

hello **Healthy**

CELEBRATING THE HEALING POWER OF HUMANKINDNESS • WINTER 2018-19

Humankindness. Carry it on.



Hello humankindness®

Diversity celebrated

March for
Humankindness
brings community
together

What nobody wants to talk about

There's help
for women's
sensitive
health issues

Need a new joint?

Don't let hip or
knee pain slow
you down



Advancing patient safety together.

Keeping our patients safe and healthy is a top priority. Dignity Health – Memorial Hospital has earned an “A” from The Leapfrog Group for being one of the safest hospitals in America based on nationally-reported patient safety measures.

No matter where you’re at in life, Memorial Hospital is here to keep our community healthy. Learn more at dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/leapfrog.

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The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is an elite designation from The Leapfrog Group, a national, independent watchdog that sets the highest standards for patient safety in the United States.



Sharing a smile

Donated dental kits help families of sick kids

Pictured are Scarlett Sabin, Bakersfield Ronald McDonald House Director, and Michael Sloan, Vice President of Human Resources for Dignity Health Central California.



For every hygiene kit purchased, another is donated to charity.

Caring for a sick child takes a big toll on families. A local entrepreneur hopes to ease the burden for parents staying at the Bakersfield Ronald McDonald House by providing them with some of the comforts of home.

“When you’ve rushed your child to the emergency room, all you have are the clothes on your back,” says Scarlett Sabin, Director of the Ronald McDonald House in Bakersfield. “This gift allows us to provide families with comfort and care when they need it most.”

A chance to give back

Michael Sloan, Vice President of Human Resources for Dignity Health Central California, and his business partner donated 5,000 Trek Fresh dental hygiene kits to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern California. That includes the Bakersfield location, situated on the east side of Dignity Health – Memorial Hospital. The house serves as a home away from home for the families of pediatric and NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) patients and offers them a way to stay together in proximity to the hospital.

“We wanted families to have one less thing to worry about,” Sloan says. “Everyone needs a toothbrush, and

we are happy to provide it.”

Trek Fresh is a compact, all-inclusive hygiene kit similar in concept to a Swiss army knife. It includes a toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss in a convenient package.

“My brother-in-law is a dentist and an avid outdoorsman,” Sloan says. “He was struggling to find a convenient way to brush his teeth while he was on hiking trips. We got to talking and decided to create a dental hygiene kit where everything is in one place.”

When Sloan and his brother-in-law became entrepreneurs, they decided they wanted to give back. Trek Fresh adopted a philanthropic business model. For every hygiene kit purchased, another is donated to charity.

“Working at Memorial Hospital and seeing the families who come to stay at the Ronald McDonald House, I can’t even imagine what they are going through,” Sloan says. “To be able to give back to the community where we live is paramount for us.”

“This is part of the culture at Dignity Health,” Sabin says. “It means so much that upper management looks for ways to strengthen the relationship with the Ronald McDonald House and to support the families.”

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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Marching
with a

mission



In October more than 500 people laced up their walking shoes to celebrate diversity in our community during the inaugural Dignity Health March for Humankindness at California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB). Community leaders, friends, faith groups, students, and co-workers walked together to highlight what unites us as a community and to spread the message of kindness—one step at a time.

“Bakersfield is a diverse community with people coming from many different backgrounds,” says Matab Singh, MD, an internal medicine physician at Dignity Health. “Getting to know each other can help increase understanding. At the end of the day, we are all human beings. We have to be kind with each other.”



Healing through humanity

Dr. Singh and his colleague, family medicine physician Sudhir Kakarla, MD, helped to come up with the idea for the march. They were inspired to create an event that would bring the community together and celebrate diversity with tolerance. Working in a hospital setting, both men know how important kindness can be to the healing process.

“As a doctor, I know that a patient needs medicine to heal, but they also need kindness,” Dr. Singh says. “By showing them compassion and positivity, we can help their stress levels go down.”

To make the world better

The event included several speakers, including Blaine Hodge. Hodge was severely injured back in September while saving a woman he didn't know from being attacked by a man with a machete. For Hodge, kindness is simple.

