Fifty years ago on Nov. 22, 1963, at 12:30 p.m., our country was forever changed. It was on that day, in Dallas, that John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States of America, was assassinated.

Although I was not yet born, what happened on that day resonates with me. I cannot watch the infamous Zapruder film without getting teary eyed. It is unimaginable. It is so hard to see the response of the Secret Service agent jumping on the back of the car to protect the President and First Lady. It is heartbreaking to see Jackie Kennedy reaching over and caring for her husband. The events of that day proved to be a significant time in our history and one that has had a profound impact on our country.

For James “Red” Duke, Jr., M.D., it was personal. He was a 35-year-old fourth-year surgery resident working at Parkland Hospital in Dallas. He was eating lunch when a desperate voice came over the hospital’s speaker calling for the chief of surgery. A colleague who was sitting with Dr. Duke grabbed a telephone to find out what was happening. “The President has been shot,” he said.

When Dr. Duke arrived in the emergency room, it was a harrowing and chaotic scene, and he knew then that President Kennedy had been mortally wounded. Dr. Duke doesn’t like to talk much about his memories from that day, but recently he’s been the subject of multiple news stories run in observance of the dark anniversary.

I am so proud to get to work alongside Dr. Duke – not because of the history, but because of the genuine person that he is. I often tell people that I have never met anyone who cares more about people than Dr. Red Duke – he is remarkable.

As a result of the events that took place in Dallas, our country lost much of the innocence and confidence that President Kennedy had helped it regain. A collective grief settled over the nation, and here we are, half a century later, living in a world that President Kennedy could never have imagined – a world where Twitter or texts would have likely broken the news to most of us, a world where bullet-proof glass may have saved his life, a world that is in many ways much darker and more complicated.

And yet we go on. In the midst of our modern lives, there is still much hope, much joy and much room for greatness. Let us continue to fight what JFK called in his inaugural address the “common enemies of man,” including poverty and disease. And let us remember the President’s closing words in that speech: “All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.”

Let us continue.

Talk soon,
Craig ♡

2013 Year in Review
2013 was a year filled with accolades and achievements at the Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center Campus. The following is a short list highlighting just a few of our hospital’s incredible accomplishments.

Mischer Neuroscience Institute Awarded Advanced Certification for Comprehensive Stroke Centers
The Mischer Neuroscience Institute (MNI) at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center was designated as a Comprehensive Stroke Center by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association and The Joint Commission. The certification solidifies MNI’s place in an elite group of providers focused on highly specialized and complex stroke care.

Life Flight® Filmed for National TV Series
Memorial Hermann’s air-medical transport service was selected as the subject of a national TV docu-drama series that will air on the TNT Network in early 2014. For months, film crews followed employees, physicians and the Life Flight crew as they cared for the critically ill and injured.

Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital Performs 10th HeartGift Surgery
On May 20, 2013, Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital gave the gift of open-heart surgery to a 3-year-old from the Dominican Republic who was suffering from a congenital heart condition. These surgeries are made possible by the generosity of the medical team at Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital and the HeartGift Foundation, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide life-saving heart surgery to children from developing countries around the world where specialized medical treatment is unavailable.
Memorial Hermann stepped up its fight against multiple sclerosis recently by signing a multi-year agreement to sponsor the annual National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) BP MS 150 Houston to Austin bike ride, dedicated to raising awareness and funds for those living with multiple sclerosis.

The three-year agreement, starting in 2014, will increase Memorial Hermann’s support to NMSS in its battle to find new treatments and advances in research. For the past 15 consecutive years, Memorial Hermann has sponsored a 150-plus member team consisting of employees and physicians, along with their families and friends. In addition, many of our employees have served as volunteers for the race.

Under this agreement, Memorial Hermann will serve as the official healthcare sponsor for the race, providing medical supplies and helping to recruit additional medical volunteers for the two-day ride. Two of Memorial Hermann’s leading Institutes – the IRONMAN Sports Medicine Institute (ISMI) and Mischer Neuroscience Institute (MNI) will also provide valuable information and insights to riders as they train and raise funds.

