MHN Advocates for Policy Changes to Improve Workforce Challenges in Iowa

Each year MHN creates an advocacy agenda. This year, workforce issues are an underlying problem for almost every other health care challenge. Below are two factors contributing to the current health care workforce crisis in Iowa:

- The state’s aging population increases demand for health care, along with a decreasing workforce as nurses reach retirement age
- Limited in-state medical school openings and competitive entrance standards

MHN is working closely with the governor’s office, legislators and the Iowa Department of Public Health on the following workforce initiatives:

- Support efforts to aggressively address the workforce shortage in behavioral health, nursing and other areas by:
  - Creating incentives for Iowa-trained health care professionals to stay in Iowa
  - Expanding loan forgiveness programs
  - Supporting $2 million in funding of the medical residency training grant program for FY19
- Support payment and coverage parity for telehealth services to expand access to qualified providers to Iowans

At the federal level, MHN is working with our Congressional delegation on changes to the State Conrad 30 J-1 Visa Waiver program. This program recruits foreign physicians to underserved communities. We are asking Congress to extend and expand this program as it is vital to the recruitment efforts of Iowa hospitals. Our goal is to increase the allotment of visas to at least 35 per state and allow unused visas to go into a pool for other states to access. Iowa communities are short on physicians, especially psychiatrists, and we rely on the Conrad 30 program to fill the gaps.

Q & A with Bob Ritz

Q. Legislature is in session, what are you hoping we achieve?

A: We would like to see the legislature make a bold move to improve the state’s behavioral health delivery system. There are many areas that need to be addressed, but one key issue is access to behavioral health services. Specifically, there is a need for more services and more physicians and staff to provide more capacity to address a very fast growing demand. The shortage of psychiatrists and other behavioral health providers is a crisis in Iowa. We simply do not have enough psychiatrists to care for Iowans - and many psychiatrists will not take patients with Medicaid coverage. We need to find ways to attract more health providers to our state. MHN is supporting various pieces of legislation at the state and federal level that would address this. We are working closely with the Iowa Hospital Association and other partner organizations to ensure these challenges are addressed through meaningful legislation.

Have questions for Bob? Email MHNinfo@mercydesmoines.org.
Spotlight on Patient Care Improvements

Robots Added to the Infection Prevention Toolbox

Ensuring a clean and safe environment for patients is a top priority of the Environmental Services department at Mercy-Des Moines. To help in this effort, special robots, Wall-E and Rosie, aim bursts of ultraviolet (UV) light throughout cleaned rooms — adding another layer of protection for patients with lowered immune systems.

Initially the robots were used for rooms of cancer and transplant patients. Their role has expanded to include rooms in the Cardiac Surgical Intensive Care Unit (CSICU) and other locations.

“The robots are available 24/7 and they’re used for almost 100 room cleanings each week,” says Environmental Services Manager Rich Angus. “It takes about 15 minutes longer to clean a room, but it’s time well spent to give peace of mind.”

The infection prevention team says the robots are a great addition to the safety toolbox. The team will continue to study and track the effectiveness of the robots in focused areas.

Healthy Variety™ Makes Nutritious Eating Easier and Extends to More Markets

A program started at Mercy-Dubuque to reduce congestive heart failure and patient readmissions will expand to Mercy-Clinton and Mercy-Sioux City in the near future. Ryan Osterberger and his team developed Healthy Variety™ in 2014. Healthy Variety is a frozen meal line developed by Mercy dietitians and hand-crafted in the Mercy-Dubuque kitchen.

Mercy's dietitians tailor the sodium, carbohydrate, and saturated fat content to ensure meals are appropriate for a variety of dietary needs, and well balanced for good nutrition. The meals are heart healthy, low in sodium and diabetic friendly. They offer an easy meal solution for anyone with congestive heart failure, diabetes or heart disease. They are also meant for those following a weight reduction plan or anyone who wants a convenient and healthy option.

