Message from CEO

Happy New Year! We opened the new year with lights of hope across MercyOne shining to showcase our appreciation for each of you and as a beacon of hope for our communities as we begin the new year – please see photos on page 2 from across MercyOne.

We have many signs of hope to celebrate as 2021 begins – one of the most encouraging is the COVID-19 vaccine (see many photos and stories beginning on page 3).

We also are preparing to celebrate our 2nd birthday as MercyOne. Together we have overcame monumental challenges in the past year and have much to celebrate due to the dedication and passion of our care circle. Please join us in celebrating you on Feb. 1. You can find details at MercyOne.org/birthday.

Regardless of future challenges or what may be happening outside of our care locations, we remain committed to our Mission to transform the health of our communities together. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our special mission of Mercy.

CEO and President

Watch this month’s MercyOne CEO Update Video>

This month’s features:

Click on the Key Result to read Focused Stories of how we are living our Mission, Values and Cultural Beliefs.

- Consumer Experience
- Team Engagement
- Quality
- Ambulatory Growth
- Financial Performance
This is what Improve Daily looks like...

Alyson and Avery know exactly what it’s like to find hope through uncertain times. These married colleagues are both nurses in the ICU at MercyOne Siouxland Medical Center and were touched by the Lights of Hope displayed across MercyOne during the first week of January.

Alyson captures the essence of the project by writing, “Our hospital has displayed this beacon as a symbol of appreciation for those of us on the frontline of this pandemic, as well as a symbol for high hopes for 2021. It has been an unforgettable experience going through this with my husband right alongside of me. From being pregnant and working in a COVID-19 ICU and then delivering our daughter after we had recovered from COVID-19 ourselves, I cannot help but appreciate the symbolism from MercyOne. It has been an extremely taxing year and as the new one begins, I know that we have become stronger because of it.”

See more photos from the Lights of Hope by searching #MercyOneHope2021 on social media.
This is what Own It! looks like to me...

What does the vaccine mean to our health care heroes? Jacob, a COVID-19 unit nurse manager at MercyOne Siouxland Medical Center shared these heartfelt sentiments after getting to vaccinate his wife Rhiannon, a PACU nurse at MercyOne.

“This picture does not do justice as to what we have endured this last year!

Rhiannon and I have cared for COVID-19 patients in our area since April. We’ve experienced the loss of my grandmother, the pain of doing compressions, and the sadness of calling a loved one and informing them of their loss; but we also cannot forget the joy of discharging so many patients back home to their families.

I’m not a guy to show much emotion but today was monumental if you ask me. I was able to provide my wife with her initial COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 has brought a different challenge to each person that it has affected. The one commonality is that it is real and can be devastating in many realms; emotionally, physically, financially, etc.

As we come to the end of 2020, a crazy year no doubt. Get your vaccine if able, wear a mask and wash your hands.

I am proud to be a husband, father to three resilient children, a nurse and have been afforded the opportunity to lead a great group of health care staff.

Here’s to a brighter future.”

Visit MercyOne.org/COVID19vaccine for more information to share with friends and family.

This is what Own It! and Be ONE looks like to me...

As Mercy Iowa City, an affiliate of MercyOne, begins the COVID-19 vaccination process, a group of colleagues have led the Mercy Iowa City Vaccine Task Force to ensure everything runs smoothly. This group has spent countless hours planning and executing a clinic inside the hospital to ensure everyone who wants a vaccine can get it. I received a message from one of our affiliate offices who explained how positive her experience was:

“The clinic was well run, and the team of people working were very friendly. I can only imagine how hard it is to logistically run something like this. I was pleasantly surprised with my experience!”

We are incredibly thankful for the hard work and commitment from all colleagues involved in the vaccination clinic.

~ Judy Andronowitz, Chief Operating Officer, Mercy Iowa City Clinics

This is what Be ONE looks like to me...

The Laboratory department at Van Diest Medical Center, an affiliate of MercyOne, saw its highest test volumes to date in November 2020 and surpassed a record in December 2020. Despite record high volumes, the turnaround times remained constant, all staying below the department threshold. This timeframe was also consistent with the hospital’s highest number of COVID-19 tests performed as well as being at a time when the laboratory was facing staffing challenges due to the pandemic. Colleagues from across the organization stepped up to offer support and help with COVID-19 collections. This is an excellent example of growth across the entire organization and a true testament to the teamwork displayed to provide quality care to the patients we serve.
This is what Innovate looks like to me...