The ISMI will support the health and fitness needs of athletes as they train to participate in the historic 30th annual BP MS 150 bike ride, while MNI will help to highlight the research and treatment being conducted in Houston to help people suffering with multiple sclerosis. MNI is the largest and most comprehensive neuroscience program in Texas, while the IRONMAN Sports Medicine Institute is a comprehensive sports medicine clinic providing elite-level care for athletes of all ages and skill levels.

“This agreement represents a beneficial partnership between our health system and an organization that has been on the frontlines of fighting a disease that affects more than 2.3 million people worldwide,” said Jerry Wolinsky, M.D., a neurologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center. “We’ve had a corporate team annually participate in the bike ride. But this agreement gives us an opportunity to engage in a more meaningful and significant way by enlisting our body of health experts to help highlight the research and treatment in Houston.”

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system (the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves). Symptoms may be mild, such as numbness in the limbs, or severe, such as paralysis or loss of vision. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS are unpredictable and vary from one person to another.

However, new treatments and advances in research are giving new hope to people affected by the disease.

Riders and other participants will receive information from the two Institutes through BP MS 150 emails, social media sites and memorialhermann.org. In addition to BP MS 150, Memorial Hermann also sponsors such events as IRONMAN Texas, IRONMAN 70.3 Texas, the Shell Houston Open, the U.S. Men’s Clay Court Championship and the Chevron Houston Marathon.
On Dec. 5, Partners in Caring (PIC) hosted the Employee of the Year luncheon for Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center and Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital in the Herman Conference Center. The annual employee awards, which are based entirely on nominations from colleagues, began in the late 1980s to honor employees who go above and beyond in their roles at work, with both patients and colleagues.

The celebration began with an invocation, led by Chaplain Director Brent Peery, D.Min., BCC, followed by a welcome from Susie Distefano, chief executive officer of Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital. The 17 nominees – eight from Memorial Hermann-TMC and nine from Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital – were asked to stand as members of the executive leadership team read their names and highlights from their nominations, which were submitted by their peers.

The first award, the 2013 Employee of the Year for Memorial Hermann-TMC, went to James Graber, R.N., on the ACE unit. It was presented by Chief Operating Officer Tom Flanagan, who read the following segment from Graber’s nomination:

James Graber, R.N., foreground, was named 2013 Employee of the Year for Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center.

James consistently connects with his patients. He takes the time to get to know them personally. He cares for them patiently and compassionately. Recently, James had a patient who was difficult and quite grumpy. When he came in the room, he sat with her, explained everything that he was doing and what to expect for the rest of the day. Later in the day, the patient asked him where he had been and he replied “I was running from the zombies in the hallway.” The patient laughed so hard, he had really made her day. He was able to make his most unhappy patient laugh that day which inspired the entire ACE team.

Graber has been a nurse with Memorial Hermann-TMC ever since he graduated from nursing school eight years ago. Before that he made his living as a freelance musician, playing the French horn for a number of different clients including the Houston Ballet Orchestra and the Houston Grand Opera. He says his favorite part about being a nurse at Memorial Hermann-TMC is serving the patients he works with.

“I just imagine my family members in their same shoes and think, ‘How can I best serve them?’” he said. “I have met so many wonderful people here. My colleagues are absolutely wonderful too – I couldn’t do my job without their help and support.”

The 2013 Employee of the Year for Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center.
Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital was awarded to Amanda Davis, R.N., CPN, project manager for education for Critical Care Nursing. Holly Elliot, chief of hospital operations for Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital, read the following:

“Amanda is one of those nurses who is the persona of compassion, engagement and professionalism in all that she does. I have never heard her speak negatively about a situation, another individual or express frustration with a difficult patient or family. She gives 100 percent of her time to her role and works tirelessly to assure that her tasks are always on time, completely accurate and are customized to assure that staff will find the information beneficial and ready to be applied to their clinical setting. Many of the successes that Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital has received are a direct result of the work that Amanda Davis has either initiated, promoted or championed. She truly represents the exemplary employee and is considered to be ‘pure gold’ when it comes to being an asset for Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital.”

Davis has worked at Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital for 5 1/2 years.

