

CENTRA CARE Health System

SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTH

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Healthily ever after
Faster transfer saves patients' lives

Help is a
heartbeat away

Central Minnesota Heart Center
specializes in treating heart failure

healthily ever after

Faster transfer saves patients' lives



On July 3, 2005, after attending a family reunion, Susan Merchant, 58, from Clear Lake, felt nauseated as she was getting ready for bed.

“I thought it was something I ate,” Merchant said. “I had overwhelming nausea and thought I had food poisoning.”

Her husband, Dan, was concerned and wanted to call the Emergency Trauma Center (ETC) at St. Cloud Hospital. Susan, a registered nurse at a local clinic, discouraged him because she was not having typical pain that goes with a heart attack. Dan called the ETC anyway.

Within a half hour, a Gold Cross ambulance was transporting her to the ETC. The electrocardiogram on the way to the hospital showed she was having a heart attack.

After arriving at St. Cloud Hospital, Merchant was rushed to the cardiac catheterization lab in the Central Minnesota Heart Center. Interventional Cardiologist Richard Aplin, M.D., found a 90 percent blockage of her right coronary artery. The artery was quickly opened with balloon angioplasty, and a stent was placed in the artery to restore blood flow to the heart.

“It’s amazing how such a minimally invasive procedure can save a life,” Merchant said.

Merchant was discharged from the hospital 48 hours later.

The Central Minnesota Heart Center’s rapid transfer program saves lives. The program is called STEMI-SC for ST elevation myocardial infarction-St. Cloud (the medical terminology for heart attack). One phone call to the STEMI-SC number triggers a step-by-step protocol that results in prompt transfer of heart attack victims to one of five cardiac catheterization laboratories within the Central Minnesota Heart Center.

“The quicker we can get the patient into the cath lab and get the artery open, the better,” said Aplin, coordinator of the STEMI-SC program. “Quicker transport and care helps save heart muscle and save lives.”

Once the call is placed, an experienced medical team of five is summoned immediately and assembled in the lab within minutes. A team is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Eight interventional cardiologists participate in the program.

“Staff doesn’t get any better than this,” Aplin said. “They devote their lives and are totally dedicated



Susan Merchant enjoys the snow with her granddaughter Kira Erickson.

Can we talk?

Clinical research advances medicine and technology

to this program. Each team is highly trained, and that helps accomplish our goals of timely and excellent care.”



Richard Aplin, M.D.

Since the formal program began in 2004, more than 900 heart attack patients have been

transferred to Central Minnesota Heart Center from 27 referral hospitals within 100 miles of St. Cloud. Since then, the overall in-hospital mortality rate has decreased dramatically and one-year survival rates of patients maintained with the STEMI-SC registry is greater than 95 percent.

After six weeks, Merchant went back to work full time and life returned to normal.

Now Merchant is retired and spends her time with Kira, her 3-year-old granddaughter, gardening, hiking, snowshoeing, swimming and enjoying life.

“I feel better now than before I had my heart attack,” she said. “I am able to do all the things I love and have no permanent heart damage due to the quick response from the STEMI-SC team from the Central Minnesota Heart Center. I am blessed to be given the chance to be here for my family,” she said. “Especially for Kira.”

The award-winning Central Minnesota Heart Center at St. Cloud Hospital takes a leading role in cardiovascular research. The Heart Center participates in clinical research studies (also called clinical trials) to help advance the treatment of heart disease and to provide patients with high-quality, innovative medical care.

Louis (Cliff) Grosberg, 57, Sauk Rapids, is a retired physics teacher from St. Cloud Apollo High School who participates in the PRECISION Study. This study will provide information doctors need to choose the most appropriate pain reliever for patients who have or are at high risk for heart disease and who have osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis.

“I’ve participated in several studies at the Heart Center,” Grosberg said. “I know you don’t further science without research, and I’m more than willing to help out. It’s a win for everybody. With research comes better technology and medicine, which benefits patients.”

The Heart Center, in conjunction with the CentraCare Clinic - River Campus Rheumatology department, is conducting research that could help arthritis sufferers all over the world. Working in partnership with the Cleveland Clinic, Central Minnesota Heart Center is recruiting participants for the international PRECISION Study, which will compare Celebrex, Ibuprofen and Naproxen and their effects on patients with heart disease.




Bernard Erickson, M.D.

“This is the first study that actually looks at the effects of these medications on heart disease,” said Bernard

Erickson, M.D., director of clinical research at the Central Minnesota Heart Center. “The study is trying to get to the truth about what is best for heart patients with arthritis.”

