Community Benefits: Not Random Acts of Kindness Anymore

New federal laws require nonprofit hospitals to conduct community health needs assessments in a standardized manner. The purpose of the assessments is to move community benefits from random acts of kindness to strategic planning that involves communities served. Here some Avera hospitals share processes and plans, and discuss the pitfalls and perks of meeting the new requirement.

The Process: A 10-member steering committee selected target focus groups based on frequent health care access: business, education, minorities, older adults, social services, mental health, civic and law enforcement, elected officials, patients and hospital staff. Organizational Learning and Community Relations departments helped conduct the groups.

The Possibilities: Despite the hospital’s addition of mental health services a few years ago, there is a need for more resources. Gaps in transportation and needs for radiation therapy for cancer patients and affordable dental care also exist.

The Plan: The Open Door Health Center, a mobile unit, now provides dental and other affordable care to people in need on a regular basis at the hospital parking lot on East College Drive. Public Health had been coordinating the project, and the hospital collaborated to provide the host site. Planning to meet other needs will be done in conjunction with the board later this year. The completed report will be published at www.Averamarshall.org.

The Surprise: The prevalence of demand for additional mental health services.

The Pitfall: Know how to distinguish community health needs with other “wants,” such as the desire for another store downtown or additional white-collar jobs. Be able to refocus the discussion.

The Perk: In working with other Minnesota groups, it became evident Avera has a strategic focus on the process and is leading the way.

The Pros: Contact Marty Seifert, executive director of the Avera Marshall Foundation, at (507) 537-9145, or Sr. Sharon Altendorf, vice president of Mission Services, at (507) 537-9032.

Of Band-Aids, Bucks and Buyer Centralization

Understood in Band-Aids, the value of centralizing Avera’s buying functions would cover a lot of skinned knees. In reality, the comparison isn’t such a bad one in the health care industry environment where buying decisions and processes make all the difference between hurting the organization and a healthier bottom line!

In fact, careful analysis determined that Avera has $9 million to gain over five years by bringing buyers under one reporting structure, making buying processes uniform and implementing new policies and software. That healthy savings can do a great deal to keep health care costs down and keep the organization strong — both of which translate to greater job stability for all Avera colleagues.

Purchasing Manager Ryan Rotar helped translate the savings into another image to illustrate the impact. “The money saved, if placed into one pile of one-dollar bills, would weigh 19,800 pounds or nearly 10 tons,” he notes. That’s BIG savings.

Avera Supply Chain employees recently began the centralization process, but it doesn’t mean that everyone will be working from one location. Buyers will remain throughout the regions but will operate under a unified structure with newly defined roles and responsibilities.

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Avera St. Luke’s Hospital in Aberdeen, S.D.
The Process: A 12-person team of hospital professionals who “touch” the community — equipped with fiscal and clinical analysis, and administrative vision — assembled six focus groups: students, community health providers, key hospital personnel, public agencies, community leaders and the underinsured and uninsured.

The Possibilities: Focus group participants gave many accolades to Avera St. Luke’s for the wonderful health care the hospital provides in the region. Areas of opportunity that were identified include a need for more education in the areas of mental health, diabetes, nutrition, obesity and preventive medicine. Transportation to health care and improved access for the underserved and uninsured also were noted as issues.

The Plan: The team will sift through the input (prioritized by each group) to determine top opportunities. This will be compared with data such as census, Emergency Department discharges and chronic-disease data to develop a plan.

The Surprises: The team members discovered that much of what they first wanted to do didn’t match the community’s needs, but the work is exciting, the opportunities are plentiful, and the team the “amped up” to respond with solutions.

The Pitfalls: Finding the right attendees and getting them to the groups in the right numbers — particularly the underserved — proved difficult. And, is there ever a good time for another project?

The Perks: Opportunities are opening up, and this work ties back to the Avera mission. There will be excitement over the next three years as the paper turns into a project that impacts the community.

The Pros: Other area hospitals, not all Avera facilities, called upon the team for assistance with their assessments. The team members shared data and the Avera toolkit, and made themselves available to assist. Contact Michael O’Keefe, executive director of Avera St. Luke’s Foundation, at (605) 622-5758 or michael.okeefe@avera.org.

