

Bulletin

FEBRUARY 2008

The Bulletin is a monthly publication for employees and friends of Mercy Medical Center

Save the date...

The next round of General Information Meetings – whose theme will be “Spotlight on Mercy” – will take place on Monday, Feb. 18, in the East Tower Auditorium at 7:45 a.m., 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Each session will feature a special presentation by Mercy President & CEO Dave Vellinga and other members of the Leadership Team, who will offer updates about upcoming initiatives and opportunities at Mercy. In addition, there will be food, beverages, trivia questions and door prizes.



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New technology revolutionizes the way Mercy delivers critical care

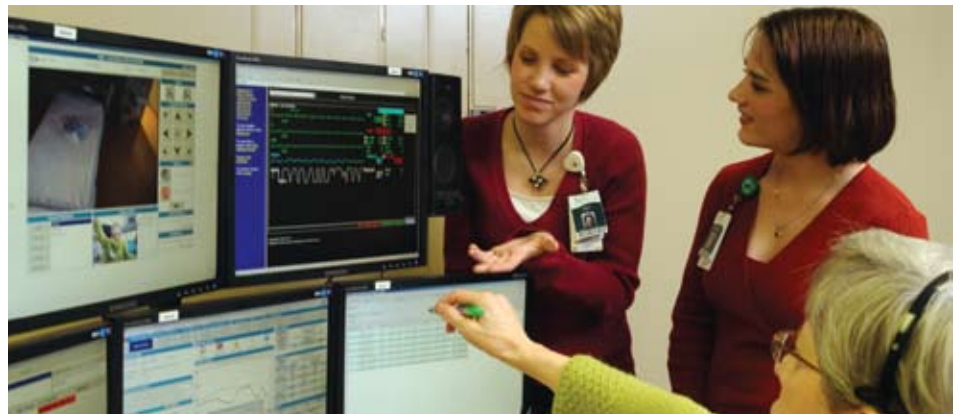
In January, Mercy became the first hospital in Iowa to offer life-saving eICU® technology to patients in its adult intensive care units (ICUs) when it launched Mercy eICU Connect at Central Campus and Mercy Capitol. The revolutionary system uses audio and video links to enable intensive care physicians and nurses to oversee the care of ICU patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from a centralized command center.

Baltimore-based VISICU, Inc., developed the technology, which was designed to help standardize intensive care despite the shortage of critical care physicians and the growing population of critically ill patients. This is especially true of rural states like Iowa, where advanced medical technology and specialists are often limited to urban areas. By mounting video cameras and speakers in ICU patient rooms at remote hospitals and linking them to Mercy’s command

center, Mercy’s team of critical care specialists can monitor patients, perform virtual rounds and consult with caregivers from hundreds of miles away.

On Feb. 15, Mercy eICU Connect will extend services to Mercy Medical Center – Sioux City, the first of the other Mercy Health Network medical centers to utilize the technology. This will increase the number of critical care beds that the command center monitors to 78. Plans are also underway to connect with some of the members of Mercy’s central Iowa network of rural hospitals.

“Mercy eICU Connect is significant to critical care delivery for Iowans,” said Dave Hickman, vice president of Mercy Health Network. “This technology not only promises to improve patient outcomes, reduce medical errors and lower costs, but will also make world-class health care accessible to people throughout the state.”



With the launch of Mercy eICU Connect in January, Mercy became the first hospital in Iowa to offer life-saving eICU® technology to adult critical care patients. The sophisticated system allows critical care specialists in a centralized command center on Mercy’s Central Campus (pictured above) to continually monitor ICU patients in remote locations.



Excellence.
Every Day in Every Way.™

President's Message



Dave Vellinga
President & CEO

When you stop to consider all that Mercy has to offer its patients and their families, you may think about our state-of-the-art facilities, leading-edge technology or the millions of dollars worth of charity care we provide each year. Clearly, each of these things helps ensure improved health outcomes and increased patient satisfaction, but they cannot begin to compare with Mercy's most important asset: its employees.

With more than 6,800 employees and a medical staff of more than 900 physicians and allied health professionals, Mercy is one of the largest employers in the state – and I know without a doubt that our Mercy Family is one of the most talented and compassionate workforces there is. Mercy and the patients it serves are blessed to have you and your co-workers on board, and because we know how fortunate we are, your personal well-being is one of our top priorities.

