

Welcome to the new *Partners in Health!*

We hope you enjoy the new look and feel of our community health magazine. It's our goal to bring you health content that's engaging and on target — the information and resources you need to keep yourself and your family healthy. In every issue, you'll learn how we are working to serve the health care needs of people in our communities. You'll also find helpful tips to empower you to live your healthiest life. (For instance, turn to Page 13 to discover how you can run your first 5K by fall.)

At St. Francis Regional Medical Center, we believe that people's most valuable asset is their good health. St. Francis is a partner with Essentia Community Hospitals and Clinics, Allina Hospitals & Clinics and Park Nicollet Health Services. Because of these partnerships, we are able to offer a full range of primary and specialty care services, including technically advanced inpatient and outpatient care, 24-hour emergency care, medical transportation, pharmacy, and home and community services. Whatever your age or stage, we're there for you.

Happy — and healthy — reading!

Partnering with patients care at St. Francis

At St. Francis Regional Medical Center, your care is planned and provided by teams of highly trained doctors, nurses, technicians, skilled administrators — and perhaps your neighbor.

Yes, your neighbor. “We know that listening to our patients helps us provide a better experience,” said Nancy Wolf, RN, director of quality and safety at St. Francis. “We have the medical knowledge and experience, but we look for ways to involve patients in their care and to understand their point of view.” St. Francis is now adding a volunteer community member — perhaps you or your neighbor — to bring patient input into the quality improvement teams that are charged with constantly looking for ways to improve care.

PLANNING TEAMS HEAR PATIENT POINT-OF-VIEW

“Because hospital employees work together on medical care every day, we have a point-of-view, procedures and a language that make sense to us, but might be irritating or confusing to patients,” said Wolf. “Having patient input as we plan our care improvement helps us prevent that.”

So far, two area residents are serving on hospital teams. Anne Weiers of New Prague has been on the Patient Satisfaction team for about a year. It monitors patient satisfaction measurements, looks at trends and compares St. Francis to other hospitals. Each hospital department has goals that are reviewed at each meeting. The team has developed gift programs for patients, patient comment and suggestion

cards, and recognition programs for departments that achieve the highest patient satisfaction ratings.

“I’m there to be the outsider,” said Weiers. “Often during discussions there are assumptions and language that are understood by medical professionals, but not patients. It’s my job to say, ‘Wait a minute, what does that mean?’ and to ask the questions that patients want answered.” Weiers enjoys the monthly meetings and feels she can make a big difference in a minimal amount of time.

Richard Stoks of Shakopee has been a member of the Falls Prevention team for several months. “Before I was asked to serve, I had no idea that teams like this were working hard to prevent patient falls and solve other problems,” he said. “St. Francis has a very good record, but we expect to show improvement on falls reduction. Team members build on each other’s ideas. When I bring up a point, it’s discussed and definitely not overlooked,” Stoks said.

improves



From left: Edwin Bogonko, MD of St. Francis; Anne Weiers of New Prague; and Kathryn Mason, RN, BSN, patient care supervisor at St. Francis. Weiers is a member of the Patient Satisfaction team at St. Francis, which works to improve patient care and satisfaction.

MAKING ST. FRANCIS A SAFER PLACE

Medical team members appreciate the input from community members like Stoks. “Dick is a valuable addition to the Falls Prevention team,” said Kathryn Mason, RN, BSN, patient care supervisor at St. Francis. “His insight into our falls data has helped us understand our challenges and opportunities for making St. Francis a safer place for all patients.”

St. Francis is seeking patient input on more teams, and Wolf encourages area residents to consider volunteering. Volunteers should have been a patient at St. Francis or be familiar with a family member’s experience at St. Francis. The job requires a willingness to ask questions, share experiences and opinions, and attend a monthly meeting. Participation is completely confidential, and no medical background is

required or desired. The following teams are seeking community members:

- The Healing Environment and Integrative Therapies team will focus on projects like hospital waiting areas and healing gardens, as well as integrated therapies like guided imagery.
- The Construction team comments on the design, traffic flow, overall feeling and user-friendliness of planned spaces.
- The Advanced Care Planning team tries to improve the flow of care resources for patients with chronic illnesses and those who require home care, hospice and palliative care.
- The Readmission Reduction team is charged with improving care to reduce readmission rates for patients with heart failure and pneumonia, who tend to return to the hospital.

Patients and families invited to SPEAK UP

Community participation on these teams is only one of many ways St. Francis partners with patients. Patients and their families are encouraged to ask questions and check and challenge their caregivers while they are in the hospital. The SPEAK UP program, introduced several years ago, encourages patients to speak up if they have questions or concerns about medicines, procedures or their health condition. Family members and friends are encouraged to advocate for and support the patient.

CALLING A RAPID RESPONSE TEAM FOR HELP

Family members at St. Francis can also call a Rapid Response team to a patient’s room if they feel the patient’s condition is rapidly deteriorating. Research shows that these teams, which include a nurse, critical care nurse and respiratory therapist, save lives.

“We encourage the use of Rapid Response teams because we can respond even more quickly,” said Nancy Wolf, RN, director of quality and safety at St. Francis. The team can be summoned with a phone call if the patient is experiencing warning signs like:

- pounding or racing heart
- feeling faint or light-headed
- difficulty breathing
- change in alertness
- change in ability to speak.

►► For more information about volunteering on care improvement teams, please call Nancy Wolf at **952-428-2261**.