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HEALTHY
LIVING FOR
INDIANA'S
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 Community Healthcare System

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
ST. CATHERINE HOSPITAL
ST. MARY MEDICAL CENTER

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summer 2008 \$2.95

a healthier
community

tunnel-less
MRI

cookbook
inspired by
cancer
survivor

HOSPITALS
HONORED
FOR CARE

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inspire you to prevent
osteoporosis

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redefining the patient experience

nearly \$100 million spent on improving technology and services

In this issue, you'll learn about our efforts to strengthen and improve healthcare in Northwest Indiana—a promise we made nearly seven years ago when we brought three competing hospitals together under a single ownership.

Today, I'm pleased to say that through the creation of the Community Healthcare System, we are making healthcare better for the people of our community. We are also creating a better workplace for our employees and the physicians who practice at Community Hospital in Munster, St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart.

We set out to be recognized as one of the leading quality providers in the region. Today, all three hospitals are ranked among the top hospitals for the care we provide to patients. Community Hospital has been recognized by HealthGrades® as one of the 2008 America's 50 Best Hospitals; St. Catherine Hospital has achieved the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence®, ranking its performance in the Top 5 percent of the nation three years in a row; and St. Mary Medical Center has achieved the Distinguished Hospital Award for Patient Safety®, ranking its performance in Top 5 percent of the nation four years in a row (pages 54-55). No other hospitals in Northwest Indiana have achieved this level of national recognition.

By coming together as one, we also set out to reinvest in our hospitals so they remain valuable assets in our community, serving the needs of all people, including the poor and disadvantaged. Nearly \$100 million has been invested since 2001 to add new technology and services and to make improvements in our facilities (pages 52-53). Another important part of that investment has been our outreach to help prevent chronic disease and support area residents in making healthy lifestyle choices.

Our community can take great pride in knowing that these local hospitals have been recognized for providing some of the best care in America and are supported by advanced technology. But in the end what do people remember? They remember that their food was hot, their room was clean, the nurses were kind and someone said "thank you." To exceed our patients' expectations, we have embarked on what we call "Operational Excellence" to redefine the patient experience. We believe in the kind of healthcare that both changes and touches people's lives for the better!

John Gorski
Senior Vice President of Hospital Operations
Community Healthcare System



John Gorski
Senior Vice President of
Hospital Operations
Community Healthcare System



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Editors: Steven Beschloss, Jeff Ficker, Shelley Flannery, Kelly Kramer, Matt Morgan, Amanda Myers, Kari Redfield, Jill Schildhouse
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Design

Managing Art Director: Lisa Altomare
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Production

Senior Production Manager: Laura Marlowe
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Circulation

Circulation Director: Joseph Abeyta

CLIENT SERVICES

VP/Sales and Product Development: Chad Rose,
888-626-8779

VP/Strategic Marketing: Heather Burgett
Strategic Marketing Team: Brady Andreas, Robyn LaMont,
Barbara Mohr, Andrea Parsons

ADVERTISING SALES

Advertising Sales Representatives

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Phoenix: Solteir Jaeger, Associate Publisher, 888-626-8779
Mail Order: Bembach Advertising Reps, 914-769-0051

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lab results you can trust!

community healthcare system hospitals
join elite group of accredited labs

by kathleen pucalik

Three geographically diverse laboratories at three different hospitals have proven they provide the same results and same level of excellence across the healthcare system. The laboratories of Community Hospital in Munster, St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart—all part of the Community Healthcare System—provide consistent, accurate results.

Recognizing this achievement, a system-wide accreditation was recently awarded by the Commission on Laboratory Accreditation of the College of American Pathologists (CAP). According to Community Healthcare System Medical Director and Pathologist Brenda Eriksen, M.D., there are about 6,000 CAP-accredited labs in the country, but only about 60 “system” accreditations.

“It’s actually rather extraordinary,” Eriksen says. “Since there are only 60 CAP system-accredited labs in the country, we are part of an elite group.”

A hospital laboratory is guided by thousands of standardized policies and processes. The Community Healthcare System labs regularly test their work by sending samples to each other. The tests results are the same, so Community Healthcare System patients know that regardless of which of the three hospitals they choose, they are going to get the same high-quality care.

For systemwide accreditation, the Community Healthcare System was subjected to more rigorous standards. The system had to be substantially compliant with more than 800 elements.

