

Meriter Earns State Award of Excellence

Meriter Hospital has earned the 2006 Wisconsin Forward Award Governor's Award of Excellence—Wisconsin's highest honor for organizational performance excellence. Wisconsin Forward Award (WFA) recognizes business practices that ensure the economic vitality of Wisconsin organizations and the communities they serve.

Organizations chosen are ones that have demonstrated "outstanding results," says Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman. "Award winners are committed to management excellence,

have developed innovative strategies to address health care and business challenges, and engage in proactive efforts to build a highly-skilled workforce."

While the written report submitted by Meriter highlighted the hospital's work, WFA examiners cited their conversations with employees as the true demonstration of an organization focused directly on patients. They were overwhelmed by positive stories people shared about the work they do and their commitment to the Meriter mission.

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(LEFT TO RIGHT) Newly appointed Meriter CEO Jim Woodward and his predecessor Terri Potter with Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman.

Meriter Welcomes a New CEO

Jim Woodward began his duties as Meriter president and chief executive officer in January. Noting that there are differences in how health care is practiced across the country, he shares these observations about what attracted him to Meriter:

- It is rare to find a hospital that provides highly skilled services—such as a Heart Hospital, top-level Newborn Intensive Care, and the latest in orthopedic surgery—combined with a strong community mission focus. Meriter serves otherwise unmet community needs with the Max Pohle Dental Clinic, Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Hospital, and the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program.
- Madison is a unique healthcare market: three main competing hospitals that actively search out ways to collaborate (for example, Turville Bay MRI, Wisconsin Dialysis, Center for Perinatal Care). This benefits the community by eliminating unnecessary duplication.
- The staff at Meriter is extremely dedicated, many with an extended history of service to this community. Their skill, experience and commitment create an environment in which patients can put their trust.

Woodward is spending his first months learning Meriter from the inside as he begins work to shape its future direction.

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"Patient safety is clearly a top-of-mind issue with all members of the Meriter

team," wrote the examiners in the feedback report. "Staff members take obvious delight in providing high quality care to their patients."

"Wisconsin Forward Award recognition is a tribute to all who are part of the Meriter family, and would not have been possible without our collective dedication to serving the community," says Robert Coats, Meriter Chief Operating Officer.

"This prestigious award is not the end," says Coats. "We will continue to listen and learn. Meriter is committed to continuous improvements that result in better service and safer care for our patients and their families."

WFA—created in 1997—is a public/private partnership modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program. Applicants are rigorously evaluated by an independent Board of Examiners in seven areas including leadership, strategic planning and focus on customers.

Meriter is one of four organizations to receive the 2006 Award of Excellence. Since 1997, a total of ten organizations have been recognized at this highest level of achievement. For more information about WFA, visit www.forwardaward.org.

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Heart Program Earns Top 100 Rating



Meriter Hospital's cardiovascular care program was recently named one of the nation's "100 Top Hospitals" for Cardiovascular Care by Solucient. A prominent health information company, Solucient bases the award on objective ratings of more than 800 hospitals' clinical quality, performance and operational efficiency.

"This award recognizes the diligent work of Meriter staff and physicians who put the heart health of our patients front and center," says Una Alderman, assistant vice president of

Cardiovascular Services. "Our drive to exceed national benchmarks and our dedication to quality improvement gives us much to be proud of."

Alderman points to the excellent survival rates of heart attack patients, state-of-the-art technology and practices used in Meriter's cardiovascular surgery program and the high patient volumes treated in the cardiac catheterization lab as some elements of a high quality heart program. Solucient also measures the degree to which hospitals follow the proven best model of cardiac care.

