

Bulletin

MARCH 2008

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

Inflammatory Bowel Disease and Ostomy Care Patient Education Conference

Advances in IBD and Ostomy Care 2008
Saturday, April 19, 2008
(8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.)
East Tower Conference Center

The annual patient education conference will feature keynote speaker Mary Ann Mobley, Miss America 1959. Mary Ann will share her story of hope, entitled “My Life with Crohn’s Disease.” The event is intended for patients diagnosed with inflammatory bowel disease, ulcerative colitis or Crohn’s disease, as well as those interested in ostomy care. Family members are encouraged to attend.

The event is free and open to the public. However, reservations are encouraged by Tuesday, April 15. To register or request additional information, please call x-32785 or visit www.ibdiowa.com.

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Mercy surgeon promotes colorectal screenings from a personal perspective

Every month is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month for Mercy Surgical Affiliates surgeon Dennis Whitmer, D.O. Whitmer’s motivation for increasing awareness about preventative screenings was elevated after losing his brother, Rick, to the disease in December 2007 – just five months after his diagnosis. One week after his brother’s funeral, Dr. Whitmer had his first colonoscopy at age 44.

“My brother was just 45 years old when he was diagnosed with colon cancer,” Dr. Whitmer said. “By the time he was showing signs and symptoms and received the appropriate screening, his cancer had advanced to stage three.” Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the United States, despite the fact that up to two-thirds of those deaths are preventable with simple screening and prevention methods. When detected early, it is among the most treatable of all cancers, with a 90 percent survival rate. Screening also allows for the detection and removal of pre-cancerous growths – known as polyps – thus preventing the development of colorectal cancer.

“I don’t hesitate to share my colonoscopy experience and the story of my brother with my patients,” said Dr. Whitmer. “I want patients to understand that this disease can affect any age group. If you are over the age of 50, have seen any of the symptoms such as rectal bleeding or have a family history of colon cancer, I encourage you to be screened.”

Fear and embarrassment are some of the reasons people hesitate to talk about colon screenings. “A lot of people remember hearing their grandparents’ stories of colonoscopies – drinking gallons of fluid, etcetera,” said Dr. Whitmer. “Today’s technology makes screenings comfortable and very dignified for the patient.”

That leads Dr. Whitmer right back to his professional passion: colorectal cancer awareness and prevention. “We can treat this disease. We can prevent this disease,” he says. “Schedule an appointment with your personal physician to talk about which colorectal cancer screenings tests are appropriate for you. Routine screenings often detect this disease when it is most curable.”



Although March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, Dr. Dennis Whitmer of Mercy Surgical Affiliates advocates colonoscopies to at-risk populations all year long.



Excellence.
Every Day in Every Way.™

President's Message



Dave Vellinga
President & CEO

It's finally March – and with it comes the official beginning of spring. While it seems like central Iowa has been covered in a blanket of snow for as long as we can remember, the dreary landscape soon will be transformed by green grass, budding trees and blooming flowers. This is great news for the Mercy Family and all the contractors and workers who have been striving to keep construction projects on schedule.

As you know, several projects are underway on Mercy's Central Campus in downtown Des Moines, including the expansion and renovation of the Emergency Department. This is a much-needed improvement project for a department that was built 30 years ago to accommodate 25,000 patients a year, and now cares for more than 65,000 patients annually. When completed, it will feature an improved healing environment for patients and families, better patient safety through larger trauma rooms and increased patient visibility for nurses, improved security, and easier access for patients, ambulances and medical helicopters.

Another significant facility project currently underway is the replacement of Mercy Capitol with a modern facility: Mercy Medical Center – West Lakes. If you haven't seen the progress of this replacement hospital in West Des Moines lately, I encourage you to drive past the site at 59th Place and University Avenue, or check out the construction web cam at www.mercymomentum.org. To date, the concrete footings have been poured, the underground work has been completed, the elevator towers and stair towers are up and the steel structure is being erected. Current plans are to celebrate the placement of the final steel beam with a "Topping Off" party in early June.

Once completed, Mercy West Lakes will be a 230,000-square foot facility offering the same services as Mercy Capitol – including medical and surgical care, intensive care, obstetrics, cardiac care, a 24-hour emergency department and diagnostic and ancillary services. It will be the first health care facility in central Iowa built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) specifications – meaning it will be an energy-efficient, environmentally-friendly building. It also will incorporate modern designs, attractive colors and finishes, and natural sunlight that have been proven to have a positive impact on patient healing.

