Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network have designated McLaren Regional Medical Center as a Blue Distinction Center for Spine Surgery and a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement. Blue Distinction Centers for Spine Surgery and Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip Replacement are part of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association’s expansion of its Blue Distinction® designation. McLaren is the only medical center in the greater Genesee County region to earn the Spine Surgery Distinction.

McLaren Regional Medical Center offers a full range of comprehensive spine surgery and knee and hip replacement surgical services, including minimally invasive procedures. The medical center recently opened a newly expanded and enhanced Joint Express Unit, which features a multidisciplinary team.

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approach in a dedicated setting for patients undergoing hip and knee replacement surgeries.

“Our Blue Distinction program recognizes hospitals that demonstrate higher levels of performance in providing better care for patients,” said Thomas Simmer, M.D., BCBSM senior vice president and chief medical officer. “We congratulate our Michigan Blue Distinction Centers for their commitment to providing high quality health care.”

“Congratulations to all of our Blue Distinction hospitals for meeting the care and quality criteria established by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and experts in this specialty,” said Marc Keshishian, M.D., BCN senior vice president and chief medical officer.

The selection criteria used to evaluate facilities were developed with input from a panel of expert physicians. To be designated as a Blue Distinction Center for Spine Surgery and a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement, the following types of criteria were evaluated. More information on selection criteria is available on bcbs.com:

- Established acute care inpatient facility, including intensive care, emergency care, and a full range of patient support services with full accreditation by a CMS-deemed national accreditation organization
- Experience and training of program surgeons, including case volume
- Quality management programs, including surgical checklists as well as tracking and evaluation of clinical outcomes and process of care
- Multi-disciplinary clinical pathways and teams to coordinate and streamline care, including transitions of care
- Shared decision-making and preoperative patient education

“Blue Distinction puts a high value on research and evidence-based health and medical information,” said Allan Korn, M.D., Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association Chief Medical Officer. “Blue Distinction Centers show our commitment to working with doctors and hospitals in communities across the country to identify leading institutions that meet clinically validated quality standards and deliver better overall outcomes in patient care.”

The Blue Distinction designation is awarded by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies to medical facilities that have demonstrated expertise in delivering quality health care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacement, spine surgery and transplants. The program is part of The Blues® efforts to collaborate with physicians and medical facilities to improve the overall quality and safety of specialty care.

A Tisket, a Tasket, What’s the Pay It Forward Basket?

The Pay It Forward Campaign was created by a subgroup of the Director’s Forum, called Teams Working Well Together. The premise behind the initiative is to provide an opportunity for departments to acknowledge one another in a fun and creative way. Each department that receives the basket will have it for 30 days. At the end of that time period the receiving department will then pay it forward to a different department that it deems worthy of the same recognition; once again filling the basket with the contents of its choosing. A laminated card attached to the basket outlines some guidelines and suggestions to assist departments with the pay it forward process. The basket will include stickers indicating where the basket has gone each month.

Nutritional Services was recognized at the June Director/Manager Meeting with the first “Pay It Forward” basket for the outstanding customer service they provide in the cafeteria, through catering services and on Barbeque Wednesdays.
Extra Mile Program for Cancer Patients is on a Roll

A special fund to assist McLaren cancer patients in need is gaining momentum thanks to the big hearts of the Forbidden Wheels local motorcycle club members. Despite a gray sky, nearly 50 bikes gathered at Shiawassee Sports Center in Birch Run for the beginning of the Extra Mile Ride benefiting GLCI’s Extra Mile patient fund. A live auction followed the ride, resulting in a donation of over $3,000 to support patients at GLCI-McLaren.

Jean Battles, social worker at GLCI-McLaren, witnesses patients who are not able to meet basic needs during treatment or who need help with incidental costs to receive their treatment.

“There have been times patients have had to stay for treatment longer than expected and didn’t have money for lunch, or they couldn’t get the medicine for treatment because they couldn’t afford their copay,” said Battles. She discovered that employees at GLCI were often reaching into their own wallets to assist patients who had an immediate financial need.

“We started by hosting bake sales and spring basket sales to raise some money and were pleased with the response,” said Battles. “We were overjoyed when Todd Nash, from Forbidden Wheels approached us wanting to help. It has allowed us to expand the support of our patients who are struggling.”

The creation and growth of the Extra Mile patient fund has benefited many patients already since its inception. Nutritional supplements such as Boost or Ensure are provided to patients with dietary issues that cannot afford the retail cost of the products.

