

We are Avera

A PUBLICATION FOR AVERA EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

A woman with long brown hair, wearing red safety glasses and a light blue lab coat, is smiling as she works in a laboratory. She is wearing white gloves and is using a pipette to transfer liquid into a multi-well plate. The background shows laboratory equipment and a clean, bright environment.

THE INNOVATION ISSUE

Avera Leads Health Care Into The Future

Avera 

Dear Avera We reader,



With each issue, We magazine attempts to bring our readers a little closer to the employees who make up Avera and carry out Avera's mission day after day.

With more than 16,000 employees who work in facilities across a five-state footprint, it's difficult to know each other personally — but we hope this magazine is a useful tool that facilitates an understanding of the people and work across our organization.

This issue of We focuses on innovation at Avera.

You'll read about Avera's membership in the Worldwide Innovative Networking Consortium, research being done at Alumend to reinforce artery walls and efforts to reduce work-related injuries – as well as many other initiatives that employ technology or problem-solving skills.

I want to use this space to talk about an innovation not written about elsewhere in this issue.

Recently, Avera launched WEave, a common space for employees across Avera to come together and share uplifting messages, personal photos, favorite recipes and more. This community-building project ties into the "Live Better, Live Balanced" initiative.

Periodically, a question will be posted on WEave, and employees will be encouraged to share their answers. The first question was "What are you thankful for?"

My own answer to that question is my family and the support they provide me. My wife and three children are truly a blessing upon my life.

As we post new topics of discussion, we encourage you to share your thoughts — and maybe even a picture — on WEave.

It will be exciting to see how this new gathering place grows and results in new connections between employees across the Avera system.

To experience WEave yourself, go to <http://knowledgenet/weave>.

Daryl Thuringer
Vice President of Corporate Communications, Avera

We
are Avera

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On the Cover:
Patty Huizenga, Genetics Research Associate at the Avera Institute for Human Genetics, loads reagents onto an automated liquid handling system to prepare samples for large-scale and targeted genotyping studies.

SEND COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND STORY IDEAS TO:

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Or to wemagazine@avera.org
For additional news, resources and updates about Avera, visit KnowledgeNet or Avera.org.



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 previous issues of We magazine on KnowledgeNet.

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We Live for... FRUIT SNACKS

The key to a healthy life is learning good habits early in life. It's recommended that adults and children eat more fruits and vegetables, five cups or more for adults, and limit sugary drinks and juices.



These snacks are 100 calories or less:

-  A MEDIUM-SIZE APPLE
-  A MEDIUM-SIZE BANANA
-  1 CUP BLUEBERRIES
-  1 CUP GRAPES
-  1 CUP CARROTS, BROCCOLI OR BELL PEPPERS WITH 2 TBSP. HUMMUS

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Avera  **HwyVee**
Avera.org/womenshealth

Avera Cancer Institute Joins Other Top Research Institutions in Global Effort to Improve Cancer Care

WRITTEN BY DONNA FARRIS

As part of the Worldwide Innovative Networking (WIN) Consortium, the Avera Cancer Institute (ACI) is a leader in the changing landscape of cancer research.



Worldwide innovative networking in personalized cancer medicine

ACI is the fifth medical institution in the U.S. to become a member of the WIN Consortium.



BRIAN LEYLAND-JONES, MB BS, PHD, VICE PRESIDENT OF AVERA CENTER FOR PRECISION ONCOLOGY

“We are thrilled to join the WIN Consortium. In the nearly two years since our team joined Avera, we have cared for more than 300 patients, and we are documenting exciting results,” said Brian Leyland-Jones, MB BS, PhD, Vice President of the Avera Center for Precision Oncology.

“This is the age of genomic medicine. We’re at a pivotal moment in cancer research, when we can apply genomic profiling to targeted therapies. This will be absolutely transformative in the history of cancer care,” Leyland-Jones said.

Founded on the recognition that greater success can be achieved through collaboration than any organization can achieve alone, the WIN Consortium is a global network of leading academic,

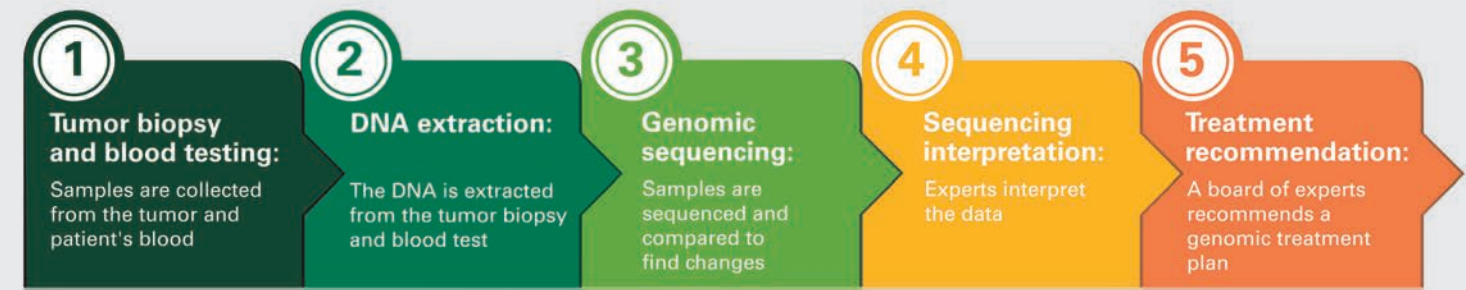
industry, insurance and non-profit research organizations working to make personalized cancer care a reality for patients worldwide.

Avera joins prestigious medical institutions including Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, New York University Langone Medical Center, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and University of California San Diego Moores Cancer Center.

To date, the approach in cancer care has been population medicine – treatments based on what has shown to be most effective for people with a certain type of cancer. In comparison, personalized medicine uses genomic analysis to discover the specific genetic drivers of a tumor, and target those drivers with treatment regimens.

“Personalized medicine is a concept of giving the right drug at the right time for the right person,” said Vladimir Lazar, MD, PhD, founder and Chief Operating Officer of the WIN Consortium. “WIN was created with a goal to go beyond what is now possible. As a member of the WIN Consortium, Avera will be on the front line of this transition. Not only will this work benefit patients at Avera, it will benefit cancer patients throughout the world.”

Avera’s genomic oncology team is “a rare group of people who are working to break into new frontiers and push knowledge beyond what is possible today. They are drivers, they are visionaries. Rarely do you see what I have seen at Avera,” Lazar said.





eCARE Innovation: TURNING IDEAS INTO REALITY

Check out
Avera eCARE's
new website at
AveraeCARE.org

The idea of eLongTermCare came forward from a meeting between Avera and Good Samaritan Society on how to best support the needs of nursing home staff.

“There are also those ideas that are really intriguing that we can’t execute on as well as we’d like – at this particular time,” Mandy said.

Mandy majored in history and Spanish in college — which might seem like the furthest thing from health care innovation. She took an internship with Avera in grant-writing, working on projects that resulted in funding for eCARE. Her contributions as a grant writer eventually resulted in a job offer with eCARE.

“It’s just so fun to put all the stakeholders together and figure out what they want to do and how to do it,” Mandy said. “It’s easy to come to work every day at Avera. I feel part of a greater mission. By supporting nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and of course patients, we’re really making a difference.”

eCARE Expands its Borders

services in New Hampshire and Vermont. D-H is a partner with the Geisel School of Medicine of Dartmouth College — an Ivy League institution.

This collaboration takes eCARE to the East Coast, and gives eCARE a national presence.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with Dartmouth — a well-known academic medical center — as they take their telemedicine services to the next level,” Deanna said.

Avera eCARE also has recently contracted with the University of Kansas Hospital and Hays Medical Center of Hays, Kan., as part of a \$12.5 million Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) award.

The University of Kansas Hospital received the CMMI award to work with Hays Medical Center, 10 critical access hospitals and rural providers throughout western Kansas to design an innovative care delivery model focused on improving heart health and stroke survival. eEmergency will be the tool they use to make it happen.

In addition to getting support with care protocols in the case of stroke and heart attack, participating sites can contact the eEmergency hub for support with any case.

