

Our donors have made a positive difference in the lives of thousands of patients and families throughout the region. Philanthropic support plays an important role in providing patient and family services, technology, research, and education. We are so grateful for support and MeritCare Foundation is careful about how we allocate the resources donors provide. Here are a few examples of how funding has been used in the past year.

Patient & Family Programs & Services

School Re-entry Program

Going back to school after being in the hospital for a long time can be scary for children and for their peers. Staff from Children's Hospital visit regional schools to help a child with the transition of returning to his or her classroom after an extended illness. Their goal is to educate classmates and answer questions about the hospital stay and health concerns. This special program is funded entirely with donations. A Child Life Specialist and a pediatric or oncology nurse often travel together. Last Spring, Kristine Schimek, Child Life Specialist, and Marcia Stubstad, RN, visited Carrington High School where Monica Hatch of Sykeston, ND, attended. Monica



had a zest for life which was evident when she showed up at the school with green hair for St. Patrick's Day. Monica lost her battle with cancer in August but her spirit and courage inspired classmates, other cancer patients and their families, and MeritCare staff.

Stroke Care Across the Continuum

Stroke is a leading cause of adult disability. Doreen Taber of Fargo, a retired English teacher, suffered a stroke and when brought to the Emergency Center the stroke team was ready for her. With the prompt response of care and correct medication, Doreen continues an active life with no permanent disability. Doreen discovered the distinct difference when professionals work together as a team.



Efforts are underway at MeritCare to improve and maintain a strong stroke program by achieving national certification as a Primary Stroke Center (PSC). This designation is a measure of a health system's ability to effectively use clinical practice guidelines and to continually measure and improve stroke care. Currently there are no Primary Stroke Centers in North Dakota. The proceeds from the 2006 Festival of Wreaths are being used to assist MeritCare in achieving this goal.

Patient & Family Programs and Services continued on back page.

"More than ever, the ability to meet the growing healthcare needs of our patients and families depends on a vital partnership between MeritCare and community members that believe in the importance of serving the well being of others. Donors to MeritCare Foundation have been an integral part of our past successes, and they are valued partners in achieving a vision of the future characterized by smart medicine, extraordinary care and exceptional service. We look forward to continuing our work together to make sure that the services needed to support quality of life in our region remain strong and vibrant."

Roger L. Gilbertson, MD
President/CEO
MeritCare Health System

Medical Technology

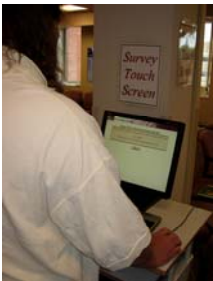
Heart Services EECP Technology

New technology, the Enhanced External Counter Pulsation technology (EECP), assists our patients in Heart Services who have angina and heart failure and few alternatives to improve their health. The equipment provides treatments that increase the blood and oxygen supply to the heart muscle and decrease the amount of work the heart has to do to pump blood to the rest of the body. EECP uses a set of computer-controlled inflatable cuffs (like blood pressure cuffs) on the lower half of the body that are inflated and deflated with each heartbeat. The treatments are provided on an outpatient basis and involve one-hour sessions, five days a week for seven weeks. Approximately 80% of patients who complete the 35-hour course of EECP therapy experience significant symptom relief that may last up to three years.



Satisfaction Kiosks

Touch screen computer monitors have been placed in two clinic surgery areas to offer patients a resource to share real-time feedback about their care. The purpose of this program is to monitor feedback daily and identify trends early in a reporting cycle, so care can be modified in a more timely manner. Patient feedback is vital in meeting our goal of service excellence.



Kidney Dialysis Equipment

Patients MeritCare serves from throughout the region need dialysis many times a week. The Detroit Lakes Kidney Dialysis Department, one of seven MeritCare sites, purchased equipment for their new unit. Dialysis is treatment for kidney or renal failure. It takes over function for the kidneys when they lose their ability to clean toxins from the blood and eliminate excess fluids from the body. MeritCare Dialysis Services is unique in that it offers a multi-disciplinary approach to dialysis care.

Assistive Technology

Communicating with others can be very frustrating if you have few ways to accomplish it. The Speech-Language Pathology and Occupational Therapy



services have set up an Augmentative Communication and Assistive Technology lab that provides services in Fargo and surrounding areas. Computer hardware and software was

purchased to assist people with physical, cognitive, and speech disabilities.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) refers to methods of communication other than verbal speech, while Assistive Technology (AT) refers to the use of aided tools to improve function and independence of individuals with disabilities.

The lab provides on-site services to inpatients and outpatients in need of alternative communication (low or high tech) and/or assistive technology



including environmental controls, computer access, and community access. The lab places the focus not on what is lost but on what is possible.

Eye and Ear Simulation Models

Sophisticated, life size models of human heads are the first of this type of training technology MeritCare has available for the Internal Medicine Department, other medical staff and Transitional Year residents.

The eye model shows different types of pathology and helps confirm a diagnosis



when examining a patient. The ear model allows the simulation of the normal hearing process and study of conditions that affect hearing. A resident can use an interactive component of the model to refine diagnosis and technique.

