Cherishing life
Manhattan couple’s hearts full after harrowing visit to ER

Break point
Engineer rallies with 175-pound weight loss

Grateful grandpa
Pittsburg’s heart care team receives high praise
Dear Neighbor,

In 2016, Via Christi team members advanced our work to become an integrated health system that cares for families through every moment of life. As you will see in the Annual Report section of this issue, we continued to improve the quality of our care and our patients’ experience. We introduced innovative programs to offer patients greater access to the latest advances in heart care, cancer treatment and stroke intervention, providing world-class care close to home.

As part of our mission of serving all who need care, Via Christi continued to take an active role in urging Kansas lawmakers to discuss and vote on expanding Medicaid to an additional 150,000 people. We will continue this important advocacy work throughout 2017.

Kansas is one of 19 states that have not expanded the Medicaid insurance program for the poor. As a part of Ascension, the nation’s largest Catholic and nonprofit health system, Via Christi has played a leadership role within a coalition of healthcare, business and community groups advocating to expand the state’s Medicaid managed-care program, called KanCare.

I joined Via Christi in July after serving for two years at another Ascension ministry, St. Vincent Health in Indiana, where Gov. Mike Pence — who now is helping to lead our nation — and the Legislature took the bold step of expanding Medicaid to help their state’s citizens and economy, thereby achieving both aims.

We are hopeful that Kansas lawmakers will follow Pence’s example and expand the KanCare Medicaid program in 2017. Independent economic studies commissioned by the Kansas Hospital Association show that expanding KanCare will help resolve our state’s budget crisis and create new jobs, while providing needed healthcare to 150,000 hard-working Kansans.

Wichita Police Chief Gordon Ramsay pointed out another reason for expanding KanCare during a news conference sponsored by Via Christi last fall: It will enhance public safety. He says many crimes involve people suffering from untreated mental illness — crimes that could be reduced by expanding access to mental health treatment.


I hope 2017 will be the year our Kansas lawmakers move our state forward by expanding KanCare.

Sincerely,

Mike Mullins
CEO and Ministry Market Executive, Via Christi Health

Chat with the CEO

Via Christi joined business and community advocates during a three-city series of fall news conferences to discuss expansion of the KanCare Medicaid program. Left: During a forum at the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce, CEO Mike Mullins urges state lawmakers to debate and vote to expand KanCare. Right: Bob Copple, hospital president, describes state Medicaid losses absorbed by Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan.
Timing is everything

After late-night allergic reaction, Manhattan couple thankful for quick-reacting ER staff

Connie and Ron Forkenbrock enjoy spending time outdoors. The couple recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Last summer, Connie and Ron Forkenbrock were looking forward to a good night’s sleep after a busy evening with their grandsons, Pryse, 6, and Donnie Ray, 10, who were visiting from Kansas City.

Connie, a 69-year-old retired preschool teacher who lives in Manhattan, had taken Bactrim, a prescription antibiotic, earlier that evening.

“I woke up around midnight, itching all over and I had broken out in hives,” Connie says. “It was hard to breathe or speak.”

Recognizing immediately that she was having an allergic reaction, Connie took a Benadryl allergy pill before she and Ron loaded the boys into the car and drove to the Emergency Room at Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan.

“They took me back to an exam room right away,” Connie says. “I had no idea what was causing the reaction, but we found out later it was the Bactrim — even though I had taken it without incident just a month before.”

Accommodating care

So Connie’s husband could sit with her in the exam room, Cindee Becker, the patient admissions representative, took charge of the grandsons, putting cartoons on the television, giving them blankets and keeping an eye on them.

“Cindee was so calm and helpful, which made the situation so much easier,” Connie adds.

After three hours of care and monitoring, Connie left the ER with a prescription for allergy treatments — prednisone and an Epipen.

“Dr. Grant Forrester was so reassuring and informative and the nursing staff was very efficient, caring and comforting. I had such a positive experience.”

An uncommon reaction

Though delayed allergic reactions to medications do occur, it is relatively uncommon for people to develop allergies to medications they have previously taken safely or are currently taking, says Eugene DeDonder, the hospital’s director of Pharmacy.

“However, people who are known to be allergic to a number of drugs are more likely to have additional drug allergies as they are exposed to them,” he says.

In Connie’s case, this was not the first time she developed an allergy to medication.

“I’m allergic to Lisinopril, a blood pressure medication that I had been taking for a long time,” she says, adding that she is also allergic to bean sprouts and cats, but the symptoms for those can usually be taken care of with a dose of Benadryl.

By coming to the ER, Connie definitely did the right thing during her latest allergy scare, DeDonder says.

“If one is experiencing a mild allergic reaction like hives, and the hives are not spreading and worsening, over-the-counter allergy medication, such as Benadryl, may counter the symptoms,” he says. “If it is a severe reaction, specifically with throat swelling and difficulty breathing, seeking medical attention is absolutely necessary.”

In severe cases, epinephrine, if available, should also be administered, DeDonder adds.

Back to action

After the allergy scare, Connie and Ron were back to doing what they love — serving as fan ambassadors, volunteering during fall football games at Kansas State University’s Bill Snyder Family Stadium, and spending time with their grandsons.

Connie hopes to never face such a medical emergency again, but if she does, she is comforted by her positive experience and knows that help is close by, at Via Christi.

“They do a lot of really great things in the ER,” she says.

