

# Mercy Insights


Health care's bright spot

FALL 2012

## Infusions and Other Ambulatory Services in a Convenient Setting



Lillian Borg was relieved to have the Ambulatory Care Department treat her postsurgery infection. Thanks to the caring and expert staff, Borg is on the road to recovery.

**To learn more** about the services offered at Mercy Hospital, go to [www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org](http://www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org). Then, ask your physician for a referral. 

**LILLIAN BORG** has always been active and has walked at least a mile or two every day. But last winter, when her leg became numb and she could no longer walk without a limp, she sought medical treatment.

Less-invasive treatment options, including injections and chiropractic and physical therapy, didn't help, so she underwent back surgery. The whole ordeal sapped her strength. "I was laid up for so long," she says.

But after Borg finally had back surgery in February, she developed an infection. Doctors were concerned the infection might spread to her bones, and treated her aggressively.

Borg, 66, of Valley City, needed to receive antibiotic treatments by intravenous (IV) infusion twice a day for three weeks, and she was grateful that Mercy Hospital had an Ambulatory Care Department where she could receive her IV medications. "Otherwise, I would have had to drive 60 miles one way to the nearest infusion center," she says.

Mercy's Ambulatory Care Department is located within the hospital's Emergency Department. It has eight treatment areas, and a nurse is available to provide treatments 24/7.

"We serve a variety of patients, and we serve all age groups," says Alana Wendel, RN, ER manager, trauma coordinator, and certified sedation nurse at Mercy.

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## Safeguard Yourself Against the Flu

Getting vaccinated for flu *every year* is the single best approach to keeping the virus away. And the time to get your shot is now. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting vaccinated as soon as shots become available—and, ideally, before December.

Vaccinating early gives your body time to develop virus-fighting antibodies well before flu season is in full swing.

Experts recommend the vaccine for everyone age 6 months and older. It's especially important if you are at a high risk for serious flu-related complications. This group includes those who are pregnant or have a chronic medical condition, such as asthma or diabetes, or live with someone who does.

### Roll Up Your Sleeve ...

Call your doctor's office to get your flu shot today. Or visit the CDC flu vaccine locator at [www.flu.gov/wherelive/index.html](http://www.flu.gov/wherelive/index.html).



## Family Plays a Key Role in Spotting Dementia

**SOME CONDITIONS**—such as high blood pressure and diabetes—can be detected only by your doctor or a lab test. When it comes to dementia, it's often family members who notice the first warning signs. Knowing what's normal and what's not can help you spot red flags in your relatives' behavior.

### Mind the Warning Signs

Around age 20, brain cells begin to die and produce fewer of the chemicals they need to work. Later on, these changes can contribute to minor forgetfulness, such as misplacing the car keys. These normal lapses are different from dementia. But thinking and memory problems that aren't a normal part of aging include:

- ▶ Repeating things in the same conversation
- ▶ Forgetting how to do regular tasks, such as driving to a familiar location
- ▶ Confusion around time or place
- ▶ Trouble making choices or handling money
- ▶ Shifts in mood and personality

If you notice these changes or others that affect your loved one's daily life, speak up.

### Smart Guide to Getting Help

The first step is talking to your loved one's primary care doctor. He or she may perform tests to determine the root cause of the problem. In some cases, such as when medications are to blame for a foggy memory, the fix may be as simple as changing a prescription.

Some types of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, have no cure. However, treatment can slow their progress and make a person's daily life easier. The earlier dementia is detected, the better treatments, such as medications and memory aids, will work to preserve brain function.

### Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters

Wednesday, September 19,

2 to 3 p.m. or 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.,

Mercy Hospital, Health Education Center

Attend this interactive workshop to learn the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's disease. We'll separate myth from reality and address commonly held fears about Alzheimer's disease. Find out how to recognize the signs and what steps to take.

## Making Every Day Safe

**HAVE YOU** ever gotten to work and wondered whether you had turned off the coffee pot before leaving the house? Have you ever driven to work instead of the grocery store? Have you gotten busy talking on your phone while driving and have run a stop sign? One study by the U.S. Department of Labor found the average American worker makes 25 mistakes a day! Most of these we are not even aware of making.

Safety events are the leading cause of injury and harm to patients in hospitals around the country. While we know that no one intends to hurt patients, an outside study of hospitals in the U.S. cites that a serious safety event occurs an average of every eight days. That is why Mercy Hospital, as part of Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI), is putting “Safety First.”

