

# We are Avera

A PUBLICATION FOR AVERA EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES



**Avera Plans for  
Workforce of  
the Future**

Simple Ways  
to Take Care  
of Your Health

**Employee Spotlight**  
Hospitality Is Everywhere at Avera

**MISSION  
IN ACTION**

Be Inspired to Live Out Avera's Mission

Dear Avera We reader,



It's easy to focus on the challenges going on in health care today. We magazine offers you a chance to pause and reflect on the great things going on across Avera, to learn relevant news and information about Avera, and to encourage you in carrying out Avera's mission.

This magazine is a resource for you and for your families. The magazine is being mailed to employees' homes so you can share a copy with your family and friends. We want them to know about the great things happening at Avera. In order to provide you with articles on a more regular basis, We magazine is expanding to a quarterly publication, with two printed editions and two online-only editions. This fall, watch for an online edition.

In an online magazine survey, many of you noted that you'd like to see more employee features. We have expanded three sections — Mission in Action, the Employee Spotlight and We Are Fun — to feature more employees. In the Employee Spotlight section, we feature four employees who are demonstrating the Avera value of Hospitality. I think you'll be inspired, like I was, by these stories.

As you read this magazine, you will meet Sara German, a dietitian at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital who also plays piano and guitar for long-term care residents in Yankton. You will also meet Margarita Terazzas, a food service and nutrition employee at Avera McKennan who always has a smile and a kind word for anyone who needs it.

This issue also includes articles about new programs at Avera, including AveraNow. Learn about the serious issue of workplace bullying, and be informed about Avera Health Employee Health Plan coverage. You will also learn how our organization is planning for its future workforce.

Information and resources for all employees is important, and this magazine is just one way that we are working to get that information to you. There are some exciting updates coming soon to KnowledgeNet. We are building more local content on facility-specific pages. Also watch for more system-wide daily statistics on the home page.

We will be involving employees in building more local content for the "Live better. Live balanced." campaign. We want you to share your stories with coworkers. Watch for more information.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Sincerely,

Daryl Thuringer  
Vice President of Corporate Communications, Avera

We  
are Avera

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On the Cover:  
Brianna Mertens, 21, a CNA at Avera Yankton Care Center, visits with resident Glennys Pederson.

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For additional news, resources and updates about Avera, visit [KnowledgeNet](http://KnowledgeNet) or [Avera.org](http://Avera.org).



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We magazine is published by Avera for Avera employees and their families. Its purpose is to communicate stories, events and issues pertinent to Avera; to share ideas and information useful in managing or delivering health care; to assist in fostering a common Avera culture; and to reinforce the mission and core values of Avera.

View a digital version of We magazine on KnowledgeNet.

# ON MY MIND



JOHN T. PORTER,  
PRESIDENT/CEO

GOOD HEALTH  
CAN LEAD TO  
GREATER *joy* OF LIVING

Health systems across the country are trying to figure out how to move populations to good health; how to make people more engaged in preventive health care; how to get people to lose weight, eat right and exercise more. Why? Because health care is changing to focus on keeping people healthy. Health systems will be paid based on keeping people healthy.

Do patients care about those reimbursement models? Probably not. So what do people care about? What would motivate people to change their lifestyle?

Nobody really lives for a blood pressure score. Studies have shown that people really aren't motivated to change their health habits by the "fear of dying." As a matter of fact, people don't quit smoking simply because their doctor tells them to.

So what does motivate people to be and act healthy? Dr. Dean Ornish, who advocates a lifestyle-driven approach to the control of coronary artery disease, might say that people live for joy. They live and long to be happy.

And so, our premise at Avera is that while people may not live to be healthy, they need to be healthy to LIVE. How do we equate the joy in living with living healthy? By taking the concept of LIVE and reframing it for the purpose of positively impacting people's health and health motivations.

You may have noticed our new marketing campaign, "Live Better. Live Balanced." Our message speaks to the importance

of staying healthy for those we love — and for continuing to do the things we enjoy.

We believe Avera can start a conversation in our communities and inspire a grassroots movement that engages Avera's workforce, our partners, our patients and health plan members, and the consumer public in improving their health and well-being. We believe we can position good health as leading to greater joy through a new narrative that's simple, positive and emotional.

That conversation includes us too. We are Avera, and as everyday representatives of Avera, we need to ask ourselves, "What do we live for?" What is the joy that motivates us? In the coming months, we want to engage you in the conversation; hear from you about living better and living balanced; and hold up employees across the system for how they live for each other, their patients, their families, their friends — their joy. Go to KnowledgeNet to learn how to get involved and to see what your coworkers live for.

Thank you for all that you do as part of Avera's health ministry.

Sincerely,

John T. Porter  
President/CEO

# AveraNow

Health Care Through Your Phone—Who Would Have Thought?

WRITTEN BY DONNA FARRIS

Getting immediate care when you're sick or injured has never been so easy. Avera is excited to offer mobile video visits through AveraNow.

You can connect to a provider anytime, from anywhere, through your smartphone, tablet, laptop or personal computer. Providers connect with patients from the Avera eHelm "virtual hospital."

AveraNow has a free app offered through Apple Store or Google+. Or, you can access a visit by logging into Avera.org/Now. Some health systems offer video visits that can only take place through a desktop computer. And some systems offering those desktop visits require people to be an already-established patient.

AveraNow is different. AveraNow is for anyone regardless of your health plan or health system, and you can

access doctors and advanced practice providers through your smartphone or tablet from anywhere you have Internet service.

The most usual diagnoses for smartphone and tablet visits include sinus infections, upper respiratory ailments, coughs, and urinary tract infections. On average, patients report a 96 percent satisfaction rate with this mode of health care delivery.

Some visits are not appropriate for AveraNow; for example, visits that would require a physical exam, lab tests, X-rays, imaging or hands-on treatment.

AveraNow is expected to quickly grow in popularity. "Access to a telemedicine provider can prevent an ER visit on a Saturday night or prevent the need to arrange travel, child care, or time off from work for an office visit during the week," said Tad Jacobs, DO, Avera Medical Group Chief Medical Officer. "While AveraNow is not designed to replace the need for a relationship with a primary care physician, it can serve as a convenient and cost-effective option."



## The AveraNow experience:

You sign in and fill out a checklist about your symptoms, current medications and pertinent health history. Payment is **\$49** with a credit card.



If your case is appropriate for AveraNow, you'll be connected to a provider immediately or within a couple minutes. If your case cannot be managed through AveraNow, no charge is made to your credit card.



You'll see and talk with the AveraNow provider, who will give you advice on how to address your symptoms or prescribe a medication if necessary — even sending it to your preferred pharmacy.





Brianna Mertens, 21, has been employed as a CNA at Avera Yankton Care Center since January. One of her favorite aspects of the job is the relationships she has developed with residents such as Glennys Pederson.