“Allergic reactions range from mild symptoms, like hives and itching, to life-threatening ones, like throat swelling and difficulty swallowing and breathing. Severe reactions require immediate medical attention and an injection of epinephrine,” DeDonder adds.

Exaggerated side effects are extreme reactions not usually associated with the drug and require some type of intervention, such as decreasing the dose, or discontinuing the drug. Side effects often include severe diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, cough, headache and dizziness.

Visit viachristi.org/drug-allergies for more information about drug allergies, symptoms and side effects.
Via Christi Hospital St. Francis in Wichita, already a leader in advanced cardiac care, began offering the world’s first fully dissolving heart stent for treating coronary artery disease approximately 90 days after it received FDA approval.

That was great timing for the 66-year-old El Dorado retiree whose Oct. 7 heart catheterization procedure revealed a narrowed heart vessel in need of stenting.

“It was pretty cool — I felt like a celebrity,” said the man, pleased to have been the first patient to receive the revolutionary stent at St. Francis. “I’ve got five older brothers, so it was the first time in my life that I was the first to receive anything!”

By Thanksgiving, nine other patients whose scheduled or emergency heart catheterization procedure revealed the need had received an Absorb™ dissolving stent.

“I’m pleased that patients coming to Via Christi now have this long-dreamed-about alternative to a permanent metallic stent as an option,” says Bassem Chehab, MD, the structural heart specialist who placed the first dissolving stent at Via Christi.

Like the traditional metal stent, the Absorb stent opens and expands the walls of blocked arteries, enabling better blood flow, and releases a medication that promotes healing.

But unlike metallic stents, the Absorb stent, made of a naturally dissolving material, gradually disappears within three years.

“This allows the patient’s artery to regain its natural motion,” says Dr. Chehab. “It also provides more options should the patient require future intervention.”

**Did you know?** Coronary artery disease affects 15 million people in the United States and remains a leading cause of death worldwide.

For more information about dissolving stents, call 316-771-8116 or go to viachristi.org/absorb
GOOD EATS

Serves 8

1/2 cup 2 percent reduced-fat milk*
1 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
2 tablespoons fresh chives, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

Homemade Ranch Dressing

Preheat oven to 450°. Place an oven-safe rack on top of a foil-lined baking sheet. Spray with non-stick cooking spray.

To create the batter for the cauliflower, in a large bowl whisk together the flour, milk, garlic powder, sea salt and black pepper. Toss the cauliflower with the batter. Make sure all pieces are well coated.

Place the coated cauliflower onto the prepared rack. The pieces should not touch. Bake for 20 minutes or until the cauliflower starts to brown.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter. Stir in hot sauce and honey.

Remove cauliflower from the oven and in a large bowl toss with the hot sauce mixture.

To cool off from the heat of the buffalo sauce, pair the cauliflower with Homemade Ranch Dressing that’s loaded with fresh herbs.

For Chef Dustin Cherry’s gluten-free version of the cauliflower dish and recipes for Loaded Sweet Potato Bites and Thai Turkey Burger Sliders, visit viachristi.org/recipes

NUTRITION (APPROXIMATE, PER 1 CUP SERVING WITHOUT DRESSING):
154 CALORIES; 6 G FAT; 18 G CARBOHYDRATES; 4 G PROTEIN; 3 G FIBER; 85 MG SODIUM; 54 MG POTASSIUM; 84 PERCENT OF DAILY VALUE OF VITAMIN C

For Chef Dustin Cherry’s gluten-free version of the cauliflower dish and recipes for Loaded Sweet Potato Bites and Thai Turkey Burger Sliders, visit viachristi.org/recipes

Healthy snack recipes are winning alternatives for game-day parties

Baked Buffalo Cauliflower

Serves 8

Non-stick cooking spray
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup 2 percent reduced-fat milk*
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Homemade Ranch Dressing

Preheat oven to 450°. Place an oven-safe rack on top of a foil-lined baking sheet. Spray with non-stick cooking spray.

To create the batter for the cauliflower, in a large bowl whisk together the flour, milk, garlic powder, sea salt and black pepper. Toss the cauliflower with the batter. Make sure all pieces are well coated.

Place the coated cauliflower onto the prepared rack. The pieces should not touch. Bake for 20 minutes or until the cauliflower starts to brown.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter. Stir in hot sauce and honey.

Remove cauliflower from the oven and in a large bowl toss with the hot sauce mixture.

Spray the rack with cooking spray again and return the cauliflower to the rack. Bake for an additional 10 minutes or until browned. Remove from oven and transfer to a serving dish with Homemade Ranch Dressing for dipping.

Prep time: 15 minutes; cook time: 30 minutes

*To make these recipes dairy-free, replace the milk with soy milk and the butter with a dairy-free variety.
After he began experiencing chest pain, Allen Garner received care from Via Christi cardiac specialist Rizwan Khalid, MD, that was so good, it prompted Allen’s daughter to write a letter to hospital administrators and other personnel.

That occasionally happens. But this letter was unique in that it was penned by a fellow physician.

“I was very impressed with how Dr. Khalid handled another physician’s father, and as a visiting cardiologist in a hospital he was new to, which must have been a little nerve-wracking,” says Mindi Garner, DO, who has been an internist with Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg for 13 years. “He was called in to handle a very stressful situation, and I have the utmost respect for how he handled it in stride.”

