Mercy Health Network Advocacy Update

The Iowa legislative session adjourned for the year in May. Mercy Health Network (MHN) had a successful session with several significant policy achievements related to opioids, telehealth, workforce development and mental health. Colleagues from across MHN participated in our advocacy work this year and made a significant impact on legislation related to MHN priorities.

Comprehensive legislation was passed which will address many gaps in Iowa’s mental health system. MHN gave input throughout the process. Many MHN mental health providers shared their expertise with policymakers. We are encouraged by the overwhelming support of the legislators and the Governor to address the mental health crisis in our state.

MHN has been deeply involved in confronting the state’s opioid epidemic. That work – led by Mercy-Dubuque—has been recognized by state and federal leaders as a “best practice” and national leader. MHN worked on formulating policy recommendations for legislators which led to the unanimous passage of House File 2377.

The Legislature also passed a bill mandating telehealth coverage parity. MHN has been advocating for expanded telehealth coverage for many years.

We are pleased the Legislature appropriated $2 million for the funding of the Medical Residency Grant Program at the Department of Public Health. This new appropriation will be available to expand existing programs or establish new programs.

Finally, legislation was enacted which creates additional oversight of the Medicaid managed care system. We believe the additional oversight will make improvements to the current Medicaid program, but work on this issue will continue.

Please contact MHN Director of Advocacy Sara Eide at eidesl@mercyhealth.com or at 515-358-9226 to learn more about MHN advocacy efforts.

Q & A with Bob Ritz

Q. I read the announcement about Trinity’s move to EPIC. How does that impact Mercy Health Network (MHN) markets?

A: Based on Trinity Health’s recent decision to install Epic as the integrated platform for their Electronic Health Record (EHR) and revenue cycle systems in all Trinity Health assets over the next four years, MHN has been reviewing the possible impact on our ministries in Iowa. Knowing this major Information Technology (IT) investment may be coming in the near future to five of our six major MHN ministries (those owned by Trinity Health), this new plan has created a timely opportunity for MHN to explore additional options to integrate our IT services to allow us to face the market as one health system.

An MHN IT Steering Committee has been appointed to explore options and complete a comprehensive assessment to move to one, integrated state of the art IT system across MHN.

An integrated IT system is a major strategic undertaking and will require the support of our board and member organizations (Trinity Health and CHI). There are numerous complexities in reaching a decision of this scale. This process will take time and careful analysis. We are pleased to have Chief Information Officers for Trinity Health and CHI partnering with the MHN IT Steering Committee (Dr. Joe Behr, Frank Rademacher, Steve Larson, Derek Novak, Deb Rea, Kelly Richards, Jim Strother, Dan Varnum, and Dr. William Vandivier) to complete that assessment. We will keep you updated as we complete the review process.

Have questions for Bob?
Email MHNinfo@mercydesmoines.org.
Gov. Reynolds Signs Opioid Bill at Mercy-Dubuque

On Monday, May 14, 2018, Gov. Kim Reynolds signed House File 2377, a bipartisan piece of legislation she says represents a significant step forward in Iowa’s efforts to address the opioid epidemic. Mercy-Dubuque has been viewed as a national leader in the fight against the opioid epidemic. The governor signed the bill at Mercy-Dubuque in front of overdose victims’ families, law enforcement, state and local officials and others.

“Opioid-related deaths have more than doubled over the past decade,” Gov. Reynolds said. “This will not end until we take action. With this legislation, we are taking the first step to reverse this heart-wrenching trend.”

An important step in addressing the opioid epidemic is reducing the number of opioids prescribed in Iowa. The bill helps prevent doctor shopping and overprescribing by:

- Requiring all prescribers to register for and use the prescription monitoring program
- Allowing for proactive notification to recognize patients at high risk for abuse and addiction
- Requiring electronic prescribing in order to eliminate the risk of fraud
- Allowing licensing boards to set penalties for providers who overprescribe

The bill also takes a compassionate approach to ensure those who need immediate help with an overdose receive it by providing immunity from criminal liability for those who call 911 to seek care for someone who has overdosed on drugs.

