Read an update on the cancer center progress and meet our oncology nurse navigator.

Learn how we strive to improve your experience at MercyOne.
A Letter from the President

It was about 11:15 a.m. on Wednesday, April 10, 2019. I had just arrived back to my office at the hospital when I received a phone call I will likely never forget. It was my husband, Mike, and he told me he was having pressure in his chest and just couldn’t get comfortable. When I asked him if he wanted me to call 911, he responded, “yes.”

Emergency medical services practitioners arrived at our home, skillfully assessed Mike’s condition, and rushed him from Cascade to MercyOne Dubuque with the sirens sounding. His heart attack was confirmed from the EKG that had been transmitted from the ambulance to our physicians in the emergency department (ED). In this situation, time is muscle, and the cardiologist-on-call, Dr. Rami Eltibi, escorted Mike to the cardiac catheterization (cath) lab immediately upon his arrival to the ED. Within minutes, a procedure to open Mike’s occluded coronary arteries was initiated, but it was soon determined his disease was too advanced. Instead, a mechanical device was inserted into his aorta to assist his heart in pumping blood, and Mike was moved from the cath lab to the intensive care unit to stabilize and prepare for quadruple bypass surgery first thing the next morning.

MercyOne Dubuque is highly regarded nationally for our consistently excellent patient outcomes. We are constantly working to improve, and we always say our most precious opportunities for learning are our own personal encounters with the health care system, because we are most critical of ourselves. In fact, with 1,400 colleagues and more than 200 providers, we have frequent opportunities to learn from our own experiences.

I worked as a nurse on an open-heart surgical team for six years, so I understood what Mike would be going through from a clinical perspective. However, being the family member on the cardiac team was a whole new experience for us, and there is no place we would have rather been than at MercyOne Dubuque. The care was extraordinary.

While I knew he was in excellent hands, the updates from the OR nurse during Mike’s surgery were so helpful (and hopeful) and we were relieved and grateful—beyond-words when Dr. Stephanie Helmer, Mike’s cardiac surgeon, met with us afterwards to tell us the procedure had gone well.

The intimate details and personal hurdles and triumphs of the hours, days and months since Mike’s surgery are hard to capture in these few paragraphs, and I’m still reflecting on them. However, expert practice—compassionate, clinically competent, holistic and collaborative care—was pervasive in our experience, and the teamwork was truly inspiring.

Other than some pain across his clavicle during exercise about four days prior to his heart attack, Mike had no warning of his heart condition. We were fortunate he had time to get to MercyOne, where the full continuum of heart services, including open-heart surgery, were available to save his life. Mike graduated from cardiac rehab on July 3rd and his recovery continues to go smoothly. To every member of the MercyOne team, thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and congratulations on a job well done!

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Giving Blood

Who can you help by donating blood?
- Cancer patients
- Burn patients
- Trauma patients
- Sickle cell patients
- And patients with other chronic disease

Who can donate?
The most basic criteria for eligibility includes:
- Good health and feeling well
- At least 16 years of age
- At least 110 pounds

Never donated before? Here's what you can expect:
- Registration: Sign in, show your ID, and read some required information
- Health check: Answer some health questions and get your blood pressure checked
- Donation: You'll be seated comfortably while a pint of blood is drawn, which typically takes 10 minutes
- Refreshment and recovery: Take 10-15 minutes to relax and enjoy a snack before resuming your day
- Testing: Your blood will be tested and sent to a patient in need

Would you like to save a life today? All it takes is a pint of blood and an hour of your time. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. It's a constant need, and you can help.

Source: Redcrossblood.org

Save the Date for Blood Drives at MercyOne!
- Friday, September 13 | 12 – 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, December 20 | 12 – 3:30 p.m.
Improving Your Experience

We have a very special role as a hospital and health care provider to serve you during some of your most challenging, critical, and also joyous occasions.

Whether you’re a patient or a visitor, one of our goals at MercyOne is to continuously improve your experience. It’s about thinking well beyond clinical needs and considering the many different ways to encourage healing and improve your experience. Here are just a few examples of how we strive to do that.

Creating healing spaces

What are some of the factors that afect our physical environment? Light, space, color, texture, sounds and aromas are just a few, and these are some of the elements we consider when updating our physical spaces. If you’ve been inside our hospital in recent years, you’ve seen these elements, whether it’s in our new lobby, updated units or inviting patios. These spaces are created with soothing colors, rich textures and natural light. We know that physical surroundings can impact mental wellbeing; when you’re in a beautiful place, you feel better.

“We want patients and visitors to feel welcomed when they enter our facility and also to know they are in a modern health care environment that can take care of them,” said Chad Darter, MercyOne facilities director.

Some recent updates to our areas include new flooring, lighting, paint, and tables and chairs in the dining area of our café; and new carpet, paint, lighting and artwork in our main corridors on first floor.

Considering all options

Innovation is one of our cultural beliefs at MercyOne. We embrace new ideas to revolutionize and improve care. One example of that is the use of aromatherapy. Our nurses began using essential oils in 2017 to help relieve patient’s symptoms, such as anxiety, stress, pain, nausea, insomnia and headaches.

“Aromatherapy gives nurses a safe alternative to offer patients while we are waiting on new orders for medications, pharmacy approval or time between pain medication dosing,” explains Jessica Kennedy, BSN, RN. Jessica is a nurse on the surgical services unit who is passionate about the use of essential oils. She is also a member of the nursing team who conducted a research study to confirm the efectiveness of aromatherapy.

“Innovation is one of our cultural beliefs at MercyOne. We embrace new ideas to revolutionize and improve care.”

“Feedback from patients and staff has been extremely positive since the initiation of aromatherapy hospital-wide.

