



## CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

# 10 Catholic Hospitals on Best Places to Work List

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The eight short articles that follow are written by representatives of CHA member hospitals that appeared in *Modern Healthcare's* 2010 list of "100 Best Places to Work in Healthcare." The 100-Best list is derived from a survey of employees and administrators at self-nominated hospitals. *Health Progress* invited these Catholic hospitals, listed here alphabetically, to provide some mission-related specifics about ways they care for their employees, those policies or programs that help to make their organizations satisfying workplaces.



## Baptist Hospital

Nashville, Tenn.

A member of St. Thomas Health and Ascension Health

By **MARTHA UNDERWOOD**, director of human resources, and **JULIE O'CONNOR**, vice president of mission

Comments from our new-hire feedback forms: "It feels wonderful to be with people who understand the true call of health care." "Thank you for making me feel like an asset instead of an expense; I look forward to my ministry and thank you again for the opportunity to serve."

These types of feelings are not unusual following the first two days new associates spend at Baptist Hospital in Nashville, Tenn. The largest not-for-profit hospital in Middle Tennessee with approximately 1,600 associates, we feel our associates are called to serve and that their work is sacred — whether employed as a nurse, in a clerical support area, facilities maintenance or administration. All members of our staff are aware of what their role means to our overall ministry and that it takes a team to fulfill our mission.

Each spring, the hospital conducts an associate engagement survey, with approximately 90 percent of the staff participating. In the comments from this survey and the Best Places to Work in Healthcare survey, staff members say that they:

- Know their job makes a difference
- Connect with our mission to serve the poor and vulnerable
- Appreciate the opportunity to share their spirituality in their daily work with one another and their patients
- Truly enjoy their co-workers, physicians and caring for patients
- Agree with the hospital's increased focus on safe care
- Appreciate great benefits and the support of a healthy work/life balance

Over the past few years, Baptist Hospital has been focused on increasing associate engagement and ensuring associates have a voice in the work they do. We want associates who are engaged in a model community of inspired people. Through our commitment to a model community, we foster and promote a positive organizational climate in which all of us play an active role in shaping a truly human community that enables all of us to flourish.

One of our most successful tools is the daily huddle. Every morning, the leaders huddle to assess the day's activities that could have an impact on patient care, patient safety, associate safety, operations or satisfaction. Leaders then take the information back to their own units and hold huddles with employees there. Issues that aren't resolved in unit huddles are escalated to the leadership huddle so they are addressed within 24 hours.

Huddles are more than a quick “check-in” meeting. They provide a chance to recognize associates who have done an exceptional job, made a great patient safety catch or identified a service recovery opportunity with a patient. Huddles close with a prayer for the patients, families and associates who will be in the hospital during that day.

Town hall meetings are held each quarter with several sessions covering all shifts. Associates can ask any questions. For those not able to attend, a summary is available along with a video from one of the sessions. Associates also can send a question, suggestion or try to verify any rumors by submitting them to “Ask the CEO or CNO,” and these always are answered. In addition, the CEO makes regular rounds on hospital units.

We encourage associates to participate in activities that will help them grow professionally. For example, the Professional Nursing Ladder Program is a voluntary program that encourages registered nurses in direct areas of patient care to pursue the development of professional, clinical, educational and leadership skills to enhance their careers and to promote the profession and image of nursing. A group of front line nurses from the neonatal intensive care unit and labor and delivery recently presented to the senior leadership team their work on several pilot programs to advance care for fragile newborns as part of a statewide initiative. They expressed how much they feel supported by leadership to participate in more than just bedside care.

We have a program that encompasses eliminating waste where the work is done, including wasting time. Teams, including front line staff, are encouraged to assess processes and make immediate changes to deal with such issues as staff or patients waiting and disorganization of supplies or equipment and more.

Over the past three years, Baptist Hospital has been focused on further improving patient safety and associate safety. The number of serious safety events has decreased by 80 percent, resulting in an injury rate that is now below the national average for a health care facility. These accomplishments could not have been done without a change in culture, which has included safety coaches on each unit. These coaches are respected members of our front line staff.