Malissa Sprenger, Coordinator of Mercy Turning Point Treatment Center in Dubuque, in conjunction with colleagues from across MHN are collaborating on a consistent plan to address the opioid epidemic in Iowa. Their recommendations have been endorsed by MHN’s Interdisciplinary Clinical Leadership Team (ICLT). ICLT Co-Chairs Amy Berentes and Dr. Charles Keller say, “We are confident the actions recommended by the MHN Opioid Task Force to improve prescribing practices, educate providers and non-providers, and establish response teams will result in fewer opioid-related overdose deaths.”

The Call to Serve

MHN Representatives Meet with Iowa Catholic Conference to Discuss Mental Health and Opioid Crises

As part of MHN’s efforts to partner with Catholic entities, Colleen Walters, Chief Mission Integration Officer and Sara Eide, Director of Advocacy, presented at the Iowa Catholic Conference on May 17, 2018.

The presentation featured an update on issues related to the mental health and opioid crises in Iowa and MHN’s proactive advocacy and the establishment of an Opioid Task Force, chaired by Malissa Sprenger, Coordinator of Mercy Turning Point Treatment Center in Dubuque. The conference committed to continued education and alignment from the Dioceses in support of the efforts of MHN addressing these needs in our communities.

Attending the presentation was the Most Rev. Bishop Pates, Diocese of Des Moines; the Most Rev. Bishop Nickless, Diocese of Sioux City; the Most Rev. Bishop Zinkula, Diocese of Davenport and representatives of the Iowa Catholic Conference.
The Call to Serve (continued)

Safety Village Completes another Successful Summer Camp in Iowa City

At Safety Village, a two-week summer program in Iowa City for children aged 5-7, participants learned about personal safety through hands-on activities. A child-sized “village,” complete with buildings, streets, traffic lights and pedal-driven cars provide the setting where children practiced safety. Daily themed classes on topics such as how to call 911 and what to say, poison safety, stranger safety, introduction to emergency personnel and more were taught by partnering organizations. Participants also learned how to safely exit a small model home containing artificial smoke simulating a fire emergency.

Partners included - Mercy Iowa City, Iowa City Police and Fire Departments, Coralville Police, Johnson County Sheriff’s Office and the Iowa Children’s Museum. Safety Village was staffed by a certified director, paid staff and community volunteers.

In 2018 an additional session was added for children age 10 and older with special needs. With a class limited to eight and a staffing ratio of 3:1, children received personalized attention and were able to benefit from everything at Safety Village.

The inspiration for Safety Village was a similar child-sized village in Hinsdale, Illinois, built by the parents of a young girl who was killed by a car. Retired Mercy Iowa City family medicine physician Chuck Skaugstad brought the idea to Iowa City, organizing a group of volunteers to build the $100,000 facility with in-kind donations of materials and labor.


Spotlight on Patient Care Improvements

Mercy-Sioux City Nurses Published in the Journal of Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing (JWOCN)

Mercy-Sioux City is proud to announce Judy VanWyhe, BSN, RN, CWOCN and Sue Willer, BSN, RN, CWOCN have a published article in the JWOCN May/June issue. Their article, “The Use of Immersion Therapy Mattress with Low Air Loss in Patients with Myocutaneous Flaps,” deals with finding an alternative support surface for post-myocutaneous flap patients in reducing pressure injuries.

Judy and Sue conducted five case studies and found that a support service combining immersion and low air loss is a viable alternative to an air-fluidized bed for postoperative care of patients undergoing this type of surgery. They presented a poster about these studies at the National Wound Care and Ostomy Conference in 2017. Dr. Mikel Grey, the editor of the JWOCN, encouraged Judy and Sue to publish their findings during the conference. The article was peer-reviewed by an expert panel of wound, ostomy and continence (WOC) nurses. Judy and Sue are both board certified in WOC nursing.

