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THE SHAW HEART AND VASCULAR CENTER ISSUE

A white ECG (heart rate) line graphic that spans across the top of the page, partially overlapping the orange and green background sections.

CURRENTS



...and the beat goes on

DR. HOWARD FELDMAN:
10 YEARS AT MERCY'S SHAW HEART

A person wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a light-colored long-sleeved shirt with a fringed scarf is seen from behind, standing in a grassy field. Their arms are raised in the air, reaching towards the sky. The background is a bright sunset or sunrise over a field, with a warm, golden glow. The overall mood is peaceful and celebratory.

contents

spring edition 2017

Dr. Howard Feldman reflects on 10 years at Shaw Heart	Page 4
New online health programs	Page 6
Introducing Dr. David and Hilary Oakes	Page 8
Douglas County's 'Little Pearl'	Page 11
From Turkey to Roseburg	Page 12
Child Abuse Prevention is a Community Effort	Page 15
Mercy.WellFedMe.com	Page 16

Spring



AND THE BEAT GOES ON...

Shaw Heart and Vascular Center's medical director learns that time passes quickly when you're busy establishing one of the nation's premier heart programs.

Dr. Howard Feldman leans back in his chair and quickly scans the room as if he's trying to find the hiding place where the last 10 years have gone.

He can't believe it's been that long since he arrived in Roseburg to undertake the significant challenge of developing a comprehensive heart services program at Mercy Medical Center.

There aren't many signs of the last decade in Dr. Feldman's small office, but there are plenty just outside the door.

When he arrived in 2007, Mercy's heart team consisted of four cardiologists and one catheterization lab, used primarily for diagnosing blocked blood vessels to the heart. Today The Shaw Heart and Vascular Center team is composed of six cardiologists, a cardiac nurse practitioner and many additional support personnel.

But the growth in staff only tells a small part of the story. It is the expertise they have brought that has earned Shaw Heart Center renown as a regional resource for comprehensive cardiac care and status as one of the nation's highest-performing heart centers.

Under Dr. Feldman's leadership, the center's interventional cardiology program has dramatically changed the lives of hundreds of area patients whose risk of heart attack or limb amputation has been dramatically reduced, or eliminated altogether, by the non-surgical procedure to restore blood flow through blocked vessels. A comprehensive electrophysiology program also has been established to diagnose and treat abnormal heart rhythms.

With the addition of specialists and programs, the patient volume has continued to grow, as more and more Douglas County residents realize they no longer have to leave the area to receive heart care as advanced as they can find in most large cities.

Shaw Heart's status on the national level has grown as well. It was the first program west of Texas to earn national Accreditation for Cardiovascular Excellence certification

from the American College of Cardiology. An annual conference hosted by Dr. Feldman and Shaw Heart Center now attracts to its faculty and educational sessions some of the most respected cardiology authorities in the world.

So 10 years may have vanished for Dr. Feldman, but not without leaving an indelible mark on the state of heart care, and the health status of heart patients, in the region for years to come.

Oh, and in his spare time, he opened a winery. When the affable physician says he has "put roots down in this community," he's not kidding.

*"We really like it here,"
"We like the community,
and we like the pace of life."*

He and his artist wife, Marjorie, purchased the Melrose-area winery that once housed Callahan Ridge and Champagne Creek wineries and since 2012 have been bottling malbec, tempranillo, viognier and albarino under the FOON Winery label. The origin of the name is a complicated family tale best heard in person during a visit to the FOON tasting room, which is set to open in May.

"It's just a small boutique winery, but it has been an enormous source of pleasure, gratification and expense," the physician/vintner wisecracks.

Continued on Page 15

Story by Dick Baltus and Photography by Chris Piesch

HEALTH ONLINE

Through three new digital programs, Mercy is removing barriers that can prevent people from getting help from a therapy professional, quitting smoking and eating well.

Imagine you'd like to talk to a therapist, but you live a long distance from the nearest counseling professional, or it's the middle of the night and you need help now.

Thanks to a new online resource being made available by Mercy Medical Center, some Douglas County residents who have difficulty using conventional in-office health services now can easily access professional therapy services online as well as programs to help people wanting to quit smoking or manage their weight.