Beyond competitive compensation, we have some extra perks that make our hospital a great place to work. They range from access to a nearby child-care facility, an on-site pharmacy with delivery to employees in the workplace to self-

scheduling for shifts and an on-site wellness center with discounted rates for employees, spouses and children.

## Chelsea Community Hospital

Chelsea, Mich.

Chelsea Community Hospital is affiliated with Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, a member of Trinity Health.



By **CINDY H. HARRISON, M.B.A., H.S.A.**, vice president of human resources, and **LINDA W. FITZGERALD**

With 1,054 employees and 113 beds, Chelsea Community Hospital certainly isn't one of the nation's biggest hospitals. So how did a small hospital create an outstanding work environment? The answer to that question goes back more than 10 years — and continues to the present day.

By 2001, 31 years after its founding, Chelsea had evolved from a small, physician-owned enterprise to a thriving, not-for-profit hospital in a market that included such powerhouses as the University of Michigan Medical Center and Saint Joseph Mercy Health System.

That year, for the first time, the hospital contracted with health care consultants Press Ganey Inc. of South Bend, Ind., to poll its patient population. Contrary to expectations, the results were — in the words of one hospital executive — “agonizingly average.” Patient satisfaction was at the 80th percentile.

Something had to be done.

As a first step, senior management invited the entire workforce to a series of town hall meetings to determine areas needing improvement. Within several weeks, key findings had been translated into dozens of prioritized action items. That list — which included everything from patient clinical processes to parking lot design — formed the agenda for management. Employee teams were assigned to come up with detailed recommendations.

Looking back at that time period, Chelsea's director of quality improvement, Jim Barb, notes, “We realized that patient satisfaction, physician satisfaction and employee satisfaction were inseparable. Therefore, our goal was to have every worker invested in the organization, profession-

ally and emotionally.”

With that in mind, Chelsea began an intensive educational program for all senior-level employees based on Stephen Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The program was so successful that it was extended to the hospital’s workforce.

By treating everyone as a stakeholder, the training gave employees a common language, clear expectations, shared understandings and a sense of ownership. The focus on leadership development continues to the present day, with ongoing education for all employees and two days of intensive training each year for leadership.

Looking beyond its generous benefit package — which included the state’s first employer-sponsored day care program — Chelsea began a concerted effort to make employees feel truly valued. Initiatives included a before- and after-school latchkey program, an annual employee appreciation day, a yearly awards banquet, family events, wellness and fitness programs, an ongoing peer recognition program, special activities for satellite locations and night-shift employees and an on-site farmers’ market.

Today, Chelsea Community Hospital continues to promote a culture of trust and openness — one in which senior staff are accessible, suggestions are encouraged and change is welcomed.

Concerns are aired at periodic town hall meetings. The executive team provides updates and fields questions at employee forums, held three times each year. Quality councils, opinion surveys, weekly patient safety leadership rounds and departmental staff meetings offer additional

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opportunities for workers to make themselves heard. Also, periodically, a dozen employees are chosen at random to attend an afternoon “tea-and-talk” with the hospital’s president and CEO, Kathleen Griffiths.

In 2009, Chelsea Community Hospital merged with Saint Joseph Mercy Health System and became part of Trinity Health’s 44-member network. That milestone event has led to exceptional opportunities for growth and service and spurred a recommitment to the hospital’s core values. Lawrence Handelsman, MD, vice president for medical affairs, expressed it this way: “By

maintaining our sense of purpose, by mobilizing our individual passion and by relying on the trust gained through years of working together, we will continue to be — in the words of one of my past resident physicians — ‘the little hospital that works,’ the hospital that strives to combine national standards of health care excellence with the best of small-town values.”

## CHRISTUS St. Michael Health System

Texarkana, Texas

A member of CHRISTUS Health System



By **CHRIS KARAM**, President/CEO

Vince Lombardi may have best summarized my thoughts about CHRISTUS St. Michael’s Best Place to Work recognition. In one of his many interviews as an NFL head football coach, Lombardi said, “the achievements of an organization are the results of the combined efforts of each individual.”

