

# hello **Healthy**

CELEBRATING THE HEALING POWER OF HUMANKINDNESS • SUMMER 2018



**Welcome,  
Dr. Jain**  
New radiation  
oncologist joins our  
cancer care team

**Spreading  
kindness**  
*Hello  
humankindness*  
student  
ambassadors  
are making a  
difference

These Burbank Elementary  
students are Merced's first *Hello  
humankindness* ambassadors.



# The robotic option

New surgical system means faster recovery



## Big benefits

Da Vinci robotic surgery is a less-invasive technique that offers many benefits, including:

- A shorter hospital stay.
- Less blood loss and fewer complications.
- Less need for narcotic pain medicine.
- A faster recovery.
- Smaller incisions associated with minimal scarring.

Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center is pleased to announce the recent acquisition of the da Vinci Xi Surgical System. The da Vinci Xi system gives patients another option for general surgery procedures.

Da Vinci robotic surgery is a less invasive technique and offers several potential benefits, including a shorter hospital stay, less blood loss, fewer complications, less need for narcotic pain medicine, a faster recovery, and smaller incisions associated with minimal scarring.

“We are excited to add the new da Vinci Xi system to our surgical offerings at Mercy Medical Center,” says Alfred Johnson, MD, general surgeon with the Dignity Health Medical Group. “This state-of-the-art technology allows us to expand our robotic surgery options to include general surgery and benefits our patients by making operations safer with a faster recovery and less pain.”



### Our robotic surgery program features specialties in:

- Colorectal surgery
- Gallbladder surgery
- General surgery

# Hello humankindness, kids' edition

Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center is partnering with the Merced City School District to recognize students who help spread kindness in their schools and community as *Hello humankindness* student ambassadors. These students go above and beyond to be kind to others. Tune in to our monthly video segment featuring students from kindergarten through eighth grade.

The first three ambassadors are second graders at Burbank Elementary who started a “Changing the World with Kindness” club. These girls are making a difference, one small gesture at a time. To view a video highlighting their club, go to **DignityHealth.org/merced/studentambassadors**.

We love being part of this community and can't wait to see how these kindness ambassadors spread goodwill around our town!



## Be inspired

Follow  
**@humankindness**  
on Twitter for more  
kindness inspiration  
from Dignity Health.



## Hello humankindness®

We hope you enjoy this issue of *HelloHealthy*. Comments about the publication can be directed to the Marketing and Communications Department:  
DIGNITY HEALTH – MERCY MEDICAL CENTER  
333 Mercy Ave., Merced, CA 95340

*HelloHealthy* is published by Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a health care provider. Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