“In my role as interim educator, my favorite part of my job is helping the bedside nurses and supporting them as they care for our patients,” Davis said. “They are the real heroes and it is my mission to help support them and to help them provide the best possible care. I work with an amazing group of professionals in General Pediatrics at Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital who are dedicated to the patients that we care for each day. It is an honor and a privilege to work with them.”

The individuals honored alongside Graber and Davis included the following nominees:

For the adult service lines at Memorial Hermann-TMC: Debra Green, unit coordinator of the ORCU; Donna Hoke, R.N.; Catering Manager James Jay; Deborah Page, R.N.; Chaplain Logan Rutherford, M.Div., BCC; Toni von Wenckstern, administrative director of the Texas Trauma Institute; and Hope Wyndham, unit coordinator for the transplant medical surgical unit.


Congratulations to the 2013 Employees of the Year and all of the outstanding nominees!

Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital and Heart & Vascular Institute Awarded President’s Gold Circle Breakthrough of the Year Awards

Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital received the System’s 2013 President’s Gold Circle Breakthrough of the Year in Quality and Safety Award. The Heart & Vascular Institute was honored with the System’s 2013 President’s Gold Circle Breakthrough of the Year in Growth Award.

Houstonia Magazine Recognizes Memorial Hermann Physicians as Houston’s Top Doctors

Numerous physicians who practice at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center and Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital were recognized in Houstonia magazine’s inaugural Best Doctors issue. The guide names over 150 Memorial Hermann-affiliated physicians across 50 different specialties as being the best in their field.

Physicians at the Texas Trauma Institute Develop Award-Winning New Tourniquet for Combat and Civilian Use

Memorial Hermann-TMC emergency medicine physician and United States Navy Reserve Lt. Keith Gates, M.D., along with Col. (Ret.) John B. Holcomb, M.D., director of the Texas Trauma Institute at Memorial Hermann-TMC and chief of the division of Acute Care Surgery at UTHealth Medical School, developed a new kind of tourniquet designed to treat soldiers and civilians suffering from high-level bilateral injuries. Called the JETT, the new device was selected as one of the Top 20 Innovative Products for 2013 by the EMS World Training Conference.
For many of us, January marks a time when we can begin anew. It’s the start of a new year, and an opportunity to reset goals, re-evaluate priorities and generally examine our lives. Whether you want to lose weight, volunteer, achieve a better work-life balance or enrich your career, the Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center Campus is here to help:

Resolution: I want to lose weight
Although maintaining an exercise or diet program can be quite a challenge amid our busy work and personal lives, small steps can be the key to reaching your weight loss goals. See below for a list of on-Campus wellness initiatives designed to help you stay on track:

- Join the wellness gym – it is free of charge and open to all employees.
- Participate in on-Campus fitness classes, including Zumba and Cardio Strength Interval training.
- Attend employee nutrition seminars, which take place periodically throughout the year.
- Food and Nutrition Services has partnered with MyFitnessPal®, available as a smart phone application or online, to list the nutritional content of many of their items.
- Employees insured through Memorial Hermann Health Insurance Company may set up a nutrition counseling appointment through the Wellness Center. A physician referral with a diagnosis is required.
- Follow these seven healthy diet tips from Sharon Smalling, M.P.H., R.D., L.D., clinical dietitian specialist:
  1. Watch for terms that indicate the food is probably higher in fat such as fried, Hollandaise, cream, cheese, battered, golden brown or marinated in oil.
  2. Fill up on fat-free foods. Make salads, broth-based vegetable soups, grains and beans the staple of your meal; order double portions of steamed vegetables.
  3. Downsize your entrée: have the meat portion be the size of a side dish. Share an entrée with a friend or save half for lunch the next day.
  4. Be cautious of add-ons such as salad dressings, gravies, butter/spreads and cream cheese. Though salt doesn’t add calories, it can raise your blood pressure and cause fluid retention, so push the shaker to the other side of the table.
  5. Remember sweet beverages can add many calories to a meal. Consider choosing only calorie-free beverages (or skim/low fat milk) with meals.
  6. Eat slowly and taste every bite. Savor the taste of the food!
  7. If you must have dessert, split it with your co-workers! Or, pick up a piece of fresh fruit or Greek yogurt, which is always available in our cafeteria.