We reached a crucial step in the fight against COVID-19 on Dec. 17 when MercyOne Siouxland Medical Center administered the first vaccines in Sioux City. **Dr. Joe Liewer**, an emergency physician, and **Mary Jones**, an ICU nurse, were the first two colleagues to receive vaccinations. The vaccines were administered in front of a small group of colleagues and media by Chief Medical Officer Dr. Larry Volz and Chief Nursing Officer Tracy Larson, both of whom were instrumental in COVID-19 patient care and surge planning.

Dr. Joe Liewer says, “I feel very lucky. I think this is a very important step to the end of this past year’s worth of difficulty for everyone. I’m happy to get this started, and I want as many people in the community to get the vaccine as soon as they can.”

This is what Be ONE looks like to me...

Vaccination at MercyOne Clinton got off to a great start, in part due to a group of six retired nurses who returned to help us administer the vaccine. We are so thankful they could help us. We are equally thankful to Chaplain Brewer and Chaplain Boone who formally blessed our vaccines and our vaccine administrators prior to the first dose being given.

~ Amy Berentes, Executive VP/COO, MercyOne Clinton

This is what Innovate looks like to me...

As availability of COVID-19 tests increased, so did the demand from consumers. To support operational efficiency and delivery of radically convenient health care, MercyOne Central Iowa set up a curbside testing location in the MercyOne Norwalk Family Medicine Clinic parking lot. Both adult and pediatric nonsymptomatic patients are referred to the new testing site through a telehealth visit with their provider.

This is what Be ONE looks like to me...

Colleagues from the MercyOne Northeast Iowa Patient Accounts department are using their scheduling and registration experience to help support our Access department. With the additional volume of registrations due to the administration of COVID-19 vaccine, vacancies and multiple FMLA absences the Access team was stretched thin.

We realized many of our colleagues in Patient Accounts had the experience and skill sets to help. We worked to reassign Epic role assignments and in very short order had team members placed in clinics to greet and register patients. We also had other members completing schedules and registrations for colleague vaccine administrations. We are happy to help!

~ Kathy Flolo, MercyOne Medical Group Patient Accounts Manager
This is what Be ONE looks like to me...

The vaccine teams across MercyOne are doing a tremendous job of vaccinating colleagues. The coordination and efficiency have made a big undertaking appear flawless, and fellow colleagues are incredibly thankful.

Just a few of our colleagues’ comments include:

• “Remarkable job, thank you to each of you for your continued dedication!”
• “Such an amazing and dedicated bunch of people!”
• “Thank you for taking care of all of the rest of us!!!”

This is what Personalize Care looks like to me...

With the increase of COVID-19 precautions closing traditional activities, the Christmas season didn’t feel as jolly as in past years. To help spread holiday cheer, Dietary Services colleagues created a festive display in the cafeteria at MercyOne Des Moines and West Des Moines Medical Centers, filled with delicious take home baked goods, appetizers and food gifts for purchase by colleagues and visitors.

This is what Own It! looks like to me...

A new environmental services (EVS) colleague at Mercy Iowa City, an affiliate of MercyOne, is deaf and mute. In daily life, sign language is used to communicate. At work, communication had to be written or through texting. Tom Kinney, a fellow EVS colleague, came to the education department and asked if EVS staff could have basic sign language lessons so they could communicate more personally with the new colleague and make them feel more supported. We immediately contacted our American Sign Language provider to get the ball rolling! Kudos to Tom for reaching out to be more inclusive and team oriented.

~ Kim Pattee, Training & Life Support Coordinator/Instructor

Colleagues at MercyOne Clinton held a food drive to help fill our non-perishable food bags. It’s difficult sending a patient home who is in desperate need of food or seeing a colleague who has fallen on hard times and does not have enough food to feed themselves or their family. These bags make a difference for our patients and colleagues.

Included with the food is a list of local resources for those in need. Food bags are located in a discrete area accessible by all colleagues and available 24/7.