Volunteer registries boost emergency preparedness

Volunteer registries help to identify professionals in advance, allowing them to volunteer and assist in health emergencies. The federal Emergency System for the Advanced registration of Volunteers (ESAR-VH) was created to help eliminate problems encountered in utilizing medical and health care volunteers in complex emergency situations. Volunteer registries help to identify professionals in advance, verify their credentials and provide them with disaster training so they’re ready to go in the event of a public health emergency.

The registries can be activated when a health care organization, county, state or federal agency requests volunteers. Registered volunteers choose whether to participate in any response and are not obligated to deploy.

Learn more about your state’s emergency health care volunteer registry:

Iowa: www.idph.state.ia.us/ddcr/SEVR.aspx
Minnesota: www.mirisponds.org
Nebraska: volunteers.ne.gov/ESAR-VH/Networks.jsp
North Dakota: www.ndhan.gov/PhEvr/phevr.asp
South Dakota: serv.sd.gov

What is eLTC?

eLTC is a relatively new service line in the Avera eCARE™ family of telehealth services. Residents of long-term care often suffer discomfort and disorientation when transferred out of their home settings, making healing and wellness more difficult to achieve. eLTC allows residents to stay in a familiar, homelike environment and still receive needed health care services.

- Improve access to high-quality care in a convenient, low-cost manner
- Provide around-the-clock urgent care to residents exhibiting acute symptoms not readily addressed during regular clinic hours
- Accurately assess residents’ conditions from hundreds of miles away
- Eliminate costly and exhausting transport to and from the clinic or hospital setting
- Reduce unnecessary transfers, allowing residents to be cared for in their homes by staff who know their unique needs

Avera Sacred Heart to expand service through grant

On Friday, April 6, U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D) announced that Avera Sacred Heart Hospital was the recipient of a federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services. The total grant award will be around $375,000 over three years and will expand eLTC (see sidebar) beyond the current four pilot sites to another 16 long-term-care centers.

The project is a partnership between Avera Sacred Heart, Avera eCARE™ Services and The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society. The project will also broaden the scope of the pilot by bringing additional resources, such as wound care, to the long-term-care setting.

Volunteers:

Volunteer Health Professionals (esAr-VHP) was created to participate in any response and are not obligated to deploy. esAr-VHP volunteers are not required to deploy and are available to support as needed by their state health departments, county, other state or federal agency requests.

esAr-VHP helps to coordinate, identify and mobilize the right volunteers when and where they are needed. To participate as an esAr-VHP volunteer in South Dakota, contact Kevin Kephart, PhD, at (605) 688-5642 or kevin.kephart@sdstate.edu.

Avera and South Dakota State University (SDSU) recently published a request for proposals soliciting research projects that demonstrate a collaborative effort between Avera and SDSU’s colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education and Human Sciences, Nursing and Pharmacy. The grant opportunity is for projects that have the potential to improve health care.

Up to $100,000 is available. Requests may not exceed $20,000. Projects, which will be funded for a one-year period, will be evaluated for:

- Strength of inter-organizational collaboration
- Relevance to health care and potential for advancing health care
- Quality of the proposal and proposed project
- Dissemination plans and potential for future extramural funding

Project proposals, due April 15 − 21, state health departments encouraged doctors, nurses, EMTs and other health care providers to register with statewide emergency registries of volunteers. Some registries also enroll other volunteers to assist in health emergencies.

Volunteers are not required to deploy and are available to support as needed. esAr-VHP volunteers can be used in applying for or renewal of the Gerontological nurse Certification.

For additional information about submitting a proposal, contact Kevin Kephart, PhD, at (605) 688-5642 or kevin.kephart@sdstate.edu.

Avera and SDSU

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Project proposals, due June 1, are to have co-principal investigators (one investigator is an Avera employee and one is an instructor-or-above-ranked SDSU faculty member).

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Patrick is an electrician by trade, so he knows electrical power, wiring, grounding and all that will be needed to bring the clinic’s wiring up to code, modernity and energy efficiency. He also understands the power each person has to make a difference in the world. “I am going to make the world better one step at a time by the things I can control,” Patrick says.