# Avera Adjusts TO ATTRACT WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE

WRITTEN BY **NATHAN JOHNSON**

After exploring other career options, Brianna Mertens decided she wanted to be in a field where she could help people. That drew the 21-year-old Janesville, Minn., native to apply for a CNA position at Avera Yankton Care Center. She has been working there since January.

“I like being hands-on and helping people stay on track and be healthy,” she said. Brianna is now interested in becoming a registered nurse.

Young employees like Brianna who are interested in the health care field are just what Avera needs, according to Kim Jensen, Vice President of Talent Management for Avera Health.

Avera is not immune to the workforce shortage challenge that is facing the health care industry today and in the future. The shortage is attributed to a number of factors, including industry growth, an aging workforce, and, more specific to the Avera region, low unemployment rates.

“It is a challenge to keep a pulse on high-need areas, and it can change depending on things such as retirements, relocations, etc.,” Jensen stated.

Recruiting employees in rural areas is the most difficult task. “These facilities see fewer applicants and, in some cases, no applicants for positions for extended periods of time,” Jensen said.

The workforce shortage in health care is not going away. It is anticipated that by 2018, 10 percent of new jobs in South Dakota will be in the health care field.

Avera is responding now to this anticipated shortage. “As baby boomers exit the workforce, they will become the largest consumers of health care,” Jensen said. “I think we will need to continue to optimize how work is done in health care. This will include changes in equipment, technology overall and how we can work, or modify our work settings, to be as efficient as possible.”

## Creating an Interest in Health Care Careers

One way Avera is planning for the future health care workforce is by developing relationships with students and schools.

“It’s the pipeline that will keep us viable for the future,” Jensen said. “We also want to work with the schools so we can share how needs are changing and find ways to help the workforce fit better into the health care field. We’re challenged to anticipate what skills will be needed and plan accordingly.”

Avera participates in a variety of programs that create learning opportunities for students, including HOSA-Future Health Professionals, Scrubs Camp, health care academies, World of Work, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Certified Nursing Assistant specialty training.

Developing relationships with programs at the college level is especially important. “It is great to be able to share trends, competency needs and, for some programs, clinical affiliations. Avera made a significant effort this past year to refine our internship and job shadowing experiences. This can be critical to fill needs in the more immediate future,” Jensen said.

## Avera Employees as Brand Ambassadors

Avera employees play a key role in helping to fill open positions now and into the future. Employees are brand ambassadors for the organization. If you know someone who would be a great fit for a position, refer them to [Avera.org/careers](http://Avera.org/careers).

## Health Care Education Scholarships

Avera has many scholarship opportunities that can vary by region. Contact your local Human Resources office to learn more



## HIGHEST EMPLOYMENT NEEDS AT AVERA

The highest needs in the Avera system are currently for:

- Nursing professionals (RNs and LPNs, with a focus on experienced and specialized RNs)
- Nursing support
- Support services
- Clinical technical professionals (in specialty areas such as Laboratory)
- Technical professionals

Search for open positions at [Avera.org/careers](http://Avera.org/careers).

# MISSION IN ACTION

## Be inspired to live out Avera's mission

Avera employees carry out the healing ministry of Jesus. Sometimes that care comes through unexpected ways, like using art to help a cancer patient cope. Employees serve where there's a need, whether the community is as close to home as the local soup kitchen or as far removed as Africa. Be inspired to live out Avera's mission.



Denise Cameron Nelson works to make her visits to patients fun and interactive.

### ART AS THERAPY, 'SENSE OF RELIEF'

WRITTEN BY JARETT BIES

As she begins her third year as Avera's Integrative Medicine Artist in Residence, Denise Cameron Nelson still clearly remembers her first few visits to patients who were receiving chemotherapy in the Prairie Center's oncology suites. She visited patients to suggest creative endeavors — painting, crafts, multi-media explorations — and Denise said she did feel a sense of invasion.

"Cancer patients have a visual vulnerability in the way they look. You can see right into them, and I remember the first few times, how my stomach would drop to my feet," she said. "But quickly I realized what we were providing them — a break, a distraction, a sense of relief — and how important it was for them, and their families, to use art as a departure from reality."

Denise feels she's evolved into her role and relishes every interaction, not just with patients and families at Avera Cancer Institute Sioux Falls but also with passersby and staff that take part in the regular Hobby in the Lobby sessions she hosts.

Denise worked as an artist, art teacher and yoga instructor, and now brings to bear all that experience in her interactions. "We'll do anything to help. I've had patients compliment something I'm wearing and I'll give them the jewelry off my neck, or teach them how to make one of their own," Denise said. "We talk about everything except for their illnesses, and honestly, I learn as much — probably more — than they do during our interactions."

*"We make their visits fun and provide a chance for them to relax, and to smile, and that feeling becomes contagious."*

- DENISE CAMERON NELSON  
AVERA'S INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



*"Today, I am a four-year cancer survivor, and I would just like to do my part to see cancer research continue."*

- STEPHANIE BOETTCHER

Stephanie Boettcher, her husband, Todd, and their four children have had their own cancer scare in the family.

### CANCER SURVIVOR HELPS RAISE FUNDS FOR CANCER RESEARCH

WRITTEN BY KAYLA SCHLECKTER

It only made sense for Stephanie Boettcher to be a co-chair for the Nebraska Cattlemen's Ball, an annual event to raise awareness and funding for cancer research.

Stephanie, a part-time RN in Cardiac Rehab at Avera St. Anthony's Hospital, is a cancer survivor herself.

Her cancer battle began in November 2010 at the age of 35 when she received biopsy results of high-grade ductal

carcinoma in situ (DCIS). With four small children at home, it was a very scary time for Stephanie and her family.

This year the Cattlemen's Ball was held at the Redbird Ranch, located on the Niobrara River near Lynch, Neb. Ten percent of the proceeds stay local and will benefit medical facilities in Boyd and Holt counties.

"My husband, Todd, and I were both raised on farms in Boyd County and

continue to carry on the farming tradition," Stephanie added. "We are proud to raise our four children in a great rural area."

The rest of the proceeds go to the Fred and Pamela Buffett Cancer Center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. "Being a cancer survivor myself, I have a deep passion for this and am honored to be a part of this great event," Stephanie said.

## LIVING AVERA'S MISSION IN AFRICA

WRITTEN BY JEN HOUGH



Judy McQuown, who was an OB RN at Avera Holy Family Hospital for 43 years, shares details about her 2014 mission trip with Hope & Healing – Africa.

Medical staff shortages are a major concern in developing countries. Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world, has fewer than three doctors for every 100,000 people. The dire shortage of medical personnel means that health care expertise from volunteers like Judy McQuown, a retired OB RN from Avera Holy Family Hospital, Estherville, is desperately needed.

Judy will soon embark on a third mission trip to Mozambique with Hope & Healing – Africa. She uses her clinical knowledge to educate local staff, aid in deliveries and train volunteers. The mission of Hope & Healing – Africa is to provide sustainable health care in underserved communities in Africa as an expression of Christian love through material support, short-term mission teams, clinical training and spiritual encouragement.