“We want to guarantee patients that if they go to Community Hospital, St. Catherine Hospital or St. Mary Medical Center, the results would be virtually identical,” Eriksen says. “We use the same processes, same approaches, same delivery. The inspectors said our system is the most integrated and most standardized delivery that they had ever seen.” *v&v*

numerous accreditations recognize excellence

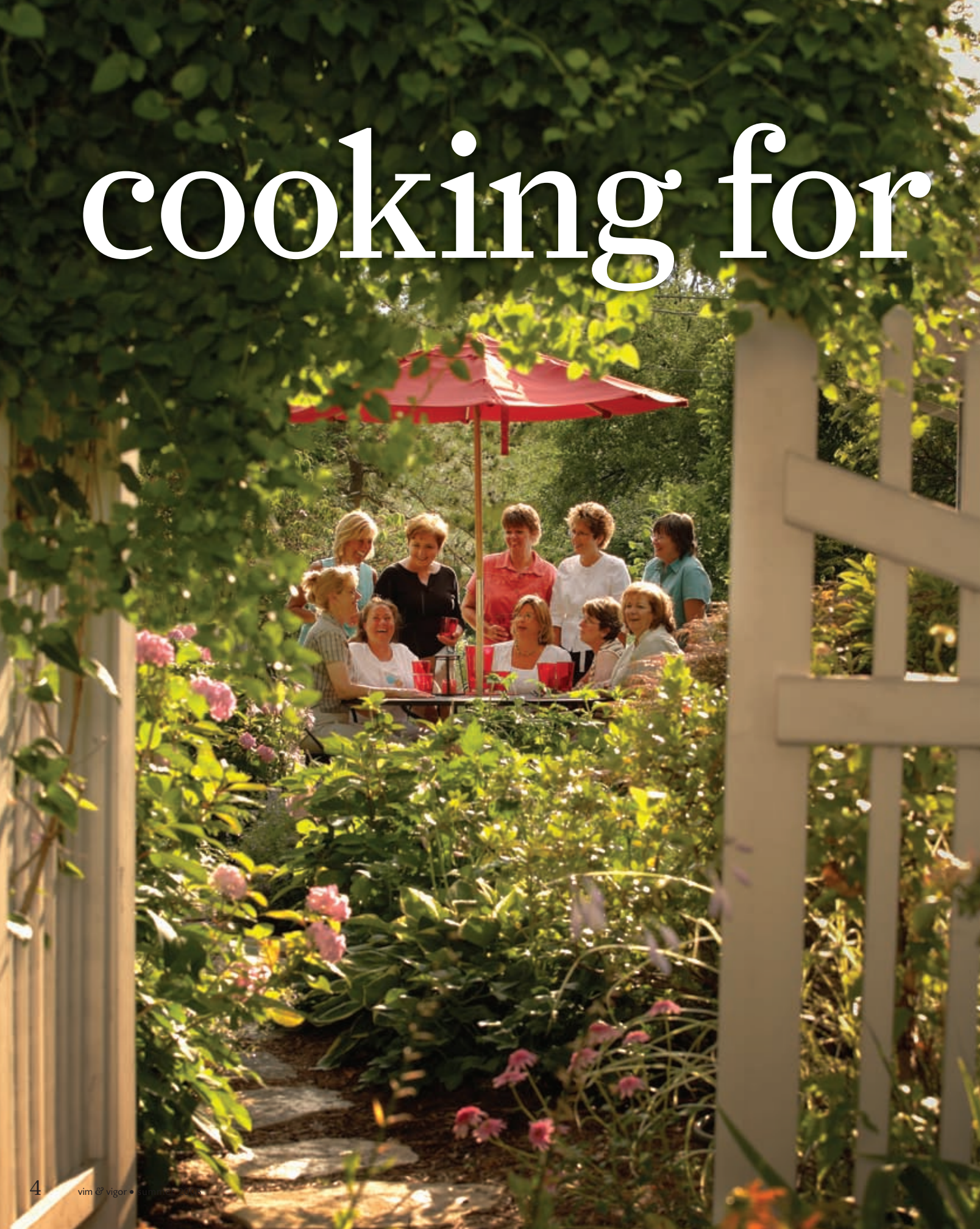
Community Hospital, St. Catherine Hospital and St. Mary Medical Center also are accredited by the:

- The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Nuclear Medicine Department)
- American College of Radiology for Mammography Services
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for Mammography Services
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
- College of American Pathologists for Medical Laboratory (St. Mary Medical Center also is accredited for Nuclear Medicine)
- Licensed by the Indiana State Board of Health
- Licensed laboratory by CMS—Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

In addition, Community Hospital is accredited for Ultrasound and Magnetic Resonance Imaging for Siemens MAGNETOM Symphony by the American College of Radiology, and the hospital is accredited for the Oncology Program by the American College of Surgeons. St. Mary Medical Center is accredited by the American Association of Blood Banks.



cooking for



Zita

a new book inspired by
one survivor's journey
through cancer

For breast cancer survivor Zita Ganza, kindness was packaged in jars of homemade tomato juice to soothe the burning effects of chemotherapy and in the home-cooked meals delivered to her door. "Cooking for Zita: Helping Loved Ones Through Cancer" is a collection of recipes and inspirational stories of the care and comfort experienced by people who had been diagnosed with cancer. Ganza's story and others provide a heartening look at the ways people reach out to help each other, nourishing bodies, hearts and souls.

"Cooking for Zita" became a kind of rally cry for a group of friends who delivered home-cooked meals to Ganza during her cancer treatment. Even perfect strangers dropped off food and made other incredible gestures of kindness, says Ganza. After having gone through that experience, she and her "cooking friends" from the St. John Junior Women's Club wanted to do more to help others through this journey. The idea for a cookbook was born.

