

Mercy Insights

Health care's bright spot

SPRING 2011

A long journey home

Perseverance and a positive attitude lead to a remarkable story of rehabilitation

WHEN Glen Koebornick thinks about his life last summer, it's difficult to believe he's just finished 20 walking laps in his house under the guidance of a physical therapist from Mercy Hospital.

Koebornick became sick in August of 2010, and his condition worsened rapidly.

"They took me to Fargo, and I had fungus on the lungs, a collapsed lung, and I couldn't breathe anymore," he recalls.

After pneumonia, multiple surgeries, a breathing mask and three months in the intensive care unit, Koebornick was finally moved to a regular patient room.

"I'd been in bed so long by that time that I couldn't move," he says. "I didn't even have the energy to pull the breathing mask off. I couldn't open a bottle of pop, I couldn't stand, I couldn't do anything."

By December his health care providers and wife began searching

for a place where Koebornick could continue his rehabilitation closer to home. They chose Mercy, and it was here that he began the second phase of his recovery.

"It was the second of December when I came to Mercy Hospital and got to meet the staff. Over time I got to know all of them, and they are all good," Koebornick says. "One physical therapist really took me under her wing because when I arrived I couldn't even stand. I swore I would never walk again."

Over the next six weeks, Koebornick kept a positive attitude. By the end of his stay, he was standing, walking and lifting weights. On Jan. 18 he walked out the door to return to his home for the first time in six months.

A lifelong resident of the area, Koebornick says it's important to have the kind of high-quality care Mercy Hospital provides close to home.

"Instead of 80 miles away, Valley is 25 miles away, and I trust the care at Mercy 100 percent," Koebornick says. "They know what they are doing, and I was treated very professionally. I have nothing but nice words to say."

Koebornick says it's important to have Mercy's high-quality care so close to home.



▲ Standing tall. Glen Koebornick is breathing easier and will start spending more time outdoors as part of his treatment through Mercy Hospital.

Koebornick continues in his recovery with physical therapy a couple of times a week, and praises the staff members still working with him. He looks forward to increasing his house laps and perhaps even taking longer walks outside as the weather warms.

WWW.MERCYHOSPITALVALLEYCITY.ORG

Need health information? Check online!



Mercy Hospital's new website, complete with a new URL, is easier to remember and better than ever.

The website is rich with information on all hospital services; important patient and visitor guidelines; upcoming classes and events; educational content on issues like stroke; and links to national foundations and associations, including the American Red Cross and the National Kidney Foundation.

The website is also a great resource for the latest hospital happenings, whether it's news about the recent addition of digital mammography to the hospital or telepharmacy services coming soon.

If you're looking for employment, all of our job openings are posted on the website, and you now have the option of applying online or printing out an application.

We welcome your feedback to help ensure our website remains a useful and valuable resource for anyone seeking medical care in our area.



Email us at info@mercyhospitalvalleycity.org.



Nothing to be frightened of. Anesthetist Clark Kruta showed the operating room to children from Jefferson Elementary.

Little children, big learning

Hospitals don't have to be scary. Instead, they can be a fun place to learn. Just ask the kindergartners from Jefferson Elementary School who participated in hospital tours during February.

Never a dull moment. The students learned that operations like they see on TV occur right here at Mercy Hospital. Our anesthetist, Clark Kruta, CRNA, showed the children the operating room and some of the instruments used in surgery. He added to their excitement when he let them touch the special clothes, hats, masks and gloves that health care professionals wear during surgery.

With each stop on the tour, the kids learned from staff members about what they do in their jobs. In the laboratory the kids viewed bacteria on a Petri dish. From there, registered dietitian Larissa Musgrave spoke to them about healthy foods and "sometimes" foods.

In radiology, the students saw x-rays of broken bones.

The emergency room staff showed off the ambulance garage, splints and monitors. On the medical floor, the kids explored a patient room, and four students were weighed on one of the beds (for a healthy total of 169 pounds).

Julie Halgrimson, PTA, from physical

therapy showed them some strengthening exercises and taught them how to use crutches.

An important lesson. The final lesson of the day came from the pharmacy. Registered pharmacy technician Emma Buttke showed the kids a jar full of pills that looked like candy. Her message to the children was, "Never take someone else's medicine. Even if it looks like candy, it can make you very sick if it is not meant for you."

It was an enjoyable day not only for the kindergartners but also for the staff members who had the opportunity for some very teachable moments.

Join us to celebrate Nurses Week

Thursday, May 12
(Florence Nightingale's birthday)
5 to 7 p.m.

Mercy Hospital Health Education Center

Fellowship, a light supper and program will be provided for nurses in our community. Contact Camille

Settelmeyer at 701-845-6487 with questions or to RSVP.



Mercy welcomes new foundation director

ROBYN Otwell brings experience and enthusiasm to her plans to make the Mercy HealthCare Foundation more visible by building on existing fundraising efforts while developing new sources of support.