“Avera eCARE is proud to be part of KU’s CMMI award. We hope that the results of this project can serve as a national model for providing vital care for critical conditions in rural hospitals,” Deanna said.

Avera eCARE™ already serves 235 locations across 545,000 square miles and eight states. Yet these borders are ever expanding.

“After we gained traction with our eCARE business strategy, people starting coming to us, asking if we would consider other programs to fulfill niche needs, such as eLongTermCare, eCorrectional Health and eSchool Nurse,” said Deanna Larson, Avera Health’s Senior Vice President of Quality and eCARE.

Most recently, Avera eCARE is reaching out business to business, or “B2B,” to help other organizations see how they could benefit from a partnership with eCARE. eCARE makes these new connections through trade shows, conferences, sales contacts and its new website at AveraeCARE.org.

One example is a new collaboration with Dartmouth-Hitchcock (D-H) of Lebanon, N.H., which has contracted with Avera eCARE to provide eEmergency

WRITTEN BY DONNA FARRIS

No one would disagree that Avera eCARE™ is among Avera’s top innovations. Still, the eCARE team is not content with “what is,” but rather is always looking forward to what “will be.”

Anyone is empowered to suggest an idea, which is then considered by eCARE’s innovation team. “Our team tries to look into all concepts that are brought forward and follow up, so no great idea goes unnoticed or untried,” said Mandy Bell, eCARE Quality and Innovation Officer.

The team not only looks into the feasibility of an idea, but whether it fulfills the Avera mission by having a positive impact on lives and communities. If an idea sounds good and looks good “on paper,” this team takes it for consideration by Avera eCARE’s Innovation Council, comprised of senior leaders. If it receives the green light, it is then tested and eventually piloted.

AveraNow is just one outcome of this process. The idea for a “virtual visit” through a smartphone or tablet first came up among members of Avera McGreevy’s Primary Care Innovation Council. When the idea was handed off to the eCARE innovation team, they found ways to make the vision a reality.

“Over the last two years, we’ve been more thoughtful and rigorous in pursuing new ideas.”

- MANDY BELL, ECARE QUALITY AND INNOVATION OFFICER

AVERA HEALTH PLANS ADJUSTS TO INDUSTRY CHANGES

WRITTEN BY KELLY THURMAN



Three months of the year, Kyle Tschetter doesn't have much time off the phone and away from his desk.

Kyle, a Customer Service Representative Level 2 licensed agent with Avera Health Plans, has recently made it through the organization's busiest season — open enrollment for individual health plan members.

"It's constant, with calls back to back," Kyle said. He estimates six to eight hours of his day were on the phone, taking up to 100 calls a day — double that of the typical call volume.

This three-month period is when people nationwide can enroll for individual and family health insurance or change current plans for the following year.

But this year, things were different due to industry changes. Competitors passed on significant premium increases to their members for 2016 plans.

Also, only two companies — Avera and Sanford — offered plans this year on healthcare.gov.

This set the stage for large numbers of people to be out shopping for health insurance, with the potential for Avera Health Plans to experience a huge influx of new members. In fact, Avera Health Plans gained over 23,000 new members.

"As an agent I pride myself in being able to help members find the right plan for them or their family."

- KYLE TSCHETTER

"People faced the sticker shock of premium increases," said Debra Muller, Chief Administrative Officer at Avera Health Plans. "On our end, we wanted to be proactive rather than reactive."

This meant the hiring of additional employees

for increased activity in every area from the front lines of sales and customer service, to finance, benefits, collections and even nursing staff.

Kyle is the front line for Avera Health Plans. He is part of a growing team answering calls from current members and potential new members to answer questions and walk them through the enrollment process.

For Kyle, the challenge of finding a plan with benefits that also work for a person's budget is fulfilling. He's been with Avera for five years and previously worked at a credit card call center doing collections.

"This job is a lot less stressful and honestly makes me feel good to help people find the right insurance or help them with their benefits."

LIGHT Program Provides Well-being Resources, Strategies to Providers

WRITTEN BY BRYANN BECKER KNECHT

Avera is one of the first health care systems in the nation to offer a provider-focused well-being program.

The goal of the LIGHT program is to provide physicians, advanced practice providers and certified nurse practitioners with resources for well-being and strategies to optimize personal development and professional performance. LIGHT recently celebrated its first program year.

"The program has grown from focusing on burnout to offering a range of well-being strategies. We see the potential of the program in continuing to help providers sustain a fulfilling career

over their lifetime," said LIGHT Medical Director Jill Kruse, DO.

The program, which has been receiving national attention, has taken an innovative approach at its offerings. In its first year, LIGHT offered a range of well-being events and training, from on-site burnout prevention presentations to a retirement series and mindfulness training event. Looking ahead to 2016, LIGHT will offer new tools and events, such as developing a smart phone app and peer-to-peer coaching.

The goal of the LIGHT program is especially important as provider

burnout continues to rise. According to Medscape's Physician Lifestyle Report 2015, the number of physicians experiencing burnout has increased by 16 percent in the past two years. Now, 46 percent of all physicians report burnout.

"As we look at our mission, yes, we take care of patients and communities. It's important that we also take care of each other. We want to give our providers the resources that they need with all the changes going on in health care. If there ever was a time to focus on providers' well-being, it would be now," said Mary Wolf, LIGHT Program Director.

Peer Strategy Coaches

One program focus in 2016 will offer a wellness resource through peer strategy coaching. In January at least 10 providers were trained to be peer coaches. The peer coaches will provide much needed support to their colleagues regarding overall well-being.

"Research shows people reach out first to their peers for help. These coaches will provide easily accessible support

from someone who understands our culture and specific profession," Kruse said.

"The training gives physicians, certified nurse practitioners and physician assistants the tools they need to help colleagues in a way that is more goal-oriented, supportive and encouraging," said Wolf. She has obtained certification as an executive coach and also is a master certified coach trainer.

Contact LIGHT

605-322-HEAL

lightprogram@avera.org
http://knowledgenet/light-program

Medical Director: Jill Kruse, DO

Program Director:
Mary Wolf, MS, LPC-MH

BRINGING HEALTH TO YOU

Hy-Vee and Avera Work Together to Better Serve our Communities

WRITTEN BY CALE FELLER

One of Avera's recent partnerships is a glimpse into the future of health care.

Avera's partnership with Hy-Vee capitalizes on convenience by offering easy access to quality health care from Avera during a simple trip to the grocery store.

The retail location also allows Avera the opportunity to promote health and wellness to families through events like cooking classes and even fruit giveaways. Another aspect of this partnership is taking the initiative on the road with the Hy-Vee Healthy You Mobile powered by Avera.

"As we look ahead to the future of health care, access to convenient and affordable services will be more important than ever, as well as prevention. Avera is proud to be on the leading edge with new innovations, and we're pleased to work with Hy-Vee to offer more access points for the population we care for," said David Basel, MD, Vice President of Clinical Quality, Avera Medical Group.

Several Sioux Falls Hy-Vee locations have added AveraNow clinics, providing shoppers a convenient option to see a provider during their grocery store run.

AveraNow clinics offer real-time video visits with a provider for patients as young as 2 years old at clinic kiosks

located at Hy-Vee stores on South Minnesota, 10th and Cleveland, Empire Hy-Vee at 49th and Louise, and Kiwanis Avenue. The South Minnesota Hy-Vee has a live, in-person provider, as well as the kiosk option. Additional locations will be opening this fall at the South Sycamore and 26th and Marion locations.

"To be able to be seen at our AveraNow clinic at Hy-Vee, fill your prescription, get your over-the-counter products and grab a quick supper all in one stop is priceless to many busy families. We have all types of patients from young to elderly, single to large families, and many have expressed the value of the convenience and quality of our service,"



HY-VEE HEALTHY YOU MOBILE

The Hy-Vee Healthy You Mobile powered by Avera is a mini health fair on wheels, outfitted with two exam rooms to provide health information and screenings at events. Hy-Vee dietitians and pharmacists staff the vehicle and provide Avera-developed health and wellness information. The mobile unit also features information about Avera Health Plans.

The Hy-Vee Healthy You Mobile Powered by Avera is the second of eight sponsored units that Hy-Vee plans to add throughout its eight-state region over the next three years.

