



PURSUIT OF healthy living



SMALL BUNDLES

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit provides a safe start for fragile patients. *See page 2.*



OXYGEN THERAPY

For this Hammond resident, recovery was in the air at Saint Margaret Mercy. *See page 4.*



COLONOSCOPY

Catch cancer at an early stage—or prevent it altogether—with a simple procedure. *See page 6.*

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

The fall issue of *Pursuit of Healthy Living* brings an abundance of good healthcare news. We are proud to once again share with you the strong minds, strong hearts and powerful medicine that Saint Margaret Mercy continues to build.

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

Patient care at Saint Margaret Mercy has once again raised the bar; our Dyer Campus has been awarded the status of Primary Stroke Center by the Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP). The HFAP stroke certification program is based on standards of care for patients from the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Heart and American Stroke Associations.

Becoming a HFAP-certified stroke center required HFAP to complete an extensive and objective review of the Dyer Campus' protocols and quality outcomes for stroke care. The certification is only awarded to hospitals meeting and exceeding HFAP's standards for patient care from the time the patient first has symptoms to after the patient is discharged from the hospital. HFAP recognizes the Dyer Campus' commitment to providing outstanding stroke care to patients and the community when awarding it the distinction of Primary Stroke Center.

HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH

I invite you to take a look at the "Health Info" tab on our website, www.smmhc.com. You'll find a wealth of information to help you take charge of your health. Use the content to learn about prevention and treatment of health issues that you may face. This is especially useful before you visit your doctor because you'll go in with a better set of questions that will lead you to better understanding and better healing.

Saint Margaret Mercy's Level III Newborn Intensive Care Unit is one of the best in Northwest Indiana, as well as the first in Lake County.



High-tech equipment plus doctors and nurses whose skill and passion are the very essence of mission allow for the remarkable survival rate of premature infants. You will meet four babies (including a set of twins), who at press time were making good progress toward being discharged.

We are equally proud of our partnership with The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and the world-class treatment this partnership brings to the Calumet region. The physicians and therapists create a wonderful balance of expertise and compassion. I hope you enjoy reading the success stories of a couple of our recent patients.

EXPANDING OUR CARE

For the past 112 years (and counting!), mission and healthcare have been inseparable at Saint Margaret Mercy. Our St. Monica Home at the Dyer Campus is a perfect illustration of our respect for life. The St. Monica Home accommodates 10 residents, with a focus on prenatal and newborn care; a second facility adjacent to the existing one is currently under construction. When it is fully operational this winter, it will house young mothers who are progressing into a life of independence. The efforts of our dedicated staff are complemented by generous donors who have adopted this mission as their own. We are grateful to all.

Maintaining your good health should include some fun. Please save the dates for two major annual events at Saint Margaret Mercy: our Days of Health in September and Omni 41's fall open house in November. For more information, see our pull-out calendar pages.

Please know that Saint Margaret Mercy is here for you whenever you need us. I wish you and your family the very best of health.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Gryzbek
President, Saint Margaret Mercy

SAINT MARGARET MERCY'S LEVEL III NICU

When health issues come in small bundles

When a baby enters the world with health problems, it's comforting to know that the very best in care is nearby. Saint Margaret Mercy offers a Level III Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Hammond Campus, staffed by skilled NICU nurses, many of whom have been there since it opened 31 years ago, plus three board-certified neonatologists. A neonatologist is present 24/7.



In addition to babies who are born at the hospital's Family Birthing Center, babies who are born at other facilities and who need this level of specialized care are transported to Saint Margaret Mercy's NICU. Because the clinical nurses are so highly trained, they manage the transport, which is initiated within 30 minutes of birth.

"Our NICU nurses have good rapport with patients and doctors," says neonatologist Sudhish Chandra, MD. "It's hard to find NICU nurses with 30 to 35 years of experience, but we have that at Saint Margaret Mercy."

AN UPGRADE FOR ALL-AROUND CARE

Saint Margaret Mercy introduced newborn intensive care to the Calumet region in 1979. In 2005, Saint Margaret Mercy's NICU upgraded to Level III with the acquisition of multipurpose Giraffe incubators.