“Employee health” and “wellness” have become buzzwords in corporate America, as more companies are discovering that taking care of their workforce is an essential part of doing business. At Mercy, however, healthy living has been part of our organization's culture ever since the Sisters of Mercy founded our hospital with the mission of improving the health and well-being of the people who live in the communities we serve. That mission extends to each and every member of the Mercy Family, because although we sometimes neglect our own health in the pursuit of caring for others, we are still all subject to the same health concerns and risks that impact our patients and their families.

For that reason, Mercy has invested in a variety of programs to help you stay active, lose weight, quit smoking, identify health risks and make significant lifestyle changes. These include – but are not limited to – Mercy's free employee wellness program (WOW 4U); our on-site Wellness Center; free flu vaccinations; the monthly *Health Wise* publication; and the large number of prevention programs, educational sessions and professional conferences Mercy offers that focus on a variety of health-related topics.

In addition, Mercy provides employees a unique opportunity each year to have a free, comprehensive health screen that helps participants determine their health risks and provides them with customized reports that detail how they can achieve better health through specific lifestyle changes. Last year, a total of 2,686 Mercy employees and their spouses took advantage of the free health screens and learned more about their current physical condition as well as ways to help minimize or prevent other health risks.

Moving forward, I hope that 2008 can be a year of healthy living for the entire Mercy Family. By taking care of ourselves physically, mentally and emotionally, we will collectively become stronger, healthier and more productive – which translates into better care for the patients and families we serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave".

Mercy Heart Hospital celebrates American Heart Month

February is National Heart Month, and to help increase the public's awareness of cardiovascular disease – the number-one killer of men and women in the United States – Mercy will celebrate with a variety of activities and events.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), nearly 80 million Americans have some sort of cardiovascular disease – including coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and heart failure. This accounts for one in every 2.8 American deaths each year and costs health care consumers an estimated \$448.5 billion in direct and indirect costs.

However, by making a few simple lifestyle changes and receiving early diagnosis and treatment, most people can dramatically reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular disease. In fact, the AHA reports that engaging in

just one hour of regular exercise can increase an individual's life expectancy by two hours – even if he or she doesn't start exercising until middle age.

To help the public learn more about cardiovascular disease and how it can be prevented, the Mercy Heart Hospital offers a free education series throughout the year (see box below for upcoming events).

“Knowing how to build a stronger, healthier heart is important, as is taking advantage of screenings and education that can alert one to potential risk factors,” said Dr. Shakuntala Advani, medical director of Cardiac Rehab and Prevention. “Participation in the education programs offered by Mercy allows people to ask questions and learn more about prevention as well as the latest research and treatment options.”

Heart Failure Awareness Day

Tuesday, Feb. 12 (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.)

Marketplace & Grille

Discuss the risk factors, signs and symptoms of heart failure with the staff of Mercy's Congestive Heart Failure Clinic.

Saturday Mornings at Mercy

“Keeping the Beat”

Saturday, Feb. 23 (9 a.m. – noon)

East Tower Auditorium

Michaela Gagne, Miss Massachusetts and national spokesperson for the SADS (Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes) Foundation and Parent Heart Watch, will share her inspiring story of being diagnosed with a life-threatening heart condition and undergoing surgery for an internal cardiac defibrillator at the age of 17.

In addition, Steven Bailin, M.D., medical director of Mercy's Heart Rhythm

Center, will discuss the signs and symptoms, risk factors, diagnostic testing and treatment for Sudden Cardiac Death. This event is free to the public, but advance registration is requested. To register, please call the Mercy Nurse at (515) 243-2584 or visit www.mercydesmoines.org/heart.

Jordan Creek Women's Club

Thursday, Feb. 28 (5:30 p.m.)

Jordan Creek Town Center (upper level near Younkers)

The February Women's Club will be a special red event. Dr. Magdi Ghali, Iowa Heart Center, will present “Women and Heart Disease: Closing the Gender Gap.” In addition, guests will enjoy a cooking demonstration, refreshments and giveaways. Red attire is encouraged. For more information or to register, visit www.jordancreektowncenter.com or call (515) 224-5000.

