

## AVERA MEDICAL GROUP EXPANDS MEETS CHANGING MEDICAL WORLD

In just 21 months since its inception, the Avera Medical Group:

- Has grown by 23 clinic locations
- Has added 115 new physicians
- Has grown by some 12 midlevel providers
- Enjoys board-level certification of some 90 percent of its physicians

One might wonder what has driven such positive growth? "Primarily, Avera Medical Group is a high-functioning, transparent and open culture – a true testament to those who have joined. Our local touch with the added benefits of the system really helps to create a transparent model," explains David Flicek, vice president of the group.

Adding that there are other reasons, David goes on to explain the complicated and uncertain state of health care. He notes that health care is top-of-mind in this country and for good reason. Among the factors he describes that contribute to the complexity of the medical model are:

- Flat and declining reimbursement
- Health care costs
- Pressure to improve and measure quality
- Increased competition
- Patients' changing expectations about their medical encounters
- Risk of malpractice suits
- Workforce shortages
- Regulatory compliance
- Increased overhead

- Complicated revenue cycles and supply chains
- Technological implementation

Further, changing demographics among providers nip at the white coat of the former practice model, where physicians sometimes put in more than 100 hours a week. A recent article in *Health Leaders'* magazine discusses the growing diversity in the workforce as Generation X workers – the oldest of whom are now in their 40s – establish careers more focused on work preferences and life balance. Just some statistics of note:

- One in five physicians now prefers part-time work.
- In 1975, the physician force was 90.9-percent male and under 35. Today that percentage is 53.7.
- In 1975, the physician force was 9.1-percent female and under 35. Today that percentage is 46.3.

"While health care in general learns to adapt to diverse work and practice styles, many appreciate a model such as the Avera Medical Group for its collegiality, support of the individual practice and long-range security, all backed by the resources of the health system," David says. "As the benefits provided by the system continue to evolve, so will the benefits of Avera Medical Group. Take a look at what is happening as we leverage technology through services like eEmergency. We are bringing physician colleagues together in whole new ways." (For more information about eEmergency, see page 2.)

"Avera has a strong history of valuing partnerships with both independent and employed physicians," reminds David. "This newer approach continues this tradition and provides yet another option for physician partnerships."

### AVERA MEDICAL GROUP WELCOMES ABERDEEN PRACTICE

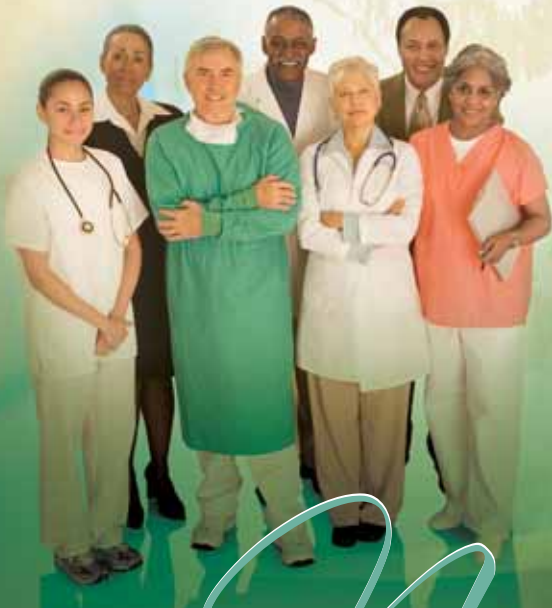
#### Obstetrics & Gynecology Associates of Aberdeen Joins Avera Family

Obstetrics & Gynecology Associates became part of the Avera Medical Group, effective Jan. 1, 2010. The practice will be called Avera OB/GYN Associates. Physicians at the specialty care clinic are Drs. Scott Berry, Tage Born, Gregg Carlson and Christine Stehly. All four are board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology.

Every year, the physicians help some 600 babies come into the world at Avera St. Luke's BirthPlace. Avera OB/GYN Associates joins 28 physicians in Avera St. Luke's Clinic Division, including Avera Aberdeen Family Physicians and Avera Internal Medicine Specialists, who have served patients in the area for many years.

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<sup>1</sup>Bakhtiari, Elyas, "Time for 'Dr. NeXt,'" *Health Leaders*, July 2009.

## TAKE NOTE

### E-MAIL CHANGING TO "@AVERA.ORG"



**Jim Veline**  
Senior Vice President of Information Systems  
Avera

Around Dec. 1, e-mail addresses changed for colleagues at Avera owned, sponsored and leased facilities (and some managed). All domain-name addresses went to a standard "@avera.org." Jim Veline, Avera CIO and senior vice president of Information Systems, explains the change.

#### JIM, WHY THE CHANGE?

"There are two main reasons why the organization made the change at this point

in time. Both are customer-centered.

1. Moving to a single e-mail address for owned, sponsored and leased facilities is a simple and cost-effective way to emphasize that Avera is one brand, shared by one family.
2. The change provides greater ease-of-address for all of our customers."

#### FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, HOW DID THE CHANGEOVER GO?

"From what I know, the changeover went smoothly. We did have to work ahead of time with individuals who had the same name. We had very few, maybe 30 people, who were in this

(continued on pg2)



IN THE COMMUNITY

eEmergency

(continued from pg1)

situation. Information Technology contacted them to determine how their addresses would read.

