November is American Diabetes Month. Thank you to Pierre Theuma, M.D., for providing this informative article for the “Bulletin” newsletter.

Dr. Pierre Theuma says preventing complications from diabetes—blindness, kidney failure and heart disease, among others—is key to improving the lifespan and quality of life for patients with diabetes throughout the nation.

Diabetes is a chronic disease affecting millions of individuals worldwide. Many more have pre-diabetes or go undiagnosed due to lack of healthcare access or limited awareness about the disease. Diabetes is the most common cause of blindness, kidney failure and limb amputation in the western world and also accelerates the progression of cardiovascular disease. Fortunately, over the years, we have learned that preventing these complications will help improve life span, quality of life and decrease healthcare costs.

The last decade has led to several new treatment options for type 2 diabetes. Health care providers now have an ever-expanding tool box of medications to treat individuals with diabetes.

We also see significant developments in Type 1 diabetes treatment. Within the next two years, we expect to have the first-ever oral medication for use in Type 1 diabetes. In addition, research continues on inhaled and oral insulin. Islet-cell transplantation is another hotly researched field whereby damaged pancreatic cells are replaced and individuals can again produce insulin. Perhaps the most significant development in the past five years is the availability of continuous glucose sensors which provide instant feedback to users, alerting them of impending low or high blood glucose levels.

All these developments are very exciting, but society is still faced with challenges due to cost or lack of accessible health care for many diabetes sufferers. With this in mind, the future of diabetes does not simply hinge on the exciting research that is ongoing, but also on national and international policy changes, assuring access to both basic and leading-edge treatments for those with the disease.

Help a child: Today is last day to pick up “Shoes That Fit” cards

Today is the final day to pick up Shoes That Fit needs cards. Employees can pick up cards at Mercy Starbucks on Level 1 and in PR/Marketing on A-Level on Mercy’s central campus and in Administration at Mercy West Lakes. Clinics and off-site locations can request cards to be sent through interoffice mail by calling Sarah Todd in Public Relations at x-38368.

Fulfilled cards must be returned with the new clothing items to Public Safety at Mercy’s central campus or West Lakes Brew at Mercy West Lakes. Clinics and off-site locations need to call Patrick Maher, x-38269, to arrange for item collection. All items need to be returned by Tuesday, Dec. 3.

Mercy publications will not be distributed due to holiday

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, “Mercy News Briefs” will not be distributed on Thursday, Nov. 28, and the “Bulletin” newsletter will not be published on Friday, Nov. 29. News will resume on Tuesday, Dec. 3. The “Bulletin” news team wishes the Mercy Family a happy, blessed Thanksgiving holiday!
Mercy named national top performer for quality

Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines has earned Top Performer on Key Quality Measures® recognition for 2012 from The Joint Commission – a leading accreditor of health care organizations in America.

The Joint Commission recognized Mercy for exemplary performance in the use of evidence-based clinical practices shown to improve care for certain conditions. Mercy was chosen as a Top Performer in delivering care for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care patients.

“This recognition is a testament to the pursuit of excellence by our Mercy physicians and staff,” says Mercy President Bob Ritz. “Evidence-based care has helped Mercy achieve clinical successes for many years. We are a firm believer in the benefits of evidence-based care for our patients from a quality and safety perspective. Mercy will remain committed to evidence-based care and the ongoing accreditation process provided by The Joint Commission. Both encourage innovation, which leads to better quality. Our physicians and staff contribute to the body-of-knowledge for evidence-based practices on a regular basis – helping to improve care processes for everyone.”

Mercy physicians and clinical staff throughout the organization are involved in research and process improvement, which lead to advances in existing evidence-based care. Iowa Heart Center physicians at Mercy have provided significant contributions for heart attack care, improving the quality of life for heart failure patients and testing new surgical interventions to improve life for high-risk cardiac patients. Mercy physicians and staff are also leaders in national evidence-based efforts to reduce cases of pneumonia in critical care settings. In some cases, pneumonia in critical care units was eliminated for more than a year. This has led to improved quality of care for all of our patients – from our most fragile premature infants to the elderly who are often more susceptible to pneumonia.

Congratulations to all on a job well done!

Mercy Hospice launches “We Honor Veterans”

Mercy Hospice launched its “We Honor Veterans” program Monday, Nov. 11, with a short ceremony at Mercy Hospice – Johnston. The program featured Ret. Gen. Danny Smith, who spoke about why we honor vets. Veterans who were in attendance at the event were given a “We Honor Veterans” pin and were acknowledged for their military service.

A flag – which was flown over the nation’s capitol in August of this year – now has a prominent place in the living room of Mercy Hospice – Johnston, beside the certificate noting its significance.

“We Honor Veterans” is a program created from a partnership between the Veterans Administration and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) to honor military veterans at end of life. This is Mercy Hospice’s first year participating. The Hospice program also partners with the Iowa National Guard Officers Auxiliary (INGOA), who make fleece blankets with military themes which are presented to veterans when they are honored for their service.

Dennis Strawn, Mercy Hospice volunteer, visits with veteran Ret. Gen. Danny Smith, and Rev. Dr. Bobby Dickerson, veteran and spiritual care coordinator at Mercy Hospice.

Mercy’s Combat Hunger “Canstruction” winner announced

Congratulations to Mercy’s own maintenance crew! On Wednesday, Nov. 13, they built an impressive Spiderman looming over New York City out of canned goods that you – the Mercy Family – deemed a winner! The event raised $357.36 and nearly 1,000 pounds of food, all to be donated to the Food Bank of Iowa as part of Combat Hunger. Check out www.mercydesmoines.org/combatathunger to view the other entries in this fun competition.

Spiderman wins! Members of the Maintenance “Canstruction” team include, (l-r): Tedd Mikesell, John Walker, Mario Ramirez, Bill Anderson, and Demarko Nereim. Combat Hunger is still underway at Mercy and throughout the community. Check out the website above for more information and to learn how you can make a difference today!