MHN Communication Changes

Thank you to the over 2,000 colleagues from across Iowa and surrounding states who took the branding and communications survey in June. You will see changes in the communications you receive from MHN in this newsletter. More improvements are on their way as the communications team continues to analyze data by role and location. Please find the high-level topics ranked by interest in the chart below.

Starting with this issue of the newsletter you will see:

- Open leadership positions across the systems
- Patient care improvements
- New roles and their impact on the organization

New sections will highlight issues and trends impacting our organization, patient successes and ideas you can apply to improve your patient’s experience. These additions answer specific requests from the survey.

You also asked to hear more from company leadership. Starting in August Bob Ritz, MHN CEO will be sharing a quarterly video with the entire organization.

Thank you again for your input! Stay tuned for even more enhancements to communications across MHN and your ministry.

Idea to Try

Asking a patient about his “bucket list” leads a nurse to make a special connection in North Iowa

Allie Maxwell recently cared for 102-year-young patient Henry Vierkant. Henry spent a few days on her unit but had no idea it would lead to fulfilling an item at the top of his bucket list – a ride in a helicopter. When Allie heard Henry’s wish she contacted the Mercy Air Med team, Lead Flight Nurse Bryan Williams and Patient Experience Director Marie Voet. Check out the video from Henry’s ride on the Mercy North Iowa FB page. We are grateful for Allie’s dedication to her patient and making this dream come true for Henry. This video has been viewed over 170,000 times and has been covered by news stations in North Iowa, Rochester, Minnesota and Des Moines. Part of Allie’s approach to getting to know her patients is to ask about their bucket list.

Email your favorite conversation starter with patients/guests to MHNinfo@mercydesmoiness.org.
Spotlight on Patient Care Improvements

Iowa Heart and Mercy-Des Moines Start Clinical Trial of a New Minimally Invasive Heart Treatment for Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)

The AMAZE clinical trial is evaluating a new approach that combines catheter ablation with the use of a device called the LARIAT Suture Delivery Device to close off the heart’s left atrial appendage (LAA), a muscular pouch connected to the left atrium of the heart. The LARIAT is a permanent, non-surgical option for LAA closure that uses remote suture delivery to close the LAA from the outside of the heart. “The AMAZE trial could help confirm the mechanical and electrical isolation benefits of the LARIAT device and provide that it will reduce or eliminate these electrical triggers. It may eventually become an important component in reducing recurrence in patients with persistent AFib,” says principal investigator Troy Hounshell, D.O., an electrophysiologist at Iowa Heart Center.

To find out more about the AMAZE trial at Mercy, please call Iowa Heart Center Research at (515) 633-3842.

Mercy-North Iowa Rapid Improvement Event

Mercy - North Iowa held a Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) to improve and expand the Intensive Outpatient and Partial Hospitalization Programs (IOP/PHP) offered by Behavioral Services. The team addressed and resolved many clinical, financial and operational issues. The team was able to:

- Develop a process for optimizing billing and reimbursement
- Develop individualized patient treatment plans
- End non-required elements of documentation
- Develop several Standard Work documents for the new processes

Improvements started right away. Patients and colleagues have shared positive remarks about the exciting changes made to both programs. Interested in seeing if North Iowa’s improvements could at your location? Contact Dr. Jill Burkley at burkleyj@mercyhealth.com

Mercy-Clinton Baby Friendly Initiative

Mercy’s Maternal Child Services is participating in a global program to encourage and recognize hospitals and birth centers which become centers of breastfeeding support. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) started The Baby Friendly initiative. Their ultimate goal is to offer the optimal level of care for infant feeding and mother/baby bonding. The pathway to designation is helping Mercy-Clinton to deliver patient-centered care, improve patient satisfaction, develop a professional environment of competence and build leadership and teamwork skills among staff. The four phases include Discovery, Development, Dissemination and Designation. Mercy-Clinton is starting phase 2. In the Development phase, physicians and staff members will take 3-20 hours of training. Mercy-Clinton is aiming to complete the initiative by 2019.

ACR Accreditation Granted to Mercy Cancer Center Radiation Oncology (MCCRO)

Mercy Cancer Center’s central campus and West Lakes Radiation Oncology centers have received full reaccreditation through the American College of Radiology’s (ACR) Radiation Oncology Practice Accreditation program throught July 2020. The ACR awards accreditation for the achievement of high practice standards after a peer-review evaluation of a practice. Board certified radiologists and medical physicists evaluate image quality, procedures, quality control and quality assurance.