Access to quality care from Avera is more accessible than ever thanks to this expanded partnership.

For more information, visit Avera.org/now.

said BillieJo Baxa, PA-C, who is the provider at the South Minnesota location.

Real-time video visits also are available 24/7 via smartphone, laptop or tablet — providing an easy way for patients to recover from simple illnesses and to open the door to establishing a connection with an Avera provider.

Avera continues to look for ways to meet health care needs while promoting wellness. For example, Avera is hosting cooking classes with Hy-Vee chefs and dietitians. Avera has also coordinated an ongoing fruit giveaway for kids inside Hy-Vee stores, and more initiative are planned. This allows Avera to continue encouraging health and wellness, courtesy of Hy-Vee and AveraNow, noted Jessica Brovold, Avera Marketing Coordinator.

If you need emergency care, call 911.



WHAT DOES HEALTH CARE INNOVATION MEAN TO YOU?



WHAT HEALTH CARE INNOVATION AVAILABLE TODAY OR ON THE HORIZON WILL HAVE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE OR ON THE AREA OF HEALTH CARE IN WHICH YOU SPECIALIZE?



“Innovation in health care should focus on the patients we serve. How do we meet their needs and include them in their care? The traditional models of care need to be changed and expanded outside the walls of our hospitals and clinics.”

Tad Jacobs, DO
Chief Medical Officer, Avera Medical Group

“Health care innovation is most possible when we shake off old mental models, give every employee the right to fearlessly fail while consistently championing their efforts, and slip into the uncomfortable shoes of those we serve to gain a new perspective. Whether turning an old process on its head or creating a new product or service, innovation will bring us one step closer to improving the lives and health of those in our care.”



Julie Ward
Vice President, Innovation & Strategy, Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center

“Innovation in health care is about identifying the pain points and eliminating them. Patients have pain points they experience as they navigate their way through the complex world of health care. Avera staff, leaders and physicians have pain points in our own processes/systems that were designed for a model of health care delivery that no longer exists. Between our patients, their families and our employees, we have the smarts to address these pain points; however, we need to have a culture that supports innovation by providing the time, the resources, the space and the willingness to learn from failure.”



Mary Sand, PhD
Vice President, Avera Leadership & Organizational Development, Avera Health

“Health care innovation means effectively impacting the Triple Aim of better outcomes, lower cost and better experience of care. Additionally, it means addressing the needs of the population/community in a new way. As the entire country views health through a new lens, all entities will have to think differently about these concepts. This includes the individual, employers, payers, providers and communities, in my opinion.”



Mary Maertens
President and CEO, Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center

“Instead of brief clinic appointments with a physician and no real organization of an individual’s or a population’s health, we will see teams of health care providers caring for individuals and populations. Patients will be engaged, and there will be a comprehensive electronic record of all their health care that they carry with them, is accessible by all members of the health care team, is updated with every encounter, and is accurate. The electronic health record will be smart and identify the health care needs of each patient, and assist in making sure those needs are met by facilitating scheduling and education.”



Mikel D. Holland, MD
Avera Medical Group Pierre, and Chief Medical Officer, Avera St. Mary’s Hospital

“Telemedicine is something we can take into most any arena and provide innovation to achieve improved access to quality, cost-effective services. The second area is care coordination. We need to change the dynamic of how patients seek care. The access points are changing, but we need to educate patients that everyone needs a medical home/team. Once we have their buy-in, it will have a profound impact.”



Deb Fischer-Clemens
Senior Vice President, Public Policy, Avera Health

“The greatest area of opportunity on the horizon is in the study of human genomics. We are learning more everyday about how to treat, heal and prevent illness and injuries that are specific to each individual. A close second is the development of technology that will allow consumers to monitor their own health status, and notify health care providers when some type of intervention is necessary.”



Douglas Ekeren
Regional President and CEO, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

MISSION IN ACTION



SWAN SONGS PROGRAM BRINGS MUSICAL PERFORMANCES TO HOSPICE PATIENTS

WRITTEN BY NATHAN JOHNSON

For one fall afternoon, Elvis was back to being the “King of Rock ‘n’ Roll.”

But he wasn’t headlining at an arena; this concert took place in the intimate setting of a Sioux Falls townhome community room.

As Elvis (brought back to life by Harold Geist) wrapped up “(Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear,” he knelt down before a hospice patient in a wheelchair and handed her a stuffed teddy bear. Although she could not speak to thank him, it was clear to the family and friends surrounding her that she was grateful.

Every Swan Songs performance organized by Avera@Home is a little different, but there is one constant thread, according to Helen Block, Volunteer Coordinator for Avera@Home Hospice and Dougherty Hospice House.

“I have seen how much these concerts mean to the patients and their families,” she said.

Swan Songs is a non-profit organization founded in Austin, Texas, more than 10 years ago by musician Christine Albert. Local musicians fulfill the “last-wish concerts” of hospice patients. In addition to Elvis music, Swan Songs performances in Sioux Falls have featured polka and Beatles music.

Swan Songs was named after John Swann, the first terminally ill patient — and friend — for which Albert performed, and is also a reference to the ancient Greek belief that the Mute Swan only sings prior to its final moments.

Swan Songs came to Avera and Sioux Falls through the friendship Robin Prunty, Vice President of the Avera McKennan Foundation, developed with Albert and her husband, Chris Gage, a South Dakota native. Prunty and Cathy Kellogg, manager of Avera@Home Sioux Falls and Dougherty Hospice House, convinced Albert and the Swan Songs board of directors to allow Avera to be the organization’s first pilot program.

Miles and Lisa Beacom made a financial gift to get Swan Songs off the ground, and a September kick-off concert featuring Albert and Gage raised more than \$10,000. The goal is to expand Swan Songs to other Avera@Home communities and create a \$1 million endowment.

The Swan Songs concerts bring joy and good memories to patients and their loved ones during what are otherwise challenging times. “Increasingly, research shows brain function physically changes in response to music and helps ease pain and anxiety,” Kellogg said of the importance of music to the hospice ministry. “It can be so instrumental in getting patients in touch with their feelings and memories.”

YANKTON LTC STAFF GET CREATIVE TO REDUCE FALLS BY HUGE MARGIN

WRITTEN BY NATHAN JOHNSON

Through teamwork, innovation and a dedication to Avera’s mission, long-term care employees in Yankton have improved their Quality Indicator Measures for falls by 52 percent.

When too many residents were experiencing falls that resulted in major injuries, Avera Sister James Care Center (ASJCC) and Avera Yankton Care Center (AYCC) employees wanted to implement a plan to reduce such falls. Since this initiative began, AYCC staff and residents have moved into an ASJCC addition and are now part of that facility.

In 2013 a team was formed to focus on reducing the Quality Indicator Measure for falls from the 91st percentile to below the 75th percentile — the threshold that triggers a state audit during annual surveys. That plan included creative ideas such as purchasing inflatable camping mattresses to reduce falls out of bed.

“Our data at the time showed that we had 13 elders out of 193 who had fallen and received a major injury,” said Cindy Sage, Director of Nursing at ASJCC. “This was 6.7 percent of our residents. In comparison, the state average was 5.3 percent, and the national average was 3.4 percent. We knew we could do better and were determined to do what was necessary to improve our care.”

FOCUSED EFFORTS

The team generated a wide-range of solutions to reduce falls. They displayed educational posters, implemented post-fall “huddles” and convened education sessions. Red tape was put on the wheelchairs of residents who were at risk of falling so that employees knew they needed assistance.

They purchased preventive equipment, including anti-lock brakes for wheelchairs, proper-fitting shoes and slippers with traction on the soles and a camera to keep an eye on extremely restless residents. They also changed rounding requirements and encouraged staff to chart throughout the neighborhoods to better monitor residents.

These focused efforts achieved amazing results. “We had reduced the number of residents with a major injury from a fall to 2.2 percent over a two-year period (that concluded in spring 2015),” she said. “That compared to 5.2 percent for South Dakota and 3.4 percent nationally.”

This led their Quality Indicator Measure to fall from the 91st percentile to the 39th percentile. “This is a 52 percent improvement, and we have successfully sustained these results by remaining alert, identifying risks, conducting post-fall assessments and implementing changes as needed,” Cindy stated. “I’m so proud of the work our long-term care staff has done to improve care at our facilities.”