By Erin Wilds

More Health Online Articles are featured on the back page.

talkspace.com

With over 1,000 licensed therapists and serving more than 500,000 clients, Talkspace is the nation's largest online therapy service. Users are matched with a licensed therapist whose specialty area best fits their needs, then have 24/7 access to therapy services from their computer or mobile device.

All communication is completely secure, and clients can text, e-mail, or video chat with their therapist while maintaining complete anonymity.

"Seeking help for mental health issues still makes some people uncomfortable," says Kathleen Nickel, Mercy's director of communications. "Having access to a confidential therapy service may lead more people to seek help and support."

The online model provides an important option for people who may not have been able to establish a relationship with a local therapist either because of the shortage of providers in the area or the length of time it can take to get an appointment.

"In Douglas County we have a mental health provider shortage, so access is a real problem," says David Price, Mercy's director of mission services. "We're trying to eliminate some of the barriers that would normally interfere with therapy in a conventional program."

Talkspace is currently in a pilot phase, while Mercy assesses its effectiveness. The hospital distributed 50 access vouchers to the Educational Service District (ESD), to help with parenting education and to support at-risk parents and families, and the Up2UsNow violence coalition, to provide another tool to prevent incidents of domestic violence and child abuse.

Mercy will use outcomes data to determine the future direction of the program. "Our best case scenario is that we find out three months into the process that all 50 vouchers have been distributed and used," Price says. "If that's the case, we are going to discuss options to expand the program."

Individuals without the vouchers can still access the service now at talkspace.com. "It's really pretty affordable," Nickel says. "Most people can receive a week of therapy service for about the cost of an insurance copay."

The vouchers are generating interest in the early going of the program, according to Marion Kotowski, violence prevention specialist at Up2UsNow.

The program is generating similar interest at ESD, Price adds. In the future, Mercy hopes to see the Talkspace project expand to reach the community as a whole, and that other local health groups consider providing the resource.

STOP smoking STAY healthy

Every three years the hospital completes a community health needs assessment to determine potential underserved health needs in Douglas County. A 2016 assessment showed tobacco use to be particularly problematic. "The tobacco incidence in Douglas County is extremely high when compared to other counties," says Price.

Also particularly alarming is the 25 percent smoking rate among pregnant women, compared to the state average of 11 percent. These high numbers motivated Mercy officials to establish an initiative to reduce smoking in the area.

That was the genesis of The Become An Ex Program, a free, confidential online support service designed to help smokers quit their habit.

Price hopes the online smoking cessation resource will accomplish some of the same goals as Talkspace -- removing barriers to people seeking help, such as inconvenience, transportation and cost.

The Become An Ex Program was started by the Truth Initiative in partnership with Mayo Clinic. Users can set up a "quit plan" tailored to their individual needs, then check in for support-in-the-moment via text messaging and digital coaching. The Become An Ex Program helps smokers understand how triggers and habitual behavior work in order to help them better understand how the quitting process works.

Once users have successfully quit smoking, they continue to receive support to fight cravings and stay smoke free.

Price says Mercy plans to refer hospitalized patients who express a desire to stop smoking to The Become An Ex Program, adding to the smoking-cessation options now being offered to patients. "We'll do what we can to assist them in their quest to stop using tobacco products."

BecomeAnEx.org



Rhythms of the Heart

Written by Mark Adams
Photos by Kellie Trenkle

Shaw Heart's newest physician specializes in repairing abnormal rhythms and other conditions related to the heart's electrical system.

With an infectious laugh, cardiologist Dr. David Oakes likens his medical specialty to a video game. As an electrophysiologist, the newest member of the Shaw Heart and Vascular Center focuses his practice on the heart's electrical system. His job is to repair problems that patients encounter when that system isn't working properly. The fixes range from "gadgets" like pacemakers and defibrillators to three-dimensional electronic mapping to find abnormal electrical circuits of the heart and ablation procedures to correct abnormal heart rhythms.

While the stakes are a lot higher than a video game, Dr. Oakes says, "It's all very high-tech, and it's my passion. I find it personally and professionally rewarding. I love coming work every day."

Dr. Oakes and his wife, nurse practitioner Hilary Oakes, joined the staff at the Shaw Heart and Vascular Center in October. Last year when Dr. Oakes' was exploring new opportunities to pursue upon completion of his contract with Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, Roseburg wasn't originally on his list.

