

EMBRACE

EXCELLENCE

ALWAYS

## Embracing Excellence Through Innovation

“To embrace excellence always” – a tenet in the Meriter mission statement – is more than just words for Meriter employees. They have taken it to heart, using creativity and innovation to

enhance the way patients are served everyday, as illustrated in the following examples.

### Bloodless Medicine Program

Meriter Hospital began a bloodless medicine program about five years ago – the first program of its kind in Wisconsin. Through the program – which supports patient autonomy and cultural diversity, and avoids the risks associated with blood transfusions and blood supply shortage – Meriter can provide quality medical care without the use of blood or blood products.

Medical Director Ed Adib, M.D. explains, “Some people choose bloodless medicine and surgery programs because of deeply held religious beliefs. Others choose such programs to reduce the possibility of blood-borne illnesses, such as hepatitis or HIV infection, or other adverse reactions. Whatever the reason, Meriter respects this choice throughout the patient’s stay.”



### Threads of Remembrance

A unique program helps grieving parents honor their infants who were born too small or too sick to survive by providing specially designed bereavement gowns. Threads of Remembrance is the inspiration of Meriter Women’s Health Administration Secretary Sally Evans.

She explains, “I had often heard frustrations voiced by the grief support staff while dressing these babies in gowns ‘cut down’ from commercial patterns. The gowns were too large, too small, or disproportionate.”

Evans, who sews but is not a designer, contacted the University of Wisconsin-

Madison School of Human Ecology to seek expertise in designing gown patterns using correct proportions for neonates of various gestational ages. The instructors accepted the unusual challenge, and students in the Textile and Apparel Design program spent hundreds of volunteer hours experimenting with styles, fabrics and closures. Together, they created gown designs based on input from grief support staff, parents, and seamstresses.

Threads of Remembrance gown patterns in four styles to fit micro-preemie, preemie and term infants are now available to hospitals throughout the nation.

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### Potter Era to End

Terri Potter, who began his health-care administrator career at Meriter in 1971, recently announced to the Meriter Health Services and Hospital boards of directors that he plans to retire as president and chief executive officer by early 2007. (See related story on page 3.)

The boards, while reluctant to see Potter retire, are grateful that he agreed to remain CEO through the rest of this pivotal year and until his successor is in place. The boards went on record as being firmly convinced that maintaining Meriter’s position as a community governed health-care leader will assure even greater success.

“We are confident that we will be able to recruit a leader who can sustain and enhance Meriter as an independent community hospital and health-care system,” says current board chair Jac Garner, “Our focus on innovation and excellence in health care, hospital-physician partnerships, dedication to our community and local governance—now in its 108th year—will extend well into the future.”