MERCY MEDICAL CENTER MISSION

The Mission of Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines and Catholic Health Initiatives is to nurture the healing ministry of the Church by bringing it new life, energy and viability in the 21st century.

Fidelity to the Gospel urges us to emphasize human dignity and social justice as we move toward the creation of healthier communities.

REVERENCE

Profound spirit of awe and respect for all of creation, shaping relationships to self, to one another and to God, and acknowledging that we hold in trust all that has been given to us.

INTEGRITY

Moral wholeness, soundness, uprightness, honesty, sincerity, as basis of trustworthiness.

COMPASSION

Feeling with others, being one with others in their sorrows and joy, rooted in the sense of solidarity as members of the human community.

EXCELLENCE

Outstanding achievement, merit virtue; continually surpassing standards to achieve/maintain quality.

Announcements • News Briefs

Mercy to receive quality award

On Nov. 12 and 13, examiners from the Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence (IRPE) Program visited Mercy to interview staff, review current processes and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. The site visit qualified Mercy for a bronze award, which will be presented at the Governor's Recognition of Performance Excellence Celebration on Thursday, Feb. 21, at the HyVee Conference Center in West Des Moines.

Mercy is one of seven organizations across the state of Iowa to receive an award. This year's honorees include one gold award winner, two silver award winners and four bronze winners.

Know your corporate responsibility officer



As a member organization of Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI), Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines is committed to fully comply with all laws and regulations that

apply to its health care ministry. To that end, Mercy has developed a Corporate Responsibility Program that is grounded in its distinctive Catholic culture and reminds employees, physicians and volunteers that they have a personal responsibility to behave ethically and appropriately, and to report violations of the standards of conduct without fear of retaliation.

Pat McDermott serves as Mercy's corporate responsibility officer and is available to answer questions or assist Mercy Family members in the reporting process. Pat may be reached at x-34557 or pmcdermott@mercydesmoines.org.

Mercy scores high on ACC ACTION Registry™ reports

Data reported by the third quarter 2007 ACTION Registry™ maintained by the American College of Cardiology (ACC) ranks Mercy first among 224 participating hospitals for "Overall Guidelines Composite, Acute Guidelines Medications, Discharge Guidelines Medication and Total CMS Guidelines Composite" for ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) patients. Mercy also performed well in its management of non-STEMI patients, ranking 13 out of 250 participating hospitals for "Overall Guidelines Composite."

The ACTION Registry™ (Acute Coronary Treatment and Intervention Outcomes Network) is the nation's largest, most comprehensive cardiovascular patient database, establishing national standards for understanding treatment patterns, clinical outcomes, drug safety and the overall quality of care for patients with acute coronary syndrome. Its purpose is to measure clinically relevant indicators in the treatment of STEMI and non-STEMI patients, and to promote quality improvement in hospitals across the country.

Starbucks offers e-mail ordering service

Beginning this month, Starbucks will offer an e-mail ordering service to employees. Individuals and departments purchasing at least four beverages are invited to use the menu and fill out the order form located on the share drive under "Starbucks" and e-mail it to starbucks@mercydesmoines.org. Once the drinks are prepared, a Starbucks employee will call and let the group know their order is ready.

Starbucks is conveniently located on the first floor of the East Tower, across from the Surgery Waiting Area. It is open weekdays from 6 a.m. – 7:30 p.m., Saturdays from 7 a.m. – 1 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (seasonal). Starbucks cards and payroll deduction are accepted.

Mercy employees, physicians may contact The Joint Commission with concerns

Any employee or physician who has concerns about the safety or quality of care provided at Mercy or its affiliates may contact The Joint Commission to report the issue.

The Joint Commission may be reached by phone at 1-800-994-6610 or by e-mail at complaint@jointcommission.org. No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee or physician because he or she has reported safety or quality-of-care concerns to The Joint Commission.

McDonald's sales to benefit pediatric patients

During the month of February, the McDonald's located on A-Level of Mercy's Central Campus will donate \$1 to the Pediatrics and Pediatric Intensive Care Units at Mercy's Children Center for every Premium Salad sold. All of the money raised will go toward the purchase of DVD players and child-friendly movies for the units. This is a great opportunity to eat healthy while supporting Mercy's pediatric patients.