Carefully conducted clinical trials are the fastest and safest way to find treatments that work and ways to improve health. Participants in clinical trials can play a more active role in their own health care, gain access to new research treatments before they are widely available and help others by contributing to medical research.

“Patients get even better follow-up care by participating in clinical trials,” said Alisse Amundson, R.N., research nurse at the Central Minnesota Heart Center. “Not only is the patient’s doctor following up, but so is the research team. We really get to know our patients and work closely with them.”

Numerous studies are in progress at the Central Minnesota Heart Center.  Learn more about heart research at www.centracare.com/community.

10 Positive Ways to Control Blood Pressure

Know your blood pressure. Have it checked regularly.

Take your medicine exactly as prescribed. Don't run out of pills even for a single day.

Know what your weight should be. Keep it at or below that level.

Keep appointments with your doctor.

Don't use too much salt in cooking or at meals. Avoid salty foods.

Follow your doctor's advice about physical activity.

Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole-grain, high-fiber foods.

Make certain family members have their blood pressure checked regularly.

Don't have more than one drink a day if you're a woman or two a day if you're a man.

Live a normal life in every other way.

Following the recommendations of your health care professionals is essential to lowering your high blood pressure. > Visit www.centracare.com/community for facts, tips and tools.



Stories from the Heart

A variety of women will share their personal encounters with heart disease at this special dinner presentation from 6-8 p.m. Feb. 11 at St. Cloud's Radisson Suite Hotel. Learn how a woman's heart is unique and how to prevent heart disease in your life. We encourage you to wear red to the event. Tickets are \$25 and available at St. Cloud Hospital's Gift Gallery and Women & Family Specialty Center at CentraCare Health Plaza through Feb. 4. Call (320) 229-5139 for more information. Sponsored by CentraCare Women's Health Education and Central Minnesota Heart Center.

Dr. Richard Collins – The Cooking Cardiologist



Sample the cuisine of Richard Collins, M.D, and hear his message about the prevention and reversal of heart disease through changes in diet and lifestyle from

7-8:30 p.m. Feb. 26 in the Windfeldt Room at CentraCare Health Plaza. Doors open at 6 p.m. His creativity in the kitchen is legendary, and his delicious, heart-healthy recipes have established him as a popular chef on television and at cooking demonstrations coast to coast. The \$10 tickets are available at St. Cloud Hospital's Gift Gallery, Byerly's service desk, Cash Wise Video Department and Coborn's Superstore Sauk Rapids service counter. This event is sponsored by Central Minnesota Heart Center.

Help is a heartbeat away

*Central Minnesota Heart Center specializes
in treating heart failure*

Richard Prom was born with a heart defect and has battled heart problems all of his 74 years. In 2006, after the St. Cloud man was told his heart was failing, he enrolled in the Heart Failure Management Program at the Central Minnesota Heart Center at St. Cloud Hospital.

“This is a great service for patients,” Prom said. “I know if I’m having a problem, I can always call and get advice from Dona, the nurse who works in the heart failure program. It’s a relief to know there’s always someone there who can help.”

The heart failure program features a team of specialists, consisting of a cardiologist, a nurse practitioner, registered nurses and other consulting specialists who diagnose, treat and follow-up with patients.




Tim Schuchard, M.D. said Tim Schuchard, M.D., cardiologist specializing in heart failure disease management. “It allows us the ability to provide our heart failure patients with the highest quality care.”

“Our heart failure program uses a patient and family approach to manage the disease in the home setting,” said Dona Bloch, R.N., cardiology practice nurse. “Our program improves patients’ quality of life by educating them and those who support them on how best to live with heart failure. We are available to patients whenever they need assistance, whether it is by phone or a clinic visit.”

The Heart Failure Management Program uses the latest research to manage heart failure. As a member of the Minnesota Heart Failure Consortium, the program actively takes part in research studies with many other hospitals. When standard therapies have been tried without success, this research program allows patients to try experimental therapies unavailable elsewhere.

“With our association with the Minnesota Heart Failure Consortium, we have access to new technology and therapies that wouldn’t have been available to our patients in the past,” said Schuchard, who is the newest member of the Minnesota Heart Failure Consortium board.

For more information about the Heart Failure Management Program, please call (320) 656-7020 or (800) 448-3455 or  visit www.centracare.com/community.

What is heart failure?

Heart failure is the fastest growing heart problem in the United States. About five million Americans suffer from the disease and it is the No. 1 reason people ages 65 and older are hospitalized. Heart failure is a state in which the heart is weakened and is unable to pump blood efficiently, causing a backup of fluid into the lungs or the veins in the body. It cannot be cured, but it can be controlled.

