

Senior Expo 2008 a heartwarming event



The tally for glucose and cholesterol testing was 325 individuals. One of the people performing screenings was Barb Urbaniak, Laboratory Services Director at MMC.



JoAnne Koosmann, left, and Pam Dewey, radiology technologists, talked about the new digital mammography at MMC.



Jill Gibbons and the Rehabilitation Services intern performed strength and mobility screening.



Dr. Thomas Guffy, ophthalmologist with Ashland Eye Specialists, has volunteered his time, with help from Ashland Lions Club, to perform visual field testing at Senior Expo since 1997.



U.S. Senator Herb Kohl stopped by to chat with attendees.

Senior Expo 2008 took change in stride and relocated to the Lake Superior Elementary School. It worked because Senior Expo is one of the area's strongest partnerships and also one of the area's top community benefits. Event sponsors, Northern State Bank, Ashland Health and Rehabilitation Center, Heartland Communications and Memorial Medical Center, form a strong platform as members of the community come together to provide health screenings, services and information important to seniors.

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DEAR EMPLOYEES,

On Wednesday, August 20, MMC again enjoyed an extremely successful Senior Expo. As several people said to me, “the place was packed” and everyone fully appreciated all the many screening tests available to them that day. My thanks to all of you who worked so hard to make this event a success.

As many of you are aware, this year’s Senior Expo was moved to Lake Superior Elementary School as the Beaser Avenue construction project made it impossible to get access to the high school for so many people. It is my understanding that parking was a little more of a challenge at the elementary school, but the flow inside the building worked a little better. I suspect we will have to wait and see what the steering committee concludes is the better site for this event. Again, a special thanks to everyone who had to go the “extra mile” this year to accommodate this new location.

You may have noted in the next morning’s newspaper that Senator Kohl was one of the visitors at the Senior Expo. Senator Kohl is becoming a regular visitor to this event. I believe this speaks highly of the importance this annual event has come to play in our area.

That same day, Senator Feingold held his annual Ashland County listening session at WITC. I used that session as an opportunity to give him a short report on the success of MMC’s conversion to Critical Access Hospital (CAH) status under the Medicare program. We are experiencing a good year and I suspect that will continue until the end of our fiscal year at the end of this month.

I also took this opportunity to talk about what I feel is an unnecessary regulation that CAH facilities have no more than 25 beds in their facility. I told them about some of the hassles all of you go through on a

daily basis to move beds between the three inpatient units to get them to the place they are needed by patients that day. Interestingly, he agreed that this seemed to be an unnecessary requirement and promised to look into it for our organization. Perhaps, with a little bit of luck, we might see some relief from this nuisance regulation at some time in the future. I would warn all of you, however, that government works slowly and it may take some time to achieve that goal.

While we had repeatedly been told that the Beaser Avenue project will not be done until October 1, with the blacktop now down, we may soon be able to at least travel on the road once again. I suspect the lighting and landscaping part of the project will continue throughout the month of September, however, so even though this road soon will be open for travel, I encourage all of you to continue to keep your eyes out for the men and women working on these construction crews. We want them to have a safe conclusion to this project.

Till Next Time,

**Dan Hymans
President**

News from Huhns

Carole Huhn donated one of her kidneys to her husband, Jerry. Here is the latest report as of this newsletter printing.

We're both doing fine, Haven't had any pain meds since this morning (August 23). It doesn't really hurt - just a burning sensation that's tolerable. We've both been up walking and visiting each other.

Jerry's sister-in-law gave us a "guardian chicken" to carry to the other's room. It's a stuffed animal in bloomers, dress and apron. Her feet look like fingers. Jerry's kidney is working well. Peeing up a storm. We're getting really good care here. I'm disappointed though because they gave me something on the way to the operating room but I don't remember anything until I woke up in the recovery room. Missed the OR completely.

Since today is Jerry's birthday he has to be happy with just the kidney. No time to do other shopping. Today he surprised me with jewels. A lovely eternity circle necklace. Guess he is happy with his kidney. And now we are eternally connected.

Thanks for all the good thoughts and prayers. We'll behave and listen to the nurses so we can get out of here. I should be out by Monday. Jerry will be later in the week. Until later.