In July 2014, Dr. Khalid was at Via Christi providing temporary coverage and was on call for the cardiology team when Dr. Garner met her dad there in the Emergency Room.

“Dad had called me from the house to say he was having a little shortness of breath and chest discomfort, and he never calls me for something like that unless it’s pretty significant,” Dr. Garner recalls. “It was to the point I recommended he get to the ER.”

Thorough treatment

Allen, 76, had survived four years as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division, and had never required hospitalization until age 64. But at that age, he underwent triple bypass surgery, and had risk factors, including diabetes and a history of tobacco use.

After evaluating his symptoms, Dr. Khalid performed a cardiac catheterization. During the procedure, Dr. Khalid inserted a long, thin tube — the catheter — into Allen’s groin and guided it to his heart. That enabled Dr. Khalid to identify and evaluate narrowed or clogged arteries in the heart and check for defects.

Allen’s daughter says she also was grateful for the openness Dr. Khalid showed in communicating her father’s progress.

“My dad and I have always been very, very close,” says Dr. Garner, whose practice in downtown Pittsburg is adjacent to Allen’s accounting office in a building he owns.

Lasting relationship

Allen is grateful, too, he says, for the high-quality care and treatment he received and has continued to receive from Via Christi for other health concerns.

“Dr. Khalid was very thorough,” Allen says. “And he was very interested in making life better for me. He did a professional but also a sincere job. I can say that of all the staff there — they are nothing but A-plus.”

With career experience that includes prestigious fellowships in heart transplant and advanced heart failure, and speaking engagements in the United States and abroad, Dr. Khalid is a recognized regional expert in interventional cardiology, advanced cardiac imaging and electrophysiology.

Allen and Dr. Garner were happy about another outcome, as was Dr. Khalid: His experience working temporarily at Via Christi Hospital that summer was so positive, he accepted an offer to join the Via Christi Heart Center as a permanent Pittsburg physician.

Rizwan Khalid, MD

Identify narrowed or clogged arteries.

2 Evaluate how well the heart is working.

3 Check heart defects.

4 Evaluate an enlarged heart.

5 Decide on appropriate treatment.

6 Complete a procedure such as balloon angioplasty and stenting to help increase blood flow.

What is heart catheterization?

If a patient is having chest pain and has a history of heart disease, a heart catheterization can determine if there is a blocked vessel that is causing the blood supply to the heart muscle to be cut off. Dr. Khalid says. When the blood supply is cut off, it becomes starved of oxygen and nutrients, which in turn can cause chest pain or a heart attack.

In a heart cath procedure, a physician uses a catheter and X-ray machine to check your heart and its blood supply. A long, thin flexible tube is inserted into your groin or arm and guided to your heart. You will be sedated, but able to communicate.

The procedure helps your physician:

- Evaluate how well the heart is working.
- Decide on appropriate treatment.
- Complete a procedure such as balloon angioplasty and stenting to help increase blood flow.

Allen Garner says his grandchildren give him “a lot to live for.” He is pictured with Marrone, age 5.
Together through life’s twists & turns

Couple relies on strength of their marriage and skill of their rehab team in fight against multiple sclerosis

What started as tingling and numbness in her feet in late 2015 had robbed Rebecca Power of her independence within months.

“She started the year in high heels and now she’s in a wheelchair and diagnosed as paraplegic,” says Chris, Rebecca’s husband of 13 years.

“The numbness started to go up my whole body,” recalls Rebecca, who worked as an ophthalmic technician for an eye surgeon.

The 44-year-old Wichitan had difficulty walking and balancing. She couldn’t feel her body or positioning and worried she would fall off stools at work. At her neurologist’s recommendation, she stopped driving when she had trouble sensing the pedals and how hard she pressed them.

A diagnosis

On Feb. 1, 2016, she had a diagnosis: multiple sclerosis, or MS, an unpredictable, often disabling disease where the immune system attacks the brain, spine and nerves. Lesions form causing flare-ups, or exacerbations, which is when strength and mobility problems, for example, get dramatically worse.

When an exacerbation hit Rebecca in July, she was hospitalized. “She didn’t have the strength to put her glasses on,” Chris says.

While there, Rebecca was evaluated by Erica Wallis, a physical therapist with Via Christi Rehabilitation Hospital in Wichita, who recommended she continue recovery in an acute inpatient rehabilitation setting.

“There was no way she would have been safe or able to function at home independently, and I didn’t know how to help care for her,” Chris recalls of the couple’s decision to transfer to Via Christi.

Rebecca was still extremely weak, yet she and Chris were reassured knowing that her rehab team was experienced in helping patients with neurological diagnoses including MS, stroke, traumatic brain injury and Guillain-Barré syndrome.

As nursing staff showed Rebecca new ways to care for herself, physical and occupational therapists helped her regain strength and function. Wallis, for example, taught her how to safely use a walker and to transition to and from bed, the restroom and the shower.

“They all completely embraced Chris and me,” says Rebecca of her 10-day stay. “They showed so much kindness and compassion. Their goal was for both of us to succeed.”

Encouraged by her daily improvements, the couple was comforted by the staff’s caring touch, skill and professionalism. “Everyone at the Rehab Hospital truly feels like family,” Chris says. “I’ve never seen such values infused through an organization before.”

They say “the missing piece of this whole puzzle” was medical director Reginald Fears, MD.