That changed after a phone call with Dr. Howard Feldman, founder of the interventional cardiology program at Shaw Heart Center. "Howard is an exceptionally well-trained vascular medicine physician who enjoys a great reputation in the field," Dr. Oakes says. "He shared his vision of what he is building here - a world-class cardiovascular program." Dr. Feldman's vision included a robust electrophysiology program that includes a state-of-the-art lab now under construction. Dr. Oakes liked what he heard.

"Howard's a very pleasant, funny, enjoyable guy," Dr. Oakes says. "In one phone call I became very interested in the opportunity, so I came and interviewed. We found this to be a very lovely area and couldn't be happier."

In his highly personable style, Dr. Oakes offers a down-to-earth explanation of the difference between the electrophysiology he practices and the vascular medicine expertise of Dr. Feldman.

"He's sort of the plumber and I'm the electrician," Dr. Oakes explains, adding that he's an electrician who uses tools like three-dimensional mapping of the heart to locate and fix problems of the heart's electrical system. The results are often dramatic.

"I've had patients who were in hospice care because of heart failure or who were waiting on the transplant list," Dr. Oakes says. "We do these procedures, resynchronize the heart and they go from being in really terrible shape to feeling good again. They're able to go back to work or they're out chopping wood. It's one of the most dramatic things we do."

Dr. Oakes gives high marks to all of the cardiologists and other staff members at the Shaw Heart and Vascular Center. "They're all well-trained and experienced," he says. He adds that it is rare that residents of a community the size of Roseburg have access to the breadth and caliber of expertise and technology available at Shaw Heart and Vascular Center. He's happy to now be part of the team and to help patients with abnormal heart rhythms and other conditions return to their highest possible quality of life.

"I thoroughly enjoy building relationships with my patients," he says. "I try to make decisions like my patients are my own family. That seems to work out really well."

Dr. David and Hilary Oakes
at home with their pals
Rocco and Jax.



A GREAT FIT

Good timing enables cardiac nurse practitioner Hillary Oakes to continue caring for heart patients, and working alongside her husband, at Shaw Heart and Vascular Center.

Written by Mark Adams
Photos by Kellie Trenkle

She was just along for the ride, really.

Hillary Oakes' husband, Dr. David Oakes, was visiting Roseburg last fall to explore an opportunity to join the team of cardiology specialists at Shaw Heart Center. Given that it held the potential to uproot the couple from their Boise home, she wanted to see what the area had to offer.

As fate would have it, Roseburg had a lot more to offer Oakes than a great lifestyle. It had a job for her too. On the same day her husband was meeting with his future Shaw Heart colleagues, a cardiac nurse practitioner opening was posted on Mercy Medical Center's job board. It just so happened Oakes was practicing that very specialty at the time back in Boise.

Both she and Dr. Oakes, who met while practicing together at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center, were soon practicing together again at Shaw Heart Center.

"The stars aligned," she says. "We feel really fortunate to work with such kind, nice, smart colleagues. It's a cohesive group of well-trained cardiologists. This is a great fit for both of us."

It's not a stretch to say nursing is in Oakes' blood, given her mother is a nurse, and her grandmother was one. Oakes worked as a registered nurse in Boise for almost 10 years until 2015, when she completed nurse practitioner training and began taking care of heart surgery patients. At Shaw Heart Center, she is caring for patients who have undergone interventional cardiology procedures to clear obstructed blood vessels.

"As a cardiac nurse practitioner I support the cardiologists in the care of their patients," Oakes says. "I see patients at the clinic and help them learn how to manage their medications. I do a lot of

patient education and health promotion in areas like diet, exercise and weight loss, and I help develop and modify treatment plans."

Nurse practitioners work independently of the cardiologists, but in a collaborative process.

"Hillary's a smart, capable woman and I trust her completely," says her husband Dr. Oakes. "She may see a patient more frequently than I do, so she'll often update me on how he or she is doing. We can then sit down and make sure we're in agreement on what we want to do next in a shared decision-making process."

The cardiologist says nurse practitioners help the busy physicians at Shaw by taking some of the strain off their caseloads. "Even when patients are doing well, they still need to follow up with the nurse practitioners. That also frees doctors up to see new patients," he says.