“In a case or two, it might have taken an extra day or so to make the switch until we had all of the information we needed. But really, from my perspective, it was a seamless transition.”

**WHAT CAN AVERA COLLEAGUES DO TO SUPPORT THE CHANGE?**

“Regarding the initial change, Avera colleagues, for the most part, didn’t have to do anything to make it happen. For example, ‘john.doe@averaqueenofpeace.org’ became ‘john.doe@avera.org.’

“Moving forward, there are some things that everyone whose address changed can do to facilitate the change for others. Be aware that e-mail sent to a former e-mail address will be automatically forwarded until Jan. 1, 2011. So, for roughly another year now, John Doe will get mail at either address.

“However, colleagues affected by the change can support the process and ensure that, come next January, they will still get all of their e-mail. Starting now, they can add this statement to their e-mail signatures: ‘My e-mail address has changed. Please update your records.’

“Naturally, good stewardship is encouraged with business cards or other materials that have had individual e-mail addresses on them. Using up as much as can be before ordering new materials is the best idea.”



TODAY'S  
*Scripture*  
& Reflection

Take the chill out of winter at Today's Scripture and Reflection and Prayer Line found at [www.Avera.org](http://www.Avera.org) where you can e-subscribe today!



**eEMERGENCY VERY TANGIBLE TO WAGNER**

“Board-certified emergency medicine physicians take a team approach,” says Dr. Don Kosiak, Avera eCARE Services medical director. “It is best when one of us does the critical thinking and one of us is doing. This is the way we practice here, so eEmergency is a play out of this team approach in the rural setting,” Dr. Kosiak explains.

That is exactly what Dr. Robert Hubley, family medicine, Wagner Community Memorial Hospital Avera, was counting on when a team member pressed the red call button on the wall in the hospital Emergency Department. Dr. Hubley remembers with clarity the evening he got the call that 76-year-old George Herrold of Lake Andes, S.D., was on his way to the hospital. “Given his history of medical problems, I knew it was a difficult case. So, we were pretty prompt to hit the button to get the eEmergency involved,” says Dr. Hubley. It was Dr. Kosiak who responded on the other end. “He gave us that extra set of eyes and ears in the room, and that emergency medicine thought. It probably saved George’s life,” Dr. Hubley notes concerning the patient.

George arrived at the Emergency Department in Wagner at 7:49 p.m. In just over two hours, he crossed the threshold to the Avera Heart Hospital, where doctors were ready to perform life-saving surgery. Dr. Hubley explains that the expeditious transfer of both the patient and his medical information saved additional hours. “In the past, the receiving team might have had to work up the patient themselves,” he notes.

On a cold mid-December afternoon, George and his wife, Karen, both have warm smiles as he does his cardiac rehabilitation workout with Physical Therapist Joe Sees in Wagner. “The care George received here and in Sioux Falls was just excellent,” Karen says.



By Bryan Slaba  
Administrator, Wagner Community Memorial Hospital Avera

eEmergency gives us the ability to extend, enhance and advance the level of health care in our rural community at a time when it is getting more and more difficult to recruit. It elevates the level of care that we can support in our Emergency Department to where we sometimes are able to keep patients here at home where they are going to recuperate better than they are in a place that is foreign to them. This means less anxiety for patients, so they can concentrate on getting better.

If needed, we can expedite a transfer with all of the electronic documentation for care providers on the receiving end, so they don’t have to begin again with evaluation.

We are able to give better care in our rural community and keep patients here because we have a great team standing right beside us at all times – at our fingertips whenever we need them. We have all of the specialists we need available to us as resources as well – brought to bear here even though they are 120 miles away. This is health care that has never been able to be delivered at that level, right here!

eEmergency is a greater opportunity to do better the one thing we have always done for this community – take care of it! It’s like Nurse Mary DeWaard says, “Why wouldn’t you?”



Look no further.

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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.

QUESTIONS? comments,

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For additional information about Avera, its affiliates and physicians, or to view this newsletter online, please visit our website at [www.Avera.org](http://www.Avera.org).

## AVERA GARNERS GRANT

Avera has been awarded a three-year United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant worth \$396,693. The grant, which includes 17 facilities in the region, will assist in purchasing equipment for teleradiology, eEmergency, eConsult and urgent care.

Facilities included in the grant are Avera Healthworks, Bowdle Hospital, Faulkton Hospital, Freeman Regional Hospital, Avera Gregory Healthcare Center & Medical Clinic, Hendricks Hospital, Avera St. Benedict CRH Clinic in Lake Andes, Floyd Valley Hospital, Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital & Clinic, Avera Queen of Peace, Avera Brady Health and Rehab, Avera St. Benedict Health Center, Platte Health Center Avera, Osceola Community Hospital, Sioux Center Community Hospital & Health Center Avera, St. Michael's Hospital Avera and Wagner Community Memorial Hospital Avera. Avera has received seven USDA grants in the past four years.