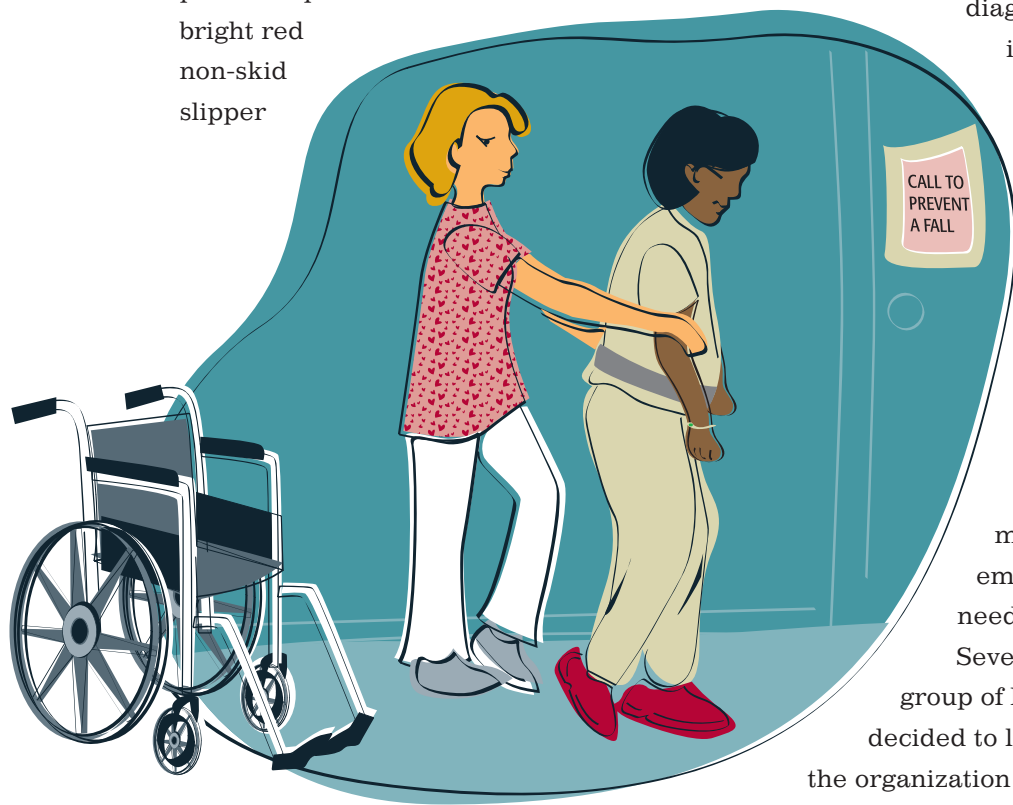


## Red Socks for Safety

As a member of the Madison Patient Safety Collaborative, Meriter is committed to patient safety. Preventing falls is part of that commitment.

When each patient is admitted, the nursing staff does a “falls assessment,” which considers factors such as the patient’s diagnosis, medications, history of falls and general mobility. If a patient is determined to be at high risk for falling, he or she is put on Fall Prevention Protocol, and some extra steps are taken.

One relatively new method is to provide a pair of bright red non-skid slipper



socks for these patients to wear. Another is to attach green stickers to the patient’s wristband, chart and door sign. “Both methods serve as visual reminders to staff members to observe extra precautions to help keep these patients safe,” says Internal Quality Consultant Mary Zimmerman.

And people continue to improve the process, Zimmerman adds. “An oncology nurse recently developed a kit for each high-risk patient on her unit that

includes the red socks, green stickers, a brochure on safety for patients and their families, a sign to remind the patient to use the call light for assistance and more ... all in a self-sealing plastic bag. Using this simple kit ensures that no safety step is missed.”

Zimmerman said the Meriter Falls Team is working to make the kits available to all units soon.

## Support for Emotional Needs

When patients enter a hospital, they often arrive with a variety of concerns. Unfamiliar surroundings, fear about

procedures, concern about the

diagnosis and other

issues can cause

stress and

anxiety for

them as well

as their

families.

Meriter has a

commitment

to extra-

ordinary

customer

satisfaction, and

meeting patients

emotional support

needs is a key focus.

Several years ago, a

group of Meriter nurses

decided to look at how well

the organization was addressing

these concerns.

“It was more than simply wanting to relieve anxiety,” says Barbara Pinekenstein, Vice President of Patient Care Services, “Research shows that emotional and spiritual needs can have a profound effect on clinical outcomes.”

The first step was to understand what is important to patients. In a process called emotional mapping, the group took a close look at the hospital experience from the patient’s perspective at each step from admission to discharge. For instance, they asked

themselves what might be the concerns when the patient is being registered, admitted to the room, just before discharge and so on.

After they understood when the patient might be fearful, anxious or in need of more information, they used a “heart-head-heart” model to determine the words and behaviors to use to allay fears and respond to the patient and family concerns.

“Focusing on key ‘touch points of care’ such as welcoming, supporting the patient and family through transitions and understanding and respecting the patient are essential,” says Pinekenstein, “and the results we’ve seen so far are very heartening.”

“During two quarters of 2005, NRC Healthcare patient surveys ranked Meriter among the Top 10 percent of over 700 hospitals in the nation for Emotional Support,” Pinekenstein notes with pride, adding “we have made excellent progress, but we want to do more. Our goal is to be ‘best in class’ in providing extraordinary customer service for our patients.”

## Brysh Among Top Area Dentists

Madison Magazine recently named L. Stanley Brysh, DMD, to its *Top Dentists 2006* list in the Community Service Dentistry category. Brysh, who was selected through a survey of 240 Madison-area dentists who were asked to rank their peers, is director of the Max W. Pohle Dental Clinic at Meriter. The clinic is a dental residency program that provides care for patients with special needs and the underserved.

## Potter Era at Meriter to End in 2007

Addressing situations and issues that range from rewarding to difficult to everything in between is part of the landscape for innovative leaders from any organization. Still, there's no doubt in Terri Potter's mind that January 23-27 ranks as one of the most emotionally trying, yet satisfying, weeks he's experienced during nearly 35 years at Meriter.

Between presenting Meriter managers with the 2006 business plans and recapping 2005, working on final adoption of a new Meriter Retirement facility improvement plan and taking part in a groundbreaking for the hospital's new Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Potter announced that he plans to retire by early 2007 as Meriter president and chief executive officer.