Mercy faces a very exciting time as we further our mission to provide the highest quality health care to the patients and families we serve. "Providing the right care in the right place at the right time" is the message that has accompanied Mercy Momentum since we announced our comprehensive facilities improvement campaign five years ago. This patient-centered philosophy of care not only demonstrates Mercy's commitment to ensuring that the health care needs of Iowans are met for many years to come, but also underscores our dedication to building healthier communities.

When the Sisters of Mercy founded the hospital in 1893, they believed wholeheartedly that love, mercy and compassion were integral components to caring for the sick and the poor, and felt that anyone who came to Mercy in need deserved to be treated with respect and genuine personal concern. They also understood that facilities and technologies were key components of high quality care, and were renowned for building modern, comfortable hospitals for patients and families. As we continue to live the Sisters' mission and incorporate their values into our daily work here at Mercy, it is evident that their beliefs continue to shape our decisions. Their forward-thinking attitudes continue to influence a variety of our actions – from the way we treat our patients and families to the thought processes that go into designing a hospital. It is a philosophy of patient care that will continue to move us forward, in the spirit of Mercy.

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

Mercy celebrates registered dietitians during **National Nutrition Month**

MERCY MEDICAL CENTER MISSION

The American Dietetic Association (ADA) has declared March National Nutrition Month® – a time to focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. National Nutrition Month also promotes the ADA and its members to the public and the media as the most valuable and credible sources of timely, scientifically-based food and nutrition information.

This year, Mercy and other health care organizations across the country are encouraging consumers to mark National Nutrition Month and the first annual Registered Dietitian Day on March 10, 2008, by establishing an ongoing relationship with a registered dietitian (RD) – a health care professional who is specially trained to help patients make positive lifestyle changes.

“This is the first year that dietitians have had an awareness day, highlighting the work we do,” said Heidi Petersen, oncology nutrition specialist and current president of the Iowa chapter of the ADA. “Good nutrition can make a big difference in overall health and healing, and can greatly improve the quality of life for our patients and their families,” she added.

Mercy’s 14 RDs are food and nutrition experts, with degrees in nutrition, dietetics, public health or related fields. RDs must also complete a supervised examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration and earn professional education

credits to maintain registration. On average, each RD sees more than 20 inpatients and outpatients a day, helping individuals of all ages address nutrition and health problems as they occur and prevent problems that are potentially looming down the road.

For more information on how one of Mercy’s RDs can help you eat better, lose weight, balance nutrition and exercise or reduce your risk for chronic disease, please contact outpatient scheduling at x-74444 to make an appointment.



March is National Nutrition Month, and Mercy will celebrate this year by recognizing the important contributions of its clinical nutrition team (pictured above), who help patients and families make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits.

Front row (L-R): Connie Schmitt, Donita Lunsford and Deb Ewen. Second row: Kate Schroeder, Lauren Grundmeier and Carol Throckmorton. Third row: Janette Batts and Stefanie Brown. Back row: Nora Fernandez, Diane Dolan and Sue Reams.

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 employee named to magazine's medical advisory board



Julie Shannon, cardiac surgery patient educator for the Iowa Heart Hospital at Mercy, was recently selected to serve on the medical advisory board of *Heart-Healthy Living Magazine* – a

Better Homes and Gardens special interest publication for people who want to prevent or minimize the impact of heart disease. The premier issue hit newsstands on Feb. 6 and includes articles about new medications and procedures, advice on lowering cholesterol, healthy recipes and a question and answer session with a cardiologist.

In her new role, Julie will review manuscripts for accuracy, provide editorial consulting, offer feedback to the publisher and alert editorial staff to new research or story ideas that should be considered for publication.

Mercy Scholars applications and contracts due

First-time applicants to the Mercy Scholars program who would like to be considered for Summer 2008 courses must submit completed materials to Human Resources by Monday, March 31.

In addition, current program participants who wish to receive tuition reimbursement for summer courses must contact Human Resources and sign a contract by Friday, May 16, in order to be eligible for the Mercy Scholars Summer 2008 payment. For additional information, please contact Greta Weiss at x-34523.

Deadline for flexible spending accounts approaching

Employees who were enrolled in a Health Care Reimbursement Account (HCRA) or Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (DCRA) in 2007 have until March 31 to submit claims for expenses incurred during the plan year (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2007).