For more information about the above initiatives, or to suggest employee wellness ideas for the Campus, contact Sharon Smalling at 713.704.5800 or sharon.smalling@memorialhermann.org.

Resolution: I want to give back
Join Partners in Caring (PIC), an employee-driven grass-roots organization focused on supporting the mission and vision of the Memorial Hermann Health System by connecting, inspiring and engaging employees. Members participate in strategically planned events, assist with events that support the Greater Houston community, organize and participate in recognition events that celebrate the efforts and talents of colleagues, and work with fellow committee members to help meet the System’s needs. To learn more about joining Partners in Caring, contact Faizbano Rayani at 713.704.2074 or faizbano.rayani@memorialhermann.org. Employees can also apply to volunteer with Heroes in Health, the Memorial Hermann Foundation’s young professional advocacy group, which supports Memorial Hermann and its many facilities,

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2013 Year in Review

Memorial Hermann-TMC Once Again Ranked as One of the Nation’s Leading Academic Medical Centers by UHC

University HealthSystem Consortium (UHC), a national organization comprising most of the nation’s leading academic medical centers with a focus on quality and accountability, once again ranked Memorial Hermann-TMC as one of the 25 top-performing academic medical centers in the nation. When she administered intra-arterial chemotherapy to a young retinoblastoma patient. This was the first recorded instance of this ever being done in the state of Texas. By utilizing this state-of-the-art technique, Scheffler is able to deliver treatment directly to the cancer site itself thereby avoiding the characteristically devastating side effects of standard systemic intravenous chemotherapy.

Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital Performs First Intra-Arterial Chemotherapy Procedure in Texas

Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital pediatric ocular oncologist Amy C. Scheffler, M.D., performed a landmark procedure...
Resolution: I want to achieve a better work-life balance
Do you suffer from stress? Do you need extra support in your life? Sign up for the Employee Assistance Program through the askHR tab on InSite. The Employee Assistance Program can help with issues that occupy your time and attention, including work problems, depression and anxiety, personal or family alcohol and substance abuse problems, relationship issues, parenting, legal concerns, financial problems, the need to identify child and eldercare resources, and trauma recovery. For more information, call the Human Resources “askHR” team at 713.456.6447.

Resolution: I want to enrich my career
The Education department works with employees to maintain and strengthen the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors necessary for providing quality care and services to our patients and their families. Employees are encouraged to explore the courses offered on the Partners in Learning section on InSite and to speak with their managers and directors about any additional educational or growth opportunities available. For classes outside the System, Memorial Hermann offers tuition reimbursement programs; information about tuition reimbursement can be found on the Employee Self Service section on InSite.

In addition to traditional coursework, employees can grow professionally by joining one of the many committees or groups on Campus. Whether your passion is quality improvement, employee safety, nursing research, fall prevention or proper hand hygiene, the Memorial Hermann-TMC Campus has a place for you to share your knowledge and skills. To learn more about how you can make an impact outside of your current role, talk to your manager or director about your interests or contact the Education department.

Resolution: I want to manage my finances better
Did you know Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center offers you a free Principal financial representative? You can sign up for one-on-one meetings to discuss saving for retirement, reducing your current taxable income, enrolling in or making changes to your current retirement plan, adding additional savings options, including Roth IRAs and other investments, adding life or disability insurance options, and drafting a personalized, action-oriented guide for retirement. To make an appointment, call 713.456.MHHR (6447) or send an email to Shola Age at age.shola@principal.com.

Consider joining a credit union to save money on bank fees and to learn more about how to best manage your money. The Memorial Hermann Credit Union (Memorial Credit Union) and Bayou City Federal Credit Union are both onsite and available to employees who wish to join. Memorial Credit Union is located on the 2nd floor of the Memorial Hermann Medical Plaza. Member benefits include checking accounts with free checking, investment accounts, VISA check card with worldwide ATM access, MasterCard and VISA credit cards with no annual fees, holiday and vacation savings accounts, and low-rate loans for automobiles, bill consolidation, vacations, appliances and more. The credit union also offers home improvement loans, mortgages and home equity lines of credit as well as personal financial counselors who can help you navigate which services are best for you and your family. To learn more, go to www.memorialcu.org or call 713.778.6300. The Bayou City Federal Credit Union is also available on the Ground Floor of Jones Pavilion and offers comparable financial services; to learn more call 713.704.3980.

