Summer 2000

Beacon Light: Summer 2000

St. Cloud Hospital

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Abdominal Aneurysm
New surgical procedure is now available at St. Cloud Hospital
A medical transport is another option which soon became available in the St. Cloud area, with the addition of a Life Link III helicopter based at St. Cloud Hospital.

CentraCare Health System (St. Cloud Hospital's parent organization) recently partnered with Life Link III of St. Paul and five other Twin Cities hospitals to provide a transport team of a neonatologist, NICU nurse, transport RN, communications technician and special equipment, such as ventilators, to transfer infants within the region.

With the addition of the Life Link III service, soon hospitals in the county and surrounding area will be able to say goodbye to Grandma before they left with her."

"It is very important to establish trust with children to calm their fears," said Rena Shooker-Allen, 3-year-old Zach's father.

"We often will check children's vitals while they are playing and will try to mimic home life as much as possible," Olson added.

"We give them choices whenever possible."

I've always been an active person, but if the task had me feeling scared I would have been a whole lot worse."

"Despite the stress of the past month of June, the St. Cloud-based helicopter was dispatched more than 41 times to sites throughout central Minnesota during the month. Cary Fussy, 39, of Pierz was one of the patients who was transferred to St. Cloud Hospital after an accident at a well-drilling site near Pierz on June 13.

"Although I was initially scared to ride in the helicopter, they took good care of me," Cary said. "I was very glad that this service is available."

"I was really scared because I could only take little breaths," said Cindy Melloy; she explained that the added stress and inconvenience of traveling to the Twin Cities for care

"I would like to expand pediatric oncology in St. Cloud so that rural residents and their families can get the care they need closer to home," said Melloy.

"I believe that with my background as a mom and in pediatric oncology if my own malignancy, I am well-equipped to..."
New Therapy Program brings hope for INCONTINENCE

New abdominal aneurysm procedure shortens hospital stay, recovery

Here are the stories of the first two patients to experience the new procedure.

First patient: Sylvester Fandel

Over the years, the 79-year-old Sylvester Fandel of St. Cloud, has experienced numerous medical problems. Conditions such as heart blockage, emphysema, and stroke have made for many visits to St. Cloud Hospital.

This past March, Sylvester had a CT scan to evaluate a superficial cancer in his bladder. This CT scan demonstrated, unexpectedly, an abdominal aneurysm. Following this discovery, A. David Matthews, M.D., nephrologist, referred Sylvester to James Jost, M.D. for vascular surgery at St. Cloud Hospital. After the examination, Jost believed Sylvester might be a good candidate to undergo a new procedure called endoluminal aortic aneurysm grafting (EAAG). Devices were approved by the Food and Drug Administration in September, 1999.

In Sylvester's case, Jost along with Tracy Napp, M.D., an interventional radiologist with CentraCare Clinic, performed the procedure. It's really a team approach in the operating room," Napp said. "A combination of skills is essential in performing such an advanced procedure.

In this procedure, a surgeon and an interventionalist work cooperatively to place an endograft directly into the aorta, a tube made from polyester cloth with specially designed metal attachments

"Sylvester was placed on the operating table and a small incision was made in his groin. After the incision was made, an endograft (a fabric graft tube made from polyester cloth with metal attachments at each end) was placed within the aorta for blood to flow through it and not through the aneurysm. The graft is inserted through a small incision in the groin area. Sylvester would have faced an extended recovery period had he undergone the more invasive procedure that's been done in the past," Jost said. After Jost told Sylvester and his wife, Betty, that the new procedure would reduce the recovery period, they decided it was the best option for them.

"Dr. Jost was very reassuring," Betty said. "He was really positive and upbeat about it and did a good job explaining the risks of the procedure," Sylvester said. Even with his confidence in Jost, Sylvester admitted he was a bit nervous about being the first patient.

"Although, I believe she was more nervous than I was," he added while pointing to Betty. "It may have been a little nerve-wracking, but I had confidence in the hospital's staff," Betty said.

Following his surgery on May 9, Sylvester spent four days in St. Cloud Hospital and was able to return to home. He felt better now than I have felt for years," Sylvester said.

Second patient: Conrad Locnikar

Central and Genereous Locnikar of Albany have been living in their garage since the end of April awaiting the completion of their new modular home. But their unusual living arrangement has been one of the easier things they've faced since Conrad was diagnosed with colon cancer in 1986. Although Conrad, 79, has been cancer-free for five years, follow-up scans demonstrated a large abdominal aneurysm. Conrad was referred to James Jost, M.D., by Hani Al-Khatib, M.D., oncologist with CentraCare Clinic. Jost suggested that Conrad be the second patient to undergo endoluminal aortic aneurysm grafting at St. Cloud Hospital. As the Locnikars weighed the pros and cons of the situation, their faith in God and in Jost made their decision easier.

"Dee is just a common guy who could understand," said Genevieve. "And it's great to be able to get this specialized care in St. Cloud so that we don't have to travel to the Twin Cities or farther.

"Because we had to prepare for moving and had so much work to do, we appreciated the short recovery period," Conrad said. Conrad's surgery was May 9. Since that time, the Locnikars' 44-year-old son, Jim, who lives in Salem, Ore., has also undergone surgical treatment for an abdominal aneurysm and spent two weeks in the hospital. But according to his father, "He had the procedure the old-fashioned way.

"I feel better now than I have felt for years," Sylvester said.
ST. CLOUD HOSPITAL AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIPS (L to R): St. Cloud Hospital ranks in nation's 100 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals in the United States. St. Cloud Hospital is one of only two health care facilities to make the list. The ranking comes from HCQA's, the country's largest health care data company. Less than 2 percent of all hospitals in the United States. The hospital's ranking was in the category of teaching hospitals, which includes hospitals with 250 or more beds and at least five residents. "We are very proud to have the resources available to provide leadership in the treatment of cardiac disease for the people of Central Minnesota," said Bob Johnson, executive director of the Central Minnesota Heart Center.

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Currently, Olson lives in Hutchinson on the family farm with her husband and two children. She will begin her practice at Glencoe Regional Health Services in September.

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Construction, remodeling projects enhance health care services

You may have heard the saying that Minnesota has two seasons: Winter and Road Construction. At St. Cloud Hospital, we sometimes feel that we have just one season: Construction/Remodeling.

As we strive to continually improve the quality of the health care services we provide, we continually upgrade our facilities. Sometimes our projects are relatively minor upgrades such as replacing worn carpeting and giving walls a fresh coat of paint. Sometimes, however, we undertake major construction projects such as the behavioral health and conference center that opened less than one year ago along the Mississippi River on the hospital’s east side.

No matter what the size and scope of a project, it can mean inconvenience for our patients and their visitors, as well as our employees. Our caregivers and support staff strive to help ease the stress of construction and remodeling on those we serve. We aim to minimize your inconvenience, help you find your way and answer your questions.

It is always difficult to remodel and update facilities that are in use, and our current high demand for patient services increases this challenge. Extra care on the part of our caregivers and support departments can improve the experience for our patients and their families.

It is our desire to create an environment where patients and families feel good about their experience at St. Cloud Hospital in spite of our construction.

CentraCare Health Plaza to open November 2001