“MS impacts the whole body, so having a physiatrist whose specialty is function to coordinate Rebecca’s care was wonderful,” Chris says. “He made sure we had the tools, capacities and resources to help her be as independent and active as possible.”

Rebecca learned and practiced adaptations and energy-conserving movements to safely maximize her mobility and to continue passions such as cooking.

“She’s probably one of the most motivated people I’ve taken care of in rehab,” says Dr. Fears. When she discharged home, she was able to walk short distances with a walker, he adds.

“We’ve got this”

Rebecca digressed considerably from another exacerbation and was readmitted to the Rehab Hospital in September.

“We reset our baselines and expectations and started learning processes to address new challenges,” Chris says of new symptoms that included swallowing difficulties, memory and concentration problems.

Rebecca no longer works, but she remains busy with ViaHab Hospital outpatient therapy and other appointments. She breaks up tasks and errands with rest and keeps company with their cats Pugsley, Wednesday and Gomez. She recently supervised home-accessibility renovations and she practices speech and cognitive exercises.

“I’m just trying to be as good as I can be,” she says. Painting with acrylics has become a significant hobby, too. “I don’t know if I’m good at it, but I’m having fun,” she says, smiling.

Rebecca says she draws strength from knowing her husband is her solid foundation. He says they are ready for whatever challenges come.

“We know there are going to be ups and downs but the bottom line is, together we’ve got this,” Chris says.

What is MS?

> Immune system attacks central nervous system
> Causes lesions on brain, spinal cord and optic nerves
> Symptoms vary: numbness, extreme weakness, balance and mobility problems, speech and swallowing difficulties, memory and concentration problems, vision loss, paralysis
> Affects more than 2.3 million people worldwide — two to three times more women than men
> Forms and progressions range from mild to severe
> No cure

Visit viachristi.org/rehab to learn about rehab services. In Wichita, visit viachristi.org/manhattan-rehab and in Pittsburg, visit viachristi.org/pittsburg-rehab.
Kids ages 6 months and older should get a flu shot each year. Getting a flu shot does not cause the flu, and as long as it is still flu season, it's important to get your child vaccinated.

If children are feeling ill and have a fever, I recommend staying home from school or day care, resting, taking vitamin C, and to keep hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids such as Pedialyte for younger children and Gatorade for older children and teens. Fevers usually can be controlled with acetaminophen and ibuprofen, but ask your doctor if they're appropriate for your child. If their fever is not resolving, they should see their doctor to determine the cause, whether it be viral versus bacterial or any other disease process.

When playing outside, dress children in layers to keep warm, with hats, scarves, mittens, warm socks and coats. Remember that children will lose heat much faster than adults, and will need one extra layer to keep warm.

Get a flu shot. It’s important to remember that it can take up to two weeks for it to take effect, so the sooner you get it, the better.

Practice good hand hygiene. Make sure to wash hands with soap and water to keep germs at bay.

Stay hydrated. Drinking lots of fluids can help prevent dehydration, especially if you are sick.

Make sure you eat a healthy diet. Eating plenty of fruits — especially those with vitamin C — and vegetables can help protect you against common colds.

If you do get sick, understand that most common colds are viral and will self-resolve. Using an antibiotic won’t help.

Keep others in mind. If you’re ill, stay home. Don’t go out unless it’s necessary.

While winter is inevitably the time many adults and children come down with colds and flu, there are lots of things families can do to minimize their risk and to treat symptoms as they occur.
Minimal sedation
Using nitrous oxide for procedures that can be painful or distressing, such as stitches.

Comfort holds
Allowing exams and procedures to be completed without physically restraining the child.

One voice
Designating one parent or staff member to soothe or explain what’s happening.

Painless needle sticks
Using a special device to insert buffered Lidocaine, a local anesthetic, under the skin.

Kid-friendly décor
Installing murals and an iPad station to provide visual distraction and entertainment.

More than décor
Having visual distractions and activities to keep kids calm is great, says James Vayda, MD, assistant medical director for Via Christi’s Wichita-area Emergency Department.

"But more importantly, we’ve redesigned the way we care for children in order to provide a more ‘ouchless’ ER environment," says Dr. Vayda.

For example, when doing needle-stick procedures on children, the ER has begun using a special needle-free syringe device to insert buffered Lidocaine, a local anesthetic, under the skin.

All staff have been trained how to use “comfort holds” to help children feel safe and stay calm during examinations and procedures, eliminating the need to physically restrain a child to provide care. Staff also designate one parent or staff member to communicate with their pediatric patients, to avoid confusing or overwhelming the child.

“We’ve also begun using nitrous oxide for minimal, or conscious, sedation for procedures that can be painful or distressing to children, such as stitches and setting broken bones,” says Jacob Reed, DO, medical director for St. Teresa’s ER.

Worth duplication
A gift of $170,000 from Dairy Queen International is providing the funds needed to expand the kid-friendly ERs to Via Christi Hospital St. Francis, where remodeling soon will be underway, and to Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph.

Via Christi pediatrician Amy Seery, MD, says she’s excited to see the concept being expanded to Via Christi’s other Wichita hospitals and ultimately to its outpatient clinics, which provide care to more children than any other Wichita-area healthcare provider.

"Care can and should be both gentle and effective," says Dr. Seery.

Brady’s mother and grandmother agree.

"As a nurse, I know we’ve always provided the necessary care to children in our ERs," says Carol O’Mara. "But as a grandmother, I’m glad to see this focus on how we can make it a less frightening experience."