His first trip to Haiti was in 2010 when he worked at Avera Queen of Peace Hospital in Mitchell, S.D. “It gets a hold of you,” Patrick notes. In fact, he credits the visit with prompting him to his current work as a teacher. “I wanted more direct contact where I knew I was really helping people.”

When he returned to Jérémie in 2011, HHF Administrator Sr. Maryann Berard, OSF, had plans for him, and he had plans to reciprocate. “Sr. Maryann knew what makes me tick,” he notes of her ability to size up people and draw out their talents. Sr. Maryann supplied him with the blueprints to the building. Patrick agreed to send them back with the next Avera group.

From that point on, Patrick says, “Every obstacle — whenever we ran into a roadblock — it was removed. When your heart is in the right place, things just happen,” he explains.

Math Electric, Inc., in Mitchell, S.D., helped him copy the blueprints and redesign a wiring plan for all four floors of the building. (Only the second floor where the clinic is located is being rewired this trip.) The company also helped him obtain the needed materials at a generous discount. A Sioux Falls businesswoman donated essential power tools. Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc., in Sioux Falls trucked the supplies to HHF’s Connecticut offices, also at a discount. Once there, they were loaded into a container for shipment to Haiti.

Patrick estimates total project expenses with shipping, materials and tools at $12,000. “The retail value of the design would be close to $22,000,” he notes, expressing amazement at the donations and price breaks others gave to the project.

To recruit the team he says he just talked about it, at first with his second-year students. Friends talked to friends, and before he knew it, he had assembled an eight-person team.

Asked if all of the permits and permissions are in place, Patrick explains that if wiring works, it is a success by third-world standards. But, he says the group is bringing their work and check out.

How you can help

Donate to Avera’s work in Haiti at www.Avera.org. Select “Avera Foundations” on the left. Choose “Avera Health Foundation.” Then select “Make a Gift Online” on the left. Fill out the online donation form choosing “Mission Work (Haiti)” in the program area drop-down box. Click “Add to Cart,” and check out.

Most of us expect that when we flip a switch, something will happen. But that experience isn’t so true for many people in our world, including workers at the Haitian Health Foundation’s (HHF) outpatient clinic, Klinik Pep Bondye-a (Clinic of the People of God) in Jérémie.

Thanks to one man who really understands power, all of that is about to change. The man is Patrick Soukup.

The Klinik Pep Bondye-a features the following:

- Fully stocked pharmacy
- Medical X-ray and sonogram — the only such services in the area
- Clinical laboratory
- Fully equipped eye examination room
- Fully equipped and staffed dental clinic
- Diabetes treatment center
- Staff of physicians, dentists, nurses, technical assistants and others

**Mission Work (Haiti)**

**friends?**

If you have any questions, please visit our website at www.Avera.org. Contact us via phone at 3900 W. Avera Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57108 or allofus@avera.org. Avera is published quarterly by Avera. Its purpose is to communicate activities 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.
Proud!
AVERA PRAIRIE CENTER
The Prairie Center on the Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health System campus in Sioux Falls, S.D., recently received recognition on two fronts:
- the award for Best Project in Health Care from ENR Mountain States magazine (an engineering news periodical covering Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota) and
- two Green Globes for its efforts in maintaining sustainability and overall environmental performance.
- The Prairie Center is home to the Avera Cancer Institute and the Avera Surgery Center.

“This is evidence that we take pride in being good stewards, both in energy conservation and providing a healthy environment for staff and patients,” says Current Peters, director of Facility Development at Avera McKennan.

Perfect!
AVERA ST. LUKE’S KIDNEY DIALYSIS
The Kidney Dialysis Unit at Avera St. Luke’s Hospital in Aberdeen, S.D., scored a 100-out-of-100 (a perfect score) in meeting quality standards set by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The hospital’s score on its End-Stage Renal Disease Quality Incentive Program evaluation is above the national average of 26. CMS scores on total performance of three individual facility measures and how closely performance comes to CMS standards. All facilities are required to display their Performance Score Certificate in a public area throughout 2012.