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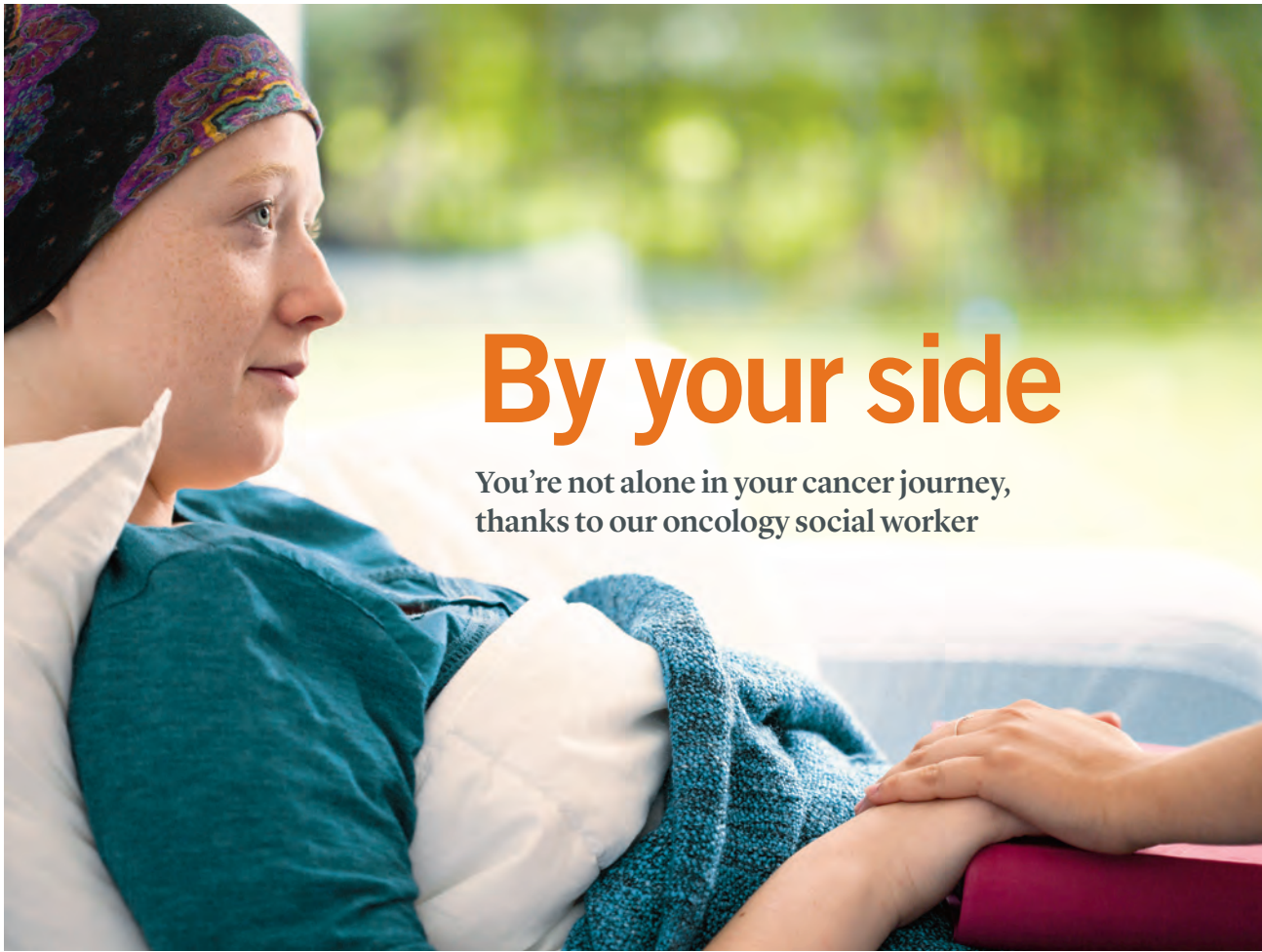
Michelle Willow—Director of External Communications—Central California

Robert McLaughlin—Director of Marketing—Central California

Lindsey Wine—Communications Manager—Central California

Michelle Oliver—Marketing Manager—Central California





# By your side

You're not alone in your cancer journey,  
thanks to our oncology social worker



*"I think patients don't really have a clear idea of what social work in the medical field is all about. Patients can come to me with any problem that isn't medical, that their doctors or nurses can't help with, and I can find help for them pretty much right away."*

*—Brittany Cotta,  
MSW*

**B**rittany Cotta, MSW, an oncology social worker at the Mercy UC Davis Cancer Center, wants cancer patients and their caregivers to think of her as their cheerleader. Whatever their difficulty is, she will try to solve it for them—or find someone who can.

Transportation? She has a list of resources. Confusing forms to fill out? She's a pro. A listening ear? She has two of them.

"I think patients don't really have a clear idea of what social work in the medical field is all about," says Cotta. "Patients can come to me with any problem that isn't medical, that their doctors or nurses can't help with, and I can find help for them pretty much right away."

The resources may be within the hospital or outside in the community. Wherever they are, Cotta will track them down.

## A difficult diagnosis

Doctors frequently refer their patients to Cotta.

"A cancer diagnosis is often difficult to cope with," she says. "So maybe the doctor thinks the patient has some emotional concerns. Or it might be something more concrete, like not knowing how they're going to afford their copays."

Cotta does a lot of what she calls "active listening." She provides some counseling. She also runs a cancer support group once a month—not just for patients, but for their caregivers too.

