

## Mercy receives donation from racing organization

During the Iowa Corn Indy 250, which was held June 21 at the Iowa Speedway in Newton, the Championship Auto Racing Auxiliary (CARA Charities) presented Mercy with a \$2,500 donation to help provide car seats to families in need.

CARA Charities made the contribution to Mercy as part of its "Buckle Up Baby" program, which is supported by the Bridgestone/Firestone Trust. Since 1993, the Indianapolis-based non-profit organization has donated more than \$600,000 to children's hospitals in communities where auto races are held. Mercy has been the Official Medical Provider of the Iowa Speedway since it opened in 2006.

Because of this partnership, all Mercy employees are eligible to receive a 15 percent discount on tickets for the 2009 race season, which has five remaining races this year – including the NASCAR Camping World Series West on Friday, Sept. 4, and the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series on Saturday, Sept. 5.

To purchase tickets at the Mercy rate, visit [www.ticketmaster.com/mercy](http://www.ticketmaster.com/mercy) and enter "Mercy09" when prompted for a special offer code. More information is available at [www.iowaspeedway.com](http://www.iowaspeedway.com).



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## PCI physician leads breakthrough study to improve health outcomes for preterm babies

Dr. Neil Mandsager, a perinatologist with the Perinatal Center of Iowa, an affiliate of Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines, recently served as one of the principal investigators in a landmark research study investigating the impact of multiple doses of steroids on unborn babies.

Physicians typically prescribe steroids to women going into preterm labor in order to improve the lung function of babies born between 29 and 34 weeks of pregnancy. Evidence has shown babies benefit most when the steroid dose is given no more than a week before birth, but since an exact delivery date cannot always be predicted, doctors often repeat the dose after an expectant mother passes the seven-day mark without giving birth.

Further studies have shown, however, that multiple courses of steroids can result in growth restriction and smaller head circumferences in premature babies, which can lead to additional health complications after birth. Therefore, to determine a method of giving steroids to premature babies that aids development without causing other medical problems, Dr. Mandsager recently took a lead role on a research team to investigate the impact of giving mothers in preterm labor their recommended first course of steroids one week in advance of giving birth, followed by just one additional "rescue" dose of steroids shortly before delivery.

The study concluded that giving a second dose of steroids to babies still in the womb reduced their mortality rate by

Above, Dr. Neil Mandsager, perinatologist with the Perinatal Center of Iowa, holds a newborn baby who was born prematurely to one of his patients. Recently, Dr. Mandsager led a landmark study to investigate the impact of multiple doses of steroids on unborn babies. (Steroid therapy is typically prescribed for mothers in preterm labor in order to help their babies' lungs develop.) His research suggests babies born before 34 weeks may benefit most if their mothers are given one course of steroids a week before delivery and a "rescue" dose of steroids shortly before delivery.

31 percent and decreased their risk of developing additional complications by 21 percent.

"As the findings of this study are adopted as evidence-based best practices, babies born at Mercy and across the United States will benefit," said Dr. Mandsager. "Based on the study, babies born before 34 weeks to mothers placed on this new steroid therapy have a lower chance of developing respiratory distress and being placed on mechanical ventilation, which leads to better outcomes for the babies and their families."

# Mercy, The Joint Commission encourage patients to “Speak Up” through campaign



In an effort to make health care safer, Mercy is encouraging patients to voice their questions or concerns as part of the The Joint Commission’s Speak Up™ campaign – a national patient education initiative that urges individuals to take a role in preventing medical errors by becoming active, informed participants of their health care team.

Specifically, Speak Up™ encourages patients to talk to health care providers if they do not understand any part of their treatment plan; to pay attention to the care and medications they receive; to educate themselves about their diagnosis and suggested treatment plan; to ask a trusted friend or relative

to advocate on their behalf; to know which medications they take and why they have been prescribed; to use a hospital or clinic that has been evaluated and is accredited; and to actively participate in all treatment decisions.

Since The Joint Commission launched the Speak Up™ campaign in 2002 in conjunction with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the award-winning patient safety program has helped thousands of patients ask the types of questions needed to keep them safe while in the hospital, recover sooner with fewer complications and decrease their chances of readmission.

For more information about the Speak Up™ campaign, please contact Patti Wray-Marnin, Joint Commission accreditation specialist, at x-32257.

## Mark your calendar...

**BLOOD SCREENING**  
Monday, July 27 (7-9 a.m.)  
Dahl’s Foods

1208 Prospect Road, West Des Moines  
The clinic will be offering eight blood tests that range in price from \$15-30 per test. For more information or to register, please call the Mercy Nurse at x-32584.

**GREAT EXPECTATIONS**  
Thursday, July 30 (6:30-8:30 p.m.)  
East Tower Auditorium

If you’re thinking about starting a family or are already in your first trimester, this event is for you! A fitness instructor, dietitian, childbirth educator, nurse and physician will be available to address your questions and concerns. Tours of the Women & Infants’ Center may be scheduled before or after the event. To register, visit [www.mercydesmoines.org/about\\_mercy/classes\\_screenings.cfm](http://www.mercydesmoines.org/about_mercy/classes_screenings.cfm) and select “Great Expectations.”

## Announcements & News Briefs

### Liz May accepts position of director of Rural Physician Operations for Mercy Clinics



Liz May, director of Nursing and associate administrator of Mercy Capitol, has been named director of Rural Physician Operations for Mercy Clinics. She will transition into her new role over the next few months as Mercy Capitol is closed.

In her new position, Liz will be responsible for facilitating the development and operations of rural clinics and acting as a resource on clinic operations to members of Mercy Health Network – Central Iowa.

Liz has been a member of the Mercy Family for 30 years and has served as a

staff nurse, clinical nurse and assistant head nurse on 5 South, as well as intake coordinator for Mercy Home Care, director of Subacute Care and interim nursing director of Story County Medical Center.

### 5 North announces new unit nursing director

Rhonda DePriest, RN, BSN, has accepted the position of unit director on 5 North (Orthopaedics). Rhonda brings a variety of experience to this role, including her work for many years on 5 North as unit coordinator.

Rhonda will transition into this position over the next several weeks as Shari Carlson, current unit director, moves into her new role as nursing director for 5th Floor Medical-Surgical/Telemetry/Orthopaedics at Mercy Medical Center – West Lakes.

## BULLETIN

Volume 09 Issue 28 | July 17, 2009

The *Bulletin* is published weekly for employees and friends of Mercy Medical Center, 1111 6th Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50314-2611.

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