"I really believe in the idea of paying it forward," Ganza said. "All of the kindness I received when going through my cancer treatment has to be passed on. I hope this will help."

The group brought the idea to the Cancer Resource Centre in Munster, a place where patients with cancer and their loved ones receive free support services to help

A photo of Zita Ganza and her friends from the St. John Junior Women's Club that appears in the book "Cooking for Zita."

about the cancer resource centre



The Cancer Resource Centre is a place ...

- ... where everyone can receive support and resources to help them face a diagnosis of cancer.
- ... where individuals may check out books, conduct Internet searches and receive information on cancer.
- ... where support groups gather, lectures are held and friends can be found.
- ... where patients and their families receive professional counseling to cope with the complexities of the disease.
- ... where those who have been touched by cancer can gather and draw strength from one another.
- ... where people can make a difference through contributions of their time, talent and resources.
- ... where services are provided for free to all who need help.

Started in 2003 by a group of doctors, medical professionals and volunteers, the Cancer Resource Centre is a place that offers education, support and encouragement to all who have been touched by cancer. It is a sanctuary beyond the walls of hospitals and medical clinics, a place where emotional and spiritual well-being are the focus, a place for the community to come together and participate in the healing process.

The Cancer Resource Centre is open to everyone. All its services are provided free of charge thanks to the generosity of many individuals, community groups and businesses. The Cancer Resource Centre is operated and supported by the Community Cancer Research Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of cancer care available in Northwest Indiana and the South Chicago Suburbs. It is part of the Community Healthcare System that operates three not-for-profit Northwest Indiana hospitals: Community Hospital in Munster; St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago, and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart.

cancer resource centre advisory board

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deal with the emotional toll of a cancer diagnosis. Ganza says she wanted to give back to the Centre for the support it provided her.

“When I heard Zita’s story I knew we had the makings for a great book—one that would celebrate the kindness that people express to those who are diagnosed with cancer,” says Myllinda Cane, chairman of the cookbook committee and advisory board member for the Cancer Resource Centre. “This book is a testament to the people whose muffins, potato pancakes and pots of chili have brought great joy to families, friends and perfect strangers.”

Admittedly, food and cancer don’t always mix well. In the book, cancer survivors and family members share some of what has worked to help those searching for the right combination to sustain and strengthen loved ones. Many of the recipes are easy to make, to heat and refreeze, a practical choice for anyone undergoing cancer treatment, and for the busy families who support them. Local chefs also stepped forward to donate recipes for dishes that will surely be enjoyed for generations to come, Cane says.

Proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit the Cancer Resource Centre. The cost to publish

start cooking!

To purchase a copy of “Cooking for Zita,” visit us online at www.cookingforzita.com or call the Cancer Resource Centre, **219-836-3349**.

go

the book was substantially underwritten by members of the Centre 1000 Club—individuals, businesses and organizations who donated \$1,000 each toward the project. Another significant donation to help offset costs associated with the publication was the four-color photography provided by Walt Bukva, of Bukva Imaging in Michigan City, Ind. M. Nabil Shabeeb, M.D., chairman of the Cancer Resource Centre advisory board, and Anthony Andello, director, spearheaded the fundraising drive so a greater portion of the sale of each book would directly benefit the Cancer Resource Centre.

“I am so touched by the outpouring of support for this project and other initiatives of the Cancer Resource Centre, particularly from our healthcare family here at the Community Healthcare System,” says Shabeeb. “This Centre is a place where the community can come together to help with the healing process through their contributions of time, talents and resources. Cooking for Zita is a great example of the difference people can make.” *v&v*



Walkers helped raise \$115,000 during the 2007 walk, an annual event held since 2004 chaired by Russell Pellar, M.D., a member of the Board of Directors for the Community Cancer Research Foundation. This year’s goal is \$130,000.

join us in helping patients with cancer!

The 5th Annual Cancer Resource Centre Romp and Roll will be held Sunday, Oct. 5, at Munster High School. This event, which raises money to support free programs of the Cancer Resource Centre, includes a walk and fun run. Participants can choose from a 1 to 2.5 mile walk through Community Park, or for those wanting to pick up the pace, a 3.1 mile/5K fun run. A free T-shirt will be provided with a \$25 minimum donation. Registration begins at noon. Walk and fun run begin at 1 p.m. with a picnic to follow. Envelopes and sponsor information will be available at the Cancer Resource Centre, 900 Ridge Road, Suite J, Munster, or call **219-836-3349**.

healthy indiana plan

cigarette tax funds uninsured

by *kelly nissan*

Ask someone in the job market what he or she is looking for in a potential employer, and one of the top answers would probably be “a good health insurance package.” Ask the employer what the most costly benefit is, and the answer would likely be the same.

Realizing this is a stumbling block for many working Hoosier families, lawmakers passed a 44-cent cigarette tax increase last year with proceeds to target a serious gap in coverage for individuals who aren't offered insurance through an employer. The plan is known as HIP—Healthy Indiana Plan. Sponsored by the state of Indiana, it requires only minimal monthly contributions from the participant.