Top-Performing! www.AVIRA.org
A study in the “Journal of Healthcare Management” assessed the performance of 25 hospital and health system websites in the United States based on best practices in the areas of accessibility, context, marketing, technology and overall quality. The Avera site scored 8.1 on a 10-point scale, tying for fifth place with four other systems listed in the top six. The mean overall score in the study was 6.37, and the maximum was 9.4.

In 2011, more than 80 percent of adults reported using the internet as a resource for health care quality information.

Best! ***** Outstanding!
AVERA HOSPITALS
HealthGrades® has rated Avera St. Luke’s the best in South Dakota in cardiac intervention (angioplasty and stents) for 2012. HealthGrades also gave Avera Heart Hospital in Sioux Falls, S.D., five-star ratings for:

- Cardiac surgery for six years in a row
- Coronary bypass surgery for nine years in a row
- Treatment of heart attack for 10 years in a row
- Value surgery for 10 years in a row

In 2011, HealthGrades named Avera McKennan the best in South Dakota in orthopaedic joint replacement, neuroscience, gastrointestinal medical treatment and cardiac care. Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton, S.D., and Avera Heart Hospital also received 2011 HealthGrades Outstanding Patient Experience Awards™. HealthGrades is the nation’s most-trusted, independent source of physician information and hospital quality ratings.

Gold Seal
AVERA MARSHALL IMAGING
The Imaging Center at Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center, Marshall, Minn., has been awarded three-year terms of accreditation in magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography and ultrasound as the result of review by the American College of Radiology (ACR). The mammography program has been continually accredited since 1988. The ACR gold seal of accreditation represents the highest level of image quality and patient safety.

Innovative!
AVERA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER
An article in the Feb. 1, 2012 edition of “Catholic Health World” touts the innovative approach taken in the creation of the Avera Behavioral Health Center to reduce the fear and stigma that keep people from seeking behavioral health care. The front-page feature story calls the approach “advocacy for the mentally ill” and says it is a “bricks-and-mortar testament” to the Sioux Falls region that Avera McKennan places its behavioral health services on par with its other medical services. The article can be found by entering “Avera Behavioral Health” in the search bar at www.chausa.org.

Another First!
AVERA SOUTHERN IOWA
The National Weather Service (NWS) recently announced that Avera McKennan is “StormReady.” The hospital is the first faith-based nonprofit organization to achieve the designation. Avera McKennan has worked closely with the NWS, the City of Sioux Falls and Minnehaha County to better prepare its facilities for the next weather disaster. Former Manager of Communications Jason diMercurio, who passed away in August 2011, laid the groundwork for ensuring various departments and the organization as a whole are prepared.

29,400 Roses
AVERA FOUNDATIONS
Twenty-four facilities participated in the annual “Roses... Just Because” fundraiser this year, and 7,700 dozen roses were ordered.

New this year was a partnership between the Avera Foundation and the YWCA – Avera of Sioux Falls, which brought the event to a broader audience. Other participating facilities included:

- Avera St. Luke’s Hospital, Aberdeen, S.D.
- United Living Community Avera, Brookings, S.D.
- Avera De Smet Memorial Hospital, De Smet, S.D.
- Avera Dell Rapids Hospital, Dell Rapids, S.D.
- Avera Illinois Valley Community Hospital, Harvard, Ill.
- Avera Carter County Memorial Hospital, Columbus, Neb.
- Avera Good Samaritan Medical Center, Atchison, Kan.
- Avera Health
- Avera McKennan in Sioux Falls, S.D.
- Avera’s 25 hospitals

The week-long event raised $111,000 for local community organizations that provide health care services.

BEST!
SIX AVERA NURSING HOMES
Six Avera nursing homes are listed in the U.S. News & World Report rankings as Best Nursing Homes in 2012. The facilities are:

- Avera Assisi Healthcare Center, Mitchell, S.D.
- Avera Bethany Care Center, Avera, Platte, S.D.
- Avera Culpepper Health Center, Mitchell, S.D.
- Avera Elizabeth Health Services, Mitchell, S.D.
- Avera Gertrude Health Services, Mitchell, S.D.
- Avera Good Samaritan Medical Center, Mitchell, S.D.