Want to help sick and injured Kansas kids? Visit viachristi.org/cmnhospitals to donate to Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals at Via Christi Health.
arty Magby was always a big kid, and later a big adult. But he was still able to play sports and was in good health, so it didn’t bother him much.

Then, in late 2015, he hit 365 pounds, the most he’d ever weighed. A few months later, his doctor prescribed blood pressure medicine for the first time.

“I said, ‘I’ve got to do something now before I get diabetes,’” the 47-year-old Wichitan says. “I saw it coming — I had to lose weight before I had health issues.”

So in February 2016, Marty signed up for the clinical diet plan at Via Christi Weight Management. The structured weight-loss program is designed for rapid and effective weight loss, using shakes, meal replacements and other HMR foods.

The results: By October, he had dropped down to 190 pounds.

Committed to the plan

For Marty, an engineer with Westar Energy, success meant approaching weight loss with an analytical mindset.

“It’s a math equation — calories in have to be less than calories out,” he says. “If I stick to that, everything will work out for me.”

Marty says his life on the road, working at electrical plants, often enabled him to eat fast food. “The weight gain just creeps up on you,” he says.

He had some success with dieting in the past, losing around 50 pounds four or five times. But eventually, his weight loss would plateau and he would gain the weight back.

The difference this time with Via Christi Weight Management? He stuck to the plan laid out by his health educators.

“Do what they tell you to do. Commit to it,” he says. “Follow the program, and you will lose weight.”

‘Life is easier’

At home, Marty says his family — his wife, Mi Sun, his 17-year-old daughter, Mia, and his 19-year-old son, Scott — are eating fewer fried foods and more chicken, fish and vegetables. Marty has always been an avid tennis player, and now he plays two or three times a week — sometimes with Mia, who reports her dad is a lot faster on the court.

“To see him take action like this, I’m really proud of him,” Mia says. “It used to be he was easy to spot in a crowd. Now, we can be in a store together and I hardly recognize him.”

The tennis court isn’t the only place Marty recognizes a difference in his life. It’s easier to climb stairs or shimmy into small spaces at electric plants. “Just everyday life is easier,” he says. “Even stuff around the house.”

Marty says he knows, in some ways, the tougher part of weight loss will be keeping the weight off. He wants to always stay under 200 pounds.

“I wish I had done this years ago,” he says. “I think about how much better I would have felt.”

Marty before his 175-pound weight loss

‘Life is easier’

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Making healthy changes
In the August 2016 episode, you’ll meet Via Christi Health’s new CEO, Mike Mullins, and hear how our health coaching teams and healthcare providers can help you get and stay healthier — and stay out of the hospital — by guiding you to lifestyle changes.

Get on track
Are fitness trackers effective for weight loss? The answer might surprise you.

Med mistakes
Many parents overdose their children with liquid medication. Our pharmacist offers suggestions for getting the right amount.

Rash decisions
Pittsburg pediatrician Jessilyn Humble, MD, offers 10 tips for dealing with diaper rash.

A survivor, again
Twenty years after beating prostate cancer, John Foulston faced breast cancer. Read about his journey.

High-tech heart care, cancer screens
Watch the October episode to learn about new heart stents that dissolve away when they’re no longer needed, now available at Via Christi; and low-dose CT scans for early screening — and more successful treatment — of lung cancer.

Play time
Having a sick or injured child is never fun. Our child life specialist offers tips for how to keep your kid entertained when they’re not feeling their best.

Link&learn
Like the stories you’re reading in this magazine? There are more online. Visit viachristi.org/life for the latest in health news and tips.

Our monthly health and wellness broadcast features Via Christi experts discussing topics that matter to you and your family. Visit viachristi.org/lifematters for our latest episodes, the full archive, and for upcoming TV dates and air times for Wichita-area viewers.
ANNUAL REPORT

Our Mission

Project Renewal to bring dignity, hope to behavioral health care

Father Mike Simone is passionate about the power of healthcare to help heal and improve people’s lives. His parents, Jerry and Carol Simone, both have encountered challenges with their health — Jerry, 74, with heart disease and Carol, 68, with bipolar disorder.

“Whenever we go into an acute care facility for my father, there are all kinds of medicine and all kinds of support for him to be able to overcome his illness or his presenting symptoms,” says Father Mike, who serves as the chancellor and director of Vocations for the Catholic Diocese of Wichita and as board chair for the Catholic Care Center in Bel Aire.

“I want that same type of care for mental health issues,” he says. “I don’t understand why we don’t understand mental illness just like we do other chronic physical illnesses.”

Long overdue

Father Mike’s experience helping to find the best care for his mother’s bipolar disorder underscores the need for a new approach to behavioral health services — an approach that Via Christi is developing as part of its Project Renewal initiative. Project Renewal is an investment of more than $50 million to renovate Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph in Wichita, expanding its historic role as a full-service, innovative family medical center that provides compassionate, personalized care for all of a family’s needs.

As part of the project, patient rooms will be converted to private; new approaches to care for women and children are being developed; and behavioral health services are being transformed. All inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services will be consolidated onto the St. Joseph campus, with the goal of integrating mental health treatment into primary care and other family medical services.

Father Mike says this progressive approach to behavioral health — blending it with comprehensive family medical care and working to overcome the stigma of mental illness — is long overdue.

