



New Ulm Medical Center Cancer Center on the move

Although things are usually hopping in the Oncology and Infusion department at New Ulm Medical Center (NUMC), the flurry of activity is tucked away behind the closed doors of the department and the enthusiasm of staff and patients alike is contained there.

It was a different scene the day that staff announced to their patients that Allina Hospitals & Clinics had given NUMC the green light for an expansion and improvement project for the department. The cheers and excitement of the patients could be heard all the way out the door and down the hall.

That's because it tends to get a little crowded in the department and staff and patients are looking forward to the additional space. The department, which was designed to treat four or five patients at a time, has seen significant growth in the last few years and it is not uncommon to have nine patients onsite instead.

The oncology and infusion center will be relocated to the lower level of the clinic (where America's Fitness once occupied.) The medical center is currently in the design phase of the project, working with patients and staff to design a space that is community and family centered, has increased privacy, plenty of natural light, is warm and welcoming, and most importantly, is over double the space we have today. The new area will include a conference and resource room, private and open treatment areas, exam rooms, a great gathering area for get-togethers and a spectacular outdoor garden area for patients and loved ones to enjoy.



Barb Fenske received chemotherapy recently at the New Ulm Medical Center. Mandy Schwarzrock, RN, administered her medication.

The upgrade is about more than just the space issues, though, said NUMC Director of Operations Toby Freier.

"Our growth in the chemo department is about more than just the numbers. We have developed a growing relationship with oncologist Dr. Ettore Piroso and we are in the process of integrating with Virginia Piper Cancer Institute to bring expanded services to our patients," Freier said. "Also, with an aging population in our service area, we need to prepare for expected continued growth in the need for cancer services."

The cost to move and expand the department will near \$1 million, and philanthropy will be a vital component to making this project a reality. In fact, the NUMC Foundation has already begun working toward raising half the cost of the project and has set a goal of \$500,000. "The community has always been our partner in providing exceptional care to our patients, especially when it

comes to supporting new, vital projects like this," said Carisa Buegler, Director of the NUMC Foundation. "We are happy to report nearly 20 percent of the funds have already been raised. Assuming our fundraising continues to go well, we'll be on track to start the project next spring and open a new oncology and infusion center by the end of summer 2011."

The campaign committee began meeting earlier this month and is being chaired by Barb Fenske, retired teacher and current patient in the oncology department. Through her experience as a patient and a volunteer in the department, Fenske said she is energized by the idea of the Cancer Center renovation and expansion and is enthusiastic about sharing the good news with the community.

"New Ulm needs to be proud that they've got this here because people are seeing NUMC as a destination," she said. "Because of its reputation, its close proximity for people and because of the people in the department – both the staff and other patients."

There are many ways to support the Cancer Center Renovation and Expansion Campaign. Consider a gift in honor of a survivor or in memory of a loved one, or in appreciation of the services provided. Together, we will create a department that will welcome and comfort cancer and infusion patients for years to come.

To donate to the project go to www.newulmmedicalcenter.com and select the "Foundation" link on the left-hand side; or call 507-233-1188.

Reverie Harp brings comfort to hospice patients, families

It has been proven that music can provide comfort and a calming atmosphere for anyone in a stressful situation. That is the philosophy behind the purchase of the Reverie Harp by Allina Home and Community Services – New Ulm for use by hospice patients and their families.

Bonnie Beranek-Fortwengler, LICSW, a social worker with the hospice program saw the Reverie Harp on a television news story one night. The reporter said that it was being used by some hospice programs in the metro area. The harp is made by Musicmakers Kits, Inc in Stillwater, MN.

“The best thing about this harp is that you don’t have to have any musical ability or skills to play it,” Beranek-Fortwengler said. The harp is tuned to a pentatonic scale in which all notes harmonize, which means that no matter how it is played, the notes sound good together.

The New Ulm Medical Center Foundation provided the \$824 for the purchase of the harp, the carrying case and a DVD that provides instruction on different techniques to use in playing the harp.



Bonnie Beranek-Fortwengler, LICSW, a social worker with the hospice program through Allina Home and Community Services – New Ulm, demonstrates the Reverie Harp purchased recently for use by hospice patients and their families.

“I thought this would be a great addition for our hospice patients,” Beranek-Fortwengler said. “But there was one patient in particular who I had in mind.

He absolutely loved music and he liked to put his hand on instruments so that he could feel the vibration.”

The harp arrived in time so that the patient, 12-year-old Taylor Wacker, could enjoy it for the last week of his life.

“The last week prior to Taylor’s death we were at home and keeping him comfortable and spending the precious time we had left with him. Bonnie brought the harp over and said you don’t need to know how to play, you just start picking,” said Taylor’s mother Molly Murphy. “We found it so comforting. We spent hours and hours playing it for Taylor. At different times different family members would play it for him. Earlier in the week when he was still alert, he would reach out for it and feel the vibrations.”

“It doesn’t matter if it’s the patient playing it or a family member,” Beranek-Fortwengler said. “The music that comes from it is so soothing that it helps all those who hear it.”



Support NUMCF today with a gift in the new year!

Teaching children heart-healthy eating and exercise. Improving the lives of those living with chronic disease. Eliminating heart attacks. Providing essential equipment for exceptional care. Supporting patients and their families at end of life.

The work we do at New Ulm Medical Center and in the communities we serve is vital to our health and our quality of life. Your support of the New Ulm Medical Center Foundation means our communities have access to life-saving equipment, supportive programs and community health initiatives. We’re there at every stage of life, and with your help, together we can provide our community the support we need to live our lives to the fullest. Make your gift today by visiting our website at www.newulmmedicalcenter.com, then click on ‘Foundation.’