The culture we have created is deeply rooted in our associates and also within our community. Our core values and standards guide us in all we do — in how we treat one another and how we care for our patients. Our associates understand that it takes each one of us to create a best place to work, and when we face challenges, we work together diligently to address them. Before associates join our health care ministry, they are introduced to our culture so they can determine if they believe CHRISTUS St. Michael is a good fit for them.

Addressing compensation issues is a critical starting point in creating and maintaining a best workplace. An organization doesn’t have to be the highest in salary or benefits, but unless it is market competitive in these areas, other positive actions will be overshadowed. Next in importance is addressing issues creating concern in a timely manner, even if it’s not possible to always give the answers associates want to hear.

We believe that open, honest and ongoing communication is key, recognizing that the more our associates know — good or bad — the more it helps them better understand and adapt to challenges. Our motto is communicate, communicate and then communicate again — and never sur-

prise associates. I strongly believe that effective communication helps our associates have ownership of our very special health care ministry.

We keep them informed through *St. Michael Monitor*, our employee newsletter, and in monthly meetings with all staff members, department directors and managers use an agenda that ensures participants receive pertinent information and have time to discuss topics as needed. Associate com-

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munication boards are placed strategically in 32 locations throughout facilities for sharing progress toward our organization's goals and demonstrating associates' contributions to the outcomes.

Before releasing information to external audiences, we strive to share news with internal stakeholders, usually via email blasts. Additionally, we conduct flexibly scheduled "town meetings" three times a year, giving associates the opportunity to participate in one of 15 to 16 sessions. At the close of each of these meetings, associates are invited to evaluate the content and offer ideas for future topics. They also can submit follow-up questions, which are published along with answers, in a special edition of the *St. Michael Monitor*.

Quarterly, directors and managers meet off site to participate in our Leader Development Institute, a component of our organizational effectiveness strategy. Leaders meet with associates monthly to assess whether they have the resources needed to perform their jobs and to respond to other questions. This process helps our leaders gauge employee satisfaction and identify associates who deserve recognition.

In addition to our competitive salaries, all associates who pursue additional training and education are compensated accordingly if the efforts pertain to their positions. We also compensate associates financially on a quarterly basis when labor, supply and patient satisfaction goals are met, and associates participate in an annual evaluation process which can lead to an annual salary increase of up to 3 percent when individual and organization goals are achieved.

Management team members at CHRISTUS St. Michael understand that creating a best work

place is one of their key responsibilities, and they are held accountable for employee satisfaction. Our leaders know they will be asked to present improvement plans if associate satisfaction scores or other feedback indicates a need.

As a way of making our health system a best place to work for leaders too, we make sure they have appropriate resources and training to ensure their success and strengthen our management teams.

Our mentorship program is another way we identify people who are capable of additional responsibility. Potential leaders shadow members of the administration team for a one-year period to help develop leadership skills and in-depth

knowledge of our organization. We also offer School at Work (SAW), a workforce development system that helps associates fine-tune skills they need for future advancement.

When we receive recognitions or awards, we give credit where it is due — to our associates. We believe that CHRISTUS St. Michael is only as good as its associates, and we are blessed to have a workforce that embraces what our founding religious sisters created.

## Holy Name Medical Center

Teaneck, N.J.

Holy Name Medical Center is sponsored by its founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.



By **BARBARA FRANZESE CRON**, manager, marketing communications

Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, N.J., is one of five hospitals in the relatively small and highly competitive geographic area that is Bergen County, N.J., minutes from New York City. But in many ways the medical center, founded in 1925, stands alone in its reputation for workplace excellence.

Holy Name succeeds in balancing technological and clinical sophistication with the mission of its founders and the tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. Using its mission as a guide for organizational objectives and human resources strate-

gies and policies, the 361-bed hospital fosters a family-oriented workplace culture that incorporates a high-end benefits package and programs of engagement, recognition and reward to foster job satisfaction for nearly 2,000 employees.