Judy's adventures began in 2012. Her brother's church was starting a mission to Africa, and they were in need of a midwife. Judy's brother, Jim Blackburn, said that his sister is not a midwife, but "she has been delivering babies for 100 years."

In June 2012 Judy, Jim and 10 other volunteers headed to Mozambique and the Nhaloi Hospital, which was established by missionaries in 1959. During the two-week trip, Judy educated local staff about childbirth and helped to deliver five babies. After Judy retired, she used the opportunity to volunteer for a longer period. She returned to Africa in June 2014, volunteered for six weeks, and helped to deliver 15 babies.

When she returns to Africa in June 2015, she'll get to visit individuals whose lives she has already impacted. In 2012 Judy helped deliver a baby who was named Judita in her honor. When Judy was reunited with Judita in 2014, Judita's mother had taught the girl how to say "grandma" in English, just for Judy.



Volunteers prepare food for a meal at Esther's Kitchen in Marshall, Minn.

## PROVIDING A CARING SMILE AND A HOT MEAL

WRITTEN BY STACY NEUBECK

At Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center, one way employees live the Avera mission is by helping to prepare and serve a free community meal once a month at Esther's Kitchen.

Esther's Kitchen is part of the Loaves & Fishes program that provides nutritious meals to people who are hungry at sites across Minnesota. In Marshall, meals are offered three days each week at Christ United Presbyterian Church.

Working alongside Esther's Kitchen staff, Avera employees help to prepare a hot, nutritious meal for about 50 people. They dish up food and serve it to diners. Meals are made from scratch, and many ingredients are from the Second Harvest Heartland food bank or donated from area grocery stores, restaurants and individuals.

But Esther's Kitchen is about more than just food. It's also about not eating alone.

It's about hospitality, kindness and friendship. Diners often come early for a cup of coffee and stay afterward to visit with program staff, volunteers and fellow diners.

A different group of Avera employees volunteer each month. Sometimes employees' family members join as well. Marti Muhl, Clinic Manager, has participated in the Esther's Kitchen ministry three times. She volunteers out of gratitude for the blessings in her life.

Patient Service Representatives Keith Greer and Amanda Brunner recently volunteered for the first time. "I chose to help because that is what the mission of Christ is all about, and it's a way for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus," Keith said. Amanda enjoyed providing a caring smile with a good meal. "I know that in God's eyes we are all equal, and I hope that those who we served know that as well."



Esther's Kitchen volunteers included employees and providers from Avera Medical Group Marshall: Amanda Brunner; Marti Muhl; Jess Moriarty, CNP; Julijana Botic, MD; Dave Moriarty; Laura Johnson, PA; and Keith Greer.

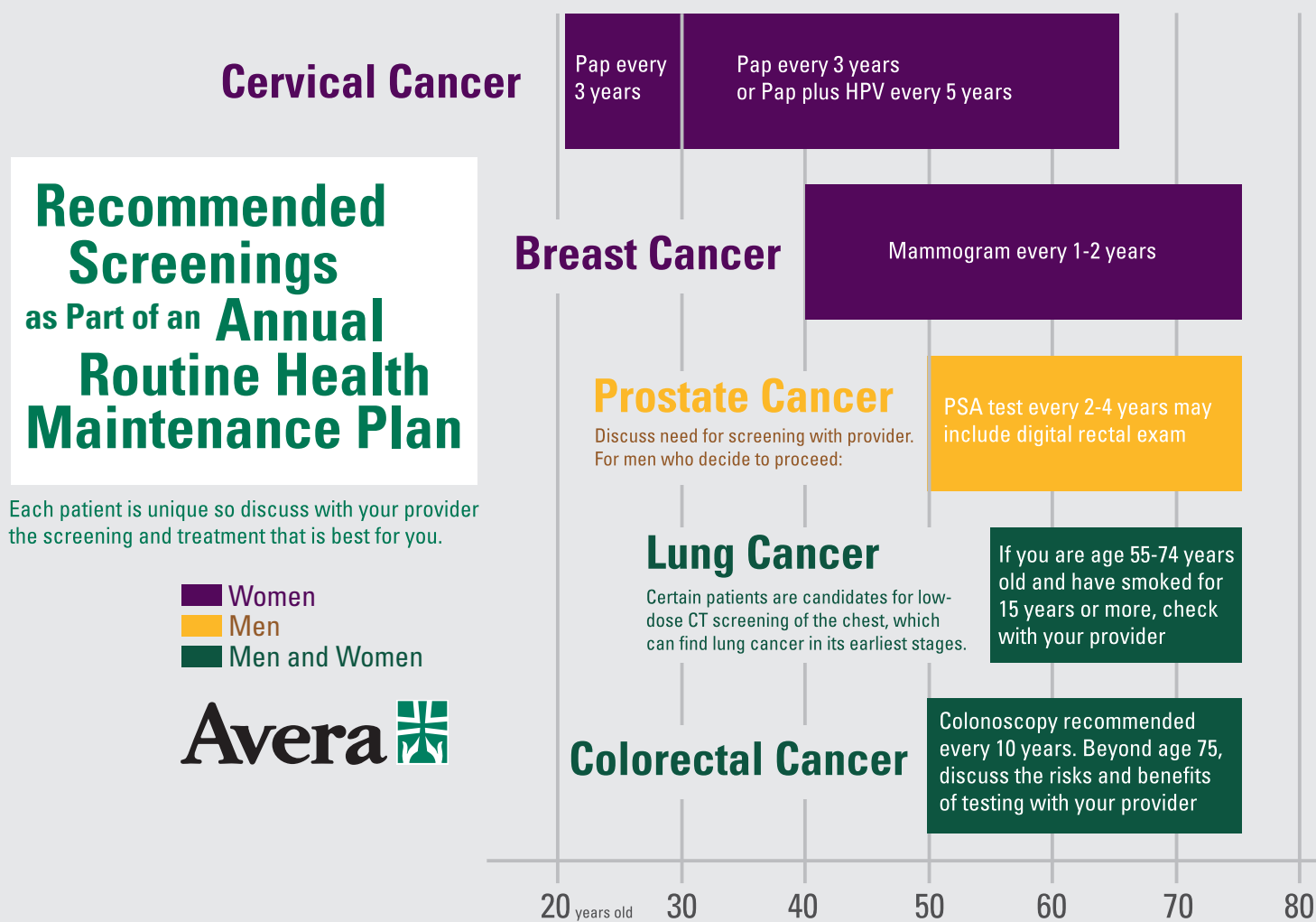
# MISSION IN ACTION

# Simple Ways to Take Care of Your Health

It's easy to overlook your own health when you're busy caring for others or serving customers. But taking care of your own health is a necessity, whether you're involved with direct patient care or elsewhere. Here are a few ideas, plus seven ideas for maximizing your health insurance benefits.

**Find a primary care doctor.** One key person who can help you and your family live healthier and age in good health is a primary care doctor. "It's extremely important to have a primary doctor who oversees your care," said Tad Jacobs, DO, Chief Medical Officer, Avera Medical Group. That individual can help ensure you are getting your health maintenance and appropriate health care checkups.

