

# be well

A DIGNITY HEALTH PUBLICATION | SUMMER 2023

Mercy Medical Center Redding:  
**Diagnosing Dangerous  
Heart Attacks – Fast**

Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta:  
**Medical Experts Who Call  
Mt. Shasta Home**

St. Elizabeth Community Hospital:  
**Taking Medical Imaging  
to the Next Level**

SUMMER  
*Self-Care*



**Dignity Health**  
Mercy Medical Center  
Redding

# Leadership Letter

HELPING YOU

## BE WELL



### Summer has arrived.

As you spend these longer, carefree days exploring the outdoors and spending time with those you love, please remember to take care of yourself.

In this issue of *Be Well*, we offer tips for summer self-care while understanding that summer SADness is real. This issue also emphasizes the importance of sleep when it comes to a healthy heart.

We here in the North State love the warmer months, and we want to make sure you are doing all you can to have a happy, healthy summer. That includes a friendly reminder about the importance of wearing sunblock if you choose to spend time in the summer sunshine.

Sincerely,

Anita Chandrasena, MD,  
Chief Medical Officer,  
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



Mercy Redding prides itself on being at the forefront when it comes to treating those in our community. We have received national recognition for our skill in diagnosing the most dangerous heart attacks, leading to better outcomes for our patients. Dignity Health Connected Living is another way we improve life for our neighbors. The program's offerings include a food bank that distributes millions of pounds of food per year. Plans to expand space for the food bank will positively impact even more lives in the community.

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

### Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta



At the heart of every hospital are the devoted, compassionate doctors who have dedicated their careers to caring for the patients in their community. Mercy Mt. Shasta understands the importance of the relationship between doctor and patient, which is why we're excited to introduce Dr. Darren Russell, general surgeon, and Dr. Kelsey Sloat, OB-GYN. We believe that it takes a community to live well and be well. We are pleased to be joined by these physicians in attending to the overall well-being of our community.

### St. Elizabeth Community Hospital

CT scans provide crucial diagnostic information to providers and their patients. St. Elizabeth Community Hospital recently upgraded its old CT scanner with a more advanced unit that offers better capabilities for diagnosing serious concerns (such as cancer and stroke), close to home. In addition, we've improved the experience to help ease patients' anxieties about the scans. This is just another example of our commitment to safe, high-quality care that has made St. Elizabeth Community Hospital one of The Leapfrog Group's Top Rural Hospitals in California.

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

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# STEMI STAT

## Heart-Attack

### Care

MERCY REDDING'S STEMI PROGRAM DIAGNOSES AND TREATS THE MOST DANGEROUS HEART ATTACKS—FAST.



**A STEMI is the most dangerous** heart attack. Short for ST-elevation myocardial infarction, a STEMI occurs when you have a completely blocked coronary artery. Fortunately for communities around the North State, Mercy Redding is home to an accredited STEMI receiving center.

“Every minute care is delayed potentially damages heart muscle,” said Nikita Gill, MD, interventional cardiologist who sees patients at Mercy Redding. “If you want to save heart muscle, you need to get to a STEMI hospital as soon as possible.”

#### Get Here Fast, Get Care Fast

Treating a STEMI starts with fast-acting medication to help clear blocked arteries. Angioplasty and stenting follow. During this procedure, an interventional cardiologist inflates a tiny balloon inside the blocked area and inserts a wire and a mesh tube (stent) to keep the artery open.

For the best outcome, you need both treatments within 90 minutes of a STEMI heart attack starting. You also need proper support in the hospital and upon discharge.

#### Tested and Tried

Hospitals that meet these standards nearly 100% of the time earn recognition as an American Heart Association (AHA) Mission: Lifeline STEMI Receiving Center. After doing this for a full year, Mercy Redding will be on pace for a silver award.

“When you’re having a STEMI heart attack, you need a hospital that handles STEMI regularly and has success treating them,” Dr. Gill said. “We’re very good at what we do, and we consistently meet or beat AHA goals.”

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IF YOU'RE HAVING SYMPTOMS OF A HEART ATTACK, CALL 911 AND ASK TO GO TO MERCY REDDING.

#### Growing to Meet Your Needs

Put simply, Dignity Health Connected Living improves life for our community. Programs provide respite care, transportation for seniors, hot meals and more. After 25 years, one beloved program—Connected Living Food Bank—has outgrown its space.

The Connected Living Food Bank is the designated food bank in Shasta County, distributing over 4 million pounds of food each year. The Food Bank helps support our local church and social-service agency food pantries and serves thousands of seniors and families each month at 12 different distributions in the county.

“If we weren’t here, our community would suffer nutritionally,” said Staci Wadley, Senior Director of Dignity Health Connected Living. “By growing our space for the Connected Living Food Bank, we can bring in more resources and better serve those who turn to us.”

To that end, Connected Living is breaking ground on an expansion project. Once completed in early 2024, the Food Bank’s footprint will nearly double in size.