(Left to right) Mark Gerhardt, Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth Sandlin's office; Ben Ready, Senator John Thune's office, Rural Development Area Director Trace Davids; Rural Development General Field Representative Kim Anderson; Rural Development State Director Elsie M. Meeks; Rachael Sherard, executive director for Avera Rural Health Institute; Tom Rasmussen, president and CEO, Avera Queen of Peace; and Matt Varilek, Senator Tim Johnson's office

## Avera

At Avera, our mission means every moment of every day, we work to make a positive impact in the lives and health of persons and communities we serve. Here are just some recent activities that illustrate Avera's commitment to our communities.

- By February of this year, Avera will have provided staff for 112 H1N1 flu-shot clinics – or more than 38 percent of the 290 events statewide, which administered 178,000 doses of the H1N1 vaccine.
- In October 2009, Avera Sacred Heart began offering comprehensive cardiovascular screenings to complement the Planet Heart screening the hospital was already providing. The hospital subsidizes \$100 of each screening valued at \$250. In just three months' time, some 150 screenings were performed. Through the screenings, five individuals discovered risk factors about which they would have been otherwise unaware. Early detection is improving quality of life in Yankton, S.D.
- At Avera Marshall, Dr. John Kemp, orthopedics and sports medicine, and Charlene Bass, athletic trainer, recently began offering ImPACT testing for area athletes. The ImPACT program is designed specifically for sports-related concussion management. Avera Marshall purchased the program and offers free testing for Marshall High School athletes to objectively evaluate an athlete's post-injury condition and ensure his or her safe return to play after a concussion.
- The "We're Building a Chapel" capital campaign at Avera Eureka Health Care Center is nearing its goal of \$120,000. Plans are to break ground in spring for the 40-seat, 860-square-foot chapel addition to the southeast corner of the care center. The addition will provide a spiritual setting for residents, families, staff and the community. Avera Eureka Health Care Center is a 56-bed, long-term, Medicare-certified nursing facility with two assisted-living suites.
- In December, Avera Queen of Peace employees donated more than \$4,000 in goods and funds to Pathway, a program through Dakota Counseling that serves the severe and persistently mentally ill. Each client received a bath towel, wash cloth, two bars of soap, socks, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, alarm clock or laundry basket and laundry soap. Employees also donated funds for gift wrap, ribbons and incidentals, such as haircuts, for the clients throughout the year. Many of the 116 clients served have little or no family support. The project was organized by the Avera Queen of Peace Mission Team and is supported by individual employees and numerous hospital departments.
- Bullying is out at Patrick Henry Middle School, where a \$3,500 grant from Avera McKennan Behavioral Health Services for the Olweus Bully Prevention Program is making a big difference in changing behaviors. Students, staff and parents report positive and impressive results as they create a culture of care for all students.
- Many employers make their decisions on health plan coverage for their employees in December to coincide with deductibles that begin Jan. 1 of each year. This year, Avera Health Plans welcomed more than 45 new employers representing some 3,900 new members on Jan. 1, 2010.

Did you know?



FULFILLING OUR

MISSION

## SUPPORT A VERY SPECIAL SCHOOL THROUGH THE AVERA HAITI PROJECT

Imagine a country where only 40 percent of the children ever attend school and less than 1 percent graduate from high school. Imagine four educated young men who, without pay, stepped forward to teach 150 children. Thus began St. Pierre School in Jérémie, Haiti, in 2000 in a cramped, unsafe space in a coffin maker's dirt-floored workshop. When benefactors of the Haitian Health Foundation offered to salary the teachers, they settled for lower pay in order to hire additional teachers to accommodate more students.

Today, 773 students attend the new school constructed in 2001. A second story was added in 2007. The school is now staffed by 17 teachers, who until recently were paid \$100 per month. Funds for salaries have been lost, but the teachers continue to work, receiving only one meal a day as payment for their services.

The children who attend the school receive a lunch of beans, rice, milk, bread and meat or tuna fish each day. For many it is their only meal for the day.

The future of any country depends upon an educated populace. Each child at the school has the potential to succeed. As individuals who work for an organization that carries its ministry beyond our region to this third-world country, Avera colleagues are uniquely poised to make sure these children have this opportunity.

The Avera Foundation is looking for 100 individuals to donate \$17 per month to pay the teachers' salaries. To make things easy, Avera colleagues can do an electronic funds-transfer form to make a monthly withdrawal from their bank accounts, or consider a payroll deduction for 24 pay periods of \$8.50 per pay period.

The Avera Foundation can also charge credit cards on a monthly basis, or will accept a one-time donation toward the project. Thank you for helping to make a difference in the lives of the teachers and children of Haiti. For more information, contact Jerry Soholt, Avera Foundation, at (605) 322-4750 or [foundation@avera.org](mailto:foundation@avera.org).

## AVERA SEEKS FUNDS FOR HAITI RESCUE

The Avera Haiti Project brings the current disaster so much closer to home and to our hearts.

Avera has learned in past disasters that needs come in two waves. The first need is for dollars to buy medical goods, bandages, antibiotics, medications and other emergency products. The second is for food, clothing, and rebuilding and construction dollars. In past disasters, Avera has directed dollars through the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders and Catholic Relief Services. In this disaster, we have a great partner in the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF).

