

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



## Ardmore Co-worker Demonstrates that Ingenuity and Support Reap Big Results

**A**s I mentioned in this newsletter several months ago, we are working hard to show that the “Mercy Difference” is tangible and meaningful to everyone across Mercy, whether you are a patient, family member, board member, physician or co-worker. In

measurable terms, that means being able to demonstrate our difference at each level of service: clinical quality, patient safety, personal service and value. Personally, I find that demonstrating our progress goes beyond the reporting of numbers and statistics; some of the most powerful examples come from sharing the events of our daily lives.

Storytelling is a meaningful way of showing that Mercy Service is more than just

a concept; it is alive and well at our facilities and in our communities. On a recent visit to Mercy Memorial Health Center in Ardmore, Oklahoma, I had the opportunity to speak with Barbara Lovelace, unit secretary for the 2 West medical/surgical nursing unit.



Barbara Lovelace, unit secretary – 2 West medical/surgical, explains the rounding program to Jay Johnson, chief operating officer at Mercy Memorial Health Center, and John Sullivan, Mercy president and CEO (right).

Barbara’s focus on personal service led her to ask herself, “What can I do differently that will have an impact on patient care today?” The answer she came up with was so successful that it has since been expanded to two additional units in the hospital.

Barbara’s idea was to personally conduct patient rounding each day before her shift in order to establish a connection with patients and tend to their needs. With the support and encouragement of her nurse manager, Rhonda Fleming, R.N., Barbara began daily rounding in September 2007. She told me that she enjoys rounding because it gives her the chance to get out from behind the nurses’ station and visit with each patient, to get to know them and make sure they receive the best service possible – in her words, “the kind of service they deserve.”

Patients have told Barbara that they look forward to her visits. They freely open up to her and talk about their needs, knowing that Barbara will do whatever it takes to accommodate them. Most of the time the requests are simple: a cup of coffee, new batteries in the remote control or help sitting up in bed. Other times they simply want to talk or to voice their fears. As her manager, Rhonda, explained, “Our patients don’t necessarily understand that this something that Barbara does for everyone. The time she spends with them is so personalized and so special that they feel like she visits only them each day.”

In addition to providing service to patients, Barbara’s daily hour of rounding helps the nurses on her unit by allowing them to focus exclusively on clinical care when their shift begins, because Barbara

has already attended to other service-type requests. Through her interaction with patients, Barbara is also able to include their voice at weekly patient satisfaction meetings.

As Barbara told her story, I could sense the joy she gets in helping fulfill the needs of patients on her unit. Patient satisfaction scores reflect this positive impact, having risen 27 percentile points in the two quarters since the rounding program began.

In any job, it’s easy to stick to the tasks that are part of the job description. Barbara saw an opportunity to go the extra mile, and her manager was open and supportive to expanding Barbara’s role. The take-away for me was how a little ingenuity on Barbara’s part and a willingness by her manager to try something new made a big difference in enhancing patient service.

In coming issues I look forward to sharing other stories that demonstrate how as individuals and as members of a team, we are living out what is distinctive about Mercy each and every day.

Sincerely,

**John Sullivan**  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Sisters of Mercy Health System

## Sisters of Mercy Pursue New Sponsorship Model for Health System

**T**he Sisters of Mercy of the St. Louis Regional Community, sponsors of the Sisters of Mercy Health System (Mercy), are beginning a process to change the sponsorship model of the Health System. The new model will allow lay members to join the Sisters of Mercy in sponsoring the health ministry.

“The Sisters of Mercy are committed to ensuring the future of our health ministry,”

said Sister Mary Roch Rocklage, RSM, chair of the Health System’s Sponsor Council. “The present-day reality is that there are fewer Sisters available to actively serve in leadership and other roles within the Health System. At the same time, there is a deepening sense by the Sisters of the ability and commitment of lay leaders to partner with us in carrying on the Mercy health ministry. This new sponsorship arrangement will strengthen that partnership, provide for the continued involvement and influence of the Sisters of Mercy, and ensure the continuation of our health ministry into the future.”

The sponsorship change will not impact day-to-day operations at Mercy health

facilities or the daily activities of Mercy co-workers and physicians. Mercy will remain a Catholic health system and will retain its existing identity, traditions, mission and values. Sisters of Mercy will continue to actively serve as long as they are willing and able to do so. To ensure their continuing influence, the Sisters will oversee a robust formation program for board members and lay leaders across Mercy.

