Feeling Good MN: Improving community health through collaboration

When we think about health, we often think of doctor appointments and check-ups. But, did you know that 80 percent of what drives health happens outside hospitals and clinics? This simple fact is the driving force that led to the creation of Feeling Good MN — a new initiative powered by CentraCare Health — that will support people in Central Minnesota by making it easier to be healthy.

Health: A shared responsibility

Feeling Good MN is designed to be collaborative and community driven. Its success will depend on the involvement and participation from people and businesses to strengthen our communities in unique and innovative ways.

Feeling Good MN will work with partner organizations to improve the health of communities by changing systems and environments.

In the coming year, watch for exciting ways that you can join the Feeling Good MN movement.

1. Encouraging healthy lifestyles: This includes efforts such as developing sidewalks and bike lanes that make it safer and easier for people to be active.

2. Improving access to healthy foods: This will focus on addressing food deserts, promoting healthy food options and championing the affordability of healthy foods.

3. Reducing tobacco use: This includes advocating for enhanced policies that prohibit smoking, tobacco and e-cigarette use throughout our communities.

As seen on TV

To shine a spotlight on this community collaboration, CentraCare is partnering with KARE-11 TV to sponsor a monthly Feeling Good MN segment during its morning program which airs from 8-10 a.m. Saturdays. The segments will feature CentraCare’s Jodi Gertken, director of wellness, who will provide an overview of Feeling Good MN and discuss the goals of the initiative.

If you or your organization is interested in learning more about how to get involved in Feeling Good MN, contact Jodi Gertken at 320-251-2700, ext. 77526, or send her an email at gertkenj@centracare.com.

For more information and to sign up to receive the latest news and updates, visit feelinggoodmn.org.
Hundreds from the community attended the “Our Best for You” community event Oct. 19 at River’s Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud where CentraCare Health unveiled Feeling Good MN, a new initiative powered by CentraCare Health. The initiative will support people in Central Minnesota by making it easier to be healthy. The event also included a health fair featuring Animal-Assisted Therapy teams, free health screenings, a walk-through giant colon exhibit and more.

CentraCare’s leaders discussed how partnerships create healthy communities and answered questions from the audience. Two keynote presentations rounded out the day. David Kroska, MD, CentraCare Clinic physician and avid gardener discussed how to preserve your health by eating healthful produce year-round. Physical Therapist Audra Zastrow, CentraCare Health – Long Prairie, presented how to fit mini-exercises and stretches into your commute, workday and evening routine to stay flexible and reduce stress.

Check out the 2016 Report to the Community that features the many ways we partner with our communities to ensure that they are healthy and vibrant. Visit centracare.com/2016 where you can:

- Watch videos of patient stories
- Learn about community health partnerships
- Read messages from CentraCare Health leaders
- Understand how CentraCare supports our communities
Dialysis, kidney transplant helps patient live life to the fullest

By Meghan Dingmann

Sarah Blommer is used to being unique. Because of a rare condition, she started her dialysis journey at the CentraCare Kidney Program when she was only 23. It began with in-center hemodialysis (HD). She switched to peritoneal dialysis (PD) due to the flexibility it allowed her. She had a kidney transplant in July of 2011, which lasted until May of 2013. After this, she returned to HD and PD, and then switched to home hemodialysis.

“It’s not often that a patient has done all three forms of dialysis,” said Jodi Friedrichs, RN, CentraCare Kidney Program & Home Dialysis.

“Home hemodialysis was the one that worked best for me,” Sarah said. “Even though I needed it six days a week, it was nice to have some flexibility. I could pick the day that I would have off so I could make plans or attend events.” Through it all, Sarah’s husband, Eric, was by her side.

She told him to leave; she knew the future could be difficult with her illness and treatments. “I didn’t want to go; I didn’t hesitate to let her know I wasn’t going anywhere,” Eric said.

When it came to Sarah’s home hemodialysis, she and Eric developed a routine and they worked through it together. “Caregivers can often get overwhelmed,” Eric said. “It can be tough, so it’s important to have a great support system.”

“Caregiver burnout is the number one reason why people leave home hemodialysis,” Friedrichs said. “The commitment we make to patients and their caregivers is crucial. We offer support through training, phone calls, home visits and monthly clinic and lab appointments. But it’s easy for caregivers to get overwhelmed with the treatment process and all it entails.”

In January 2016, Sarah had a second kidney transplant, which was a success. Sarah’s dialysis treatments are a thing of the past. She now has more freedom and flexibility.

