



## MISD's Project Access Creates New Computing Environment for Mercy



In the not too distant future, computers across the Sisters of Mercy Health System (Mercy) will run faster, co-workers will have easier access to applications, will experience less downtime and will be able to sign on to computers with just a touch of a finger. These are only a few of the benefits co-workers will experience as part of Project Access, a Mercy Information Services Division (MISD) initiative focused on building a new computer environment across Mercy.

"Project Access is vital to Mercy's plans for the future," said Dick Escue, chief information officer for Mercy. "It is the technological foundation that will enable information sharing across all parts of the System and create the work environment needed to support major Mercy activities such as the Genesis Project."

Following is more information about the three main components of Project Access – a Mercy workstation, a standardized computer environment and single sign-on tools:

**Mercy workstation.** This is the physical computer that runs Mercy applications. Over the next year, MISD will replace approximately 17,000 desktop and laptop computers (but not monitors) throughout the System in order to standardize the Mercy workstation. The standard workstation will be faster, require less downtime and allow for rapid repair solutions that can be performed remotely.

### Standard computer environment.

Currently, computers across Mercy are configured differently at many locations, resulting in diverse software and hardware that all have separate maintenance requirements. Project Access will establish a standard computer operating environment by providing co-workers with a consistent background, screensaver and software. Co-workers will continue to have access to all the necessary applications required to perform their daily duties. However, to prevent the introduction of computer viruses and software downloads that can disrupt computer performance, co-workers will no longer be able to load unauthorized software

onto their workstation or download programs from the Internet. A standardized environment will allow for synergies in application deployment, desktop management and customer support. It also will ensure that security policies are applied consistently to all Mercy workstations to protect sensitive information and to protect systems from viruses.

**Single sign-on.** The third component of Project Access features biometric fingerprint readers and proximity badges. Single sign-on will eliminate the need to remember multiple IDs and passwords by allowing users to log on to workstations by touching a fingerprint reader. It will enable access to a variety of applications without having to sign on to each one. All workstations will be equipped with fingerprint readers.

In addition, workstations in clinical areas will be equipped with proximity badge readers and clinicians will be provided with proximity badges. When a clinician approaches a workstation equipped with a proximity badge reader, the workstation will prompt the clinician for a short password. The workstation will automatically lock when the clinician walks away. This tool will



allow faster access to electronic patient information, easier movement between applications and increased security for patient information and other sensitive data.

"Project Access is an excellent example of the Mercy values of service, excellence and stewardship at work," said Escue. "It provides for the needs of our co-workers, ensures the safety and security of our data and operating systems, and reduces waste and redundancy to assure that our technology assets are used to their greatest potential."

The first implementation of Project Access will take place in St. Louis at Mercy Corporate Services, followed by St. John's Mercy Medical Center. The project then will expand to other Mercy locations. •



## Genesis Review to Include Scope, Timeline and Tools

Since the launch of the Genesis Project in 2003, co-workers across the Sisters of Mercy Health System (Mercy) have made tremendous progress toward the project's goals to enhance patient care and business work processes through the support of technology. Recently, Mercy began a comprehensive review of the Genesis Project's work plan in order to incorporate the insights gained since the project began two years ago. This review considers not only the timing of process and technology implementations across the system, but also the resources and tools to support these implementations.

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"Making the decision to evaluate the work plan and consider the possibility for change was not easy. The Genesis team and the Subject Matter Experts at our facilities have worked hard to get us where we are today, and momentum has been good," said Bob Schimmel, Mercy senior vice president and executive sponsor of the Genesis Project. "But we've learned a great deal in the past two years and have information today that we didn't have when we started the project. It just makes good sense to incorporate this new information into the project plan. In the long run, Mercy – and more importantly, our patients – will benefit from this decision."

Meanwhile, members of the Genesis Project tracks – Clinical, Revenue, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Finance and HR/Payroll and Supply Chain Management – continue to test and refine the applications that will be integrated into a standard healthcare information system with the flexibility to meet the individual needs of each Mercy facility. The following is an update on each track's activities:

**Clinical** – Much work has been accomplished toward the first implementation of new clinical technology at St. John's Mercy Heart Hospital in

St. Louis, which is expected to open in July 2006. However, due to timing issues associated with the work plan review and to minimize risks associated with this go-live, a decision has been made to open the Heart Hospital with the clinical systems currently being used by St. John's Mercy Health Care, rather than with the new clinical systems and standards being built by the Genesis team. How this decision will impact other Genesis clinical implementations throughout Mercy will be determined as part of the work plan update.