"Even though the caregiver doesn't have the diagnosis, they're going through almost as much as the patient," Cotta says.

Why are these kinds of services and support important to people with cancer?

"People need to understand that it isn't doing them any good when they're stressing



To learn more about the Mercy UC Davis Cancer Center, visit [MercyMercedCares.org](http://MercyMercedCares.org).

## Give a warm welcome to Dr. Jain

Expertise. Experience. Effectiveness. That's what you want when someone is treating you for cancer. And that's what you'll get with Prachi Jain, MD, the new radiation oncologist at the Mercy UC Davis Cancer Center. Here are a few things to know about Dr. Jain.

### Q. Where did you go to medical school?

I grew up in the Twin Cities and went to medical school at the University of Minnesota. I also went to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for my undergraduate studies and majored in chemical engineering.

### Q. How did you decide you wanted to work in radiation oncology?

For me, as an engineer, radiation oncology

was a natural fit. I confirmed my decision to pursue radiation oncology after a family member was diagnosed with cancer. It is incredibly rewarding to treat a person during the most difficult time in their life.

### Q. What are your goals for radiation oncology treatments at the Mercy UC Davis Cancer Center?

I plan to implement advanced treatment methods that I've learned in my training at Northwell Health in New York, as well as during my fellowship at Yale, to provide quality patient care in this community.

### Q. Do you have family with you?

My husband, Priyank, works nearby in finance. We are enjoying the natural beauty California has to offer.

out about housing or food or things like that," Cotta says. "It's just really important to have someone there to help them through this, so they can be as mentally and physically healthy as possible."

### Redefining a 'win'

Ask Cotta about one of her most difficult cases, and she's quick to mention a homeless man she's been working with since she started her role as an oncology social worker.

"I was very concerned about him," she says. "His living situation was not ideal for someone going through chemo. I kept talking to him about housing. He kept saying, 'If I can make it through the winter, we'll talk about it.'"

"Then it was spring. So I asked him again if I could help him with housing.

And he said, 'If I can make it through the summer.'"

That's when Cotta realized he didn't want to spend time and money on housing. He was fine with his living situation.

"I didn't get the resolution I wanted, but I was able to meet him where he was and understand he's doing OK," Cotta says. "In the meantime, he knows I'm here for him. If he changes his mind tomorrow, I'd help him."

Being an oncology social worker can be emotionally taxing, Cotta allows.

"But at the end of the day, I know this is where I'm supposed to be," she says. "And when I have a 'win,' even if it's realizing my homeless patient is never going to choose an apartment, it gives me a great sense of pride to know I'm doing my best for someone."