“Humankindness to me is the little things that we as people do to make not only our community but the entire world a better place,” he says. “It's the subtle yet warm smile you put on your face in spite of what you're going through. It's helping when no one's asked you to because you know it's going to make things easier.”

A similar sentiment was echoed by many people who came out to show their support.

“Humankindness is caring about each other and showing compassion for the people around you,” says Kelliane O'Neill, RN, a nurse manager at Mercy Hospital Southwest. “Being a nurse, we take care of people from all walks of life, and it's so important that we show them how much we care.”

“We need to do things without being asked or even expecting a thank-you,” says Tom Burch, a member of the East Bakersfield Rotary Club. “We are all human, and we are on this journey together.”

The march around the CSUB campus was followed by a rally to kick off the first Roadrunners' basketball game of the season.



Join us next year!

Dignity Health plans to make the March for Humankindness an annual event. Find out how kindness is good for you at dignityhealth.org/hello-humankindness.

GERD: More than heartburn

When Edward Taylor III, MD, a general surgeon at Dignity Health – Mercy and Memorial Hospitals, started researching gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) more than 20 years ago, no one really considered it a true disease. He and his medical counterparts soon realized that its severity and frequency greatly merited further investigation.

While the disease is often associated with heartburn, several other symptoms may indicate whether a person has GERD.

Symptoms to watch out for

Approximately one-third of individuals in the U.S. have GERD and experience classic symptoms of acid reflux, such as heartburn and regurgitation. Additional GERD symptoms may include chronic cough, chest pain, belching, difficulty swallowing, a sensation of a lump in the throat, chronic pneumonia, hoarseness, laryngitis, and worsened asthma.

In severe cases of GERD, patients may have anemia due to blood loss.

Diagnosing the problem

With the increased availability of over-the-counter medications for treating GERD, people have been able to self-diagnose and self-treat with medications called proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). A primary care physician may also advise using this type of medication as a first step toward diagnosing the problem.

“Those inhibitors work so well, it’s one strong way to diagnose GERD,” Dr. Taylor says. “It’s uncommon the symptoms wouldn’t get better upon implementing this therapy. If the PPIs don’t make the symptoms better, the problem may lie elsewhere.”

If a patient has been experiencing GERD for five years or more, they may start to develop what Dr. Taylor terms alarm symptoms: difficulty swallowing, bleeding, anemia, or chest pain. At that point, a specialist will perform an esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD) in order to rule out

esophageal injury, which can lead to narrowing of the esophagus and precancerous changes to cells in the esophagus (called Barrett’s esophagus).

Caucasian males over age 45 who have had GERD for more than four years should also consider undergoing an EGD. This patient population is at a significantly increased risk of developing esophageal cancer.

Dr. Taylor warns that people should not continue self-medicating for an extended period without medical intervention, as doing so may mask more serious underlying issues.

“It is a bit risky to just keep treating yourself with over-the-counter options, because precancerous changes may occur without previous symptoms returning,” he explains. “That’s part of the danger with the medications working so well.”

Proceed with caution

Dr. Taylor’s strongest piece of advice is to not underestimate any symptoms potentially related to GERD. They may eventually lead to more serious conditions, such as Barrett’s esophagus, which increases the risk for esophageal cancer. A person’s likelihood of developing Barrett’s esophagus is directly correlated with how long they have GERD.

“Definitely don’t ignore this disease,” Dr. Taylor says. “It doesn’t necessarily mean you need surgery, but you certainly don’t want to ignore it for 20 years.”



Edward Taylor III, MD, is a general surgeon at Dignity Health – Mercy and Memorial Hospitals. Dr. Taylor has more than 25 years of experience in general surgery, has held several academic and faculty appointments, and is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons. He has given countless lectures on laparoscopic surgery topics, including fundoplication, and has published numerous research articles on a variety of clinical topics.



Stop the burn!

If you are experiencing symptoms of GERD, talk to your primary care physician (PCP). If you don't have a PCP, we can help. Visit dignityhealth.org/ourdoctors or call **661.324.7070**.