Mercy is the only radiation oncology practice in central Iowa to obtain this accreditation. “MCCRO remains one of only two radiation oncology departments in Iowa to voluntarily submit to this comprehensive and rigorous review of all facets of our patient care. This accreditation is a strong testament to the outstanding work each of our colleagues does every day with expertise, compassion and empathy,” said Dr. Phil Colletier, Mercy Cancer Center Radiation Oncology Director.
Expanding Access to Care

Mercy-Dubuque Announces Plan for New Comprehensive Cancer Center

Mercy Medical Center-Dubuque and Medical Associates Clinic announced plans for the addition of a fully-integrated, comprehensive cancer center. The $25 million project will be located in a new, two-story facility near the hospital and Professional Arts Plaza building. Construction is expected to begin in early 2018.

The cancer center at Mercy will be the first in Dubuque and the tri-state region to offer a hematology/oncology outpatient clinic, with both chemotherapy infusion and radiation oncology services in the same building. The new center will be much more convenient for patients and families. In addition to these clinical services, the center will offer an array of holistic and other cancer-related services that are not currently available in the area. For many people in Dubuque with cancer, care can be fragmented-with provider visits in one facility and treatments in another, or the need to travel hours for care. This creates confusion for patients, family inconvenience, treatment delays, and increases the overall cost of care.

“Our patients and their families should have one focus - to get better,” said Kay Takes, president of Mercy Medical Center-Dubuque. “Knowing they have access to coordinated care and resources in one place, instead of having to make multiple visits to different facilities across various communities, is a huge benefit. The less people have to worry about, the better the outcomes.”

Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare to Expand Services in Oelwein

Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare-Iowa will open a new clinic in Oelwein this year to house both Covenant Clinic Convenient Care and Covenant Clinic Occupational Medicine & Wellness. Renovations are currently underway on the fourth floor of Mercy Hospital. Covenant Clinic will be the first in the Oelwein community to offer urgent care and occupational medicine services.

U.S. News & World Report Rankings


U.S. News evaluates data on nearly 5,000 hospitals throughout the country to help patients decide where to receive care. To be nationally ranked, a hospital must excel in caring for the sickest, most medically complex patients.

Mercy – Des Moines ranks third overall in Iowa, and is one of 535 Best Regional Hospitals nationally. Mercy – Des Moines is recognized as “high performing” in seven types of care:

- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Repair
- Heart Bypass Surgery
- Heart Failure
- Colon Cancer Surgery
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Hip Replacement
- Knee Replacement

Mercy - Dubuque ranks fifth overall in Iowa, and is recognized as “high performing” in the following areas:

- Heart failure
- Knee replacement
- Colon cancer surgery
- COPD

Leadership Positions Across the Network

- Webster City
  - Chief Executive Officer, Van Diest Medical Clinic
- Dubuque
  - Director, Supply Chain Management
  - Director, Home Care
- Sioux City
  - Director, Radiology

Look for this new feature in each issue of MNH News.
Shane Cerone Joins Mercy Iowa City as Interim CEO

Shane Cerone joined MHN as the Interim Chief Executive officer for Mercy Iowa City. Shane has extensive experience as the former president of Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. Shane is currently the CEO of Health Market Solutions. He completed his graduate work at the University of Iowa and also worked at University of Iowa Health Care for several years. Shane replaces Mike Heinrich who has accepted a position with St. Luke’s in Cedar Rapids. Mercy Iowa City joined Mercy Health Network through a strategic affiliation and management agreement effective June 1, 2017.

Dr. Kent Carr Appointed President of Mercy Health Network Physician Enterprise

MHN is committed to developing a statewide MHN Physician Enterprise (MHN PE) which will deliver efficient and excellent health care for its patients and communities, anticipate and respond to demands of the market, provide a satisfying culture and create an even more desirable practice environment.

Kent Carr, M.D. recently accepted the newly created position of President of the Mercy Health Network Physician Enterprise. As MHN evolves into a fully integrated delivery system in Iowa and surrounding areas, the plan to organize our aligned physician practices is an important step.

As a physician, Dr. Carr knows the challenges of practicing medicine today. He will be working with physicians, leaders and support teams to standardize clinical protocols when standardization will improve efficiency and quality of care, improve non-clinical processes, improve coordination of care and increase communication and interaction.

In this role, Dr. Carr will be responsible for providing guidance and oversight to the more than 270 clinic locations and over 1,000 employed providers and the MHN PE Leadership Team.