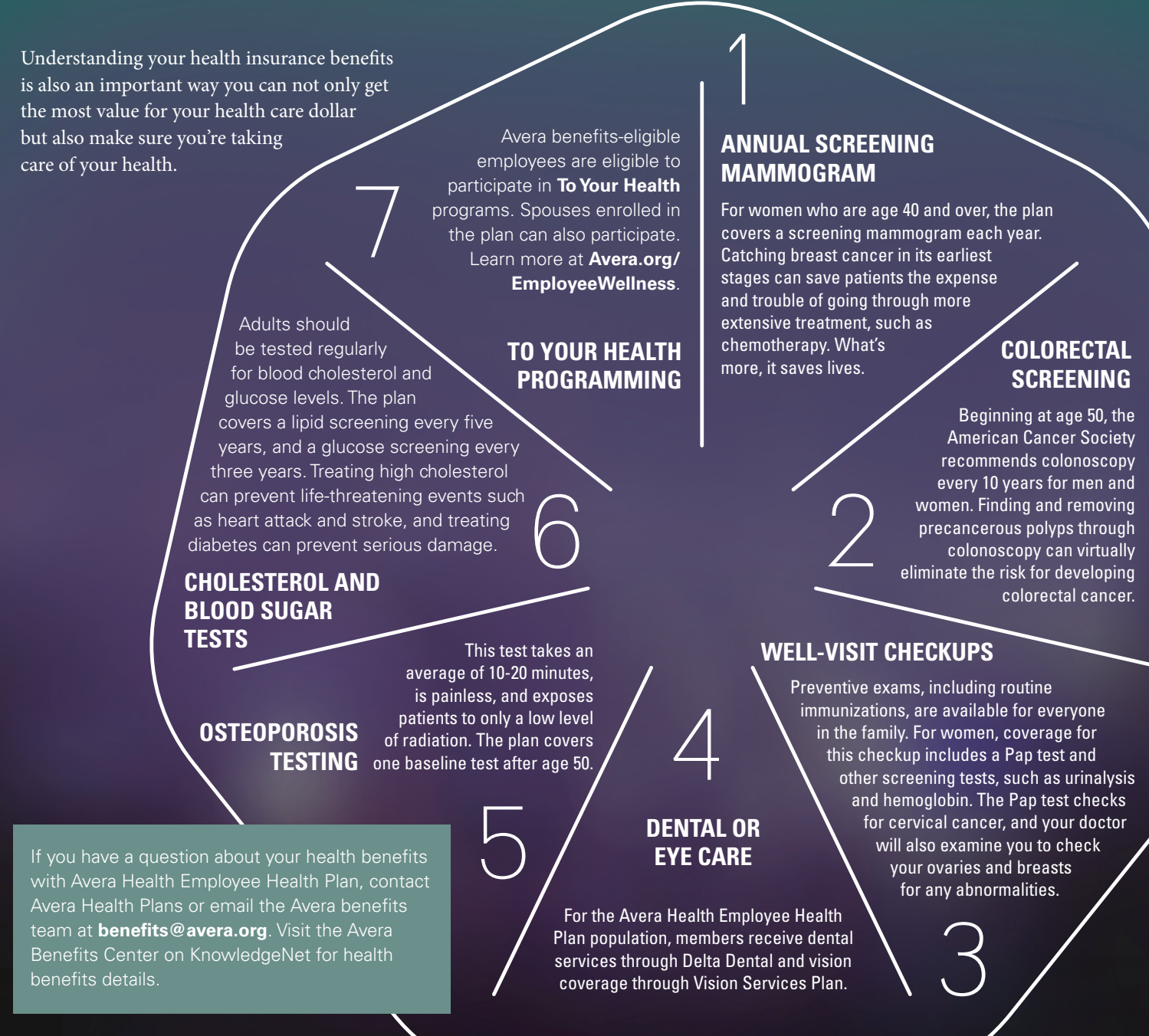
**Take advantage of preventive health services, including important screenings.** Two reasons that often keep people from making those appointments are concerns about cost or possible test results. For Avera Health Employee Health Plan members, preventive health services are paid for 100 percent, with no deductible or co-pay, said Deb Muller, Chief Administrative Officer for Avera Health Plans. Early detection of problems can be not only preventive but also lifesaving.



The above guidelines for breast, cervical and prostate cancer are recommended by Avera Medical Group. The guidelines for colorectal and lung cancer are from American Cancer Society recommendations.

## BENEFITS COVERED BY AVERA HEALTH EMPLOYEE HEALTH PLAN

Understanding your health insurance benefits is also an important way you can not only get the most value for your health care dollar but also make sure you're taking care of your health.



If you have a question about your health benefits with Avera Health Employee Health Plan, contact Avera Health Plans or email the Avera benefits team at [benefits@avera.org](mailto:benefits@avera.org). Visit the Avera Benefits Center on KnowledgeNet for health benefits details.

### Statistics

**77%** of benefits-eligible employees have Avera Health Plans. This includes owned, leased and sponsored employees.

Avera Health Employee Health Plan has more than **19,500 members.**

Of that number, we know that 85 percent have seen a primary care provider in the last 24 months.

### Preventive Health Screenings\*

**79.67%** Breast cancer

**72.82%** Cervical cancer

**51.81%** Colorectal cancer

\*As of February 2015, the percentage of the Avera Employee Health Plan population who are eligible for screenings who are getting those screenings

### ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Compared to national benchmarks, the Avera Employee Health Plan population who are eligible for screenings are doing better in some categories than others. "Over time, we have had good strides with breast cancer and cervical cancer. But they aren't near high enough. We want to look toward screening rates at 100 percent," Muller said.



# Facility Spotlight:

## AVERA MARSHALL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



“Since becoming part of the Avera system, Avera Marshall has fulfilled its promise to the community to expand health care options by adding medical specialists and advanced technology. We’ve led the way in providing services that meet identified needs in the Marshall area, including specialty care, cancer care and behavioral health care.”

- MARY MAERTENS, PRESIDENT/CEO

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:**  
More than **480**

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**CITY:** **MARSHALL, MINN.**

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**YEAR FOUNDED:** **1950**

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 25-bed hospital
- 76-bed long-term care facility
- 10-bed behavioral health inpatient unit
- The Emergency Department treats more than 600 patients per month. The department is staffed with 24/7 physician coverage and has a Level 3 trauma designation.
- The Obstetrics Department surpassed 500 deliveries in 2014.
- Clinic visits average nearly 5,000 per month.

### ABOUT AVERA MARSHALL

- First opened as Louis Weiner Memorial Hospital in 1950
- Formerly a city-owned facility that was known as Weiner Memorial Medical Center
- Entered a management agreement with Avera in 2004 and was renamed Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center
- Became an Avera-sponsored facility in 2009

### AVERA CANCER INSTITUTE MARSHALL

Construction of Avera Cancer Institute Marshall was completed in December 2014, resulting in a 16,500-square-foot, \$12.95 million addition. Now, access to cancer care is closer than ever for people in the Marshall region. While chemotherapy has been available at Avera Marshall since 1990, now radiation therapy as well as a full complement of support services and care are available.