“MercyOne colleagues never fail to rise to a challenge, and I appreciate everyone’s generous donations and support.”

~ Lisa Myli, foundation assistant and volunteer coordinator, MercyOne Clinton
This is what Personalize Care looks like to me...

I was scheduled to see a high school student who is on the autism spectrum. During COVID-19 her dad’s health declined steadily. The prior Friday, the patient’s mom let me know her daughter was bowling for the varsity team for the first time, and she and her dad are watching on Zoom. I asked for the link and watched with them. She did well and had a few strikes. The following Monday a few minutes after the patient’s dad passed away, her mom let me know. I saw the patient, and she was able to weep, share her feelings and special memories about her dad. She mentioned that she does not talk about her feelings, but today she did. “I thought this was possible, because through telehealth it was possible to walk the trying part of their journey with them during the past few months.”

~ Dr. Ronelle Langley

This is what Personalized Care and Own It! look like to me...

A 37 year old woman with a history of heart disease, chronic kidney disease, diabetes and a right above the knee amputation had been living in a nursing home in Kansas. She was moving to live with her friend in Illinois, but came into the emergency department at MercyOne Clinton because her friend had a heart attack and now she had nowhere to stay.

The MercyOne Clinton Case Manager worked with the emergency department and nursing home teams to temporarily move the patient back to her previous nursing home residence in Kansas while her friend recovered. The MercyOne case manager worked with the Kansas nursing home to split the cost of transportation to help the woman travel safely back to the facility. Once the woman arrived safely at the residence, both the nursing home and the patient called the Clinton case manager to thank her for all of the help.

This is what Be ONE and Own It! look like to me...

2020 was a difficult year for all of us, especially those struggling with social influencer of health needs: food insecurities, transportation, safe housing, social isolation, etc. To help patients in need over the Christmas season and through the winter months, MercyOne Population Health Services Organization colleagues collected non-perishable snacks, first aid kits, dental and feminine hygiene kits, hats, mittens and warm socks. The colleagues filled 326 slots of items and collected enough to fill six totes for the community health workers in MercyOne Central and North Iowa Clinics to give to their patients.

This is what Own It! looks like to me...

The MercyOne Northeast Iowa Credit Department donated to the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA) last month. CVMA, an organization that welcomes veterans from all branches of the United States Armed Forces, focuses to aid any veterans, retired or active, and their families. Representatives from CVMA Cole “Chapstick” and Jade “Sassy” shared that this year, the CVMA adopted a veteran who was single with two children to help make their Christmas special!
Frank Betts traveled all the way from Cornelius, North Carolina, to have heart surgery with Dr. Giovanni Ciuffo at MercyOne Siouxland Heart and Vascular Center. A few months after his successful aortic valve replacement, Frank wrote to us to share an update:

“It has been almost five months, and boy oh boy, do I feel great! I now walk about five miles and 11,500 steps three times a week. At a brisk pace, I might add. The other days, I do about an hour of exercise inside my house, including shadow boxing. My heart feels terrific.”

Frank says he feels blessed that he found a surgeon who took time to understand the kind of life he wanted to live.

“I feel blessed every morning upon awakening. Dr. Ciuffo is one of a kind.”

Hancock County Health System (HCHS), a MercyOne affiliate in Britt, opened its newly remodeled emergency department in late October. The department offers enhanced privacy and safety for patients with four exam rooms and two trauma rooms while also giving providers and staff an updated space for improved process efficiencies, including pass-through cabinets, a centralized nursing station and immediate access to HCHS’s Laboratory and Radiology departments.

Simultaneously with opening the new emergency department, HCHS also went to a centralized registration system for all hospital-based services and created one entrance for all patients. With one point of entrance, patients enjoy the drive-up drop off lane, heated sidewalks and the canopy cover. Plus, centralized registration makes the beginning of their health journey at HCHS easy and convenient.

I cannot sing enough praises of telehealth! It has given me so many ways to maintain therapy with clients. I also feel that clients being in their homes during sessions has really helped them be comfortable and less vulnerable. I have made so much progress with clients over telehealth, just as much as I would have made with clients being in the office, sometimes even more because they have the comfort of their own home! I feel my clients feel the same way.

~ Amy Muller, LMFT

We are here to support you!