“As I think about the project Via Christi is undertaking, two words really come to mind — dignity and hope,” he says. “Those of us who support family members with mental illness want our loved ones to be recognized with the same dignity as all other patients who enter a hospital. This project is trying to bring about that dignity and respect to those suffering with mental illness in a way that gives me a lot of hope and encouragement.”

Father Mike says his father and sister, a nurse, are grateful for the excellent care his mother has received over the years. She currently receives care from Cheryl Wehler, MD, a psychiatrist who serves Via Christi patients through the University of Kansas School of Medicine’s psychiatric residency program.

“It’s so important to have a good doctor, someone you can relate to,” says Carol, who lives with Jerry near Pittsburg and travels to Wichita for appointments with Dr. Wehler. “She’s easy to talk to — you know she cares.”

Via Christi’s approach to providing family-centered behavioral health care through Project Renewal is “wonderful,” Carol says.

“I’ve always had my husband and my children as strong supporters. They’ve always been there for me,” Carol says.

“Family support is so important and some don’t have that.”

The spiritual support Via Christi provides also is critical to recovery, Carol adds.

Without faith, she said her own recovery wouldn’t have been “a lot harder.”

Father Mike says he looks forward to the world-class care Project Renewal will bring to patients needing inpatient or outpatient behavioral health services.

“There will be medicine and best practices in place so that people suffering from mental health issues can lead healthy and productive lives, just like everyone else in the general population.”

As part of Project Renewal, Via Christi is launching its first-ever capital campaign, providing an opportunity for charitable community members to invest in programs at St. Joseph that will advance family health and healing.

Father Mike Simone was one of the first donors toward Via Christi’s fundraising efforts for the project.

“If you’ve ever had a loved one affected by a mental health issue, and if you’ve ever watched them get better and have been with them in both states, you can’t help but want to give to a project like this,” Father Mike says.

“We are very grateful to Father Mike for his generous donation to Project Renewal,” says Monica Coen, Via Christi’s chief philanthropy officer. “We invite other community-minded philanthropists to help this project achieve its full potential by joining Father Mike in making a tax-deductible donation.”

To watch an interview with Father Mike and learn more about Project Renewal, visit viachristi.org/renewal

Artist’s rendering of Project Renewal at Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph
Via Christi Health provided $77.8 million in community benefit in fiscal year 2016, providing free medical care to those in need, educating healthcare professionals and supporting community health efforts in Wichita, Pittsburg, Manhattan and Wamego.

Via Christi’s contributions to the overall benefit of the communities it serves included $44.5 million in charity care and $7.9 million in unpaid costs of Medicaid services. Via Christi provided another $25.4 million worth of community benefit through such initiatives as:

- Subsidizing health services provided by our specialty and family medicine clinics, and behavioral health facilities
- Training physicians, nurses and other health professionals
- Supporting community health clinics, health screenings, research, community building activities and donations of space to community organizations

Via Christi’s community benefit is based on community health assessments conducted in Manhattan and Wamego, Pittsburg and Wichita to guide our work in addressing gaps in services, barriers to care and educating the public on better ways to protect themselves and their families from diseases.

Responding to community needs

Delivering Change is a program that helps moms-to-be in Riley and Pottawatomie counties obtain childbirth education and care. Pictured are participants Francisco Cruz, wife Vangalis Razo, son Jordan and daughter Naimah.
Transitional Care Clinic: care by a multidisciplinary team, which of a national safety net. More than 2,030 community benefit of $66.6 million, do not have a primary care provider or delivers compassionate, personalized care to uninsured patients as part of ongoing care for patients who have been discharged from the hospital. Patients are referred to the clinic, where a team of nurse practitioners, registered nurses, medical assistants and social workers provide primary medical care, support and encouragement. Their goal is to ensure a safe and smooth transition to a primary care provider as well as to help patients in south-central Kansas. It was established in 2014 for patients who need to follow their plan of care and avoid unnecessary hospital readmissions. In the clinic’s first year and a half, it has helped reduce inpatient admissions and Emergency Room visits among those patients by 93 percent.

Gerard House: For more than 25 years, Via Christi’s Gerard House has provided a nurturing shelter for young women during their pregnancies and for a few months after delivery as they decide whether to keep and raise their children or place them with adoptive couples. They receive the medical care they need for a healthy pregnancy, learn life skills to become good parents and independent adults, and find help completing and furthering their education. Gerard House also provides psychological, spiritual and adoption counseling to its residents. It’s the only state-licensed maternity home in the Wichita area that serves young women in the juvenile justice and foster care systems, and the only maternity home in Wichita that serves all in need, regardless of ability to pay.

Heart Failure Clinic: The Via Christi Heart Failure Clinic delivers safe, effective and holistic care using advanced resources and capabilities for each patient across the healthcare continuum. Those served include, but are not limited to, patients with a new heart failure diagnosis, risk factors for hospital admission, medical conditions in addition to heart failure, who have poor social networks, or are advanced in age. The program teaches symptom control, maximizes medical and device therapy and prevents avoidable hospital admissions or ER visits.

Manhattan and Wamego Clinic, which opened in 2005 to serve the growing number of uninsured in Riley County. The hospital also provided transport security using Riley County Emergency Medical Services for patients who are brought to the Emergency Room but need to be taken to mental health facilities for appropriate psychological treatment. Riley County EMS, a department of the hospital, helped to provide free weekly car seat checks. The hospital provided free community education on topics including childbirth education, diabetes, prostate health, heart health, weight management and bariatric surgery.