### AVERA MEDICAL GROUP MARSHALL

In 2005 Avera Marshall began offering clinic services with one employed physician. Just 10 years later, the group has grown to 47 medical providers in 14 specialties. With a focus on keeping patients close to home for their medical care, Avera Medical Group Marshall has clinics in seven communities, and providers travel to 12 area towns to offer outreach care.

**Employee Quote:** “Rural life is important to me. It’s great that Avera Marshall provides services that are so needed, like cancer care and behavioral health care. This is why I wanted to live in a rural area — for a sense of community.”

- MOLLY CHRISTOPHER, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



# Hospitality at Avera is done as Jesus would do

It doesn't take long to find an Avera employee demonstrating the Avera value of hospitality. You might even say that hospitality and kindness are written into the DNA at Avera. Hospitality can be as simple as giving a word of comfort to someone in need or playing a song to people who will listen. It can be as fun as baking a cheesecake to help parents celebrate a new birth. Most of all, hospitality at Avera is done as Jesus would do.



Amy VanLith's cheesecake is famous among employees and patients at Milbank Area Hospital Avera.

## CELEBRATING WITH A SLICE OF CHEESECAKE

WRITTEN BY AMY THUE

On a typical day, you'll find Amy VanLith serving patients in her role as a lab technician at Milbank Area Hospital Avera.

She also serves patients and employees in another way: by using her baking skills. Amy is known as the baker in the facility, and everyone loves her famous cheesecake. She has been an employee of Milbank Area Hospital Avera for 15 years.

When the Milbank hospital and clinic broke ground for a new health care center, Amy made mini cheesecakes, cupcakes and truffles for the celebration. She not only spends time in the kitchen preparing the desserts but also helps at every facility event with setup, serving and cleanup.

As part of the facility event planning committee, Amy recently offered to add a new feature to the Labor and Delivery Department. After a new baby is born at the hospital, Amy provides the new parents with a cheesecake to celebrate the new birth.

It's another way that Amy demonstrates the value of hospitality. "Amy is always willing and able to assist with every event that we are planning," said Natalie Gauer, Hospital Administrator. "She goes above and beyond for our patients, her coworkers and the members of this community. We are fortunate to have an employee who cares so deeply about serving others."



Margarita Terrazas serves lunch at the Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center Cafeteria.

## HOSPITALITY AND A KIND WORD MAKE A DIFFERENCE

WRITTEN BY BRITTANY GADES

Margarita Terrazas' voice echoes through the Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center Cafeteria. "Can I help you, mijo? Sweetie, is everything OK?"

For 12 years as a food service and nutrition employee, she has helped guests with a smile, a comforting touch on the arm, and sometimes much, much more.

One such time, an Hispanic woman came to the cafeteria, and Margarita asked her if she needed help. The woman looked at her with sad eyes,

but said nothing. Margarita asked again, but this time in Spanish, and the woman broke down in tears.

"She was so scared, with no family nearby. Her son was in an accident and was not going to make it," Margarita explained. Margarita then escorted the woman to the chapel, and she stayed, prayed and cried with her.

Margarita exudes hospitality. For her comforting and helpful hospitality, she has received hugs, cards and even flowers from guests. Individuals have come back to hug and thank her for

being so friendly during a difficult time.

Married for 20 years with one son, Margarita was born in California, but grew up in Canatlán, Durango, Mexico. Despite this being her first job, outside of helping with the family orchard, Margarita wasn't nervous on her first day because of all the hospitality she says was already here.

"Every time I try to do the best I can and just try to make each situation a little better," she said.

"Every day I pray, 'Thank you, God, for letting me help other people.' This is me, all the time. I think I have it inside of me, inside my heart."

- MARGARITA TERRAZAS

“I think they would probably prefer it if I would just sing and play the guitar instead of actually doing my job. That’s OK with me! Playing for the residents does provide a way to connect with them that I wouldn’t have otherwise.”

- SARA GERMAN



Sara German plays the piano and guitar for residents at Avera’s two long-term care facilities in Yankton.

## DIETITIAN CONNECTS TO PATIENTS THROUGH MUSIC

WRITTEN BY NATHAN JOHNSON

Sara German is a clinical dietitian, but if you ask residents at Avera’s two long-term care facilities in Yankton, they are more likely to identify her as the woman who plays guitar or piano in their facilities.

Sara began working as a clinical dietitian for Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in December 2012. At some point, she noticed that a “neighborhood,” or residential wing, at Avera Sister James Care Center had a piano.

“I ended up sitting down to play something after finishing work one afternoon,” Sara recalled. “This was probably two years ago. I enjoy playing the piano, and residents, family and staff seemed to enjoy listening, so it’s something I kept doing when I had time.”

Sara began performing on guitar for the residents when she was teaching herself to play the instrument. “Once I had a few chords down and could accompany some basic songs, I started walking over to the Avera Yankton Care Center on free afternoons and singing for the residents. It was a good way to practice chords in a very forgiving environment. No one minds if you mess up on the chord changes or have to start a song over in a different key. It’s good motivation, too. The residents enjoy it, which makes me want to continue.”

Performances are intermittent. She has been asked to play for occasions such as Christmas events. Sara said she is often offered cookies as payment on those occasions.

“Really, nursing home residents are probably the best audience a person could ever have,” Sara said. “Their enjoyment greatly exceeds what is warranted by the actual performance. It’s a huge confidence booster. Their enjoyment is what motivates me the most — it’s such a simple, easy thing for me to do, and they appreciate it so much.”



Melissa Mentele has been an X-ray Tech at Avera Weskota Hospital for 11 years.

## X-RAY TECH ALWAYS LENDS AN EXTRA HAND

WRITTEN BY TENILLE MANNING HEIER

Melissa Mentele, an X-ray Tech at Avera Weskota Hospital, is always willing to help out fellow coworkers.

“She goes the extra mile to help out fellow associates in a huge way. She’s awesome!” said one coworker. For example, she answers phones at the nursing station if it’s needed.

Melissa has been an X-ray Tech at Avera Weskota Hospital for 11 years, and she was held up by her coworkers as an example of the Avera value of hospitality.

Melissa demonstrates compassion and hospitality, no matter the circumstances. “When I needed a mammogram, she did everything to make me feel comfortable and ease my anxiety, like she does with every patient,” another coworker said.

For Melissa,  
hospitality means

“doing the best we can for patients every day and taking the extra step to make sure they have what they need.”

- MELISSA MENTELE

This attitude fits right in at Avera Weskota. “It’s such a great group that works here. It’s small, so everyone helps out wherever they’re needed,” she said.



Mark Marion repairs bicycles for students and individuals who can't afford to buy a bike.