Mercy Health Network Mission Statement

Mercy Health Network serves with fidelity to the Gospel as a compassionate, healing ministry of Jesus Christ to transform the health of our communities.
Mercy-Clinton Now Offering Advanced Vein Treatments

Mercy-Clinton recently began offering advanced vein procedures using the VenaSeal™ closure system. Mercy-Clinton is one of the first hospitals in eastern Iowa to treat patients with vein disease. This procedure uses an advanced medical adhesive and is performed in the outpatient setting, allowing patients to return to normal activities quicker. Unlike other heat-based treatments, VenaSeal™ eliminates the risk of burns or nerve injury.

“Varicose veins may be a sign of a more serious condition known as chronic venous insufficiency, which in severe cases, can result in lifestyle-limiting lower leg pain, swelling, skin damage and ulcerations,” said Ricky Maddox, M.D. “The VenaSeal™ closure system is an innovative treatment option that improves blood flow by closing the diseased vein. It minimizes patient discomfort, reduces recovery time and improves blood flow.”

To learn more about the VenaSeal™ closure system, visit www.MercyClinton.com/varicose-veins. To make an appointment, call 563-244-5900 and then press 5 for Dr. Maddox. VenaSeal™ is also offered at Wheaton Iowa. For a consultation, please call 319-272-7059.

Stop the Bleed Program Underway at Mercy-Des Moines

When a traumatic injury happens — minutes matter. Like knowing CPR in the event of a heart attack, being able to control major bleeding until medical help arrives can save lives and is a skill everyone can learn.

A series of mass casualty incidents led government and health leaders to develop the national Stop the Bleed program. Through education, bystanders are empowered to begin lifesaving care using techniques developed by the American College of Surgeons.

“In as little as five minutes, blood loss can become life-threatening. If there is a mass casualty incident, industrial accident or motor vehicle crash, bystanders can make a difference,” says Mercy-Des Moines Trauma Services Injury Prevention and Outreach Coordinator Beth Berg.

Since March, the program has trained 162 colleagues. It is open to colleagues and family members, including children who are at least 13 years-old. During the program, attendees learn the important steps of: ensuring their safety, alerting EMS by calling 911, identifying life-threatening bleeding, covering or packing a wound, and applying direct pressure or a tourniquet.

“We are also working with the Des Moines medical community to train members of our community. The ultimate goal is to train bystanders to feel comfortable and competent to help someone with life-threatening bleeding should the need arise,” said Berg. Stop the Bleed programming has also been conducted at Mercy-Clinton, Mercy-North Iowa and Mercy-Sioux City.

Expanding Access to Care

Mercy-Clinton Purchases Genesis Health Group Clinic

Mercy-Clinton has purchased a physician office formerly operated by Genesis Health Group. Genesis is a health system based in the Davenport area. The three well-respected clinic providers will continue to care for patients and provide medical services at the current clinic location.

"Providing quality care is important to us and we are excited to continue to offer extensive health care options that make it convenient to receive treatment and care right here in the eastern Iowa and western Illinois region," said Amy Berentes, Interim Administrator of Mercy-Clinton.
Covenant Clinic Now Scheduling Pediatric Appointments in Cedar Falls

Wheaton Iowa is expanding access in Cedar Falls for pediatric patients. Pediatric appointments can now be scheduled at Arrowhead in Cedar Falls.

"Cedar Falls is a rapidly growing community and we wanted to expand our services to accommodate those busy families," said Jeff Halverson, Vice President of Covenant Clinic. "This location will give our existing patients in Cedar Falls an option closer to home, and we're welcoming new families to join us for their children's health care needs."

Pediatric providers at Arrowhead include Kendra Elwood, M.D., Lori Shockley, M.D., Angela Townsend, M.D., and Jodi Van Sickle, M.D. These providers will rotate through the Cedar Falls clinic starting July 9.

Healthy Variety™ Frozen Meals Expands to Mercy-Sioux City

A program started in Mercy-Dubuque to reduce congestive heart failure and patient readmissions has expanded to Mercy-Sioux City. 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.