One of the unique features of HIP is the POWER account—Personal Wellness and Responsibility Account. It acts like a health savings account in that individual monthly contributions, based on income, are deposited into the account. The state makes contributions to the account to bring the total value to \$1,100. The money in this account is used to cover healthcare services.

what's covered?

- Services include: physician services, prescriptions, diagnostic exams, home health services, inpatient and outpatient hospital, hospice, preventive services, family planning as well as services to manage diabetes, heart disease and asthma.
- Mental health coverage includes substance abuse treatment, inpatient and outpatient.
- Vision and/or dental coverage can be purchased for an additional cost.



Financial counselor Yvette Hernandez helps a resident complete the HIP application form at St. Catherine Hospital. Counselors are available on a walk-in basis to help anyone complete these forms; you do not have to be a patient of the hospital to use this service.

More than 45,000 working adults in Lake County are eligible for the Healthy Indiana Plan. Participants can choose one of two private insurance carriers. The hospitals of the Community Healthcare System—Community Hospital in Munster, St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart—have contracted with MDwise, one of the carriers providing this new insurance benefit.

“HIP is available on a first-come-first-served basis, so we want to help as many people in our community get enrolled as possible,” says Kevin Mybeck, regional director of managed care services for the Community Healthcare System.

“We have a group of hospital employees who have been trained to do presentations in the community about HIP. They'll go out to churches, community centers, businesses, wherever they are needed.”

who is eligible?

Uninsured adults earning up to double the federal poverty line: \$20,420 for a single person or \$41,300 for a family of four. Participants are required to pay a premium based on their income beginning with 2 percent for individuals earning \$10,210 or less with contributions not to exceed 5 percent of income. [v&v](#)

HIP plan benefit structure

- \$500 free Preventive Care Services
- POWER Account: \$1,100 individual and state contributions that you control to cover initial medical expenses
- \$300,000 annual insurance coverage and \$1 million lifetime coverage

Want more information?

877-GET-HIP-9 or www.HIP.in.gov

To arrange a HIP presentation for your group, call **219-392-7135**.

info

seeing is believing

making patients more comfortable is the focus

New technology is helping take out the anxiety and fear some patients experience when they undergo imaging tests. A new open MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) at Community Hospital Outpatient Centre in St. John and the state-of-the-art Siemens Symbia S gamma camera at St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart offer more patient comfort.

These innovative systems feature an improved, more accessible design than a standard gamma camera or MRI system. The gamma camera detects the molecular makeup and metabolism of the body's tissue and organs. The MRI provides doctors with structural or geographic information inside the body.

One of the common complaints about undergoing an MRI is the difficulty of being placed in a "tunnel" for a long period. The new open MRI available at the Community Hospital Outpatient Centre in St. John helps patients who may have feelings of claustrophobia during an imaging session.

Imagine painting a room your favorite color, with bubbles flowing across the ceiling or images of an island paradise. This can be a reality for a short time—if you are a patient being scanned in the new open MRI. The latest-generation in open MRI systems, the Philips Medical Systems' Panorama 1.0T allows patients to make these selections for the room environment to help make the scan a comfortable experience.

MRI is a diagnostic tool physicians and radiologists use to diagnose a variety of medical conditions, including brain and nervous system disorders, cardiovascular disease, cancer and organ disease. The advanced capabilities of the MRI and supporting computer system allows medical staff to view and manipulate images digitally (on a computer screen) rather than on traditional films, giving physicians the clearest image possible and making the images more available on an immediate basis. As the system becomes more widespread in the medical community, patients will no longer have to revisit the hospital to retrieve films; the images can be transmitted and stored on a compact disc for viewing at a physician's office or other medical facility.

The same open concept is also incorporated in the new gamma camera which also better accommodates patients of all body sizes and body types, as well as stretchers and wheelchairs.

The gamma camera offers advanced, high-quality imaging, an ultrathin bed and a DVD player that enhance patient comfort during an imaging session.

"Nuclear medicine provides a wide variety of procedures for diagnosis and treatment of diseases, including early detection and staging of cancer, heart and other hard-to-diagnose disorders," says Erlinda Roque-Kerekes, M.D., nuclear medicine specialist on staff at all three hospitals of Community Healthcare System.

The gamma camera system works by detecting benign radiation emitted from the radioisotope given to a patient. Once inside the patient, the radioisotope is attracted to a specific organ or area of the body.

The gamma camera system works by detecting benign radiation emitted from the radioisotope given to a patient. Once inside the patient, the radioisotope is attracted to a specific organ or area of the body.

