

# HOUSE CALLS

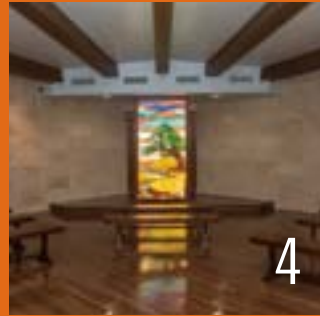
SUMMER 2016



## Time Is Brain

Helping Families Identify  
the Signs of Stroke





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Cover: Ruby Montes and her mother, Erlinda, who recently suffered a stroke.

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

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HouseCALLS is published by Dignity Health - Mercy & Memorial Hospitals to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a healthcare provider.

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**Hello humankindness™**



# Enjoy the life you were meant to have.

## Find out if bariatric surgery is right for you.

The physical, emotional, and health benefits of weight loss surgery can put life on a whole new path. It is a big decision, but of those who commit, no one ever wishes they'd waited longer.

Our experienced surgeons, nurses and counselors support and prepare patients for success every step of the way. If you feel like all else has failed, we invite you to attend an informational event or take our free online assessment to help determine if bariatric surgery is right for you. It could be the first day of your happily ever after.

To take the assessment or reserve your space at our next event, visit [DignityHealth.org/bakersfield/weightloss](http://DignityHealth.org/bakersfield/weightloss) or call **661.663.6765**.

 **Dignity Health™**  
Mercy & Memorial Hospitals



The new Monsignor Craig F. Harrison Interfaith Chapel at Memorial Hospital

## A Place to Pause and Pray

The standing-room-only crowd had gathered for the dedication of the Monsignor Craig F. Harrison Interfaith Chapel at Memorial Hospital. The chapel's open design welcomed its guests with bright beauty. Sliding glass doors lead to a peaceful courtyard with a water feature. A custom-designed, stained glass window depicts a majestic river oak reaching across a river framed by colorful flowers. A wall of inscribed blocks features inspirational quotes and sacred scriptures from many faith groups and spiritual traditions. The community's interfaith leaders and our generous donors had come to express a unified hope: that all who ventured into this place of respite would receive healing of the body, mind, and spirit.

**Mercy and Memorial Hospital Chaplains provide professional spiritual care to all patients, families, staff, and providers.**

### A Fresh, New Design

The grand opening and dedication ceremony of the Monsignor Craig F. Harrison Interfaith Chapel was held May 2. The chapel's name acknowledges Monsignor Harrison's long-time service and outreach to our faith community as a Bakersfield native. Funded by philanthropy, the renovation project came together through Bakersfield Memorial Hospital Foundation's tireless fundraising efforts and dozens of donor gifts. The event not only paid tribute to the Monsignor, it also introduced the chapel's fresh, new design.

"We went with a simple, modernist approach," said John Mastalski, M.Div., M.A., BCC, regional director spiritual care services, Dignity Health Mercy and Memorial Hospitals. "The space is very flexible. Not everything faces the same direction like in a typical chapel or church."

The design has three points of focus: the courtyard, the backlit stained glass window, and the wall of inscribed blocks. The short benches of dark wood compliment the woodwork throughout the chapel, and are easily moved to accommodate a variety of gatherings.

### A Diverse and Dedicated Staff

"The chapel is not meant to be a public worship place," said John. "We encourage people to stay connected to their own faith communities. It's part of what we do as chaplains to help our patients. We're always inviting their own priest or spiritual leader to come visit."

John leads the staff of six, full-time chaplains at Dignity Health Mercy and Memorial Hospitals. As interfaith chaplains, they are trained to provide the individualized spiritual care each patient needs.

"We are the only hospitals in Bakersfield that have full-time, board-certified chaplains on staff, and that's a big deal," said John. "Our mission and goal is to visit every single patient, and do a full spiritual assessment—assessing their spiritual, emotional, and coping needs. Certification is a several-year process that allows us to provide this level of spiritual care." Studies have shown spiritual care improves the patient experience. "They feel much more cared for—not just by us, but also by their doctors and nurses," he said.

**"The space is a healing atmosphere for when patients need a break from the clinical nature of the hospital or family members need to be recharged," said John. "We also have a lot of nurses who come by to pray before and after their shifts."**

—John Mastalski, M.Div., M.A., BCC, regional director spiritual care services, Dignity Health Mercy and Memorial Hospitals

The Monsignor Craig F. Harrison Interfaith Chapel at Memorial Hospital will enhance the patient experience, as well as promote the well-being of families and members of the health care team.