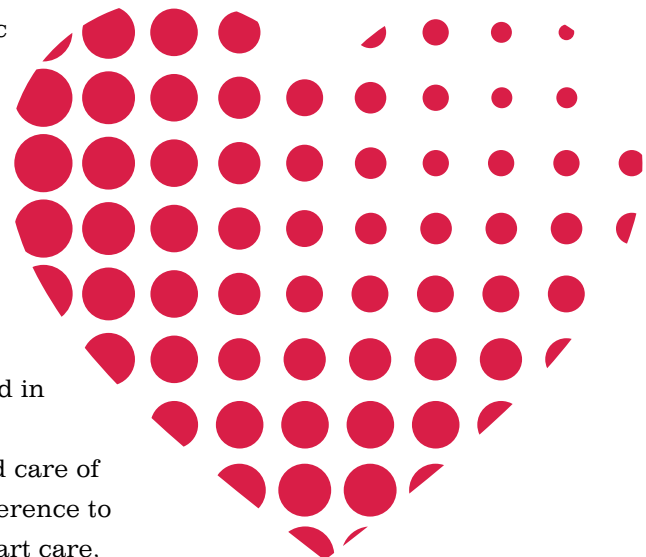
In addition to the "Top 100" award, Meriter was recognized in 2006 by the American Heart Association for its streamlined care of heart attack patients and adherence to AHA guidelines for quality heart care,

and continues to be the area's only nationally accredited Chest Pain Center.

For more information on the study, visit www.100tophospitals.com. For more about cardiovascular services

at Meriter Hospital, visit

www.meriter.com/heartcenter.



New NICU is a Dream Come True

The new 30-bed Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) that Meriter Hospital is opening in April is literally a dream come true, thanks to generous support from the individuals and businesses in the community.

“Gifts from the community made all the difference in moving the new NICU from being a merely good design model to a truly great facility for babies born too soon or with life-threatening complications. My wife, Amy, and I want to thank everyone who was inspired to make a gift,” says Park Bank president Jim Hegenbarth. The Hegenbarths co-chaired Meriter Foundation’s *Little Babies ~ Big Dreams* campaign, which exceeded its goal of raising \$2 million to support the \$6.1 million project.

The new unit—with 12,000 square feet devoted to patient and family care—blends high-tech and high-touch elements. It is replacing a two-room, 23-bed unit, which opened in 1990. As with the older unit, the new NICU is designated Level III, which means it provides the most advanced care available for premature and severely ill babies.

The NICU at Meriter is part of The Center for Perinatal Care, a joint program of Meriter Hospital and the University of Wisconsin Medical School. Board certified neonatologists and perinatologists work in partnership to provide medical care for more than 450 infants annually from counties throughout southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

“The partnership between these medical specialties has resulted in excellent outcomes. In terms of survival rates of very low birthweight infants, we have some of the best rates in the country,” notes Department of Neonatology Director David Carlton, MD. “The new NICU will allow us to continue

to provide the highest quality of care, but in a more comfortable and spacious setting.”

One of the more important attributes of the new unit is private rooms for each family, says Assistant Vice President of Women’s Health Services Patricia Grunwald.

“Extremely premature infants experience an enormous amount of

Architects designed each patient room with three distinct “zones.” Equipment and supplies for the medical and nursing staff are nearest the door; the bassinette, life-sustaining technology and baby supplies are in the middle; and a sleeper sofa and storage cabinets for parents are near the window. Several rooms have the flexibility to accommodate families with multiple births.



NICU nurse Julie Rice and Dr. David Carlton agree that private rooms will offer a more comfortable and peaceful environment for NICU babies and their families. Dr. Carlton is a UW Health Physician and UW School of Medicine and Public Health Faculty Member.

brain growth during their stays in the NICU,” Grunwald says. “Research has shown that a quieter, light controlled and less chaotic environment promotes the infant’s comfort and stability, and may contribute to optimal brain growth and organization.”

In addition, private rooms provide a peaceful setting where new parents can nurture and bond with their babies, and gain confidence in caring for them. Moms can work on breastfeeding skills, too.

The unit also features a large family room with comfortable areas for relaxing, dining, computer use and sibling play. And, unlike the old NICU, the new unit is located in the same wing as the Birthing Center—making it more convenient for hospitalized moms to spend time with their newborns.

If you’d like to see the new unit, please plan to attend a Community Open House on March 25 (see back page).