“I think that growing the fundraisers already in place is also important, and I plan on getting out in the community more to make sure people know about these programs and why we do them,” Otwell says.

Mercy HealthCare Foundation is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to supporting Mercy Hospital with supplemental funding for its capital and program needs. The foundation may be best-known for its annual fundraisers: Sack’Em and the Festival of Trees.

Otwell took over the reins as the new foundation director Jan. 5. Originally from western North Dakota, Otwell and her husband moved to

Valley City about seven years ago. Up to that time, she’d spent much of her career in sales, including high-end retail and insurance.

The Foundation’s Future

“My ultimate goal is to make sure the foundation is secure and self-sustaining, and that it has enough support from its constituents,” Otwell says. “Without the hospital the community would suffer tremendously.”

Her overarching goal for the year is to grow the planned giving program and help ensure donation sources that can be counted on each year.

Otwell expresses optimism when it comes to community support. “I believe the community is open-minded and willing to be supportive for the right causes,” she says.

She wants to help people understand the importance of the hospital staying up-to-date—by adding new

To make a donation, call foundation director Robyn Otwell at **701-845-6557**.

Getting to know Robyn

While Robyn Otwell is going full-speed ahead these days, she still finds time to spend with her two boys, ages 4 and 6, and her husband. Her family loves to travel and spend time doing gardening and yard work. Otwell also loves to cook, and published her own cookbook last year.



▶ Robyn Otwell, Mercy HealthCare Foundation’s new director, has plans to grow the hospital’s donor base and increase community support.

programs, purchasing new equipment and recruiting medical providers—ensuring the community has high-quality health care close to home.

Last year, foundation funds supported the pediatric surgical dental program and equipment and training for individual hospital departments. The foundation raises about \$50,000 annually, and the goal is to double that in the coming year.

Patients and families provide an important voice

ACTING on national research that suggests patients and families can help hospitals improve safety and the patient experience, Mercy Hospital has formed a Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC).

“Our goal is to partner with patients and families, along with staff from our hospital, to identify practices, policies and safety initiatives that will benefit from patient and family input,” says Stephanie Kruta, RN, MSN, OR manager and PFAC lead. “While patient satisfaction, safety and quality have always



been a focus, we believe the Patient & Family Advisory Council will help us better understand what’s important to patients and their families and contribute to improved care.”

The Mercy Hospital Patient & Family Advisory Council began meeting in January. After their orientation, the advisory council will work hand-in-hand with staff and administrators to bring about changes that make the care experience better for patients and their families.

If you are interested in learning more about the Mercy Hospital Patient & Family Advisory Council or would like to consider volunteering on the council next year, please call Kruta at **701-845-6519**.



MERCY INSIGHTS is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of MERCY HOSPITAL, 570 Chautauqua Blvd., Valley City, ND 58072-3199, telephone 701-845-6400, www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org.

Keith E. Heuser, Administrator

Information in MERCY INSIGHTS comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider.

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Health care options: You're in control

“ARE there any questions?”

The question may never be more important than when it's asked by your health care provider. When your provider is talking about your health, a test you should have, or a medicine being prescribed, you need to know exactly what he or she is saying.

Asking questions, requesting more information and knowing your options are important steps for staying well or getting better.

Three simple questions can often provide you with valuable information:

- ▶ What's the main problem I'm facing?
- ▶ What do I need to do?
- ▶ Why is it important for me to do this?

Don't give up if you don't

understand the provider's answers. You might say, “Doctor, this is all new to me, and I still don't know if I fully understand what you're saying. Would you mind going over things one more time?”

Other tips for being a smart health care consumer:

Choose medical providers and facilities you're comfortable with.

Your physician may recommend a specialist. It is your right to choose a specialist you are comfortable with. You can also choose where you would prefer certain tests and screenings to be performed. Please consider Mercy Hospital whenever possible.

Get a second opinion. If your diagnosis or proposed treatment is risky or complicated, ask your doctor if another physician's input might be helpful. You always have the right to seek another opinion. You cannot lose by being more informed.

Take your health care seriously—and make sure everyone else does, too.

Sources: Partnership for Clear Health Communication; Regence BlueShield



Gardening can put you at risk for more than just dirty fingernails. Soil may contain bacteria that can cause tetanus, a potentially dangerous disease.

Tetanus enters the body through breaks in the skin. An infection is possible if the bacteria gets into any wound—even a scratch—but is more likely to result from a deep puncture. Gardeners are at risk for tetanus because they use sharp tools, dig in the dirt and handle prickly plants.

In its most common form, tetanus can cause paralysis. You can even die from tetanus. That's why it's important to make sure that your tetanus vaccination is up-to-date. The immunization wears off over time, so you need a booster shot every 10 years.

In addition to getting vaccinated, you can lower your risk for tetanus by wearing gloves, long sleeves and long pants while gardening to help protect against cuts and scratches.

Source: National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