Reasons for heart failure

The heart weakens with age. This weakening may be accelerated by:

- high blood pressure
- coronary artery disease
- heart attacks
- rheumatic fever
- birth defects
- infections
- valve abnormalities
- alcohol or drug abuse

CENTRACARE Health System **SPOTLIGHT** **ON HEALTH**

MISSION STATEMENT

The CentraCare Health System works to improve the health of every patient, every day.

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There's no place like home

'To be close to home means more than you realize'



Al Kremers


Al Kremers of St. Cloud is a man with a passion for life, a life he doesn't take for granted. A routine physical in 2001 revealed Kremers had an abdominal aortic aneurysm, a serious and potentially life-threatening condition that required surgery. When he was in pre-op, medical professionals discovered that three of his coronary arteries were blocked. Doctors decided to go ahead with the surgery for the aneurysm. Fortunately, Kremers recovered quickly and a triple bypass was scheduled a few months later. This surgery also was successful.

"You can't truly appreciate the emotions you go through in having surgeries of this sort," said Kremers, now 73, "especially when you have no symptoms beforehand."

Kremers stresses the importance of being able to have both surgeries — and the rehab he needed afterward — in St. Cloud. "It also is hard to appreciate the impact of what it means to have family and friends close by when you are going through something like this," Kremers said. "To be close to home means more than you realize."

"I can't overemphasize the people part of the equation," Kremers said. "Certainly we have cutting-edge technology and treatments at the Central Minnesota Heart Center, but we are especially fortunate to have the caliber of people who work there. The people who work in this health care system are committed to quality. They are the epitome of a great service industry."

Al and Yvonne Kremers have supported the CentraCare Health Foundation for years as a way of saying thanks and giving back to the community. "We see the benefits that come from our contributions," Al said. "We choose specific areas of health care that are important to us and then we support those areas. We give to the Foundation because our contributions benefit local people."

Thanks to gifts from the Kremers and other benefactors, CentraCare Health System can conduct research and clinical trials, provide staff and community education, expand clinical services, develop programs to prevent heart disease and provide care to those who lack resources. If you would like to make a gift, call the Foundation at (320) 240-2810, or  visit www.centracare.com/foundation.



A new clinic in Big Lake

The growing community of Big Lake soon will have a medical clinic to call its own.

CentraCare Health System partnered with Monticello-Big Lake Hospital to build a clinic in Big Lake, which is expected to open by mid-January.

Lola Sutherland, M.D., and Laurie Pung, C.N.P., will care for patients at the clinic. Additional providers will be recruited to meet the needs of the community.

Clinic hours will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday. The phone number is (763) 263-7300. The clinic is located at 16830 198th Ave. N.W.

CentraCare's dialysis services in Monticello will move to this new clinic building and will offer dialysis services from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

A public open house is planned from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 24, 2008, at the clinic.

Returning to their *roots*

Training future caregivers in rural medicine



After more than 30 years as a family medicine physician in Long Prairie, Paul Van Gorp, M.D., has delivered hundreds of babies. Through the years, his practice has spanned three and four generations of families at CentraCare Clinic – Long Prairie.

During the past few years, two of these “babies” have returned to Long Prairie to work alongside Van Gorp as part of their training to become physicians. They are Angela Brandes and Harrison Hanson.

“It’s a joy to see these young people mature into such wonderful doctors,” Van Gorp said. “We would love to have them join the practice when they complete their training.”

At a time when family medicine physicians are in short supply, small communities such as Long Prairie and Melrose struggle to recruit additional physicians to replace others who have retired or moved to other communities with fewer on-call demands.

For the past five years, CentraCare Clinic – Long Prairie has participated in the Rural Physician Associates Program, which allows medical students to work with seasoned physicians and experience rural health care.

“I tell students that family medicine is the most challenging of all medical specialties, more in breadth

than in depth, because you need to know quite a bit about everything,” Van Gorp said. “From pre-conception until death, you’ll see every possible aspect of health care walk through your door.”

The challenges facing physicians in rural areas are long hours, especially on-call days, emergency room coverage, delivering babies, patient diversity and in Van Gorp’s case, being the only physician in the community who does Caesarean sections. However, Van Gorp also emphasizes all the positive things that have kept him here for all this time.

“In addition to the wonderful people, life in a small, rural community is safe, convenient, and offers great parking spots!”

He also enjoys spending time on his lakeside hobby farm only eight miles from town.

“It’s not for everyone, but for those of us who enjoy the rural lifestyle, it’s a great place to live.”

Van Gorp is one of the pioneers of the Comprehensive Advanced Life Support Program (CALs), which is designed to educate rural health care providers. Long Prairie Memorial Hospital & Home recently was recognized as the first Minnesota CALs hospital.