Research

Neonatal Intensive Care Research

Parents who have a baby in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit have both joy with the birth of their child and anxiety from all the special care that is needed for their infant. Fortunately, MeritCare Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit is a member of the Vermont Oxford Network. This organization maintains one of the world's largest databases of information about the care and outcomes for high-risk infants treated in neonatal intensive care units around the world.

Involvement provides hospitals with feedback concerning their performance. Reports assist the staff in identifying opportunities for improvement and in monitoring the effects of quality improvement in the care of infants in MeritCare's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The department was also able to use education funds to participate in a Vermont Oxford web conference that reviewed testing and implementing better practices.

Research on Childhood Cancer

Thankfully, childhood cancer is relatively rare, affecting only about 14 of every 100,000 children in the United States each year. Among all age groups, the most common childhood cancers are leukemia, lymphoma, and brain cancer. Research done at MeritCare is so important because it is so rare.



The Pediatric Oncology Department at Roger Maris Cancer Center, led by Dr. Nathan Kobrinsky, is a member of the Children's Oncology Group (COG). This cooperative program is dedicated to providing state-of-the-art care and advancing the understanding and treatment of childhood cancer through clinical and basic science research. MeritCare has played a leadership role in the brain tumor, acute myelogenous leukemia and Hodgkins Disease study committees.

Over the past year at MeritCare, 26 children with newly diagnosed malignancies have been registered with COG. Eight have been enrolled on phase 3 clinical trials.

Education

Diabetes & Obesity

Across the nation, the growing number of obese people has led to an increase in Type II diabetes. MeritCare Nutrition Therapy staff was able to attend a conference on treating patients who are obese and also have diabetes. This education keeps staff up-to-date on treatment practices for those with diabetes and for preventing diabetes in those who are obese.

Donations made to the Diabetes Education Fund also make it possible to offer education about diabetes to those recently diagnosed and to the community. An annual Fall event with vendor and education booths provided information about current medication and treatments.

Home Care Quality Initiative

After an individual has been referred to home care, a member of MeritCare's Home Care Team meets with the patient and their family to discuss their needs.

MeritCare's Home Care staff undertook a project that improves staff efficiency, patient assessment and communication among all people involved in the patient's care. The goal of this project was to positively impact quality of care and offer consumers information about the value of home health care.



Nursing Scholarships

MeritCare Foundation is able to award yearly nursing scholarships through the generosity of families who established endowed funds in memory of a loved one who was in the medical field. They understood both the need for nurses and the challenge of paying for a college education. This year the scholarships benefited thirteen students beginning or advancing their nursing education.

One recipient wrote: "Thank you for supporting my education with your generous gift. I really appreciate the help. I am thrilled to start my nursing education."

Patient & Family Programs (continued from page 1)

Screening for Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men, affecting one in six. If caught early, nearly 100 percent survive. Those with early-stage cancer rarely have symptoms, so screening is very important and why MeritCare makes them readily available to the men in our region.

Each year, Roger Maris Cancer Center provides low-cost screening for men at high risk for prostate cancer. Donations cover the lab supplies for screenings in Fargo and two regional clinics.

Massage Therapy

Touch is a powerful tool that spreads positive feelings and attitudes. Massage is shown to relax, comfort, promote feelings of well being, help with pain management, and decrease the patient's level of pain and/or anxiety.

Roger Maris Cancer Center continues to provide two certified massage therapists. Massages are offered to patients, with a physician's approval, while in the hospital or while receiving treatment at the Cancer Center. This year, massages also became available for patients in the Palliative Care Unit.

Heart Services Day Unit began to incorporate massage therapy into their plan of care for patients this year. They, too, provide a certified massage therapist to patients on the Heart Unit for approximately five hours a week.

Family Cancer Risk Assessment

It often seems that many people in one family develop cancer. Over the last nine years, the Family Cancer Risk Assessment program has served patients and families facing cancer. This program provides services for individuals with strong family histories of breast and ovarian or colon and uterine cancers. Patients and the Assessment Team assess their personal risk for developing cancer and formulate an individualized plan to reduce risk and promote early detection. Some families elect to undertake genetic testing as part of this plan. Approximately 400 patients and families have received services. The Foundation supports a nurse educator and physician who provide education and counseling services not often reimbursed through traditional insurance programs.

SHARE

SHARE is a support group for people who have been touched by the death of a baby during pregnancy, birth or infancy. Established in 2001, this non-denominational program is locally coordinated by MeritCare Children's Hospital. The community-based chapter is part of the national SHARE Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support, Inc.

Balloons and butterflies filled the sky over MeritCare South University at a recent annual event. Participants wrote messages on balloons and



released their balloons and butterflies into the sky. The group also holds a community candlelight memorial service in October at Hope Lutheran Church.

Lung Case Manager

Adults diagnosed with cancer face the fact that they will have many, many appointments. Roger Maris Cancer Center has developed several new case manager positions that guide patients through their treatment. The breast cancer nurse case manager was funded three years ago and was so successful it is now self-sufficient. Last year, the lung case manager position was added with funds given to the Cancer Center. This staff person develops a plan of care in collaboration with the patient, family and other health care providers and assists in implementing the services needed. Another part of the program provides educational opportunities for the patient to promote self-management of their health.



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