New open MRI of Community Hospital enables patients to choose what they would like to see and hear during exam. Nuclear medicine technicians (above, from left) Donna Zatkoff, Brian Czekala, Mary Kristoff and Adam King demonstrate the new gamma camera's features including its open design and DVD player.



great things

... are happening at the community healthcare system hospitals

by *kathleen pucalike*

When three competing hospitals came together to form the Community Healthcare System, they pledged to work together to strengthen and improve the quality of care in Northwest Indiana. That was nearly seven years ago, and since that time about \$100 million has been invested in improvements at Community Hospital in Munster; St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago; and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart.

Here's a look at how Community Healthcare System is improving healthcare:

* facility improvements

To address concerns about privacy and patient comfort, a number of new initiatives were undertaken at all three hospitals.

- At Community Hospital, work was recently completed to expand its Family Birthing Center to provide



all-private rooms for each mom throughout her stay. The Emergency Department is currently being expanded, and remodeling will add an additional 100 private rooms to the hospital.

- At St. Catherine Hospital, a bright, beautiful lobby greets visitors, and what was once a nearly empty wing is now home to a new multimillion-dollar information technology hub for the health-care system.
- At St. Mary Medical Center, a new all-private room patient tower was built redefining the experience of a hospital stay. From the waterfall wall in the main lobby to rooms that resemble those in a hotel, it is hard to tell this is a hospital!

* new services

To improve the community's access to healthcare, investments were made to add new services.

- At St. Catherine Hospital two specialized services—long term acute nursing care and rehabilitation services—enable patients to remain close to home, their family and friends while they regain the skills they need to return to independent living.
- At St. Mary Medical Center, a Women's Diagnostic Center was added to create a more comfortable and less anxious experience for women undergoing

mammograms and other services. Options for same-day results are available at the Women's Diagnostic Centers at St. Mary Medical Center and Community Hospital using digital mammography.

* new technology

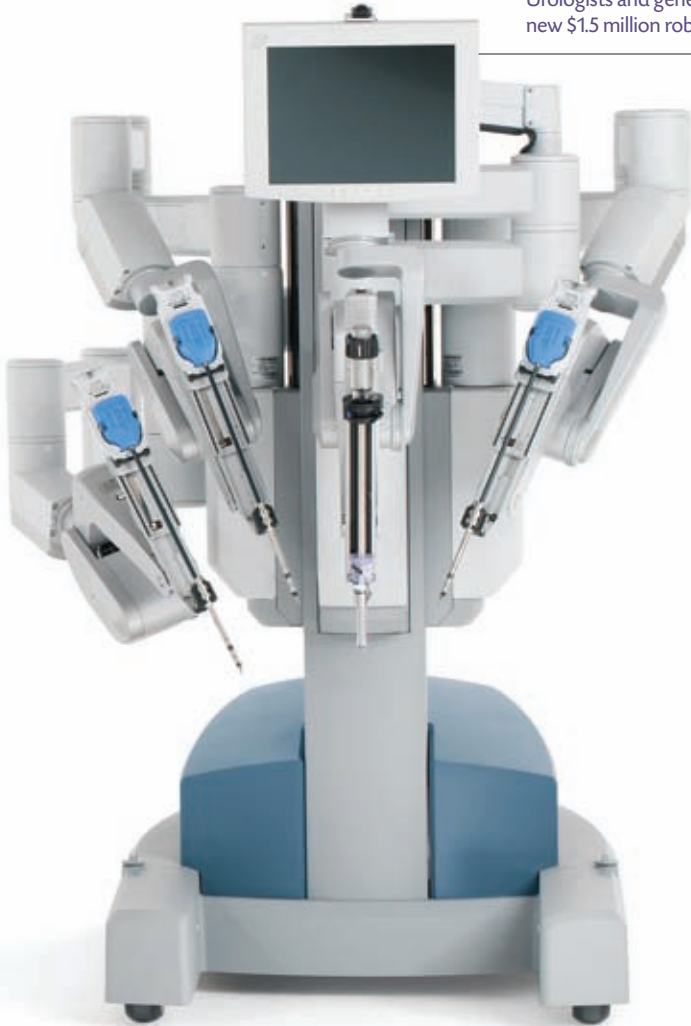
Advances in technology are providing patients with hope and new treatment options.

- St. Catherine Hospital became the 26th site in the U.S. to introduce a new cancer radiation treatment technology known as CyberKnife. Physicians here helped to pioneer new stereotactic radiosurgery technology that targets cancerous and benign (non-cancerous) tumors anywhere in the body without surgery and without pain. CyberKnife is the only radiosurgery system available that uses intelligent robotics to continuously track, detect and correct for tumor and patient movement throughout the treatment.
- Another treatment that offers patients new options is image guided radiation therapy (IGRT), which further improved the delivery of conventional radiation therapy. Community Hospital's Varian Trilogy linear accelerator uses a variety of digital imaging techniques to locate the tumor at the moment of treatment. In IGRT for prostate cancer, three to five marker seeds are placed in the prostate to provide a "target" for positioning patients for treatment. This technique accounts for any movement, improving the accuracy of the radiation and minimizing side effects.
- Community Hospital surgeons are among an elite group of physicians using the new robotic da Vinci Surgical System to perform less-invasive surgeries including prostate cancer surgery and hysterectomies. The new robotic system is in place at only about 500 hospitals nationwide and is available locally only at Community Hospital. The system enables surgeons to perform



The CyberKnife Center at St. Catherine Hospital is bringing new hope to cancer patients whose tumors could not be removed surgically or treated effectively.