# We Are Fun

Avera employees find joy in activities outside of work, from repairing bicycles to passing along a love of fishing to the next generation. Employees rally around a good cause to raise funds for behavioral health services. These activities help employees keep perspective on life as they help others.



The Avera Green Team from Avera St. Benedict Hospital won first place in 2013.



Brad Saathoff enjoys sharing his love of fishing with others.

## Kickball Tournament Offers Fun for a Good Cause

WRITTEN BY **JULIE SEMMLER**

For the past four years, come rain or shine, Avera St. Benedict Hospital employees, led by Jason Wickersham, MD, have participated in the Kick'n Depression Kickball Tourney. The goal of the tournament is to raise depression awareness within the community. Proceeds provide behavioral health services to patients in Parkston's service area.

After placing a close second for two years in a row, the Avera Green Team pulled ahead of the local competition by placing first in 2013. They wore the crown proudly for a year, only to lose to their nemesis, Parkston Drug. This has led to a friendly rivalry in the Parkston community. Avera employees wear championship T-shirts with pride at Avera St. Benedict and around town, only to fuel the fire of competition for the next year. The tournament is held the first Sunday in June.

Avera St. Benedict staff and family provide enough support for two teams, concession workers, field workers and fans. The Parkston community has embraced this event and its cause, making it a day in the park for family, fun, fellowship and fans.

For more People News, visit [KnowledgeNet](#).

## Uncovering the Fun of Fishing

WRITTEN BY **AMANDA BACON**

It's no secret that a love of water and wildlife is often what lures people to, and keeps them in, South Dakota's capital city. Brad Saathoff, Pharmacy Director at Avera St. Mary's Hospital, is no exception. The Watertown native has called Pierre home since 2008. He came for the fishing and stayed for a job. His free time is largely spent in a boat on the Missouri River — fishing pole in hand.

"My dad always took me fishing," Brad said. "I've been doing this since I was in diapers."

In fact, his first fishing trip was an ice fishing trip with his dad when Brad was a toddler. However, upon arrival, his father discovered he neglected to bring what was arguably the most important piece of equipment on this particular fishing expedition — the diapers. "After all that, we never did get to fish that day," Brad laughed.

Many trips followed when they actually did get to wet a line. Those memories are a big part of why Brad knew he was all in when he was asked to help with the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' Kids Fishing Weekend in 2013. The free program pairs kids with some of the region's finest anglers and gives kids firsthand fishing experience.

While the kids clearly love the program, it was Brad who became hooked. He plans to participate again in the future.

"I really enjoy watching the kids. A lot of them are catching their first fish for the first time, or have never been in a boat," he said. "It's great for the kids and great for the community."

## Bike Repair Aids International Students in Transition

WRITTEN BY **PATTY KIRKPATRICK**

Who would think that a bicycle could serve as a token of international hospitality? Mark Marion, Hospice Chaplain at Avera St. Luke's Hospital, found a way to do just that.

Northern State University in Aberdeen has a significant number of international students — more than 200 most semesters. Most students have abundant mass transportation in their home cities. That is not the case in Aberdeen, so the students sometimes find it difficult to get around town.

Mark has a talent for refurbishing and fixing bicycles, so he and a friend, Jim Mortenson, organized a bicycle repair program. They take in broken and abandoned bicycles, repair and revive them, and then give them to the students to use. The foreign students appreciate this service, and others benefit as well, since Mark and Jim give bikes to anyone who can't afford one. For the last six years, they have refurbished about 200 bikes each year and rarely have any left to spare.

Mark worked in the Radiology Department for 26 years at Avera St. Luke's and retired from that position in 2012. In December 2013 he came back to work in a chaplaincy role. Anyone who knows Mark would agree that he demonstrates excellent hospitality to the patients and families he serves throughout the hospital. But he also demonstrates the value of hospitality to students from around the world.

# People NEWS

## Leadership on the Move

Mary L. Hill, BSN, MA, JD, is the new Vice President of Ethics for Avera Health. In this new position, she is committed to ensuring a robust ethics infrastructure that supports Avera's identity, mission and values by guiding organizational and clinical decision-making. Hill is available to provide ethics consultation and guidance for clinical and administrative issues.

## Avera colleagues in the news:

Jamie Schaefer, Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, was recognized by the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA) as a recipient of its Tomorrow's Leaders honor. Each year, the CHA selects 10 individuals from the health care industry to honor as Tomorrow's Leaders recipients. Schaefer is the first leader to be selected from South Dakota since the program's inception in 2011.

Mary Maertens, Regional President and CEO of Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center, has been honored with two awards. She received the Minnesota Hospital Association's 2015 Spirit of Advocacy Award and the American Hospital Association's Grassroots Champion Award for Minnesota. For the AHA's Grassroots Champion Award, one hospital leader from each state is honored for the individual's work over the previous year for exceptional leadership in generating grassroots and community activity in support of a hospital's mission.

Steve Petersen, PharmD, Vice President of Pharmacy Services at Avera Health, has been selected by the South Dakota Society of Health-System Pharmacists as recipient of the Gary W. Karel Lecture Award recipient for 2015. This award is the highest lifetime achievement honor in South Dakota for a health-system pharmacy practice.

The South Dakota State University College of Nursing honored four Avera leaders at its 80th anniversary gala in April: Darcy Sherman Justice and Kris Gaster, Leadership in Clinical Practice; Courtney Ehlers, Emerging Professional; and Deborah Soholt, College of Nursing Distinguished Alumni. In total, 30 nurses were honored for their contributions to nursing and health care, as well as their prestigious careers as SDSU Distinguished Alumni from the College of Nursing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention named Kerri Lutjens as a 2015 Childhood Immunization Champion. Lutjens, who works as a visiting nurse for Avera St. Benedict Hospital, Parkston, provides services to seven Hutterite colonies in the region.

## Medical Staff Notes

The American College of Physicians has awarded the 2015 Richard Neubauer Advocate for Internal Medicine Award to Rob Allison, MD, FACP, Avera Medical Group Pierre. The award recognizes individuals who have made exceptional efforts in support of the College's advocacy program.

Jerome Bentz, MD, was named the 2015 South Dakota Family Doctor of the Year by his peers at the 2015 South Dakota

Academy of Family Physicians Winter Seminar in February. Dr. Bentz, who practices at Platte Health Center Avera, has been serving the Platte community as a family medicine doctor for 31 years.

Gareth Davies, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer and Scientific Director at the Avera Institute for Human Genetics, was listed as a co-author in Nature.

Avera Medical Group Gynecology/Obstetrics physician Jodi Scott, MD, completed the 2015 Boston Marathon in honor of her older sister, Elinor. Elinor participated in the 2013 Boston Marathon but was unable to complete the race and was forced to stop when a bomb went off at the finish line. Elinor was determined to finish what she started. Despite being diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer, Elinor completed the last mile of the marathon last year. Elinor lost her battle four months later at age 51. Dr. Scott was selected as a charity runner for the Team Purple Project.

## New Providers

View a list of new physicians and advanced practice providers on the Avera Medical Group page on KnowledgeNet.