"Babies live in our Giraffe incubators from birth to discharge," says unit manager Anne Leus, RN. "Anytime they change environments, it creates stress. In the Giraffe, we are able to perform all procedures, including ventilator, CPAP, phototherapy and x-rays."

"The environment is as close to mother as possible," says clinical nurse Joanie Blaszczyk, RN. "The quilted coverlet blocks out light and sound."

"Our survival rate is good," says Dr. Chandra. "In certain situations, babies as young as 23 weeks into the mother's pregnancy and as light as 1 pound have a chance. With the exception of surgical issues, we handle the full gamut of neonatal care at any stage of pregnancy."



^ A MOTHER'S TOUCH:
Maria Salas monitors the
temperature of her son,
Abraham.

SUPPORTING BABY

Families are part of the treatment at Saint Margaret Mercy's NICU, with visiting hours 24/7 for parents. Siblings who are at least 2 years old are welcome with proof of current immunizations.

Artwork from big brothers and sisters is also an important part of the décor in the NICU.


A personal touch accompanies the high-tech, clinical environment. Nurses photograph each newborn's early days so parents have the memory of their child's progress during his or her stay.

The staff also celebrates each milestone. The personal touch is driven by this sense of mission. "Successful outcomes are every bit as important to us as they are to the families," Leus says.

REUNITING IN SUCCESS

The celebrated milestones don't end with discharge. As the babies move through their toddler years, they and their families are invited to a reunion that the staff hosts in the spring every two years. Patients who are now adults include one who is on her way to becoming a physician. And young mothers whose lives began in the NICU are now returning to Saint Margaret Mercy's Family Birthing Center to have their own babies.

FOR MORE INFO

 The neonatologists at Saint Margaret Mercy are Sudhish Chandra, MD; Girish Gowda, MD; and Deepika Kakkera, MD. To browse the physician directory, visit www.smmhc.com and click the "Physicians" tab at the top of the page.

BIG SUCCESSSES IN NICU

Aidan Muñoz was born via cesarean section 10 weeks ahead of time, weighing 2 pounds, 3 ounces. His mother, Jennifer, was experiencing health problems that demanded the early birth. At press time he had tripled in size—topping the scales at 6 pounds. He will be on his way home as soon as he masters the art of taking his bottle without needing an oxygen supplement.

"Premature infants have an added challenge in learning how to suck, swallow and breathe all at the same time," says clinical nurse Janet Pearman, RN.

"Size and age are not the determining factors of when it's time to go home," says clinical nurse Joanie Blaszczyk, RN. "They need to be able to take a full feeding, maintain proper body temperature in an open crib and breathe without respiratory care."

Aidan is close to that milestone. He needed oxygen initially but now eats with good appetite.

"I'm grateful for his good care," Jennifer says. "And it's nice that I can come and see him any time of the day or night."

CARE AND EDUCATION

Abraham Cazares was born four weeks ahead of schedule. His mom, Maria Salas, as all parents do, underwent discharge teaching prior to going home. Education includes monitoring his temperature and aspirating matter from his mouth and nose. Right now eating takes a little longer than it should, which is a common problem. But they expect him to overcome it within a day or two.

"The nurses here are wonderful," says Maria.

PROGRESSING IN PAIRS

Stephanie Dekker's twins, Elliott and Abigail, arrived at Saint Margaret Mercy's NICU from another facility. They underwent an emergency c-section nearly eight weeks early. Elliott weighed 4 pounds, 7 ounces, and Abigail weighed 3 pounds.

"They've made a lot of progress," Stephanie says. "We're so proud of them. The nurses have been excellent—I've learned a lot by asking questions."



⤴ **PICTURE OF HEALTH:** Deborah Burns, deposit system coordinator at Peoples Bank in Munster, returned to work Feb. 1.



⤴ **THE POWER OF OXYGEN:** A patient is moved into the hyperbaric oxygen chamber at Saint Margaret Mercy's Hammond Campus.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy at Saint Margaret Mercy



⤴ **AN AIR OF HEALING:** Vietta Johnson, MD, provides a healing touch at Saint Margaret Mercy.

Hammond resident Deborah Burns is busy enjoying everyday life with family, friends and co-workers. That in itself may not seem unusual, but she came very close to losing all of it last year when she was overcome by carbon monoxide poisoning in her home that was allegedly caused by poor ventilation.