Urologists and general surgeons at Community Hospital will be among the first to use the new \$1.5 million robotic surgical system to perform less-invasive prostate cancer surgery.



less-invasive surgery with greater accuracy and fewer complications, including less pain and blood loss and a quicker recovery.

- The Women's Diagnostic Center of Community Hospital and St. Mary Medical Center offers the newest diagnostic technology—digital mammograms using a Lorad® Selenia® system from Hologic®. Studies have found that digital mammography technology can be more accurate in detecting cancer in premenopausal women.
- Electrophysiologists at St. Mary Medical Center who treat patients for rhythm malfunctions of the heart are first to use computer-generated technology, called CartoMerge Image Integration Module that merges a 3-D map of the heart's inner chambers with a CT scan, allowing them to more accurately

locate, map and eliminate arrhythmias. St. Mary Medical Center is one of only four hospitals in the U.S. selected to implement CartoSound, a system that allows for even more precise mapping of arrhythmias by combining ultrasound with CT scan images.

- Community Hospital is among the first in the country and the only area hospital to offer a dual-source CT, the most advanced imaging technology. It offers a noninvasive method to diagnose patients at risk for heart attacks, strokes and a variety of other medical conditions. With the highest imaging power available, one of the main advantages of the dual-source CT is that it produces the clearest imaging for making a diagnosis in less time and with less radiation exposure for patients.
- St. Mary Medical Center cardiac patients with defibrillators have home monitoring systems available to them through the Electrophysiology (EP) Lab. Previously, remote monitoring systems were limited to patients with pacemakers enrolled through clinical trial at the hospital.

* community outreach

To make our community a healthier place to live, a number of new programs are helping area residents make important lifestyle changes.

- STOP Diabetes at St. Catherine Hospital offers a two-pronged approach to diabetes education. The program is partnering with area churches, offering prevention education sessions held at the churches to educate the congregations about the disease. The second piece is aimed at qualifying individuals who have received a diagnosis from their doctor, offering financial assistance for self-management education classes.
- A program developed by the Community Hospital Fitness Pointe reaches out to school-age children across Northwest Indiana, educating them about healthy habits for life. Take 5 for Life is a 12-week, in-school pedometer-based walking competition with weekly fitness/nutrition curriculum aligned with state of Indiana education standards. The five components of the Take 5 program are to eat healthy, be active, manage your mind (abstain from drugs, alcohol and tobacco), be well-rested and feel good about yourself. [vev](#)



education plays key role in joint care

making the
grade in
knee and hip
replacement

by elise sims

Knowing what to expect both before and after a hospital procedure can make a world of difference in the recovery process and be a source of comfort, says Carol Szklarski, 68, of South Haven. Szklarski volunteers on the orthopedic floor of St. Mary Medical Center where she also once recovered in May 2007 after a total knee replacement.

“I knew what to expect because I volunteered on 3-West,” Szklarski says. “I knew all the nurses and the aides, the staff from food services to housekeeping. I had very good care.”

Standing on her feet 12 hours a day, five days a week, for 16-½ years as a store inventory clerk was very hard on her knees, Szklarski says. After retirement, and for about five years as a volunteer at St. Mary Medical Center, the pain in her knees continued. She finally went to see orthopedic surgeon Scott Andrews, M.D., on staff at St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart and Community Hospital in Munster, for relief.

“Through a combination of innovative techniques in pain management, rapid rehabilitation and education we are able to perform joint replacements that help patients, like Carol, increase their quality of life,” Andrews says. “It allows [patients] to do everyday activities, such as walking, that they want to do without pain. Although a joint replacement is a fairly large surgery, we’re looking for ways to make it a pleasant patient experience, one that they feel more comfortable about.”

a leg up on joint care

The hospitals of Community Healthcare System—Community Hospital, St. Catherine

Hospital in East Chicago and St. Mary Medical Center—understand that education, including pre- and postoperative teaching, is an important part of patient care. Patients, like Szklarski, are supported by board-certified and fellowship-trained orthopedic physicians, specially trained orthopedic nursing staff and surgical technicians through the surgery phase of their procedure. Then, patients are usually transferred to a specialized rehabilitation center at the hospital where they receive education and follow-up from certified physical therapists, occupational therapists and social workers.

After the total knee replacement in May of last year at St. Mary Medical Center, Szklarski says her physical therapists encouraged her to continue to workout three times per week.

“It was hard. I had to work at it,” she says. “But, the harder they pushed me, the more I did.”