The Avera Foundation is in contact with each of these organizations and is directing dollars to the area where they will have the greatest impact. A gift of \$25, \$50, \$100 or even \$250 will help the people in Port-au-Prince and the surrounding areas. Avera offered a \$10,000 match, which was met by 3:00 p.m. the first day of fundraising. By Jan. 26, nearly \$40,000 was raised.

Word from HHF confirms that even Jérémie, though 100 miles from the epicenter, has sustained damage but no loss of staff or volunteers. They are still assessing the situation. The great suffering for the people there is not being able to find out if family and friends in the hardest-hit areas are alive and well. There is no boat or road by which they can travel. In addition, vital supplies in Port-au-Prince waiting to be moved to Jérémie cannot be transported at this time, nor does the HHF know if they are lost or damaged.

Donations can be directed to an Avera facility foundation or the Avera Foundation. Gifts can be made online by going to [www.Avera.org](http://www.Avera.org) and clicking on the Haiti Rescue icon. Select Haiti Rescue from the Program Area dropdown box. Call the Avera Foundation at (605) 322-4750 with questions.

*Grace before meals*



*Old school*



*New St. Pierre School*

PEOPLE NEWS

NEW PHYSICIANS

THE FOLLOWING PROVIDERS HAVE JOINED THE STAFF OF AVERA MARSHALL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER IN MARSHALL, MINN.:

**Dr. Edward Wolske** is a graduate of Ross University School of Medicine, Dominica, West Indies. He completed a family medicine residency at the University of Minnesota Rural Family Medicine Residency Program, Waseca. Dr. Wolske will provide Emergency Room services at *Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center*, Marshall, Minn.

THE FOLLOWING PROVIDERS HAVE JOINED THE STAFF OF AVERA MCKENNAN HOSPITAL & UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER IN SIOUX FALLS, S.D.:



**Dr. Mina Hafzalah** is a graduate of Dubai Medical College, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. She completed a pediatric residency at Tulane and Ochsner Pediatric Residency Program, New Orleans, La., and a pediatric critical care fellowship at the University of Chicago Hospitals, Comer, Ill. Dr. Hafzalah joins *Pediatric Critical Care Services*, Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. Joyce Jeffries** is a graduate of Howard University – College of Dentistry, Washington, D.C. She completed an oral and maxillofacial surgery residency at St. Vincent Catholic Medical Center of Queens, Jamaica, N.Y. Dr. Jeffries joins *Siouxland Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery*, Sioux Falls, S.D.



**Dr. Desiree Langel** is a graduate of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine, Omaha. She completed an anatomic and clinical pathology residency at the University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle. She completed a surgical pathology fellowship at the Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education, Rochester, Minn., and a fellowship in dermatopathology at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Dr. Langel joins *Physicians Laboratory, Ltd.*, Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Dr. Brenda Nour** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Irving Harris Program in Child Development and Infant Mental Health, Denver, Colo. Dr. Nour joins *Avera University Psychiatry Associates*, Sioux Falls, S.D.



**Dr. Tamera Sturm** is a graduate of Des Moines University – Osteopathic Medical Center, Des Moines, Iowa. She completed an internal medicine residency at the Sanford School of Medicine at The University of South Dakota, Sioux Falls. Dr. Sturm joins *Avera McKennan Hospitalists*, Sioux Falls, S.D.



**Dr. Rachelle Sutton** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. She completed an anesthesiology residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha. Dr. Sutton joins *Anesthesiology Associates, Inc.*, Sioux Falls, S.D.



**Dr. Erick Wait** is a graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, Vermillion. He completed an obstetric and gynecology residency at University of Missouri – Columbia Hospitals and Clinics. Dr. Wait joins *Avera Brookings Medical Clinic*, Brookings, S.D.

MEDICAL STAFF NOTES



**Dr. Shahid Chaudhary**, certified nephrologist, has been appointed medical director of Quality at Avera St. Luke's.



**Dr. Lee Mabee**, OB/GYN specialist, has been named the 2009 recipient of the Young at Heart Award by the South Dakota State Medical Association. The award is presented to a physician who helps new physicians by serving as a mentor, role model or leader.



**Dr. Suneet Verma**, internist and lipidologist with Avera McGreevy Clinic in Sioux Falls, has been honored as Young Physician of the Year by the South Dakota Chapter of the American College of Physicians.

PEOPLE NEWS



**Roxanne Ahlers, RN**, is the new director of Long-Term Care Nursing at Avera Rosebud Country Care Center. She has been interim director since October 2009.



**Charlene Berke**, director of Radiation Oncology at the Avera Queen of Peace Cancer Center, was presented with the South Dakota Comprehensive Cancer Control Program's first-ever "Partner of the Year Award" in Pierre on Oct. 14. The award recognizes extraordinary effort on the program's behalf.

**Nancy Berndt, RN**, coordinator of Palliative Care at Avera McKennan, recently was honored with the District 10 Nurse of the Year and Rookie of the Year Awards at the South Dakota Nurses Association Annual Convention.



**Sandy Gehl, RN**, is Avera Sacred Heart's new director of Emergency Services. Sandy has nearly 30 years of experience in emergency nursing and hospital leadership.