For more information visit, www.mercyhealthnetwork.com/get-healthy

Iowa Ranked Fifth Best State to Practice Medicine

According to Medscape’s annual list of the best places to practice medicine in the United States, Iowa ranks number five. Medscape considered eight factors related to physician work life, including a state’s:

- Percentage of adults and children who go without medical care, as measured by U.S. News & World Report’s Best States Report
- Physician burnout rate, as measured by Medscape’s 2018 National Physician Burnout and Depression Report
- Average physician compensation, as measured by Medscape’s 2017 Compensation Report
- Health care quality, as measured by U.S. News & World Report’s Best States Report
- Malpractice rates, based on data from the National Practitioner Data Bank
- Physician happiness at work, as measured by Medscape’s 2018 Lifestyle and Happiness Report
- Performance on public health measures, such as obesity, smoking, suicide, and mortality rates, as measured by U.S. News & World Report’s Best States Report
- Uninsured rates, as measured by the Kaiser Family Foundation

For more information, visit www.advisory.com.
IHA Executive Leadership Academy Graduates Include Seven MHN Leaders

Seven leaders from MHN hospitals and affiliates graduated from the Iowa Hospital Association Executive Leadership Academy June 7. Participants in the year-long program were nominated for the program by their respective CEOs. In addition to attending training sessions, each participant completed a project for his or her organization and presented the results May 16.

Those graduating were Amy McDonough, Van Diest Medical Center; Stephanie Duckert, Mercy-North Iowa; Mary Jo Romanco, Mercy-Des Moines; Jody Timmins, Mercy-Des Moines Children’s Hospital and Clinics; Denyse Gipple, Davis County Hospital; Chad Darter, Mercy-Dubuque. Not pictured, Sara Peterson, Mercy-North Iowa.

For more information, visit https://www.ihaonline.org/leadership.

Mercy-Dubuque Earns National Recognition for Advertising and Marketing Excellence for Nursing Recruitment

Mercy-Dubuque won a gold Aster Award in the category of professional recruitment for its nurse recruitment campaign. A gold award represents a score of 95 to 99 percent – the top five percent in the nation.

“We’re honored to receive a gold Aster Award this year,” said Matt Daughenbaugh, director of marketing and community relations. “It’s nice to have some of the country’s most creative individuals recognize our talented department and the great work it does to help the community understand our services and our Mission.”

The Aster Awards, one of the largest national competitions of its kind, is hosted by Marketing Healthcare Today magazine and Creative Images, Inc. This elite program recognized outstanding health care professionals for excellence in their advertising/marketing efforts for calendar year 2017.

“The quality and creativity of the entries submitted increase each year. The 2018 Aster Awards program brought together some of the best and most creative advertising in the world,” said Melinda Lucas, Aster Awards Program Coordinator.

The 2018 Aster Awards received thousands of entries from across the United States as well as several foreign countries. All entries are reviewed by a panel of industry experts and are scored on multiple criteria with a possibility of 100 percent. Participants compete against similar-sized organizations in their specific groups and categories.

Awards were issued for entries that received top marks from judges placing them in the top 16 percent of the nation for advertising excellence. Judging criteria included creativity, layout and design, functionality, message effectiveness, production quality and overall appeal.

All winners are posted on the Aster Awards website as well as published in Marketing Healthcare Today.

For more information on the campaign, contact Matt Daughenbaugh, Director of Marketing and Community Relations, at daughemj@mercyhealth.com

Winning direct mail campaign postcard.
Mercy College of Health Sciences Awarded $1.79 Million Grant by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Mercy College of Health Sciences has been awarded a $1.79 million grant by the HRSA of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through its Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention of Registered Nurses in Primary Care Training Program. The funding will be dispersed over four years to support the Community Advocacy Registered Nurse Education (CARE) project, a new initiative at Mercy College. Mercy College was the only institution in Iowa to receive this competitive federal award.

The CARE project will increase the number of nursing students and registered nurses trained and working to the full scope of their licenses on community-based primary care teams in Iowa. This project will be administered by the Mercy College School of Nursing and several community-based practice partnership sites. CARE will serve a seven-county region in Iowa and includes both urban and rural communities.

“We sincerely appreciate this significant grant from HRSA. The funding will make a lasting and meaningful impact by enabling important work at Mercy College,” said Mercy Des Moines Foundation President Shannon Cofield.

The CARE project was developed based on existing successful academic-clinical partnerships and the capacity to impact hundreds of Iowa’s future and current nurses.

“Mercy College is at the forefront of creating a robust health care talent development pipeline in central Iowa,” said incoming Mercy College President, Dr. Doug Fiore.

“This award allows us to continue to build and grow this pipeline to ensure a skilled nursing workforce in Des Moines and throughout Iowa.”

The CARE project goals are to:

- Increase the number of undergraduate nursing students receiving clinical practice experience in community-based primary care settings.
- Increase the knowledge and competencies of nursing students needed to practice to the full scope of their license in primary care.
- Increase the number of nursing graduates who choose to work in community-based primary care settings.
- Improve the health care knowledge and competencies of practicing registered nurses working in primary care and with vulnerable populations.

The project’s goals will be accomplished through several activities, including:

- Enhancing the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program curriculum, both didactic and clinical training, to incorporate more primary care concepts and training.
- Expanding student primary care learning opportunities via simulation and interprofessional education.
- Developing a primary care immersion clinical program to provide longitudinal training for students; establishing a clinical preceptor peer mentor program.
- Providing primary care continuing education to hundreds of Iowa’s current registered nurses.
- Connecting graduates to primary care employers.
Awards and Accolades (continued)

Five MHN Ministries Receive Quality Achievement Awards

Mercy-Des Moines, Mercy-Dubuque, Mercy Iowa City and Mercy-North Iowa received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. Mercy-Sioux City received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Silver Plus Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes hospitals’ commitments to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence.

To earn the award both hospitals had to meet specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients at a set level for a designated period. These measures include evaluation of the proper use of medications and other stroke treatments aligned with the most up-to-date, evidence-based guidelines with the goal of speeding recovery and reducing death and disability for stroke patients. Before discharge, patients should also receive education on managing their health, get a follow-up visit scheduled, as well as other care transition interventions.

Additionally, Mercy-Des Moines, Mercy-Dubuque, Mercy Iowa City and Mercy-Sioux City received the association’s Target: StrokeSM Honor Roll award. To qualify for this recognition, hospitals met quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patient’s arrival at the hospital and treatment with the clot-buster tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, the only drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat ischemic stroke.

Mercy-North Iowa has also received The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval® and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Heart-Check mark for Advanced Certification for Primary Stroke Centers.

Mercy Iowa City’s Wound and Vein Center Recognized for Clinical Excellence

Mercy Iowa City’s Wound and Vein Center was recognized with the Robert A. Warriner III Center of Distinction Award by Healogics, the nation’s leading and largest wound care management company.

Mercy Iowa City’s Wound and Vein Center achieved outstanding clinical outcomes for 12 consecutive months, including patient satisfaction higher than 92 percent, and a wound healing rate of at least 91 percent in less than 31 median days.

“Mercy Iowa City’s Wound and Vein Center has continued to increase services and capacity to serve more and more patients since opening in 2011,” said Sean Williams, President and CEO. “In the last year alone, the center served almost 700 new patients with extraordinary success, improving their quality of life and helping them return to their normal activities.”

The Wound Care Center® is a member of the Healogics network of nearly 800 centers, with access to benchmarking data and proven experience treating approximately 2.5 million chronic wounds. Mercy’s Wound and Vein Center offers highly specialized wound care to patients suffering from diabetic ulcers, pressure ulcers, infections and other chronic wounds which have not healed in a reasonable amount of time. Some of the leading-edge treatments offered at the Wound Care Center include negative pressure wound therapy, debridement, application of cellular-based tissue or skin substitutes to the wound, offloading or total contact casts, hyperbaric oxygen therapy and vein ablations.