CLICK 

When surgery becomes necessary

For people with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) who don't respond well to medical therapy, surgical intervention may be necessary—specifically for those who have stubborn GERD, large hiatal hernias, strictures, precancerous changes, or other esophageal damage. The corrective procedure is called fundoplication, most often associated with hiatal hernia repair.

“The hiatal hernia itself is an anatomical defect that needs to be fixed or the symptoms simply won't go away, even with medical intervention,” says Edward Taylor III, MD.

In his history of performing hundreds of fundoplication procedures, Dr. Taylor has seen 92 percent of his patients weaned off PPI therapy within six weeks, and 95 percent report being happy with the results.



To learn more about GERD

and treatment options at Dignity Health – Mercy and Memorial Hospitals, listen to an interview with Dr. Taylor on our Hello Healthy Podcasts at dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/podcasts.



Don't be embarrassed!

There's serious
help for
sensitive issues

You don't have to live with bladder control issues or pelvic health problems



More about Dr. Lee

Justin Lee, MD, is a board-certified and fellowship-trained urogynecologist for Dignity Health Bakersfield.

After earning his medical degree in the field of obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive sciences, Dr. Lee completed a fellowship in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery. That's a newer subspecialty in gynecology that enables him to help women with pelvic health problems and urinary incontinence.

Maybe you've been there: The fear of leaking urine keeps you from fully enjoying your social life. Whenever you go out, you're constantly looking for the closest restroom. Or perhaps you're experiencing symptoms of a pelvic health problem, such as pelvic organ prolapse or pain.

If you can relate, Justin Lee, MD, wants you to know that help is available. These are very personal issues. But you shouldn't feel embarrassed to speak up.

"It's important to have your voice heard," says Dr. Lee, a urogynecologist and pelvic reconstructive surgeon at The Women's Center at Mercy Hospital Southwest. "These are very common conditions with solutions. We have treatment options here in Bakersfield that can help you."

Health care

especially for women

A welcoming place for women

At Mercy Hospital Southwest, we believe women in Kern County deserve a special place dedicated to their health needs. And that place is The Women's Center.

Innovative and specialized care for women of all ages is available at The Center. Some of the surgical and nonsurgical services there include:

Radiology services, such as digital mammography with computer-aided detection technology, breast and obstetric ultrasound, and stereotactic breast biopsy.

Urogynecology services, which include treatments for conditions such as urinary incontinence, overactive bladder, pelvic organ prolapse, and pelvic pain.

Lactation support services, such as lactation consultations, breast pump rentals and sales, and breastfeeding bras.



Here for you!

For a complete list of all the services provided at The Women's Center at Mercy Hospital Southwest, visit dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/womens-center. Or call **661.663.6429**.

Many problems, many solutions

Dr. Lee and the staff at The Women's Center offer both nonsurgical and surgical treatments for a range of urinary and pelvic health problems, including:

Urinary incontinence. Many women leak urine when they cough, sneeze, exercise, or lift an object (stress incontinence). Others may leak when they feel a sudden urge to go (overactive bladder).

Pelvic organ prolapse. This is when the bladder, uterus, rectum, or other organs bulge into the vagina. Some women with this condition may notice the bulge and may experience other symptoms, such as pelvic discomfort or pain, urinary incontinence, and sexual difficulties.

Fistula. This abnormal opening between two parts of the body may develop between the bladder and the vagina or the rectum

and the vagina. It allows urine or stool to pass through the vagina.

Painful bladder syndrome. Also called interstitial cystitis, this is a chronic condition that causes painful urinary symptoms.

Some urinary or pelvic health problems can be improved with medicines, lifestyle changes, and patient education, Dr. Lee notes.

Other options may include biofeedback therapy and pelvic floor rehabilitation to help strengthen the pelvic floor; the insertion of a pessary, a removable ringlike device that fits inside the vagina and supports the pelvic organs; InterStim therapy, an implanted device for bladder control; and surgery.

