Our Role in the Medical School's Centennial

The Creighton Cardiac Center celebrated its Silver Anniversary in 1986 and is celebrating the School of Medicine Centennial with the addition of a large, new facility.

Dr. Michael Sketch, professor of medicine and director of the Cardiac Center, said the new, 61,000 square-foot, four-level structure across 30th Street from St. Joseph Hospital will enable us "...to emphasize wellness and education programs we simply didn't have the space for before."

Adding new patient care programs, innovation and expansion have been routine for the Cardiac Center since its inception.

The Cardiac Center was founded at the old St. Joseph Hospital in 1961. An Omaha businessman donated funds for construction of a new, two-story wing of the hospital—the Carl W. Renstrom Heart Research Center—in 1963.

We have grown to the point that we now have more than 400 weekly cardiac rehabilitation patient visits. Training of physicians, nurses and technicians in cardiac rehabilitation will become a major endeavor at the new site, and a cardiovascular disease prevention program will be instituted and emphasized.

Creighton's cardiologists and staff worked with Bell Laboratory engineers in 1963 to develop the world's first Phoneline EKG Interpretation Service, which provided 24-hour electrocardiogram interpretations. Eventually, the Cardiac Center's physicians were interpreting EKGs for 178 hospitals in 10 states.

The Cardiac Center's CREI-GARD continuous EKG monitoring system, which combines highly sophisticated computerization with human interaction, was designed and built here by Cardiac Center engineers and physicians. It provides 24-hour-a-day, uninterrupted surveillance of 86 patients at St. Joseph Hospital, plus three pediatric beds at Boys Town National Research Hospital.

CREI-GARD service is also provided for patients hospitalized in two outlying community hospitals. It is the world's largest and most advanced system of its kind.

Cardiac Center physicians pioneered the first Intensive Coronary Care Unit in the Omaha area, developed a non-invasive laboratory for the evaluation of cardiovascular function, instituted ambulatory EKG heart monitoring, and established the region's first, and now largest Pacemaker Clinic.

Through telephone transmission of the EKG signal, the Pacemaker Clinic staff provides follow-up care for over 700 patients in seven states.

Electrophysiology techniques have contributed significantly to the diagnosis and treatment of heart rhythm abnormalities.

The Cardiac Center's catheterization laboratories are the most modern in the Midwest. Prior to performing Nebraska's first atherectomy, they introduced valvuloplasty (dilation of heart valves) to the region.

Earlier they adapted existing technology to permit the rotation of patients during heart catheterization. The Cardiac Center's physicians also developed the methodology for determination of cardiac blood flow, which became a standard.

Creighton cardiologists and surgeons work daily with patients undergoing open-heart surgical procedures, including reconstruction of congenital heart abnormalities, coronary artery bypasses, coronary

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From the Chief...

When Dialing Long Distance

It has been over two years since we initiated our telephone network for referring physicians, their nurses and staff members to communicate with either a cardiac nurse or a cardiologist here at the Creighton University Cardiac Center.

Because there has been some confusion regarding the name of this service and the long distance phone number to call, we gave the network a new name, "CDR-STAT," which is the acronym for Creighton DoctoR STAT. This change aligns directly with the corresponding digits (1-800-237-7828) that you would dial when accessing the system.

I want to encourage you to use this "hotline" service. By calling this CDR-STAT number (1-800-237-7828) at any time, day or night, you can communicate with either a cardiac nurse or a cardiologist here at Creighton's Cardiac Center.

As in the past, between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday, a cardiac nurse will answer your call. If you wish, she will immediately connect you with a cardiologist. If you're calling to make an appointment for a patient, or to transfer a patient and it is not necessary to speak directly to a cardiologist, this nurse is qualified to obtain all the necessary information to assist you.

After 5:00 pm, on weekends, and on holidays, the on-call cardiologist will answer your call directly. We would like to encourage you to use this network for immediate advice, to arrange consultations, and to refer patients.