Healthy Variety meals are $4–$5 and are currently available for sale in the Mercy-Dubuque cafeteria or at the Mercy Family Pharmacy Elm Street location. Sales have been favorable, and upcoming plans include online ordering and local delivery.

Osterberger, who now serves in a regional role, says, "I am proud and excited to expand our Healthy Variety meal options throughout the MHN markets. This will help promote and deliver prevention services for strategic groups of key target populations including those with chronic illness, the elderly and the poor. Healthy Variety meals are the result of collaborative efforts and talents from marketing, food and nutrition services, chefs and clinical dietitians. Support service departments such as home medical equipment and retail pharmacy, support the effort with home delivery. We are all working together as a team/region to seek new ways to provide the highest quality of care to our patients."

For more information, visit www.mercydubuque.com/healthy-variety-meals
New CT Scanner Reduces Wait Time and Improves Image Quality

Patients at Oakland Mercy Hospital are benefiting from a new 64-slice CT scanner located in a more convenient location.

The Helmsley Charitable Trust Rural Healthcare Program awarded Oakland Mercy Hospital $506,000 for the new CT scanner and the addition, which is next to the radiology and emergency departments. Prior to the addition patients had to exit the main hospital building to access an older CT scanner. The addition and new CT scanner not only provides the latest technology but also decreases the time it takes to perform a scan. Now patients and staff are protected from exposure to the elements because they are not going outside for scans.

“Helmsley also helped with the infrastructure to build a separate room next to the radiology and emergency departments,” said Thomas Carmichael, Oakland Mercy Hospital radiology manager. “We are very grateful for the Helmsley grant and what those funds mean to our hospital and community.”

Mercy-Clinton Begins Program to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

A new program offered by Mercy-Clinton, PreventT2, is helping community members learn to prevent Type 2 diabetes. Guided by a trained lifestyle coach, groups of participants learn the skills they need to solve problems and make lasting changes such as losing weight, being more physically active and managing stress.

“One in three American adults has prediabetes, so the need for prevention has never been greater,” said April Barsema, diabetes educator. “The PreventT2 program offers a proven approach to preventing or delaying the onset of Type 2 diabetes through modest lifestyle changes, made with the support of a coach and one’s peers.”

PreventT2 groups meet more than 30 times over the course of a year. The group setting provides a supportive environment for people who are facing similar challenges and trying to make similar changes.

PreventT2 is part of the National Diabetes Prevention Program, led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The local program meets at Mercy-Clinton North Campus and is free to participants.

Central Community Hospital Signs Letter of Intent to Join MHN

Central Community Hospital (CCH) in Elkader and Mercy Health Network (MHN) announced they have signed a Letter of Intent. Mercy-Dubuque will acquire CCH and integrate the hospital into MHN. The official ownership change is set for July 1, 2018.

CCH has been in a successful management relationship with MHN for the past 17 years. The expanded relationship will provide long-term sustainability for CCH, as well as stability for the community.

“We are committed to enhancing the health and wellness of area residents. Becoming a full affiliate of MHN will provide more services and enhanced access for our patients,” says Brooke Kensinger, CEO of Central Community Hospital.

Likewise, MHN officials are pleased with the addition of CCH and what it means to the residents of Northeast Iowa.

“We are excited to have Central Community Hospital join the Mercy Health Network family. They have a long track record of success and our previous relationship with them has been beneficial,” says Bob Ritz, CEO of Mercy Health Network. “Making CCH a full affiliate of our network is a good next step for both of us because it adds value to the access and services we already provide to Iowans in that part of the state.”

Kay Takes, President of Mercy-Dubuque, adds, “Mercy-Dubuque has enjoyed close ties to the Elkader community for many years. I’m looking forward to the opportunity to work even more closely with the wonderful staff and physicians of Central Community Hospital. The prospect of CCH integrating with Mercy-Dubuque and Mercy-Dyersville is exciting. These three hospitals working in conjunction with MHN’s latest affiliate in Guttenberg will provide all of us the opportunity to collaborate and innovate for the benefit of our patients.”