Doug Ekeren, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Regional President and CEO, recognized Avera Sister James Care Center employees involved in the effort to reduce falls: Alexis Schmidt, CNA; Stephanie Lange, RN, Household Coordinator; Linda Schweitzer, RN, Household Coordinator; and Cindy Sage, Director of Nursing.



COOKING CREATIVELY:

Easy Ways to Add Nutrition to Your Diet

WRITTEN BY **BRYANN BECKER KNECHT**

Learning to be creative in the kitchen with healthy foods can lead to better overall health. It can also help you stick to your healthy eating goals.

Start by trying a new healthy recipe or a low-sodium spice blend, or switching from white rice to whole grains. For example, quinoa, a protein-rich grain, has a nutty flavor and can be substituted for white rice.

“Look for whole foods and minimally processed items,” recommends Carri Lucas, RDN, LN, Clinical PCU Registered Dietitian for the Avera Heart Hospital of South Dakota.

Reinventing recipes by using healthier substitutes is one way you can cut calories and add nutrition to your diet.

It probably comes as no surprise that Carri has updated one of her family’s favorite recipes to be healthier. In a recipe for stuffed peppers, she added whole grains, and replaced half the meat and cheese in the original recipe with more vegetables. The recipe can be made with barley, couscous or brown rice, depending on taste preference.

Eating more whole grains and cutting back on processed foods may also help you reach your wellness goals. “Whole grains will help fill you up quicker — you may not feel the desire to eat as much as you used to,” Carri said. “Eating fresh fruits and vegetables and cutting out processed carbohydrates, like white breads and pastas, will help reduce inflammation in the body. You’ll feel better when you cut back on these processed carbohydrates and begin incorporating more whole grains and fiber.”

1

Instead of relying solely on salt for flavor, use herbs and spices, which have additional benefits without the high sodium levels. “They contain antioxidants, which can help prevent blockages in the arteries,” Carri said.

2

Use ground flaxseed to add a dose of omega-3 fats to your diet. The recommended intake is 1-2 tablespoons per day, Carri noted. Add flaxseed to casseroles, soups, chili or hot cereals.

3

Prepare vegetables in a different way: Buy a spiralizer, an inexpensive kitchen tool you can use to slice and add texture to vegetables like zucchini squash. Use the faux-noodles as a low-calorie alternative to pasta.

4

Experiment with your own recipe reinvention. For example, instead of using cream to thicken soups, try potato flakes. Low-fat or nonfat yogurt makes a great substitute for yogurt.

Share your healthy recipes on [WEave on KnowledgeNet](#).

TRY THESE HEALTHY IDEAS TO ADD NUTRITION INTO YOUR DIET.

Spice Guide

Follow this guide for food and spice pairings.

Basil:
eggs, fish, lamb, beef, stews, salads, soups and sauces

Bay leaves:
meat, stews, chicken, turkey, soups and tomatoes

Cilantro:
meat, chicken, fish, tomatoes, rice and pasta

Cinnamon:
fruit and bread

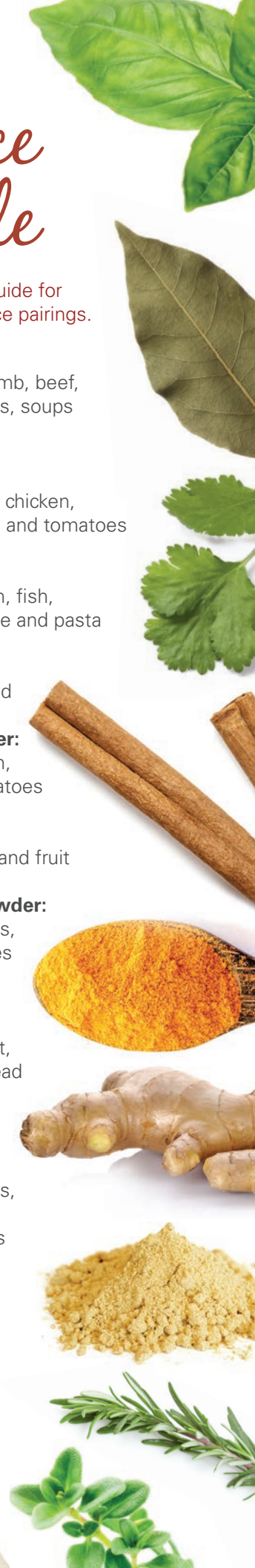
Curry powder:
meat, chicken, fish and tomatoes

Ginger:
chicken, fish and fruit

Mustard powder:
Ground meats, salads, sauces and potatoes

Rosemary:
chicken, meat, potatoes, bread and pasta

Thyme:
eggs, meat, sauces, soups, vegetables and tomatoes

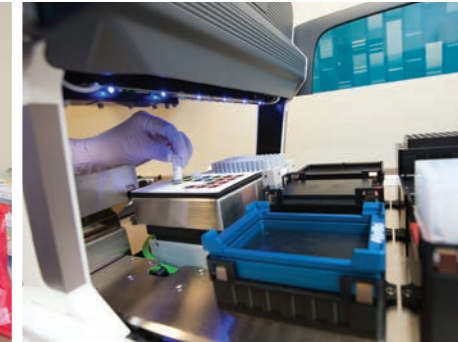


Facility Spotlight: AVERA INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN GENETICS



“What an honor it is to have worked with so many dedicated. Expanded space and the latest technology afford us the potential to further develop our genetics endeavors, in both clinical and research settings. Our updated facility and latest advanced sequencing equipment will elevate us to the next level in personalized medicine and genetic research.”

- RYAN HANSEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



WHAT'S NEW?

- Avera Institute for Human Genetics, 3720 W. 69th St. in Sioux Falls, has expanded its current laboratory space from 5,500 square feet to approximately 16,000 square feet.
- AIHG has expanded into space previously occupied by Avera Medical Group McHale Institute, which has moved to the Prairie Center.
- AIHG laboratory suites are each specially equipped to accommodate a part of the genetic analysis process, for example, extraction of nucleic acids, genotyping and DNA analysis.
- Expanded space allows more space for specialized freezers to store DNA samples, as well as meeting space and work area for students and visiting partners.

ABOUT AIHG

- AIHG is a molecular genetics laboratory that is home to the latest advanced sequencing equipment for genetic research and clinical personalized medicine.
- AIHG performs genetic testing on patients to assist clinicians in determining the most effective medications in their treatments.
- AIHG was founded in 2007, in a small two-room laboratory housed at the Avera Behavioral Health Center.

Over the past eight years, staff has grown from two to 23.

KEY COLLABORATIONS

- AIHG plays a vital role in the world's largest twin registry, the Netherlands Twins Register (NTR).
- NTR sends regular quarterly shipments of 400-700 collected cell samples. Avera scientists extract and test DNA from these samples.
- Currently, approximately 80,000 twin samples are stored at AIHG and hundreds of samples are received in quarterly shipments from the NTR or other collaborators.
- Twin studies provide insight into how genetics and environmental influences cause differences between individuals, including the development of disease or behavioral health conditions.
- AIHG also collaborates with MD Anderson and the Buffett Cancer Center, as well as several major institutions around the world.