Hilary Oakes says helping patients with cardiac issues provides no shortage of personal and professional rewards.

"They're so appreciative," she says. "Patients are dealing with chronic problems, and we help them get better by creating positive interactions. We help them modify behaviors by first building relationships with them."

Oakes says she, her husband and their English bulldogs, Jax and Rocco, are looking forward to getting out and exploring the area's great outdoors this spring. The couple likes to hike and bike in the warm weather, and ski in the winter.

"Roseburg has everything we need," she says.

Keeping The Beat

A new pacemaker gets Glide resident's heart ticking like a clock again without the need for major surgery.

After undergoing open-heart surgery twice in recent years to replace a failing heart valve, Richard Pierce was hoping the solution to his latest heart problem would be significantly less dramatic.

He got his wish, courtesy of the newest member of the Shaw Heart Center team of specialists at Mercy Medical Center. Pierce had developed an arrhythmia - an irregular heartbeat - and his cardiologist recommended a pacemaker be installed. Enter electrophysiologist Dr. David Oakes. Dr. Oakes informed Pierce a pacemaker could be installed without requiring major surgery, a big selling point for Pierce, who had the procedure performed last December.

Pierce, who says, "I wasn't sure I was ready for another open-heart surgery," was surprised at how noninvasive the pacemaker-implantation procedure was, and how much better he feels after it.

"I went from not being able to walk very far without getting short of breath to chopping wood outdoors without a problem," the Glide resident reports.

The pacemaker procedure involved sending wire leads through a neck artery to the walls of the heart to regulate pumping of the heart muscle. The wires are sent through a small incision in the lower neck near the shoulder, and the pacemaker - which he described as being about the size of a dental floss casing - was then attached to the wires and implanted in the shoulder. Pierce says he had an ace in the hole in terms of reducing anxiety prior to the installation: A neighbor who'd had a pacemaker installed previously at the Shaw Heart Center told him the procedure was both quick and well worth it.

"He told me the difference was night and day. He felt better immediately," Pierce says.

Pierce also gave Dr. Oakes high marks for taking much of the trepidation out of the process. The patient and his wife felt like the medical staff at Shaw went out of their way to answer their questions in easily understandable terms.

"I didn't feel like I was just another patient," Pierce says. "They really care about what they're doing and keep a real close eye on you after surgery to make sure there's no infection."

A couple of months after the pacemaker surgery Dr. Oakes discovered a new arrhythmia in Pierce's heart. The patient went back to the Shaw Heart Center in March for a successful procedure called cardiac ablation, which is used to destroy parts of an abnormal electrical pathway that is causing the abnormal rhythm and working against the steady beat provided by the pacemaker.

"He was getting about 85 percent of the benefit the pacemaker brought," Dr. Oakes said. "We wanted to get it up to 100 percent."

Pierce and his wife Joanne moved to Douglas County about 30 years ago. The retired firefighter from San Diego says he's been cared for at Mercy several times over the years, always with positive results, including his most recent experiences with Dr. Oakes and his staff.

"I'm the curious type," Pierce says. "They happily answered all my questions. They always made me feel like I wasn't just another patient."

He has noticed a big difference in his physical performance and mood following installation of the pacemaker. His wife and his son have also noticed the improvement.

"Our son told me, 'He sounds so much better!'" Joanne Pierce said.

Pierce says his energy has improved to the point that he's now able to drain a full tank of gas in the chainsaw when he's working on their Glide property.

"I'm starting to enjoy life a lot more," the 72-year-old says. "I don't have to feel like people have to stop and wait for me. The feeling of having more energy is wonderful, especially at my age."

Pierce says he's become an ambassador for the quality of care available from Mercy, routinely telling friends and family that if they ever have a situation similar to his, The Shaw Heart Center is the place to go.

"Mercy is Douglas County's little pearl," Pierce says. "And the Shaw Heart Center makes it that much stronger."

The Long Road To Roseburg

Dr. Cihan Cevik had always planned to live in Turkey forever and practice cardiology alongside his father. Fortunately for Douglas County residents, plans sometimes change.

By the time Cihan Cevik, M.D., was in high school he already knew the direction in which he wanted to steer his life, and that was down the same path his father had worn.

He never could have predicted that following in his father's footsteps would lead him to Roseburg, Oregon, USA.