Wamego gave in-kind support to Community Health Ministries, a medical and dental clinic for low-income or uninsured residents. The clinic also provided prescription assistance, family counseling and other needed services.

Pittsburg Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg provided community benefit of $7.2 million in fiscal year 2016, including $3.4 million in charity care. As part of its community benefit, the hospital provided transportation to the elderly or those in need through its CareVan program, which serves Pittsburg-area patients who can’t drive themselves to doctor and therapy appointments. The hospital also serves as an official infant and child safety seat fitting station for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Another way the hospital helped the community was by providing nursing students with clinical experience training in a real-world healthcare environment, giving them the practical experience needed to complete their training.
New hope for heart patients:
St. Francis continued to expand access to other life-saving heart procedures that previously were only available in such distant urban centers as Denver, Oklahoma City and Kansas City. In June, the Structural Cardiology team performed the 200th transcatheter aortic valve replacement, or TAVR, a less-invasive procedure to treat cardiac stenosis. By year’s end, the team had performed 300 TAVR procedures and was recognized as one of the nation’s leading centers for such capabilities.

Visit viachristi.org/heart to learn more about advancements in heart care.

Gold Seal of Approval® for Wichita Heart Failure and Chest Pain programs: Via Christi earned The Joint Commission’s certification—a symbol of quality reflecting commitment to providing safe and effective patient care.

Via Christi Hospital St. Teresa began offering robot-assisted surgical procedures, providing access to this innovative surgery for patients living in and around west Wichita.

Comprehensive Stroke Center achievement: Via Christi Hospital St. Francis was recognized by The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association as a Comprehensive Stroke Center, only the second health system in Kansas to be recognized for providing the most advanced procedures to save stroke victims and to minimize the brain damage caused by a stroke.

Visit ascension.org to learn more about our national health ministry.

A major renovation for the NewLife Center at Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph was undertaken, improving compassionate, personalized care for parents and their newborns.

Via Christi Direct, an innovative control center for daily hospital operations, opened in January 2016, making it easier for referring physicians to admit patients to Via Christi’s hospitals and improving the quality and efficiency of patient care.

A centralized patient access call center was implemented by Via Christi Clinic to make it easier for patients to schedule appointments with primary care physicians and specialists.

As we look back over 2016, let’s take a moment to celebrate Via Christi’s accomplishments in advancing patient care, innovating new models of care and receiving recognition of excellence.

Proud to offer veterans a choice: With many veterans in Kansas and other states facing long wait times to access care through the Veterans Administration, Via Christi and Ascension responded by becoming preferred providers through the Veterans Choice Program. Via Christi has treated more than 700 Kansas veterans under the program during more than 1,400 visits for primary care, inpatient and outpatient specialty care, and behavioral health services.

Visit viachristi.org/veterans to learn more.

New outpatient center in Derby being built:
To expand services to the growing Derby region in southern Sedgwick County, Via Christi Clinic is building a new outpatient center in the suburban town, with expanded hours for walk-in appointments and access to more physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Visit viachristi.org/derby to learn more about advancements in care.

Via Christi Hospital completed a $14 million project in Manhattan to update and expand its ER, create a new outpatient Endoscopy Center for testing and treatment, build a new chapel and expand the Birth and Women’s Center. The second phase of the hospital’s expansion is a $5 million investment to relocate behavioral health and other outpatient services from the Sunset campus to a renovated hospital unit and to a new east-side location which will also house Via Christi’s first primary care clinic in Manhattan.

Visit viachristi.org/manhattan-chapel for a video on the Manhattan chapel dedication.
Genetic testing gave Debbi Mertes and her daughter, Courtney, “the gift of having a voice and a choice in our future.”

Genetic testing for cancer expanded: Via Christi Cancer Center, the region’s leader in cancer care, expanded its genetic testing and counseling program to help patients determine if their genetic heritage places them at higher risk of developing cancer. Under the Cancer Outreach and Risk Assessment program, known as CORA, Via Christi provided testing and counseling to more than 200 patients, with more than 40 identified as being at high risk for developing cancer and enabling them to develop a preventive course of treatment.

Visit viachristi.org/cora for more information.

St. Teresa received a three-year accreditation from The Joint Commission, a physician-led reviewing group that assesses and certifies the quality of care offered by hospitals and medical centers.

Becker’s Hospital Review named St. Francis to its list of “100 hospitals and health systems with great neurosurgery and spine programs” and to its list of top 100 best cancer care programs.

Level I Trauma Center certification: St. Francis was certified for another three years by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas Blue Distinction centers: Via Christi’s hospitals in Manhattan, Pittsburg and Wichita were recognized for maternity care, and knee and hip replacement.

Via Christi’s Immediate Care clinic in west Wichita opened in April to expand access to after-hours primary care, providing convenient quick care to more than 50 patients a day.

West Wichita’s only pediatric-friendly ER was opened for children at Via Christi Hospital St. Teresa. “Ouchless” ERs for children will be implemented in 2017 in St. Francis and St. Joseph hospitals.

Visit viachristi.org/about-us to watch “We are Via Christi,” a video about our history, Mission, caregivers, patients and services.
Philanthropy highlights

Wichita Via Christi Philanthropy

To meet the needs of patients in fulfillment of our Mission, Via Christi Philanthropy, which includes Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals at Via Christi Health and Via Christi Volunteers, Partners in Caring, experienced a 17 percent increase in giving.