Holy Name's comprehensive health benefits package includes virtually free medical care at Holy Name, with no deductibles or service limits, and a flexible plan design that allows employees and their families to receive care from other facilities. There is also life insurance, disability insurance, a prescription drug plan and a choice of dental plans, as well as assorted voluntary benefits and an employee assistance program.

As added perks, staff and their adult family members can use the employee health service as their family doctor to obtain immunizations, free health screenings and physicals. The medical center dispenses select prescription medications on site at a reduced cost to employees, and staff enjoy a 46 percent discount on membership at Holy Name's medically based fitness center.

The pursuit of professional excellence is a top priority, and the medical center's philosophy is one of internal advancement. Holy Name offers tuition reimbursement for career-related degree programs, financial assistance for professional certification and classes in leadership skills. Holy Name also empowers department heads and managers to recognize outstanding performance and express gratitude with concrete rewards, which reinforces productivity and positive behaviors.

Performance incentives and annual merit salary adjustment programs enable department directors to reward deserving employees with a cash bonus and pay increase commensurate with their job performance. In 2010, 200 employees were granted spontaneous cash rewards of \$25 or \$50 as part of the medical center's spot recognition program for actions toward patients, visitors or co-workers that went above and beyond expectations.

Employees reaching a five-year service milestone are acknowledged at an annual recognition dinner hosted by senior management, while SPIRIT Awards (which include a \$500 monetary gift) are given to employees who demonstrate dedication to Holy Name's mission and most valued ideals: service, performance, innovation, respect, integrity and teamwork.

Town hall meetings hosted by President/CEO Michael Maron allow him to share medical center developments as well as provide employees the opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions and share concerns. Employees also can offer written feedback anonymously to the CEO via the internal intranet. Holy Name's senior management team has traditionally enjoyed an easy and open relationship with all levels of staff, and opportunities for interaction occur regularly.

The way in which Holy Name's human resources department prepared staff for the medical center's recent Joint Commission survey is a good example of creative engagement: a series of game-show-type encounters in which departmental teams squared off against each other in a "Tournament of Champions." Over the course of several weeks, the competition not only brought employees up to speed on Joint Commission issues (helping to obtain an excellent survey outcome), but enhanced morale and departmental pride.

Work-life benefits go the extra mile to make

### **Holy Name succeeds in balancing technological and clinical sophistication with the mission of its founders and the tenets of the Roman Catholic faith.**

Holy Name a great place to work by addressing quality-of-life needs. The medical center offers an on-site, high-quality, discounted child care program. A "Sniffles Club," managed by Holy Name's own pediatric nurses and offered *pro bono* to employees, cares for mildly ill children who are too sick to attend school or day care. The hospital-subsidized employee cafeteria provides meals and snacks at prices from 25 to 60 percent below retail.

The employee crisis fund, sponsored jointly by the medical center and employee contributions, provides financial assistance to employees. Repayment terms are flexible, interest-free and loans may be forgiven entirely, depending on individual circumstances.

"There is a very special culture at Holy Name," explains Maron, "a sense of family and of making a difference in the lives of each other and our patients. More than the benefits we offer or the rewards we give, is the palpable sense of passion and purpose that exists here. It defines who we are and why we are here."



## Langlade Hospital

**Antigo, Wis.**

Founded and sponsored by the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph in affiliation with Aspirus Inc.

By **SR. DOLORES DEMULLING, RHSJ**, mission effectiveness coordinator

The national recognition we have received has generated a great deal of excitement at Langlade Hospital. More than that, the award has affirmed the values that the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph (RHSJs) have imbued within the organization through their inspiring history and their ministry of love and service.

Langlade Hospital is a 25-bed Catholic critical

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access hospital located in Antigo, Wis., and serves a population of 26,000 people in the north central region of the state. The hospital employs 480 people and includes a medical staff of 32 active and 50 consulting providers. In addition to the acute care hospital, the organization operates a congregate living facility for older adults, an assisted living center, an adult day care service, a child-care facility, a sports medicine center, a renal dialysis center, several primary care clinics, a hospice service and a cancer center providing medical and radiation oncology. Today, the hospital's ownership is shared by the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph through a formal partnership with Aspirus, Inc., a highly regarded tertiary health care system headquartered in Wausau, Wis.