In addition, in an effort to help individuals and families avoid forfeiting funds at the end of the plan year, participants have a two-and-a-half month grace period immediately following the end of the plan year to incur eligible expenses. Therefore, expenses incurred between Jan. 1 and March 15, 2008, may be applied to any remaining balance in a 2007 account if those expenses are submitted by the March 31 deadline. (Claims submitted with service dates within the grace period – Jan. 1 through March 15 – will first be applied toward any balance remaining from the previous plan year. If there is no remaining balance, the claim will be applied to the current plan year's account balance.)

For a list of eligible flexible spending account expenses, call 1-800-826-9781 or visit www.fiservhealthservices.com.

Mercy gets in sync with atomic time

When it comes to delivering high quality health care, every second counts. That is why Mercy is beginning to time clinical events – including births, deaths, surgical procedures, emergency interventions and the administration of medications – against atomic time, the most exact measure of timekeeping available.

Over the next few months, Mercy will gradually replace nearly 700 standard

clocks in patient care areas on Central Campus with atomic clocks. These units are equipped to automatically synchronize themselves against United States government global positioning satellite feeds that are beamed through a localized FM radio signal. While the FM frequency is strong enough to ensure accurate time on every atomic clock in the hospital, it will not interfere with sensitive medical equipment, computers or other technology.

In addition to installing the atomic clocks, Mercy is also launching a campaign to make employees and physicians more aware of the need for accurate timekeeping. Staff are encouraged to synchronize their personal watches against atomic time – either against the time displayed on the Kronos clock when they swipe in or against the time on their networked PC when they log in – to make sure they are accurate.

Mercy welcomes suggestions from patients and staff

Additional suggestion boxes were recently installed near public elevators at Central Campus and Mercy Capitol in an effort to expand Mercy's Voice of the Customer initiative. The boxes are designed to promote comments and feedback from patients, visitors and staff – both about areas where Mercy is doing well and areas that need improvement. All observations are valued, and suggestions collected from the boxes are included in a weekly report distributed to the hospital's Leadership Team. This is just one of many activities that Mercy is using to better understand the needs and concerns of its patients and employees. Moving forward, please continue to share your opinions and encourage others to do the same.

CHI Connect News: Supply Chain Management

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.

Materials management staff from around the country helped design the changes CHI Connect will bring to Mercy. By standardizing tasks such as supply ordering and inventory management, CHI Connect will help us collect and share data more accurately across the system, enabling Mercy to leverage CHI's purchasing power and better manage our non-labor expenses. We'll be able to work smarter and serve our community better.

Supply ordering will be automated and paperless

Shopping lists will be developed to help with supply ordering for each department. With CHI Connect, you'll be able to go online to order supplies, approve requisitions and view your order status any time.

To help make ordering even easier, some employees will receive procurement cards for making purchases. The P-card will be used just like a credit card and will be in the employee's name. At the end of the month, those employees will get a bill to approve and have the ability to direct

the expense to multiple cost centers. The Accounts Payable Support Center will process the bill for payment.

Inventory management will be simplified and efficient

At Mercy, we will be able to manage inventory more effectively and replenish supplies automatically. Handheld scanners will enable us to take real-time inventory in areas with high inventory volumes.

Supplies will cost less overall

Our new system will ensure the best contracted price and pricing consistency across CHI, enabling Mercy to identify contracting opportunities with the lowest ordering costs.

Testing process gives hands-on trial

Materials management staff will have the chance to explore the new CHI Connect system before go-live. A training team will lead User Acceptance Testing sessions to help managers and employees learn the new process and explore the benefits and features of the online system in May and June.

Support center will be ready to help

Starting July 1, the Procurement (Purchasing) Support Center will be available to help you by phone and e-mail. Representatives will be available to answer your questions from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. In addition, policies and procedures, links to forms and quick reference guides will be available on Inside CHI (<http://home.catholichealth.net>).

Resources available on MercyNet

A new community dedicated to CHI Connect will be added to MercyNet in the next few weeks. General information about CHI Connect, as well as training schedules and support center information, will be posted and updated regularly.

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 February 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.

Mother/Baby Unit

All of the nurses and staff on the Mother/Baby Unit were incredible. Both during and following our stay, we knew we could count on them to calm us down and provide excellent advice and care. The anesthesiologist was also great.