“Needs really range from one patient to the next,” Battles said. “We are proud to be able to provide this extra level of comfort to our patients. The most important thing we can give our patients during tough times is hope. The Extra Mile signifies people going out of their way to help someone even if it is not part of their job, or for someone they know. It’s just a good thing to do.”

Auxiliary Awards Nursing Scholarship

Deborah Pauly is the 2010 recipient of a $4,000 scholarship awarded by the MRMC Auxiliary, in cooperation with the Human Resources Department. These funds are available from a memorial fund established to honor Margaret McLaren. Many donations in memory of Auxilians have been made to the Fund throughout the years. Scholarship recipients receive tuition assistance and agree to work at MRMC for a minimum of 18-months.

Deborah will begin her career as a registered nurse once she completes her education. She is currently receiving clinical training in McLaren’s CCU. Deborah carried a 4.0 GPA at Baker College, was on the Dean’s List and President’s List, graduating with an Associate’s degree in Nursing. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in international Studies from Michigan State University and carried a GPA of 3.93, Summa Cum Laude from the Honors College, and was on the Dean’s list. The Auxiliary is very pleased to honor Deborah with this scholarship.

Pictured above: On hand to congratulate Deborah Pauly (right center) were members of the McLaren Auxiliary. (l to r): Geri Bois, Counselor; Liz Manley, Auxiliary President and Denise Osman, Memorial Fund Treasurer. Auxiliary members involved on the scholarship not pictured are: L. Jean Smith, Director of Volunteers and Kathy Lescelius, Scholarship Committee member.

Outfitted in orange shirts, volunteers from GLCI-McLaren assisted with registration, snacks and t-shirt sales at the Extra Mile Ride. Volunteers from left to right (in orange): Amy Strang, Roxanne Caine, Jean Battles and Jennifer Kopchek.
Skin Cancer Screening Event

Nearly 200 men and women took advantage of McLaren Regional Medical Center’s free skin cancer screening event held on Thursday, May 13 at the McLaren Medical Education Building. The project was spearheaded by Dr. Parul Sud, McLaren Internal Medicine Residency Program, and Maria Smith, M.D., Internal Medicine Resident. Those who attended were very complimentary of how well organized the screenings were and how friendly everyone was. This would not have been possible without the contribution of GLCI-McLaren staff, several area dermatologists, the Genesee County Cancer Connection and volunteers from the American Cancer Society. A special thanks also to Donna Cox, Manager Internal Medicine Residency Group Practice and her staff who checked attendees and out and provided direction. Several melanomas and other forms of skin cancer were detected denoting the importance of offering the screenings.

MRMC Board of Trustee Ghassan Saab and his wife Manal were honored recently by the Community Foundation in Lansing, receiving the Russell Mawby Philanthropy Service Award. According William Piper, to fellow MRMC Board member, this is a prestigious award presented once a year to an outstanding philanthropist. The award is named after Russell Mawby, former head of the Kellogg Foundation.

Denyatta T.N. Henry, MBA, RN, CCS, has been promoted from CDS Coordinator to the manager over the CDS staff as well as the Compliance Documentation Management Program (CDMP) program. As manager of the CDMP, she is responsible for giving direction to the program, ensuring accuracy and completeness of clinical information used for measuring and reporting physician and medical center outcomes. Denyatta has taken on positions of greater responsibility at McLaren beginning as a staff nurse, moving to a case manager, a case manager team leader, a clinical documentation specialist, and onto her present position.

For the past fourteen years, McLaren has outsourced the leadership of Materials Management to Premier Inc. Kevin Hines, an employee of Premier, filled that responsibility. Through Kevin and Premier’s leadership, McLaren has benefitted in reducing our cost of care to competitive levels. In addition to reducing our costs, Kevin and Premier have helped build McLaren’s management team to the level where we can now in-source this function. We are very grateful for the contributions that Kevin Hines has brought to McLaren and we wish him the best in his next assignment with Premier.

David Bueby has assumed the position of Corporate Director of Materials Management. David joined McLaren Health Care during 2001 and moved to Corporate Materials Management during 2005 as the Director of Purchasing.
OR Adopts Sustainability Initiative and Reduces Costs

Sorting plastics, paper, glass and cans from the rest of the garbage has become an earth-friendly practice for many of us at home. Now, the surgical and Cath Lab staff at MRMC is going greener with a similar initiative in the OR. Select surgical equipment is now being given a new life as a reprocessed surgical device instead of being discarded as medical waste. The benefits extend beyond its environmental impact, including cost savings and quality.

Reprocessing is the process of taking apart, decontaminating, and rebuilding a medical device. MRMC adopted the practice in December 2009 as part of a corporate best practice initiative. How much surgical equipment each McLaren subsidiary reprocesses varies by location. At MRMC, Rita Julius, director of Surgical Services was enthusiastic about testing the idea.