New employees are introduced to the RHSJs as well as the hospital's mission and values and are challenged to view their work at Langlade Hospital as a local manifestation of a worldwide ministry.

Throughout their nearly 400-year history, the RHSJs, founded by Jerome LeRoyer, a layman, have emphasized lay collaboration as they brought their ministry of boundless love, compassion and service to lepers in New Brunswick, typhus-decimated towns in Ontario, African American children in Windsor orphaned by their

escape from the harsh realities of Civil War-era slavery through the Underground Railway, as well as to the poorest of the poor in countries such as the Dominican Republic and Peru.

The hospital has sought to create a non-hierarchical work climate that promotes teamwork, as well as employee health and wellness initiatives which emphasize the importance of offering care to the caregivers.

There is strong evidence of teamwork as demonstrated recently through the design of the new Langlade Hospital now under construction. The design process included teams of employees, physicians and patients that studied evolving health care trends to assure the creation of a future-oriented facility that would be relevant for many years to come. Employees in every department

were involved in the design of their respective departments and work areas.

Annual employee work climate surveys have consistently

shown very high levels of "pride of affiliation" and identification with the hospital's mission. This reflects the hospital's culture which promotes service to others as a privilege, leadership as a calling to serve and every job function as critical to the success of our shared ministry. Treating one another with dignity and respect is an expectation and a source for formal employee recognition. So is searching for every possible opportunity to go above and beyond to show our patients how much we really care. In addition, Langlade Hospital has embraced a culture of quality and safety and has hardwired it into practices and care delivery as part of a continuous, relentless journey to raise the bar.

Employees at Langlade Hospital see their work as a calling to serve others in the stirring tradition of the women of the RHSJs and their journey to demonstrate Christ's love, as well as in the passion for excellence and compassion for people that is at the very core of the Aspirus, Inc. health system. Recognition by *Modern Healthcare* magazine as one of the best places to work in health-care simply reflects the interpersonal joy we have found through our shared commitment to serving others.



## Chandler Regional Medical Center

Chandler, Ariz.

A member of Catholic Healthcare West (CHW)

## Mercy Gilbert Medical Center

Gilbert, Ariz.

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy

A member of CHW

## St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center

Phoenix, Ariz.

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy

A member of CHW

By **MAUREEN STERBACH**, vice president human resources, Catholic Healthcare West, Arizona market area

Every day we, as those called to the health care profession, care for others. It's in our individual natures to offer a loving hand, habitually putting others' needs above our own. At Catholic Healthcare West's (CHW) hospitals in Arizona — Chandler Regional Medical Center (225 beds), Mercy Gilbert Medical Center (212 beds) and St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center (673 beds) — that compassionate nature also is applied to the way we care for our employees. In the past year, all three of our hospitals were recognized nationally and locally for our workplace initiatives that make us among the most sought-after places to work in health care.

What are we doing that draws employees to us and makes them want to stay? What makes these hospitals so special?

It's the way we treat our employees. We know that when we take good care of our caregivers, they in turn take better care of our patients. We want our employees to find meaning, purpose and fulfillment in their daily work. That's why we have implemented a host of workplace initiatives that recognize innovation and leadership and encourage a connection to the CHW mission. We strive to offer benefits that help to balance lives both inside and outside of the workplace.

It's also the way we incorporate the CHW mission at every level of our organization. CHW's

core values of dignity, collaboration, justice, stewardship and excellence are the foundation of the organization and guide Chandler Regional Medical Center, Mercy Gilbert Medical Center and St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in everything we do. Our employees know that every decision we make and every action we take has meaning behind it, not only because we are touching lives, but because we are preserving a legacy of caring for others that was established more than 100 years ago by the Sisters of Mercy, our sponsoring congregation for Mercy Gilbert and St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center.