"I want women to be empowered with knowledge so that together we can make the best decisions for their health," Dr. Lee says.



"These are very common conditions with solutions. We have treatment options here in Bakersfield that can help you."

—Justin Lee, MD

Heart patient gets a *second chance* at a healthy future

The date May 23, 2018, is seared in Brian Kiser's memory. That's when, shortly before lunch, he suddenly felt pressure in his chest. Minutes later he was sweating and ashen. His wife, Tracy, did exactly the right thing: She called 911.

Still, neither of them suspected a heart attack. Brian is only 47, and recent blood work showed no red flags. However, at the emergency department at



"I feel better than I have in years. I was given a second chance for a healthy future. I'm not wasting it."

—Brian Kiser

Hybrid cath lab helps high-risk patients stay close to home

At Dignity Health – Memorial Hospital, we are always looking to improve the patient experience and make it easier for people to have procedures close to home. That's why we recently opened the area's only hybrid catheterization lab in our Sarvanand Heart and Brain Center.

Dignity Health – Memorial Hospital, Brian learned he was indeed having a heart attack.

“But as alarming as the news was—and I’m a worrier—the staff was so compassionate and capable that I felt remarkably comfortable,” he says. “I knew I was in wonderful hands.”

That expertise was crucial when further testing revealed that multiple arteries feeding his heart were blocked—and one was almost totally blocked.

A new lease on life

Initially, it appeared that Brian needed open-heart surgery. But instead, Tommy Lee, MD, a cardiologist at The Sarvanand Heart and Brain Center at Memorial Hospital, was able to restore blood flow

to Brian’s heart with a far less invasive—but still technically challenging—procedure. He performed angioplasty to open up Brian’s arteries, and he inserted three stents to help keep the arteries from narrowing again.

Brian is forever grateful to Dr. Lee and everyone at Memorial Hospital who took care of him.

“I call the whole medical staff my guardian angels,” he says.

Back at home, Brian exercises daily, eats a healthy diet, and watches his weight. He has lost 29 pounds so far.

“I feel better than I have in years,” Brian says. “I was given a second chance for a healthy future. I’m not wasting it.”

What is a hybrid catheterization lab?

“It’s a room that combines the features of a traditional catheterization lab with the features of a surgical suite,” explains Michele Shain, Senior Director of Memorial Hospital’s cardiovascular and neurology services. “It is reserved for complex catheterization procedures, such as abdominal aortic aneurysm repair or a transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR).”

Catheter-based procedures are minimally invasive. Doctors use a small incision to insert a tube that can break a clot, place a stent, or even repair a heart valve. Many cath lab procedures are low-risk, with few complications. But some are more high-risk, and patients sometimes develop complications that quickly require open surgery.

Before the hybrid cath lab was in place at Memorial Hospital, those patients with complications would be moved immediately to a surgical suite in a different part of the hospital. That move increased the time until surgery could begin and increased the risk of even more complications for the patient.

But that doesn’t happen anymore. Like a Swiss army knife that can go from clippers to scissors in seconds, the hybrid lab can quickly morph from a cath lab into a surgical suite when necessary. All that’s needed is for the cath lab staff to step back and the surgical team to step up to the table.



Safety and convenience

For Memorial Hospital patients, the introduction of the hybrid lab means added safety. It also means that some high-risk patients who might have been sent to other, distant hospitals can be treated here.

“This allows us to take care of our community within our community,” says Rellon Powers, manager of the cath lab. “Now the patient and their family won’t be forced to travel for care.”

Healthy hearts love longer.

Take our free online heart health assessment at dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/hra.

Ortho Joint Camp

A simple step to prepare for a successful joint replacement surgery

Knowledge of the path ahead helps make many of life's journeys easier—including a journey through total hip or knee replacement surgery. That's why Dignity Health – Memorial Hospital offers a class called Ortho Joint Camp.

It teaches joint replacement candidates what to expect before, during, and after their surgery. Many people say this in-depth coverage of the topic reduces anxieties they have about getting a hip or knee replaced. And it helps ensure a good outcome.