Resolution: I want to do my part to help the environment
Many important hospital safety measures, albeit necessary, can lead to a lot of waste: we are required to frequently use water and hand-sanitizer in order to maintain proper hand hygiene, throw away gloves and personal protective equipment after each use, and properly discard documents that contain confidential patient information. Nevertheless, there are numerous things we can do around the workplace to help reduce our waste. Take your morning commute, for example. Is it possible to carpool or use public transportation? Walk or ride a bike? In addition to helping the environment, you can also save money on gas (see previous resolution). Try to save energy by unplugging anything that isn’t being used, such as cell phone chargers. You should also go electronic as much as possible to avoid unnecessary paper waste: use your phone, email, PowerPoint presentations and web resources instead of hard copies. Finally, avoid buying bottled water and disposable coffee cups – use washable commuter cups instead.

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Campus Exceeds Fundraising Goal for the 2013 American Heart Association Heart Walk

The Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center Campus surpassed its fundraising goal for the 2013 American Heart Association Houston Heart Walk by raising over $52,000. All-in-all, the Campus sponsored 53 teams with 719 walkers at the event, which took place Nov. 16 at Reliant Park. The Heart Walk facility leaders, which included Kim Vu, Leah Blackwell and Hope Moser, worked tirelessly in the months leading up to the walk, organizing multiple fundraising events and promoting the cause. All proceeds went to the American Heart Association to help fight heart disease and stroke through research and education. Thank you to all who participated!
Earlier this fall, Memorial Hermann launched its new advertising campaign with our new tagline – Advancing Health. It’s our Brand Promise to the people we serve. To deliver on our Brand Promise requires changing the way we see ourselves and how others see us by evolving our Brand to stand for more than hospitals and care delivery. That’s the idea behind One Memorial Hermann. When we bring care delivery, physicians and health solutions together as One Memorial Hermann, we become well positioned to deliver on our promise of advancing health.

As we continue to evolve our Brand, delivering on our promise of advancing health requires a continued commitment to providing error-free health care as we maintain patient safety as our core value. That’s why Memorial Hermann embarked on our journey to become a high-reliability organization (HRO). “Reaching our destination as an HRO requires three things: Leadership Commitment, a Safety Culture and Robust Process Improvement,” says System Chief Medical Officer Michael Shabot, M.D. “In collaboration with our affiliated physicians, we are building a system of care that ensures timely, accurate, safe and effective treatments.”

Achieving high compliance with core quality and safety measures is helping us deliver safer, more effective health care. As a result, we’re receiving national, regional and state recognition for our efforts, positioning us as Houston’s clear leader in quality and patient safety. Going forward, increased emphasis will be placed not only on core processes but on the outcomes that result from following those processes. That’s why we’re launching the Advancing Quality Outcomes internal campaign.

Focusing on outcomes raises the bar and leads to increased emphasis on reporting and results. “Advancing Quality Outcomes will be the umbrella campaign encompassing all we’re doing to ensure safer, quality care for the people we serve,” says Dr. Shabot. “It will encompass additional training, tools and Information Technology programs focused on improving how we deliver safe, error-free, quality care and document and report our outcomes.”

**Patient Safety**

To continue our performance improvement gains and accommodate new outcomes-based metrics, we’ll be expanding and reexamining our quality and safety practices and training modules. “We’ll be building on these high-reliability techniques and principles proven to prevent harm and support quality care,” adds Dr. Shabot. “We know that safer care begins with an in-depth analysis of how culture, technology, process and individual behaviors are connected to quality and safety outcomes.”

**The Role of Health Information Technology in Advancing Quality Outcomes**

Health information technology (HIT) is the infrastructure that enables clinical and business units to translate data into information that can be utilized as knowledge for improvement in the delivery of safe, high-quality, high-reliability care. “ISD and informatics teams will lead the design, the people, process and technology workflows necessary for Advancing Quality Outcomes while the leadership for successful implementation will reside at the hospitals and physician practices,” says System Chief Medical Informatics Officer Robert Murphy, M.D. “Our design efforts are governed by the MHMD System Medical Informatics Committee, and clinical operations groups under the Patient Care Leadership Council. Ambulatory efforts are likewise led by the MHMD and MHMG physician organizations. Overall, our success will depend on a comprehensive, coordinated teamwork approach.”