Grimes Clinic Now Open

On Jan. 2, Mercy Clinics opened a new family medicine and pediatric clinic in Grimes. The clinic is a 14,500 square-foot facility located at 250 S.W. Brookside Drive off Highway 44.
Expanding Access to Care (continued)

Behavioral Health Resource Center Taking Shape in North Iowa

Mercy-North Iowa recently held a rapid improvement event to determine the scope of services offered by the Jan Again Center for Hope and Safety. The Jan Again Center will be part of the Behavioral Health Pavilion, currently under construction.

During the weeklong event, the team determined the Jan Again Center would be a place to provide prevention and education resources to the community, patients and staff, with the goal of reducing the stigma of mental illness in the community.

The Center will:

- Focus on prevention so individuals can learn about early symptoms of mental illness and get help sooner
- Help families understand and support the needs of chronically ill family members
- Support the community in finding access to mental health resources
- Offer support groups and classes to the community
- Have a registered nurse/health coach available to help individuals find information or refer them to treatment resources

The Behavioral Health Pavilion is expected to be complete in early 2019.

The Call to Serve

Hospital Stay Doesn’t Keep Patient from Seeing Special Milestone

When a patient at Mercy-Des Moines realized he would be unable to attend his daughter’s graduation from the School of Nursing at Midland University in Nebraska, he was very disappointed. That’s when a family friend, Rebecca Oliva, who also is the director of Mercy Hospice and Home Care, contacted nursing staff and Mercy’s Public Relations department to see what could be done to allow the patient to view the ceremony from his hospital bed.

With the graduation only four days away, work began arranging for audio visual equipment and a live feed from Midland University. The communications team at the university even emailed the graduation program so the family watching from Mercy could have copies.

On the night of the graduation, family filled the room and, as the ceremony began, the patient’s daughter appeared. From across state lines, the patient was able to be a part of this very important milestone in his daughter’s life. This moment left an impression on everyone involved and is another example of what makes Mercy such a special place.

Staff Advisory Council Helps Area Homeless Population

The Mercy-Des Moines Staff Advisory Council (SAC) recently bought supplies and assembled 30 bags for Joppa, an outreach group that supports the Des Moines area’s homeless population. The bags were filled with items such as flashlights, blankets, socks, toiletries, batteries, nonperishable food items and more.

Susan Schrader, Senior Organizational Development Consultant, and Cory Ohorilko, SAC co-chairman, delivered the bags to Joppa.
The Call to Serve  (continued)

Mercy-Sioux City Launches "Stop the Bleed" Campaign to Siouxland Community

Mercy-Sioux City’s Barb Eveleth and Dr. Craig Nemechek are making a difference in the community by taking a crucial message to local groups and businesses. The message is what to do in an emergency situation when a person is experiencing heavy bleeding due to a traumatic injury.

Various media events helped launch the "Stop the Bleed" campaign. The campaign helps bystanders understand how they can help save the life of someone who is in danger of bleeding to death and what they should do until the EMS squad arrives to take over the patient's care.

Leadership Positions across the Network

Des Moines
- Physician Recruitment and Engagement Leader (Central Iowa)

Dubuque
- Director of Clinical and Professional Development
- Director of Home Care

North Iowa
- Regional Vice President of Hansen Family Hospital

Iowa City
- Vice President of Revenue Cycle
- Director of Radiology
- Director of Materials Management

Awards and Accolades

Covenant Cancer Treatment Center Earns National Accreditation with Commendation from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons

The Commission on Cancer (CoC), a quality program of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), has granted three-year accreditation with commendation to the cancer program at Covenant Cancer Treatment Center.

To earn this accreditation, a cancer program must meet or exceed the CoC quality care standards, have an evaluation every three years and maintain levels of excellence in the delivery of patient-centered care. This type of accreditation is only awarded to a facility that exceeds standard requirements at the time of its three-year survey.