Dr. Carr currently serves as the Interim President of Mercy Clinics Des Moines. He will continue in that role until the transition to a new Mercy Clinics Des Moines leader is complete. Prior to his current role, Dr. Carr served as a Physician Enterprise Leader for Catholic Health Initiatives in Englewood, Colorado. He also served as the President of Mercy Clinics Des Moines from 2002 to 2008. Dr Carr is well-respected for his calm, steady and very pleasant leadership skills in group practice management.

The MHN PE plan was developed by a group of physicians and market leaders from across the state who were charged with the development of a plan to create a unified MHN Physician Enterprise to support MHN’s evolution to a highly integrated network. This team received input from physicians and leaders at each of the MHN markets and presented their recommendations to the MHN Board of Directors, who approved the plan.

Awards, Accolades & Celebrations

- Mercy-Iowa City Named to 2017 Becker’s Hospital Top 100 Community Hospitals
- Mercy Home Care in Mason City Named to Top 100 of the 2016 Home Care Elite
- Mercy Breast Center of North Iowa has been recognized as a Certified Quality Breast Center of Excellence in the National Quality Measures for Breast Centers Program (NQMBC™) for the third year in a row
- Mercy Medical Center-Sioux City Honored with Mission: Lifeline Gold Quality Achievement Award
- Mercy Medical Center-Sioux City Receives Mission: Lifeline NSTEMI Silver Quality Achievement Award
- Mercy Medical Center New Hampton’s Sleep Lab achieved accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC)
- Palo Alto County Health System, Emmetsburg - PARC Hall, a 22-bed long-term care facility that is part of Palo Alto County Health System, earned a top 5-star rating score for overall care on Medicare’s Nursing Home Compare website
- Mercy Medical Center New Hampton Celebrates 100th Anniversary. Click here for event photos
Making a Difference

Mercy-Sioux City Child Development Center Opens New Facility

Mercy’s Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in Sioux City celebrated the opening of its new facility with a ribbon cutting and open house.

The new center is centrally located and provides a more accommodating environment for the children and families they serve. It will also provide enhanced privacy and security for the child victims of abuse.

Since 1989, Mercy’s Child Advocacy Center has served more than 17,000 abused children and their families. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, the CAC currently provides medical examinations, video-taped forensic interviews, therapy, and family advocacy in a child-friendly environment to 900 children annually. Mercy has provided millions of dollars in care through the CAC without reimbursement and no family is ever charged for services. Mercy’s Child Advocacy Center also offers educational opportunities and prevention services for children, adults, professionals, agencies and schools.

MHN Advocacy Efforts Show Results

Over the course of the past seven months, MHN has engaged in many advocacy efforts at the state and federal level. We are grateful for the engagement of our MHN colleagues across the state. While you may not feel your contact to a state legislator or a member of Congress made much of a difference – be assured that it did.

As our lawmakers deal with budget challenges and continue to consider changes to health care policy, we will be asking for your help again. Our goal is not to send too many requests as we don’t want you to develop advocacy fatigue. However, when the issue is important and timing is right – you will get requests asking you to engage. These grassroots efforts will not be complicated and will likely take less than five minutes to complete.

At the Federal level, Congress has been working on “repeal and replace” legislation since the spring. MHN has been engaged in this discussion from the beginning. Several MHN leaders have traveled to D.C. to advocate on behalf of our patients and providers. We’ve had members of Congress visiting our facilities. We have also engaged our grassroots network on several occasions. Through various action alerts, many MHN colleagues have contacted their legislators. From our last tally, we generated over 800 emails to members of Congress. Thank you! As the debate continues - and it will - please help us double that number. It is vital that our members of Congress know that these changes to health care have serious consequences to Iowans.

While Congress is on its August recess now and members are working in their districts, there is still discussion in D.C. of future efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). MHN will continue to advocate and we encourage you to engage with your members when you see them in your communities.

Our key messages are:
- Maintain coverage expansion.
- Medicaid restructuring should not be used as a vehicle to make substantial budget cuts in an already underfunded program.
- The ACA should not be repealed without a simultaneous replacement guaranteeing adequate coverage.

In addition to our work on these health care reforms at the federal level, MHN is working with state leaders on many issues during this interim period. These issues include opioid abuse, telehealth, behavioral health, and Medicaid managed care.

Thank you for your continued engagement on our MHN advocacy efforts and watch for opportunities to engage this fall.

If there are advocacy issues that you think the MHN advocacy leaders need to be aware of or need to be working on, please contact Sara Eide, MHN Director of Advocacy, at eidesl@mercyhealth.com.