Care Circle team members are available in each region. Contact Spiritual Care to coordinate.

We also have several NEW VIDEOS to help you take a break by trying a new recipe or work out.
This is what Be ONE looks like to me...

Bishop Thomas Zinkula of the Diocese of Davenport was invited to MercyOne Clinton to perform a small, private blessing of the new linear accelerator on Jan. 6. The blessing, given before the first patient was treated the week of Jan. 11, was the culmination of more than four years of planning and hard work to keep the latest cancer treatment technology close to home for area patients.

“Our Mission is to transform the health of our community,” said Malissa Sprenger, vice president, mission integration, MercyOne Eastern Iowa Region. “The dedication, innovation and delivery of local radiation oncology care assures patients and families are close in a time of great uncertainty. We are grateful to our generous donors, compassionate treatment team, and all those who brought this to fruition.”

This is what Improve Daily looks like to me...

The first phase of online scheduling became available at MercyOne Central Iowa urgent care locations throughout the greater Des Moines area for in-person and telehealth visits on Dec. 21, 2020. New and existing patients can make an appointment 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through MercyOne.org.

In addition to online scheduling, patients are able to check in before arriving at their appointment with MercyOne's mobile check-in service. In advance of the appointment, patients receive a text message and/or email with a link to check in. If needed, patients can also sign office consents and make a payment from the convenience of their device.

The second phase of the online scheduling rollout in Central Iowa will take place in January 2021.

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This is what Innovate looks like to me...

Congratulations to the following MercyOne providers who have completed more than 1,000 telehealth visits to provide convenient, high-quality care to patients:

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In July of 2020, MercyOne was awarded an almost $1 million grant from the Federal Communications Commission to invest in telehealth opportunities. About a third of the funds were used to improve telehealth equipment for monitoring COVID-19 patients at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center. The other funds were used to purchase remote patient monitoring equipment to help high risk patients track their clinical data at home through technology synced to an application on their smartphone. The app sends the patient data to a secure dashboard, and the patient’s clinic can access to determine if the patient needs additional clinical intervention without having the patient leave their home and reduce their potential exposure to COVID-19. The pilot group of patients will receive the first bundles of home equipment in early February.

Dr. Dante Dali from MercyOne North Iowa is now offering thoracic surgery at MercyOne Northeast Iowa. Dr. Dali is a cardiothoracic surgeon at MercyOne North Iowa Heart Center with a special interest in minimally invasive/robotic cardiac and thoracic surgery. Thoracic surgery focuses on treatment for diseases of the chest (thorax), including coronary artery disease and heart valve and vessel abnormalities. In Waterloo, Dr. Dali will initially concentrate on thoracic conditions, to include cancers of lung and esophagus, gastroesophageal reflux disease, dysphagia, hiatal hernias, achalasia, pneumothorax, and pleural effusion.

Dr. Neil Mandsager from MercyOne Perinatal Center in Des Moines is now offering Maternal Fetal Medicine to patients at MercyOne Waterloo Medical Center. Maternal Fetal Medicine focuses on managing health concerns of mom and baby before, during and after pregnancy. By having Dr. Mandsager in MercyOne Waterloo, pregnant women can conveniently access this service without the need to travel outside their local area. In addition to seeing patients in Waterloo and at MercyOne Perinatal Center in Des Moines, Dr. Mandsager also makes regular visits to see patients at MercyOne North Iowa Medical Center in Mason City.

Ben Schaffer, RN, works in the Telemetry Unit at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center, and was recently recognized by a patient’s family member for owning his actions to deliver quality, personalized health care.

In The DAISY Award® nomination, the patient’s family wrote Ben: “is a model for all nurses, not because he did one thing that stuck out to us as a family, but because everything he did was impactful, reliable and meaningful. Ben entered and exited the room every time with a smile on his face. He made sure to clean his hands in front of us, commenting the reason why to protect us all from the COVID-19 virus. Ben communicated accurately to the next shift what my father needed, what was important to him, and things he needed to work on to get discharged. It is because of nurses like Ben, my father was discharged and able to continue his healing at home.”
This is what Personalize Care looks like to me...

