



Mercy Honored for Innovative Information Technology Solution

InfoWorld 100 The Sisters of Mercy Health System (Mercy) was one of only 12 healthcare organizations honored by *InfoWorld*, a national trade publication for information technology (IT) professionals, on its 100 Most Innovative Corporate IT Solutions 2005 list. Mercy was recognized as a national leader of innovative technology for its rapid and comprehensive implementation of a software-management solution on 16,000 personal computers (PCs) in approximately two months, nearly ten times the average pace. This project was the precursor to Project Access, a Systemwide PC standardization initiative that will establish a more secure, high performance computing environment for meeting both patient care and business technology needs. Other companies on the list include Microsoft, American Express, Prudential, E*Bay, Sutter Health, GE, Federal Express and Kodak. •

Board Member Appointed to AHA Council

Charles Thoele, member of the Sisters of Mercy Health System board of directors and former chief operating officer for Mercy, has been appointed to the American Hospital Association (AHA) Council on Governance for a three-year term. •

St. John's Mercy Honored for Medication Safety

St. John's Mercy Medical Center in St. Louis was selected as a Cheers Award winner by the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP). The Cheers Award honors organizations that have set a superlative standard of excellence in the prevention of medication errors and

adverse drug events. This honor puts St. John's Mercy in the company of Johns Hopkins Community Physicians, another 2005 award winner. •

New Surgery Center Opens in Washington

St. John's Mercy Hospital in Washington, Missouri, celebrated the opening of its



new Surgery Center on November 10. The new 27,724-square-foot facility

doubles the hospital's surgical capacity to 10 operating room suites. The first surgery was performed in the new center on November 14. •

Springfield Hospital Named Consumer Choice

St. John's Hospital in Springfield, Missouri, has been named the area's Consumer Choice hospital by the National Research Corporation (NRC). NRC annually provides consumer choice awards for hospitals and health systems in 180 U.S. markets. The award is based on consumer response to questions regarding the best doctors and nurses, best overall image and reputation and best overall quality. Other winners in their markets include the Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins Hospital and Duke University Medical Center. •

St. Edward Mercy Celebrates Centennial

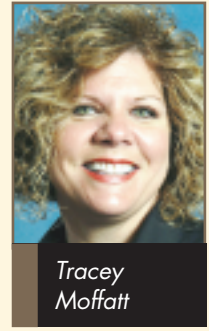


St. Edward Mercy Medical Center in Fort Smith, Arkansas, celebrated its 100th anniversary on November 27. Local churches rang their bells 100 times on the centennial. During the following week, dubbed "Century of Caring Week," a special Mass and presentation of a Papal Blessing took place and the annual Auxiliary Gala honoring the Sisters of Mercy was held. •

Leadership Changes

Tracey Moffatt has been named vice president – performance improvement at St. John's Mercy Medical Center in St. Louis. She previously served as executive director – quality management.

Garth Womack has been named vice president, information services – Mercy Health Plans, for the Mercy Information Services Division. He previously served as deputy chief information officer for Mercy Health Plans.



Tracey Moffatt



Garth Womack

Listening to Our Customers

continued

Ganey as the exclusive vendor of this survey to broaden benchmarking opportunities.

Patient satisfaction surveys are mailed within 48 hours of discharge to a random sample of patients. "The survey helps us understand the lasting impressions that we make because by the time people take it, they have had a chance to think about their experience," explained Michelle Bass, director of customer relations for Mercy Health System of Northwest Arkansas.

Mercy's SSUs use the survey responses to produce department- or manager-specific reports that help them track patient experiences and improve their programs. Scores for each SSU are communicated in a high-level performance report given to senior leadership across Mercy. Quarterly reports detailing the System's performance also are posted on Mercy's intranet site.

But in order for these reports to have meaning, the raw data must be analyzed and communicated to co-workers at each SSU. "Until you understand how the surveys are scored and what the raw scores and percentiles mean, they can just look like a bunch of numbers. The analysis is what makes the results real," said Julie Jones, vice president of marketing and customer service at St. John's Health System in Springfield.