"I've pondered this decision for some

time and I can assure you it was difficult," says Potter. "I want to be able to spend more time with my family, which is becoming harder to do. My son will be finishing high school. And I have dreams about places to visit and adventures to experience."

"As I look at where Meriter will be early next year, it became clear there will be few, if any, better times to hand over the office to a new leader. We will be opening our new Heart Hospital, opening a new NICU, completing installation of our clinical information system, continuing to elevate the role of philanthropy at Meriter and be well underway with our improvements at Meriter Retirement."

The formal search process to replace Potter will begin sometime in mid-March, according to Meriter Health

Services and Meriter Hospital board of directors chairman Jac Garner.

"Terri's passion, vision and leadership have been invaluable," Garner says. "His legacy will be his many accomplishments while at Meriter, and the way he's established Meriter's strong foundation for the future—a foundation that will allow our focus to remain on innovation and excellence in health care, dedication to the community and local governance."

Potter admits it's hard to fathom life after Meriter, but knows that the time is right.

"The hardest part will be leaving the people of Meriter behind," he says. "They are the reason why I have remained with the organization these many years."

## Two Local Magazines Recognize Potter

Terri Potter was recently honored by two local magazines.

Potter received Madison Magazine's *Brian D. Howell Award for Excellence in Innovation* for his role as chair of the Collaboration Council's Quality of Life design team. The Council – a group of forty business executives, government officials and civic leaders – works on business recruitment and retention, workforce development, intergovernmental cooperation and the branding of the greater Madison community. The group identified

challenges, including affordable housing, and compiled a comprehensive inventory of the county's assets, ranging from agriculture to the potential commercial value of research coming out of UW-Madison.

And, In Business Magazine included Potter in its *2006 Executive Hall of Fame Class*. This year's members were selected by the magazine's 2005 Class, which had the mission of selecting people who have been instrumental in building quality companies, industries, and communities.





# Great Expectations: Giving Birth to a New NICU



A groundbreaking ceremony in January marked the beginning of a project to create a new Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Meriter Hospital. NICU graduates Jenelle, Aaron and Kyle DeVries, and Sean Baek formed the demolition crew that tore down a colorful cardboard wall to unveil a rendering of the new unit.

Once completed in February 2007, the new unit will provide an environment unmatched in the area that combines a quiet, healing environment with leading-edge medical and technical care, including 30 private patient rooms with in-room parent sleep areas, a family lounge and resource area.

Celebrities on hand to help commemorate the occasion included University of Wisconsin-Madison Men's

Basketball coach Bo Ryan, the honorary chair of the *Little Babies ~ Big Dreams* campaign to raise \$2 million of community support for the \$6.1 million project. Ryan calls the project, "a vision of something greater for the smallest people in our city and state."

Olympic runner Suzy Favor Hamilton and her family were there, too. Kylie Hamilton, who was born five weeks early, graduated from Meriter's NICU last fall. Hamilton spoke of the special care she and Kylie received, and shared her hopes to have more babies at Meriter.

ANEW Magazine publisher Kristin Erickson related the concerns she had when was asked to speak – after learning

that Hamilton and Ryan were part of the campaign. She recalled, "My first thought was, 'What can I bring to the party? I can't run a mile. I can't even dribble!' But then I realized that because of Meriter, my son Brady will be able to run, to play basketball, to sing . . . to live."

Brady and his older brother Sean are both NICU graduates, says Erickson, noting that Brady was born at just 27 weeks in 2004. She says, "We were faced with tremendous obstacles — chronic lung disease, a rare heart condition, a brain bleed . . . but due to the exceptional care of the medical staff, Brady is here and he's absolutely fine."



NICU graduates knock down a wall to reveal a rendering of the new unit.

(above)  
ANEW Magazine Editor Kristin Erickson with her sons Sean (left) and Brady.

The NICU at Meriter was created in 1975, as part of The Center for Perinatal Care, a joint program of Madison General Hospital and the University of Wisconsin Medical School. Last renovated in 1990, the current unit provides 23 beds in two rooms, with approximately 90 square feet of space for each infant.

To date, \$1.2 million of a \$2 million goal of community support for the new NICU has been raised. As a not-for-profit healthcare system, Meriter reinvests every dollar back into its mission. Major construction projects, such as building a new NICU, are beyond what can be financed through operating margins alone. Philanthropy

provides the margin of excellence that moves the project from a merely good design model to a truly great facility that provides the best possible environment of care to both critically ill newborns and their families. If you would like to speak with a Meriter Foundation staff member about this project, call (608) 267-5300.

