

# be well

A DIGNITY HEALTH PUBLICATION | SUMMER 2022

Mercy Medical Center Redding:  
**Cardiac Surgery Clinic Opens**

Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta:  
**High-Level Care for  
Trauma Patients**

St. Elizabeth Community Hospital:  
**Healing Wounds, Changing Lives**

Get Your  
*Family*  
**BACK-TO-SCHOOL**  
*Ready*



**Dignity Health**<sup>®</sup>  
Mercy Medical Center  
Redding

# Leadership Letter

HELPING YOU

## BE WELL



**Summer is winding down**, and that means families are finishing out their vacations and gearing up for another school year. This is a time that often represents fresh

perspectives, energizing adventures and more chances to grow. We're here to help ensure you and your kids are healthy and ready for a fresh start this fall.

In this issue of *Be Well*, we share helpful tips on back-to-school prep, from backpack guidelines to well-child checkup reminders.

And for those of you who plan to squeeze in one last trip before the season ends, we know comfortable and carefree travel is a must. Check out our suggestions so you can put your mind at ease with proper planning and focus on the fun.

As always, our culture of humankindness drives our mission at Dignity Health North State. Let's continue to work together and support each other as one community.

Sincerely,

Todd Strumwasser, MD  
President  
Northern California Division,  
Dignity Health

At Dignity Health, we believe the two pillars of humanity and kindness are the yin and yang of healing: powerful alone, but **better together**.

## North State News

### Mercy Medical Center Redding



We are honored to care for our community year after year. With the recent opening of our new cardiac surgery clinic in collaboration with Stanford Health Care, our team of specialists offers patients a range of cardiothoracic surgical services. Located on Mercy Redding's campus, the clinic handles minimally invasive heart valve operations, atrial fibrillation surgeries and more. Better health after surgery is the priority, and we are committed to working with our patients to meet that goal every day.

—**G. Todd Smith, President, Mercy Medical Center Redding**

### Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta



In the event of a traumatic injury, including major burns and blunt trauma, trust us to care for your loved ones. Our care team at Mercy Mt. Shasta's Trauma Program is equipped to treat severe injuries and is ready to step in when you need them. As the only level III trauma center in Siskiyou County, our facility provides 24-hour coverage supported by emergency medicine physicians and the prompt availability of general surgeons and anesthesiologists. We take pride in bringing a wide range of services to the residents of Mt. Shasta and nearby communities.

### St. Elizabeth Community Hospital

When you have a chronic or non-healing wound, we understand how deeply it can impact your quality of life. At the Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine Center at St. Elizabeth, we focus on state-of-the-art treatments for advanced wound care. In fact, we offer hyperbaric oxygen therapy so you can experience high-tech healing in a comfortable and safe environment. We are always here to care for you and help you heal.

—**Rodger Page, President, Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta and St. Elizabeth Community Hospital**

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## THE CARDIAC SURGERY CLINIC BRINGS

# Advanced Surgical Care to the Community

MERCY REDDING'S CLINIC SPECIALIZES IN A RARE, MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGICAL TECHNIQUE WITH A PERSONALIZED TOUCH.



**A cardiothoracic surgery clinic** is now available to patients throughout the North State. Located on Mercy Redding's campus, the clinic functions in affiliation with Stanford Health Care. This affiliation ensures patients and surgeons have direct access to hospital resources for the highest level of cardiothoracic surgical care.

The clinic is staffed by three providers with decades of cardiothoracic experience combined. Eric Keyser, MD, FACC, performs minimally invasive heart valve procedures, as well as atrial fibrillation surgeries. Dr. Keyser also offers several other techniques, such as off-pump CABG, minimally invasive vein harvesting, the Convergent Procedure for atrial fibrillation, and videoscopic lung and mediastinal surgery. The clinic also relies on two cardiac surgery advanced practitioners who help with patient surgeries, care and recovery.

For Dr. Keyser, performing cardiac surgery using the humankindness standard at Dignity Health is inspired by his personal connection to the work.

"My mother had severe heart and lung disease, and she decided against organ transplant due to the poor technology at the time," Dr. Keyser said. "This happened before I went to medical school, and it was in the back of my mind when I chose my profession."

### **An Exciting Cardiac Surgery Advancement**

During his more than 20 years in cardiac surgery, Dr. Keyser has become one of the few cardiac surgeons to perform a certain minimally invasive surgical technique.

This procedure is unique to the cardiac surgery clinic at Mercy Redding.

"The traditional incision for heart surgery is 15 inches," Dr. Keyser said. "Through technical skill and craftsmanship, I've developed a technique for heart valve surgery using a two-inch incision."

This method has similar advantages to less invasive robotic-assisted surgeries, featuring faster recovery times and fewer complications. Yet, Dr. Keyser's minimally invasive surgical methods are faster than robotic technology and use less equipment. His methods are available to patients to ensure quicker recoveries and more favorable outcomes.

### **Full Spectrum Patient Care**

The Stanford Cardiac Surgery Program at Mercy Redding Heart Center accepts direct referrals, though most patient referrals are generated through other cardiologists or primary care providers.