All six received overall five-star ratings from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. A facility’s overall rating is graded in its performance in health inspections, nurse staffing and medical care.

Beautiful!
AVERA URGENT CARE IN MITCHELL
Avera Urgent Care in Mitchell, S.D., recently received the 2012 Chamber City Beautification Committee’s Community Improvement Award in the Public/Nonprofit category. In just more than six months after opening, the clinic was already providing care to an average of 15 patients on weekends and up to 40 patients on weekdays.

2,500 #EMERGENCY MISSION!
Avera’s #Emergency program recently celebrated the 2,500-patient milestone!

The program, which began in October 2009, has grown to 57 hospitals in six states. #Emergency reaches beyond the Avera service area to as far west as Brandon, Minn., on the Canadian border and to as far east as Atlantic, Iowa, along the Idaho state line. #Emergency: more than 550 patients have avoided costly transfers. Some 350 of those patients were admitted to local hospitals. Learn more at www.Avera.org/ECARE.
Bill McLean has been named senior vice president for Human Resources for Avera. The appointment comes following a national search with more than 60 candidates.

In the role, Bill will work with Human Resources professionals across the system to standardize operations and centralize functions. The process will bring together nearly 100 Human Resources employees from five regional centers serving nearly 14,000 employees and physicians across the Avera system. Bill will begin the new position July 1.

Past: For 13 years he has been senior vice president of Human Resources for Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center in Sioux Falls. There he has worked on a variety of key projects including culture change, benefits redesign and development of the physician employment model. He began his health care career in 1984 and since 1986 has primarily been involved in health care human resources administration, working in Fargo and Bismarck, N.D., before coming to Sioux Falls.

Present: Bill says, “As reimbursement models change, health care delivery will change accordingly. The Human Resources team will be in the middle of the culture change-management process. We have to find ways to deliver human resources services more effectively and efficiently as we centralize and standardize some processes and functions. Pay practices and benefits structures are an example. Aligning our leaders with common leadership skills is another priority.”

Personal: His father was a small-town doctor, and his mother was a nurse. Though he was born in New York City, he grew up in rural North Dakota, the oldest of six. He says his values were formed by what he calls “the utopian, Upper Midwest small-town lifestyle.” He and his wife, Judy, have two children and two grandchildren.

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Nick Fosness is the new CEO and administrator at Marshall County Healthcare Center Avera in Briton, S.D. Nick was formerly executive director and administrator of Long-Term Care at St. Mary’s Healthcare Center in Pierre, S.D. Previously, he served as administrator of Long-Term Care and Critical-Access Hospitals.

Justin Garry, manager of Avera Medical Group Neurosurgery Sioux Falls, received the Early Careerist Award from the University of Missouri Health Management and Informatics Alumni Association in conjunction with the American College of Healthcare Executives Annual Congress in Chicago, Ill., on March 20.

Deanne Geditz is the new director of Health Information Management at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital. Previously she was assistant director of Health Information Management.

Lynn Hagen, director of Human Resources at Avera McKennan, recently was named Senior Professional of the Year by The Sioux Empire Society for Human Resource Management.

Alan Holguin, marketing manager at Avera McKennan, has accepted the position of director of Account Services for the hospital.

Franz Kuffer is the new executive director of the Avera Sacred Heart Foundation. She has been with Avera Sacred Heart Hospital for three years as Strategic Marketing manager.

Rod King, PA-C, Avera Medical Group Brookings, has received the Distinguished Service Award for 2012 from the South Dakota Academy of Physician Assistants.

Laura Sangster has accepted the position of director of Volunteers and Gift Shop at Avera St. Luke’s Hospital.

Jamie Schaefer, vice president of Finance at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, recently was elected treasurer of the South Dakota chapter of the Health Care Finance Management Association.

Cathi Scharnberg, RN, MPH, ARNP, vice president of Patient Care and Compliance officer at Avera Holy Family Hospital in Estherville, Iowa, has been named one of 100 Great Iowa Nurses 2012. She was chosen by a team of 21 reviewers from more than 500 nominations. She will be honored at an event in Des Moines on May 6.

Dr. Theresa Campbell has been named medical director for the Avera Queen of Peace Palliative Care Program.