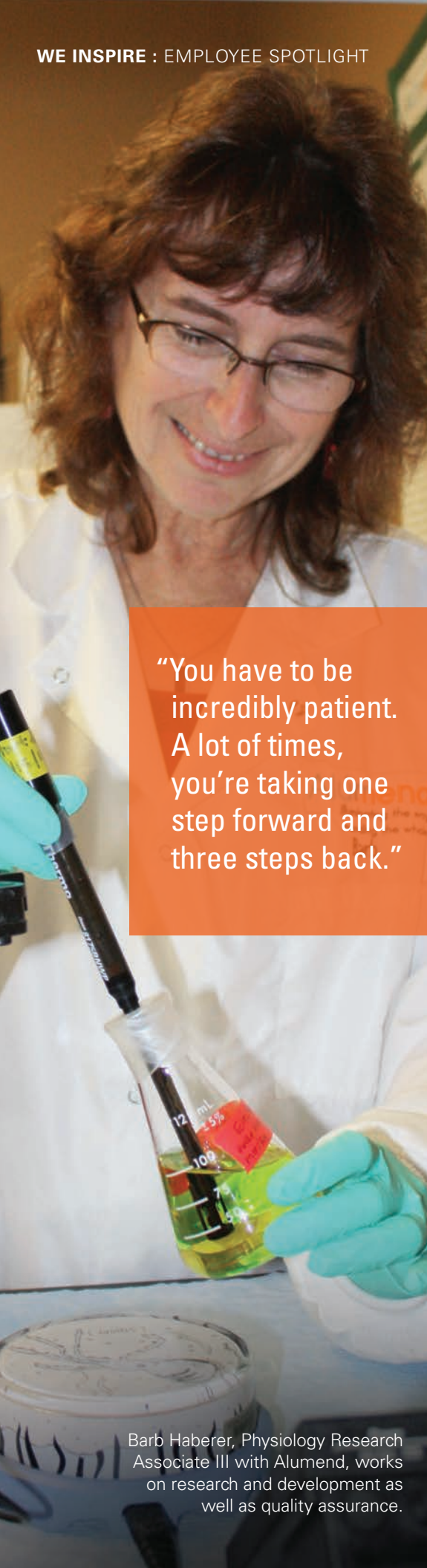
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: **23**

CITY: **SIoux FALLS, S.D.**

YEAR FOUNDED: **2007**

EMPLOYEE QUOTE: “The human population is different in terms of certain traits and diseases. Twins are invaluable in understanding how much of it is related to genetics and where in the genetic landscape are those differences that are driving those traits and diseases. We have leading world experts right here at Avera, and so we’re excited about the possibilities.”

- ERIK EHLLI, RESEARCH SCIENTIST



“You have to be incredibly patient. A lot of times, you’re taking one step forward and three steps back.”

Investment of Time, Talents Yields Research Innovation

WRITTEN BY DONNA FARRIS

If there’s anything she’s learned about research over the past 17 years, it’s that innovation doesn’t happen overnight, says Barb Haberer, Physiology Research Associate III with Alumend, a wholly owned medical device company owned by Avera.

Barb and the entire team at Alumend took a giant step forward recently when their product known as NVS — natural vascular scaffolding — began the process of Food and Drug Administration approval after nearly 20 years in development.

The invention of Ron Utecht, PhD, Scientific Director of Alumend, NVS is light-activated, chemical technology that can be used to treat arteries in people with peripheral arterial disease. After balloon angioplasty, the solution serves to reinforce artery walls and keep them open for adequate blood flow.

The treatment can replace that of a stent — a mesh framework placed in the artery. As a foreign body, a stent can create an immune response, causing scar tissue to grow. Also, over time, stents can crack, creating a ragged or sharp edge that can cut into the artery.

As a physiologist, it’s Barb’s job to figure out the effects of NVS on the human body, as well as safe ways to deliver the solution to arteries, and then expose it to blue light via catheters to activate the solution.

In addition to research and development, Barb works on quality assurance. She’s developed tests to ensure the product is consistent each time a new batch is manufactured.

Barb uses innovation in her everyday work, for example, developing new systems from parts and pieces of existing equipment, to avoid buying new when possible.

The work is far from complete, even now that the product is in the FDA approval process. “We have to prove the product is safe in a hundred different ways,” Barb said.

After the product goes to market, there are related products that will move from the back burner to the front.

“I find it rewarding, challenging, frustrating and wonderful all in one day,” Barb said. “Underlying it all, I want to be able to help people. When we get this product to market, it could prove to have huge health benefits.”

Barb Haberer, Physiology Research Associate III with Alumend, works on research and development as well as quality assurance.



Mike Speas, Plant Operations Supervisor; Julie Hoffmann, Administrator; Amy Hanselman, Director of Nursing; and Tom Steinfeld, Plant Operations, work at Avera Brady Health and Rehab in Mitchell.

Kicking the Comp Out of Work

WRITTEN BY TENILLE MANNING HEIER

At Avera, when an employee gets injured, the first priority is helping that employee get what he or she needs to return back to 100 percent. However, when an employee can’t work due to an injury, it can have a cascading effect. It often impacts other coworkers who need to cover that employee’s workload.

Avera Brady Health and Rehab in Mitchell had been experiencing a high number of work-related injuries and knew they needed to make changes.

“We wanted to protect our employees, as they are caregivers, whether in nursing, dietary, laundry, housekeeping or plant operations,” said Amy Hanselman, Director of Nursing.

The results speak for themselves. DART (Days Away Restricted Transferred) and work-related injuries at Avera Brady are now well below the national average, and the cost of workers’ compensation claims has decreased by almost \$41,000 in the past four years.

Long-term care workers are especially at risk of injury because of the repetitive nature of the work. “There is a lot of bending and lifting when caring for residents, and this can lead to the back and shoulder injuries that are frequently seen,” said Julie Hoffmann, Administrator at Avera Brady. “Even with the use of lifts and special assistive devices, employees are still bending, pulling and lifting, and employees are on their feet for long periods of time,” Amy said.

Avera Brady implemented many strategies. They updated equipment, provided training, implemented a 24-hour response time for any repairs needed within the facility, provided work site assessments by occupational therapy, and implemented assessments of physical demands so injured workers could return to work sooner in a modified capacity.

Increasing education was the most effective change. “We discuss safety at each staff meeting and discuss processes for fixing things that cause risk, and also give reminders appropriate to the situation. For example, reminding people about proper footwear, be it in the kitchen or outside on the icy sidewalks,” Julie said.

Avera Brady’s program has had a positive impact, and the program’s success goes back to the employees’ dedication. “Each department goes above and beyond on a daily basis to make this the great place that it is. It is evident they are truly here for the residents and not just for a job,” Julie said.

“Helping our employees stay safe helps us further our mission of making a positive impact on the lives of our residents,” Amy said.

Avera St. Mary's Blood Drive Stands as Example

WRITTEN BY AMANDA BACON

The first blood drive at Avera St. Mary's Hospital 13 years ago left a lasting impression on Plant Operations Assistant Jerrie Gosch. But not for the reasons you might think.



Left to Right: Cami Erickson, Jackie Protexter, Andi Bonham and Jerrie Gosch are the members of the blood drive committee at Avera St. Mary's. Not Pictured: Bonnie Rus

"It was just so hot," she recalled. "We had it in the fifth floor conference room. And there are all those windows up there and the sun was just blaring in. I was just so light-headed."

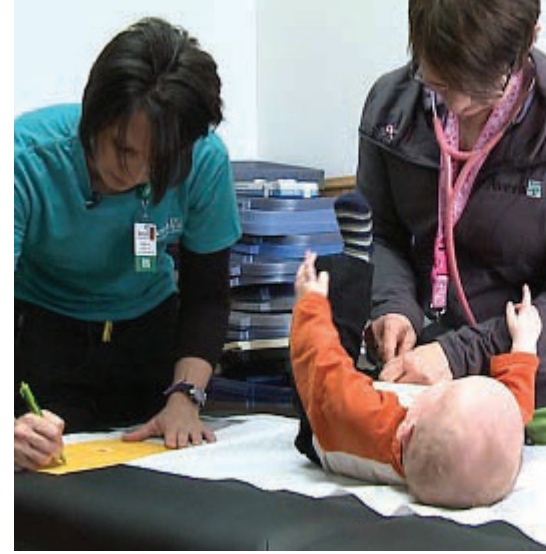
That was Jerrie's first and last attempt to give blood. But she gives back through a different way: Jerrie has organized nearly every blood drive at Avera St. Mary's since 2003.

Jerrie and a five-member committee organize three blood drives a year. The blood drives consistently produce a minimum 70 units of blood, and save the hospital roughly \$10,000 a year.

Abbie Gail Titze, Senior Donor Recruitment Representative for United Blood Services, says that makes Avera St. Mary's the best in her three-state region. "They are the example I hold out to everyone," she said. "What they accomplish as a hospital is simply not duplicated anywhere else in North Dakota, South Dakota or Wyoming."