She and Eric even went camping for the first time last summer.

Types of dialysis
Kidneys help the body get rid of toxic waste and fluids. When kidneys fail, dialysis or a kidney transplant is needed to prevent death.

• **In-center hemodialysis** is usually done three days a week and takes three to five hours a day. An artificial kidney (dialyzer) filters your blood to remove toxic waste and fluids.

• **Peritoneal dialysis** is done at home and uses the body’s peritoneal membrane which provides continuous therapy removing toxic waste and fluids.

• **Home hemodialysis** requires the patient and caregiver to be trained and requires more frequent treatments.

CentraCare Kidney Program Services

As the largest provider of kidney care in Central Minnesota, CentraCare Kidney Program offers the care you need at these locations:

- Alexandria
- Big Lake
- Brainerd
- Cambridge
- Litchfield
- Little Falls
- Olivia
- Princeton
- Staples
- St. Cloud

For details, call 855-361-5740 or visit centracare.com.
Four years after her husband died from leukemia, Marcia O’Konek, of St. Cloud, received a kidney transplant. Throughout dialysis and recovery, Marcia still worked as a nurse educator in surgery to support her two children, ages 5 and 9. When reflecting on this time of her life, one would expect to hear about her struggle. Instead, Marcia beams gratitude and strength. “I still pray for the family who donated the organ. Without their generosity and the hard work of my nephrologist, Dr. Leither, I wouldn’t be here today. I am so grateful.”

Eight years later, Marcia was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had a lumpectomy and received chemotherapy. Her treatment went well and she was back to good health for the next 20 years. Recently, through a self-breast exam, Marcia, 70, discovered a lump. The biopsy showed the cancer was back. Care Coordinator Amy Stolt, RN, called Marcia to deliver the news and inform her of Coborn Cancer Center’s new multidisciplinary cancer clinic available for breast cancer patients.

“This new process was less overwhelming, much more comfortable and very educational,” Marcia said. In just one sitting, Marcia met with her care coordinator, surgeon, geneticist and oncologist. “I can’t imagine anyone more kind or thorough than my oncologist, Dr. Ufearo. We went over everything ahead of time. I felt prepared. I knew what to expect. Everything was taken care of so calmly and clearly. It made such a difference.”

The surgeon explained how they would be removing both breasts and offered reconstruction to Marcia as an option. Marcia kindly declined reconstruction and replied with laughter, “I’ve always hated bras.” Marcia liked how everything took place in that one visit. She wanted to take care of it right away and that’s just what this new program allowed her to do. She scheduled her surgery for that Monday.

After losing her hair, Marcia was offered complimentary caps and wigs. “These were donated — I just can’t believe the generosity,” she said. “I still go out for lunch with my friends. This hasn’t stopped me at all. I wear my wigs and hats and I just love it. I don’t care what anybody thinks. At home, I just go bareheaded. I have a very nice smooth head,” she joked.

Marcia’s positivity and cheerful spirit remained unhindered throughout her journey. She’s thankful to feel healthy and enjoys reading, embroidering, watching ball games and spending time with friends, family and her four grandchildren. She smiles and says, “If I wouldn’t have had this outstanding treatment and care, I wouldn’t be here today.”
CentraCare Health and St. Cloud Medical Group, two of the St. Cloud region’s leading health care providers, will proceed with a full integration of their operations, to be completed over the next two years.

“The delivery of health care services has been undergoing dramatic changes in recent years, as payers look to reward high-quality patient care, including reducing fragmentation of care from different providers,” said Scott Rahm, MD, president of St. Cloud Medical Group. “As a group of physicians, we began exploring the best way to meet those changing expectations and deliver the care that our patients need and value. This partnership is the result of that review.”

“We already share many patients between CentraCare and St. Cloud Medical Group; this is a great opportunity to ensure that patients in the region receive highly coordinated care of the best quality, provided in the most efficient way,” said Ken Holmen, MD, President & CEO of CentraCare Health.

Care provided at St. Cloud Medical Group’s current locations will continue in St. Cloud, Clearwater and Cold Spring.

Authorize release of health information

At your next appointment or admission to any CentraCare site, we will ask you to sign an authorization to release your health record to health information exchanges. This release will allow CentraCare to send your electronic health record electronically to another facility where you are seeking care. The release would occur in the future if or when you are seeking care at another health care organization and a request for records is received from that organization. The ability for health care organizations to electronically request and receive health information can help with the continuity and coordination of care.