Because it is a CoC-accredited cancer center, colleagues take a multidisciplinary approach to treating cancer. This multidisciplinary partnership results in improved patient care. The program’s focus is on the full spectrum of cancer care including prevention, early diagnosis, cancer staging, optimal treatment, rehabilitation, life-long follow-up for recurrent disease and end-of-life care. When patients receive care at a CoC facility, they also have access to information on clinical trials and new treatments, genetic counseling, and patient centered services including psycho-social support, a patient navigation process, and a survivorship care plan which documents the care each patient receives and seeks to improve cancer survivors’ quality of life.

"We are very proud to be the leading cancer center in the community," said Annette Wilson, director of cancer services for Wheaton Iowa. "The surgeon who reviewed our program was amazed at the level of care we provide in this size of market – it's important for the community to understand our commitment to their care when they make a decision about treatment."

Mercy Health Network Core Values

- Reverence
- Integrity
- Commitment to the Poor
- Compassion
- Excellence
- Justice
- Stewardship
Awards and Accolades (continued)

Mercy Iowa City Recognized by Healthgrades

Mercy Iowa City received Healthgrades’ 2018 Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence. Hospitals receiving this recognition rank in the top 5 percent in the nation with the lowest risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates across set conditions and procedures. Patients treated in hospitals receiving this award have, on average, a lower risk of dying than if they received care in hospitals that do not receive the designation. Hospitals receiving this award exhibit comprehensive and consistent quality across a set range of conditions and procedures.

Mercy-Des Moines Receives “Best of” Award

Cityview announced its annual “Best of” awards in Des Moines in January. Among the 260 categories ranging from restaurants to entertainment to medical providers, Mercy-Des Moines received “Best Local Hospital” for the third year in a row.

Mercy-SiouxCity’s Dennis Bickett Named Battalion Commander for the South Dakota Army National Guard 153rd Unit

Congratulations to Dennis Bickett, Mercy-SiouxCity’s physical therapy manager, on being named Battalion Commander for the South Dakota Army National Guard 153rd Unit! Dennis joined the South Dakota National Guard in 1988 and became an officer in 2000.

Dennis was deployed to Iraq from 2004-2005. He says “Managing a military career, a medical career and ensuring that my family is a top priority has been a challenge over the years. I am grateful to Mercy for all its support and allowing me the time needed to meet my training requirements. The experience I have gained as a leader in the military has helped me be a successful manager.”

As a battalion commander, Dennis handles everything that happens. Preparation for wartime and state missions, mentoring and coaching subordinate commanders and staff officers are some of his many duties.

We’re proud of you, Dennis, and thank you for your service to our country!

Lenten Message from Colleen Walters, Chief Mission Integration Officer

Lent, the period leading up to Easter, commemorates the 40 days of Christ’s fasting in the wilderness. This time provides an opportunity for us to reexamine our Mission which calls us to fulfill our purpose through acts of service (with fidelity to the Gospel as a compassionate, healing ministry of Jesus Christ to transform the health of our communities). We are called to follow Jesus Christ’s ministry of healing by hearing the cry of the poor. Christ’s definition included not only the materially poor but he also touched those who were afflicted by physical, emotional and spiritual poverty. This is our work, to be more attentive to the poor and to grow in solidarity with them. During this Lenten season, spend some quiet time asking yourself these questions. Who are the poor? Who are most in need? Who are pushed to the margins? Who is suffering? Who is tremendously burdened? May this Lenten season be one of spiritual strengthening which will carry you through your wilderness by showing your love to others in need.
Leadership Announcements

New Administrators in North Iowa

MHN recently welcomed an interim vice president of network development and two new administrators to Mercy-North Iowa affiliate organizations.

Scott Curtis has agreed to serve as interim vice president of network development at Mercy-North Iowa. Scott assumed this role Jan. 2 and will continue serving as administrator and CEO of Kossuth Regional Health Center in Algona. Scott has filled this role before and has many years of experience with Mercy-North Iowa.