**Michael Hall** is the new CEO of Avera Holy Family Health in Estherville, Iowa. A native to the Estherville community, he has an extensive background in health care administration.



**Marilyn Kathol**, Credit manager, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Business Office, recently became president elect for the Rushmore chapter of the American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management.



**Barbara Larson**, vice president of Patient Care Services at Avera Sacred Heart, recently was appointed to the American Nurses Association of Nurse Executives' Future Patient Care Delivery Committee.



**Jason R. Merkley**, vice president of Professional Services at Avera Queen of Peace, recently became a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

**Becky Nichols, RN**, clinical nurse coordinator in the Intensive Care Unit at Avera McKennan, recently was honored with the Nursing Practice Award at the South Dakota Nurses Association Annual Convention. She also was elected president of the organization.



**Karine Pogosyan**, director of Physician Recruitment at Avera St. Luke's, recently earned professional recognition as a Certified Administrator in Physician Practice Management (CAPP) and as an Executive Fellow in Practice Management (EFPM), both from the American Academy of Medical Management.

**Timothy Renelt**, Avera St. Luke's director of Accounting, has received the national 2009 Founder's Medal of Honor Award from the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) after being recommended by the South Dakota HFMA Chapter. It is only the fourth time a South Dakotan has received the honor.



**Darcy Sherman Justice, RN**, director of Professional Nursing Development and Integration at Avera McKennan, recently was honored with the Joy of Nursing Award at the South Dakota Nurses Association Annual Convention.



**Deb Soholt, RN**, director of Women's Health at Avera McKennan, recently received the Deliver Award as one of four distinguished alumni honored by the University of North Dakota College of Nursing.



## AROUND THE SYSTEM

kudos



## FIVE AVERA HOSPITALS GARNER PRESS GANEY AWARDS

Five Avera hospitals recently brought home 2009 Press Ganey Associates, Inc., Summit Awards. The Summit Award is given to clients who achieve and maintain the 95th-percentile ranking or higher in the Press Ganey database for each reporting period for a minimum of three consecutive years. Floyd Valley Hospital, Avera St. Benedict Health Center, Sioux Center Community Hospital & Health Center Avera, Avera Weskota Memorial Medical Center and Avera Sacred Heart Hospital all were recognized in the Emergency Department category.

**Floyd Valley Hospital** kept patient satisfaction high by posting signage regarding wait times, revising radiology procedure sheets for outpatient testing and communicating with patients about delays.

Among various ways **Avera St. Benedict Health Center** maintained its high ranking were keeping wait times short, doing assessments with the electronic medical record, redesigning exam rooms and involving Dietary during meal times.

**Avera Weskota Memorial Medical Center** gives credit for its award to meeting the challenge of attending to patients personally while implementing the electronic medical record.

**Sioux Center Community Hospital & Health Center Avera** promoted a team atmosphere, trained physicians and staff in patient communication, added an automated medication-delivery system, created private waiting rooms, utilized service-recovery kits, extended Admissions hours and communicated patient-satisfaction results community wide to earn its award.

**The Avera Sacred Heart Emergency Department** maintained overall patient-satisfaction and nursing scores in the 99th percentile through solid leadership and involving the entire workforce in the process of culture change.

## AVERA BRADY EARNS 5-STAR STATUS

Avera Brady Health and Rehab recently earned a 5-Star Overall Quality rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Only 10 percent of all nursing homes achieve this distinction. The rating is based on a health inspection, quality measures and staffing.

## AVERA NURSES CELEBRATED AT SEVENTH AVERA NURSING CONFERENCE

Avera nurses from around the region were recognized at the Avera Nursing Conference on Nov. 3 in Sioux Falls:



- **Julie Hoffmann** of Avera Brady Health and Rehab received the Avera Nursing Distinguished Service Leader Award.
- **Linda Erlenbusch** of Avera St. Luke's was recognized with the Avera Nursing Distinguished Service Care Provider Award.
- Avera Nursing Innovation Awards went to **Jodi Doering** of Avera Queen of Peace, **Reenie Malsom** of Avera St. Luke's and **Jody Sternberg** of Platte Health Center Avera.
- **Gail Headrick** of Avera McKennan and **Holly Tracy** of Avera St. Anthony's received Avera Nursing Visionary Awards.
- The Avera Nursing Commitment to Caring Award recipient was **Andrea Koch** of Avera Sacred Heart.
- **Rebecca Nichols** of Avera McKennan and **Chris Jones** of Avera Queen of Peace both received Avera Nursing Publication and Research Awards.
- This year's Avera Nursing Novice to Expert Award recipient was **Kari Bruns** of Avera St. Luke's.
- **Jane Stehly** of Avera Queen of Peace received the Avera Nursing Friend of Education Award.

## AVERA SACRED HEART SCHOOL OF RADIOLOGY AWARDED MAXIMUM ACCREDITATION

The Avera Sacred Heart School of Radiologic Technology received an eight-year accreditation from the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT), the longest accreditation available. JRCERT is responsible for the evaluation of programs in accordance with the Standards for an Accredited Educational Program in Radiologic Sciences and is the only agency recognized by the United States Department of Education for the accreditation of educational programs in radiography, radiation therapy, magnetic resonance and medical dosimetry.