View the renderings for the new NICU and learn more by visiting [www.meriterfoundation.org](http://www.meriterfoundation.org)



# Building for the Heart of the Community

When it opens in 2007, the new Meriter Heart Hospital will raise the standard for cardiovascular care in our region.

“Meriter Hospital and the cardiovascular physicians who practice here have a common goal – to provide a comprehensive spectrum of cardiac and vascular services that are delivered in the most compassionate, cost-effective and highest quality manner possible,” says Vice President of Programs Tim Sio.

The new “heart hospital within a hospital” will be located on the upper two floors of Meriter Hospital. Now that the hospital exterior has been completed, work is about to begin inside. The facility’s all-private room design will be based on input from physicians, nurses, other staff, families and patients.

“The consolidation of cardiovascular services on these two floors will make a world of difference to patients and families,” Sio adds, “Patients won’t have to be transported to other areas of the

facility for most diagnostic and interventional services, and, during those

procedures, their families can wait comfortably nearby.”

## We’re Raising the Standard for Cardiovascular Care

### The new Heart Hospital will offer:

- A comprehensive range of diagnostic, treatment and therapy services for all stages of cardiac and vascular disease
- The latest technology and care teams that are among the best in the country
- 45-bed inpatient unit with all private rooms that each include a comfortable area for family members
- 16-bed, all-private room, short-stay unit that supports diagnostic and interventional cardiovascular activity
- Five diagnostic and interventional labs (two more than currently available)
- An expansion and consolidation of current capabilities and services to provide additional support to our physician partners and their patients throughout south-central Wisconsin

Learn more about the cardiovascular program at Meriter by visiting [www.meriter.com/heartcenter](http://www.meriter.com/heartcenter)



## Meriter News in Brief

### Davis joins Middleton Clinic

Meriter Medical Clinic-Middleton is pleased to announce that Mark F. Davis, MD, has joined the practice. Dr. Davis has been practicing internal medicine in the Madison area for more than 15 years.

The clinic opened in 2004 and offers personalized health care services including adult primary care, lab, X-ray, EKG and stress testing. The clinic is accepting new patients. For more information, call (608) 828-3434 or visit [www.meritermedicalclinic.com](http://www.meritermedicalclinic.com)

### Improvements planned for Meriter Retirement Community

Meriter Retirement Services (MRS) recently announced exciting plans to revamp two facilities in its downtown Madison continuing care retirement community: Meriter Heights, which opened in 1975 and offers independent-living apartments; and Meriter Health Center, a skilled nursing care facility, which opened in 1980.

These changes – which will be phased in over five years – are needed to

provide today’s seniors with the design features and amenities they’re seeking.

MRS has selected an architect to develop plans for both interior and exterior improvements at Meriter Heights, and will engage an architect for the Health Center enhancements soon. The latter project will include the conversion of some semi-private patient rooms to private, and upgrades to both patient and public spaces. Details of both projects will be announced later this year.

## 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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Focus is published three times  
per year by:

Meriter Health Services, Inc.  
Marketing Department  
202 South Park Street  
Madison, WI 53715

Phone: 608-267-5620

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# Meriter Receives Wisconsin Forward Award

In February, Meriter Hospital was one of eleven organizations to receive a 2005 Wisconsin Forward Award, the state's highest award for organizational excellence.

"The organizations being recognized are working to move Wisconsin forward in different ways," Governor Jim Doyle said, "But one thing they all have in common is that they are continuously striving to make their organization more efficient and effective, without sacrificing their focus on the customer. I commend these organizations for their commitment to excellence, to the people they serve, and to the state."

Wisconsin Forward Award recipients for 2005 were evaluated by an independent Board of Examiners in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, human resources, customer and market focus, information, knowledge and process

management, and results. The evaluation included about 900 hours of review by teams of examiners. Seven organizations, including Meriter, received on-site reviews.

The WFA evaluation process requires Wisconsin organizations to demonstrate superior management principles and practices against national benchmarks. Comprehensive feedback reports from specially trained examiners help participating organizations position themselves for changes in a dynamic and competitive marketplace.

The Wisconsin Forward Award is given at four levels—Excellence, Mastery, Proficiency, and Commitment—and is the culmination of a rigorous assessment process that uses the Criteria for Performance Excellence of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Meriter was recognized at the Mastery level for the second year in a row; no awards were

made in the Excellence level for the year. More information about the award is available at [www.forwardaward.org](http://www.forwardaward.org)



Meriter President/CEO Terri Potter accepts the 2005 Wisconsin Forward Award from Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton.