Mercy Health Network (MHN) is evolving into a more integrated, effective and competitive regional health system to better serve its members and patients. MHN CEO Dave Vellinga announced the important step occurred March 10, 2016, when MHN’s co-sponsors, Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) and Trinity Health, signed a revised joint operating agreement (JOA).

The agreement establishes a better MHN operating model that simplifies decision making and streamlines business processes. MHN will be more clinically, operationally and financially integrated.

Vellinga said, “The revised agreement ensures the hospitals, clinics and other ministries of MHN will function as a true regional system...”

- Dave Vellinga

Under the revised agreement:

- MHN will establish its own Mission, Vision, and Values Statements and Strategic Plan. MHN will be responsible for strategic activities; operating performance; approval of members’ budgets; and services and functions developed within MHN. Sponsors will approve the MHN annual budget, share equally in MHN’s financial performance, and retain the right to approve the sale of substantial assets and the addition of new members.

- MHN members will continue to receive supply chain services, insurance services, clinical engineering support and IT services from the sponsors.

- Examples of services to be coordinated by MHN in Iowa continued on page 2

Trinity Health, now in its 18th year, is a clear example of how our collaboration allows us to accomplish much more together for Iowa residents than we could alone. One reason for the success of our partnership is our willingness to anticipate changing demands and adapt our business model accordingly to deliver the value expected of us in terms of quality, service, cost and access. We are very pleased to continue our legacy of service through this new structure.”

Scott Norrlund, Trinity Health executive vice president for growth, strategy and innovation said, “Strategic partnerships are central to Trinity Health’s people-centered approach, and our collaboration in Iowa with Catholic Health Initiatives is an important part of the effort. With shared resources and expertise, our partnership will enable better processes, more innovation and overall economies of scale that can help drive better health, better care and lower costs for the community we serve together.”

MHN will continue to be a Catholic ministry co-sponsored by CHI and Trinity Health, and the MHN management team will remain in place.
CELEBRATE MERCY’S **CHILD LIFE SPECIALISTS**

Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics is proud to recognize its team of dedicated child life specialists during National Child Life Month in March. Each day, the child life specialists make a difference in the lives of Mercy’s pediatric patients and their families by providing support during procedures, educating families about a child’s illness or injury and providing activities during a child’s hospital stay. Child life specialists are health care professionals who are trained to meet the needs of children and families going through difficult experiences.

Mercy provides child life services for children receiving treatment in the Pediatric and Pediatric Intensive Care Units, Medical Imaging, the Pediatric Emergency Department and the Variety Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Additionally, assistance is given to other patient areas in the hospital where children receive care in a mixed adult and child environment—including Endoscopy, EEG and Cath Lab.

Thank you to everyone who made a basket for or won a basket in the annual Easter basket auction! This year, 64 baskets were donated and child life raised $4,500. The money will help the child life team provide new games, toys, movies and other activities for children who are hospitalized.

There will also be another opportunity to support the work of the child life specialists in April. Stay tuned for more information about a special donation opportunity that will be fun for the whole organization!

**MHN UNIFIES, CONTINUED . . .**

include legal, strategic planning, business development, communications and marketing, payer strategy and contracting, quality and safety, finance, human resources and physician enterprise.

JOA changes were agreed to by leaders at MHN, CHI and Trinity Health after more than a year of analyzing the changing health care landscape and what MHN needs to succeed.

Vellinga said, “I want to thank the leaders of both CHI and Trinity Health for the time and effort they invested to understand the Iowa market and the opportunities and challenges facing MHN. I am extremely pleased with the level of support and commitment both national sponsors have made to MHN by agreeing to changes in the JOA.”

MHN is working on the plan to transition to the new operating model. Teams are being established in several areas. It may take up to three years to fully implement the new model.

WHAT’S **UP?**

IT’S TIME TO HONOR OUR MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS!

Each year, we celebrate March as National Social Work Month. This year, the national theme is “Forging Solutions out of Challenges.” Our nation’s social workers confront some of the most challenging issues facing individuals and families, and they skillfully forge solutions to help people reach their full potential.

Mercy has 21 professional medical social workers in our Care Coordination department, covering central campus and Mercy West Lakes seven days a week. In addition, there are several social workers working in other areas such as Hospice, House of Mercy, Homecare, Mercy Behavioral Health and Transplant.

“Mercy’s social workers assist with patients and families who are experiencing some of the most challenging and difficult times in their lives,” said Frank Kiener, LISW, social work manager at Mercy. “Their efforts help to greatly improve quality of life for everyone they serve.”

Take a moment to thank our medical social workers for the important role they play in providing a Remarkable Mercy Experience each day!