Here’s a look at the four major HIT initiatives for 2014:

**Meaningful Use**

Meaningful Use involves the set of standards defined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) incentive programs that governs the use of electronic health records and allows eligible hospitals (EH) and eligible providers (EP) to earn incentive payments by meeting specific criteria. The EH criteria apply to the hospital setting while the EP criteria apply to the physician office setting. It is part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that provided hospitals and physicians with incentives to transition from paper-based medical records to electronic health records to demonstrate they are “meaningful users of technology.” In addition to using electronic health records, computerized decision support and barcode scanning of medications to make care safer, the System will enable our patients to get more engaged in their own health through a secure patient portal called MyMemorialHermann that goes live in January.

**e-Quality Check Program**

A key part of demonstrating meaningful use involves using technology to document and report the quality of the care we deliver. e-Quality Check is the electronic quality reporting program that automates physician entry, capture and submission of clinical quality data, including data from the Care4 electronic health record to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The 2014 e-Quality Check measures are captured in Care4 as care is provided while the patient is in the hospital. The measures must be met prior to discharge and cannot be corrected after discharge. Additionally, most e-Quality measures require coded data entered by the physician. New interface tools will assist clinical staff in capturing the data for the 16 e-Quality measures for e-submission. These tools will use computerized decision support to assist physicians and nurses in capturing the data at the point of patient care within
the staff’s routine workflow to minimize disruptions.

**Provider Documentation**

Making sure that patient charts reflect as accurately and completely as possible the severity of the illnesses and any co-existing conditions is essential for accurate care delivery and reimbursement. Clinical documentation specialists regularly review inpatient physician notes to find opportunities for physicians to enhance the accuracy of their documentation. MHMD, our physician network, has developed online CMEs and tools containing helpful documentation tips. New IT tools and online voice recognition software will offer providers enhanced ease of use.

**ICD-10**

Like most health systems in the United States, Memorial Hermann is in the process of an important transition from ICD-9 to ICD-10 code sets used to report patient diagnoses. Our employees and affiliated physicians will be critical to the successful implementation of ICD-10. The System’s ICD-10 Steering Committee has developed transition strategies that address people, process and technology as well as the financial and industry-wide impacts ICD-10 represents. Although the new codes will provide much more specific data about patient conditions, there will be a lot more codes to use. When ICD-10 is implemented in October 2014, the number of diagnosis codes increases from 13,000 to 69,000 and the number of procedure codes increases from 11,000 to 71,000. In addition to increasing the number of coders on staff, Memorial Hermann will be offering special training on ICD-10 for employees and affiliated physicians.

To keep everyone informed about Advancing Quality Outcomes and its programs, the System is preparing monthly electronic newsletters as well as new online Advancing Quality Outcomes sections on InSite and PhysicianLINK - in addition to the System’s regular communication vehicles.

“We encourage our employees and affiliated physicians to take advantage of these communications, online resources and training in our efforts to advance quality outcomes that will enable us to advance the health of the people we serve,” adds Dr. Shabot.

To learn more about Advancing Quality Outcomes, individual programs and upcoming training sessions and go-lives, visit the new Advancing Quality Outcomes section coming soon on InSite and PhysicianLINK.

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**HEART AND VASCULAR INSTITUTE NURSE SHARES PATIENT EXPERIENCE STORY**

When Jason McMullen, R.N., a nurse at the Memorial Hermann Heart & Vascular Institute-Texas Medical Center, was 17 years old, his stepfather, Glenn, suffered a massive heart attack. It was February 1989 and Jason’s mother had only been married to his stepfather for six months. She drove him to the hospital in Huntsville where physicians stabilized him and then called Life Flight®. He was transferred to Memorial Hermann-TMC where he was treated by Richard Smalling, M.D., Ph.D, FACC, FSCAI, director of Interventional Cardiovascular Medicine at Memorial Hermann Heart & Vascular Institute-Texas Medical Center and professor at UTHealth Medical School. Dr. Smalling decided to insert a Hemopump into Glenn’s heart; at the time this was new technology and both Glenn and Dr. Smalling were interviewed for Channel 13 news. Glenn was at Memorial Hermann-TMC for a little over two months and at one point suffered a stroke as a result of his condition and treatment. When he was finally discharged home, Jason’s family was told that without a heart transplant, Glenn would only have about two more years to live. Despite being just 49 at the time, Glenn selflessly declined.