Dr. Cevik grew up in Istanbul, Turkey, where he got an early and intimate preview of his future life as a heart physician. His father was a cardiologist who managed his own practice.

"I got to see him with his patients all the time, and observe first hand how happy they were in his care," Dr. Cevik remembers.

Fast forward through several years of college, medical school and cardiology training, and the young Dr. Cevik is now living his dream. He's practicing interventional cardiology alongside his father, assuming he will finish his career in the same place he started it. But two years into his practice, the political climate in Turkey starts taking a turn for the worse.

"Turkey is this beautiful country in the middle of the Mediterranean," Dr. Cevik says. "It was a wonderful place to live; previously lots of Americans were moving there. But things started changing after the election of 2002. Healthcare changed a lot, and respect for the medical profession decreased. Education changed for the worse. By 2005, things were getting pretty bad."

Dr. Cevik saw the writing on the wall, and it wasn't foreshadowing a happy ending. Heeding the advice of his parents, he started exploring other practice opportunities.

The best medical care in the world was in the United States, but that came with a hitch -- a big hitch. His Turkish medical credentials weren't recognized in the U.S., meaning the well-trained cardiologist who had been seeing his own patients for years would have to start over in America, almost from scratch.

"I had to repeat my internship, residency and entire cardiology training," he says. "But I had done my research, and I knew what the quality of technology and medical education in the U.S. were like. I was ready to do whatever it took. My friends from medical school thought I was crazy, but I was young and knew the situation in Turkey was only going to get worse."

It took Dr. Cevik almost nine years of additional training to start where he had left off.

Fast forward again and now Dr. Cevik is at Texas Heart Institute, one of the top five heart hospitals in the nation. There were some differences between the U.S. and Turkish training, but not enough to keep Dr. Cevik from excelling the second time around to such an extent he is named the Most Outstanding Graduating Fellow.

During his job search, he heard about Dr. Howard Feldman and his world-class interventional program at the Shaw Heart & Vascular Center. "Medical representatives were all talking about it," Dr. Cevik remembers.

He reaches out to Mercy Medical Center and soon he is being hosted by Dr. Feldman and his wife Marjorie at his picturesque vineyard.

The young physician still had another two years of fellowship training to complete, but the visit made an impression.

"It was late summer, and it was beautiful here," Dr. Cevik remembers. "I fell in love with the place and I was very impressed with the quality

of the interventional cardiology work offered here."

As interventional cardiologists, Drs. Cevik and Feldman specialize in the use of catheters to diagnose and non-surgically treat blocked arteries and other conditions of the heart. After having Dr. Cevik observe some of his cases, Dr. Feldman talked about the rapid growth of The Shaw Heart Center and the future need to grow his medical team.

"Sure enough, two years later, when I finished training, they needed someone," Dr. Cevik says. "So I didn't have to do much of a job search."

Fast forward one final time to today, three years after Dr. Cevik started at Shaw Heart, more than a decade after he moved to the U.S. Acclimating to his new country and home has been, for the most part, a breeze, he says.

After growing up in a city of nearly 15 million people, Dr. Cevik wanted to settle down in a place where the pace was slower, and life easier. He and his wife certainly found it in Roseburg. Jenny was one of the first people he met in Texas. She rented an apartment to him. They now have two young children.

"I had to repeat my internship, residency and entire cardiology training"

Dr. Cevik especially appreciates that his new hometown offers such easy access to the activities he enjoys, like basketball, running, hiking and skiing.

"In Turkey, if you wanted to play basketball, you had to know enough people to form teams, then find a place to play. Here, you have pick up games. You just stand on the sideline watching complete strangers play, and soon you'll be called in to join them.

"It's even harder to go for a run there. Turkey is very old, with narrow streets. It wasn't built for jogging. There are places to run, but not close. You have to drive somewhere, which might take an hour because Turkey probably has the worst traffic in the world. Then it's another 30 minutes to park. Then after your run, it's another hour home. "Here, I see my last patient of the day, put on my shorts, step outside and start running."

Dr. Cevik says cardiology, in practice, has been as rewarding as it seemed back when he was watching his father at work.

"Interventional cardiology is a discipline in which you can make someone's life significantly better after just one procedure," he says. "I'll see people with a valve disorder who have been huffing and puffing, just trying to breathe, for 10 years. I will see them one week after they have undergone a procedure and their symptoms are completely gone. They are very grateful, and that's really rewarding."