**Revenue** – Leaders at each Mercy hospital report progress in standardizing the revenue process. Benefits already have been experienced in terms of the number of patients able to pre-register and the number of point-of-service payments received.

**Finance** – The initial implementation of new processes and technology to support finance activities occurred last July in St. Louis and Washington. Additional finance-related functionality will become available as other aspects of the Genesis Project are implemented. The next implementation is scheduled at St. John's Health System in Springfield, Missouri.

**Human Resources/Payroll** – Genesis co-workers continue to convert data and test the new human resources/payroll and automated time and attendance (ATA) systems. Initial deployments are scheduled for mid-2006 in St. Louis and Washington. Co-workers at Mercy hospitals have already experienced a shift in payroll processing cycles, a necessary step to support the change to a more efficient payroll system.

**Supply Chain** – Genesis co-workers, in conjunction with Subject Matter Experts from across Mercy, completed the first round of system testing last fall. Through the course of this testing, Experts identified and documented 45 end-user benefits gained by the new system. •



## Sister Carolyn Stoutz, RSM

Sister Carolyn Stoutz, RSM, is aware that religious sisters are sometimes misunderstood and considered to be stern

and somber. As a result, it always has been important for her "to let people know that sisters are human, that we can laugh and have fun" while serving the Lord. "It's our human side that touches people. Once that barrier has been broken, I can really connect with people," she said.

It is easy to recognize Sr. Carolyn's charisma and love for people. She likes to laugh and joke with those around her. When she walks down the halls of the hospital, the nurses often say with affection, "Here comes trouble." It is this humanity that allows Sr. Carolyn to connect with people. "They see me as a real person, not just a sister," she said.

An educator in Mercy schools for many years, Sr. Carolyn discovered a love for healthcare as a board member for Mercy Health System of Oklahoma. In

1998, she joined St. Mary's Hospital in Enid, Oklahoma, as vice president of mission. Since 2000, she has served as vice president of mission services at Mercy Memorial Health Center in Ardmore,



Sr. Carolyn Stoutz, RSM

Oklahoma, where she is responsible for the call center, Mercy Service, pastoral care and overseeing the activities of volunteers and the auxiliary.

Sr. Carolyn fondly remembers a particular patient she helped some time ago. "Upon entering the woman's room, I found her lying in perfect silence. As we talked, I learned that she had been taking care of her husband who suffered from Alzheimer's and had become accustomed to listening to quiet, soft music," Sr. Carolyn recalled. So Sr. Carolyn brought the woman her personal CD player and a few CDs. The next morning, she learned that that the patient had had her

first good night's sleep in the hospital. She continues to communicate with the woman, who affectionately refers to Sr. Carolyn as her "earth angel."

Sr. Carolyn has experienced Mercy care and compassion first-hand. Shortly after arriving in Ardmore, she discovered she had breast cancer. She credits her current good health to the prayers and support she received from her fellow sisters and talented, caring co-workers and physicians in Ardmore. "I was lucky enough to know everyone on my care team," said Sr. Carolyn. "It had a tremendous impact on my healing."

Today, physicians sometimes ask Sr. Carolyn to talk to their patients after they have been given the devastating news that they have cancer. "I have had the opportunity to experience healthcare from both viewpoints, as a caregiver and a patient. It is a unique perspective that allows me to understand and help patients during this difficult time," said Sr. Carolyn. She is also happy to share that this year marks her fifth year as a cancer survivor.

Sr. Carolyn grew up in New Orleans, attended Mercy schools and became a Sister of Mercy in 1962 after graduating from high school. Shortly thereafter, she came to St. Louis, where she received a

bachelor's degree in history from Webster University and a master's degree in counseling from St. Louis University. She served in St. Louis and Little Rock, Arkansas, before moving to Oklahoma City where she spent the next 20 years at Mount St. Mary's High School as a teacher and guidance counselor.

In her spare time, Sr. Carolyn enjoys listening to music from artists such as Jim Brickman and Josh Groban and playing computer games. She also enjoys being near the water, especially Lake Murray in Ardmore. •

### TOP 10 "FUN FACTS"

- Favorite food: Anything with jalapeños
- Favorite color: Burgundy
- Favorite season: Fall
- Favorite author: John Grisham
- Role model: Grandmother
- Favorite travel spot: Alaska
- Favorite flower: Rose
- Favorite holiday: Christmas
- Personal motto: Love serves joyfully
- What talent would you most like to have: Opera singer