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- Rescreening reduced by up to 40 percent
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Call 320-229-4919 to schedule your mammogram at St. Cloud Hospital Breast Center, located at the CentraCare Health Plaza.

CENTRACARE.COM
Events raise more than $400,000 for cancer

Coborn’s, Inc., raised more than $268,000 at its 15th annual Grocers on the Green golf tournament Sept. 14. The funds will support St. Cloud Hospital pediatric cancer services at CentraCare Health Plaza, which allows Central Minnesota children to stay closer to home while receiving treatment. To date, the event has raised nearly $2.4 million.

Coborn’s, Inc., and its vendors also raised $161,000 through the annual Food for the Cure promotion, which supports the Coborn Cancer Center Greatest Needs Fund. The money raised is used to provide events for couples and families with young children, counseling and classes for patients and their families, an endowment to fund registered nurse care coordinators and participation in more than 50 clinical research studies.

Learn more at centracare.com/foundation or call 320-240-2810.
Dissolving the stress of heart disease

By Ann Weismann

Garbage truck driver Jay Desmarais, age 62, of Rockville, takes the good with the bad. “I love working outdoors, except,” he grinned, “when it’s snowing and 20 below — but it’s all part of life.”

This philosophy carries through to his annual work physical. This year’s stress test found a blocked artery to his heart, leading him to become a candidate for a new type of stent called Absorb.

Stents are small, expandable tubes inserted into a narrowed or blocked section of the coronary artery during angioplasty. Like traditional metal stents, the Absorb stent props open a diseased vessel and restores blood flow, allowing the vessel to heal. But, like dissolving stitches, Absorb disappears — completely and naturally — usually within three years. By contrast, metal stents are permanent implants.

On Oct. 17, Cardiologist Thom Dahle, MD, along with a multidisciplinary team, inserted an Absorb stent into Jay’s left anterior descending artery. “The CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center constantly strives to offer cutting edge technology, especially pioneering methods, such as Absorb, that can lead to new directions in patient care,” Dr. Dahle said.

For Jay, the effect of the stent was immediate, eliminating his shortness of breath. He recommends everyone be proactive about their health. “Watch what you eat, exercise and get regular check-ups. It pays off in the end.”

About Absorb

The Food and Drug Administration approved Absorb in July. The CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center is the only site in Minnesota where the device is commercially available.

Dissolving stents have several benefits. They allow vessels to expand and contract, as needed, to increase blood flow to the heart in response to normal activities, such as exercising. They also offer flexibility for future treatment options and may reduce the need for long-term anti-clotting medications.

Call CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center at 320-656-7020 for more information.
Jean Mitchell, a resident of Sauk Centre, felt “blind-sided” when she received the news on August 16 that she had stage 4 multi-form glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer.

Her doctor in Sauk Centre sent Jean by ambulance to St. Cloud Hospital where they performed emergency surgery and successfully removed a four by four-centimeter tumor. Jean was told that her left side likely would be affected, given the location of the tumor. “I proved them wrong, I don’t even need a brace — just the walker for stability,” she said.

After spending six days at St. Cloud Hospital, Jean was moved to CentraCare Health – Melrose where she stayed an additional week and received services through CentraCare Transitional Care. “Jean wasn’t quite ready to go home because she still needed additional physical and occupational therapy to safely move to a more independent setting in her apartment,” said Trista Klaphake, director of patient care in Melrose.

Naturally, Jean’s family was concerned about her diagnosis. Dennis Mitchell, Jean’s brother, traveled from Arizona to be by his sister’s side. He stayed two nights at both the Gorecki Guest House in St. Cloud and the Main Street Guest House in Melrose.

“I really appreciated the availability and accessibility of both of these houses,” Dennis said. “We literally walked in the door of the Gorecki House, dropped our suitcases and walked across the street to St. Cloud Hospital. The Main Street House also is within close walking distance and the staff was so friendly and caring.” Dennis and his wife appreciated the home-like guest houses and the reasonable price — only $45 a night. “I can’t stress enough how helpful and caring everyone was. They were so polite and answered all of our questions,” Dennis said.

“The support we received through CentraCare has been wonderful,” Jean said. “They have been able to guide me through this difficult process.”