"We give joint replacement patients tools that help them with their journey and their healing," says Wanda Brown, Joint Replacement Program Manager.

What's involved?

The Ortho Joint Camp classes are held every Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

During class, attendees view a presentation and hear from staff members, such as nurses and physical or occupational therapists, who may be involved in their care.

The presentation covers things that joint replacement candidates might not think about, such as:

- Preparing their body for surgery with good nutrition.
- What to expect on the day of their surgery and during their hospital stay—including that they will be up and walking with assistance right after surgery.

- What to expect when they go home, such as what kind of help they'll need with daily activities and the types of precautions they'll need to take while they heal. "For example, we remind people that they'll need a ride home from the hospital," Brown says. "And they'll need to have good lighting at home so that they don't trip and fall when going to the bathroom, for instance."

There are opportunities to ask questions during the class. Attendees also receive a book—designed by the orthopedic surgeons at Memorial Hospital—that further explains their surgery and what to expect. It includes illustrated examples of special exercises patients may need to do at home as part of their recovery.

"Also, for people who attend the class within seven days of their surgery, we can preregister them and get all of their blood work done so they will not have to come back to do that," Brown says. "Sort of a one-stop experience!"

Loved ones welcome

If you'll be having joint replacement surgery at Memorial Hospital, you're encouraged to attend the joint class. Your family or friends are encouraged to come too.

"We recommend that you bring someone, especially your caregiver," Brown says. "We want to make sure everybody has the information they need to help their loved ones on this journey."



Mark your calendars!

In early 2019, The Orthopedic, Spine & Hand Center at Dignity Health – Mercy Hospital will begin offering an Ortho Joint Camp for patients having joint replacement surgery.



Could you be ready for a new hip or knee?

If you've been living with knee or hip pain, you may wonder if it's time to think about joint replacement surgery.

Ask yourself:

- ☒ Have I tried other treatments, such as anti-inflammatory medicines, steroid shots, physical therapy, or a special knee brace?
- ☒ Does pain still limit my daily activities—like walking, shopping, or climbing stairs?

If so, you and your surgeon may want to discuss a new hip or knee, says Fadi S. Saied, DO, a Dignity Health orthopedic surgeon.

Out with the old, in with the new

Most candidates for hip or knee replacement have severe arthritis that has damaged their joint. During joint replacement, the surgeon replaces the damaged parts with metal and plastic implants that should last more than 20 years, Dr. Saied says.

Typical joint replacement candidates are in their 60s. But age alone isn't a limiting factor.

"I've even done a replacement on a 101-year-old," Dr. Saied says.

Joint replacement surgery can greatly improve your quality of life. But it won't make you a super athlete. And full recovery from joint surgery doesn't happen overnight.

In time, however, you should be able to enjoy many activities—such as walking, shopping, golfing, or dancing—with little or no pain.

"The goal is to give you as pain-free of a joint as possible so that you can do the things you want to do," Dr. Saied says.



Learn more!

To learn more about Ortho Joint Camp, call **661.327.4647**, ext. 4428.





Breaking the cycle of homelessness

Dignity Health is continuing its mission to serve the underserved by backing a new program to help break the cycle of homelessness in Bakersfield.

In the last year, homelessness has increased by 9 percent locally. To help mitigate the increase, Dignity Health is partnering with the nonprofit organization Garden Pathways to launch the Homeless Outreach and Intervention Pilot. The yearlong effort will seek to address the very complex, underlying issues of homelessness, as well as connect homeless people to the services they need.

“We listened to the community, and there has been a lot of concern, confusion, and even some fear regarding the increased number of homeless people we are seeing on our streets,” says Robin Mangarin-Scott, Vice President of Strategic Marketing and Communications for Dignity Health Central California. “This program gives us a unique opportunity to go out face-to-face, one-on-one, and ask the homeless what they need to find the lives they deserve.”