“Surgery generates a lot of waste, possibly the most out of any other department in a hospital,” said Julius. “It doesn’t all have to go into a landfill. We wanted to start small with four items and test how well the program would work. Some teal-colored bins were placed in the room where the used equipment is sorted after surgery. The staff has done a great job putting the items slated for reprocessing in a teal bin rather than going into a red medical waste bin. It really is easy to make a significant difference.”

In the first six months of the program, 1,203 pounds of waste has been kept out of the waste stream according to Ascent Healthcare Solutions, the company contracted to handle reprocessing for McLaren. The first four items selected for reprocessing were endoscopic trocars, ultrasonic scalpels, EP cables and suture passers. The cost savings in the first quarter of 2010 equals $89,201 in device savings and $636 in fewer purchases of red medical waste containers.

All reprocessed items have been given clearance by the FDA and are held to a higher standard in function and sterility than the original manufacturers of the devices. “I have a lot of confidence in the reprocessed products we use now in surgery,” Julius said. “The process is so thorough, it is appropriate to say they are remanufactured versus reprocessed. Each item after being disassembled, decontaminated and rebuilt is inspected, compared to new products where only a sampling is inspected.” A device can only be reprocessed a certain number of times before it can no longer be remanufactured. Once devices have reached the end of their approved uses they are given a new life. Plastics are melted down and sold to companies that manufacture items made from recycled plastics such as construction cones or park benches.

“We started small to test the idea and have been very happy with the outcome,” said Julius. “It is assuring to know Ascent, who is our partner in reprocessing, has been in the industry for years and has safely reprocessed more than 50 million single use medical devices. They have been great to work with.”

The Surgery Department in conjunction with Materials Management is now expanding the list of surgical items to be reprocessed to include tourniquets, and some other laparoscopic devices.

http://www.ascenths.com/index.html
World’s Smallest Heart Pump Procedure Now Available at McLaren Regional Medical Center

A treatment option is now a reality for some patients with poor heart function who in the past would have been considered too high risk to have the life saving stents, angioplasty or bypass they needed. Called the Impella, it is the world’s smallest heart pump assist device. Wilfredo Rivera, M.D., a McLaren Interventional Cardiologist, has used the device several times on patients this year and is pleased with the results.

“This is a safer procedure for high risk patients who didn’t have other options,” states Dr. Rivera. “It is a device that can be life saving for patients who come in with cardiogenic shock, an otherwise fatal condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood for survival. It occurs with acute myocardial infarction (AMI), which is a type of heart attack, or severe sudden malfunction of one of the heart valves. We can now use the Impella to support their pressures while we work on either their heart attack or to prepare and sustain them while awaiting high risk bypass or valve surgery. It is also useful in patients whose stent may place a large part of the heart at risk such as left main coronary artery interventions or bypass patients who have only one graft left feeding most of the heart.”

Damaged heart muscle is exactly what John Chargo, age 72, of Lennon had. Chargo’s situation was unusual in that he never felt his heart attack. It was “silent” but fortunately not deadly. However, because it was silent, there is no way to tell how long ago his heart suffered damage. This damage, and years of high cholesterol, caught up with him in December of 2009 when he felt extremely congested and was having a very difficult time breathing. He ended up in the Emergency Department at McLaren.

“I was diagnosed with congestive heart failure (the pumping action of the heart becomes less and less powerful),” states Chargo. “I spent eight days in the hospital and then went home feeling much better. However, because of my medical diagnosis I had to follow up with a cardiologist.”

Chargo had several tests performed, finally ending up in the office of Dr. Rivera who explained the seriousness of his situation. He was not a candidate for bypass surgery but Dr. Rivera could try putting needed stents in with the help of the Impella device. Chargo went to McLaren’s Cath Lab on a Tuesday,

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Heart Walk 2010

For the second consecutive year McLaren Regional Medical Center was the “Cause Sponsor” for the American Heart Association’s Genesee County Heart Walk. This year’s event was held on Saturday, May 22 in downtown Flint. The 3.1 mile walk started at the U-of-M-Flint Pavilion, went through the U-of-M-Flint campus, to the Mott Community College Campus and then through the Cultural Center back to the Pavilion. This year the American Heart Association estimates there were close to 2,000 walkers who helped to raise over $100,000. Cardiac Rehab Specialists Tonya Smith, Liz Birchmeier, Sarah Worton, and Kevin Price, and their interns, as well as Sue O’Brien, McLaren’s Stroke Program Coordinator, and Kevin Ross, RN from 10 Tower, took blood pressures before the walk and offered participants educational materials regarding heart health and stroke awareness. Gai Clemmer captained the McLaren team which numbered over 100 walkers.