Not only is she pain-free in her left knee with the replacement, but through physical therapy and exercise, she no longer has any pain in her right knee, Szklarski says. She’s on the go again and headed in a whole new direction of volunteering at St. Mary Medical Center.

new course with the joint academy

All three Community Healthcare System hospitals have outstanding orthopedic joint care programs with national quality ratings. St. Mary Medical Center is introducing another aspect of patient education through the addition of The Joint Academy on the hospital’s orthopedic unit. Care begins with each patient being fully educated about his or her procedure prior to surgery and continues with inpatient group therapy, followed by education and readiness for recovery at home. Procedures are scheduled so that patients can relate with others who are experiencing similar joint surgery at the same time. Each patient is assigned his or her own specialized, dedicated team of orthopedic professionals.

Andrews serves as medical director of The Joint Academy, with Joint Care Coordinator Donna Wieczorek as a link for the patient throughout each phase of care.

“The Joint Academy is committed to delivering very good care and meeting and exceeding our patient expectations,” Wieczorek says.

The unit offers private suites with accommodations for a family member or friend who acts as a “coach” (assists with recovery), Wieczorek says. Education continues with a pre-op class. The class is the “official” beginning of the education process and consists of a slide presentation, role of the

consistency is key

The hospitals of Community Healthcare System—Community Hospital in Munster; St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart—have been recognized in the 2008 study by HealthGrades, a leading independent national ratings organization, for excellence in joint replacement procedures. That means that our healthcare team is consistent in following processes and procedures designed to help keep patients safe, experience fewer complications and have the best outcome possible:

Community Hospital:

- Five-Star Rated for Overall Orthopedic Services – five years in a row
- Five-Star Rated for Joint Replacement – five years in a row
- Five-Star Rated for Total Knee Replacement – five years in a row
- Five-Star Rated for Total Hip Replacement – five years in a row
- Five-Star Rated for Hip Fracture Repair – five years in a row

St. Catherine Hospital:

- Five-Star Rated for Hip Fracture Repair – four of the previous five years

St. Mary Medical Center:


- Five-Star Rated for Joint Replacement – two years in a row
- Five-Star Rated for Total Knee Replacement – two years in a row

“coach,” meeting members of the care team, a tour of the unit, breathing exercises, review of preoperative exercises and questions and answers.

“This class helps familiarize them during the hospital stay as well as after,” Andrews says. “A lot of the anxiety has to do with dealing with the unknown—they’re not sure what to expect. This decreases their anxiety greatly and helps them feel much better about the whole process.”

“Our patients will know what to expect every step of the way from six weeks preop until three months postop and beyond,” Wieczorek says. “During a stay at The Joint Academy, our patients participate in group activities as well as receive individual care for preparation of discharge. Care doesn’t stop once a patient is home; they receive a followup phone call as well as an invitation to a reunion luncheon with their coach.”

This is a team effort on the part of St. Mary Medical Center staff to be with the patient every step of the way, ensuring the best possible experience and result. As a former patient who can relate to the experience of joint replacement, Szklarski has agreed to be a part of the team as a volunteer.

“It’s going to be interesting,” Szklarski says. “I can relate, one-on-one, because of my own experience with a knee replacement. I’m here to offer encouragement and support every step of the way.” 

community healthcare system receives

national awards for quality care

So you've carefully selected a doctor and reviewed all your treatment options. What about your choice of where to have diagnostic tests and medical treatments? Does your choice in hospitals make a difference?

It can make a big difference in terms of mortality rates and likelihood of complications, according to HealthGrades®, the nation's leading independent rating agency. Each year, HealthGrades analyzes the clinical quality performance of all nonfederal hospitals across the country in 27 procedures and diagnoses, as well as 13 patient safety indicators.

high marks

The 2008 HealthGrades review gave high marks to all three hospitals in the Community Healthcare System. Community Hospital in Munster was named to HealthGrades America's 50 Best Hospital list this year and for the past five years has achieved the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence. St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago has achieved for the past three years the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence. St. Mary Medical Center has achieved for the past four years the Distinguished Hospital Award for Patient Safety.

"When we came together six years ago, we pledged to raise the quality of healthcare in Northwest Indiana by joining Community Hospital, St. Catherine Hospital and St. Mary Medical Center," says John Gorski, senior vice president of Hospital Operations for the Community Healthcare System. "These awards, and others we've received, are a validation of our efforts to adopt the best practices in medicine. The people of Northwest Indiana should take great pride in knowing that our hospitals deliver the kind of patient care that matches up to the best healthcare provided in America.

"Delivering the best outcomes isn't dependent on one person—it takes an entire team of dedicated and skilled medical professionals and an organization that supports excellence at every level." Gorski says. "We're very proud of the efforts of our entire staff and physicians that work across the Community Healthcare System to deliver the highest quality healthcare in America."

 **community hospital is the only indiana facility named to the 2008 america's 50 best hospitals**

Community Hospital's superior clinical performance ranks it among America's 50 Best Hospitals, according to HealthGrades, the nation's leading independent healthcare ratings company.

The HealthGrades America's 50 Best Hospitals designation is the only national hospital quality rating based solely on clinical outcomes, recognizing hospitals that have demonstrated superior clinical quality over an eight-year period.