Reaching out

Dignity Health will provide \$100,000 to support the pilot program, which will be managed by Garden Pathways. During the discovery phase, which began in September, teams of five employees hit the streets twice a day in the area surrounding 34th Street, between Union and Chester avenues. They began by surveying the area for environmental factors that may contribute to homelessness—things like recycling centers; abandoned businesses; empty homes, which can be used for squatting; or overgrown vegetation, where a homeless encampment may go unnoticed.

“This effort is unique because it’s proactive instead of reactive,” says Juan Avila, Chief Operating Officer of Garden Pathways. “Our approach is to be consistent and present every day so we can connect the homeless with the services they need to move them along in their journey.”



Hope for the future

Eventually, Garden Pathways will put together a multidisciplinary team of professionals, such as nurses, therapists, and behavioral specialists, to go out and offer on-site services to homeless people. Organizers hope this targeted approach will help re-establish trust with homeless people so they will be more likely to seek care and ultimately transition to other housing options.

“We have to go beyond giving them a meal or a place to live for a couple of nights,” Mangarin-Scott says. “We need to meet them where they are, and that’s where we can provide hope for a new future.”

Once the program is completed, the two organizations hope to use the results to create a replicable model that can be used throughout the city for continued outreach and advocacy.

Help us make a difference!

If you would like to volunteer, call Garden Pathways at **661.633.9133** or send an email to juana@gardenpathways.org.

CLICK 

Events for your health

Classes and events coming up



Register today! Visit dignityhealth.org/bakersfield for more information about classes, events, and support groups at Dignity Health – Mercy and Memorial Hospitals.

FITNESS

Fitness classes are free and open to the public. Must be 18 years of age or older. For more information about our exercise classes, please call **661.861.0852** or email cwp@dignityhealth.org.

Zumba

- Monday through Thursday, 6 to 7 p.m., Mercy Conference Center, 1600 D St. (corner of 16th and D streets)
- Saturdays, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., Mercy Conference Center, 1600 D St. (corner of 16th and D streets)

Yoga

- Mondays, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Clerou Lecture Room at Mercy Hospital Downtown, 2215 Truxtun Ave.
- Wednesdays, 6 to 7 a.m., Buena Vista Room at Mercy Hospital Southwest, 400 Old River Road
- Wednesdays, 5:15 to 6:15 p.m., Founders Hall Auditorium at Memorial Hospital, 420 34th St.

SUPPORT Art and Spirituality Center

The Art and Spirituality Center is located at Mercy Hospital Downtown and is home to programs that promote the

health and well-being of patients through artistic expression.

The Center is also open to patient family members, community members, and caregivers who just want a quiet and reflective space to read, pray, or have a quiet conversation.

Classes and workshops include:

- Art and writing classes.
- Music therapy.
- Support groups.
- Crafting.
- Meditation and tai chi.

Visit dignityhealth.org/bakersfield for a complete list of classes and workshops or call **661.632.5357**.



Maternity classes

Learn more about Memorial Hospital's "Miracles on 34th Street" Birth and Parenting Classes and Tours. Call **661.494.5668**.

Mercy Hospital offers several Birth and Parenting Classes and Tours. Please call **661.663.6067** for upcoming dates and to register.



Weight-Loss Surgery Seminar

First Wednesday of every month
Clerou Lecture Room, Mercy Hospital Downtown, 2215 Truxtun Ave.

Enjoy the life you were meant to have. Attend one of our free seminars to get the information you need to make an educated decision on whether bariatric surgery is right for you. Register online at dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/weightloss or call **661.632.5117**.

Hello humankindness. *"Life is short and we never have enough time for the hearts of those who travel the way with us. O, be swift to love! Make haste to be kind."* —Henri-Frédéric Amiel
Follow [@humankindness](https://twitter.com/humankindness) on Twitter for more kindness inspiration from Dignity Health.



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Too young for a heart attack

Brian Kiser
doesn't intend
to waste his
second chance.



▶ **SEE PAGE 10**
to read his story.

Cardiology that never misses a beat.



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1st in our area

to offer TAVR, Watchman,
biplane imaging and many
other advanced treatments



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**Sarvanand Heart
& Brain Center.**

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