Capitol 3 North

All nurses were excellent. I am an RN, so I possibly have higher expectations, but I could not have asked for more excellent or compassionate care. Gary and Deb were particularly awesome. Thank you all for taking such good care of me.

5 South

I had two surgeries and my stay went very well. My pain was taken care of and my nurses and doctors kept me comfortable. I was able to trust them and didn't worry so much about the procedures. I thank them for their great knowledge and for being there to meet my needs. I couldn't have asked for more.

Emergency Department

The doctor and his staff did a wonderful job. I have no complaints in regard to my care at Mercy or any of the follow-up appointments I have had.

8 South

I wouldn't change anything. Dr. Turner was absolutely wonderful.

Medical Imaging

From the bottom of my heart, I think your doctors, nurses and assistants are the best. This hospital is the only one I have ever been fully satisfied with.

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 American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) members receive a \$10 discount. For more information or to register, please visit www.mercydesmoines.org or call x-32584. The registration deadline is March 14.

Spring Into Infusion 2008

Friday, April 4 (7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
East Tower Conference Center

This seminar is designed for registered nurses and will explore current issues associated with vascular access devices (VADs) – including national standards of practice, legal implications and costs of using the devices. Participants will be awarded 0.8 CEUs and 5 CRNI recertification units from the Infusion Nurses Society (INS).

The \$40 registration fee covers tuition, materials, lunch and refreshments; INS members receive a \$10 discount. For more information or to register, visit www.mercydesmoines.org or call x-32584. The registration deadline is March 31.

During the month of March, Mercy will join health care organizations across the country to celebrate Child Life Month, which is designed to promote understanding of the child life profession while educating others about the unique needs of children and families undergoing challenging health care experiences. Mercy's team of child life specialists makes a difference in the lives of children and their families every day – helping providers make procedures easier for patients, educating parents about their child's illness or injury and doing activities with patients and their families during their hospital stay.

“Lisa (Fox) helps me understand what is going on and goes to procedures with me. She makes me laugh and provides me with arts and crafts while I'm in the hospital,” said Emily Weis, 16, a patient in Mercy's Pediatrics Unit. “Child Life specialists are really nice and helpful.”

The Child Life program at Mercy was started in 1996, with one specialist for the Pediatric and Pediatric Intensive Care Units. Since then, the department

has expanded to provide services to Medical Imaging, the Children's Emergency Center and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

In order to provide fun activities for patients and their families, the Child Life program receives assistance from many sources. Most recently, the McDonald's at Mercy donated a portion of profits from the sale of premium salads during the month of February. As a result, the Pediatrics and Pediatric Intensive Care Units received more than \$700 to use toward the purchase of DVD players and movies.

Each year, the Child Life program sponsors an Easter basket contest and auction to raise funds for new toys, craft supplies, DVDs and other items the child life specialists use with their patients. This year, the auction will be held on Wednesday, March 12, in the Marketplace and Grille from 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information about the Child Life program or the Easter basket contest, please call x-41441.



During Child Life Month in March, Mercy recognizes its team of child life specialists for their dedication to making treatment and hospitalization as stress-free as possible for young patients and their families. Front row (L-R): Lisa Fox (Peds/PICU), Jolene Vos (Medical Imaging), and Becky Dodd (Peds ER). Back row (L-R): Stephanie Thoms (Peds ER), Raye Pietruszka (Medical Imaging), and Rania Robb (NICU).

Six Sigma team works to improve suture material flow

In November 2007, a Kaizen event was initiated to improve the efficiency of suture flow in the Main OR. The team – comprised of staff members from the operating room (OR) and surgical inventory control (SIC) – met to analyze existing processes and develop a plan to improve suture material storage and access, decrease the amount of time it takes to receive suture material and reduce unnecessary transport.

During the event, the team determined that 64 percent of suture material issued over the course of a day is returned to stock, although OR staff reported making more than 100 phone calls per day to request extra suture material from SIC. The team also found that one-third of all suture types account for more than 80 percent of the suture material used in the OR. They agreed that frequently used suture material would be stored in each OR suite, while lesser-used products would be stored in the OR “inner core” hallway, which is accessible to several rooms at once.

To maintain proper inventory of suture material at each location, a Kanban card system was implemented. A Kanban card is stored with each type of suture material, and as the product is used, the card is pulled and placed in a visible location in the hallway. Throughout the day, SIC staff collects Kanban cards, pulls product from SIC inventory and returns the suture material and Kanban card to their proper storage location. This system eliminates unnecessary transport and returns while providing staff quick access to inventory.

