Mercy Values guide excellence in cancer care

For patients of Mercy Katzmann Breast Center, cancer is a life-changing word. It brings questions and concerns. It also brings personalized care from Spirit of Mercy Award winner Amanda Fry.

Colleagues say Amanda is dedicated to every patient. She eases the anxiety of a cancer diagnosis and answers questions. Patients know she will be with them throughout their journey.

Amanda’s commitment leads to exceptional care. This could be helping a patient understand a procedure, or offering a compassionate ear when listening is needed most.

Amanda tracks patients during the care process and makes herself available for questions from other departments. Amanda’s commitment has her colleagues’ attention. One shared, “If I were ever diagnosed with breast cancer, I would want Amanda on my team.”

Thank you, Amanda, for ensuring your patients are treated with the Reverence, Integrity, Compassion and Excellence each deserve.

Reception welcomes new providers

Doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants were honored at the annual new provider reception Tuesday, Nov. 6, at Glen Oaks Country Club. New providers had a chance to mingle with current Mercy providers and administrators at the event, which is coordinated by Physician Employment Services colleagues.
Operating at the **highest standard**

To provide the safest and highest quality care possible, Mercy colleagues not only talk about best practices – we deliver them every day, and at every opportunity. State-of-the-art standards created by The Joint Commission help guide our efforts, making certain we measure, address and improve performance through a consistent approach to care.

“Each of us needs to act as if we impact quality and safety at Mercy, because we do,” said Dr. Charles Keller, Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines chief medical officer. “By intentionally performing each and every act as if we are doing it for those we love most, the results will take care of themselves.”

The Joint Commission is an independent, not-for-profit organization that accredits and certifies nearly 21,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including Mercy. As part of the accreditation process, Mercy participates in a comprehensive on-site survey at least every three years.

**While evaluations by The Joint Commission are unannounced, we do know an on-site survey at Mercy will take place between now and March 10, 2020.**

**Tracking Through Tracers**
The Joint Commission accreditation does not begin and end with the on-site survey – it’s a continuous process. Across Mercy, departments are utilizing tracer methodology to evaluate and ensure compliance with the quality of care provided.

Borrowed from the manufacturing industry, a tracer involves following a procedure, system or process, to identify and address potential issues. Often, opportunities for improvement and additional education are also unveiled.

“The Joint Commission accreditation requires Mercy and our teams to be in a state of constant readiness. We must all be vigilant, actively monitoring our performance and responsive when we find opportunities to improve,” said Keller.

One area reviewed using tracers is **Environment of Care** – in other words, confirming your workplace is clear of risks to your safety and the safety of our patients. The tracer process may also include:

- Observation of care delivery
- Observation of medication-related processes
- Observation of planning care
- Patient or family interview
- Review of medical records as indicated
- Discussion with staff about performance improvement and patient safety activities, daily duties and clinical practice, orientation and training
- Review of policies and procedures

**Answering Our Call**
The example set by the Sisters of Mercy 125 years ago inspires the dedicated team of highly-skilled professionals, talented physicians and amazingly-supportive staff of Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines to come together every day to answer the call to serve and strengthen our community.

Learn how Mercy answered the call to advance care and support our community in our 2017-2018 Annual Report.

Mercydesmoines.org/annualreport
On a warm summer day in July 2016, Evan Schultz, then 29, was playing an impromptu game of catch with friends in the downtown Des Moines Sculpture Park when he jumped over a hedge and landed awkwardly.

“I didn’t tuck and roll when I landed. I caught the top of my head, and right away I realized I couldn’t move,” he says matter-of-factly.

During an ordinary outing with friends, Schultz had sustained a life-changing C-5 spinal cord injury, which caused paralysis from the chest down. But with help from Mercy physicians, he is moving forward with his life.

After spinal surgery performed by Mercy neurosurgeon John Gachiani, M.D., he began receiving treatment from Ai Huong Phu, D.O., a board-certified physiatrist at Mercy Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, while still in the ICU at Mercy. He then spent two months in inpatient rehab in Lincoln, Neb., before returning to Des Moines.

With some use of his arms and hands, Schultz uses a power wheelchair and lives in an apartment downtown with a roommate and twice-daily visits from a home health aide.

Schultz experiences muscle spasms, which are common in patients with paralysis, and which make physical therapy and daily living activities more difficult. He and Dr. Phu agreed to try Botox injections as a first treatment.

“I really appreciated Dr. Phu’s approach to talking through the options. She was very straightforward and didn’t seem to have an agenda. I trust that she has my welfare in mind, and I just like her a lot.”

He also has high praise for Dr. Phu’s nurse, Emily, who recently sat up a support group for people with spinal cord injuries and their families. “She is super awesome,” he said with enthusiasm.

“When I was in Mercy with a blood clot last December, Emily stopped by just to see how I was doing, even though it wasn’t a neurological issue at all.

“And, I think the spinal cord support group she put together is going to be amazing. We just got together for the first time. It’s a great way to get to know other people living with spinal cord injuries, so we can ask each other questions and talk about what works, and what doesn’t. Dr. Phu and Emily sat in for the first meeting—it was great of them to give their time. I’m very excited about it.”