"The space is a healing atmosphere for when patients need a break from the clinical nature of the hospital or family members need to be recharged," said John. "We also have a lot of nurses who come by to pray before and after their shifts."

John encourages visitors to write their prayer requests in the journal set up in the chapel for that purpose, and help themselves to the prayer cards, which will guide their time of reflection. "We're here to help the body, mind and spirit," he said. "The doctors and nurses help with the healing of the body. The interfaith chapel adds the mind and spirit to that."

Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the Monsignor Craig F. Harrison Interfaith Chapel welcomes visitors and offers them a special place to pause and pray. ■



Kevin & Tuedy Small and Monsignor Craig F. Harrison in a dedication prayer for the Inspirational wall of the new chapel.

**Our board-certified chaplains meet the strict requirements of The Joint Commission, which include learning and participating in the following:**

- Graduate-level theological degree (e.g., Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies)
- Minimum of one year post-graduate clinical pastoral education at accredited training hospital or medical center
- Minimum 50 hours of continuing education units per year
- Endorsement and commissioning from authorized church
- Peer review and comprehensive recertification every five years
- Membership in the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) or the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC)





# Time Is Brain

“I noticed something different about my mom,” said Ruby Montes of Bakersfield. “I asked if she was okay, and she told me, ‘When I touch I can’t feel, and when I pinch it’s all tingly.’ Immediately, I knew what it was.” Armed with knowledge to identify the signs of a stroke, Ruby helped save her mother’s life.

## Helping families identify the signs of stroke

Ruby’s mother was treated for a stroke last February. Upon discharge, the stroke coordinator at Dignity Health Mercy Hospitals, Gerry Elizondo, RN, BSN, promised to mail the family a copy of their stroke booklet. “I have a strong passion for stroke patients,” said Gerry. “I visit every patient that comes in with a stroke, and I’m involved in educating the staff and community about how to recognize strokes. It’s so important not to ignore the signs.”

**“I have a strong passion for stroke patients, I visit every patient that comes in with a stroke, and I’m involved in educating the staff and community about how to recognize strokes. It’s so important not to ignore the signs.”**

—Gerry Elizondo, RN, BSN, stroke coordinator at Dignity Health Mercy Hospitals

“I received the booklet from the stroke coordinator and started reading it,” said Ruby. “It educated me a lot. Maybe a week after I got it, I noticed something wrong.” Ruby lives just two doors down from her mother and provides daily care. “I know my mom,” she said. “I take her to her appointments, pick up her medication, take her to the market, and feed her. I noticed something wrong. It was because of the booklet. So I called 911, and when we got to the hospital, they confirmed that she’d had another stroke.”

## Gerry teaches two, easy-to-remember tips:

### 1) Time is brain 2) F.A.S.T.

- 1) “The faster you get here to the hospital, the better your chances for a full recovery,” said Gerry. The lifesaving procedures carried out by Dignity Health experts can push the narrow window for effective treatment from within 4½ hours to as many as 24 hours after a stroke has occurred. “When you’re having a stroke, the blood is not flowing to your brain,” she said. “The longer blood flow is hampered, the more brain cells are dying. Once your cells die they don’t recover and they don’t regenerate.”
- 2) The acronym F.A.S.T. helps people identify the signs of stroke. “The ‘F’ stands for Face,” said Gerry. “Is it numb or tingly, especially on one side? The ‘A’ is for arm. Hold it out straight in front of you and watch to see if it is drifting or falling down slowly. The ‘S’ is for speech. Have them repeat something simple like ‘mama’ and see if their speech is slurred or garbled. The ‘T’ means time to call 911. If they have seen any of these warning signs, they need to act fast. That’s why we say ‘Time is brain.’”

## Supporting patients and caregivers with resources

Depending on the amount of disability involved, stroke patients may no longer be able to do daily activities like brushing teeth, combing their hair, or walking to the bathroom. “Studies have shown that if you have a good support system, you have a better outcome,” said Gerry. “It’s a huge responsibility to take care of a stroke patient. Caregivers need a support system, too.” ▶



## Neurology

### Are you at risk?

Our Stroke Risk Assessment will help evaluate your cardiovascular health and identify those medical or lifestyle conditions that may put you at risk for a stroke.