“Our providers include seven physicians and a very strong team of talented and dedicated clinicians,” said Gagan Kamal, M.D., Medical Director of the Wound Center. “Our goal every day is to help patients return quickly to a healthy and pain-free condition by treating wounds that have resisted other forms of treatment. This recognition is a testament to our team members.”
Leadership Announcements

Dan Varnum Assumes Dual Role at MHN

As MHN continues to develop as a statewide, regional health system to “Face the Market as One,” it is essential we continue to integrate systems and accelerate our process improvement work. Dan Varnum has been serving as Chief Integration Officer on a part-time basis since October 2017. Dan has agreed to become full-time at MHN effective July 1, 2018, to increase our integration work and to support development of the MHN Medical Group. As a result, Dan will serve in a dual role including:

- Chief Integration Officer: Responsibilities will include leading process improvement efforts, leading key integration projects, working with Trinity Health and Catholic Health Initiatives to coordinate MHN Information Technology Services and working with Mike Trachta to coordinate our Affiliate hospital strategy with Critical Access Hospitals.

- Chief Administrative Officer for MHN Medical Group: Dan will serve as the dyad partner with Dr. Kent Carr, President Physician Enterprise, to bring the vision of our statewide medical group to life.

Rod Schlader Named Interim President for Mercy-North Iowa

Mercy-North Iowa is pleased Rod Schlader will serve as Interim President. Rod has held executive roles in Catholic health care in Iowa since 2001 including serving as interim CEO at Mercy-North Iowa and most recently as interim CEO at Mercy-Sioux City. In his short time leading Mercy-Sioux City, Rod led the team to improve quality and patient satisfaction scores, operations and the financial health of the organization.

Dr. Charles Keller Named Chief Medical Officer for Mercy-Des Moines

Mercy-Des Moines has selected Charles Keller, M.D., to serve in the role of chief medical officer (CMO). Dr. Keller has served as the interim chief medical officer since October and assumed this new appointment May 24.

Dr. Keller joined Mercy in 2012 as a family medicine and urgent care physician. He quickly became involved in many leadership roles. In 2015, Dr. Keller was named physician leader for primary care services, providing strategic leadership to a group comprised of more than 130 family medicine, internal medicine and urgent care physicians, PAs and NPs.

In his role as CMO, Dr. Keller will oversee clinical operations for the entire medical staff, including employed and non-employed physicians, providers and staff. Dr. Keller will focus his attention on initiatives designed to improve physician engagement, patient satisfaction and overall clinical quality. He will lead ongoing enhancements in the areas of safety, reporting, coding and billing, credentialing and medical staff privileges to assure the highest quality of care for all patients we serve. Dr. Keller will also direct graduate medical education programs for family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, plastic surgery and, starting this fall, psychiatry.

Hansen Family Hospital Named Doug Morse as New Chief Executive Officer

Hansen Family Hospital, an affiliate of Mercy-North Iowa, located in Iowa Falls, has announced Doug Morse as its new Chief Executive Officer/Administrator.

Doug has more than 25 years of executive hospital administration, business and teaching experience. “It’s exciting to join the team. Rural health care is very challenging,” Morse said. “Working together will be a terrific opportunity to write the next chapter of the story for Hansen Family Hospital.”

“Doug has the full support of Mercy-North Iowa. His past experiences with Mercy have positioned him to be able to effectively continue our longstanding tradition of supporting the Hansen Family Hospital team.” said Scott Curtis, Vice President, Network Development for Mercy-North Iowa.
Audiology
Jamie Soper, Au.D., CCC-A
Waterloo

Cardiology
Annalisa Morgan, ARNP
Iowa City

Colombia Ptacek, ARNP
Mason City

Richard Rattin, D.O.
Mason City

Emergency Medicine
Heather Groth, M.D.
Iowa City

Emergency Medicine
Jeffery Mason, PA-C
Iowa City

Family Practice
Kylie Leewright, ARNP
Mason City

Teresa Ross, ARNP
Clinton

Michelle M. Sprengelmeyer, M.D.
Iowa City

Midwifery
Alicia Johnson, ARNP
Waterloo

Neurosurgery
Danielle Horgen, PA-C
Des Moines