Love, Carole & Jerry

Above and Beyond

The August Above and Beyond award winners nominated by their peers are:

Brenda Eder

Sara Waby ●

What's New will be new

Starting with the October issue, What's New will go electronic and arrive by email to everyone included in mmceveryone@mmc.com. Staff members that would like to have the newsletter delivered to their private email address should send their address to dklump@ashland-mmc.com. A limited number of copies will be run off and placed in the cafeteria newsletter holders until the January 2009 issue. Then the newsletter will be electronic only.

The design of the newsletter will change by January to make it more electronic friendly. In addition to the considerable savings in printing and being environmentally friendly, an advantage is employees will be able to access pictures in the newsletter and additional photos from an event, electronically. Presently the newsletter can be accessed through the MMC website and that will continue though the design will be different as of January. ●

Book sale planned

The estate of Fern Morris left a large collection of romance novels to Partners of MMC. The books will be featured in a book sale, Thursday, September 18, 8 a.m. to noon, in the hallway by the Coffee and Gift Shop. Proceeds will be used to redecorate the ICU family room. ●

Patient talks about control of diabetes

Claude Schilling will speak at MMC, Tuesday, September 16, 1 p.m., Stockton Island Meeting Room, to share his personal experience with living with diabetes. Schilling is a member of the sanofi-aventis A1C Champions Program®, which is a patient-led approach to diabetes education.

Schilling will talk about topics including: Achieving good glucose control; learning about effective self-management; developing a balanced, healthy lifestyle; planning and prioritizing diabetes management; overcoming fears surrounding diabetes; finding resources for diabetes support.

If you or someone you know is struggling with diabetes or has an A1C that is 7 percent or above, the A1C Champions® can provide motivation to take those first steps to a healthier life. Contact Debra Ollanketo, Ext. 5177, with questions. ●

Secretary Gassman highlights training success at MMC



Secretary Roberta Gassman traveled to northern Wisconsin to highlight the success of three individuals starting new careers. Pictured from left are Daniel Hymans; Kathy Carlson, Human Resources; Secretary Gassman; Steve Terry, executive director of Northwest CEP; Dennis Kontny, Cardiopulmonary Services, Gerald Seitz, Behavioral Health Services; JoAnne Koosman, Radiology Services; and Dan Racette, chair of the board of directors of Northwest CEP.

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman visited MMC to acknowledge the success of three individuals starting new careers as health care workers at Memorial Medical Center and honored DWD's job training partner, Northwest CEP, Inc., for helping workers and employers in its 40 years of service to the area.

While at Memorial Medical Center (MMC), Secretary Gassman met three individuals who changed course as adults and began new careers in health care with employment and training services that DWD funded and CEP provided. The three individuals are:

- Dennis Kontny, a dislocated worker who worked at Fort James Corporation until the paper mill closed in 1998. He enrolled in the dislocated worker program, entered Lake Superior College in Duluth and earned a two-year degree in respiratory therapy. Upon his graduation in 2002, MMC hired him as a respiratory therapist.

- JoAnne Koosmann decided to return to college, earning a two-year degree as a radiology technologist. She was hired immediately by the Eagle River hospital and has since pursued her mammography certification. She now is employed at MMC as a mammography technologist.

- Gerald (Jerry) Seitz, once a self-employed carpenter, entered a training program and today is an Alcohol and Drug Counselor in MMC's Behavioral Health Department.

"It really has been a win-win for us," MMC President Daniel J. Hymans said. "The individual gets a stable, good paying job in the area where they want to live, and MMC gets good employees who are invested in our organization and our community. This is especially helpful in the fields of radiology and respiratory therapy where there are national shortages of trained staff." ●

New mileage rate for flexible benefits participants

As of 7/1/08, the IRS changed the amount of flexible benefit reimbursement for mileage for medical treatment. It has increased from 19 cents per mile to 27 cents per mile for the rest of 2008.

Please note, to receive the reimbursement at the higher rate, the "date of service" must be after 6/30/08.

Please call Human Resources, Ext. 5520, if you have questions. ●

Senior Expo *continued from page 1*

Expo participants are a group of people that like to have fun and polka music by the Jeff Walker Band fits right in.

It is a group of people that likes to spend time with friends with a good cup of coffee and a great tasting muffin that Northwood Catering was happy to serve.

The owl, Archimedes, brought in by the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center Fish and Wildlife is a part of the community as much as the Chequamegon Food Cooperative with healthy diet options. Local businesses and agencies participating in the exhibit halls know seniors are important people and an asset to the community. They want to show off for their Expo guests.