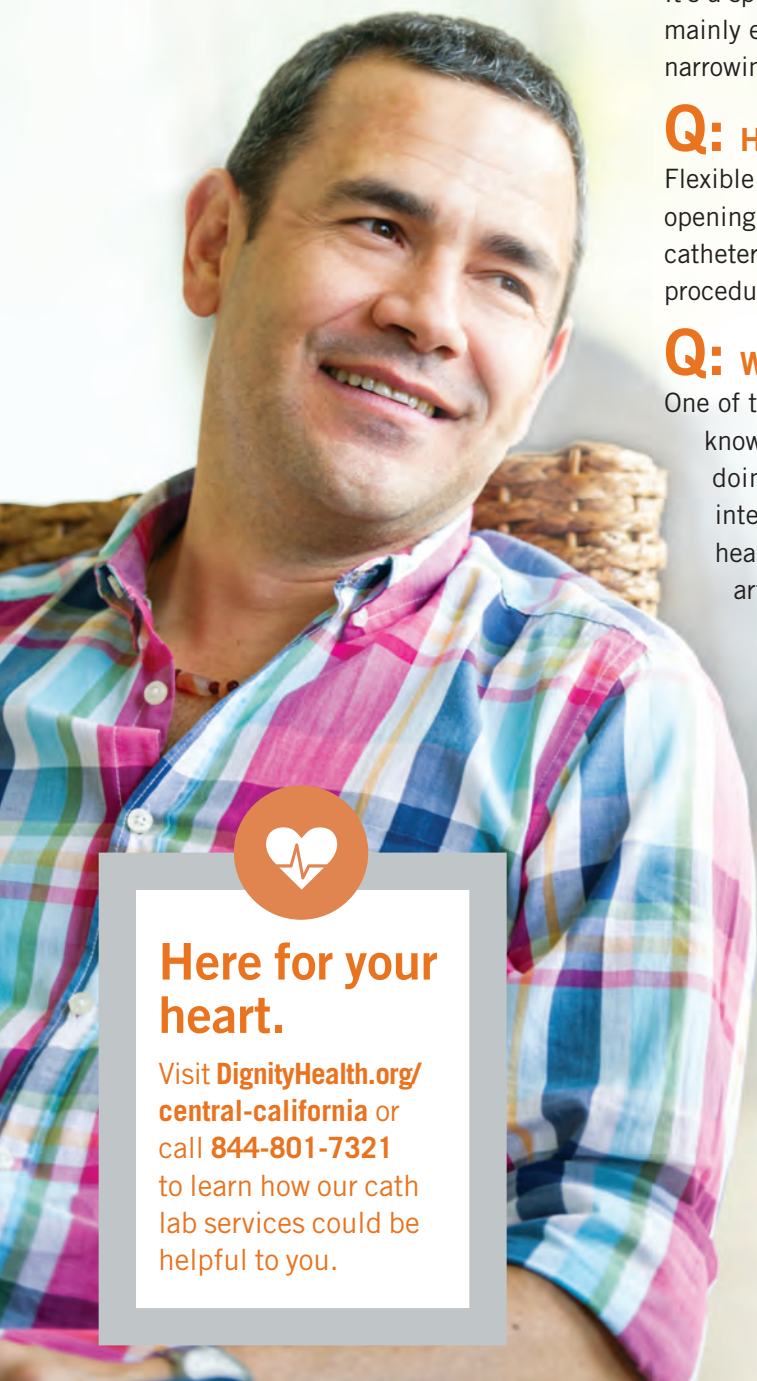


## Just a phone call away

To speak to oncology social worker Brittany Cotta, call **209.564.3669**.

# An inside job

Treating heart problems without surgery, close to home



## Here for your heart.

Visit [DignityHealth.org/central-california](https://DignityHealth.org/central-california) or call **844-801-7321** to learn how our cath lab services could be helpful to you.

If your doctor thinks your heart isn't getting enough vital circulation, he or she might want you to have a test and possibly a procedure done in the Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center cardiac catheterization lab. Raj Gurai, supervisor of the cath lab, explains what happens in the lab and how experts there can help you or your family member if you have a heart or other circulation problem.

### **Q: What is a cardiac cath lab?**

It's a special area in our hospital where we use imaging tests to mainly examine arteries around the heart for blockages and narrowing that prevent enough blood from getting through.

### **Q: How are procedures performed?**

Flexible wires called catheters are put into an artery through a small opening in the wrist or the groin. It's kind of like starting an IV. The catheter is moved through the artery all the way to the heart. Then a procedure—a test or a treatment—can be done.

### **Q: What treatments are performed in the cath lab?**

One of the main treatments we offer is elective angioplasty, also known as percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI). We started doing that last year. With this procedure, doctors (called interventional cardiologists) use a catheter to open a narrowed heart artery. They can then place a device called a stent in the artery to help keep it open. Angioplasty can help ease the symptoms of heart disease, such as chest pain.

One of the benefits of us now doing elective angioplasty at Mercy Medical Center is that our patients don't have to leave Merced to have the procedure.

Before, we were able to diagnose a blockage in an artery in our cath lab, but we couldn't treat it. If we found a blockage, the patient had to be transferred to another facility—up to an hour away—to have the artery opened. Now you can have everything done right here. It's much more convenient for both patients and their families.

### **Q: What are some other procedures available in the cath lab?**

We also diagnose and treat peripheral vascular disease—blocked arteries in the legs. We install implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs) and pacemakers, which treat irregular heartbeats.