Dr. Paul Carpenter of North Central Heart Institute, a partner with Avera Heart Hospital, recently received an Outstanding Teaching Award from the Sanford School of Medicine at The University of South Dakota (USD). Dr. Carpenter is a clinical professor of medicine at the school and has been a USD faculty member for 30 years.

Dr. Steve Gutnik, Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C., recently was honored for excellence in teaching by the department of internal Medicine at the Sanford School of Medicine at The University of South Dakota (USD). Dr. Carpenter is a clinical professor of medicine at the school and has been a USD faculty member for 30 years.

Dr. Erick Tausen of Avera Medical Group Pediatrics Aberdeen recently was awarded a Childhood Immunization Champion award by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
NEW PROVIDERS

THE FOLLOWING PROVIDERS HAVE JOINED AVERA MEDICAL GROUP:

**Dr. David Balt** is a graduate of Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, Mo. He completed a family medicine residency at Naval Hospital Charleston, S.C. Dr. Balt joins Avera Medical Group Emergency Medicine Mitchell in Mitchell, S.D.

**Dr. William Del Monte** is a graduate of Creighton University, Omaha. He completed a psychiatry residency and a child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at Mayo Clinic School of Medicine and Science, Rochester, Minn. Dr. Del Monte joins Avera Mitchell Psychiatry Associates in Marshall, Minn.

**Dr. Ahmed Galal** is a graduate of Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt. He completed an internal medicine residency at Dallam University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, a hematology fellowship at University of Western Ontario and an allurgical bone marrow transplant fellowship at University of Toronto, Ontario. Dr. Galal joins Avera Medical Group Hematology & Bone Marrow Transplant Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. Scott Hiltunen** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. He completed a family medicine residency at USD Hospital, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Dr. Hiltunen joins Avera Medical Group University Psychiatry Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. Michael Pochop** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. He completed a residency in anesthesiology at Chamberl Medical Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington. Dr. Pochop joins Yankton Anesthesiology in Yankton, S.D.

**Dr. Eri Shinozaki** is a graduate of Yamanashi Medical University, Japan. She completed an internal medicine residency at the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Sioux Falls. Dr. Shinozaki joins Avera Medical Group Hospitalists Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. James Simon** is a graduate of the University of Iowa College of Medicine, Iowa City. He completed a radiation oncology residency at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City. Dr. Simon joins Avera Medical Group Radiation Oncology Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. Steven Vander Lent** is a graduate of Des Moines University- Osteopathic Medical Center, Iowa. He completed a family medicine residency at Saint Louis Medical Education Foundation, Sioux City, Iowa. Dr. Vander Lent joins Avera Medical Group Lakes Family Practice in Spirit Lake, Iowa.

**Dr. Melissa Younger** is a graduate of Pacific University College of Optometry, Forest Grove, Ore. Dr. Younger joins Avera Medical Group Ophthalmology Redwood Falls in Redwood Falls, Minn.

**Theresa Bly, P.A-C.** is a graduate of Wichita State University. Josie joins Avera Marshall Specialty Clinic in Marshall, Minn.

**Jeff Konstanz, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. Jeff joins Avera Medical Group Chamberlin in Chamberlin, S.D.

**Leah Mergen, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha. Leah joins Avera Medical Group Urogynecology Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**T. Grace Petermann, CNP,** is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha. Grace joins Avera Medical Group Comprehensive Breast Care in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Emily Roberts, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. Emily joins Avera Medical Group Maternal Fetal Medicine Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Melissa Scolling, CNP,** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. Melissa joins Avera Marshall Specialty Clinic in Marshall, Minn.

**Sharon Simon, CNP,** is a graduate of the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks. Sharon joins Avera Medical Group Webster in Webster, S.D.

**Travis Slaba, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. Travis joins Avera Medical Group Hemoglobin in Harrisburg, S.D.