CHW understands that collaboration is essential to success and is the cornerstone of our culture. Leaders at all three hospitals hold open employee forums and regularly make rounds in departments to answer questions, discuss the latest hospital news and share ideas. We provide employees with the time and support they need to participate in committees and help with initiatives. Employee input and assistance is crucial in shaping our programs and offerings. We want our staff members to be the best they can be. That's why we offer professional development programs, shadowing opportunities and tuition reimbursement.

We are proud to be able to show our employees appreciation through the many outstanding benefits we offer. These benefits include programs designed to help them receive the most satisfaction possible from their career and life with us.

### **We are committed to providing health benefits that deliver our healing mission to employees and promote well-being.**

We offer a comprehensive total rewards package. Our pay and recognition program provides professional growth and development while compensating employees for their contributions to our strategic goals. We help employees to plan for and attain a financially secure future through participation in pension and savings plans. We are committed to providing health benefits that deliver our healing mission to employees and promote well-being.

Because health care is as challenging — the work and pace can be intense — as it is rewarding, we strongly encourage work/life balance. All

three CHW Arizona hospitals have comprehensive wellness programs that include free exercise classes, on-site farmers' markets, lunch-and-learn sessions and a long list of other offerings. In addition, we host employee recognition and celebratory events throughout the year. These include attending professional sporting events, hosting holiday parties, celebrating hospital milestones and planning "just-because" events when we need a little fun.

Employees at Chandler Regional Medical Center, Mercy Gilbert Medical Center and St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center know the work they do is very important. We're proud to say that they take great pride in their jobs and in carrying out the important mission of our hospitals. Their commitment to excellence and making a difference helps distinguish our organization from others.



## St. Joseph Hospital

Kokomo, Ind.

Affiliated with St. Vincent Health of Indiana and Ascension Health

By **SR. CATHERINE KELLY, D.C., MTS, MS-HS**, vice president, mission integration

*My object in living is to unite  
My avocation and my vocation  
As my two eyes make one in sight.  
Only where love and need are one,  
And the work is play for mortal stakes,  
Is the deed ever really done  
For Heaven and the future's sakes.*

The words above come from Robert Frost's poem, "Two Tramps in Mud Time." They speak of two powerful motivators: avocation, meaning something pursued for enjoyment, and vocation, the work in which a person is regularly employed. When love and need are blended together in an individual's life, and when work takes on meaning so that each person can say, "I am important, not only for what I do but for who I am," then the secular and sacred combine powerfully into Catholic health ministry and the Catholic employer.

At St. Joseph Hospital there is an intentional focus on providing "the exceptional associate experience." Employees are called associates to reflect the belief that members of the staff are called to be partners, friends and companions in the healing ministry of Jesus

— a prime focus of the hospital and its mission.

So what makes an exceptional associate experience? For us, it starts with our mission, vision and values, the foundation of the St. Joseph Ministry. The hospital encourages justice, fairness and equity in all policies and practices, which includes providing just and fair wages and benefits. Other components include ensuring that associates sense they have a voice in decision-making; feel appreciated for their gifts and talents; feel encouraged to grow and develop skills; feel welcome regardless of background or experiences; understand that leadership and management are approachable and available; and know that communication is open and honest, without fear of retribution.

St. Joseph Hospital has served our community for 98 years. However, times haven't always been kind to the operational aspects of the hospital. Beginning in 2000, volumes decreased considerably and financials were dangerously near or below break-even. For three consecutive years associates were laid off and associates' spirits were low.

To counter these factors, leadership acted with tenacity and confidence to develop a strategic plan with the acronym GREAT — Growth, Retention, Excellence, Access to care and Translation of our mission — and with tremendous energy, St. Joseph Hospital began its journey into greatness.

The strategic plan was the beginning of a period of improvement and development for St. Joseph Hospital. In 2006, workplace spirituality was added as a focus at the same time the organization was emphasizing patient-centered care. Blending the two concepts allowed associates to experience formation in emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social development to add to their professional/clinical expertise. A renewal day called "For the Love of It," (with "it" being the person's role in the organization) was offered to all associates as a paid retreat day. Programs such as "Providing Holistic, Reverent Care" and "Cultivating Reverence for Living" were offered.