The Heart of a Woman

McLaren hosted its fourth annual “The Heart of a Woman” event on Thursday, May 20 at the Holiday Inn Gateway Centre in Mundy Township. More than 75 area women took advantage of various heart health related screenings and educational stations followed by an educational program. Dr. James Chambers, McLaren’s Chief of Cardiology, facilitated the program which featured Dr. Russell Raymond, Cardiologist from the Cleveland Clinic and Dr. Sunita Tummala, Neurologist and Medical Director of McLaren’s Stroke Program. A female heart attack survivor from McLaren’s Cardiac Rehab Program also shared her story. After the program the physicians were joined by Kristin Ross, Dietitian, to take questions from the audience. Thanks go out to the “Heart of a Woman” Committee members and everyone they recruited to volunteer their time to make the event possible. McLaren Nutritional Services also prepared heart healthy food samples that were enjoyed by all!

World’s Smallest Heart Pump

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Pictured l-r are the Cath Lab staff who helped perform the first Impella procedure at McLaren Tony Grignani, RCIS; Wilfredo Rivera, M.D., Interventional Cardiologist; Mike Hubert, RN and Kelli Carter, RTR. Not pictured are Glen Walker, RN and Tina DuPuis, RTR.

received two stents, and was discharged on Thursday of that same week.

“The Impella is inserted into the body through an artery in the groin, then fed through the aorta to the heart,” states Dr. Rivera. “It is then advanced into the left ventricle where the Impella’s spinning pump acts like a straw, sucking blood from the left ventricle into the aorta, assisting the weak heart in pumping oxygen rich blood to the rest of the body. During this time angioplasty can be performed, or stents can be inserted, both to open up blocked arteries. Without the device in place the heart would not tolerate these procedures without catastrophic consequences.”

Since the procedure this spring, Dr. Rivera recommended Chargo go to McLaren’s Cardiac Rehab Program where he continues to improve his heart health. While in Cardiac Rehab Chargo wears a cardiac monitor while exercising and is supervised by McLaren’s cardiac team of experts. He is being taught how to warm up before exercise and how to cool down after. He is also learning about risk factor modification, nutrition, stress management, and medications.

“I feel very fortunate, I know how bad things were and I am thankful for this technology,” states Chargo. “I had quick care and a really good doctor.”

This summer Chargo is looking forward to keeping his heart healthy so he can attend many classic car shows with his wife in their 1938 red Chevy pickup.
Cancer Survivors Celebrate Life

Each year the Great Lakes Cancer Institute at McLaren helps hundreds of people through their battle with cancer. As a way to honor the strength and spirit of those who have overcome cancer and those who are currently undergoing treatment, McLaren hosted its 16th Annual Cancer Survivors’ Celebration on June 9 at the Holiday Inn Gateway. At this year’s event, more than 530 guests were introduced to Healing Through Art, a new art therapy program available to cancer patients and their caregivers at GLCI-McLaren. Karla Grunow, T. Trevor Singh, M.D., Hesham Gayar, M.D.; Sukamal Saha, M.D. all delivered positive messages to the audience. Guests were entertained by featured speaker Mack Dryden, comedian and two-time cancer survivor. A former staff writer for Politically Incorrect with Bill Mahar, Dryden has also appeared on the Tonight Show with both Johnny Carson and Jay Leno.

Cancer Survivor Celebration Planning Committee members include: Karla Grunow, Cindy Duncanson, Delynn Ruddy, Roxanne Caine, Shamiah Specht, Gail Singer, and Ellen Peter.

Gail Singer, Certified Art Therapist, led the guests in a simple art therapy project, decorating their nametags.

The Neithercut Honors Choir provided energetic and uplifting musical entertainment.

Guests enjoyed the refreshments and colorful table decorations to follow the event’s theme “Color Your World with Laughter”.

Mack Dryden, professional comedian, actor and two-time cancer survivor, had the entire audience laughing by sharing the humorous side of some of his life experiences. Dryden also offered his own tips on how to live a fuller, happier life.

Medical oncologists, Madan Arora, MD; Sunil Nagpal, MD; T. Trevor Singh, MD; and surgical oncologist Sukamal Saha, MD were among the physicians who enjoyed visiting with present and past patients. Hesham Gayar, MD, joked how nice it was to see so many of his patients ‘all dressed up,’ since he was used to seeing everyone in their medical gowns.
The McLaren Regional Medical Center Spine Program has recently collaborated with Spine-health.com, a world-renowned online resource, to educate patients on their pain and treatment options.