HealthGrades analyzed tens of millions of Medicare patient records from 1999-2006 to identify this elite group of world-class facilities. These hospitals have achieved higher survival rates and lower complication rates, not in just one or two clinical specialties, but across 27 medical procedures and diagnoses, from cardiac care to orthopedic surgery, consistently ranking among the top 5 percent in the nation for overall clinical outcomes.

"This record of outstanding care is a real credit to the hard work and dedication of the doctors, staff and volunteers who have hard-wired excellence into everything we do," says Donald P. Fesko, administrator of Community Hospital in Munster. "It is also a credit to our community for their role in helping to build one of the 50 Best Hospitals in America."

Community Hospital ranked in the top 5 percent in the nation for: overall orthopedic services; joint replacement; spine surgery; overall cardiac services; cardiac surgery; overall pulmonary services; overall GI services; GI surgery; and GI medical treatment. It ranked in the top 10 percent for vascular surgery.



 **st. catherine hospital—distinguished hospital award for clinical excellence 2006-2008**

For the third year in a row, St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago is ranked among the nation's top 5 percent of hospitals, based on a study of mortality and complication rates. St. Catherine Hospital was named HealthGrades 2008 Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence based on its clinical quality performance across 27 common procedures and diagnosis performed in hospitals.

St. Catherine Hospital was ranked in the top 10 percent in the nation for stroke care and pulmonary care, and ranked among the top 5 percent in Indiana in overall cardiac services and cardiology services, according to HealthGrades.

"We're celebrating 80 years of providing quality care in this community, and what a great present to share—a HealthGrades award for the third time," says Jo Ann Birdzell, administrator of St. Catherine Hospital.

According to the HealthGrades study, patients admitted to hospitals receiving this award are, on average, 27 percent less likely to face mortality and 5 percent less likely to suffer from a major complication. This year, only 269 of the nation's 4,971 nonfederal hospitals received this distinction.

HealthGrades estimates that if all patients were treated at Distinguished Hospitals, 171,424 lives could have been saved and 9,671 postoperative complications could have been avoided during the three years studied.



st. mary medical center reaches nation's highest safety standards

St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart has been recognized for achieving the nation's highest safety standards. St. Mary Medical Center is recipient of the HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Award for Patient Safety *four consecutive years—2005-2008*—a recognition only 58 hospitals in the U.S. have achieved. The award places St. Mary Medical Center in the top 5 percent in the nation when it comes to patient safety.

"It is an honor to be recognized for the safe care we give our patients," says Janice Ryba, St. Mary Medical Center administrator. "We've placed our healthcare delivery practices under rigorous scrutiny of multiple organizations that are interested in seeing that patients are kept well-informed. We've adopted new practices, revised existing ones and reinforced those already working in order to keep safety at the forefront of our care."

The HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Award for Patient Safety is based on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's patient safety indicators. St. Mary Medical Center achieved a high level of quality across the 13 patient safety indicators from preventing complications from postoperative hip fracture, to postop respiratory failure to postsurgery bleeding.

The 2008 HealthGrades study found that Medicare patients treated at Distinguished Hospitals for Patient Safety had, on average, approximately 40-percent lower occurrence of experiencing one or more patient safety incidents compared with patients at the bottom-ranked hospitals. Additionally, if all hospitals performed at the level of Distinguished Hospitals for Patient Safety, approximately 34,393 Medicare deaths could have been avoided and \$1.74 billion in costs could have been saved during 2003 to 2005. *v&v*



check out your hospital



How well does your hospital perform? For more information on hospital performance, check out www.healthgrades.com. Each year, HealthGrades independently analyzes the clinical quality performance of all non-federal hospitals across the country in 27 procedures and diagnoses. The company reviews tens of millions of hospitalization records to determine which hospitals perform better, examining outcomes and complications. If a hospital performs better than expected, it is given a five-star rating, three stars for performance as expected and one star for performance less than expected. HealthGrades also ranks hospitals that perform in the top 5 percent for clinical excellence and patient safety and publishes a yearly list of the 50 Best Hospitals in America.



learn more

Community Healthcare System hospitals are ranked among the nation's top hospitals. To learn more about HealthGrades' review of the Community Healthcare System—Community Hospital, St. Catherine Hospital and St. Mary Medical Center—visit our website: www.comhs.org.

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Community Hospital
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Clinical Excellence – 3 years in a row

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ranked Top 5% in the nation for
Patient Safety – 4 years in a row



Choose a Hospital that Ranks Among the Top in the Nation

Better outcomes. Fewer Complications. That's what distinguishes the Top Hospitals in America. It is also what distinguishes the hospitals of the Community Healthcare System, recognized nationally for the high quality care we provide to patients in a safe environment. It takes a whole team of people – doctors, nurses, technicians and a support staff all focused on delivering the highest quality care. These Extraordinary People and the Extraordinary Care they provide are living proof that your choice in hospitals matters.

To learn more about job opportunities with one of America's Top Hospitals visit www.comhs.org.

extraordinary **people**
extraordinary **care**