Her last clear memory of the night of Dec. 11, 2009, was noticing that it was 11 p.m. Memories of family members breaking into her house at 9:30 on the morning of Dec. 12 are vague. When the Hammond Fire Department brought her to Saint Margaret Mercy's Hammond Campus, she was very close to death. Effects of the carbon monoxide included kidney failure, cardiac ischemia and muscle destruction.

After evaluation by wound-healing specialist Vietta Johnson, MD, Burns was treated by Saint Margaret Mercy's hyperbaric team of trained physicians and nurses.

"We provide hyperbaric care at a level of expertise that others do not have," Dr. Johnson says.

"The hyperbaric team is a wonderful group of people," Burns says. "I couldn't have asked for a better crew. They couldn't do enough for me."

Burns' claustrophobic tendencies created some initial concern for her, especially when she learned that she would be spending three hours in the hyperbaric oxygen chamber, followed by six additional 90-minute treatments. But she was

allowed to sit, and passed the time watching movies when the team wasn't keeping her busy with activities such as repositioning her oxygen mask at regular intervals. Sips of water and a bag of hard candy helped with pressure in her ears, as did the tubes that an ear, nose and throat physician gently placed when the pressure grew intense. The team was in constant communication, so her time in the chamber was not as uncomfortable as she had feared it would be.

She made an excellent recovery, with lab values returning to within normal limits, and has since returned to work and her normal activities.

BACK, AND IMPROVED

Burns admits that she was lucky. Despite the 9½ hours of carbon monoxide exposure, she has suffered few lasting effects. Subsequent checkups revealed her heart and kidneys in excellent condition.

Burns does report one positive side effect of hyperbaric oxygen therapy: The 11 days she spent in the hospital initiated a break in her 30-year smoking habit. "I haven't had a cigarette since," she says.

On Feb. 1, Burns returned to her position as deposit system coordinator at Peoples Bank in Munster. Life is good.

Saint Margaret Mercy is the only hospital in the Calumet region that offers hyperbaric oxygen therapy 24/7 for victims of carbon monoxide poisoning and smoke inhalation.

FOR MORE INFO

For more information about hyperbaric oxygen therapy, visit www.smmhc.com and click on the "Health Info" tab or call the Wound Healing and Prevention Institute at 219-933-2666.



The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
at Saint Margaret Mercy

Back to life with RIC

HEADING TOWARD RECOVERY

While Guillain-Barré syndrome can strike at any age, it's most likely to occur in adults ages 30 to 50. Lacey Bradigan, 19, of Grant Park, Ill., a freshman at Parkland College in Champagne, is an exception to that rule.

On March 18, Lacey woke in the middle of the night feeling weak. By 3 a.m. she was completely paralyzed. Several friends carried her from the dorm to the car and drove her to Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana, remaining with her until her mother, Rhonda, arrived. Rhonda, who has educated herself on Guillain-Barré syndrome, said patients generally get worse before they get better, and that was the case for Lacey. She contracted pneumonia, accompanied by a 103-degree fever, underwent a tracheotomy and required a feeding tube for nourishment. After that she began her long road to recovery.

A PATH OF PROGRESS

Lacey began rehabilitation April 14 at The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago at Saint Margaret Mercy in Dyer. "Her progress has been excellent," says medical director Revathy Ameeruddin, MD. "When she arrived, she was not able to move her legs. Shortly before her discharge on May 12, she was walking the hospital hallways."

"The simplest things were surprisingly tough at first," Lacey says. "My rehabilitation began the day I arrived. I had to practice eating and did stretching exercises in bed. When it was time to stack



^ A SMILE OF SUCCESS: Lacey Bradigan smiles with her physician, Revathy Ameeruddin, MD.

"We were lucky to have RIC so close to home."

fortably. In the two weeks before discharge she was able to turn herself in bed.

Rhonda says that travel between Grant Park and Dyer hasn't been bad. "We were lucky to have RIC so close to home," she adds.

SUCCESS IN SIGHT

Lacey's aunt, Schererville resident Cheri Whitney, says that Lacey has at least two more months of therapy ahead.

"She's been a real trooper," Dr. Ameeruddin says. "She fought through this herself. It's our privilege to have assisted in her recovery."