Brett Antczak began his new role as administrator of Palo Alto County Health System in Emmetsburg, Jan. 2.

Brett was the chief clinics operations officer at Washington County Hospital and Clinics in Washington. While there he recruited six providers, increased patient satisfaction scores by 24 percentile points and established new service lines and clinic opportunities. He has more than 20 years of strategic planning and leadership experience.

Laura Zwiefel became the new CEO/administrator of Hancock County Health System (HCHS) in Britt, on Jan. 26.

Laura has been with HCHS for 28 years, the last 21 years as chief nursing officer and assistant administrator. She has vast experience as a health care administrator, knowledge of the organization and the North Iowa health system.

Hancock County Health System and Palo Alto County Health System are managed by Mercy-North Iowa.

National Wear Red Day®

National Wear Red Day® was held Friday, Feb. 2, 2018. See how we helped raise awareness for cardiovascular disease across the state!

Why Go Red? Cardiovascular disease in the U.S. kills approximately one woman every 80 seconds. The good news is that 80 percent of cardiac events may be prevented with education and lifestyle changes. Go Red for Women advocates for more research and swifter action for women’s heart health.

Five numbers that all women should know to take control of their heart health are: total cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar and body mass index (BMI). Knowing these numbers can help women and their health care provider determine their risk for developing cardiovascular disease. It’s time for all women to learn the most critical numbers in their life — their hearts depend on it.
Wheaton Iowa Colleagues Rewarded with Family Fun Night

After a long 2017 filled with massive changes, Wheaton Iowa colleagues received a Family Fun Night for their commitment and hard work! Colleagues and their families went to the Cedar Valley Sportsplex Jan. 26 or Feb. 2 for an evening of food and activities. Colleagues and families enjoyed food and won several exciting prizes.

"Our colleagues showed great dedication during the launch of a new electronic health record, new network, and many new applications and equipment this past year. We wanted to do something different to allow everyone to spend time with their families," stated Jack Dusenbery, CEO for Wheaton Iowa. "The attendance was incredible, and the positive comments were wonderful to hear!"

Training Opportunity

If you are looking to prevent missed revenue and denials are struggling with the latest Medicare coding and billing rule or regulations for CAH and/or RHC, we have the answer for you!

As a member of MHN, we invite you to take advantage of the HCPro Medicare Boot Camp offered at the Iowa Heart Center in West Des Moines at a reduced cost. HCPro is a pioneer in delivering coding and regulatory information to organizations.

Participants will walk away with tools and skills to research troublesome Medicare questions specifically for CAH & RHC facilities.

Medicare Boot Camp for CAH & RHC
When: April 2 – April 5 (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
Where: Iowa Heart Center
5880 University Avenue
West Des Moines, IA 50266
Cost: $800 per participant

Medicare Boot Camp for Critical Access Hospitals
When: April 2 – April 4 (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
Where: Iowa Heart Center
5880 University Avenue
West Des Moines, IA 50266
Cost: $570 per participant

Medicare Boot Camp for Rural Health Clinics
When: April 5 (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
Where: Iowa Heart Center
5880 University Avenue
West Des Moines, IA 50266
Cost: $230 per participant

This is a first come, first serve offer!

Sign up now by contacting Traci Kreuziger, at TKreuziger@mercydesmoines.org or (515) 358-8047.
New Providers across the Network

Family Practice
- Tiffany Post, PA-C
  Des Moines
- Pradeepa Vimalachandran, M.D.
  Oakland

General Surgery
- Amareshwar Chiruvella, M.D.
  Clinton

Geriatric Services
- Alison Harrison, ARNP
  Des Moines

Hospitalist
- Jan-Michael Andresen, D.O.
  Des Moines
- Shelby Dougherty, ARNP
  Des Moines

Psychiatry
- Sophia Kang, M.D.
  Des Moines

Trauma Services
- Jacob Lane, PA-C
  Des Moines

Wound Care
- Lisa Taylor, ARNP
  Mason City