# The ABCs of diabetes

## Use them to help prevent heart disease

Controlling blood sugar is an essential part of staying healthy when you have diabetes. But your blood sugar is not the only thing that needs a watchful eye: Your blood pressure and cholesterol levels do too.

**The reason:** Having diabetes increases your risk for a heart attack or stroke. You can lower that risk, however, by following the ABCs of diabetes management.

**A** is for **A1C**. This test measures your average blood glucose over the past two to three months. For most people, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends an A1C below 7 percent. Ask your doctor what your goal should be. And always remember this: An A1C test is not a substitute for your daily blood sugar tests.

**B** is for **blood pressure**. If your blood pressure is high, it means your heart is working harder than it should be. That's unhealthy for your heart, kidneys and eyes. For most people with diabetes, the ADA recommends a blood pressure level below 140/90 mmHg.

**C** is for **cholesterol**. Your cholesterol numbers reflect the amount of fat in your blood. LDL cholesterol is a bad type of fat—it clogs arteries and raises your risk for heart disease. You want a low LDL level. On the other hand, HDL cholesterol is a good type of fat. You want a high HDL level, which can actually help protect your heart from disease.

Triglycerides also are a bad-for-your-heart fat. You want a low triglyceride level.

Additional source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

## Lower your risk for diabetes

### Join our Diabetes Prevention Program

Want some support in preventing diabetes before it becomes a problem? Our curriculum, approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with lessons, handouts, and other resources, can help you make healthy changes. Some key components of the program include:

- A lifestyle coach to help you learn new skills, encourage you to set and meet goals, and keep you motivated.
- A support group of people with similar goals and challenges. Together, you can share ideas, celebrate successes, and work to overcome obstacles.
- A CDC-recognized lifestyle change program where you'll learn, laugh, share stories, try new things, and build new habits—all while lowering your risk of type 2 diabetes and improving your health.



### Interested in joining the Diabetes Prevention Program?

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. If you are interested in joining this program, contact Lillian Sanchez-Ramos at [Lillian.Sanchez@DignityHealth.org](mailto:Lillian.Sanchez@DignityHealth.org).

Having diabetes  
increases your risk for a  
heart attack or stroke.

You can lower  
that risk by following the **ABCs**  
of diabetes management.  
See page 7.

# For your health

Classes and events coming up



**Register today!** For questions about registration and other details, call **209.564.4384**.

## CHILDBIRTH

### Breastfeeding Support Group

Wednesdays, July 11, 18, 25  
11 a.m. to noon

Breastfeeding Education  
Center, Mercy Outpatient  
Center, first floor

### Stork Tour

Tuesday, July 10  
6 p.m.

Mercy Pavilion, third floor  
classrooms C and D  
Tour hospital before delivering.

### Childbirth Education

Mondays, July 2, 9, 16, 23  
6 to 9 p.m.

Mercy Pavilion, third floor  
classrooms C and D

## Diabetes Support Group

Tuesdays, July 3, 17  
1:30 to 2:30 p.m.  
Mercy Outpatient Center,  
first floor



## Yoga

Every Tuesday and Thursday  
5:30 to 7 p.m.

Mercy Outpatient Center,  
garden level,  
multipurpose room



## FITNESS Zumba

Every Monday, Wednesday,  
and Thursday

5:30 to 6:30 p.m.  
Merced Senior Center

## Diabetes Support Group (en español)

Tuesdays, July 3, 17  
3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Mercy Outpatient Center,  
first floor

## SUPPORT GROUPS Cancer Support Group

Wednesday, July 25  
4:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
Mercy UC Davis Cancer  
Center

## Cancer Support Group (en español)

Tuesday, July 10  
4:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
Mercy UC Davis Cancer  
Center

## COPD Support Group

Every Thursday  
2:30 to 4 p.m.  
Cardiac Pulmonary Center,  
Mercy Outpatient Center

**Hello humankindness.** *"Three things in human life are important: The first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind."* —Henry James  
Follow **@humankindness** on Twitter for more kindness inspiration from Dignity Health.