The blood drives are held in February, June and October so regular donors can give each time United Blood Services comes to town. The team has the routine down to a science. Regular donors are called and booked as soon as the dates are on the calendar. "Regular donors want that phone call," said team member Bonnie Rus, who gave her 80th blood donation at the last drive.

The team also gives movie tickets to donors, and consistently captures new donors who make appointments online. The team also asks donors to fill out comment cards. The team looks at those comments, and has worked with United Blood Services to tailor the entire blood drive to what works best for this group of committed donors and health care workers.



Nurse Kerri Lutjens, RN, and Mary Schaefer, Physician Assistant, deliver care to patients in the Tschetter Hutterite Colony near Olivet, S.D.



Melissa Gale, Michele Radack and Ember Dale bring healthy lifestyles into the classroom.

Bringing Health Care to the Hutterite Colonies

WRITTEN BY ALYSSA KUECKER

Avera St. Benedict Health Center in Parkston, S.D., is bringing services and education to people in seven Hutterite colonies, the Parkston School and the Lake Andes School, through a project called Community Partners in Prevention. This project won a 2015 Quality Congress Award in the Caring With Collaboration category.

Kerri Lutjens, RN, and Mary Schaefer, PA, travel to surrounding Hutterite colonies to provide needed health care services to the men, women and children who live there.

"The Hutterite colonies are part of the Avera St. Benedict community," Kerri said. "That's why we feel so strongly about caring for them."

Initiated in 2013, the outreach clinic first focused on simple blood draws and immunizations. Today, Hutterite residents have access to well-child visits, services for chronic disease management, and preventive care and screenings — all without leaving their home.

The effect has been substantial. Before, only 13 percent of Hutterite children were immunized. Now, more than 90 percent are protected. Colonies as a whole have a greater understanding of practicing healthy standards in their close-knit community.

Providing these outreach services relates to the Avera mission in every way. We're bringing the care to them.

- MELISSA GALE, LPC-MH, QMHP

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN

A similar collaborative effort involves Melissa Gale, LPC-MH, QMHP, Behavioral Health Specialist; Michele Radack, RDN, Dietitian; and Ember Dale, ATC, Certified Personal Trainer, who are hosting wellness programs at the Parkston and Lake Andes schools for fourth and fifth graders.

"At this age, kids are making more choices," Melissa said. "When you expose them to healthy habits, they get the sense that this affects their future — and then they feel a little more grown up."

The curriculum features hands-on activities that promote healthy eating, exercise and stress management. They also screen for mental health disorders, such as depression.

Serving local children and witnessing their growth has been rewarding for Melissa. Likewise, the students, teachers and families have had an overwhelmingly positive response to the program.

JUST A MAN AND HIS SHOVEL:

Avera Employee Turns Frustration into Innovation

WRITTEN BY BRITTANY GADES

Several Internet searches, eight prototypes, one patent and a little over a year later, Jeff Hermanson, Biomedical Technician at Avera Health, found his snow-pushing solution.

Jeff's Shuvalot shovel shows how innovation can be born out of frustration. He thought of the idea when he was looking for a shovel to clear a few inches of snow, but he didn't want to fire up the snowblower.

The Shuvalot, which has two handles with a wheel on each handle, is designed with a blade that changes angles on the fly and will push snow into a pile. "I figure my snow-pusher-on-wheels can do anything that others out there can do, but no one else's can do everything mine can do. It's handy," he said.

As part of this venture, Jeff wears many hats. He is part engineer, assembler, marketer, accountant, web developer, warehouse, and sales and customer service to the over 450 units sold. He says that the commitment to caring for people he sees daily at Avera helps drive his customer service. Jeff will personally



"I got excited about the last few prototypes and would push snow from the grass back onto my driveway so I could test them."

- JEFF HERMANSON, BIOMEDICAL TECHNICIAN

deliver Shuvalots purchased in the Sioux Falls area and teach the buyer how to use it, and if needed, he will fix something that breaks at no charge.

Through his job in BioMed, Jeff has had the opportunity to view how other machines are built both electronically and mechanically. This knowledge helped him with the Shuvalot, as well as other innovations. With a full-time job, wife, Barb, and four kids — one of whom named the Shuvalot during a family brainstorm — time to build,

market and sell these units is at a premium. So is garage space.

"It takes away my couch time, and it would be nice to have my garage back," Jeff said. But even if his dream of selling the patent and production rights to another company come true, Hermanson said he would still keep working at Avera. "I've got a great life now, so whatever happens, happens. But I might buy an RV to travel if there's enough."



Bruce Geist used a type of woodcraft called intarsia to create this horned owl piece. No stain or color was used in this model.

HOBBY BECOMES A PASSION FOR WOODWORKING

WRITTEN BY RICHELLE BRAUN

It began in elementary school when he carved a simple image of leaves and a bird into a piece of found driftwood. This piece is still displayed in the home workshop of Bruce Geist, who has worked as an ultrasound technician for 28 years at Avera St. Luke's Hospital.

Over time, Bruce has filled his home and yard with projects he created by hand out of wood. His passion for woodcraft continues to evolve. After building his current home, Bruce found his inspiration, and woodworking has become an outlet for his creativity. He creates most pieces for family and friends.

He created many of his earlier designs using tools to carve intricate patterns or burn designs into solid pieces of wood. As he honed his craft he began to explore new methods of creating three-dimensional landscapes, intricate wall art, and detailed carvings including a complete chess set, which is displayed on his family coffee table.

His home workshop is outfitted with large handcrafted cabinets, and is well stocked with hand tools, sanders and various types of saws. Along the back wall rests a variety of slabs of wood. He gathers the wood through various ways — some are purchased locally while others are found or donated, and some are purchased from different states. He has wood in various colors, even including a purple slab.

For the past few years, Bruce has developed a passion for creating original pieces using intarsia, which is a form of wood inlaying made by applying different types of wood to a structure to form decorative patterns, designs or pictures. The finished pieces capture the distinctive qualities of a variety of hardwoods from across the world.



Bruce Geist created this three-dimensional design by using a scroll saw to cut the intricate designs and stack several pieces of wood together.

His appreciation for the medium is apparent when he describes why he selects each type of wood. "Sometimes I use different techniques like wood burning or stain to create the right texture I am looking for, but sometimes the natural beauty of the wood lends itself to the design," said Bruce. "Since there is a limited supply of what I can get locally, I often travel to other places to find exactly what I am looking for."

Lately, Bruce has taken on winter projects that bring him inside from his unheated shop. "I like to work with wood burning in the winter because I can do that inside, and my next shop will definitely be heated."

Live better.
Live balanced.

WEave

WEave, a new initiative of the “Live Better Live Balanced” campaign, is a common space for employees across Avera to come together. Share your answers to fun questions and interact with other employees.

To join in, visit KnowledgeNet and click on the “WEave” banner.

To Your Health

To Your Health continues to celebrate five years of making a difference within the Avera population. Many resources and programs are available to benefits-eligible employees on the To Your Health website, including Walk This Way. More than 4,400 employees and spouses are registered for the current Walk This Way challenge. As a group, participants have tracked over 1.8 billion steps.

Visit

Avera.org/EmployeeWellness to register and learn more. Registration closes May 2, 2016.

People NEWS

Leadership on the Move

Bob Sutton is the Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer for Avera Health. Most recently Sutton served as Regional President and CEO of the Avera St. Mary’s region, which includes operations for Avera St. Mary’s Hospital, Avera Gettysburg Hospital, two long-term care facilities and a multi-specialty clinic. Bill McLean, Avera’s Senior Vice President, Human Resources, retired Feb. 1. Todd Forkel, CEO of Avera St. Luke’s Hospital, is serving as interim CEO for Avera St. Mary’s Hospital. Geoff Durst, Chief Financial Officer at Avera St. Luke’s, is also serving as the CFO at Avera St. Mary’s. Ellen Lee, Vice President of Foundation for Avera St. Mary’s, assumed the same role for Avera St. Luke’s.

Jonathan Moe has accepted the position of Chief Executive Officer of Tyler Healthcare Center Avera. In this position, Moe will also function as the licensed nursing home administrator for Sunrise Manor.

