

hello **Healthy**

CELEBRATING THE HEALING POWER OF HUMANKINDNESS • SPRING 2019

Bakersfield opens hearts and doors for homeless vets

Tiny house village a welcome idea

Family practice

Why Mercy's new ortho surgeon treats his patients like family

Hello

Memorial Hospital welcomes new President/CEO

'They couldn't believe I was actually having a stroke'

Nathan Banks is 23, happy—and a stroke survivor





Say hello to Memorial Hospital's new President/CEO

As hospital executives go, Ken Keller is fluent in health care

"I tell people that I'm trilingual. I've been in the health care space for about 30 years. During that time I've garnered experience on the health plan side, the physician side, and the hospital side," Keller says. "It gives me the ability to understand the needs and concerns of all parties, and when we work in collaboration, it ultimately leads to better patient care."

As Memorial's chief operating officer since 2015, Keller was instrumental in many projects—most notably the completion of the Robert A. Grimm Children's Pavilion for Emergency Services; the launch of the new neuro critical care unit; and the establishment of a dedicated, permanent unit for the Grossman Burn Center. He also supervised the conversion to a new electronic medical record system and oversaw an \$11 million face-lift for the hospital.

So what does the future hold?

"I want to make sure we are aggressively focused on patient quality, patient experience, and patient safety," Keller says. "We want to continue to improve and elevate our game."

That includes continuing Memorial Hospital's strong community partnership and delivering on the *Hello humankindness* brand.



Rendering created by Centennial High School seniors Christopher Gereke and Caden Erickson and instructor Pierre Peasha

Tiny homes, big impact for local veterans

A longtime champion for local veterans is taking the lead on a new project. The mission: to provide permanent housing to Bakersfield's homeless veterans.

Tim Terrio, president of TERRIO Physical Therapy and Fitness, saw a plan for so-called tiny homes on social media and had a lightbulb moment.

"I knew this would be huge for our community," Terrio says. "Both my father and grandfather are veterans, so I know how important it is to make sure those who have served our country are taken care of."

Terrio teamed up with the California Veterans Assistance Foundation (CVAF), a local agency with a long history of providing housing for homeless veterans. The nonprofit already had a piece of land in mind on Covey Avenue in Oildale.

Safe, dignified housing

The Veterans Village will consist of 12 tiny homes, an outdoor barbecue

area, and a common space with a laundry room. Each home is 400 square feet and includes a bathroom, kitchenette, bedroom, and living area. CVAF will identify local homeless veterans to occupy the homes and will manage the facility. Terrio is working to raise funds through his nonprofit, Health Through Wholeness.

Dignity Health Mercy and Memorial Hospitals contributed \$20,000 to the project.

"We're trying to build this entire project with private funds, so donations like the one from Dignity Health make a huge impact and help us reach our goal of getting homeless veterans into permanent housing," Terrio says.

Bakersfield steps up for veterans

The list of people involved keeps growing. From local home builders to high school students, everyone is donating time and talents to the project, but there is still much to be done.

"Anything we can get donated makes it go faster," Terrio says. "We need everything from concrete to coffeepots."

"This project is going to be a testament to Bakersfield and how this community comes together to get things done," says Terrio.

Construction is expected to start this spring.



Tim Terrio



A little help goes a long way

To find out how you can contribute, visit bakersfieldveteransvillage.org.

CLICK

Meet Timothy Galan, MD

Get to know Mercy Hospital's newest orthopedic surgeon

For Timothy Galan, MD, the best part about being an orthopedic surgeon is making an immediate—and meaningful—difference in people's lives. That may be someone who has dealt with painful arthritis for years and can now enjoy a more pain-free, active life because of the treatment he provides.

"I enjoy seeing the results and my patients' appreciation for them," he says. "Every day it's a miracle. I'm very happy doing what I do."

Dr. Galan is the newest member of the surgical staff at the Mercy Orthopedic, Spine & Hand Center. He recently completed fellowship training in adult joint reconstruction at the world-renowned Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida.

A former nurse, almost an engineer

Dr. Galan started his medical career as a nurse in Modesto. Before that, he graduated with a degree in engineering like his dad. But he ultimately followed in the footsteps of his mother, who had been a nurse in Ukraine before she became a physician.

"I actually always wanted to be a doctor, so after four years of working as a nurse, I applied to medical school," Dr. Galan says.

"I decided to specialize in orthopedics after an orthopedic surgeon spoke to my class in medical school," he recalls. "I was just blown away by the presentation and made the decision that that was who I wanted to be. Since then, I never thought twice about it or had any doubts."

After medical school in Minnesota, Dr. Galan completed an orthopedic residency at UCSF Fresno. His nursing background helps him relate to patients and families. Being a mechanical engineer helps him think about orthopedic problems three-dimensionally, he says.