Jean’s family members (standing left to right): Carol and Dennis Mitchell, Jean Mitchell. (sitting left to right): Paul Mitchell, Paul and Mary Kukowski. (shown below): Gorecki Guest House in St. Cloud (top) and the Main Street Guest House in Melrose (bottom).

Jean’s family was grateful for the extensive services and guest house availability. By Diane Hageman

 Transitional Care options
CentraCare Health offers transitional care in a variety of settings. For more information, visit centracare.com, click on services, transitional care.

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Creamy Chicken Wild Rice Soup

1 medium onion, diced
1 large carrot, chopped small
1 celery rib, chopped small
1 small garlic clove, diced
1 Tbsp. canola oil
1 tsp. each: dried basil, parsley, thyme
¼ c. all-purpose flour
4 c. unsalted chicken broth/stock (130 mg. of sodium or less per 8 oz.)

2 c. cooked wild rice
3 chicken breasts, uncooked, boneless/skinless, all natural (no sodium added), cubed
6.5 oz. can mushrooms, no salt added, drained and chopped
¼ tsp. pepper
12 oz. can low-fat evaporated milk, (2%)

In a large saucepan sauté the onion, carrot, celery and garlic in the oil until tender. Add dried herbs (basil, parsley, thyme).
Stir in flour until blended, cook for 1-2 minutes. Gradually add broth.
Stir in the rice, chicken, mushrooms and pepper.
Bring to a boil over medium heat; cook and stir until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are tender. Stir in milk; cook 3-5 minutes longer.

Yield: 7.5 cups, 1 serving = 1 cup

‘Getting fit’ not cutting it?

By Alyssa Monson, RD, LD
Clinical Dietitian
CentraCare Weight Management

Is the thought of getting in shape or losing weight not enough to keep you motivated to hit the gym? Check out these five non-fitness related benefits of exercise to find your motivation.

1. Reduce stress and improve sleep
Rough day at the office? Take a breather and go for a walk or head to the gym after work. Stress relief is one of the most common benefits of exercise. Exercise increases concentrations of chemicals that can improve the brain’s response to stress.

Consider moving your workout up five or six hours before bedtime to improve sleep while also reducing stress. Moving around five to six hours before bedtime raises the body’s core body temperature. When the body temperature drops back to normal a few hours later, it signals the body that it’s time to sleep.

2. Boost happy chemicals
Sometimes we might feel too tired to get off the couch. Good news! Physical activity releases endorphins, which create feelings of happiness. Studies have shown that exercise can even alleviate symptoms among the clinically depressed. Don’t worry if physical activity is not your thing; being physically active for just 30 minutes a few times a week can boost overall mood.

3. Improve self-confidence
Many people exercise to lose weight and look better, but exercise can actually boost self-esteem and improve positive self-image regardless of weight, size, gender or age.

4. Keep your brain in tip top shape
Regular physical activity can prevent cognitive decline and boost memory. As aging and degenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s kill off brain cells, the noggin actually shrinks, losing many important brain functions in the process. While exercise and a healthy diet can’t “cure” Alzheimer’s, they can help protect the brain against cognitive decline that begins after age 45.

Additionally, a study showed that physical activity increased vocabulary retention among healthy adults. So even if you aren’t approaching 45, your brain still will benefit from being active.

5. Get more done and tap into creativity
Feeling uninspired? The solution might be just a short walk or jog. Research shows that individuals who take time for exercise on a regular basis are more productive and have more energy than their sedentary peers. A bout of physical activity can boost creativity and productivity for up to two hours afterwards.
Breath Savers Support Group
Breath Savers is a support group for people with chronic lung illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema. This group meets on the first Wednesday of each month at CentraCare Health Plaza in the Kremers Room. For details, call 320-251-2700, ext. 54345.

Do you have high cholesterol?
See if you’re eligible for a drug study that may lower blood cholesterol levels, at clearstudy.com. The CLEAR-Harmony Study is being conducted to learn more about the safety and tolerability of an investigational drug designed to lower cholesterol levels by limiting your liver’s ability to make cholesterol.

Renewing Life
This proven curriculum from 5:30-8 p.m. Tuesdays Jan. 24 – March 21 empowers participants to live authentically and view life challenges as opportunities for growth. Discover and create a personal healing path. Cost is $50 (includes books, supplies and snacks/refreshments). To register, call Coborn Cancer Center at 320-229-4900.