While change does not always come easy, clinical nurse Priscilla Collins stated, “These tools were helpful to implement a new suture flow to make it more accessible for our patients and surgeons.”

To date, one OR suite has experimented with the new system. Staff feedback will be used to modify the system when it is implemented throughout the Main OR in upcoming months.

Team members:

Carol Hillman, Champion
Craig Ruhl, Black Belt
Kathryn Meyer, Black Belt
Priscilla Collins
Tom Heckler
Alex Lagodzinski
Shelly Pawlewski
Mark Schreck
Sandy Waterman



A recent Six Sigma project focused on improving the flow of suture material from surgical inventory to the OR. By implementing a Kanban card system to help monitor inventory, the team was able to improve suture material storage and access and reduce unnecessary transport time.

OUR SYMPATHY TO...

Margo Adams, House of Mercy, on the death of her mother-in-law.

Sue Baldwin, Rehab Services, on the death of her mother.

Charlie Dixon, Security, on the death of his mother.

Linda Hensley, IT Services, on the death of her mother.

Linda Jones, Public Relations and Marketing, on the death of her mother-in-law.

Martha Rhoades, Mercy Therapeutic Radiology Associates, on the death of her mother-in-law.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Wendy Flinn, 7 North, and Wade, on the birth of their son, Tristan. Tristan was born on Jan. 30 and has two siblings – Layla, 4, and Alexander, 1.

Pamela Harrison, CCU, and Brian, on the birth of their son, Clark Andrew. Clark was born on Feb. 18 and has two siblings – Taylor, 7, and Parker, 4.

Renee Landis, Blood Bank, and Nathan, on the birth of their son, Dean Richard. Dean was born on Feb. 16 and is the couple's first child.

Jenny Myers, Labor and Delivery, and Joe, on the birth of their son, Dylan. Dylan was born on Feb. 9 and has one sibling – Caden, 4.

Lynna Pham, Family Medicine of Urbandale, and Tuan Dao, on the birth of their daughter, Yvan. Yvan was born on Jan. 28 and is the couple's first child.

Jeff Richardson, Surgery, and Amy, on the birth of their daughter, Lily. Lily was born on Feb. 8 and is the couple's first child.

Sharon Safley, Centralized Monitoring, and Mark, on the birth of their daughter, Serenity Nevaeh. Serenity was born on Feb. 13 and has two siblings – Kaetlyn, 8, and Ashley, 4.

Erin Zea, Mercy South, and Corbin, on the birth of their son, Lucas James. Lucas was born on Jan. 29 and has two siblings – Caleb, 4, and Samuel, 1.

Mark your calendar

Health Observances

March is:

- Child Life Month
- Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- Nutrition Month
- Professional Social Worker Month

Recognition Days/Events:

- Doctor's Day (March 30)

Nutrition: It's a Matter of Fact

Monday, March 3 (6:30 – 8 p.m.)

**Ankeny Dahl's Community Room
1802 N. Ankeny Blvd.**

Join Mercy dietitians as they look at important facts that will help you make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits. A grocery store tour and healthy snacks are included. This is a free class. Register by calling the Mercy Nurse at x-32584.

DVT Lunch and Learn

Wednesday, March 26 (11:30 a.m.)

East Tower Auditorium

Dr. Steven Berry from Chest, Infectious Diseases and Critical Care Associates will explain what deep vein thrombosis

(DVT) is, who's at risk of developing DVT and how it can be prevented. The event is open to all Mercy employees, patients and visitors, and a free sack lunch will be provided. Lunch starts at 11:30 and the presentation will begin at noon. Space is limited and registration is required. Call x-38909 to reserve your seat.

Breast Cancer Symposium

Wednesday, April 2 (7 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

West Des Moines Marriott

1250 Jordan Creek Pkwy.

This one-day seminar is designed to explore current treatments and issues involving breast cancer. Topics covered will include breast cancer and sexuality; treatment of the whole person; diet and breast cancer; a survivor panel; and a motivational speaker who will help participants learn to handle the challenges they may face. CEUs are provided for nurses, as well as contact hours for Iowa Licensed Social Workers. Mammography authorization has also been applied for. For more information, please call the Mercy Cancer Center at

x-38206, the Katzmann Breast Center at 222-7830, or look for the brochure online at www.mercydesmoines.org.

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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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