“He told Dr. Smalling that he’d lived a good life and that if a heart did become available, it should go to someone younger,” McMullen recalls. “That’s just the kind of guy he was, always thinking of others.”

As it turns out, Glenn survived for another 10 years. Those 10 years were precious to Jason, who loved his stepfather deeply and even gave his middle child the name “Matthew Glenn” to honor him.

“I cannot tell you how thankful I am for Life Flight and Dr. Smalling and all of the physicians and nurses who were responsible for giving us those 10 years,” Jason said. “It was watching them with my stepfather that made me want to become a nurse.”

Because of financial reasons, Jason wasn’t able to begin his prerequisites for nursing school until 2006. He never let go of his dream, however, and in 2011 he graduated with his R.N. He worked in a hospital in Conroe for 16 months and then when a job at 5 HVI became available, he applied.

“It was my dream job,” he said. “I now work on the same kind of unit that saved my step-dad’s life.”
While working in healthcare can pose many potential risks, according to Cory Worden, M.S., CSP, CSHM, CHSP, CESCO, manager of System safety, the key to staying safe in the hospital setting is awareness.

“The more employees are educated on potential risks and then armed with information to avoid those risks, the safer they are,” Worden said. “The best cultural change we can make right now is to actively identify hazards and risks in our work and then find and use the right controls to prevent injuries. Controls can be guards and devices, processes and procedures, personal protective equipment such as gowns, gloves, glasses and other items, training sessions and much more. If a control isn’t in place, or isn’t available, we’ll need to know that, too, so one can be developed.”

This month, Gateways is addressing the top three employee safety risks at the Memorial Hermann-TMC Campus, which include patient handling, needlesticks and body fluid exposure.

Patient Handling: These injuries are mostly caused by overexertion from repeated manual patient handling activities such as transferring a patient from toilet to chair, chair to bed or bathtub to chair, or from repositioning from side to side in bed, lifting a patient in bed or repositioning a patient in chair. Strains and sprains in the shoulders and lower back are most commonly reported.

When handling patients, it’s good to remember to perform S-A-F-E patient handling:
- **S**low down and look for hazards such as not having the right equipment.
- **A**ssess the risk – think about your exposure to the hazard and how badly the consequences could affect you and others – including patient safety.
- **F**ind the right hazard control such as equipment, assistance or procedures.
- **E**xecute the task safely.

Needlesticks: Needlesticks and other sharps-related injuries may expose workers to bloodborne pathogens, infectious microorganisms in human blood that can cause diseases. Needlestick injuries can occur during procedures, as a result of mishandling or in the process of disposal.

Needlesticks are extremely dangerous due to their possibly infectious nature. Keeping this in mind, all needles should be handled with the utmost safety precautions. Some notable preventive measures for needlesticks from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) include the following:
- Plan for safe handling and disposal of needles before beginning an operation.
- Avoid the use of needles where safer alternatives are available.
- Help identify and evaluate devices with safety features and recommend infection prevention practices.
- Use safety features as provided.
- Avoid recapping needles.
- Promptly dispose of needles in appropriate sharps disposal containers.
- Tell your supervisor about hazards from needles you observe in your workplace.

Bodyfluid exposures: Body fluid exposure is defined as contact with a potentially infectious body fluid such as blood, cerebrospinal fluid, amniotic fluid, pleural fluid, synovial fluid, and peritoneal and pericardial fluids. Contact can occur through skin penetration injury or through mucous membrane, parenteral and non-intact skin exposure.

To avoid bodily fluid exposures, awareness is necessary. Employees should look for any “red flags” that indicate an exposure is possible, such as certain clinical processes, lack of personal protective equipment, or noncompliance with proper lab or bio-safety procedures. By noting red flags you and your colleagues can identify the need for the implementation of safety procedures or any other necessary precautions. Remember, it’s always better to be safe.