Meet medical student Karen Myren

CentraCare Clinic - Long Prairie is hosting University of Minnesota-Duluth medical student Karen Myren. Miliona native Myren is at the clinic for nine months as part of the Rural Physician Associates Program, an internationally recognized program for third-year medical students interested in rural Minnesota primary care. Myren will finish her final year of medical school in the Twin Cities.

“I knew Long Prairie would be the perfect place to experience rural medicine, especially with my interest in working with both Hispanic and Amish populations,” Myren said. “All of the providers here have been great teachers and are very willing to share their knowledge. I’ve already learned a lot!”

January-March 2008 Upcoming Events

Childbirth Education Classes

For details about classes offered by:

- St. Cloud Hospital, call (320) 229-5139,
- CentraCare Clinic - Women & Children, call (320) 654-3630, ext. 70400;
- Melrose Area Hospital, call (320) 256-4231;
- Long Prairie Memorial Hospital, call CentraCare Clinic - Long Prairie at (320) 732-2131. Call (320) 732-4110 to register for classes in Spanish.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

St. Cloud Hospital Behavioral Health Clinic is hosting a free seminar on Seasonal Affective Disorder from noon to 1 p.m. Jan. 10 in the Windfeldt Room, CentraCare Health Plaza. Call (320) 229-4918 for details.

Shapedown

A 10-week family-based weight management program for children and adolescents. The evening sessions start Jan. 10 for children ages 6 to 9 and Feb. 5 for ages 13 to 16 at CentraCare Health Plaza. Call (320) 229-5139 for details.

Volunteer Welcome Sessions

Adult Volunteer Welcome Sessions are from 5-6:30 p.m. Feb. 1 or March 3, and Junior Volunteer Welcome Sessions are from 5-6:30 p.m. Jan. 14, Feb. 13 or March 13 in the Aspen Room, St. Cloud Hospital. RSVP to (320) 255-5638 or volunteer@centracare.com.

From Acne to Wrinkles

Dermatologist Rachel Schuneman, M.D., will discuss adult acne, anti-aging products, prevention of wrinkles, Botox and fillers from 7-8:30 p.m. Jan. 14 at CentraCare Health Plaza. This free program is part of CentraCare Women's Health Education. Register at (320) 229-5139.

CENTRA CARE Health System

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Food Allergy Network

A support group with medical support for families coping with food allergies meets at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 14 or March 10 in the Spruce Room, St. Cloud Hospital. For more information, call Lisa at (320) 310-7717.

Bariatric Surgery Seminar

Darren Glass, M.D., or Matthew Bettendorf, M.D., of Central Minnesota Surgeons, will provide an overview of the procedure at St. Cloud Hospital's Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 15, Feb. 4, Feb. 19, March 3 or March 18 in the Spruce Room, St. Cloud Hospital. Call (320) 251-5676.

Child Passenger Safety

Have your car seat evaluated from 3-6 p.m. Jan. 15, Feb. 20 or March 18 at Gold Cross Ambulance. Call (320) 251-2700, ext. 54492, for appointments.

Longing of the Grieving Heart: Songs and Healing Thoughts

Father Kevin Anderson's program will comfort those feeling grief from 2-4 p.m. Jan. 27 in the Windfeldt Room, CentraCare Health Plaza. Register with Roxanne at (320) 529-0427. Sponsored by the Central Minnesota Area Grief Service Provider Group.

Osteoporosis & You

Learn easy prevention tips for you and your family, including nutrition, exercise and medications from 6:30-8:45 p.m. Jan. 28 at CentraCare Health Plaza. Part of CentraCare Women's Health Education. Register at (320) 229-5139.

Reproductive Seminar

This free program from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Feb. 6 or March 5 gives an overview of the treatment for couples having difficulty conceiving, experiencing multiple pregnancy losses or seeking donor insemination. Call (320) 654-3630.

Open house

St. Cloud Hospital Pediatric Rehabilitation and Pediatric Behavioral Health are hosting an open house from 6-8 p.m. Feb. 28 at CentraCare Health Plaza. Call (320) 255-5652 for details.

Arthritis

Learn about the causes, symptoms and treatments for arthritis from 7-8:30 p.m. March 10 at CentraCare Health Plaza. Part of CentraCare Women's Health Education. Register at (320) 229-5139.

Coping skills for binge eaters

Sessions from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays at CentraCare Health Plaza help participants learn what prompts overeating and provide coping skills to prevent it. Call Dr. Barbara Carver at (320) 229-4918 for details.

➤ Visit www.centracare.com for more information about upcoming events at St. Cloud Hospital, Long Prairie Memorial Hospital, Melrose Area Hospital or clinics throughout CentraCare Health System.