[www.dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/stroke](http://www.dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/stroke)



Gerry together with Judith Harniman, manager of Dignity Health's Community Wellness Program, developed a support group for stroke survivors and their caregivers. The group meets weekly for a free series of facilitated discussions and educational sessions. Allied health professionals provide attendees with information and skills to minimize stroke risk and improve quality of life.

By providing patients with the care and resources they need, Dignity Health offers hope to families as they adjust to a different lifestyle after a stroke.

"I will be there for my mother," said Ruby. "She gave me life, and I have to be there for her. I love her and I don't know what I'd do without her." Together, the daily support of family caregivers and the expertise of Dignity Health professionals help stroke patients like Ruby's mother live their lives to the fullest.

"Our goal is to get you back to where you were before the stroke occurred," said Gerry. "We want you doing and experiencing all the things you enjoyed before you had the stroke." ■

## Stroke patients, family members, and caregivers, join us for the next six-week session of our support group

**Our stroke support group meets on Thursdays from 5:30 pm - 7 pm**

**To learn of our upcoming 6 week seminar dates, please contact the Community Wellness Center 2634 G Street, Bakersfield 661-861-0852**

Learn from a different professional each week:

- Neurologist
- Psychologist
- Nutritionist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Speech Pathologist

## Know the signs of stroke and act FAST

**FACE**

Does one side of their face droop?

**ARM**

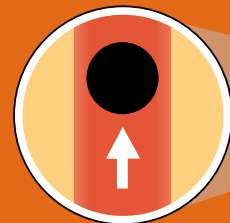
Does one arm drift down?

**SPEECH**

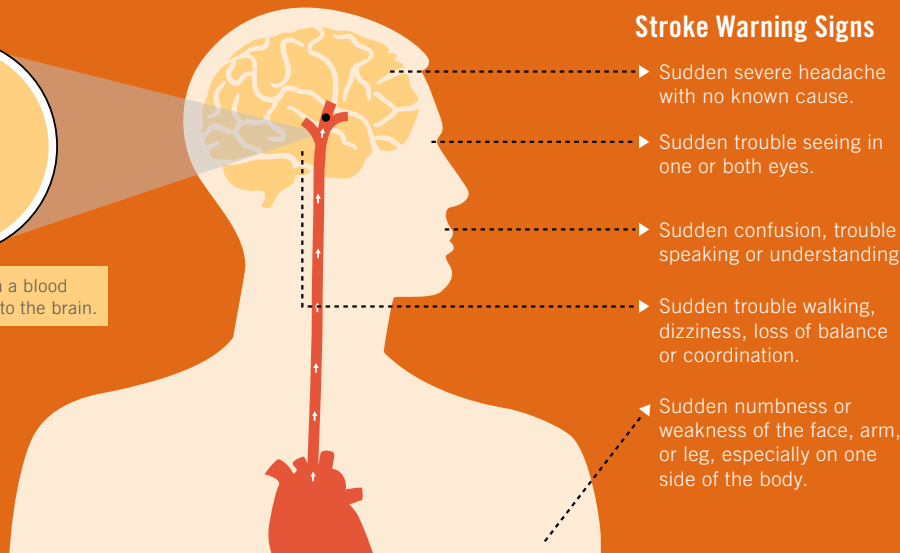
Does their speech sound strange or slurred?

**TIME**

Time to call 911!



Stroke is caused when a blood clot forms and travels to the brain.



### Stroke Warning Signs

- ▶ Sudden severe headache with no known cause.
- ▶ Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- ▶ Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- ▶ Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- ▶ Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.



## Five Minutes To Health:

Learn steps you can take in five minutes or less to be safe and healthy.

## You and the Zika Virus: Prepare and Prevent

The arrival of summer means more time spent outdoors, family vacations across the country, and days spent by the pool and lake. These activities should be enjoyed worry free, so be sure to protect yourself and your family against mosquitos and the potential for the Zika Virus, especially if pregnant.

### What is the Zika Virus?

Zika Virus spreads to people primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. People can also get Zika through sexual relations with an infected man, and the virus can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. While the illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days, it's important to be aware of the symptoms, especially in pregnant women. Zika infection during pregnancy can cause serious birth defects, so prevention is key.