The school also recently received a grant from the South Dakota Education Access Foundation, a program that provides monetary aid to students of low-income, under-represented backgrounds and those facing other barriers to a postsecondary education.

## AVERA SACRED HEART HONORED FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY

Avera Sacred Heart earned high praise from the governor's office this past October. The South Dakota Safety Council awarded one of 49 Governor's Safety Awards to the hospital for excellence in workplace safety and health. Since 1993, the annual awards have spotlighted South Dakota employers with above-average safety records.

## AVERA MCKENNAN EARNS GOLD MEDAL FOR ORGAN DONATIONS

Avera McKennan is one of 30 hospitals nationwide to earn a Gold Medal of Honor for Organ Donation from the Department of Health and Human Services for achieving and sustaining national goals for donation. Gold medal winners reach or exceed these goals: improving donation rates, increasing the number of organs donated per individual donor to 3.75 or higher and expanding clinical processes for recovering organs.

## AVERA YANKTON CARE CENTER RECERTIFIED

Avera Yankton Care Center recently was recertified as an Eden Alternative Home. Organizations involved in the Eden Alternative must participate in a recertification process every two years. The Eden Alternative is a small not-for-profit organization with the core belief that aging should be a continued stage of development and growth, rather than a period of decline.

## AVERA HEART HOSPITAL NAMED TOP CARDIOVASCULAR HOSPITAL

For the fourth consecutive year, the Avera Heart Hospital was named one of the nation's 100 Top Hospitals® for cardiovascular care by Thomson Reuters. The organization's annual study analyzes 971 hospitals for clinical outcomes for patients diagnosed with heart failure and heart attack, and those who receive coronary-bypass surgery or percutaneous cardiovascular interventions (PCI). The study, in its 11th year, found that the 100 Top Hospitals cardiovascular winners have:

- 17-percent-lower mortality for heart-attack patients
- 10-percent-lower mortality for heart-failure patients
- 27-percent-lower mortality for bypass-surgery patients
- 22-percent-lower mortality following PCI
- Fewer post-operative complications
- Close to 12-percent-shorter average hospital stays
- 12-percent-lower cost per case

"The Avera Heart Hospital's comprehensive and patient-friendly approach to care ensures that patients experience shorter hospital stays, comparable costs and overall better outcomes. Proof of this model is reflected in studies like this and our exceptionally high patient-satisfaction scores," says Jon Soderholm, CEO of the hospital.

## AVERA MCKENNAN RECOGNIZED BY MODERN HEALTHCARE

Avera McKennan recently received national recognition by *Modern Healthcare* magazine for its innovative practices in recruiting and hiring registered nurses. The honorable mention in the "Team Spirit" category was announced in the magazine's Dec. 14 edition and can be viewed online at the publication's website.

The award recognizes the "Green Carpet Events" developed by Human Resources and Nursing. The events allow the hospital to conduct approximately 30 interviews in one three-hour event, receive references, collaborate on hiring decisions and call successful candidates with a job offer within 24 to 48 hours.

Along with capitalizing on the prime time for hiring graduates, the events save the expense of significant hours scheduling, interviewing and telephoning references. Exit surveys show that candidates overwhelmingly prefer this format to traditional interviews.

## AVERA SACRED HEART HOSPITAL RECEIVES RE-ACCREDITATION

Avera Sacred Heart has been awarded a three-year term of re-accreditation in ultrasound technology as the result of a recent survey by the American College of Radiology (ACR). The ACR awards accreditation to facilities for achieving high practice standards after a peer-review evaluation. Evaluations are conducted by board-certified physicians and medical physicists who are experts in the field. They assess the qualifications of the personnel and the adequacy of facility equipment. The surveyors report their findings to the ACR's Committee on Accreditation, which subsequently provides the practice with a comprehensive report.

To receive the accreditation, evaluated facilities need to receive a score of 85 in 16 categories. Avera Sacred Heart's ultrasound technicians received a score of 100 in all 16 categories.



## THE LEARNING CURVE

### HOST OF SPRING CONFERENCES SLATED

The learning year kicks off with the **Avera HealthCARE™ Forum** at the Convention Center in Sioux Falls on Feb. 27, following an invitation-only event Feb. 26 on the Avera McKennan campus. The forum is designed to help physicians and other health care professionals better incorporate technology in their practices while implementing the electronic medical record and meaningful use. Several educational opportunities and breakout sessions are planned. The keynote speaker is an internationally known author, consultant and futurist Ian Morrison who specializes in long-term forecasting and planning with particular emphasis on health care and the changing business environment.

March 24 at Callaway's in Sioux Falls, those who manage projects in any industry or department (whether employed by Avera or another organization) can take advantage of the **Avera Project Management Conference**. The event is an opportunity to gain mission-critical education, tools, techniques and best practices to support project managers. Anyone who knows the value of handling projects and deadlines efficiently will want to hear from expert speakers and discuss techniques and common issues with fellow project managers.