Heart surgery is a major endeavor, and patients need personalized treatment plans, along with professional and emotional support. Our program provides this level of specialty care.

"Consider the new clinic like a specialty mechanic," Dr. Keyser said. "After surgery with us, patients return to their cardiologist and continue their heart health journey."

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LEARN MORE ONLINE AT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/MERCYREDDINGHEART](https://DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/MERCYREDDINGHEART).

# When Trauma STRIKES

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR FOR EXCELLENT CARE.



**Automobile accidents.** A fall off a ladder. Rough play on the basketball court. Sudden and unexpected, trauma calls for careful evaluation and specialized care.

As a level III trauma center, Mercy Mt. Shasta brings health and healing after traumatic events.

“It takes a lot of resources for a hospital of our size to offer this level of trauma care,” said Barbara Clark, RN, Manager of the Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit and Trauma Program at Mercy Mt. Shasta. “However, these services allow us to maximize positive outcomes and reduce the risk of undiscovered injuries. That makes trauma services a worthwhile investment.”

## Trauma vs. Emergency

All traumatic injuries are emergencies, but all emergencies are not traumatic.

Trauma may cause significant damage to extremities or leave someone with no pulse. Blood pressure may drop to dangerous levels. There may be significant bleeding, either visible or internal. A bone may be broken. The patient may struggle to breathe, or burns may cover a significant part of the body.

In the worst trauma events, Mercy Mt. Shasta's full trauma team activates. A quick chest X-ray determines if the lungs are functional. Further imaging looks for active internal bleeding. Blood tests and other screenings get performed if necessary. Patients undergo surgery. Whatever it takes to stabilize and heal patients, the team makes it happen.

## Understanding Level III

The American College of Surgeons recognizes four levels of trauma care. As the only verified level III facility in Siskiyou County, Mercy Mt. Shasta offers:

- 24-hour emergency medicine physician coverage
- Agreements with other facilities to allow transfer of patients when needed
- Continuous education for trauma team members
- Immediate access to certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) and general and orthopedic surgeons
- Ongoing quality improvement programs

At Mercy Mt. Shasta, all this comes with humankindness.

“Our people care deeply about what they do,” Clark said. “We live in this community. The people we treat are our friends, family and neighbors. It’s an honor to care for them when they need it most.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR 24/7 EMERGENCY CARE, VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/MTSHASTAER](https://dignityhealth.org/mtshastaer).

## It Takes a Team

Each month, nearly 30 North State residents turn to Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta for trauma care. As soon as they come through the doors, our trauma team springs into action. Team members include ER nurses, CRNAs and physicians, general and orthopedic surgeons, surgical technicians, phlebotomists, radiologists, respiratory therapists and others. Because trauma care takes a team.



Where Hard-to-Heal Wounds

# Meet Their Match

WHEN YOU HAVE A WOUND, YOUR BODY WORKS TO HEAL IT. SOMETIMES, THIS PROCESS NEEDS A HELPING HAND. THAT'S WHERE WOUND CARE COMES IN.

**Located at 2440** Sister Mary Columba Drive, Suite 300, in Red Bluff, the Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine Center at St. Elizabeth Community Hospital is a valuable local resource for individuals with chronic wounds. Thanks to the center, these patients don't need to drive to Redding or Chico to receive specialized wound care services that can help them avoid infection or amputation—and boost their quality of life.

A team of specialized physicians and nurses treats a variety of chronic, hard-to-heal wounds and related conditions, including:

- Diabetic foot ulcers
- Osteomyelitis
- Postsurgical wounds
- Radionecrosis
- Skin tears
- Trauma-related wounds
- Vascular insufficiency
- Venous stasis ulcers

“A slow-healing wound can make life difficult,” said Ronda Mancasola-Paris, MS, Director of the Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine Center.

“Our center offers resources and relief to patients with skilled physicians and staff using tailored treatment plans.”

## Achieving Closure

Physicians at the center use a variety of therapies to help wounds heal. For many patients, treatment starts with debridement. During this procedure, a physician removes the wound's dead or damaged tissue. Once the wound is clean, the physician might apply a skin substitute product or prescribe hyperbaric oxygen therapy. (See “Dive In” for more information.)

Seeing patients achieve successful results is always gratifying.

“In one memorable case, we treated a patient with an open wound down to the bone who had chronic osteomyelitis, or a bone infection, for more than a decade,” said Eric Rudnick, MD, Medical Director of the Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine Center. “We managed to heal the wound and get the infection under control. The patient was very grateful.”

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TO FIND A WOUND CARE SPECIALIST,  
VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/OURDOCTORS](https://dignityhealth.org/ourdoctors).

## Dive In

For some patients, wound care involves spending time in a hyperbaric chamber, where higher-than-normal air pressure boosts the blood's oxygen content. These sessions, known as dives, help more oxygen to reach wounds, which aids healing.

“We have two hyperbaric chambers that our nurses are certified to operate,” said Whitney O'Bannon, RN, Clinical Nurse Manager at the Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine Center at St. Elizabeth. “We've been very successful at using hyperbaric oxygen therapy to help heal wounds and improve patients' quality of life.”