On May 12, she did indeed walk out of the hospital. She is now undergoing continued therapy at RIC Day Rehabilitation Center and Outpatient Center in Homewood, Ill., and is making faster-than-predicted progress toward full recovery, and plans to return to Parkland College in the fall to resume her study of elementary education.

cups, I thought it was going to be easy, but I couldn't pick up the cups."

She says the therapists pushed hard because their goal was for her walk out of the hospital.

Lacey knew she was making progress when she could walk with the parallel bars. Her therapist helped her to stand and suggested that since they were right there, perhaps Lacey could give walking a try. When she discovered that she was able to do it, she knew she was on her way. Eating is still difficult, but she's able to sleep com-



^ Ready to go home: Sharon Grube (right) and Revathy Ameeruddin, MD.

A HEART FOR RECOVERY AT RIC

St. John resident Sharon Grube is home again after nearly a month at Saint Margaret Mercy's Dyer Campus. Her stay included several days on life support in the ICU, followed by physical, occupational and speech therapy with The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) at Saint Margaret Mercy.

On June 4, Grube was shopping at a Strack & Van Til supermarket when she went into cardiac arrest. The St. John Fire Department revived her in the store and then brought her to Saint Margaret Mercy in Dyer.

The episode resulted in significant memory loss. After leaving the ICU, she was transferred to RIC, where she had to relearn how to do just about everything.

"I would not be here right now if it weren't for the wonderful people at Saint Margaret Mercy," Sharon says of the care she received. "When they were working with me, they felt everything I felt. When they knew I could do it, I knew I could do it. I give every one of them an A-plus."

She will continue speech therapy with Adult Rehab at RIC at Saint Margaret Mercy and Omni 41 Health & Fitness Connection.

FIND OUT MORE

Explore our rehabilitation services at www.smmhc.com. Under "Services," click on "The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago at SMM." Or call Rehabilitation Services at **800-886-5437**.


TESTING THAT SAVES LIVES

When Highland resident Mel Loden went for his annual physical in December 2009, his physician insisted that he get a colonoscopy screening. There were no symptoms—it was simply time.

His wife, Terri Loden, RN, director of Surgical Services at Saint Margaret Mercy's Hammond Campus, decided it was time for her, too. He went one day; she went the next. Both received good news. In fact, Mel's good news included successful removal of large, precancerous polyps.

"If he had waited much longer, the polyps would have been too large to remove during the colonoscopy," Terri says. "He would have required bowel resection plus a colostomy. If cancer had been present, further treatment would have included chemotherapy and radiation. This simple test saved his life."

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT COLORECTAL CANCER

 You can find more information about colorectal cancer in the ADAM HealthSearch at www.smmhc.com. Click the "Health Info" tab.



COLONOSCOPY

A simple test can make a major difference

A healthy lifestyle is one step toward reducing your risk for colorectal cancer. But to make sure you're cancer-free—and that you stay that way—you need to be tested.

"Colonoscopy is a very important screening modality that has improved greatly with high-definition technology," says board-certified gastroenterologist John Kniaz, DO. "Now with Managed Anesthesia Care (MAC) being offered for the first time at Saint Margaret Mercy's Dyer Campus, colonoscopy can be a relatively painless procedure with faster recovery. Timely colonoscopy can detect colon cancer early, which can help save your life."

"Colonoscopy is not only diagnostic but also therapeutic, with the ability to detect precancerous polyps and

remove them in the same setting," says gastroenterologist Navin Kumar, MD, board-certified in Internal Medicine.

"Newer scopes [high-definition] and NBI [narrow-band imaging] further aid in the early detection of polyps. The most up-to-date equipment is available in the GI Interventional labs at the Hammond and Dyer campuses.

"Colonoscopy is safe, simple and comfortable, and is readily available to patients," Dr. Kumar says. "A typical exam takes 10 to 15 minutes under sedation. That small investment has

been shown to prevent colorectal cancer and save lives. Furthermore, you may avoid cancer entirely if precancerous polyps are found and removed before they ever have a chance to turn into cancer."

You may avoid cancer if precancerous polyps are found and removed before they have a chance to turn into cancer.