Martha Chapman, Memorial Hospital's manager of infection control, stresses the importance of being aware of Zika and taking measures to prevent infection: "It's important to protect yourself from Zika because there is currently no vaccine or specific treatment for the virus. The strongest weapon at this time is protection from mosquito bites."

### Zika and Pregnancy

- The primary way that pregnant women get Zika Virus is through the bite of an infected mosquito.
- Zika Virus can be spread by a man to his sexual partners.
- Zika Virus can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus during pregnancy or at delivery, potentially causing birth defects.



### Pregnant Women: What You Need to Know

- **Travel** - Avoid travel to areas where the Zika Virus is spreading. If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your doctor and follow the steps below to prevent mosquito bites.

- **Prevention** - Prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitos out. Use EPA-registered insect repellents, which when used correctly are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women. Remove or stay away from mosquito breeding sites, like containers and areas with standing water. Treat clothing and gear with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated items.
- **Safe Sex** - Take steps to prevent getting Zika Virus through sexual relations. Until more is known, pregnant women with male sex partners who have lived in or traveled to an area with Zika should use protection during sex.
- **Talk to a Doctor** - Pregnant women who have recently traveled to an area with Zika should talk to a doctor or health care provider about their travel, even if they do not feel sick.
- **The Symptoms** - If experiencing symptoms such as a fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes during a trip or within two weeks after traveling to an area with Zika, pregnant women should immediately see a doctor.
- **Medical Preparedness** - Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has provided guidance to help doctors decide what tests are needed for pregnant women who may be exposed to Zika.

\*Content provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ■



## Basic Differences Between Emergency and Urgent Care for Children

# Emergency Department vs. Urgent Care for Children

You've been dreaming of summer vacation and outdoor activities. Now that summer is here, you're ready to tackle that list of fun things to do while the kids are out of school. Planning what to do in an emergency may not be fun, but it should be on the list. If your child needs immediate medical attention, you'll want to know whether to visit the Emergency Department or an Urgent Care clinic.

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"Emergency Departments are linked closely inside hospitals, and they tend to have more resources available for your sick child," said Dr. Azimian, an emergency medicine physician. "Urgent Care has capabilities of caring for some of the less severe illnesses."

Patients in the Emergency Department (ED) are not necessarily seen in the order they arrive. "The process of selecting which patients are seen first in the ED is called triage," said Dr. Azimian. "The sickest patients are seen first."

If you and your child arrive with a mild illness when the ED is very busy, your child's care will be delayed until sicker patients are seen. This may seem frustrating, but since the ED treats patients with a wide spectrum of ailments, children with life-threatening illnesses are treated first.

### Receiving the Correct Treatment

With warmer weather come increased opportunities for seasonal illnesses and allergies. Children with asthma have an increased risk of asthma attacks due to higher pollen concentration in the air.

"This is also the time of year that we see Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease, which is a viral illness with fevers and rashes," said Dr. Azimian. "Please remember that the majority of all illnesses are viral in origin, and antibiotics will not help those illnesses improve any quicker," explained Dr. Azimian. "As a matter of fact, they can be harmful for your child." Antibiotics can lead to their own set of illnesses, such as diarrhea and other infections, and even severe allergic reactions. Ask your health care provider whether your child would benefit from the prescribed antibiotic.

**"Emergency Departments are linked closely inside hospitals, and they tend to have more resources available for your sick child. Urgent Care has capabilities of caring for some of the less severe illnesses."**

—Dr. Azimian, *Emergency Medical Physician*

All three Dignity Health Bakersfield hospitals—Memorial Hospital, Mercy Hospital Downtown, and Mercy Hospital Southwest—are equipped with an online waiting service, called InQuicker.™ This service allows you to select an estimated arrival time at one of the Dignity Health EDs, and your child can wait in the comfort of your own home. **To schedule an arrival time, visit [dignityhealth.org/bakersfield](http://dignityhealth.org/bakersfield).** (Please note: if your child is experiencing a life-threatening symptom or injury, call 9-1-1 immediately.)

Memorial Hospital will soon be home to the Robert A. Grimm Children's Pavilion for Emergency Care. Part of the Lauren Small Children's Center, this addition will provide pediatric patients with separate, child-friendly access to the ED. The Pavilion is expected to open January 2017.