Volunteer Legacy is Alive at Meriter

Without the will of volunteers, there is little doubt that Madison may have waited many more years before it had a permanent hospital. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, volunteers connected with groups such as the Madison Women's Guild and Attic Angel Association were the dominant force and voice behind the successful campaign to build the general hospital that was Meriter's predecessor.

Today's Meriter continues to reap the benefits of this "can-do" spirit, thanks to the hundreds of people who enjoy contributing to society by volunteering at the hospital or retirement community.

Fran Nagle, for example, makes a difference through his work with "At Your Service." It's a volunteer opportunity that allows him to pitch in

where needed, be it running errands for hospital staff, escorting patients and families, or helping people at the information desk. A volunteer at Meriter since 1991, Nagle has given more than 2,500 hours of his time to Meriter since retiring from UW-Madison, where he was a physiology professor for 24 years.

"I find great fulfillment in being able to use my time constructively to help people at Meriter," Nagle says. "The associations I've made are important, too. Being in the mix with other adults and getting to know them is very worthwhile. I've made a lot of friends while volunteering at Meriter."

Stan Nielsen directs the Volunteer Services Department, and believes that while there is a dollar "value" that can be attached to volunteer time—recent national estimates put it at \$18.04 per hour—there's so much more to it.

"Volunteers at Meriter, both visibly and behind the scenes, have a positive impact on the care and services we provide our patients, families and visitors. I truly believe that our volunteers do much to increase patient satisfaction with our organization," Nielsen says.

Meriter volunteer opportunities run the gamut, from anonymous tasks to others that involve significant patient contact. Dianne Totten is a piano teacher from Middleton who has volunteered in

Meriter's Emergency Room since March 1994. She came to Meriter after an interview with the United Way of Dane County volunteer placement service indicated that she should consider a hospital setting.

"It's been a perfect match. It was exactly what I wanted to do and it fits my personality. I have a lot of energy, and you need that here," says Totten of her three-hour shifts in the ER, during which you find her getting rooms prepared for new patients, serving as a "runner" for ER staff, holding and comforting children, training and mentoring new ER volunteers, and more. She gets as much out of the experience as she puts into it.

"You see a lot of sadness in the ER, and that helps you keep things in perspective. Volunteering here has made a profound difference in my life," Totten says. "Every time I'm here, someone on the staff takes time to thank me, which means a lot."

Meriter and other not-for-profits benefit from the goodwill of the younger members of our population who realize the value of giving back to the community. Natalie Salm is a UW-Madison student who anticipates a future in genetics. Right now, however, she lives the college life and volunteers weekly at the Meriter Health Center, a nursing home facility that is part of Meriter Retirement. There, she works the reception desk, answers phones, helps out in Medical Records and contributes where needed.

"I was looking for a volunteer opportunity away from the campus, and came across Meriter," says Salm, who started at Meriter Retirement in late 2005. "I've come to look at this as my family away from home. I like being around a bit of an older group, and I've enjoyed meeting and getting to know some very nice employees and residents."

For more about volunteer opportunities and a listing of current openings, visit www.meriter.com/volunteer. Or, e-mail lingwell@meriter.com (Meriter Hospital) or plabadie@meriter.com (Meriter Retirement) for further details.



Dianne Totten says volunteering in the Meriter ER—with duties that range from preparing rooms for new patients to comforting children—is rewarding and a perfect match with her personality.

Honors, Achievements and Announcements

Meriter Among Nation's HomeCare Elite

Meriter Home Health's Home Care Agency has received the HomeCare Elite Award for 2006. This national recognition for quality means the agency achieved a Top 500 ranking among nearly 7,000 home health agencies nationwide.

Outcome Systems Concepts of Seattle, in conjunction with Home Health Line publication, uses publicly reported Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services data in the area of quality care, quality improvement and financial performance to compile its rankings.

Meriter Home Health's HomeCare Agency offers skilled nursing as well as physical, occupational and speech therapy services. For more information, visit  www.meriterhomehealth.com.