Two of the methods used to make results meaningful are to break them down by department and show trends over time. In addition, by using Press Ganey tools, SSUs can analyze their scores in three ways: compare to their own scores over time, look at their scores in comparison to other Mercy facilities, and see how their scores compare to other healthcare organizations across the nation. The Press Ganey database includes more than 6,000 hospitals.

The surveys also include written patient comments, which can provide important feedback. "The comments that patients make are gold to us because they provide specifics," said Bass. "Our patients give us a gift by telling us what needs to be fixed."

Personal Connections

In 1998, many Mercy facilities initiated call-back programs to add a personal touch to the survey process. Co-workers, usually nurses, call patients shortly after they are discharged to inquire about their stay and make sure they understand how to take care of themselves at home. "Discharge calls get patients' immediate reaction to their experience with Mercy, while at the same time communicate that we truly care about their opinion and their feelings during their stay," said Bass.

While surveys and phone calls provide valuable information, it is also important for Mercy to engage in face-to-face discussion with our patients. Leader rounding provides an opportunity to do this by having administrators and directors visit patients at their bedsides and other service areas to ask about their stay and their needs. "This not only helps the patients, but shows that commitment to their satisfaction extends beyond the nurses and doctors at the bedside, all the way up to administration," said Aubuchon.

This personal connection is crucial to the success of the patient satisfaction process, as leaders are the ones who set the example for the rest of the organization by placing emphasis on listening to patients. "For a culture to change, it has to start with the CEO's vision and be carried through by the support of administration and managers," said Aubuchon. "Managers need to be the models of service excellence within their departments."

Looking Toward the Future

Even with all of these tools in place to listen to our patients, Mercy is always looking for ways to improve and expand upon current practices. Many of Mercy's integrated physician clinics are participating in patient satisfaction surveys from Press Ganey. "We want people to have the same level of care wherever they go within Mercy, whether it is a physician office or a hospital," said Bass. "These surveys help us in our efforts to provide a consistent level of high quality service in all areas of our organization."

Mercy also will soon be participating in the HCAHPS survey, a national effort sponsored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide comparative patient satisfaction data for hospitals across the country. Based on the most recent CMS timeline, Mercy should start collecting data in summer 2006, with the information scheduled for access on the CMS Web site in 2007.

"HCAHPS is part of the new era we are living in that emphasizes information sharing and being transparent to the public," said Jones. "It will be a great tool for us to learn about ourselves in comparison to other hospitals and help educate the community."

Listening to our patients is an important part of Mercy Service, said Aubuchon. "The survey process isn't done just to attain a high score," she noted. "Measurement lets us know if we are being 'Mercy.' Providing the best service, fixing what can be improved and praising what is being done right enables us to live the tradition of service excellence that we proclaim." •

Mercy Health Plans Leadership Changes

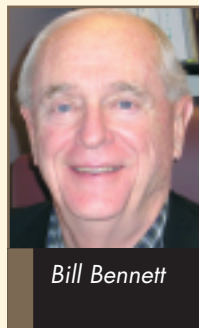
As part of an organizational restructuring within Mercy Health Plans (MHP), a number of leadership changes have been made. These changes align MHP's organizational structure with its strategic initiatives and allow MHP to take full advantage of its opportunities and strengths.

Bill Bennett has been named senior vice president – field operations. He most recently served as senior vice president – marketing and communications at MHP.

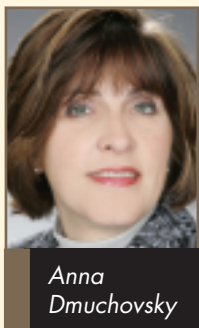
Anna Dmuchovsky has been named vice president – government programs. She most recently served as vice president – medical management at MHP.

Charles Gilham has been named vice president/general counsel. He previously served as executive director–counsel and corporate compliance officer for the Sisters of Mercy Health System.

Gary Levine has been named vice president – marketing and business development. He previously served as vice president – business development at MHP. •



Bill Bennett



Anna Dmuchovsky



Charles Gilham



Gary Levine

Mercy is published quarterly by the Sisters of Mercy Health System. Its purpose is to communicate Mercy activities and issues, to share ideas and information useful in managing or delivering healthcare, to assist in spreading a common Mercy culture, and to reinforce the Mission and Core Values of the Health System.

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