MercyOne Dyersville Senior Care invited families of residents for Christmas caroling in their backyard during the holidays since indoor visits weren’t possible. Families volunteered on the evening of their choice, and the carolers were given microphones so the music could be heard through the indoor PA system for all residents to enjoy.

This is what Own It! and Personalize Care look like to me...

Andrea Rich, RN, one of the outstanding nurses at Mercy Iowa City, an affiliate of MercyOne, had a patient who spoke and only understood Spanish. With a tracheostomy, our usual verbal interpretation services were not working for the patient. Andrea contacted our education department to figure out the best way that we could help. I was able to find what she needed and gave her copies for use in the patient room—and we placed new references for all colleagues on our Intranet for everyone to access in the future!

~ Kim Pattee, Training & Life Support Coordinator/Instructor

This is what Personalize Care looks like to me...

A patient needed some extra comfort going into surgery with podiatrist Dr. Travis Tidwell of MercyOne Waterloo Podiatry Care. “She was really nervous before her surgery and the operating room can be a little hectic with everyone getting things ready. She asked me to put on the song ‘I Can Only Imagine’ by MercyMe. I pulled up the lyrics so she could sing along. She asked me to sing as well, so the whole OR sang that song to her as she went to sleep. I think that meant a lot to her.”

Dr. Tidwell’s colleagues have heard him sing on many occasions: “It helps me feel comfortable and set the mood. The OR can be a stressful situation at times, and it helps us re-center and focus on what we’re doing.”

This is what Personalize Care looks like to me...

Cassie in the MercyOne North Iowa Heart Center received a call from a patient explaining that he wanted to stop two of his medications due to cost so the family would be able to afford his wife’s necessary inhaler. Cassie took it upon herself to work with a provider and secured prior authorization for different medications, not only for our patient but the patient's wife. Now the family has zero cost and can take all necessary medications.
Quality
ALL CAUSE UNPLANNED 30-DAY READMISSION

This is what Be ONE looks like...

After a recent visit to MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center, Des Moines firefighter Ahman Douglass took the time to send a note of recognition about Facilities colleague Dustin Mason. The following is an excerpt:

“I recently toured the entire MercyOne campus in order to gather information needed for our responders to make them better prepared and safe in the event of a fire. I found Dustin to be very thorough in his approach to helping the Des Moines Fire Department. His knowledge of the systems, along with his preparation for our follow up visit, impressed me. The business we conducted was necessary, and we made a connection beyond that. I watched as Dustin greeted every employee in the hospital and most visitors we encountered, with a genuine ‘hello.’ You have an employee who is the ideal representative of your team. I am proud to have spent several hours in his company and am grateful for his willingness to oblige the Des Moines Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau.”

This is what Improve Daily looks like to me...

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) Shawn Tulp completed an Advanced Pain Management Fellowship from the University of South Florida and recently passed his non-surgical pain management board exam to become board certified in Chronic Pain Management. Shawn joins a group of less than 100 CRNAs nationwide who hold this certification. Shawn is the chief nurse anesthetist at Van Diest Medical Center, an affiliate of MercyOne, and also the director of the Pain Clinic and Ketamine Clinic at the hospital.

Shawn uses a multi-faceted approach to treating patients with chronic pain. For many, it’s about getting quality of life back and Shawn makes such a significant positive impact in the lives of his patients.

Financial Performance
OPERATING MARGIN

This is what Innovate and Own It! look like to me...

In order to receive appropriate reimbursement from Medicare on COVID-19 discharges, a copy of a positive COVID-19 test must be on the encounter. This process is harder than it sounds based on the many locations patients could have been tested.

Julie Draper and Denise Grell in North Iowa developed the overall process to ensure we have a COVID-19 test on every possible related inpatient discharge. In that process, HIM Compliance Documentation staff, HIM coding, and HIM denials all are part of the work. Case Management/UR also assist our HIM team in this work. The new process is truly a team effort.

This work so far has resulted in at least $160,000 additional reimbursement, and likely much more.

This is what Be One and Improve Daily look like to me...

Each year during the holiday season, MercyOne North Iowa Hospice holds Tree of Life events throughout North Iowa. This year, the events were held virtually. Marketing teamed up with Hospice and produced a beautiful video. The event was different from years past but still incredibly moving. Donations equaled last year despite the change away from in-person events!
Legislature opens 2021 session

Iowa lawmakers dropped the gavel on the 2021 session Jan. 11, with majority Republicans pledging to prioritize tax relief and ensure children have the option of in-person attendance during the coronavirus pandemic.