**Dr. Jeffrey Luther** is a graduate of Sanford School of Medicine, Sioux Falls. Dr. Luther joins Midwest Family Care in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Abigail Gramlick-Mueller, CNP,** is a graduate of South Dakota State University, Brookings. Abigail joins Midwest Family Care in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Jessa Oakley, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of North Dakota School of Medicine, Grand Forks. Jess joins Midwest Family Care in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Lindsey Peterson, GNP,** is a graduate of South Dakota State University, Brookings. Lindsey joins Dakota Allergy & Asthma in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Darcie Schmidt, FNP,** is a graduate of South Dakota State University, Brookings. Darcie joins Sioux Surgical Institute of South Dakota – Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**David Spreecher, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, Madison. David joins Midwest Family Care in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Kari Varner, ARNP,** is a graduate of Creighton University School of Medicine, Omaha. Kari joins Floyd Valley Hospital Family Medicine Clinics – Le Mars in Le Mars, Iowa.

**T. Grace Petermann, CNP,** is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha. Grace joins Avera Medical Group Comprehensive Breast Care in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. James Simon** is a graduate of the University of Iowa College of Medicine, Iowa City. He completed a radiation oncology residency at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City. Dr. Simon joins Avera Medical Group Radiation Oncology Sioux Falls.

**Dr. Michael Pochop** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. He completed a residency in anesthesiology at Chamberl Medical Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington. Dr. Pochop joins Yankton Anesthesiology in Yankton, S.D.

**Dr. Eri Shinozaki** is a graduate of Yamanashi Medical University, Japan. She completed an internal medicine residency at the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Sioux Falls. Dr. Shinozaki joins Avera Medical Group Hospitalists Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. Scott Hiltunen** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. He completed a family medicine residency at USD Hospital, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Dr. Hiltunen joins Avera Medical Group University Psychiatry Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. Michael Pochop** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. He completed a residency in anesthesiology at Chamberl Medical Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington. Dr. Pochop joins Yankton Anesthesiology in Yankton, S.D.

**Dr. James Simon** is a graduate of the University of Iowa College of Medicine, Iowa City. He completed a radiation oncology residency at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City. Dr. Simon joins Avera Medical Group Radiation Oncology Sioux Falls.

**Dr. Steven Vander Lent** is a graduate of Des Moines University- Osteopathic Medical Center, Iowa. He completed a family medicine residency at Saint Louis Medical Education Foundation, Sioux City, Iowa. Dr. Vander Lent joins Avera Medical Group Lakes Family Practice in Spirit Lake, Iowa.

**Dr. Melissa Younger** is a graduate of Pacific University College of Optometry, Forest Grove, Ore. Dr. Younger joins Avera Medical Group Ophthalmology Redwood Falls in Redwood Falls, Minn.

**Theresa Bly, P.A-C.** is a graduate of Wichita State University. Josie joins Avera Marshall Specialty Clinic in Marshall, Minn.

**Jeff Konstanz, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. Jeff joins Avera Medical Group Chamberlin in Chamberlin, S.D.

**Leah Mergen, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha. Leah joins Avera Medical Group Urogynecology Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**T. Grace Petermann, CNP,** is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha. Grace joins Avera Medical Group Comprehensive Breast Care in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Emily Roberts, PA-C.** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. Emily joins Avera Medical Group Maternal Fetal Medicine Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, S.D.

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Avera Health
3900 W. Avera Drive
Sioux Falls, SD 57108

Resident’s Letter

Systemness — We Are Standing Together

You can safely bet that I will never reflect on the state nature of health care. It seems redundant to observe once again that ours is an industry synonymous with change. All the same, on the occasion to celebrate the life and passing of one of Avera’s greatest, I found myself doing just that.

As many of us gathered in Aberdeen to say goodbye to Sr. Colman Coakley, I began to think of all the changes and challenges she faced — different than today’s but no less significant. She was a senior leader for what is now Avera, and many knew her in her role with the Presentation Health Care Council and Presentation Health System. She steered the organization through Medicare and price caps, changes in structure and marketplace, placing the early health system in the direction it needed to go.

Visiting Aberdeen at this time of marketplace change, I found myself reading the 1960s when a group of physicians and employees left then St. Luke’s Hospital and set up another hospital. We had to ask ourselves if we were doing the right thing for the community and why our coworkers were going across town to compete with us. But our colleagues then understood that there was an original calling to a health ministry sponsored by the Presentation Sisters, and it is a unique calling that carries through to today. Avera St. Luke’s has served the community since 1901, and it will be in place another 100 years from now. Ours is simply the task to take it in the direction it needs to go.