- More than $3.5 million from 4,436 donors was raised in fiscal year 2016.
- Volunteers gave 83,000 hours of service, valued at over $2 million.
- Riverside Health Foundation and a Bank of America endowment fund continued support of physicians in Via Christi’s Family Medicine Residency program.
- Via Christi associates in Wichita committed $515,000 through the One Community campaign, which supports Via Christi patients and programs and the United Way of the Plains.
- More than $500,000 in funding was contributed to combat human trafficking and support forensic nursing.
- A pediatric-friendly emergency room at Via Christi Hospital St. Teresa was piloted with generous support from Credit Union of America. A $170,000 gift from Dairy Queen will replicate the program at Via Christi Hospital St. Francis and Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph.
- Expectant mothers benefited from the ‘Ergo 4 Mom’ program.
- Donations totaling $90,000 completed the development of a Cancer Wellness Center, helping patients keep active before, during and after cancer treatment. Major donations came from Intrust Bank, the Ross Foundation, Wells Fargo and Eby Construction.
- The Via Christi Charity Classic Golf Tournament presented by Freddy’s Frozen Custard & Steakburgers and Panera Bread raised $183,000. Via Christi’s Comprehensive Stroke Center program received $115,000 for outreach, education and equipment.

Pittsburg

Mount Carmel Foundation

- The Mount Carmel Foundation surpassed its goal and raised more than $410,000 to bring 3D mammography to Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg. The new technology will be available to patients in early 2017.
- The 32nd Annual Gala drew nearly 300 guests and was the most successful in the organization’s history, raising nearly $83,000 in unrestricted funds to help with hospital needs.
- For the second year, the Foundation sponsored the Department Grant Program. Any associate could submit an application to fund patient care needs in their department. Fourteen projects or programs were funded to the total of $46,000.
- The Outpatient Physical Therapy Department was gifted a $50,000 Alter G Anti-Gravity Treadmill to help patients rehabilitate faster.
- The Paint It All Pink fundraiser in May raised more than $4,500 for the Via Christi Cancer Center to help cancer patients with travel, lodging, prescriptions and nutritional supplements. Other special events raised funds for the hospital including a wine tasting, Christmas “Remember Me Trees” and the Dress Red luncheon. Fiscal year 2016 was a strong year for the Mount Carmel Foundation in helping the hospital care for patients and improving the health of the southeast Kansas region.

Manhattan

Mercy Community Health Foundation

- More than 200 community members celebrated the Red Dress Gala, raising $52,000 in support of health initiatives at Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan.
- Chad and Chris Lohman, along with their daughters, Campbell and Cooper, reinstated the Colgin Tanner Lohman Memorial Golf Classic in celebration of their son’s 15th birthday. The event enabled the family to donate more than $20,000 to the hospital’s Birth and Women’s Center.
- The 26th annual Mercy Golf Classic hosted 130 golfers and community members at Colbert Hills Golf Course, raising $49,000 for community health initiatives at the hospital.
- Via Christi associates in Manhattan supported the needs of the hospital, Flint Hills Community Clinic and the Kanza United Way through the eighth annual One Community campaign, raising more than $25,000. Since 2008, the campaign has raised more than $318,000.
New Via Christi Medical Staff

**Manhattan**
- Tamara Burke-Horea, MD, Emergency Medicine
- Ahmad Elebaiehi, MD, Hospitalists
- Jonathan Manzer, MD, Family Medicine
- Tannaz Montee, MD, eICU

**Wichita**
- Christopher England, MD, Pittsburg
- Jessica Howlett, MD, Manhattan
- Mark Wolfe, MD, Radiology
- Kathy Lewis, MD, Pediatrics

**Community health education**

- **WICHITA**
  - **Childbirth/parenting**
    - For details/to register: 316-689-5700
    - or viachristi.org/childbirth-ed
    - For details/to register: 316-689-5700
    - or viachristi.org/childbirth-ed
    - **Look Good...Feel Better™** • Free for women with cancer.
  - **Driver safety**
    - For details/to register: 316-689-5700
    - or viachristi.org/childbirth-ed
    - **AARP Smart Driver class** • $15-$20
  - **Support groups**
    - East Wichita — For details/to register: 316-634-5400 or viachristi.org/events
    - **Amputee** • Free
    - **Brain injury** • Free
    - **Stroke** • Free
  - **West Wichita** — For details/to register: 316-796-7235 or viachristi.org/events
    - **Surgical weight-loss session** • Free
    - **Weight management** • Weight-loss orientation • Free
    - **Weight-loss surgery session** • Free
    - **Surgical weight-loss surgery** • Free

- **PITTSBURG**
  - **Childbirth/parenting**
    - Call 620-235-7516 for details.
  - **Smoking cessation series**
    - Wednesdays for four weeks • Free Call 620-232-5705 for details.
  - **Diabetes**
    - **Self-management education** • Costs often covered by insurance.
      - Call 620-235-7812 for details.
      - **Cancer** • Look Good...Feel Better™ • Free for women with cancer.
      - Call 620-235-7900 for details.
  - **Support groups**
    - **Breast cancer** • Free
    - Call 620-235-7900 for details.
    - **General cancer** • Free
    - Call 620-235-7900 for details.
    - **CODP** • Free
    - Call 620-704-6822 for details.
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or call 316.771.8116