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The Beat January 2009

CentraCare Health

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Working together, we can weather financial challenges



Dear Friends:

These are difficult financial times for individuals, families and businesses, including clinics, hospitals and long-term care facilities. We are seeing unprecedented layoffs in the metro, Fargo and Duluth areas, and unprecedented program closures due to financial challenges. At CentraCare Health System, we are expecting an increase in bad debt, further cuts in Medicaid reimbursement, and a decline in elective procedures.

Fortunately, CentraCare Health System's operations have been performing better than budget during the first half of the fiscal year. However, we have suffered major declines in our portfolio of investments, and have experienced a significant increase in our expenses due to the terms of our bond financing.

In order to continue to meet the requirements of our bond financing – and to preserve our ability to provide the services that our patients expect and deserve – we must increase the health system's operating margin. To do this, we are working to control expenses related to staffing, supplies and capital equipment. In December, we began a "hiring freeze" by requiring managers who are seeking to fill new positions to demonstrate how the positions would create new revenue or decrease expenses, and obtain approval from the executive team before posting.

Managers seeking to fill vacated positions also must justify the need for replacements and get executive team approval before posting. We are delaying major capital purchases and re-evaluating the previously approved budget for capital equipment, with the exception of those pieces necessary to ensure safety. We also are re-evaluating all requests for maintenance expenditures.

We are proceeding very cautiously with the \$225-million St. Cloud Hospital expansion, which ultimately will enhance surgery revenues and enhance patient satisfaction with the addition of private rooms and additional capacity in the neonatal and adult intensive care units. Phase I of the project, which includes the warehouse, loading dock and a new parking ramp on the north end of the campus, are on time and under budget, with completion expected in fall 2009. Phase II, which includes the new bed tower on the east side of the campus, is scheduled to begin this spring. I believe it is in the best interest of our patients, our employees and our community to proceed with the project as planned. However, because many of the factors that affect the project are beyond our control, we will carefully evaluate all options and determine this spring whether or how to proceed.

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Spirit of Women Day of Dance activities

February 26

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites,
37 Ave. & Division St., St. Cloud

St. Cloud Hospital will host its inaugural Spirit of Women Day of Dance event Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Holiday Inn & Suites, 37 Ave. & Division St., St. Cloud. Free gift bags and a chance to win a \$100 cash prize will be available to the first 500 participants.

- Day of Dance, 4:30-7 p.m.
Learn simple steps for salsa, belly dancing and a variety of other dances. This free event includes heart healthy information, screenings and music. Sponsored by the St. Cloud Hospital Women & Children's Center.
- "Get Up, Get Out and Get Going: the Secrets to an Active Lifestyle," 7-8:30 p.m. Join coach and author Jenny Hatfield as she shares her secrets for learning to love activity, losing weight without sacrifice and tapping into your inner athlete. The \$10 tickets for this presentation are available at the St. Cloud Hospital Gift Gallery, Byerly's service desk, Cash Wise Video Department and Coborn's Superstore Sauk Rapids service counter. Sponsored by Central Minnesota Heart Center. Call 229-5139 for more information.

Transforming Care at the Bedside (TCAB)

St. Cloud Hospital was selected by the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) to participate in the two-year-long TCAB project to improve patient care. Nationwide, there are 68 hospitals taking part in the project, with St. Cloud Hospital as the only Minnesota participant. TCAB is a national program designed to improve the quality and safety of patient care on medical and surgical units, increase the vitality and retention of nurses and improve the effectiveness of the entire care team.

Imaging, Heart Center earn three-year accreditation

St. Cloud Hospital Imaging Services was awarded a three-year accreditation in Computed Tomography (CT) scanning and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) by the American College of Radiology (ACR). Nuclear Medicine in Imaging Services and the Central Minnesota Heart Center also received accreditation. The ACR awards accreditation to facilities for the achievement of high practice standards after a peer-review evaluation of the practice. Evaluations are conducted by board-certified physicians and medical physicists who are experts in the field. They assess the qualifications of the personnel and the adequacy of facility equipment.

Go Red for Women luncheon

This luncheon from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Feb. 5 at Mi Famiglia Restaurant includes informational sessions, a silent auction, lunch and keynote speaker, Diana Nyad, who holds the record for the longest swim in history, 102.5 miles. For more information, or to purchase a table, please call (763) 689-2906. Sponsored in part by Central Minnesota Heart Center.

Construction under way at Melrose Hospital

Phase I of a four-phase construction project was completed with the installation of a new employee parking lot and heliport. Phase II has started on the two-story building expansion, which will house the new CentraCare Clinic and Melrose Pharmacy. The entire project is scheduled to be complete in fall 2009.

SBSC provides exceptional senior living

If you are concerned about a parent living alone or needing more assistance, please contact St. Benedict's Senior Community, where a variety of senior housing opportunities are available from retirement and assisted living to memory care. Call 252-0010 for our St. Cloud campus and (763) 295-4051 for our Monticello campus.



Dr. Lurie (second from left) is presented with the U.S. Army achievement award at the Pentagon.

Heart Center physician receives achievement award

Advanced Circulatory Systems, Inc., founded by Keith Lurie, M.D., Central Minnesota Heart Center at SCH, was awarded a United States Army Achievement Award Dec. 19 at the Pentagon for the development of an impedance threshold device (ITD), called ResQGARD. The successful development and deployment of the new device designed to immediately increase blood pressure following the onset of shock, is an important advance in treating battlefield casualties and will ultimately save the lives of military and civilian personnel.

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Please keep our financial challenges in mind as you go about your work each day. In addition to providing the highest quality care for our patients, we also must provide the most cost-effective care. If you have ideas to reduce expenses and waste, please share them with your manager, or forward them to the executive team if they go beyond your immediate work area.

CentraCare Health System has weathered financial storms in the past, emerging to successfully continue our health care mission because of our employees' character, skills and dedication.

Thank you for your commitment to meeting our patients' needs!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Pladson".

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