Conversations with a Cardiologist: Debunking Cardiac Myths
Does red wine protect you from heart disease? Should you take an aspirin daily? Is there a heart disease gene? CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center Cardiologist, Richard Backes, MD, will debunk myths and deliver facts to keep your heart healthy and add years to your life from 6-7 p.m. Feb. 9 at CentraCare Health Plaza. Bring along your own questions for an evening of casual, yet lively conversation.

Purchase the $5 tickets at:
• Gift Gallery – St. Cloud Hospital and CentraCare Health Plaza
• Coborn’s and Cash Wise at the service counter (St. Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park)
Call 320-255-5642 for more information. Tickets may be purchased at the door, but seating is limited. Sponsored by the CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center.

Drive-Thru Colon Cancer Screening
During Colon Cancer Awareness Month (March), people who are age 50 or older can receive a free immunochemical fecal occult blood test (iFOBT) colon cancer screening kit from the drive-up window at CentraCare Pharmacy at St. Cloud Hospital or from Coborn Cancer Center. Kits are limited. Free. The iFOBT screening does not replace a colonoscopy, which is the best method to detect colorectal cancer. Detecting colon cancer early can lead to more effective treatment. If you have no other risk factors, you should begin screening for colorectal cancer soon after turning 50. For details, call 320-229-5199, ext. 70857.

Lunch and Learn
Learn about the amazing medical alert services available for your personal safety from noon to 1 p.m. March 2 at CentraCare Health – Paynesville. Enter door #19 near Hospital ER. Call 320-243-7903 for details. A light lunch will be served, no RSVP required.

Kick Butts Day March 15
Crave the Change encourages area youth to stand out and speak up against Big Tobacco. Contact your elected officials today to ask them to take control of how tobacco is marketed and sold in your community. You can request limiting the number of tobacco licenses issued or limiting businesses that can sell flavored products and e-cigarettes aimed at youth. Visit cravethechange.com for more information on how you can be a part of the movement.

Quit Cash Challenge
Thinking about quitting tobacco? Take the Quit Cash Challenge. Register at quitplan.com by the end of March. Quit for the month of April and be eligible for a $5,000 drawing. The challenge is open to residents of Minnesota ages 18 years or older. You, too, can be tobacco free!

CentraCare Health Earth Day Run
April 21-22 • St. Cloud State University
Get into the swing of spring with the CentraCare Health Earth Day Run. This event has something for all ages and activity levels, including several runs, Health & Fitness Expo and El-Jay Plumbing & Heating Post-Race Party. Register for the Scheels Half Marathon, St. Cloud Subaru 5K run/walk or 1K youth run at runearthday.com.

Move the Mile Marker … Go for the HALF! Take yourself to the next level through the Earth Day Half Marathon training program at the St. Cloud Area Family YMCA, beginning Feb. 6. Details at scymca.org.
Now the best resource for expecting mothers can fit in the palm of your hand. The CentraCare Baby app builds confidence and offers advice on pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding and adjustments to parenting. It complements CentraCare’s Gift of Motherhood book and our Bravo Baby childbirth education series.

Special app features include:
- Pregnancy tracker
- Animations and videos
- Week-by-week push notifications
- Contraction timer
- Journal

To download the app, visit centracare.com/baby.

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Announcing our newest addition — the CentraCare Baby app

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Are you worried that you are a helicopter parent? See if the three most common patterns seen in helicopter parents describe you.

1. When we do for our kids what they can already do for themselves.
2. When we do for our kids what they can almost do for themselves.
3. When our parenting behavior is motivated by our own egos. In other words, there is something lacking in our own experiences that we are projecting on our children.

**Signs of helicopter parenting:**
- Inability to let go
- Spoiling
- Lobbying
- Guarding
- Germaphobia
- Watchdogging
- Over-scheduling
- Too much praise

**Long-term effects of helicopter parenting:**
- Increased depression, anxiety, self-consciousness, entitlement and distress in new situations.
- Decreased problem-solving and decision-making skills.

A recent study of job recruiters showed that seven out of 10 recruits needed to speak to their parents before accepting a job offer. Twenty-five percent of companies had been contacted by parents who feel like their offspring should receive jobs.

**How to correct helicopter parenting:**
You need to create healthy boundaries. Allow your child to make mistakes, solve problems and face the consequences.
- Be an active listener. Ask “What are you feeling?” and “What are you thinking?”
- Have consistent consequences.
- Set reasonable expectations.

Check out our blog — “For the Health of It” is dedicated to a variety of health and wellness topics. Take a look by visiting centracare.com.