While emergency medical care likely isn't on your list of summer fun, it's important to know where to go if your child needs immediate treatment. Choose the best facility for your child's needs based on each unique situation. ■

## Illnesses benefitting from a quicker visit to Urgent Care

- Sprains or strains
- Mild colds
- Episodes of vomiting and diarrhea that have not stopped the child's ability to eat
- Rash-related illnesses the child has had in the past—such as allergic rashes
- Less-traumatic injuries to the extremities

## When to seek emergency care in the emergency department

- Severe illness
- Traumatic injury
- Breathing problems
- Change in mental state
- Physical injury such as a broken arm
- Children with multiple medical problems
- Children who have been in the hospital recently

**InQuicker™**

To schedule your arrival to one of our Emergency Departments for a non-life-threatening symptom or illness, visit: [dignityhealth.org/bakersfield](http://dignityhealth.org/bakersfield).

For all life-threatening symptoms or injury, **call 9-1-1 immediately.**



Don't Wait for Signs or Symptoms

# Lung cancer screening saves lives



## How often should I be screened?

Your doctor will recommend when to return for your next lung cancer screening based on the results of your first screening.

Most people should repeat the procedure yearly. You should stop having regular screenings when at least one of the following statements is true:

- I am 81-years-old or older.
- I haven't smoked in over 15 years.
- I have a history of heavy smoking.
- I have a health problem that would keep me from having surgery for lung cancer.

## How do I schedule a screening?

Contact your primary care doctor to say that you are at a high risk for developing lung cancer because of your age and history of smoking. After confirming your self-assessment, your doctor will refer you to an imaging facility for the LDCT scan.

To schedule a screening with an appointment coordinator from Dignity Health, contact our Lung Screening Patient Navigator at (661) 865-2573 or email your request to [subell@cbccusa.com](mailto:subell@cbccusa.com)



## Am I at risk for lung cancer?



### Check all that apply

- I currently smoke an average of one pack per day.
- I quit smoking less than 15 years ago.
- I have a history of heavy smoking.
- I am between 55 and 80 years old.

If you checked 3 out of 4, you are a candidate for lung cancer screening with low-dose computed tomography (LDCT).

LDCT scans are covered by most insurance plans, and can help detect lung cancer before a patient has any signs or symptoms of the disease. Early detection can lead to better outcomes.

## Am I taking a risk with screening?

While there are at least three risks associated with LDCT, the benefits of early detection and treatment of lung cancer outweigh these risks.

### Risk #1: False Positive

Sometimes pictures of the lungs taken with LDCT suggest lung cancer when no cancer is present. This may lead to unnecessary follow-up tests and surgeries.

### Risk #2: Overdiagnosis

Sometimes cancer is present, but it would not have caused the patient problems. With overdiagnosis, a patient may receive unnecessary lung cancer treatments.

### Risk #3: Radiation

Repeated LDCT exposes the patient to cancer-causing radiation, which may lead to other types of cancer.

## How do I lower my risk of lung cancer?

The best thing you can do is to stop smoking and avoid secondhand smoke. Following a healthy diet and getting regular exercise is also very important. Visit [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov) for helpful information and support.

Leading cause of cancer deaths in women, surpassing breast cancer:  
**Lung Cancer #1 since 1987**

Approximate number of lung cancer deaths in America:  
**158,000 in 2015**

To take the Lung Cancer Risk Assessment go to:  
[dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/lung](http://dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/lung)



Memorial Is The First Hospital In Kern County and Second In California To Achieve the Pathway to Excellence Designation

## Recognizing Our Nurses, Honoring Their Practices

Dignity Health Memorial Hospital has achieved Pathway to Excellence® designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), and joins an elite group of health care facilities that have created a positive work environment where nurses can flourish. After a thorough review by ANCC nursing experts, the designation was granted by the Commission on Pathway to Excellence®, and will be held by the hospital for three years. Memorial is the first hospital in Kern County and the second in California to achieve the Pathway to Excellence® designation.

“We could never have done this without the staff and their input,” said Terri Church, vice president and chief nursing officer, Memorial Hospital. “We had a little over 100 bedside staff help us write the application.”

As a part of the application process, staff had to demonstrate that our organization meets the ANCC’s 12 standards of excellence, which define and measure the essential elements of an optimal nursing practice environment. Integrating the required practice standards into the hospital’s operating policies, procedures, and management structure brought about several positive changes.