For more People News and System News, visit [KnowledgeNet](#).

# System NEWS

**Elekta Partnership:** A new strategic relationship will enable Avera to implement an integrated oncology health system that spans the full cancer care continuum. Avera has partnered with Elekta to deploy the MOSAIQ® oncology information system, advanced radiation oncology technology and treatment planning systems, and cancer registry software throughout the six regional centers of the Avera Cancer Institute. Elekta is a global leader in oncology information systems. Sophisticated treatment delivery solutions will complement this integrated informatics strategy. The agreement also includes Elekta linear accelerators (Versa HD™, Elekta Infinity™), Leksell Gamma Knife® Perflexion™ and brachytherapy solutions. The relationship will allow us to give patients access to the world's most advanced technology for treating cancer.

**Walking Forward:** Avera has partnered with the Walking Forward program, a South Dakota-based research project that is using innovative ways, such as mobile technology and text messages, to promote smoking cessation among American Indians, and ultimately prevent lung cancer deaths. Through the new partnership, Walking Forward becomes an Avera program, grant monies will be managed through Avera, and Walking Forward employees become employees of Avera. Walking Forward will collaborate with Avera's Molecular and Experimental Medicine Program at the Avera Cancer Institute Sioux Falls.

**Avera@Home:** Avera is changing the structure for the home medical equipment service line to better position our organization for future success. Effective July 1, 2015, Avera Home Medical Equipment will transition to become part of Avera@Home. This transition will allow consumers to have one access point for these services. It will strengthen our overall service design and allow us to respond to changes in the marketplace.

# 44%

Native Americans on the Northern Plains of South Dakota who smoke



# 18%

all American adults who smoke

# 13.7

AVERAGE AGE of smoking a FIRST CIGARETTE among AMERICAN INDIANS

Source: Walking Forward

## Public Policy Update

### Sustainable Growth Rate

You may have heard about the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) repeal in the news this spring. This Congressional legislation (H.R. 2, Medicare and CHIP Reauthorization), which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on March 26 and by the U.S. Senate on April 14, is a very important piece of legislation for Avera as well as health care entities across the nation.

The Sustainable Growth Rate legislation was passed in 1997 in an attempt to slow the rate of Medicare spending. It consisted of a formula that, beginning in 2000, resulted in cuts to physician payments. Due to the 17 delays passed in 14 years, a cut of 21 percent would have begun on April 1, 2015. H.R. 2 finally repealed the SGR and changed the payment formula moving forward.

Besides repealing the SGR, this legislation also reauthorized funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through fiscal year 2017, and delayed implementation of CMS's two-midnight policy until Sept. 30, 2015.

In addition, several health care provisions were extended in this legislation that are important to Avera in providing access to health care, such as:

- Therapy cap exceptions process, which allows patients to receive medically necessary therapy beyond the arbitrarily set Medicare limits.
- Medicare low-volume program, which provides additional support for the higher costs associated with operating a hospital with a low volume of discharges.

If you have questions about these or other legislative issues, please contact Deb Fischer-Clemens at [deb.fischerclermens@avera.org](mailto:deb.fischerclermens@avera.org).

## AVERA SERVICE LINE

# Leadership

### Avera Medical Group Behavioral Health

Matthew Stanley, DO, Clinical Vice President, Behavioral Health

Mary Maertens, Administrative dyad

### Avera Medical Group Oncology

Dave Kapaska, DO, Administrative dyad

David Elson, MD, Interim clinical dyad

Michael Peterson, MD, Interim clinical dyad

### Avera Medical Group Emergency Medicine

Jared Friedman, MD, Clinical Vice President, Emergency Medicine

Doug Ekeren, Administrative dyad

### Avera Medical Group Obstetrics & Gynecology

Kimberlee McKay, MD, Clinical Vice

President, OB/GYN

Tom Clark, Administrative dyad

### Avera Medical Group Radiology

Brad Paulson, MD, Interim clinical dyad

Todd Forkel, Administrative dyad

### Avera Medical Group Primary Care

Rich Kafka, MD, Interim clinical dyad

Tad Jacobs, DO, Chief Medical Officer, Avera Medical Group

Dave Flicek, Administrative dyad, Chief Administrative Officer, Avera Medical Group

### Avera Medical Group Laboratory

Bruce Prouse, MD, Interim clinical dyad

Mary Maertens, Administrative dyad

### Avera Medical Group Nephrology

Robert Santella, MD, Interim clinical dyad

Dave Kapaska, DO, Administrative dyad

### Avera Medical Group Hospitalist

Todd Forkel, Administrative dyad

Joseph Rees, DO, Interim clinical dyad

For more information, visit the Service Lines page on the Avera Medical Group tab on KnowledgeNet.

**To Your Health Update:** **To Your Health** is preparing to celebrate five years of supporting Avera employees.

Successes include:

- **To Your Health** has seen an increase in participation in screenings, health assessment, coaching, website utilization and wellness challenges.
- There have been significant reductions in high health risks.
- Participants have seen the benefits of involvement and noticed the positive impact of **To Your Health** services within their location. Visit [Avera.org/EmployeeWellness](http://Avera.org/EmployeeWellness) to view these testimonials.
- Avera was recognized two years in a row as a Fit-Friendly organization at the Platinum Award level by the American Heart Association.

Avera would like to thank participating employees and spouses who have made an effort to make their own health and well-being a priority, which makes a positive impact in living out Avera's mission.

# Kudos!

**Coordinated Care Model:** Avera's Coordinated Care program has been recognized as among the top five of health organizations that participated in a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation Health Care Innovation Challenge Grant.

**U.S. News & World Report Best Nursing Homes:** Avera Brady Health and Rehab, Mitchell, was named to the 2015 list of Best Nursing Homes by U.S. News & World Report. This annual list ranks nursing homes based on health inspections, nurse staffing and measures of medical quality of care.

**Avera eCARE:** Avera was recognized by MedCity News as one of the five best health systems implementing telemedicine. Avera eCARE is the largest telehealth program in the world.

**Women's Health Programs List:** Becker's Hospital Review has named Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, Sioux Falls, in the 2014 list of "100 hospitals with great women's health programs." Avera McKennan is the only hospital in Sioux Falls and South Dakota named to the list.

**Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals:** Five Avera Health facilities have been named to the iVantage list of 2014 Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals in the United States.

**Marketing Awards:** The Avera Marketing team came home with one gold and two silver awards from the annual South Dakota ADDY Awards event held in February. The 2014 Cancer Awareness Advertising Awards presented the Avera Cancer Institute Annual Report with its Gold award and named the Avera Marketing "Cancer Care Done Differently" campaign as a Bronze award-winner.



Avera De Smet Memorial Hospital groundbreaking



Progress continues on the Avera Grassland Health Campus.



The entrance to the Avera Yankton Care Center



A beam-signing event was held in February 2015 at the Don & Carmen Meyer Center of Excellence.