Leadership retreats on such topics as the Enneagram system of self-knowledge, praying

### **Associates are wonderful about sharing outcomes of these prayers so all can see the power of prayer.**

with the labyrinth, effects of birth order and leadership styles have been ongoing on work time. Associates are encouraged to share personal

prayer requests and hardly a day goes by without one or more being sent out. Associates are wonderful about sharing outcomes of these prayers so all can see the power of prayer. In good times and bad, associates are there for each other, and all realize that God is in their workplace, making the workplace a faith community they grow to depend on.

By forming associates spiritually and developing systems and clinical applications and skills, patient-centered care is achieved as both a vocation and avocation.

Outcomes measurements confirm this approach is leading to exceptional associate experiences. From fiscal year 2006 to 2010, the associate opinion score on “strengthening spiritual health and well-being” improved from 68.2 percent to 80.1 percent in the “strongly agree” category. Outside organizations also see the improvement. At the same time, the hospital’s Net Promoter Score, a measure of patient loyalty, continued to climb, blending the exceptional patient experience with the exceptional associate experience.

As we approach our 100-year anniversary, it is clear that at St. Joseph Hospital the secular vocation has blended seamlessly with the sacred avocation, positioning us well to continue as a vibrant Catholic health care ministry.



## Wamego City Hospital

Wamego, Kan.

Part of the Mercy Regional Health Center, Manhattan, Kan., and Via Christi Health System

By **JANA BOWMAN**, community relations coordinator

Wamego City Hospital — a 25-bed, critical access hospital with 75 employees — has served Wamego, near Manhattan, Kan., and the rural areas that surround it since 1915. At first glance, a passerby may assume his or her experience at Wamego City Hospital would be like a trip to any other hospital, but that assumption is far from the truth.

Wamego City Hospital is a great place for employees to work and physicians to practice; a place where personnel skill sets, enthusiasm, communication, cooperation and concern for the best patient care are molded together to provide the very best experience for every patient and visitor. From the time a patient enters the parking lot to the time when a friendly voiced staff member assists

with his or her discharge, the hospital is committed to creating a sense of caring community.

Although over the years since its founding there have been many changes in staff and administration, the Wamego City Hospital values and focus have always remained the same — delivering great patient care and ensuring that the hospital is a great place to work. Keeping staff centered on that mission has allowed Wamego to be instrumental in making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Staff and administration participate in many programs and initiatives throughout the year to enhance the hospital’s culture. A favorite event is the annual Fall Family BBQ. Members of the staff’s extended family are invited to attend, providing a great way for staff members to get to know their co-workers better and their family members as well.

Managers participate in a monthly book club. Titles they have chosen so far have been about the health care field, leadership, managing, team-building and more. During the meetings, managers discuss the content in the context of the Wamego environment, looking for ways to use some of the ideas in their daily routines.

We also hold a quarterly Leadership Development Institute, an off-campus session for managers typically based on a specific topic, and the discussion centers on related issues affecting our managers at the time. Sessions sometimes incorporate speakers or tools that offer managers additional support.

Building on these sessions, Wamego offers a “lunch and learn” series for all employees to hear about the topics discussed at the managers’ session. They are encouraged to look for ways to incorporate the new ideas into their work.

Wamego City Hospital also has quarterly town hall meetings for all employees, giving the CEO an opportunity to update employees on hospital business and take their questions. We start each year with a “Kick Off the New Year” social event for staff, featuring entertainment and, most recently, a presentation from an expert speaker on effective leadership.

The programs and initiatives in place at Wamego City Hospital assist our dedicated staff as they strive to achieve the organizational goals — creating a great place to work, a great place to receive care and achieving great results. The Wamego staff is committed to making every patient and visitor’s experience safe, comfortable and confidential.

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# HEALTH PROGRESS®

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