### We're Undergoing a Lifestyle Change

Each and every Mercy Hospital employee has attended mandatory training and education on the importance of safety, tools to use to increase safety for our patients, and the commitment to putting personal and patient safety before everything else. The tools that all hospital staff members are being trained on during their Safety First training include:

- ▶ Using proper communication techniques
- ▶ Making sure documentation is accurate and legible
- ▶ Checking and coaching one another
- ▶ Having a questioning attitude
- ▶ Paying attention to details



### Employing the STAR Technique

STAR stands for “stop,” “think,” “act,” and “review”:

- ▶ **Stop** and pause to focus attention on the task at hand.
- ▶ **Think** about your actions and decide what to do if the unexpected occurs.
- ▶ **Act** by carrying out the planned task.
- ▶ **Review** to verify that you got the expected results.

Using this simple tool takes only a few seconds and has been proven to reduce errors. It is a technique that is helpful not only in health care but in everyday life. Stop and think, “Did I turn off the coffee pot?” Act by looking at the coffee pot to see if it is turned off. If the pot is turned on, review by taking note of this fact and proceeding to turn it off.

### Enhanced Safety in Administering IV Medications

Other tools that put patient safety

first are relatively new to our hospital, including our safety intravenous (IV) pumps. Mercy Hospital has implemented “smart pumps,” which are technologically advanced IV pumps to help increase safety when administering IV medications and fluids.

The library of medications parameters is set by a pharmacist and implemented for all pumps, which give a warning when the parameters are violated. The pump doesn’t allow the nurse to set a rate that exceeds the safe limit for that medication.

### The Target? Zero

Our goal at Mercy Hospital and within all the Catholic Health Initiatives health care facilities is to have ZERO serious safety events by the year 2020. All of the employees at Mercy Hospital are beginning this journey of making sure that we are not only concerned about our patients’ safety, but putting patient safety before all else.



Mercy Insights is published as a community service for the friends and partners of Mercy Hospital, 570 Chautauqua Blvd., Valley City, ND 58072-3199, telephone 701-845-6400, [www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org](http://www.mercyhospitalvalleycity.org).

**Keith E. Heuser**, Administrator

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## Ambulatory Services *(continued from page 1)*

### Who Uses the Ambulatory Care Department?

The department can serve patients who need:

- ▶ Blood transfusions
- ▶ Medication transfusions, such as IV medications for arthritis, iron deficiencies or infections
- ▶ Dressing changes
- ▶ Blood drawn from implanted catheters
- ▶ Flushing of implanted catheters
- ▶ Injections, such as chemotherapy or vitamin B12 shots

Patients who may need these services include individuals with cancer, lupus, multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, and other autoimmune diseases or infections. Outpatient infusion therapy is also a treatment option for hematological, rheumatologic, gynecological, and kidney disorders.

### Patients Made to Feel Special

"I received lots of attention, even though the department is in the emergency room and I wasn't an emergency," Borg says. There was hardly any wait time, she says.

Borg says all the staff was very friendly and caring. Soon after her treatment was complete, "one of the nurses called me just to see how I was doing," Borg says.

Borg is well on the road to being herself again. Because she did so well, she was able to return to work in May, where she assists people who have disabilities. All thanks, she says, to the fine care she received at the hospital and the Ambulatory Care Department.

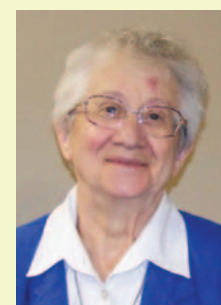
### In Need of Ambulatory Care?

Has your doctor ordered outpatient therapy that requires nursing assistance? Call **701-845-6400** and ask for Ambulatory Care to see if we can assist you. A referral from your health care provider is required.



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Offering Comfort in Time of Need



Sister  
Dorothy Bunce

When patients are finding they need to stay at Mercy Hospital, Sister Dorothy Bunce is there to pray with them and their families.

As the hospital's director of spiritual services for the past two years, Bunce's

mission is to help patients feel the presence of God in their lives.

"I find most people want to pray in their time of need," she says. Her job also includes arranging for patients to receive sacraments and representing the hospital on its Ethics Committee and on the community's Ministerial Committee.

Bunce, 71, is a member of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. "As a child, I saw God was important in the lives of people, and that said to me that I must find a way to make God important in my life," she says.

A sister for 53 years, she enjoys walking, bike riding, reading, puzzles, and playing piano in her free time.