The new sponsoring body will be governed by a board of directors that includes Sisters of Mercy and lay members. The initial board is expected to include the current members of the Sisters of Mercy Health System Board of Directors.

The Sisters of Mercy have applied to the Vatican for approval of the proposed sponsorship model. Approval may be granted as early as this summer.

“The Sisters of Mercy look forward to continuing to serve with the co-workers, physicians, volunteers, community supporters and others who are part of our health ministry,” said Sr. Roch. “We thank you for your commitment to our mission as we pursue this change in our sponsorship arrangement. Your prayers and support are appreciated.” •



SISTERS OF MERCY PROFILE

## Sister Mary Jeremy Buckman, RSM

**S**ister Mary Jeremy Buckman, RSM, grew up in the small northeast Missouri town of Shelbina, where she graduated

from the local high school in 1948. As she recalls, there were not many opportunities for women in the workforce at the time. “When I graduated from high school, there were two primary professional paths for women – nursing and teaching – so I chose nursing,” she said.

After graduating from St. John’s Mercy School of Nursing in St. Louis in 1951, Sr. Mary Jeremy entered the convent. She had considered joining the Sisters of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, but chose the Sisters of Mercy instead. “When you become a sister, you make three vows – poverty, chastity and obedience. The Sisters of Mercy have a fourth vow of service – caring for the poor, sick and uneducated. The vow of service is what really drew me to the Sisters of Mercy,” she explained.

Four years later she earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing and became the head nurse and a clinical instructor for the medical, surgical and urological units at St. John’s Mercy Medical Center in St. Louis.

For the next 40 years, Sr. Mary Jeremy taught nursing in diploma schools and colleges and universities throughout the Midwest, including: St. John’s Mercy Hospital School of Nursing and Maryville University in St. Louis; Mercy School of Practical Nursing in Springfield, Missouri; Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in Fort Scott, Kansas; DePaul University in Chicago; and Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights, Kentucky. During this time, she also held offices in professional nursing organizations and served on the board of directors of several Mercy hospitals, as well as Saint Xavier University in Chicago and St. Joseph College of Nursing in Joliet, Illinois.

In 1998, Sr. Mary Jeremy retired from nursing and teaching to focus on serving as assistant archivist for the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – St. Louis Regional Community. From November 2001 until July 2006, she held the position of archivist.

Sr. Mary Jeremy currently volunteers her time as archivist emerita and assists with activities related to saving the congregational history and changing the displays in the heritage areas at Mercy Center Retreat Center in St. Louis. She also is busy archiving historical information for St. John’s Hospital School of Nursing and has assisted with a new heritage display at St. John’s Hospital in Springfield,

Missouri. These jobs involve checking facts, proofreading and contributing historical information that will be part of the new Mercy heritage area at St. John’s Hospital.

“Co-workers in Springfield have expressed that while they have a lot of historical information about Catherine McAuley, they are eager for more knowledge about the hospital in which they work. The new display at St. John’s Hospital will give our co-workers some of the information they are seeking,” Sr. Mary Jeremy said.

Even though she is retired, Sr. Mary Jeremy still feels very strongly about nursing and serves on the Board of Trustees for Mercy Health System of Kansas and on the Sisters of Mercy Health System’s Nursing Leadership Council. She has published several works on nursing and archiving, and conducted research in nursing education for DePaul and Northern Kentucky Universities.

Sr. Mary Jeremy believes that her nursing influence continues even though she no longer walks the halls of hospitals or stands in front of a classroom. “I know I continue to touch the lives of many patients through the work of the students I have taught or nurses I have mentored as the nursing department chairman,” she said.

When she is not busy with her archiving duties, Sr. Mary Jeremy enjoys reading, using the computer for creative projects, and tatting, a form of lace work similar to crocheting or knitting. •

## TOP 10 “FUN FACTS”

- Favorite foods:** Fried chicken, fresh green beans, caramel icing and lemon cake
- Favorite color:** Pink
- Favorite movies:** *Mary Poppins* and *Patton*
- Favorite season:** Spring and fall
- Favorite role model:** Sr. Mary Kevin Trower, RSM
- Favorite drink:** Dr. Pepper
- Favorite travel spot:** Shelbina, Missouri, to see family and friends
- Favorite TV Shows:** The news, *Law & Order* and *Cold Case*
- Favorite holiday:** Christmas
- Talent she would most like to have:** To be able to sight-read music and play the piano by ear



Sister Mary Jeremy Buckman, RSM