Physician Leader Spotlight: Dr. Richard Deming, Cancer and Women & Children’s Division

Richard L. Deming, M.D., is the new physician lead of the Cancer and Women & Children’s Division at Mercy. In this position, he provides leadership for Radiation Oncology, Medical Oncology, Surgical Oncology, Katzmann Breast Center, Gynecologic Oncology, the pediatric intensivists and hospitalists, pediatric subspecialties and Emergency, Neonatology, Maternal and Fetal Medicine, Infertility and OB/GYN.

Dr. Deming will work in collaboration with Jackie Frost-Kunnen, administrative leader, to manage planning and organization to ensure efficient operations, quality clinical care and excellent customer service.

He currently serves as medical director of Mercy Cancer Center, Mercy Cancer Center Radiation Oncology, CyberKnife Radiosurgery Center of Iowa and LiveSTRONG at the YMCA cancer survivorship program. In addition, he is principal investigator of Mercy’s National Cancer Institute Community Cancer Centers Program (NCCCP) and is president of the Medical Staff at Mercy. He received his medical degree from Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Neb., and completed his residency in Radiation Oncology at the University of California San Francisco.

Social work – the profession of hope

Each year, March is designated as Professional Social Work Month. The theme this year – Social Work Matters – certainly rings true for patients seeking care at Mercy. Mercy is proud to recognize our social workers who provide service in multiple settings – including our hospitals, hospice, home care, House of Mercy and other locations.

The field of social work has often been called the “profession of hope” for good reason. A few recent examples of the specialized care and assistance provided by our Mercy social workers illustrate how they fill a unique need for our patients and their families.

• A young mother, new to Des Moines with little support, brings her ill child to the Emergency Department. The social worker assists by linking her to assistance for medication, food, medical coverage and a visiting home care nurse.

• A young man, despondent after losing his job and home, takes an overdose of medications and presents to our Emergency Department. After transferring to Mercy Franklin, he receives an assessment and counseling with a social worker and is linked to helpful services in the community.

• A husband, whose very ill wife of 57 years was in our Intensive Care Unit, wishes to transfer her to a hospice house in their local community. The social worker comforts the man and promptly makes arrangements so his wife can transfer later that afternoon.

• An 82-year-old man, who has been living on his own, is admitted with mental status changes. Due to his dementia, he is no longer able to live independently. The unit social worker brings together family members and community resources to form a plan to locate a new place for him to live.

These are just a few examples of the work Mercy social workers do every day to assist our patients and fulfill the Mercy Mission. Social workers are committed to making every person feel as though they matter, by demonstrating compassion and reverence in every interaction. During this month, and always, please take a moment to thank them and show appreciation for their many contributions.

A special keepsake for a unique birthday

To mark leap day and the special birthday that accompanies the date, Julie Ackerman, R.N., Mother/Baby Unit nurse manager, made by hand 20 special keepsakes for Mercy’s leap year babies. Playing off of a frog theme, the mementos were made out fabric and read “Welcome Little Leapling,” with each baby’s birthdate (Feb. 29, 2012) and room for their tiny footprint. Pictured at the right is baby girl Charlee DeWitt with her special keepsake within the Mother/Baby well nursery on leap day.
Mercy Cancer Center welcomes new physician to Gynecologic Oncology

Carl Christie, D.O., joined Dr. Deborah Turner serving patients at Mercy Cancer Center Gynecologic Oncology. Dr. Christie is an experienced laparoscopic and robotic surgeon specializing in gynecologic oncology. He earned his medical degree from the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine (New York Institute of Technology) and completed residencies at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center and the New Jersey School of Osteopathic Medicine. He recently completed his gynecologic oncology fellowship at the Cancer Institute of New Jersey (Cooper University Hospital.) Dr. Christie is accepting new patients and referrals. To make an appointment, call Mercy Cancer Center Gynecologic Oncology at (515) 643-6400.

Mammogram scheduling for Mercy employees on March 15

Mercy Mammography is encouraging employees who haven’t had their mammograms in the past year or longer to make an appointment. Schedulers will be outside the Marketplace and Grille at Mercy Central Campus on Thursday, March 15, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Appointments can be made for mammography locations at Mercy Central Campus, Mercy West in Clive, Mercy North in Ankeny or Mercy East in Pleasant Hill. Employees who sign up during these times and complete their mammogram will receive a coupon good at Mercy Starbucks®, Mercy Salon, Gift House & Flowers, Mercy West Lakes Gift House or West Lakes Brew.

Support group established for children with Crohn’s disease

Last fall, Mercy Children’s Center began the first support group in central Iowa for children with Crohn’s disease and their parents.

“We have seven families currently in the group,” said Lisa Fox, a child life specialist who helped start the group. “One of the parents and I lead the group, which we divide up so parents meet in one room and kids meet in another. It’s a great way for kids to know they aren’t the only ones who have these special medical needs.”

The next meeting will be March 15, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Mercy Medical Center’s Central Campus. For more information or to RSVP, please call (515) 643-4524.

Enhanced workplace improves patient experience

Workplace studies have shown when employees are satisfied, their customers receive better service and tend to become more loyal to the business. In health care, a positive work environment can impact the overall patient experience, resulting in more satisfied patients and families and better health outcomes.

To that end, Catholic Health Initiatives and Mercy offer a Performance Culture Assessment (PCA) each year to gauge employee satisfaction and identify opportunities for improvement in employee relationships and leadership effectiveness.

In response to employees’ desire for more timely communication last year, Iowa Heart Center (IHC) leaders resurrected The Pulse, a newsletter dedicated to Iowa Heart Center staff. 

“We brought The Pulse back to life to enhance communication and create a connection between our 10 locations. It allows staff in all locations to understand they are not isolated as an independent office, rather they are part of something bigger—and how this contributes to the success of IHC and Mercy,” said Sam Ayres, vice president of Iowa Heart Center Operations. “Not only do employees now have a resource for receiving information on a regular basis, they also have the opportunity to share clinical success stories and get to know their peers in other locations. We see this as part of building a stronger organization,” Ayres added.

This year, the PCA will take place between March 12 and April 2. Look for more information in future issues of the Bulletin and via email.

March is National Child Life Specialists month and Mercy is proud of the work done by its child life specialists. These staff members are specially-trained to help pediatric patients and their families manage challenging life events and health care experiences in the hospital.

Mercy has seven full-time child life specialists who provide care in the Pediatric and Pediatric Intensive Care Units, Medical Imaging, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and the Children’s Emergency Center.

To help support their work, the annual Easter Basket contest and auction will be held next week. Departments and individuals are encouraged to submit their contest entries on March 12 and 13, in the Pediatric Unit on 3 North. The top winning baskets will be sold in a silent auction on March 14, from 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., outside the Marketplace and Grille. All proceeds will help provide art supplies, books, games and toys that the child life specialists use on a daily basis. For more information, please page the child life specialists at (515) 234-1441.

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