Judy Blauwet is the Chief Clinicals Information Officer for Avera Health. She most recently served as Avera McKennan Hospital’s Senior Vice President for Hospital Operations. In this new position, she provides clinical leadership and oversight for a successful implementation of the new Meditech 6.1 EMR as well as for technology integration.

New Providers

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

Avera Colleagues in the news:

Barb Malmberg, RN, Nurse Manager of the Avera@Home program based at Avera St. Anthony’s Hospital in O’Neill, was recognized as one of the top home-health nurses in the nation. Meditech named Malmberg one of the Top 50 Home Health Nurses in the U.S. Malmberg has worked in home health for 25 years.

The Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA) recognized Nancy Moss, LPN at Avera St. Anthony’s Hospital, and Amy Borgmann, PA at Avera Creighton Hospital, as “The Caring Kind” award recipients. In addition, Sarah Fanta, CNA at Avera Creighton Care Centre, was honored as a nominee for the Nebraska Nursing Facility Association’s “Health Care Hero Award” in September.

Rachael Sherard, Senior Vice President of Rural Health Institute, has been appointed to a three-year term on the Great Plains Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. The Advisory Council provides information to the Federal Reserve Bank President and senior economists on the status of the economy in the Federal Reserve’s Ninth District, which includes Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana, northwestern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Lindsey Meyers, Vice President of Public Relations at Avera Health, was named on the annual 40 Under 40 list by Prairie Business magazine. This list features 40 of the top business professionals under the age of 40 in the Northern Plains. These 40 inspiring and dedicated professionals come from a wide range of industries and have made significant impacts in their chosen professions, industries and communities.

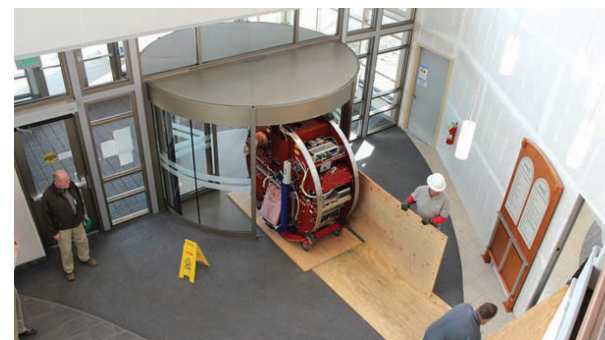
System NEWS

DAKOTACARE Joins Avera:

Health has purchased DAKOTACARE. With its ownership of Avera Health Plans and DAKOTACARE, Avera is now the second largest health insurer in South Dakota. Avera is operating Avera Health Plans and DAKOTACARE as two separate organizations.

Hospitals receive CT scanners:

Thirty-seven critical access hospitals, including Avera Creighton Hospital, Avera Gettysburg Hospital and Avera Weskota Memorial Hospital, will receive computer tomography (CT) scanners through donated funds from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. The Rural Healthcare Program of the Helmsley Charitable Trust is granting nearly \$14 million to support the purchase of new, 32-slice or higher CT scanners at critical access hospitals in a seven-state region.



Helmsley Gift:

Avera Cancer Institute Aberdeen has received a \$3.4 million from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to purchase a fully digital Elekta Infinity™ linear accelerator for its new home in the Don and Carmen Meyer Center of Excellence. By replacing out-of-date equipment installed in 2003, the new linear accelerator will allow Avera Cancer Institute Aberdeen to provide a full range of radiation oncology services that are tailored for each individual.

Policy Update

There are several updates about Medicaid in both South Dakota and Iowa, with the 2016 state legislative sessions.

In South Dakota, the Governor and his staff assembled the South Dakota Health Care Solutions Coalition, whose purpose was to develop strategies to improve health outcomes and to increase the 100 percent federally funded health care access for individuals eligible for Medicaid and Indian Health Services or tribal health services in South Dakota, and to use those savings to expand Medicaid to the entire eligible population. The group of stakeholders included several representatives from Avera.

South Dakota State Medical Association and South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations are supporting the plan proposed by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which would allow the state to recoup significant dollars and to expand Medicaid coverage to all South Dakotans up to 138 percent of Federal Poverty Level at no additional cost to the state.

In Iowa, the Governor and his staff have been working to transform the current Medicaid programs into a Medicaid Managed Care model. Here are a few important updates:

- CMS issued a notice to the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise regarding major concerns CMS has around the implementation timeframes for the transition to managed care and the risk this may place on access, continuity of care and quality of care for beneficiaries. Before CMS will approve the transition, the state must prove that its provider network is more robust and they must enhance their communications with both providers and beneficiaries.
- The Iowa Hospital Association, along with several Prospective Payment System hospitals in the state, have filed a petition asking for a Declaratory Judgment and Injunctive Relief relating to the Hospital Provider Assessment program that utilizes a tax on hospitals to increase federal Medicaid dollars.

For policy updates in all of our states, visit the Public Policy page on KnowledgeNet.

For more People News and System News, visit

KnowledgeNet.

AVERA SERVICE LINE *Leadership*

Avera Medical Group Behavioral Health

Matthew Stanley, DO, Clinical Vice President, Behavioral Health
Mary Maertens, President/CEO, Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center

Avera Medical Group Oncology

Dave Kapaska, DO, President/CEO, Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center
David Elson, MD, Interim Clinical Vice President
Michael Peterson, MD, Interim Clinical Vice President

Avera Medical Group Emergency Medicine

Jared Friedman, MD, Clinical Vice President, Emergency Medicine
Doug Ekeren, President/CEO, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Avera Medical Group Obstetrics & Gynecology

Kimberlee McKay, MD, Clinical Vice President, OB/GYN
Tom Clark, President/CEO, Avera Queen of Peace Hospital

Avera Medical Group Radiology

Brad Paulson, MD, Interim Clinical Vice President
Todd Forkel, President/CEO, Avera St. Luke's Hospital

Avera Medical Group Primary Care

Rich Kafka, MD, Interim Clinical Vice President
Tad Jacobs, DO, Chief Medical Officer
Dave Flicek, Chief Administrative Officer

Avera Medical Group Laboratory

Bruce Prouse, MD, Interim Clinical Vice President
Mary Maertens, President/CEO, Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center

Avera Medical Group Nephrology

Robert Santella, MD, Interim Clinical Vice President
Dave Kapaska, DO, President/CEO, Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center

Avera Medical Group Hospitalist

Joseph Rees, DO, Interim Clinical Vice President
Todd Forkel, President/CEO, Avera St. Luke's Hospital, and Interim President/CEO, Avera St. Mary's Hospital

Avera Medical Group Cardiology

Michael Hibbard, MD, Interim Clinical Vice President
Jon Soderholm, President/CEO, Avera Heart Hospital of South Dakota

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

Kudos!

AveraNow Accreditation:

The American Telemedicine Association (ATA) has awarded Accreditation for Online Patient Consultations to Avera for the new AveraNow service, which Avera launched in June 2015. The ATA accreditation program recognizes U.S. health care entities that are providing real-time, online consultations directly to the patient that meet specific standards.

Fit-Friendly Worksite:

The American Heart Association has once again recognized Avera as a Fit-Friendly organization at the Platinum Award level. This accomplishment reflects Avera's commitment to improving the health of our employees. This is the third year in a row that Avera has received recognition at the Platinum level.

Wellness Frontiers Award:

Avera eCARE™ received the prestigious Wellness Frontiers Award from The Healthcare Leadership Council. The Wellness Frontiers Award is a national honor that recognizes evidence-based wellness programs that prevent disease and improve the well-being of a population. The goal of the award is to promote best practices and draw attention to existing wellness initiatives that demonstrate excellence and quality.

Joint Commission Distinction:

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital and Avera Queen of Peace Hospital earned the 2014 Top Performer on Key Quality Measures®. The hospitals are the only two hospitals in South Dakota to receive this distinction. Avera Sacred Heart was recognized for achievement in pneumonia, surgical care and immunization measure sets. Avera Queen of Peace was recognized for achievement in pneumonia, surgical care and venous thromboembolism measure sets.

HIMSS:

The HIMSS Analytics Stage 7 Award honors hospitals operating in a paperless environment and representing best practices in implementing EMR. HIMSS Analytics awarded Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center with a Stage 7 Award. The award represents Community Healthcare System's attainment of the highest level on the Electronic Medical Record Adoption Model™ (EMRAM).