To assist you in having this 1-800-CDR-STAT number readily available, we have provided (and have more available) stickers, which may be attached to telephones or telephone books. Should you experience difficulties in using this system, I would appreciate it if you would let me know directly, so that they may be resolved.

Remember, when you need the services of a Creighton University cardiologist stat, please dial 1-800-CDR-STAT.

Michael H. Sketch, Sr., MD  
Chief, Division of Cardiology  
Creighton University

Profile of a Creighton Cardiologist

Karen S. Rovang, MD completed her undergraduate and graduate school training at the University of Nebraska. She received her BS degree in 1973, her MS degree from the UNMC College of Pharmacy in 1976 before graduating from the UNMC College of Medicine in 1984.

After completing a residency in Internal Medicine at UNMC in 1984, Dr. Rovang entered the Creighton University Cardiology Fellowship program. She finished this training as Chief Cardiology Fellow in 1989.

After one year as an Electrophysiology Fellow at the University of Wisconsin, Sinai Samaritan Medical Center in Milwaukee, she joined the Cardiac Center's medical staff in 1990.

Dr. Rovang is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Creighton. She is a member of the American College of Cardiology, the Nebraska Cardiovascular Society, and the Arrhythmia Society of the Heartland. She is a consulting cardiologist at outreach clinic hospitals in Columbus and West Point, Neb.

Dr. Rovang is currently involved in two research projects: Prospective randomized study of the safety of 4 hours vs 24 hours of bed rest following pacemaker lead implantation; and Effect of PDF function on the time to detect ventricular fibrillation by an implantable cardioverter defibrillator. She has also co-authored 12 scientific publications.

Karen S. Rovang, MD
Cardiac Center Sets the Pace

Thomas Baechle, EdD (Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation, Phase III Exercise Specialist) was the principal author of a text, “Weight Training: Steps to Success,” that was recently published by Human Kinetics, Inc.

Michael Del Core, MD spoke on “Atherectomy of the Coronary Artery” to approximately 35 attendees at the monthly Cardiac Rehabilitation Patient Education meeting, February 10th.

Karen Hardy, RN (Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurse Specialist) and Geri Moore, MA (Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation Exercise Specialist) taught a CPR course for 11 State Farm Insurance Agents at Saint Joseph Hospital on February 5th/12th.

Daniel Hilleman, PharmD (Administrative Director of Clinical Research) has been named Interim Chairman of Creighton’s Department of Pharmacy Practice, effective January 2, 1992. Dr. Hilleman will continue with his responsibilities at the Cardiac Center, while serving as Interim Chairman.

Dr. Hilleman attended a meeting on Creighton’s participation in the United States Thrombolytic Registry at Fort Lauderdale, Fla. on January 30-31st.

Tim Johnson (Echo Lab Technician Supervisor), and Cherie Lawrence (Echo Lab Technician Instructor) have been notified they passed certification requirements of the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers. They are now certified as Registered Diagnostic Cardiac Sonographers in adult echocardiography. Don Orton (Research Echo Technician III) also has the RDCS credentials.

Joseph Lynch, MD has been elected Governor-Elect for Nebraska of the American College of Cardiology for 1992-1993. Dr. Lynch and Michael Sketch, Sr. MD, were featured on Omaha television Channel KETV’s “Health Matters” program on Sunday, February 16th. They discussed “Anatomy of a Heart Attack”

Syed Mohiuddin, MD was Program Director and a faculty member for a program on “Thrombolytic Therapy Update: 1992” on January 7th at the Omaha Marriott Hotel. The program targeted hospital pharmacists, critical care nurses and health care professionals involved in the care of the AMI patient.

Dr. Mohiuddin spoke on “Overview of Thrombolytic Trials.” Other faculty members included Dr. Daniel Hilleman, who lectured on “Decreasing Triage Time for the AMI Patient,” and Aryan Mooss, MD, whose topic was “Patient Management During and After Thrombolysis.”