What the Benedictine Sisters of Yankton, S.D., and the Presentation Sisters of Aberdeen, S.D., began has grown into the Avera health system. It is interesting to reflect on the word “system” itself. Its roots are in two Greek words, one meaning “together,” and the other meaning “to cause to stand.” In the face of the changes and challenges in providing health care, standing together means we bring all of the strengths of the system to bear in each individual situation. Our support and strength behind each Avera facility brings greater, higher-quality care to each community than could be provided singularly.

Standing together also means we can deliver better value. Since the beginning of Avera, we have expressed that our sharing of support services as a system keeps costs as low as possible. Some 12 years into the Avera system, we are finding new ways to bring support services together. The buyer centralization you read about in this issue is one example. The support provided to the community health needs assessment initiatives is another.

Moving forward we will continue to find opportunities to further enhance how we can become more efficient, proficient and skilled as health care professionals who stand together — restructuring where needed, right sizing as appropriate and reconfiguring our long-standing vision to meet today’s challenges.

Strong Team Forms to Lead AveraChart

Avera recently announced the formation of a physician leadership team responsible for advancing AveraChart, the organization’s existing electronic medical record (EMR). Dr. Kim Jundt has accepted the role of chief medical information officer for Avera, replacing Dr. Todd Jacobs who became chief medical officer of Avera Medical Group in January.

Dr. Jundt heads the physician IT leadership team, which also includes two medical information officers: Dr. Andrew Burchett, who is newly appointed, and Dr. Jennifer McKay, who assumed her role in January. While both medical information officers will drive EMR success by providing physician leadership in the planning, design, development and implementation of clinical information systems, Dr. McKay, a hospitalist with Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, brings immeasurable expertise to the initiative. Dr. Burchett adds clinic-side physician wisdom to the enterprise.

When the three reflect on the challenges ahead for health care IT, common themes surface. All are keenly educated on the government mandates for health care IT. The three also express excitement that Avera Medical Group is at the forefront of empowering physician adoption of technologies and processes to improve patient care and keep health care costs low. Their mutual commitment is to further optimize AveraChart to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, and improve patient outcomes.

Learn more about Dr. McKay in the winter issue of All of Us.

Dr. Jundt began his health care career in family practice in Aberdeen in June 1997. He is a native of Loita, S.D., attended Leola High School and graduated from Northern State University, Aberdeen, S.D. He received a medical degree from the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion, and completed a residency at Siouxcity Clinic in Sioux City, Iowa. Dr. Jundt is board-certified in family practice and served as a medical information officer for the Avera St. Luke’s region for the past two years. He will begin transitioning to his new role this summer from his current practice, Avera Aberdeen Family Physicians — one of the busiest practices in Avera Medical Group. The practice has been at the forefront of implementing the EMR to create efficiency and improve patient care.

Dr. Jundt and his wife, Lara, have two children. He has served on the board of the Brown County United Way since 2005 and is past president of the Avera St. Luke’s Hospital medical staff. Dr. Jundt enjoys golf and is a highly competitive fantasy football player.

Dr. Burchett graduated from Harlan Community High School in Harlan, Iowa. He received a degree in exercise science from the University of Iowa in Iowa City, and a degree in osteopathic medicine from Des Moines University — College of Osteopathic Medicine, Iowa. Dr. Burchett completed the Sioux Falls Family Medicine Residency Program and is board-certified in family medicine. He began his health care career as a family practice physician at Avera Medical Group McGrawy, 5th Avenue in September 2006. Dr. Burchett has served as medical information officer for the Avera McKennan region for the past two years. He will transition to his new role this summer.

He and his wife, Dr. Andrea Miller, are the parents of 3 year-old twins. He shares a passion for piloting planes with his father, enjoys lake life at Okoboji, Iowa, and is in the process of restoring a 1973 Fiat Spider convertible. He is an early IT adopter with a passion for innovation and a strong work ethic that he says he inherited from entrepreneurial parents.