This year's **Avera Management Conference** (April 13 or 14 at the Sioux Falls Convention Center) features Chip Madera and Don Blohowiak. Chip presents "Seven Policies That Create 'WOW!'" The session clarifies the essential policies that need to be initiated, standardized and enforced to create an environment of service excellence. Don's intense and interactive workshop, "Lead Others to Greatness," focuses on ways managers can lead staff to outthink and outwork competitors while working smarter, harder and happier – even under pressure.

April 28 is the date of the **Avera Fundraising Institute** at the Holiday Inn City Centre, Sioux Falls. The purpose of the institute is to move Avera foundations to the next level through sharing best practices and developing as health care philanthropy practitioners.

Richard Groves, chaplain and internationally respected teacher of the sacred art of living and dying, heads up the **Avera Parish Nurse Conference** titled "**Healing the Healers: A Spirituality of Compassion**" on April 29, also at the Holiday Inn City Centre. Richard and his late wife, Mary, founded the Sacred Art of Living Center in Bend, Ore. Richard is co-author of *The American Book of Dying: Lessons in Healing Spiritual Pain*. The day is an opportunity for parish nurses and others in health ministry to interact, celebrate their ministries and nurture their spirits.

The **Avera PACE Conference and Tradeshow** on May 5 at the Ramkota Hotel in Sioux Falls is a free educational opportunity. This year, Chris Blackmore presents "The Magic of Quality Service." Chris has conducted training seminars for Disney, Oracle, Johnson & Johnson and others. A member of the National Speakers Association, he has a bachelor's in theater studies and a minor in business marketing. The tradeshow runs from 10:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch is available at noon.

### AVERA QUALITY CONGRESS NOMINATION MATERIALS AVAILABLE

Look for nomination materials for the Avera Quality Congress. The congress is the annual celebration of the Avera Quality Recognition Program, which is designed to:

- Recognize Avera entities that develop and implement processes that improve outcomes
- Promote sharing of best practices
- Provide models to improve performance in quality, safety and outcomes
- Encourage collaboration
- Recognize individuals whose actions exemplify Avera's values
- Recognize individuals who forward Avera's efforts in quality through leadership

### Awards are given in five categories:

- Avera Caring With Excellence recognizes projects that significantly improve processes and/or outcomes.
- Avera Caring With Collaboration recognizes projects that demonstrate improved outcomes because of collaboration.
- Avera Caring With Safety recognizes projects that significantly impact the safety of customers and employees, and protect the earth's resources.
- Avera Caring Spirit honors individuals who exemplify Avera's values.
- Avera Caring With Leadership honors individuals who forward Avera's efforts in quality through leadership.

See the nomination booklet for requirements. Nominations must be received by May 7. Materials and further information are available on AveraNET.

### AVERA ETHICS CONFERENCE POSTPONED

The Avera Ethics Conference, scheduled for April 15, 2010, is postponed until 2011. Planning is delayed pending the selection of a senior vice president of Mission Services, making the postponement prudent at this time.



### AVERA WORTHINGTON SPECIALTY CLINICS LARGEST CLINIC GO-LIVE TO DATE

On Nov. 2, 2009, Avera Worthington Specialty Clinics went live with LSS Billing and Scheduling. To date, this is the largest such implementation in an Avera clinic.

Factors that make the rollout significant are:

- The clinic supports the work of 27 physicians across five different specialties.
- A participant in the CMS demonstration grant that tracks physician adoption of the electronic medical record, the clinic will be required to report on data that can be tracked only via LSS reporting.
- The clinic is impacted by a Minnesota mandate addressing adoption of e-prescribing and will be one of the first clinics to have e-prescribing included in the first phase of clinical functionality.

### AVERA ST. LUKE'S FASTCARE® LINKS TO BRITTON, GROTON

In the first week of November, new evening hours began Tuesdays at Marshall County Medical Clinic Avera and Wednesdays at Avera Clinic of Groton through an eConsult link with Avera St. Luke's FastCare in Aberdeen. A nurse staffs the local clinic during evenings, and a certified nurse practitioner (remotely located at Avera St. Luke's FastCare in Aberdeen) treats patients via eConsult.

### AVERA CLINIC OF WEBSTER TO OPEN NEXT SPRING

Avera St. Luke's will continue a long-standing medical relationship by opening Avera Clinic of Webster. The primary care clinic initially will be staffed by a midlevel provider. Physician specialists will visit on a monthly basis.

"Last June, the northeast region of South Dakota lost a gentle giant when Dr. Alan Bloom passed away unexpectedly. He was an excellent physician who dedicated his life to the highest-quality rural health care," says Ron L. Jacobson, president and CEO of Avera St. Luke's. "I received numerous phone calls asking how Avera St. Luke's was going to assist in filling this void so patients in the area would continue to have a choice when it comes to medical care," he adds, thanking the community for the invitation to provide care there.

### SIoux CENTER HOSPITAL BUYS LAND FOR NEW CAMPUS

Sioux Center Hospital & Health Center Avera recently announced that it has purchased 40 acres of land on which to build a new facility and campus. The deal was finalized on Dec. 29, 2009, according to Chief Executive Officer Kayleen Lee.