CHI Connect News: Accounts Payable and Core Accounting

Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines will go live with CHI Connect on July 1, 2008. CHI Connect is a multi-pronged initiative to standardize and centralize certain business functions across the Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) system.

At Mercy, the departments most affected by CHI Connect include those responsible for human resources, core accounting, accounts payable, payroll and materials management – although every employee will have a role to play in this significant project. Over the next several months, this column will be dedicated to issues related to CHI Connect.

Finance staff from around the country helped design the changes CHI Connect will bring to Mercy. By standardizing tasks such as accounts payable and expense reporting, Mercy's accounting staff will have more time to analyze results and performance. We'll be able to work smarter and serve our community better.

After Mercy goes live with CHI Connect on July 1, the national Accounts Payable Support Center will serve as a single resource for expense reimbursements, invoices and financial reports.

Expense reporting will be automated

With CHI Connect, some processes now handled at Mercy will be completed electronically through the national Accounts Payable Support Center.

You will be able to:

- Complete your expense report online.
- Send an electronic expense report to your supervisor for online approval.
- Receive expense reimbursement as a separate line item on your pay statement (reimbursement will be made through payroll).
- Contact the Accounts Payable Support Center via e-mail or telephone. Support center representatives will be available by phone between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Accounts payable process will be centralized

Mercy's vendors also benefit from the electronic system, sending invoices directly to the Accounts Payable Support Center. Invoices will be scanned and processed electronically, and the support center will issue and mail checks to vendors within 30 days.

As a result, you will be able to:

- Manage the invoice approval process by approving invoice payment via e-mail and sending invoices to multiple parties for approval.
- Speed up the accounts payable process by viewing and printing invoices any time, checking invoice status online, sending vendor inquiries to the Accounts Payable Support Center and faxing demand check requests to the support center for rush checks when necessary.

As Mercy's go-live date approaches, more information and training will be made available. Until then, please talk with your manager or members of Mercy's finance staff if you have questions or would like additional information.

Kudos from Patients

Mercy is committed to providing the highest quality patient care available. One way to determine whether or not we are meeting patient needs is to ask our patients about their experience with Mercy. We do this through our patient satisfaction survey.

Printed below are excerpts from surveys returned through January 2008. They are intended to remind you that you and your co-workers are truly touching the lives of many people every day, and that the care you provide does not go unnoticed.

7 South

I can't think of anything I would change. Your nurses and staff were top-notch. This made my stay a great experience.

Mother/Baby Unit

All the nurses who took care of me and my baby during our four-day stay were wonderful. They were very respectful, friendly and sensitive to all my needs – I liked them all.

Laboratory

Everyone we had contact with at Mercy was very helpful and courteous, even when we were looking for an office or trying to get from the parking ramp to the right department. You have a great bunch of workers – be proud!

NICU

We really appreciated all the extra attention our baby got from his nurse, Jill. She took a personal interest in him when we couldn't be there. We felt like she truly cared and answered all our questions. Thank you for everything – it was a really good experience. All the nurses were wonderful, but Jill really stood out.

Cardiac Cath Lab

I was really impressed during my appointment – I didn't have to wait for anything. The staff was friendly and helpful. Afterward, I told friends and family about how great everything was because I had been expecting long waits.

Help change the shape of the Mercy Family

The 100-day Lighten Up Iowa challenge began in January, but new teams of two to 10 individuals can still join and take advantage of the weight loss and exercise tips. For more information or to register, visit www.lightenupiowa.com and enter Mercy's team registration code – luimercydm.

Lunch and Learn series

Peggy Palmer Johnson will present a three-part stress management series this month on Wednesdays at noon in East Tower Conference Room 6. Topics include "Seeking a Healthy Balance" on Feb. 13, "Attitudes for Success" on Feb. 20 and "Don't Worry, Be Happy" on Feb. 27. In addition, Carol Throckmorton will discuss "Nutrition and Heart Disease" on Thursday, Feb. 21, at noon in East Tower Conference Room 6.