The McLaren Spine Program offers a uniquely specialized approach to diagnose and treat back and neck pain. The program is totally designed around the mission of improving function, alleviating pain and enhancing quality of life for people with spine problems. The physicians with McLaren believe a vital part to recovery is empowering the patient with the facts on their condition, as well as treatment options that are available to them.

“When a patient is armed with the knowledge and understanding of their pain, they are able to take a more proactive approach in their healing process and have educated discussions with their doctor,” according to Cheryl Ellegood, Vice President of Business Development at McLaren Regional Medical Center. “By partnering with the online patient education resource Spine-health, we can feel confident referring our patients to a trusted source of information.”

McLaren’s team of spine specialists work together to develop a complete, individualized treatment plan for each patient that considers his or her diagnosis, lifestyle and treatment goals. This team works together to achieve the best possible outcomes for patients using leading edge technology, the latest techniques and the most effective therapies to help patients feel, move and live better.

“Spine-health is a premier provider of pain relief and treatment information,” noted Ellegood. “The articles and interactive videos allow patients to identify their symptoms and condition and research possible treatment options. We are very pleased to have our spine program and our prestigious team of spine experts with McLaren Regional featured both on the Group and individual physician pages of the Spine-health site.”

Learn more about the McLaren spine center by visiting its practice profile:
McLaren Regional Medical Center Spine Program
Congratulations to Catherine Montague who was nominated and selected as MRMC’s 1st Quarter 2010 recipient of the Beyond the Stars recognition award. Catherine is the Office Coordinator in the clerical area of the Internal Medicine Residency Group Practice. The Beyond the Stars Program was established to recognize outstanding performance on behalf of McLaren Regional Medical Center. Recipients of the award go beyond simply satisfying a customer. They make a personal commitment to providing exceptional customer service. Catherine’s nominator had many positive things to say about her. Specifically, her nominator said, “Cathy is an exuberant individual who brings enthusiasm and energy to her work place day after day. She has the most positive and practical attitude. One of her outstanding qualities is her problem solving skills, which are rooted in strong communication skills and the ability to see the opposite point of view. Furthermore her professionalism is outstanding. Cathy role models strong leadership as well as team work.” Catherine has spent her entire 15 plus years of service with the Internal Medicine Resident’s Group practice, starting has a receptionist. Catherine constantly strives for excellence in whatever she undertakes and is well-respected by her co-workers.

Congratulations, Catherine!

Please Join Us!

19th Annual McLaren Golf Classic August 9, 2010
For more information or to reserve your space, call 342-4087.
New Cardiac Rehab Gym Opens to Patients While Launching the McHealthy Program for Employees

The much anticipated opening of McLaren’s new Cardiac Rehab Gym on 1 North is not only exciting for staff and patients it also means new opportunities for McLaren employees. The gym officially opened to patients on Tuesday, May 4. The new space offers the Cardiac Rehab Program many enhancements that include a larger area (three times the space), new equipment, new flat screen televisions, a new telemetry heart monitoring system and windows to enjoy the Michigan weather. On May 6, the McHealthy Open House showcased the gym space to employees who were interested in joining the program. During non-patient hours (Monday through Friday, 5:00 a.m. to 6:50 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.) employees can work out on the vast array of cardio and strength equipment, take a yoga, zumba, or boot camp class, or even work with a personal trainer. Over 800 employees have already signed up for the McHealthy program which also includes monthly nutrition classes and indoor and outdoor walking paths. Information regarding the program, including gym and class hours are posted outside of the Cardiac Rehab gym. To access information regarding McHealthy, go to the MHC Intranet, and under the MRMC tab select McHealthy. If additional information is needed, contact Gai Clemmer on the McHealthy Hotline at 342-5573.
Making a Difference through the Gift of Life

An old man walked up a shore littered with thousands of starfish, beached and dying after a storm. A young man was picking them up and flinging them back into the ocean.

"Why do you bother?" the old man scoffed. "You’re not saving enough to make a difference."

The young man picked up another starfish and sent it spinning back to the water.

"Made a difference to that one."

At McLaren, families that give consent for organ donation will receive a handwritten card signed by the staff, a bookmark, a lapel pin, and a special bag to place their loved one’s belongings in, all with the starfish theme. These items are meant to help the family remember that their loved one made a difference. The Gift of Life flag will also be raised, at the front of the hospital, the day the family consents to organ donation and will remain up for 48 hours.

Robert Conlen, MRMC Engineering Dept., hoists the Gift of Life flag in honor of a family who donated their loved one’s organs.