Bariatric Program Designated a Center of Excellence


The UW Health Bariatric Surgery Program—a partnership between UW Hospital and Clinics, Meriter Hospital, and UW Health surgeons Michael J. Garren, MD, and Jon C. Gould, MD—has been designated a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence by the American Society of Bariatric Surgery.

"We're pleased to have received this designation honoring the hard work our team and both UW Hospital and Clinics and Meriter Hospital have done since our program's inception," says Garren.

"We're hoping that being named a Center of Excellence will help us in our mission to educate the community about the health dangers associated with obesity."

"Bariatric surgery, when performed correctly, can help obese people manage their serious health concerns. This designation is an indication that our

program offers quality outcomes, and ensures efficacy of the procedures with each patient," Gould adds.

For more information, call the UW Health Bariatric Surgery Clinic at 608-265-7090 or visit  www.meriter.com/bariatric.

Meriter Nurse Honored by Edgewood, Bayview

A Meriter Home Health nurse was recognized recently for her community work by both Edgewood College and Madison's Bayview Triangle Neighborhood. Joy Drummond, RN, received the 2006 Mazzuchelli Medallion—Edgewood's highest honor—at the college's Founder's Celebration. In addition, she was recognized for her contributions to the Bayview community at "Portrait of a Neighborhood," an exhibit of photographs and quotations that took place at Meriter Hospital last fall.


Meriter CIO Named CHIME Fellow

Meriter's Chief Information Officer was honored by his peers during the 2006 Fall Forum of the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME). Peter Strombom received the CHIME Fellow Award, which honors and

recognizes members who have actively participated in the organization and who have made significant contributions to the healthcare information technology field.

Blanchard Joins Middleton Clinic

Meriter Medical Clinic-Middleton is pleased to announce that J. Evan Blanchard, MD, has joined the practice. Dr. Blanchard has been practicing Internal Medicine in the Madison area for more than 16 years.

The clinic, which offers personalized healthcare services including adult primary care, is accepting new patients. For more information, call  (608) 828-3434 or visit www.meritermedicalclinic.com.

Same Lab, New Name

The former General Medical Laboratories is now called Meriter Laboratories. The new name more clearly identifies the organization as a division of Meriter Health Enterprises. The lab's services include testing for Meriter Hospital patients as well as comprehensive reference testing for physicians, clinics, hospitals, researchers, skilled nursing facilities, and employers in South Central Wisconsin.

Meriter accredited as Chest Pain Center

The Society of Chest Pain Centers recently granted Meriter Hospital a Cycle II Accredited Chest Pain Center with Percutaneous Cardiac Intervention (PCI) designation. The three-year accreditation means that Meriter has demonstrated its expertise and commitment to quality patient care by meeting or exceeding a wide set of stringent criteria and completing on-site evaluations. This designation, first granted in 2004, means that patients experiencing a heart attack can be assured that care is initiated during the critical early stages when treatments are most effective. For those whose coronary status is unclear, close observation helps ensure that they neither sent home too early nor needlessly admitted.

Meriter Health Services provides health care services to residents of southern Wisconsin and areas of northwest Illinois through its family of companies. Meriter Hospital is a not-for-profit, locally directed, teaching hospital that proudly serves the community.

MERITER'S MISSION IS:

to heal this day
to teach for tomorrow
to embrace excellence always
to serve our communities —
for a lifetime of quality health care.

FOCUS

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The DREAM of a state-of-the-art, private-room, Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Meriter Hospital is about to COME TRUE. Before the unit opens for patients in April, we'd love to show it to you!

THANK YOU

to everyone who generously supported Meriter Foundation's *Little Babies~Big Dreams* campaign. You helped make the dream of a truly great NICU come true!

Join us as we celebrate a
Dream
Come True!

Our
**BRAND NEW
NICU**
(Newborn Intensive Care Unit)

For more information about the new NICU, please see page 3

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, March 25
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- Guided tours
- Refreshments
- Activities for children
- Free parking

RSVP at www.meriter.com/classes or by calling (608) 267-5900

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