by patients will receive a note of thanks

and a special pin to commemorate the honor. They will also be recognized at an annual event.

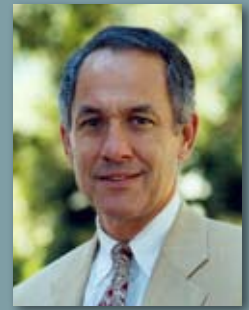
"We are very excited to offer the Angels of Mercy program," said Angela Joens, vice president of Development Operations for Mercy Foundation.

"Now, when people ask what they can do to show their appreciation, staff can talk to them about the program and let them know their gift will not only offer them a way to express their gratitude, but will also support Mercy initiatives vital to those in need."

Information about the program is available by calling Mercy Foundation at x-73248 or visiting [www.mercydesmoines.org/foundation](http://www.mercydesmoines.org/foundation).

## Dr. Dale Andres named senior vice president of Medical Affairs

Effective Feb. 1, Dale Andres, M.D., will permanently assume the role of senior vice president of Medical Affairs. In addition to his position as chief pathologist and medical director of Laboratory Administration, Dr. Andres has served as vice president of Medical Affairs in an interim capacity since April 2008.



In his new role, Dr. Andres will be responsible for Medical Staff governance and leadership, clinical quality initiatives, risk management, patient safety and medical education. He will also oversee Mercy's general surgery and family medicine residency programs and its geriatric fellowship program.

Dr. Andres joined the Mercy Family in 2005. Prior to that, he served as chief of Pathology at Mercy Medical Center – North Iowa in Mason City.

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