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**General Steps You and Your Colleagues Can Take to Avoid Injuries**

- Pay attention to detail: pause and focus on the act at hand.
- Always beware of complacency, fatigue, rushing and frustration.
- Use patient-handling equipment such as lifts and all available safety devices.
- Always comply with policies, procedures and protocols – if you see room for improvement, please let your manager know your thoughts.
- Help your co-workers: look out for each other and positively reinforce safe and productive behaviors.
- Speak up if you have questions or concerns.
- Always use personal protective equipment such as gloves, lab coats, masks and face shields to reduce exposure to blood and body fluids.
- Practice hand hygiene.
- Engage in training and initiatives related to safety.
Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center is expanding the Campus and upgrading infrastructure. The objective of this monthly Campus Construction Update is to keep our employees, patients and visitors informed of our ongoing development projects.

Spine Unit on 3 Jones Moves to Phase 2
Dec. 10 marked the grand opening of the Mischer Neuroscience Institute’s Spine Unit on the east side of 3 Jones. The spine unit will predominantly serve spine patients but will also admit some elective neurosurgical patients as well. The unit is comprised of seven rooms and will be staffed by the 5 Jones nursing team. Phase 2 of the spine unit renovation project is now under way, during which time the remaining six patient rooms will be renovated. Phase 2 is expected to be completed in March.

Other Ongoing Construction Projects
Construction is still taking place on 9 Jones and the pediatric surgical waiting area on the 2nd floor of Robertson Pavilion. During this time, certain parts of these areas will be blocked off to ensure the safety of employees, patients and visitors. Updates will be included in weekly News Flash emails.

Fifteen-year-old Mark Enyart, a freshman at Episcopal High School and Life Scout with Troop 55 of the Boy Scouts of America in Houston, has donated over 1,100 movies to the Memorial Hermann Cancer Center-Texas Medical Center in honor of his father’s memory. The donation, part of Mark’s Eagle Scout project, includes the alphabetized and catalogued DVDs along with 20 individual DVD players, headsets and headset splitters. Mark’s hope is that these movies will serve as a welcome distraction for patients undergoing chemotherapy treatment at the Cancer Center; he was 10 when his father was diagnosed and remembers the chemotherapy appointments as being long and emotionally draining.

“Dad fought hard after his cancer diagnosis,” Mark said. “He made an effort to always have time for us no matter how hard it was on him. I remember he was a big movie buff and enjoyed watching all kinds of movies, so that was really the inspiration for this project.”

The DVDs and players are housed in the new J. Lee Enyart, Jr. Memorial Video Library, located next to the main treatment room in the Cancer Center. A dedication ceremony for the library took place on Dec. 13, during which time Robert J. Amato, D.O., chief of the division of Oncology at Memorial Hermann Cancer Center-Texas Medical Center and acting director of the division of Oncology at UTHealth Medical School, who was Mr. Enyart’s oncologist, thanked Mark for his generosity.

“It is a real honor for us to have the Enyart family as part of ours, and to be able to host this generous project,” Dr. Amato said. “Mark took it upon himself to do this incredibly significant thing, and we are all very thankful.”

Both Mark and his mother, Angela Enyart, spoke at the event as well. Both expressed how rewarding the project had been and how grateful they were for all of the support from the Boy Scouts, the Cancer Center and the community.

“We were amazed at the overwhelming support,” Angela said. “And I am so proud of Mark. He worked really hard to make sure this project was successful and that the videos included in the library would appeal to all tastes. We truly hope these movies will help comfort patients at the Cancer Center during their appointments.”

Mark Enyart and his mother, Angela, at the J. Lee Enyart, Jr. Memorial Video Library dedication ceremony on Dec. 13.
Gateways is a publication for employees of the Memorial Hermann-TMC Campus, a leading healthcare facility that proudly stands at the gateway to the world-renowned Texas Medical Center.

We welcome your suggestions and comments. If you have news to share, concerns to address or questions you’d like answered, please send an email to medicalcentercommunications@memorialhermann.org or call 713.704.1222.