Following in his father's footsteps may have led Dr. Cevik in a very different direction, but he's more than happy he took the detour.

*Story by Dick Baltus
Photos by Jennifer Holland*



Dr. Feldman at Foon Winery (with wife Marjorie) and at work in the catheterization lab.



Photos by Chris Piesch and Dick Baltus

AND THE BEAT GOES ON...continued

Somewhere along the way, Dr. Feldman also started building a ukulele, but that project keeps getting sidelined for other priorities. Apparently there are limits to how much one can accomplish in 10 years after all.

It's not the most predictable career path that would begin in New York City, Boston and Los Angeles, where Dr. Feldman was educated and trained, and end in a small community like Roseburg. It was proceeding in a more natural direction early on when, after training at UCLA, he was actually set to join a prestigious Beverly Hills cardiology practice.

"I'd actually signed a contract, but I woke up in the middle of one night thinking, I can't possibly do this," he remembers. "It was no place to raise kids (the Feldmans have a son now practicing law in London and a daughter who's a nurse practitioner in Eugene)."

So the new physician veered off the big city path, and that's where he stayed. When Dr. Feldman learned of the opportunity at Mercy, he was practicing in Great Falls, Mont., where he had established and was directing the Heartland Cardiac and Vascular Center.

He didn't know much about Roseburg other than it had an airport that had come in handy 10 years earlier when the plane Dr. Feldman was flying to Mt. Bachelor for a family snowboarding trip had an equipment failure. He needed a place to land in a hurry, and Roseburg's airport provided it. After a quick alternator replacement, off he went, figuring that was the last he'd see of the community.

But Dr. Feldman had always loved the challenge of starting new heart programs, or kick starting existing ones, and when Mercy offered that opportunity he landed in Roseburg once again. This time for good.

"Our focus from the start has been continuing to develop this program so that it is a comprehensive resource for our region," he says. "This is such a great community to live in and a great place to retire, so our senior population is only going to grow. Among seniors' principle concerns, of course, is having access to high-quality healthcare services. And we're helping ensure that is available to them."

Indeed, quality ratings for Shaw Heart and Vascular Center are in the top 10 percent of all centers nationwide. "We rank up there with the Johns Hopkins and Mayo Clinics of the world," Dr. Feldman says.

The center also is a recognized leader in using interventional techniques to clear obstructed peripheral arteries that in many communities are still "fixed" by amputating the affected body part.

"The death rate from amputation after five years is higher than the five-year death rate from cancer," Dr. Feldman says. "We have been very aggressive in our efforts to save patients from that potential fate. It is extremely gratifying to see people who come to us and are at risk of losing a limb walk out of here shortly after an intervention procedure without assistance."

It's that sort of reward that motivated Dr. Feldman to plant his roots, literally and figuratively, in this community, where he can oversee the continued expansion of the heart program, help even more patients, make some wine drinkers happy, maybe even finish that ukulele.

"We really like it here," he says. "We like the community, and we like the pace of life."

Even if that pace has been a little brisk over the last 10 years.



Marion Kotowski shares a domestic violence prevention message in an area school.

Written by Erin Wilds
Photos by Kellie Trenkle

PREVENTING VIOLENCE

For nearly a decade, the Up2UsNow Child Abuse Prevention Coalition has been working to help bring an end to child abuse and domestic violence in Douglas County.

In 2008, the Mercy Foundation joined forces with a collaborative of 33 community agencies, including Department of Human Services, Battered Persons Advocacy (BPA), CASA of Douglas County, and Douglas C.A.R.E.S., to develop a plan to reduce the incidence of child abuse in Douglas County.

"We know that domestic violence and child abuse are predictors of one another; they pretty much go hand in hand," explains Lisa Platt, president of Mercy Foundation. "Our goal as a community coalition is to use a prevention-approach to reduce the number of incidents of child abuse."

In 2010, Up2UsNow received a three-year grant from the Catholic Health Initiatives Mission and Ministry Fund, which enabled the coalition to hire a violence prevention specialist to organize their efforts. Marion Kotowski has been filling the role since, coordinating resources from different agencies, setting goals for the organization, and working at different levels, both local and county, to promote change.