Weight Watchers at Mercy

In 2007, 92 Mercy employees joined Mercy's Weight Watchers group and lost a total of 793 pounds. In addition to losing weight, one of those employees – Cindy Conn, Pharmacy – also won the \$100 incentive drawing for attending at least 85 percent of the weekly meetings during the 17-week weight loss series.

It's not too late to sign up for the current series – the group meets regularly on Thursday mornings at 7:30 a.m. in the Cardiac Rehab classroom (East Medical Plaza, Suite 2275) and all employees are welcome to join.

WOW Bucks winner

The winner of \$5 in WOW Bucks this month is Felicia Miedema in Patient Care Services. Felicia, please call x-38800 to claim your prize.

Although the phrase "patient throughput" may not be part of your daily vocabulary, health care professionals everywhere are familiar with the concept. When a hospital's patient throughput process is efficient, it ensures beds are available for Emergency Department (ED) and direct admissions and leads to better resource-utilization by staff and ancillary services.

However, when patient throughput is not working effectively, wait times dramatically increase for emergency room patients and patients needing hospital admission after being evaluated in the ED. As a result, patient satisfaction begins to erode, as many patients evaluate the quality of the health care they receive in direct proportion to how quickly they are moved from the ED to an inpatient bed and how soon their care is initiated.

In order to improve the house-wide patient throughput process at Mercy, Six Sigma has worked with representatives from administration, management and front-line staff to complete eight projects in the past four years that specifically address the way patients move through their hospital stay – from admission to treatment to discharge. As you can imagine, improving patient throughput in the hospital is not an easy task, as it involves managing many processes, employee behaviors, medical staff practices and the overall culture.

To date, project teams have identified a number of operational and process inefficiencies among several patient populations in a variety of departments – including the ED, Admitting, the Mother/Baby Unit, Care Coordination and Environmental Services.

Examples of improvements include:

- Developing and implementing a Census Alert Policy and Action Plan
- Using e-Bedboard tracking software
- Revising discharge processes
- Monitoring length-of-stay data for targeted patient populations
- Monitoring bed turnaround time data
- Decreasing the time it takes to clean patient rooms

As with any Six Sigma project, data for several patient throughput measurements are being analyzed and reported monthly to track project success, monitor patient satisfaction, celebrate successes, identify defects in the processes related to special causes and monitor potential constraints.

Patient throughput will always be a point of concern with any health care environment, but by identifying and addressing inefficiencies throughout the organization, Mercy will continue to provide high quality, timely patient care.



Over the past four years, six process improvement teams have identified eight patient throughput projects at Mercy that involve a variety of patient populations and departments. Using methodologies from the Six Sigma toolbox, groups like the one pictured above have helped reduce inefficiencies and increase patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes.

Employees encouraged to pursue advanced degrees

In its continuing effort to encourage and reward the pursuit of higher education among employees, Mercy will once again offer its Master's and Doctoral Degree Program this fall to help cover tuition expenses for Mercy Family members who are working toward an advanced degree.

During the month of February, employees who wish to pursue – or are already in the process of pursuing – a master's or doctorate can submit an application to Human Resources for Fall 2008 courses (application forms are posted on MercyNet under Human Resources).

Applicants are required to submit a personal letter of interest, a letter of recommendation and proof of acceptance into a program of study along with their application. (Refer to the application for complete details.)

All applications for courses beginning in the Fall 2008 semester must be submitted between Feb. 1 and Feb. 29, 2008, and will be reviewed by a committee for approval in March. The Master's and Doctoral Degree Program only covers the cost of tuition. Other expenses, including the cost of books, course fees, internet fees and travel, are not eligible.

Employees who are not approved for the Master's and Doctoral Degree Program may still be eligible for financial aid through Mercy's Tuition Reimbursement or Mercy Scholars Programs. These programs also offer assistance to employees working toward a bachelor's degree.

Applications for the Fall 2008 semester will only be accepted through Friday, Feb. 29. Employees who miss this date will have to wait until 2009 to submit an application for consideration. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Greta Weiss in Human Resources at x-34523.

OUR SYMPATHY TO...

Rita Kay Bergis, Mercy Therapeutic Radiology Associates, on the death of her brother.

Anita Brown, House of Mercy, on the death of her father.

Kathy Cox, Mercy Jordan Creek Clinic, on the death of her father.