Patients visit the center for 90-minute dives five times per week for a total of 30–40 sessions. With a nurse nearby, patients relax inside a large, plexiglass tube—napping and watching movies are popular pastimes—while oxygen does its healing work.



PAIN DOESN'T HAVE  
TO TAKE THE FUN OUT  
OF YOUR SUMMER  
TRAVELS.

# Don't Let Traveling Be a Pain in the Neck (or Back)

**It's summertime**, and you might be readier than ever to pack your bags and hit the road—or take to the skies—for a family adventure. But if traveling comes with neck and back pain, your excitement might be short-lived.

Lifting heavy luggage and sitting in awkward positions for long periods of time can often put stress on the spine while traveling. By planning ahead, being careful and paying attention to your posture, you can avoid unnecessary discomfort and make the most of your vacation.

## Pro Luggage Tips

Protecting your back begins before you even leave home. Whether traveling by car or plane, follow these tips:

- **Pack lightly.** Use lightweight suitcases with wheels, and only pack what you and your family need so suitcases are lighter.
- **Lift correctly.** When lifting, bend at your knees instead of your waist, and move your body to meet the bag instead of pulling it toward you. Lift heavy items slowly and in stages, such as resting a suitcase on a seat before lifting it into an overhead bin.
- **Carry wisely.** Hold items close to your chest and be sure to carry weight evenly instead of on just one side of your body.

## Proper Posture

Long travel days often mean prolonged periods of sitting, which can put extra pressure on your spine.

Check on your posture frequently to reduce the amount of strain on your back and neck. Make sure:

- Both feet are flat on the floor.
- Your lower back is pressed against the seat back for support.
- Your ears are aligned over your shoulders, your shoulders are aligned over your hips, and your chin is not pressed forward.
- Your head is resting on a headrest without pushing it forward.

Bring along a lumbar pillow and a U-shaped neck pillow to help you keep good posture.

## Keep Moving

Get up and move as much as possible during travel to keep your spine from getting stiff.

Take short walks, stretch your legs and loosen your neck by bending your ear to your shoulder and holding for 15 to 30 seconds. You can also pull your chin towards your chest to stretch the back of the neck.

## Be Prepared

To combat pain when it happens, bring along battery-operated heating pads as well as plastic bags that you can fill with ice. Apply heat to ease sore muscles and joints and ice to numb sharp pain.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PREVENTING PAIN IN YOUR JOINTS? VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/NORTHSTATEORTHO](https://www.dignityhealth.org/northstateortho) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

# The ABCs of Back-to-School Health

FROM PHYSICALS TO HEALTHY LUNCHES, **HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.**

## Check That Backpack!

Backpacks that are too heavy or too large can cause serious pain for kids and increase the chances of falling. Make sure your child has an appropriate backpack for his or her size and weight.



- + **Weigh the pack** (with books and school supplies) on a bathroom scale. It shouldn't be over 20% of your child's weight.
- + If the backpack is **wider than your child's chest** or hangs 4 inches or more below the waist, it's too big.
- + Make sure the backpack has **both padded straps and a padded back**. Your child should always use both straps and wear the pack fully on his or her back, rather than on one shoulder.
- + **Opt for breathable materials**. Backpacks made from lightweight fabrics are comfortable yet durable.

**The past three school** years have been nothing like what we are used to, and there's no guarantee this year will be either. But preparing for a return to school in advance can help your child get off to a great start.

## Preparation Helps With Stress

Many children are suffering from high levels of stress due to the pandemic. Make going to class easier for your kids, especially if they are starting a new school.

If your child is feeling anxious, ask for a tour and to meet with their teacher.

Practice walking to the bus stop or the school. If a neighborhood classmate can tag along, even better.

Start going to bed earlier and getting up earlier a week or two before school starts, so there will be an easier adjustment.

## Breakfast and Lunches Matter

Most kids get half their daily calories at school. Check out your school district menus in advance so you can pack a lunch on days when their least favorite foods are featured. Also remember that providing a healthy breakfast with whole grains, protein and fruit is the best way to ensure your kids have enough energy to get through the morning.

## See Your Pediatrician

If your child hasn't had her or his annual wellness exam, now's the time to make an appointment. Your pediatrician can make sure your child is up to date on any needed vaccinations. They can also check for any potential vision or hearing problems and test for diabetes and allergies.

DOES YOUR CHILD NEED A CHECKUP OR A NEW PEDIATRICIAN? IT'S EASY TO SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS AND FIND PROVIDERS NEAR YOU AT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/NORTHSTATE](https://DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/NORTHSTATE).





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# Decades of commitment. Generations of caring.

At Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center Redding, we’ve grown alongside you and your family for generations with an unparalleled commitment to the health of our community. Serving the North State region with the most advanced, award-winning care, you can count on us—with a nationally recognized cardiac program, the region’s most comprehensive cancer care, and the only hospital in the area to offer maternity services, neonatal intensive care and stroke expertise. We’re proud to have served as your health partner for decades. And we’re honored to continue supporting you in all the years to come. Learn more about us at [DignityHealth.org/MercyRedding](http://DignityHealth.org/MercyRedding).

Hello humankindness®