Dr. Galan chose to work at Mercy because the philosophy here aligns with his own belief in whole-person care.

"I treat everybody like family because that's how I was trained and that's how I expect my doctors to treat me," he says.

When he's not seeing patients, Dr. Galan enjoys spending time with his three children. His interests include skiing, hiking, art, sports, traveling, and history.

"I could talk for hours about history," he says.



In addition to joint replacement surgery, Dr. Galan's specialties include:

- Nonsurgical management of hip and knee arthritis.
- Fracture care.
- Joint preservation (treatment intended to delay or avoid the need for joint replacement surgery).
- Revision of hip and knee replacement.

Make the call

To make an appointment with a specialist at Mercy Orthopedic, Spine & Hand Center, call **661.664.2300**.

CALL 

Hello humankindness®

We hope you enjoy this issue of *HelloHealthy*. Comments about the publication can be directed to the Marketing and Communications Department:

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‘I just couldn’t wrap my head around it’



For Nathan Banks of Bakersfield, what started out as a relaxing dinner with a friend turned into a fight for his life when he had a stroke at the age of 23.

One evening in August 2018, Banks finished up at his job as a campaign field representative and headed out to dinner.

That’s when it hit.

All of a sudden Banks had a severe headache. He immediately drove home, and his mother called 911.

“When the paramedics arrived, they couldn’t believe I was actually having a stroke, because I was so young,” Banks says.



Rapid response

Banks was rushed to Mercy Hospital Downtown on Truxtun Avenue, where emergency department (ER) doctors determined that a blood vessel had ruptured in his brain, causing a large blood clot. Bakersfield Neurosurgeon Majid Rahimifar, MD, performed an emergency craniotomy to remove the blood that was filling Banks’ brain.

“Nathan was very lucky,” Dr. Rahimifar says. “Time was the biggest factor in his case. The ER team was able to diagnose his stroke in less than 30 minutes, which is critical for a positive outcome.”

When he woke up from a medically induced coma two weeks later, Banks was shocked to learn what had happened.

“When they told me I had a stroke, and then a second one while in the ICU, I couldn’t believe it,” Banks says. “They really had to explain it to me because I just couldn’t wrap my head around it.”

For most young people, the chance of having a stroke seems like an impossibility—but there is no such thing as being too young for stroke. While the risk increases after age 55, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports an alarming rise in the number of young adults experiencing stroke.



A silent risk factor

“It’s important that young people get regular checkups to make sure their blood pressure is normal,” says Dr. Rahimifar. “They should also find out if they have a family history of stroke.”

Dr. Rahimifar says Banks had undiagnosed high blood pressure, which contributed to his stroke.

Several months and two surgeries later, Banks is on the road to recovery and extremely grateful for the excellent care he received at Mercy Hospital Downtown.

“The doctors and nurses really exemplified the motto *Hello humankindness*,” says Banks. “And Dr. Rahimifar was fantastic. I saw him shortly after I was released from the hospital, and I gave him a big hug and told him, ‘Thank you for allowing God to use your hands to save my life.’”

“Nathan is a very charming young man and we are very pleased with his remarkable recovery,” Dr. Rahimifar says.

Since his brush with death, Banks has adopted a healthier lifestyle. He takes medication to manage his hypertension and has added exercise to his daily routine.



A stroke can strike at any age. Regular checkups can help find problems early. Need a doctor? Call **661.487.1042**.



More young adults are having strokes

Strokes primarily strike older adults. But as Nathan Banks' story illustrates, a stroke can happen to anyone at any age.

"You are not immune to stroke just because you're a young adult," says Kiron Thomas, MD, Director of Stroke and Neurointerventional Services at Dignity Health – Memorial Hospital.

In fact, the number of younger adults having a stroke is on the rise. One possible reason: A 2017 study in *JAMA Neurology* found that stroke risk factors—such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity—have become more common among younger people.

Another cause of stroke in young adults is a condition called arterial dissection (a tear in the blood vessel wall), Dr. Thomas says. Trauma is often a cause of these tears in the neck arteries, though they can happen spontaneously. Some people inherit a higher risk for the condition.

Prevention is key

No matter what your age, you can take steps to lessen your chances of having a stroke. Among other steps, you can:

Know your risk for stroke. Regular checkups can help your doctor find and monitor any stroke risk factors you have. If your doctor prescribes a medication, such as one to bring your blood pressure down, take it as directed.

Lead a healthy lifestyle. For instance, maintain a healthy weight, don't smoke, exercise regularly, and eat a healthy diet.

"A healthy lifestyle can go a long way toward preventing a stroke," Dr. Thomas says.

Mercy and Memorial Hospitals Community Grants Committee with BARC



Dig deeper

For more information on the Dignity Health Community Grants Program, contact Donna Winkley at donna.winkley@dignityhealth.org.