Becker's Hospital Review:

Two Avera hospitals have been named to recent Becker's Hospital Review lists. Avera McKennan was named in Becker's 2015 edition of "100 hospitals with great women's health programs." Avera McKennan is the only hospital in South Dakota named to the list, and this is the second year in a row that Avera McKennan received this recognition for its women's program. Avera Queen of Peace Hospital was named to the list of 52 hospitals with the lowest all-cause unplanned readmission rates, and was the only South Dakota hospital named to this list.

Bricks and Mortar

Avera St. Luke's Unveils Don and Carmen Meyer Center of Excellence:

A series of grand opening events attracting nearly 1,000 visitors was held Jan. 20-21 for the Don and Carmen Meyer Center of Excellence on the Avera St. Luke's Hospital campus. The new facility will house Avera Cancer Institute Aberdeen and will offer 23 chemotherapy stations in a combination of private, semi-private and open group settings, as well as radiation therapy. Installation of a new, fully digital Elekta Infinity linear accelerator is in process and will be fully operational in March.

Avera Cancer Institute is designed to provide patients with highly coordinated care, making the most of the expertise specialists provide in key service areas. The new 29,000-square-foot patient-centered facility will bring all aspects of cancer treatment together, offering expanded services, attracting cancer specialists to the area and solidifying the reputation of Avera St. Luke's as a regional cancer treatment hub.



Multiple Events Planned to Celebrate Opening of Avera Grassland Health Campus:

The opening of the Avera Medical Group Family Health Center on the Avera Grassland Health Campus will be a historic milestone for the Avera Queen of Peace region. This beautiful new building, situated along I-90 in Mitchell, will be home to several clinics as well as a drive-through pharmacy.

A series of events has been planned to celebrate the opening. A public open house will be held 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. on March 6. A special all-staff open house for all Avera employees will be from 4-8 p.m. on March 7. Additionally, a private Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting and Reception will be held from 4-7 p.m. on March 10, as an opportunity for area business leaders, local government officials and Avera Health leadership to tour the building. During the week of March 7-11, the Grassland Building will host various service club meetings.



Avera Yankton Care Center Completes Move:



Krysta Anson, a Household Guide, prepares resident Marilyn Perry to leave the Avera Yankton Care Center for her new room at the Avera Sister James Care Center.



Resident Hilda Raymond is checked in by Pam Rezac and Mike Healy after arriving at the Avera Sister James Care Center. She is flanked by move day volunteers Sr. Julie Peak (left) and Nancy Johnson.

COMBAT THE Winter BLUES

WRITTEN BY BRYANN BECKER KNECHT

In the Midwest, we often pride ourselves on making it through extreme winters, even if it's painful.

Six inches of snow and 45 mph winds? We just grin and bear it — and maybe put on another pair of wool socks.

But when it comes to feeling depressed during the wintertime, you don't need to suffer. "There are things you can do to help," said Larry Ling, CSW-PIP, Clinical Therapist, Avera Behavioral Outpatient Services.

During winter, more people often report feeling depressed and tired. Whether it's the "winter blues" or seasonal affective disorder (SAD) — a form of depression that is often attributed to seasonal light variation — there are ways to manage your symptoms. It can be as simple as joining a gym for the dual benefits of exercising and socializing.

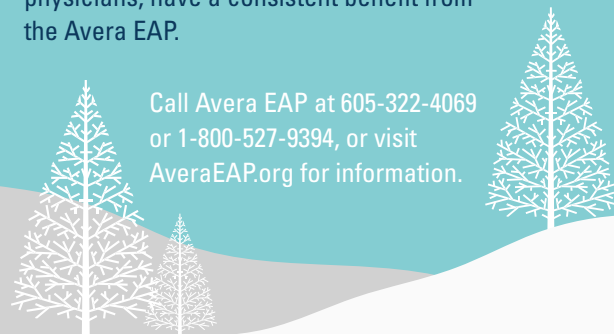
Take it from Ling, a California guy who now lives in South Dakota. "The weather is a major change for me. I decided I'm not going to be that person who sits in the house all winter and gets miserable," he said.

Instead, you might find Ling at a basketball or hockey game. Activities like these will give you social interaction — and get you out of house. He also uses a light therapy lamp for about 20 to 25 minutes a day. It can be a good option if you work inside all day. The lamp emits UV lights that simulate light at similar levels as you would get from the sun.

Four strategies to manage seasonal blues:

- 1. Exercise.** Exercise and sunshine are the best antidotes to the winter blues. It's not only the endorphins and physical benefits you'll get from it, but the social aspect too. Even if you're not exercising outside, you'll still gain benefits. "Exercise is a major antidepressant for some people," Ling said.
- 2. Seek out social activities.** It's easy to become isolated during the winter, but look for ways to get face-to-face social interaction, which will help improve your mood. Remember that social media isn't a substitute for the real thing. Meet up with friends and go to the movies, a sporting event or the mall — anything in-person counts.
- 3. Go outside.** Get any sunlight that you can during the day. Bundle up and go for a quick walk over your lunch break. Or, if you're feeling more adventurous, try outdoor winter activities like cross-country skiing.
- 4. Seek out help.** Notice any changes in how you're feeling during the winter. Be sure to talk with your provider about any serious symptoms of depression. Avera Employee Assistance (EAP) services are also available. All Avera regional facility employees, including employed physicians, have a consistent benefit from the Avera EAP.

Call Avera EAP at 605-322-4069 or 1-800-527-9394, or visit AveraEAP.org for information.



WHAT IS SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER?

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is characterized by the onset of depression during the winter months, when there is less natural sunlight. The depression generally lifts during spring and summer. (Source: National Institute of Mental Health)

SAD affects about half a million people every winter between September and April, according to Mental Health America. It peaks in December, January and February.



Reflection



Sr. Lucille is Chair of the Avera System Members and is Vice President of the Presentation Sisters. She has worked as the administrator of long-term care facilities and is still a licensed administrator. She also serves on several boards of directors for Avera facilities.

When they recognized him, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought to him all those who were sick and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak, and as many as touched it were healed.

Matthew 14:34-35

Counting our blessings

As we begin a new year it is always a good practice to count the blessings we received last year. As a ministry Avera was richly blessed in 2015. People trusted us to meet their health care needs more than 2 million times. That is 2 million encounters to fulfill our mission and be the caring hands of Jesus. Each of us, no matter our role, does have an impact on our mission. The sponsors, the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters, are thankful for your dedication and service during the past year.

Recently, I spent time in the Holy Land and visited many of the holy sites and shrines of our Christian heritage. What a privilege to be able to be surrounded by the places where it all began. Places where Jesus may have walked. Or where, 2,000 years ago, people would have been searching for Jesus and may have wanted him to cure them or care for them. This pilgrimage to the Holy Land gave me inspiration and deepened my faith.

During the time that Jesus lived in the Holy Land, his ways were often innovative and caused people to pause and look at themselves and others differently. Avera is working on many innovative initiatives and changing the way people care for others and the way we work together. During this next year, I know that Avera will continue to be innovative and discover new approaches to fulfilling our mission.

May God bless Avera — employees, doctors, patients and residents — as we continue the healing ministry of Jesus.

Sr. Lucille Welbig, PBVM

2016

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.

Brain and Spine Conference

March 11, Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Sioux Falls

Transplant Symposium

March 31, Prairie Center on the campus of Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, Sioux Falls

Rural Leadership Conference

March 31, Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Sioux Falls

Avera Children's Pediatric Symposium

April 8, Sr. Colman Room, Prairie Center on the campus of Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, Sioux Falls

Avera McKennan Trauma Symposium

April 13, Sioux Falls Convention Center

Difficult Airways Course

April 15, Holiday Inn Downtown Sioux Falls

Avera McKennan Diabetes Conference

April 15, Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Sioux Falls

Avera Medical Group Service Line Summit

April 21-22, Sioux Falls Convention Center

Avera Caring Professionals Conference

May 5, Holiday Inn City Centre

North Central Heart Vascular Symposium

May 6, Sioux Falls Convention Center

Avera PACE Conference

May 11, Sioux Falls Ramkota

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**.