### Enhanced Collaboration

“We’ve always talked to our nurses for their input, but didn’t have a formal structure in place for them to be involved in nursing governance,” said Terri. “As part of our journey applying for Pathway to Excellence® designation, we implemented unit-based councils, which gave them a formal voice.”

Establishing stronger communication channels between hospital executives and bedside nurses has benefitted both administration and operations. “Our nurses have been challenged to learn more about quality indicators and metrics,” said Terri. At the same time, leadership has come to appreciate the insight bedside nurses bring to the strategic decision-making process. “It’s so exciting in my position to see the staff engaged and the energy generated as we’ve tried to honor their ideas,” she said. “We have eyes and ears out on the unit so we understand each other better, and I’ve seen great support from the administration and an increasing desire to hear the voice of the bedside nurse.”

### Increased Satisfaction

Organizations recognized under the Pathway to Excellence® Program provide an environment that leads to high satisfaction and retention among nurses. Studies have shown that when nurses work in a desirable and nurturing environment, patients also benefit. Increased patient satisfaction and quality of care are characteristic of hospitals with Pathway to Excellence® designation.

**“The work that’s been put in for three-plus years has taken so much energy. I am so very proud of what our hospital and nurses have accomplished. This has been the most rewarding journey that I’ve had in my 36 years as a nurse.”**

—Terri Church, *vice-president and chief nursing officer, Memorial Hospital*

“Every patient satisfaction indicator has seen improvement over the past year,” said Terri. “We’ve especially seen the nursing indicator go up.”

Memorial Hospital is committed to supporting nurses and implementing systems that our nurses identify as important to their practice.

“There are always strategic decisions to be made about patient care,” said Terri. “Now I can say, ‘let me go back to the staff and hear from them.’ It takes more time, but when bedside staff through the unit-based councils takes part in decision-making, the changes are going to stick because the staff has buy-in. Not expecting every decision to come down from the executives has been a change for us, but we’ve had great admin support throughout,” she said. “It has been a centralized force that has led to better patient care.”

### Greater Recognition

From implementing the nationally recognized Daisy Award, which acknowledges extraordinary nurses, to establishing systems that seek out and value the unique perspectives of our bedside staff, nurses at Memorial know the hospital supports their efforts and recognizes their contributions.

“The work that’s been put in for three-plus years has taken so much energy,” said Terri. “At times you’re tempted to say, ‘it’s too much effort.’ But with staff and leadership working together toward our common goal, the energy and excitement escalates. I am so very proud of what our hospital and nurses have accomplished,” said Terri. “This has been the most rewarding journey that I’ve had in my 36 years as a nurse.”

On our Pathway to Excellence®, Dignity Health Memorial Hospital will continue to attract the best nurses to provide the best care by being the best place to work. ■



**Pathway to Excellence®  
Program requirements  
include a demonstrated  
adherence to the following  
practice standards:**

1. Nurses control the practice of nursing.
2. The work environment is safe and healthy.
3. Systems are in place to address patient care and practice concerns.
4. Orientation prepares new nurses.
5. The chief nursing officer (CNO) is qualified and participates in all levels of the facility.
6. Professional development is provided and utilized.
7. Competitive wages/salaries are in place.
8. Nurses are recognized for achievements.
9. A balanced lifestyle is encouraged.
10. Collaborative interdisciplinary relationships are valued and supported.
11. Nurse managers are competent and accountable.
12. A quality program and evidence-based practice are used.



# PINKfest

## Women's Health Care Festival

Treat yourself to a day of valuable health education, mixed with fun activities and exhibits focused on taking action for better health—body, mind and spirit.

Get your friends together and come out to laugh, learn, and celebrate the vibrancy of good health!

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### PINKfest will feature:

- Free glucose, blood pressure, body fat, cholesterol, & heart screenings
- Physician-led seminars
- Free massages
- Demonstrations
- Booths featuring local health and wellness professionals
- Food & drinks
- Shopping & giveaways
- Even a photo booth



**Saturday, Sept. 17**

**9 am - 2 pm**

Mercy Hospital Southwest  
400 Old River Road

**Due for a mammogram?  
Do it at PINKFest!**

Mercy's Women's Imaging Center is offering appointments during the event.

**Only \$50!** *(Cash only at time of service. No insurance, no billing, and no credit cards.)*

Call **632-5281** to make your appointment.