On Jan. 12, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds laid out her legislative agenda, pushing for schools to fully re-open and the state to make a significant investment in expanding broadband internet access. Both issues have emerged as flashpoints in many communities as COVID-19 forced some schools to close because of rising cases. Reynolds is calling for lawmakers to pass a bill that requires these schools to stay open.

Reynolds touted Iowa’s positive fiscal position compared to the rest of the nation, noting that Iowa’s 3.6% unemployment rate was one of the lowest in the country.

But one of the barriers to economic growth has been inconsistent access to broadband internet around the state, particularly in rural areas. Roughly a third of Iowa’s 99 counties are broadband deserts. Reynolds is calling for a $450 million in state spending to leverage private investment in broadband expansion.

Another barrier for Iowa is a lack of childcare options for working parents. Reynolds said one-third of the childcare spots in the state have been lost in the past five years. She is proposing state and block grant dollars to forming public and private partnerships in communities with a need for more child care.

MercyOne Advocacy Priorities

MercyOne will be focusing on the following legislatively priorities. Though this list is not exhaustive, these are the key issues which we will be advocating at the Capitol:

COVID-19 Relief

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Reynolds put varied measures into place relaxing restrictions that would limit or delay care. MercyOne is monitoring all continued legislative conversation about COVID-19 health care immunity and relief while looking to continue measures that eliminated unnecessary red tape to the industry permanently.

• Telehealth Services: parity and determine if audio-only telehealth services should continue to be acceptable as telehealth services
• Background Checks: allow employment after submission pending completion
• Professional Licensure: streamline processes across professional licensing boards to allow out-of-state professionals who are licensed and in good standing to work in Iowa for a defined period of time prior to obtaining Iowa license

Workforce

MercyOne supports the removal of barriers to recruitment and retention throughout the industry that have limited the health care workforce, particularly in rural parts of Iowa. MercyOne hopes to end price-gouging in the staffing industry while supporting its workforce through the fatigue and stress of the ongoing pandemic.

Medicaid

MercyOne supports improvements to the existing state Medicaid system in order to help our providers better serve Iowa’s Medicaid population at all levels of care.

Medical Malpractice

MercyOne is partnering with a group of providers and provider associations in advocating for a hard cap on non-economic damage awards in medical malpractice lawsuits. Today, only a soft cap exists, which has allowed juries to make disproportionate awards, in excess of the lifetime cost of care. Further amplified awards could bankrupt small providers and decrease access to care across our state.

Mental Health

Iowa is not unique in its shortage of rural behavioral health providers and diminished ability to serve all corners of the state. MercyOne supports increased access for mental health services, both for children and adults, through improvements to rural recruitment and retention, funding mechanisms, and telehealth infrastructure.

Emergency Medical Services

MercyOne supports increased and differed funding mechanisms to ensure emergency medical services and transport across the state for all patients, including classifying EMS as an essential service.
Our Key Results focus our work as well as measure performance and progress toward our Vision to set the standard as a personalized and radically convenient system of health services.

System-wide progress on the Key Results is featured here each month. To view your region’s progress, see your local communications.

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**Consumer Experience**
Percent of consumers who would recommend MercyOne to their friends or family

**Team Engagement**
Commitment each colleague gives each day to help our patients – and each other – live their best life.

**Quality**
The percent of patients who come back to any hospital within 30 days after being treated for a heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, lung disease, or hip and knee replacement.

**Financial Performance**
Think of financial performance like a check book. At the end of the month we must have more than what we spend to fund benefit programs, raises, invest in facilities and clinical and non-clinical equipment.

**Ambulatory Growth**
Non-hospital visits, including telehealth, emergency department, outpatient surgery, physical therapy, physician offices, clinics and home care.

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Share Focused Stories of how colleagues and providers are working to achieve our Key Results at [www.MercyOne.org/Culture](http://www.MercyOne.org/Culture). Stories will be featured in system-wide communications, including the monthly System Newsletter and bi-weekly MercyOne Update e-newsletter.