Gastroenterologists at Saint Margaret Mercy

ALAN M. AUERBACH, MD
AKEEK S. BHATT, MD
BENJAMIN D. SCHMID, MD
ALEXANDER TOSIOU, MD

7905 Calumet Ave.
Munster, IN 46321
219-836-5800

ILWOONG CHANG, MD
GENE CHANG, MD

9030 Columbia Ave.
Munster, IN 46321
219-836-6002

HARSH L. DALAL, MD
NAVIN KUMAR, MD

5825 Broadway
Merrillville, IN 46410
219-981-9000

JOEL A. CAHAN, MD
MARK EDWARD EFRUSY, DO
DAVID HERBSTMAN, MD
JOHN L. KNIAZ, DO

701 Superior Ave., Suite G
Munster, IN 46321
219-922-3040

SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN, MD

16250 Louis Ave.
South Holland, IL 60473
708-333-0001

MUHAMMAD MAZEN KUDAIMI,
MD, FACOG

801 MacArthur Blvd., Suite 303
Munster, IN 46321
219-836-4077



Colonoscopy is simple and quick—and could save your life. Visit www.smmhc.com and click "Physicians" to browse the physician directory.



St. Monica Home expansion under way

Named after the patron saint of mothers, the St. Monica Home opened in July 1994 on Saint Margaret Mercy's Dyer Campus, offering a medically sound and emotionally healthy residence for pregnant teens awaiting the birth of their babies. In the past 16 years the St. Monica Home has served approximately 150 moms.

Currently the St. Monica Home focuses on prenatal needs. The home is now undergoing expansion to better serve young moms who are transitioning into independence. The adjoining building will accommodate 10 residents. The new facility is expected to be fully operational by the end of the year.


A NEW LIFE

"In operating our current home, it became apparent that many of our residents could use a facility that would assist them with moving toward independence," says manager Liz Guzman-Arredondo, MSW, LSW. "We also received calls from young teen moms who needed

a safe, stable place to live while attempting to work and/or attend school.

"It is not unusual for her support system to dwindle once the newness of the baby has worn off. It is during this time that she finds herself with no safe, stable place to live," Guzman-Arredondo says. "Our new facility will provide the ability for the young mom to stabilize her situation, get on her feet to finish school and obtain employment, and hopefully go on to pursue vocational training and/or secondary education."

FOR MORE INFO

 For more information about how you can support the work of the St. Monica Home or the other Saint Margaret Mercy outreach programs:

- Contact the Regional Development Office at **219-852-2554**
- Or mail your gift to:
St. Monica Home
c/o Regional Development Office
5454 Hohman Ave.
Hammond, IN 46320



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Hammond Campus, 5454 Hohman Ave.,
Hammond, IN 46320, 219-932-2300.

Dyer Campus, 24 Joliet St.,
Dyer, IN 46311, 219-865-2141.

Gene Diamond | CEO, Sisters of Saint Francis
Health Services, Inc., Northern Indiana Region

Thomas J. Gryzbek | President,
Saint Margaret Mercy


Maria E. Ramos | Director,
Public Relations and Marketing

Linda Barenie | Staff Writer

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SAINT MARGARET MERCY

Dyer Campus awarded HFAP Primary Stroke Certification

Saint Margaret Mercy's Dyer Campus was awarded Primary Stroke Certification from the Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP), an independent, nationally recognized accreditation authority. It earned this distinction after HFAP conducted an extensive and objective review of the hospital's stroke program.


"Saint Margaret Mercy has proven their dedication in achieving excellence in stroke care," says Michael Zarski, CEO of HFAP. "Stroke is the third leading cause of death in America and the leading cause of adult disability. Providing patients who have suffered a stroke with a continuum of care that is prompt and effective can have a positive effect on the quality of their lives in the future."



"We're proud to achieve this prestigious distinction," says Saint Margaret Mercy President Tom J. Gryzbek. "By awarding us Primary Stroke Certification, HFAP has recognized our commitment to providing outstanding stroke care to our patients and our community. In fact, quality is consistently the priority focus in our strategic plans and goals."

The HFAP stroke certification program has based its standards on evidence from the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Heart and Stroke Associations. These standards are requirements to provide hospitals with the tools for education and support regarding stroke prevention, care and recovery within their communities.

FOR MORE INFO

 For more information, contact the Stroke Center coordinator at **219-865-2141, ext. 47125**.