**To volunteer with the Connected Living Food Bank, call 530.223.6034, or to donate, visit [supportmercynorth.org](http://supportmercynorth.org).**



## First-Rate Care With a *Small-Town Touch*

THE DOCTORS AT MERCY MT. SHASTA ARE MORE THAN MEDICAL EXPERTS—THEY'RE COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO LOVE TO SEE THEIR NEIGHBORS THRIVE.

**Meet two doctors** who call Mt. Shasta home.



**Darren Russell, MD**

Darren Russell, MD, general surgeon, started at Mercy Mt. Shasta about two years ago. He grew up in Southern California and lived in Oakland before making the move to Siskiyou County. The beauty of the mountains and the sense of community drew him to the area.

“What I like most about living and working in Mt. Shasta are the people here,” Dr. Russell said. “Coming from a big city, I didn’t have the opportunity to see my patients outside of the office or operating room. In a town like Mt. Shasta, I’m able to be a part of the community and get to know my patients as my friends and neighbors.”

Dr. Russell loves his work. He notes that his training included acute care surgery, where you meet a patient in the emergency room and take care of them in the hospital. Whether providing a routine, scheduled surgical procedure like an endoscopy or appendectomy, or responding to an injury in the emergency room, he’s excited to bring his skills to the community.

“My biggest joy in my role as a surgeon is being able to take someone with an illness or disease or injury, and use my hands to restore their health,” Dr. Russell said. “As a surgeon, we see the results immediately, more so than in other areas of medicine.”



**Kelsey Sloat, MD**

Kelsey Sloat, MD, obstetrician and gynecologist (OB-GYN), joined Mercy Mt. Shasta in August 2022. An OB-GYN is a doctor with expertise in women’s reproductive health and pregnancy.

“I grew up in Northern California and always wanted to return home to practice medicine,” Dr. Sloat said. “I love working in such a beautiful setting and with such passionate and dedicated physicians.”

Dr. Sloat finds joy in providing prenatal care and supporting new infants and moms. She also appreciates being able to care for women in challenging moments, such as facing a miscarriage or providing treatment for serious health conditions.

“I find the most joy in connecting with people and listening to their stories,” Dr. Sloat said. “Everyone has insight into their own health. My goal is to provide information and guide patients so they can make the best decisions possible for their own health.”

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DR. RUSSELL AND DR. SLOAT ARE TAKING NEW PATIENTS. TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, ASK YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER FOR A REFERRAL OR VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/OURDOCTORS](https://DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/OURDOCTORS).

# New CT Scanner Enters the Picture

THE NEW CT SCANNER AT ST. ELIZABETH COMMUNITY HOSPITAL TAKES ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY USED FORMS OF MEDICAL IMAGING TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

**When physicians need** to determine whether a patient is having a stroke, diagnose cancer or assess damage to a joint, they often turn to a CT scan, a type of X-ray imaging.

“There are many uses for CT,” said Rick Dunbar, MHA, Director of Imaging Services at Dignity Health’s North State hospitals. “It’s highly likely that a patient will have a CT scan if they come to us with any sort of serious, acute illness or traumatic injury.”

## High-Tech Upgrade

In December 2022, St. Elizabeth replaced its old CT scanner with a new SOMATOM Definition Edge unit, giving patients access to the latest CT technology.

“Imaging-equipment technology has marched forward over the past 15 years,” Dunbar said. “The new CT scanner has expanded capabilities we didn’t have the opportunity to offer at St. Elizabeth before and allows us to acquire images faster, resulting in shorter wait-times for our patients.”

The CT scanner features several state-of-the-art cardiac and stroke imaging capabilities, as well as a monitor that allows radiologists to view patients’ anatomy at the bedside while performing interventional cases, such as sending dye into a joint. This new unit is another example of the commitment to safe, high-quality care that led The Leapfrog Group to give St. Elizabeth its Top Rural Hospital award for California last year.

“Our goal is to enable people to get the care they need just down the street instead of having to drive to Redding, Chico, Sacramento or beyond,” Dunbar said. “The new CT scanner is an example of this strategy, and we’re excited about the service it will provide to patients for years to come.”

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CLOSE-TO-HOME MEDICAL SERVICES, VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/STELIZABETHHOSPITAL](https://DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/STELIZABETHHOSPITAL).

## Blue Skies Ahead

Having a CT scan can make some patients anxious. At St. Elizabeth Community Hospital, the atmosphere in the CT room is designed to put patients at ease.

During scans, patients lie on a table that slides into a doughnut-shaped structure called the gantry. Once inside, they may feel like they’re relaxing in a forest.

“We included a backlit panel in the ceiling of the room that sits directly over patients during their scans,” said Rick Dunbar, MHA, Director of Imaging Services at Dignity Health’s North State hospitals. “The image depicts a blue sky and tree limbs and leaves similar to the foliage one would find around the hospital. Most CT suites are located within the center of hospitals and rarely have windows. These backlit scenes help create a warm, welcoming environment for patients.”





## What Can Sleep Say About Your Risk for Heart Disease?

A STUDY FOUND THAT YOUR SLEEP HEALTH CAN HELP PREDICT WHAT MAY LIE AHEAD FOR YOUR HEART.