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Bank Midwest oneplace®

Bank Midwest has made a generous five-year donation commitment to the Heart of New Ulm project through the New Ulm Medical Center Foundation. Mike Harrington is the Branch President for Bank Midwest in New Ulm and an advocate of the Heart of New Ulm Project. “This donation is a great match for our company. Our employees have been making efforts towards healthier decisions, and the Heart of New Ulm has been a great resource. Our donation is one way to express our thanks and gratitude to the Heart of New Ulm project.”

Bank Midwest is a full-service banking business located at 26 North Broadway in New Ulm and can be reached at 354-8813.

New vital signs monitors increase efficiency, safety at NUMC



Jessica Lauwagie, RN, uses one of the new vital sign monitors to check a patient's blood pressure recently at the New Ulm Medical Center medical-surgical unit.

New Ulm Medical Center recently installed 10 blood pressure monitors for inpatient medical-surgical rooms to improve patient safety and staff efficiency thanks to support from the New Ulm Medical Center Foundation.

Previously, the vital signs monitors that were available were constantly moved from room to room, said Med/Surg Manager Sharie Novak.

“Staff would often spend valuable time looking for a vital signs monitor. Sometimes all of them would be in use and they would need to wait,” Novak said. “That is a patient safety issue we needed to improve.”

The new machines are permanently installed in 10 of the unit's 15 rooms with plans to eventually purchase the additional five.

The new monitors also have the ability to interface with the medical center's electronic medical record, which also improves staff efficiency when they are not required to manually enter the patient's vital signs, Novak said.

“This is cutting edge technology for a medical-surgical unit as we continually look for ways to improve the patient experience and stay ahead of the technology curve,” Novak said.

The vital signs monitors were purchased with \$18,000 in support from the NUMC Foundation.

Provider's Corner



Jill Wilkens, PA-C, a new physician assistant at New Ulm Medical Center, grew up with a clear sense that she wanted to work in medicine. “I can't remember a time when I didn't think that I was going to have some sort of medical career when I grew up,” she said. She credits her mother with providing the support she needed to feel confident in her choices.

“She always let me know that I could do anything and that she was proud of me.”

Wilkens began seeing patients in the New Ulm Medical Center (NUMC) clinic in October. She is a family medicine provider and will primarily be available to see patients when

other provider's schedules are full. Wilkens' position is newly created to help improve the access for patients in obtaining same-day appointments in the clinic.

Wilkens hails from Long Prairie, MN and earned her BA in Psychology from North Dakota State University and a BA in Spanish from St. Cloud State University. She earned her PA degree from Union College in Lincoln, Neb.

“I enjoy being a physician assistant because I get to spend time with patients which hopefully means they will be leaving with more than a diagnosis but also with an understanding of what it means,” Wilkens said. As family practice and urgent care provider, Wilkens sees patients all across the spectrum of healthcare; however she has a special interest in the pediatrics aspect of medicine and also women's health.

For more information or to make an appointment in the NUMC clinic, call 507-233-1011.

Foundation

1324 Fifth North Street
New Ulm, MN 56073

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New Ulm Medical Center Foundation exists to enhance the health of New Ulm Medical Center patients and the wellness of the communities we serve.

To learn more, please contact New Ulm Medical Center Foundation at 507-233-1180 or visit our website at www.newulmmedicalcenter.com and click on ‘Foundation.’

Healthy recipe

PUMPKIN DIP

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup (6 ounces) 1/3-less-fat cream cheese
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin
- 2 tsp maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 24 apple slices

Directions

- Place first three ingredients in a medium bowl, and beat with a mixer at medium speed until well blended.
- Add syrup and cinnamon, and beat until smooth.
- Cover and chill 30 minutes. Serve with apple.

Yield: 12 servings.

Recipe provided by Cooking Light.

Serving Suggestions

Serve it as a snack with 100% fruit juice or tea.

Nutrient information

1 serving = 2 tbsp dip and 2 slices of apple, Serving Per Recipe: 12 servings: 107 calories, 3.2g fat, 2g saturated fat, 18.3g carbohydrate, 1.4g dietary fiber, 2g protein.

For more heart-health recipes, visit www.heartofnewulm.org.

HAVE A HEART GALA, FEBRUARY 12



Home Free performing at the 2010 Have a Heart Gala. Due to popular demand, they've been invited back to perform at the 2011 gala.

The New Ulm Medical Center Foundation is hosting its 8th Annual “Have a Heart” Gala on Saturday, Feb. 12 at the New Ulm Holiday Inn.

The evening starts with pre-party events from 5 – 6:30 pm, then off to the Holiday Inn in New Ulm for more socializing, auctions, an elegant meal and fabulous entertainment featuring the award winning a cappella sensation, Home Free. Home Free is a distinctive combination of comedy and music featuring five male vocalists with extensive theatrical and musical training. Each performance showcases a new, animated, and electrifying experience that draws audiences in, and leaves them amazed. With a genre of music that covers an expansive mix of pop, jazz, classical and country, all songs are done with only the human voice and microphones, resulting in a truly unique and incredible sound.

Join us for an evening full of fun and elegance, while raising funds for the new Cancer Center. Tickets are available for \$60 each or \$480 for a reserved table of 8. Sponsorships are also available. To reserve your seat, please call the New Ulm Medical Center Foundation at 507-233-1180 or visit the Foundation webpage at www.NewUlmMedicalCenter.com and then click on ‘Foundation.’