Employee Influenza Vaccination Program

By Marty Baljo, Infection Control

September is here and it's time to start thinking about this year's upcoming flu season. Did you know that many healthcare workers don't bother to get flu shots? I know it sounds absurd, especially since influenza complications hospitalize more than 200,000 people and kill 36,000 in the United States every year.

Numerous professional organizations – including The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, The Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee, The American College of Physicians, The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and The Infectious Diseases Society of America – recommend annual vaccination for healthcare workers who come into contact with patients. Yet only 42 percent of healthcare workers in the United States get them.

We know that vaccinating staff reduces influenza-related death rates among frail patients. And since health care workers, like other people, may go to work even when they are sick, preventing influenza in these workers keeps them from spreading flu to their patients. Patient safety demands that we act on this knowledge. Health care professionals should view the annual influenza vaccine as a professional responsibility for many reasons: It makes us positive role models for our patients; it minimizes the likelihood that we will get influenza and be unable to work at a time when the healthcare system needs us most; and it will

U.S. Senator Herb Kohl stopped in for a friendly chat and handshake with attendees. He did a little business on the side by paying close attention to their concerns. The nurses and medical technicians drop their busy schedules and provide health care without charge. Bay Area Rural Transit comes up with a schedule and rate that provides safe passage to and from the event without charge to the passenger. The school's staff from the principal, to office personnel, to building operations, to student summer workers go way beyond their job descriptions - it's hard work and they do it with a genuine smile.

Simply put, Senior Expo is heartwarming - to its guest and its hosts. Next year, folks 55 and over, along with the folks that make Senior Expo possible, will have another opportunity to be there or be square. ●

help us avoid doing harm by infecting patients in our care. It will also help to keep us from taking the flu home and infecting those we love.

Last year at MMC our non-patient care staff did pretty good – approximately 83 percent were immunized. Direct patient care staff did not do as well. Ancillary departments such as cardiopulmonary, lab, radiology, and rehab averaged 51 percent. Nursing Units averaged 23 percent Inpatient Unit; 33 percent Float Pool; 36 percent ICU; 60 percent Peri-op, 75 percent OB, and 78 percent ER.

We need to do much better! A total of 63 percent of total employees received the vaccine last year. This year we are aiming for at least 80 percent. I hope we can do it!

As in the past, flu vaccine will be offered free to employees at clinics set up during the Health Fair in early November and at other times and places as needed. A new feature we are working on for this year is a flu clinic for health insurance participants and their covered dependents sponsored by Health Partners where your insured spouse and/or children will be able to receive the flu vaccine free. Watch for the announcement of the date and time. ●





All in the Family

JEANNE GRILL, RN AND JODI JARDINE, RN, attended “Pressure ulcer management: Assessment to Closure and Everything In Between.” The workshop was presented by an RN who works for home care, has worked in hospitals and is a legal consultant for pressure ulcer management. She discussed the importance of early and thorough, accurate documentation, establishing a plan of care with the physician and follow-through care and documentation. Emphasis was placed on legal ramifications of poor documentation and follow-through.

TRACY PRISTASH AND KANDI MATTSON, Patient Financial Specialists in Patient Access Services, attended “Forward Health Interchange Provider Training.” Forward Health is another term related to the Wisconsin Medicaid program. The state is now offering a new on-line program called Forward Health Portal, which will enable Medicaid to correct claims on line, check claims status; do claim adjustments, prior authorizations regarding behavioral health and

physical therapy claims; and do enrollment verifications. This system will be available by October 13, 2008.

KATHY TUTTLE AND NANCY GRAHAM, Nursing Services; **CINDY MRDJENOVICH**, Patient Finance Services, and **LISA EKMAN**, Health Information Services, attended “Minimize Compliance and Financial Risk while Preparing for RAC Audit.” Beginning in January 2009, Wisconsin hospitals may be subject to audits of Medicare claims. The intent of audit is to look for errors in payment, both overpayment and underpayment. To date, auditors have recovered over 350 million dollars in overpayment to hospitals in California, Florida and New York. The focus of this conference was to help Wisconsin hospitals prepare for audit through a process of rigorous utilization review to ensure proper patient placement (inpatient, outpatient or observations) and length of stay and improved documentation to ensure accurate coding and billing. ●