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The Beat: June 2008

CentraCare Health

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State lawmakers take positive steps

Dear Friends:

Health care reform often is ranked as the most important domestic issue in state and national politics. This past month, the Minnesota Legislature approved several elements of health care reform that we supported. The final bill did not include some initiatives that we opposed because those elements would have increased bureaucracy and administrative expense.

Data from Medicare and the United States Department of Health & Human Services confirms that Minnesota provides some of the best health care outcomes at the lowest cost for Medicare enrollees. While reforming health care, we must be careful to preserve our excellent delivery model.

Here is a look at CentraCare's health care reform principles (bold type) and the impact of the new legislation. For more detail, visit www.mnhospitals.org.

- **Health insurance for all**
 - o Expanded eligibility and reduced premiums for MinnesotaCare will allow up to 12,000 more Minnesotans to have health insurance.
- **Improve community health**
 - o Grants will be available for programs to reduce the percentage of Minnesotans who are obese and/or use tobacco.
- **Quality and cost transparency**
 - o The state will put quality and cost data into consumers' hands to aid them in making decisions.
- **Improve delivery system**
 - o Legislators embraced the idea of health-care homes, or medical homes. In this model, each patient has a primary provider or a primary team to ensure continuous, appropriate care.

- **Payment reform**
 - o The state health commissioner will develop a plan to create pricing transparency, encourage provider innovation, reduce the burden of processing claims, and provide comparative information to consumers.
- **Address spending disparities**
 - o The state will establish uniform definitions of services within at least seven "baskets of care" that will focused on chronic conditions. Providers then may establish package prices for these baskets — and accept those amounts as payment in full.
- **Reduce end-of-life spending**
 - o This was not addressed by the Legislature but Medicare data indicates that Minnesota spends less on end-of-life care than most other states. We encourage all individuals to have living wills to clarify their preferences for end-of-life care.

The measures that came out of this year's legislative session are the first small steps toward making health care more accessible, affordable and understandable for all Minnesotans. We can expect to see health care reform remain a hot topic throughout this presidential election year and into the future.

Sincerely,



Terry Pladson, M.D.
President/CEO, CentraCare Health System

Welcome to...



Eric Aschenbrenner, M.D., a physiatrist who will join Rehabilitation Medicine Physicians in July.

Excellence in Birth Registration award

St. Cloud Hospital recently received the "Excellence in Birth Registration" award from the Office of the State Registrar in the Minnesota Department of Health. The award, given to 26 hospitals throughout Minnesota, was presented April 30 at the "Excellence in Birth Registration" training conference in St. Paul. The award recognized hospitals for their accurate and timely registration of newborns through the state's electronic registration system.

St. Benedict's receives \$25,000 Otto Bremer grant

The Otto Bremer Foundation recently awarded a \$25,000 grant to CentraCare Health Foundation for support of St. Benedict's Senior Community's expansion. The expansion, which will be completed this summer, includes 40 new private rooms for residents, a new store, deli, therapy suite, salon and expanded parking.

New clinic and site planned for St. Joseph

CentraCare Clinic is finalizing plans for the construction of a new, larger clinic located at the intersection of County Road 133 and 75 in St. Joseph. The new clinic building, which is planned to be completed in early spring 2009, will be 13,032 square feet and designed to provide space for future growth.

Staff and physicians at the current clinic at 106 Second Ave. N.W. will move to the new clinic. New providers will be added as needed.



Edgar Pineda, M.D.



John Teskey, M.D.

Cardiac surgery program receives top rating

The cardiac surgery program at the Central Minnesota Heart Center has been awarded a three-star (the highest) rating from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) for the second consecutive year. Only 12 percent of hospitals in the nation received this award based on data from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. The STS is considered to be the most authoritative source in cardiac surgery. The Heart Center's high ranking is the result of phenomenal teamwork by cardiac surgeons Edgar Pineda, M.D., and John Teskey, M.D., and all who assist with the care of cardiac surgery patients.

CentraCare doctors honored

Several CentraCare Clinic doctors were honored at the Celebration of Commitment in May for their service to St. Cloud Hospital. **John Mahowald, M.D.**, Central Minnesota Heart Center; and **Deborah McCarl, M.D.**, Women & Children, were honored for 25 years of service. **John Lyons, M.D.**, Women & Children, was honored for his retirement. Gastroenterologist **Paul Dorsher, M.D.**, received CentraCare Health Foundation's 2008 Caduceus Award. Dorsher received the award because of his exemplary service to those in need, providing excellent patient care and generosity.

A celebration of life

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) will celebrate 20 years of service from noon to 4 p.m. June 28 at Molitor's Trout Heaven Park in Sauk Rapids. Families with children who received care in the NICU are invited to attend the 20-year reunion for an afternoon of fun — including lunch, entertainment and games. If you have questions, please call 229-5139.

City Council OKs rezoning for new Hospitality House

St. Cloud Hospital expects to build a new Hospitality House on property across Sixth Avenue from the hospital. The City Council in early June approved rezoning of the property to accommodate the house. The hospital and health system boards of directors were expected to review plans for the house at their June 19 meetings. The new Hospitality House is expected to open in Spring 2009. Until the new house opens, services are being provided in the white house on the corner of Sixth Avenue and 13th Street N. The Hospitality House provides affordable, temporary housing in a peaceful, homelike setting to patient families and, in some instances, patients themselves. All construction and equipment costs for the Hospitality House will be paid for through philanthropy.

Attend the Long Prairie Golf Scramble Fundraiser

Join the Long Prairie Memorial Hospital and Home for the 12th Annual Golf Scramble on July 15. Four-person teams will compete at the 18-hole tournament for prizes throughout the day. Cost is \$75 per person, which includes a golf cart, lunch and a prime rib dinner. Proceeds from the tournament will raise funds for a new hydraulic lift patient cot for the Long Prairie Memorial Hospital Emergency Services and the Long Prairie Greatest Needs Fund. To register, please call (320) 732-2205 or e-mail libbons@centracare.com.

Physician's article published

Neurologist Lawrence Schut, M.D., CentraCare Clinic - River Campus, published an article titled "Ataxia: A complex group of diseases" in the May 2008 issue of *Minnesota Health Care News*.

Sleep Center has new location

CentraCare Clinic Sleep Medicine Department and St. Cloud Hospital Sleep Center have moved to 1586 County Road 134 (near the CentraCare Health Plaza campus). For more information, please call 251-0726.