The site is just east of the city's water treatment plant, at Sioux County Road B-40 (Ninth Street) and 13th Avenue. Kayleen said the site was chosen for its accessibility. All roads leading to it are primary roads, which is very important for emergency vehicles. She noted that the future new facility will better serve not only patients, but also medical practitioners.

The next phase in the project is planning and design, a process that will include residents and community stakeholders. The city's existing hospital was built in 1951, primarily as an inpatient facility. It was renovated in 1983, and the medical clinic was added in 1989.

## Avera CALENDAR

2010	Feb 9-10	Avera Health Board
	Feb 16	Avera Legislative Social, Pierre
	Feb 26-27	Avera HealthCARE™ Forum, Sioux Falls
	March 24	Avera Project Management Conference, Callaway's, Sioux Falls
	March 25-26	Avera Health Board of Consultors
	April 13-14	Avera Management Conference, Sioux Falls Convention Center
	April 28	Avera Fundraising Institute, Holiday Inn City Centre, Sioux Falls
	April 29	Avera Parish Nurse Conference, Holiday Inn City Centre, Sioux Falls
	May 5	Avera PACE Conference and Tradeshow, Ramkota Hotel, Sioux Falls
	June 8-9	Avera Health Board
	June 17	Avera Gerontological Care Conference, Avera McKennan Education Center at Orthopedic Institute
	Aug 25	Avera Quality Congress, Sioux Falls Convention Center
	Aug 26-27	Avera Health Board of Consultors
Sept 28-29	Avera Health Board	
Oct 5	Avera Rural Health Conference, Sioux Falls Convention Center	
Oct 11	Avera Nursing Conference, Sioux Falls Convention Center	
Nov 9-10	Avera Health Board	
2011	April 28-30	Avera Leadership Conference, Marriott City Center, Minneapolis, Minn.
	May 4	Avera PACE Conference, Ramkota Hotel, Sioux Falls
	July 20-21	Avera Summer Administrators Meeting, Arrowwood Resort & Conference Center, Okoboji, Iowa
Aug 24	Avera Quality Congress, Sioux Falls Convention Center	



*All Of Us* is a publication for employees of Avera and colleagues like **Diane Greenup**, patient account specialist at the Avera Heart Hospital of South Dakota. Diane gives exceptional customer service. She is kind and polite to each person with whom she talks.

Diane has a positive attitude, which is a benefit to everyone who works with her.

**PROBLEMS?  
WE'D LIKE TO MAKE IT RIGHT!**  
CHANGE LABEL AND MAIL BACK TO US.

- \_\_\_ Misspelled name
- \_\_\_ Wrong address
- \_\_\_ Received more than one
- \_\_\_ Remove my name from the mailing list

W I N T E R 2 0 1 0

8

RESIDENT'S LETTER

**avera and physician colleagues meet change with mission strength**

Health care and *change* – these are words that by virtue of the times might as well be synonyms. And, if I had a nickel for every time someone quoted Charles Darwin on the topic, saying, “It’s not the strongest species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most responsive to change!” I might have enough “change” in my pockets to be able to stem the recessionary tides single-handedly. Still, at the risk of tackling the cliché, plenty of work in health care must focus on constant *change* and how it impacts our most strategic concerns.

Our valued physician relationships is one such area of importance. The steady growth of the Avera Medical Group (see the lead story in this issue) and the swirling health care reform agenda give us cause to think about these relationships, past strategies in the general market and Avera’s mission to meet the needs of our physician colleagues and the people and communities we serve.

In historical context, the 1990s saw significant growth in primary-care physician employment by hospitals throughout the country. On the whole, Avera took a cautious approach to what nationally came to be a relatively reactionary and unstructured wave of employment. We stood by our partnership model, which seeks to enhance relationships with both independent and employed physicians in a mission-guided effort to meet the needs of our communities.

Then in March 2008, Avera offered a more tempered approach to physician employment to colleagues who wanted to benefit from a greater

level of integration with the Avera system: the Avera Medical Group. The new level of partnership provided physicians the opportunity to serve their patients with less concern about the business side of managing a clinic.

Nationally, the present and future direction is toward increased physician employment and other forms of alignment (according to a recent article in *Health Progress*, the Journal of the Catholic Health Association). Change is the big driver and comes wearing the varied faces of health care reform, payment bundling, accountable-care organizations, penalties associated with readmissions and physician shortages.

Physicians can expect to have much greater voices in leadership and decision making, a dynamic that gives Avera unique position in the marketplace. At Avera, we have the mission edge, which links our physician colleagues to us by more than a contract. A recent survey of 557 physicians on the medical staffs at our five regional centers told us that 90 percent of our physician colleagues, employed and independent, agree or strongly agree that their personal mission and that of the organization have a good fit. We are grateful for our collaborative, mission-focused colleagues, and we look forward to meeting change with them in a manner that best serves the lives and health of the persons and communities of our region.



**John Porter**  
President & CEO  
Avera

*John Porter*

**“There is a big difference in being part of a mission dedicated to caring for patients guided by Christian values.”**

Tad Jacobs, DO,  
Chief Medical Information Officer  
Avera

**“I appreciate the opportunity to treat the whole patient – mind, body and spirit.”**

David Erickson, MD,  
Senior Vice President and  
Chief Medical Officer  
Avera



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