Colorful artwork was added to the main corridor.
As MercyOne, we think beyond the clinical needs and consider the many different ways to encourage healing and improve your experience.

in 2017. Patients love the personalized care, and the wonderful smell is a bonus.”

Adding convenience

MercyOne Dubuque created Healthy Variety frozen meals several years ago to provide a nutritious and delicious meal option for anyone with heart disease or diabetes, or who simply wants a portion-controlled, easy and healthy meal. The meals provide an excellent source of lean protein, vegetables and whole grains, which are perfectly portioned, dietitian approved and delicious. These meals have recently become even more convenient because they are now available for purchase online and delivered right to your door.

“We have teamed up with MercyOne Pharmacy to deliver Healthy Variety meals to homes or businesses,” explains MercyOne clinical nutrition coordinator and dietitian Miriam Troutner, MS, RD, LD, CNSC. “It’s one more way we can help ensure all our patients and customers have easy access to nutritious meals.”

Visit mercyone.org/dubuque and click on the Health and Wellness tab to have Healthy Variety meals delivered to your door.

Healthy Variety now offers two new meal choices: BBQ chicken and vegetable quiche.
Q: Kairee, tell us about your role as a nurse navigator and what that means for patients and their families.

As an oncology nurse navigator (ONN), I provide personalized assistance to patients, caregivers and families across the continuum of cancer care, from diagnosis on. I help ensure timely access and coordination of care amongst our care team. I serve as an advocate, educator and support person and am a consistent point of contact for patients and caregivers. I also closely collaborate with providers, social services and community agencies to define care options and resources.

Q: What is your nursing background and why did you pursue this line of work? Why did you want to become a nurse navigator?

I began working at MercyOne Dubuque in 2015 as a nurse on the medical oncology unit after graduating from Clarke University with my BSN. A year later, the director of my unit at that time and my beloved mentor, Louann Mottet, approached me about becoming a chemotherapy nurse. I agreed, eager to learn as much as possible. And this quickly turned into my passion. I began my role as the ONN in January 2019. I knew this role would be the perfect fit for me as I had many ideas of how we could improve our patients’ experience throughout the continuum of cancer care. MercyOne has joined efforts with Medical Associates Clinic to build and develop the cancer center, and I have been working closely with both facilities to provide coordinated care. We are making great strides, and we are all very excited to be under one roof come spring 2020!

Q: If there’s someone reading this who just received a cancer diagnosis, what would you want them to know?

It is important to know that with a cancer diagnosis there are many new terms a patient may hear from different members of their care team. I find it helpful to make sure my patients have a good understanding of these terms so they are able to actively participate in the discussion with their providers:

- **Medical Oncologist** — A doctor who has special training in diagnosing and treating cancer using chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, biological therapy and targeted therapy.
- **Chemotherapy** — The use of chemical agents to stop the growth of cancer cells and/or eradicate them.
- **Immunotherapy** — A type of therapy that uses the patient’s own immune system to stop the growth of cancer cells and/or eradicate them.
- **Radiation Oncologist** — A doctor who has special training in using radiation to treat cancer.
- **Radiation Therapy** — The use of high-energy radiation to kill cancer cells and/or shrink tumors.
- **Metastasis** — The spread of cancer from the primary site to other places in the body.

Most importantly, I want any patient, caregiver or family member to know that they are not alone in their cancer fight. We have an incredibly talented and caring team at MercyOne and we are committed to helping our patients through every aspect of a cancer diagnosis.
MercyOne Dubuque Cancer Center Update

Despite a rainy spring, construction on the MercyOne Dubuque Cancer Center has continued on pace.

Concrete flooring was poured the week of June 17, and erection of the steel beams and decking was completed the first week of July. The next phase of construction will see the walls being placed and more concrete being poured, and the building should be fully enclosed by early fall. The Iowa Department of Public Health granted approval of the plans related to radiation shielding around the linear accelerator, CT simulator and PET/CT. Staffing plans are also being made, and it is anticipated that we will be advertising several positions this fall.

In addition to this great progress, the construction crew placed the steel support beam that now contains the names of over 1,200 people who have been affected by cancer. The community was invited to sign the beam in May, and hundreds of people overwhelmingly responded. The beam will reside over the linear accelerator, not only providing structural support, but now emotional support as well.

(Right) The signed beam was installed in June.

Tropical Green Smoothie

Serves: 2

Ingredients
1 cup packed spinach
½ cup frozen mango
½ cup frozen pineapple
½ cup milk of your choice
½ cup 100% orange juice
1 tablespoon ground flaxseed
1 six-ounce container plain or vanilla Greek yogurt (Look for one with 12gm or less of sugar per serving)

Directions
1. Blend all ingredients in a blender.
2. Pour into a glass and enjoy!

Smoothies are a great on-the-go breakfast option or mid-day snack.
Mercy Gift Shop

Mark your calendar for the next big gift shop event!
November 3–4: Walk into Christmas Gift Show and Bake Sale

All proceeds support programs and services for children in MercyOne’s care.
Monday, Thursday and Friday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Tuesday and Wednesday: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Tropical Green Smoothie

“Smoothies have many nutritional benefits when the proper ingredients are used. This smoothie contains no added sugar and purposefully combines spinach and orange juice. Did you know, iron is more readily absorbed in our bodies if consumed with a source of vitamin C? Therefore, the iron in spinach is absorbed easier thanks to the orange juice in this recipe.”

— Stacy Huss, RD, LD

Nutrition information (per serving):
172 calories, 24g carbohydrates,
12g protein, 1g saturated fat,
1.5g fiber, 65mg sodium

Your best life. Our one purpose.