"One of the things we've learned was there may be one family accessing 10 different agencies, with no one agency taking the lead to help that family," Platt says. "Now Marion takes the lead, helping families access appropriate care and services. It's better for the family to have a coordinated approach and it's a better use of our community resources."

Kotowski says the organization's focus is not just on child abuse, but also the risk factors for it. A great example of this is the Supporting Families Project. This program works within Up2UsNow to connect families with community resources, ranging from

mental health services, counseling, legal aid, budgetary advice, help with transportation or other services.

Once families have been referred to the program, Kotowski meets with them on an individual basis to determine which resources will be most helpful.

Providing violence prevention education in several local schools has been a major focus of Up2UsNow. Elementary school students from fourth through sixth grades are taught the foundations of how to prevent bullying and substance abuse, and how to address their own feelings. In middle school and high school, the topics covered include bullying, dating violence, healthy relationships, gender myths and how to stay safe online. Students also are taught about local resources available to assist them if needed.

Up2UsNow is seeing positive results from their efforts to reduce domestic violence in Douglas County. In 2010 the coalition set a goal to reduce the cases of child abuse in Douglas County by 5 percent by 2015. The actual reduction was 28 percent.

The group also has been successful in its attempt to change policy at the local level. For example, Kotowski says, "Our district attorneys within Douglas County no longer plea down domestic violence cases." She explains that when domestic violence occurs and children are in the home, they are also considered abused by proximity. Proper sentencing and rehabilitation could make a significant difference for children involved.

Currently, the coalition is working to develop rural teams of professionals, community members, and emergency responders to help eliminate access barriers in remote areas and spread awareness about prevention to the entire county.



CHI MERCY HEALTH NAMED TO NATIONAL TOP 20 RURAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL LIST

The rankings were recently announced by the National Rural Health Association. The Top 20 Rural Community Hospitals, including CHI Mercy Health, scored best among Rural hospitals on iVantage Health Analytics' Hospital Strength Index™. The Top 20 Rural Community Hospital winners are those hospitals who have achieved success in the overall performance based on a composite rating from eight indices of strength: inpatient market share, outpatient market share, quality, outcomes, patient perspectives, costs, charges and financial stability.

Health Online...continued

Healthy Eating

Mercy has partnered with Well-Fed Me, an interactive website with tools to provide users with healthy eating and lifestyle information.

Online and accessible to anyone, the website features a variety of healthy new recipes, researched by a dietitian and complete with nutritional information per serving. Instructional videos show how to craft the new recipes, and videos offer tips for keeping a healthy kitchen, such as how to clean out your pantry for spring, or how to read a food label.

A free Well-Fed Me lifestyle guidebook can be downloaded, offering information about healthy living and healthy eating, healthy recipes, sleep tips and other general health information.

Though the website was just launched in January, the section offering fresh new recipes has been very popular.

Mercy.wellfedme.com provides the tools to help local residents maintain a healthy weight. "Obesity is often the term that's thrown around, and it is pretty negative," says Kathleen Nickel, Mercy communications director. "With Mercy.wellfedme we're trying to reinforce a positive movement toward achieving your healthy weight through making good food choices."

The ultimate goal of all this is to contribute to Mercy's mission of creating better health in the communities it services by providing people to the information and resources they need.

*Find more information and healthy recipes at
Mercy.WellFedMe.com*



Italian Artichoke Pasta

Ingredients - Marinade

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter, room temperature
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice (approximately ½ large lemon)
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 14-oz can low-sodium diced tomatoes, drained
- 24 raw, large shrimp (about 1 lb), peeled
- 8 oz whole wheat pasta
- 2 steamed artichokes*, quartered with choke and tiny inner leaves removed

Method

1. In a large bowl, mix marinade ingredients. Add shrimp and toss well. Let set, up to 10 minutes.
2. Cook pasta according to package.
3. While pasta is cooking, spread shrimp mixture on a cookie sheet in a single layer. Broil in oven for five minutes on second rack from the top. Check to keep from burning.
4. When pasta is done, save ½ cup of pasta water and drain noodles into a colander. Return pasta to pot, add pasta water and shrimp. Mix well.
5. Plate pasta and shrimp. Add artichokes, garnish and serve.