Care beyond our walls

Local organizations working to improve the health and wellness of our community's most vulnerable members are getting a helping hand.

The Dignity Health Community Grants Program, through Mercy and Memorial Hospitals, helps local nonprofit organizations improve the quality of life for our most underserved population. This year, eight local nonprofits were awarded a total of \$339,351.

"The Community Grants Program takes what we do beyond the walls of the hospital," says Donna Winkley, Regional Director of Special Needs and Community Outreach for Dignity Health. "We are passionate about providing resources for the poor and disenfranchised so they have access to quality health care and education."

Giving BARC a boost

One local organization receiving a boost to its budget is the Bakersfield Association for Retarded Citizens (BARC). BARC's main mission is to provide essential job training, employment, and support services for the intellectually and developmentally disabled and their families.

BARC recently determined that about three-quarters of its clients are overweight and 30 percent are considered obese. Many have chronic conditions like diabetes.

"This information motivated us to put together a

This year, eight local nonprofits were awarded a total of **\$339,351.**

full-blown program to promote health education, intervention, and prevention," says Gil Garcia, resource development specialist for BARC.

BARC was awarded \$30,000 to help provide chronic disease health education to its clients. This includes a four-day health and wellness retreat in the San Bernardino Mountains for 90 disabled adults.

"We are really excited about this program," says Garcia. "It's going to help create a long-lasting lifestyle change for our clients—and that's what we want."

Participants will receive health screenings to measure things like body fat, blood pressure, and cholesterol. They will also take part in workshops specially tailored to teach them about diet and exercise, along with the dangers of stroke, heart attack, and diabetes.

"All too often mainstream society ignores disabled adults," Garcia says. "This program will help create increased awareness and really benefit our clients."

A legacy of caring

This year's other grant recipients are Hoffmann Hospice, Bakersfield Pregnancy Center, Alpha House, St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities, New Advances for People with Disabilities, and Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Since its inception in 1990, the Community Grants Program has awarded more than \$4.5 million to 64 different agencies in Kern County.

"Our Community Grants Program is one way we collaborate with nonprofit organizations to increase access to quality care for Kern County residents," Winkley says.

What to know about three common types

When you think of cancer in women, breast cancer is probably the first to come to mind. It is the most frequently diagnosed female cancer.

But gynecological (GYN) cancers are common in women too—particularly uterine, ovarian, and cervical cancers.

Those are the three GYN cancers Jonathan Tammela, MD, most often sees as a board-certified gynecologic oncologist surgeon at the Comprehensive Blood and Cancer Center, a partner of Dignity Health. He knows a lot about GYN cancers—how to diagnose and treat them and, perhaps most importantly, some steps women can take to avoid them.



Ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer may be the most difficult of these three cancers to try to prevent. Risk factors include an early onset of menstruation, as well as late menopause.

“Some women are at genetic risk because they have a BRCA gene,” Dr. Tammela says.

Anything that suppresses ovulation can help reduce the risk for ovarian cancer. That includes pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Like uterine and cervical cancers, ovarian cancer is treated with surgery. And almost all women with ovarian cancer will need to undergo chemotherapy treatment.

Uterine cancer

“There are about 60,000 cases of uterine cancer every year in the U.S.,” says Dr. Tammela. “And the No. 1 risk factor for developing uterine cancer is obesity.”

That’s because obesity converts hormones in the body to estrogen, which increases a woman’s risk for uterine cancer tenfold. Maintaining a healthy weight is one way to reduce the risk of uterine cancer.

This type of cancer is usually treated with a hysterectomy and lymph node removal. That most often is done using minimally invasive robotic surgery, Dr. Tammela says.

If the cancer has spread, chemotherapy and radiation may also be used.

Cervical cancer

Most cervical cancers are caused by infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV). Most sexually active people will be exposed to HPV. Females and males can help prevent infection by getting the HPV vaccine, Dr. Tammela says.

Regular Pap tests help catch cervical cancer early.

Cervical cancer is treated surgically, often with a radical hysterectomy and lymph node removal, Dr. Tammela says. Chemotherapy and radiation may be needed if the cancer has spread.



Get treatment from a specialist

“Multiple studies have shown a greater chance of survival for women with cancer who are treated by GYN oncology specialists,” Dr. Tammela says.



Cancer care with kindness

From diagnosis to treatment, Dignity Health’s community of skilled nurses, expert physicians, and patient navigators delivers exceptional cancer care. Let us help you on your way to healing.

Visit dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/cancercare or call to find an expert in cancer care: **661.365.0191**.



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Too young for stroke

Nathan Banks couldn't believe he was having a stroke at 23.

▶ **SEE PAGE 4**
to read his story.

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