## Bricks and Mortar

**Groundbreaking:** Avera De Smet Memorial Hospital broke ground on a new hospital addition and renovation in May. The \$3.2 million project involves adding new space and equipment, as well as transforming existing space to be more efficient, patient friendly and reflective of state-of-the-art health care. The project will be complete in 18 months to two years.

**Grand opening:** Avera Prince of Peace Retirement Community in Sioux Falls celebrated the grand opening of the new addition in May. The two-story, 117,000-square-foot addition is the largest long-term care construction project in the history of South Dakota. The \$25 million addition houses 90 beds — 64 in long-term care and 26 in rehabilitation plus 20 additional assisted living suites. Avera Prince of Peace also has 32 existing assisted living apartments and independent living apartments.

**Construction Update:** The groundbreaking for the Don & Carmen Meyer Center of Excellence, the future home of Avera Cancer Institute Aberdeen, was in October 2014. A beam-signing event was held in February 2015. Construction is progressing, including the completion of structural steel framing and recent work on the roof deck and roofing installation. A ribbon cutting and celebration will be held in October 2015.

**Avera Grassland Health Campus:** The new building, opening in spring of 2016, paves the way for Avera Queen of Peace Hospital to continue providing outstanding patient care in the Mitchell region. The three-story, 70,000-square-foot clinic has a convenient design that meets the needs of patients and physicians. Dermatology will be opening on the first floor of the Grassland Health Campus in late summer/early fall of 2016.

**Majestic Bluffs:** Construction for a new replacement facility for the Avera Yankton Care Center and a separate hospice facility continues to make progress. The project is on track to be completed in November 2015. The facility will be built as two new "neighborhoods" of Avera Sister James Care Center at the Majestic Bluffs campus, with the hospice facility separate but attached.

Watch for further updates on  
**KnowledgeNet.**

# WORKPLACE BULLYING:

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WRITTEN BY BRYANN BECKER KNECHT

**B**ullying isn't confined to the playground. The behavior also occurs in the workplace, and it's a growing national concern. According to a national survey from the Workplace Bullying Institute, nearly one-third of workers report having felt bullied at work. Unfortunately, 40 percent of targets — the individuals being bullied — never tell their employers.

Beyond the damaging effects on the individual being bullied, bullying also can have a lasting negative impact in the workplace. Bullying often fuels a negative work environment, which can be detrimental to an organization's culture. The practice can also affect productivity and the type of care and service we deliver to patients and customers at Avera.

It is important to raise awareness about the behavior and to give employees resources to help prevent and resolve bullying behavior. "The individual can find support and look for a workplace solution," said Tim Heerts, Avera EAP Trainer and Consultant. "The real solution to bullying is that employers can create an environment that prevents bullying."

Avera wants to promote a workplace that is productive, safe and conducive to personal growth. That means continuing to maintain a positive work environment and confronting bullying behavior immediately. "If bullying occurs, it is important to address it right away. We want to provide a positive and engaged work environment to ensure we're providing the highest level of care to our customers," said Seth Hilmoe, Human Resources Officer at Avera Health.

Maintaining a positive work environment is also crucial to the culture of Avera. "We want to protect our Avera culture and make sure it is free of workplace violence and bullying," Hilmoe said. Avera is working on creating a standardized workplace violence policy.

## WHAT IS WORKPLACE BULLYING?

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, workplace bullying is repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators. It is abusive conduct that is threatening, humiliating or intimidating; work interference — sabotage — that prevents work from getting done; or verbal abuse.

There is a difference between bullying and setting work expectations. "For a supervisor to expect quality work from somebody, that's not harassing. It's the behavior that the supervisor uses to communicate with that employee," Heerts said.

## HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE?

"One of the primary ways you know you're being bullied is if you dread going back to work to face one person and that individual's ugly behavior," Heerts said. Find a list of signs of bullying at [workplacebullying.org](http://workplacebullying.org).

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU'RE BEING BULLIED?

1. Address the actions directly with the bully. Let the individual know you know the behavior is happening and that it's unacceptable.
2. The next step is to go to the bully's supervisor, your supervisor or Human Resources. Once the bullying starts, take confidential notes to back up what is happening. If the issue remains unresolved, request to meet with the next level leader within your department structure.
3. The Avera Employee Assistance Program is available for help. "Being the target of a bully really affects a person's health. EAP is a great place to turn to talk about it," Heerts said.
4. For more information, see your local Human Resources workplace violence policies or your local employee handbook.

# Reflection

## THE FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT



Sr. Maribeth Wentzlaff, OSB, is the Director of Campus Ministry and Mission Director at Mount Marty College in Yankton. She is also on the Avera McKennan Board and Avera Rural Health Advisory Board.

On July 11 the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Benedict, the founder of the Benedictine Order. The Gospel for that feast is from Matthew 19:27-29. Peter says to Jesus, "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?"

*Jesus replies,*

**"Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life."**

Does this sound like a familiar conversation in today's world? Often people are concerned with what's in it for them. One of the charisms of the Benedictine Order is community. It is rare to see Benedictine monks or nuns living by themselves. We believe in the importance of going to God together within the context of community. It is in the daily washing of dishes, serving of food, and cleaning of common areas that we live out the value of "washing feet" for others. When we do this, we do it out of selfless love for the other. In fact, St. Benedict in his Holy Rule states in Chapter 72 on The Good Zeal of Monks, "No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else."

In today's corporate world of budget cuts, layoffs and downsizing, it is tempting to get caught in the trap of being territorial and wanting to make sure that our department's budget survives the latest cuts. However, in the Benedictine world (and Avera world), it is important to remember to prioritize what is best for the good of the whole community. God will provide for all of our needs! If we truly believe this, all shall be well. And, again, as Benedict says in Chapter 72 of the Rule, "Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life."

# 2015

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Avera offers the following educational symposiums for Avera employees and other interested health care professionals. Please consult your supervisor if you would like to attend.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Avera is a health ministry rooted in the Gospel. Our mission is to make a positive impact in the lives and health of persons and communities by providing quality services guided by Christian values.

#### **Avera McKennan Pulmonary and Critical Care Symposium**

June 12, Hilton Garden Inn South, Sioux Falls

#### **Avera Quality Congress**

Aug. 26, Ramkota Exhibit Hall, Sioux Falls (invitation only)

#### **North Central Heart Cardiac Symposium**

Sept. 18, Sioux Falls Convention Center

#### **Avera Cancer Institute Oncology Symposium** (with Primary Care Track)

Sept. 24 – 25, Prairie Center on the campus of Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, Sioux Falls

#### **Avera Women's Conference for the Primary Care Provider**

Oct. 2, Sr. Colman Room, Prairie Center on the campus of Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, Sioux Falls

#### **Avera and Hazelden Conference: "Prescription Drug Abuse"**

Oct. 9, Sr. Colman Room, Prairie Center on the campus of Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, Sioux Falls

Additional conferences may add videoconferencing upon demand, so please check the registration website for a specific event for details. You can access all events for which registration is active by going to **[Avera.org/conferences](http://Avera.org/conferences)**.