**More than a third** of U.S. adults don't get the recommended minimum seven hours of sleep per night, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That could spell trouble for their hearts.

"Your heart never takes a night off, and it relies on you to get enough sleep," said David Greentree, MD, cardiovascular surgeon at Mercy Medical Center Redding. "Without sufficient sleep, you may have a higher risk for Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity, all of which are linked to cardiovascular disease. In addition, an untreated sleep disorder, such as sleep apnea, can put your heart health at risk."

In 2022, the American Heart Association (AHA) added sleep duration to its list of the most important factors affecting heart health. In addition to sleep duration, the AHA's Life's Essential 8™ includes diet, physical activity, nicotine exposure, body mass index, blood lipids (cholesterol and triglycerides), blood glucose and blood pressure.

### Potent Predictor

In a 2022 study, for the first time, researchers from Columbia University evaluated sleep along with the AHA's seven other heart-health metrics as a way to predict risk for cardiovascular disease. The researchers gathered sleep data from nearly 2,000 adults who participated in sleep studies, wore wrist devices that helped monitor sleep and completed surveys about their sleep habits. Sixty-three percent of participants slept less than seven hours each night.

The data allowed the researchers to calculate cardiovascular health scores based on sleep duration alone and sleep duration plus other sleep characteristics, such as sleep apnea. The team also determined a score for the other seven key heart-health factors. Measuring sleep data with the other seven metrics enhanced the ability to predict the participants' risk for cardiovascular disease as compared to not including sleep.

The next time you and your medical provider discuss your heart health, make sure sleep is part of the conversation.

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NEED A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER OR CARDIOLOGIST WHO CAN HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR HEART HEALTH FOR THE LONG TERM? VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/OURDOCTORS](https://dignityhealth.org/ourdoctors).

### Step Up for Better Shut-Eye

Looking to improve your sleep? Try these tips:

- + **Embrace consistency.** Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- + **Go dark.** Stop using your phone, tablet and other electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- + **Make your bedroom a sleep sanctuary.** Your sleep space should be cool, dark and free of blue-light-emitting screens.
- + **Relax to get ready for sleep.** Before bedtime, do something to decompress from the day, such as reading or taking a bath.





IF YOU'RE IN A SUMMER SLUMP, SELF-CARE COULD PROVIDE A MUCH-NEEDED BOOST.



### Summertime Blues

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, causes mild-to-moderate depression at the same time every year. Most people experience SAD in the winter, when the weather is awful and the sunshine is sparse, but some people have seasonal depression in the summer months. The most common symptoms of summer SAD include:

- + Agitation
- + Insomnia
- + Irritability
- + Lack of appetite
- + Weight loss

If you've had any of these symptoms combined with a lack of interest in things or feelings of sadness for two weeks or longer, talk to a medical provider.

**Summer months are often** filled with fun. Yet long days of activities and hot temperatures can take their toll. Whatever your summer plans involve, it's important to make time for yourself, too. Recharging your batteries can help you avoid a summer slump and get the most out of the season.

### Start a Self-Care Routine

Practicing self-care may feel selfish, but taking care of yourself puts you in a better place to take care of others. Here are some tips to get started:

- **Go to bed.** Sleep schedules can be disrupted in the summer with longer sunlight hours and no school routine. Getting enough sleep every night is crucial for your mental health.
- **Schedule some alone time.** Whether you use it to meditate, journal or take a bubble bath, a few minutes of daily alone time away from your family can help you reset your calm.
- **See your friends.** Staying connected to your social circle makes it easier to get support if you need it.
- **Take time off.** You don't have to spend money on a vacation to get the benefits of time away from work. Take a few days off and "travel" around the area—taking day hikes or scenic drives—or stay home and binge Netflix—whatever brings you joy.
- **Walk it out.** Exercise isn't just good for your heart—it's good for your brain. Make time for a daily walk outside. The fresh air and sunshine can improve your mood and focus, along with boosting your vitamin D.

If you find yourself struggling with your mood and self-care isn't doing enough to boost it, your Dignity Health primary care provider in the North State can offer additional help.


NEED MORE THAN SELF-CARE TO MANAGE YOUR EMOTIONS THIS SUMMER? DIGNITY HEALTH NORTH STATE CAN HELP. FIND A PROVIDER AT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/NORTH-STATE](https://dignityhealth.org/north-state).



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# Every heart has a story.

## We can help you live yours.

Sharing family traditions with your grandkids. That big career move. Your son saying “I do.” These are the moments that define your life’s story, and the health of your heart makes it all possible. At the Mercy Redding Heart Center we put our heart into healing yours. We offer the most comprehensive range of cardiac services in the North State including prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. Plus, our affiliation with Stanford Medicine means our community has access to renowned cardiac surgeons for the most complex care.

So, whether you have heart health concerns or are simply due for a checkup, we are committed to helping you write your next chapter. Learn more about our innovative services at [DignityHealth.org/MercyReddingHeart](http://DignityHealth.org/MercyReddingHeart).

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