Terri Cromer, ICU, on the death of her uncle.

Hope Hensley, Mercy North MCL, on the death of her mother-in-law.

Cindy Owens, Mercy Home Health Services, on the death of her father.

Cathy Pagel, Mercy College of Health Sciences, on the death of her mother.

Mary Schemmel, Mercy College of Health Sciences, on the death of her brother-in-law.

Beth Warrick, ICU, on the death of her uncle.

Paulette Wilcox, Bishop Drumm Care Center, on the death of her brother.

Jim Williams, Information Systems, on the death of his son.

Friends and family of **Lori Martin**, Medical Imaging. Lori passed away on Jan. 22.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Tarah Anderson, NICU, and Glen, on the birth of their daughter, Olivia Dené. Olivia was born on Jan. 7 and is the couple's first child.

Chenni Armstrong, 5 North, and **Peter Armstrong**, Pharmacy, on the birth of their son, Elijah Michael. Elijah was born on Dec. 30 and is the couple's first child.

Amie Dawes, Perinatal Center of Iowa, and Beau, on the birth of their daughter, Leah Marie. Leah was born on Dec. 22 and is the couple's first child.

Rena Deaver, 7 North, and Travis, on the birth of their son, Henry Gage. Henry was born on Jan. 16 and has one sibling – Alexander, 4.

Jennifer Hassett, Surgery Flex Team, and Bob, on the birth of their daughter, Sarah Ann. Sarah was born on Jan. 17 and has four siblings – Joshua, 21, Jacob, 12, Joey, 10, and Bobby, 7.

Jessica McInville, Mercy Urbandale Clinic, and **Jason McInville**, CT Scans, on the birth of their son, Brody James. Brody was born on Jan. 10 and has two siblings – Preston, 6, and Carter, 2.

Kristin Platz, ICU, and Ryan, on the birth of their daughter, Reagan Lynn. Reagan was born on Jan. 9 and is the couple's first child.

Destry Riley, Mercy Therapeutic Radiology Associates, and Elaina, on the birth of their daughter, Shade Sofia. Shade was born on Jan. 10 and has four siblings – Raymond, 19, Bret, 16, Chase, 14, and Cael, 5.

Amanda Rockhold, Home Infusion Therapy, and Robert Lee, on the birth of their son, Nathan Samuel. Nathan was born on Jan. 6 and is the couple's first child.

Mark your calendar

Health Observances

February is:

- American Heart Month
- Kids ENT Health Month
- Wise Health Care Consumer Month

Week-long observances:

- Patient Recognition Week (Feb. 1-7)
- Pride in Food Service Week (Feb. 4-8)
- Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week (Feb. 7-14)
- Cardiac Rehab Week (Feb. 10-16)
- Cardiovascular Professionals Week (Feb. 10-16)

Recognition Days/Events:

- World Day for the Sick (Feb. 11)

Blood Screenings

Monday, Feb. 11 (7-9 a.m.)

Quick Care Clinic

4343 Merle Hay Road, Des Moines

The clinic will be offering eight blood tests that range in price from \$15-\$30 per test. Please call the Mercy Nurse at x-32584 for more information or to register.

Blood Screenings

Monday, Feb. 25 (7-9 a.m.)

Quick Care Clinic

8700 Hickman Road, Clive

The clinic will be offering eight blood tests that range in price from \$15-\$30 per test. Please call the Mercy Nurse at x-32584 for more information or to register.

Spring Into Action –

Diabetes 2008 Conference

Friday, March 28 (8 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

East Tower Conference Center

This one-day seminar is designed for health care professionals and will explore current treatments and issues involving diabetes. Topics will include the standards of care in the diagnosis and management of diabetes; recognizing and treating diabetes complications; weight loss; and the physiological connection between attitude and health.

The \$60 registration fee covers tuition, materials, lunch and refreshments; Mercy employees and Iowa AADE members receive a \$10 discount. For

more information or to register, visit www.mercydesmoines.org or call x-32584. The registration deadline is March 14.

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

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If you are interested in submitting an article or information to be printed in the *Bulletin*, please send it to Erin Kennedy Kurth, Public Relations and Marketing, or call (515) 247-3050.



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