Dr. John Corson, Professor of Surgery at the University of Iowa College of Medicine served as a guest faculty member. Other faculty members, from Saint Joseph Hospital, included Ann Anderson, RN, BSN, CCRN (Staff RN, Cardiac Care Unit), Liz Finch, RN, CEN, REMT.P (Clinical Supervisor, Life Flight), Ruby Osterman, RN, MS, CCRN (Critical Care Clinician), and Jolene Volkens, RN, CCRN (Clinical Supervisor, Critical Care Unit).

Dr. Mohiuddin was also co-director and moderator of a program, “Advances in Diagnosis and Management of Cardiovascular Disease” on February 8th at Omaha’s Marriott Hotel. The program was co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska Medical Center. James Nemec, MD and Dr. Sketch also served on the faculty. Dr. Nemec spoke on “Diagnostic Techniques in Cardiology: Clinical Use of Positron Emission Tomography.” Dr. Sketch’s topic was “Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty: Use and Abuse.” Tami Docken, RN (Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation Nurse Specialist), and Geri Moore also attended this program.

Dr. Mohiuddin and Mark Woodruff, MD will be featured on Omaha television Channel KETV’s “Health Matters” program on Sunday, February 23rd. They will be discussing “The Puzzle of Cholesterol.”

Dr. Nemec has had three articles published recently. He was the principal author of “Comparison of Transcranial Doppler Ultrasound and Transesophageal Contrast Echocardiography in the Detection of Interventricular Right-to-Left Shunts,” which was published in the December 1, 1991 edition of the American Journal of Cardiology.
The Year's First Christmas Party

by Lisa Thalken, B.S., Exercise Leader

Our annual Outpatient Rehabilitation Patient Christmas party was held at the New Tower Inn on January 23rd. Eighty-five patients, their spouses and guests, and staff members attended. Awards were presented by Mark Williams, PhD (Co-Director of Cardiac Outpatient Rehabilitation).

Several participants were inducted into the "2 x 200 Club," including Gabriel Domet, Frances Drelicharz, George Foral, Harold Graves, Anthony Pane, Thomas Snodgrass, and Eileen Williams. These people have completed 200 exercise sessions and have been in the program for two years. Those participants inducted into the "5 x 500 Club," included Herbert Armburst, Paul Brich, John Drelicharz, Harold Hatfield, Carl Lundeen, Gabe Parks, and Jack Williams.

This year, for the first time, we were able to recognize a new group, the "10 x 1,000 Club." There were two inductees, Donald Fox and Frances Cunningham who have attended 1,000 exercise sessions over 10 years. What dedication! Congratulations to all and keep up the good work.

Cardiac Rehabilitation Week Is Busy!

The Cardiac Center's Outpatient Rehabilitation department celebrated National Cardiac Rehabilitation Week, February 9-12th, with an Open House on Valentine's Day. Free blood pressure screening and education brochures were available, along with refreshments. Throughout the week, staff members also provided a fasting blood lipid analysis, including cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides and glucose.
Medical School Centennial

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valve repair or replacement, and heart transplants. Creighton’s Positron Emission Tomography scans at the university’s Center for Metabolic Imaging are regularly incorporated into the diagnosis and evaluation of cardiology problems.

Realizing that heart disease is a continuum from birth in many patients, the Cardiac Center has recently instituted a corroborative program with the Department of Pediatrics.

Certain Cardiac Center services have, in recent years, been expanded to the Bergan Mercy Medical Center.

The Cardiac Emergency Network, initiated in 1988, improves the coronary care available to patients at more than 20 community hospitals in Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas. The network saves dying heart muscle by reducing the time between the onset of heart attack symptoms and the institution of appropriate treatment. Through round-the-clock, on-line consultation with a Creighton cardiologist, community hospital staffs can provide emergency care formerly available only at regional centers.

Since the early 1980’s, the Cardiac Center’s Drug Evaluation Clinic has steadily grown and now is active in 15-20 studies of a variety of cardiovascular disorders. The clinic is active in studying and discovering new therapies, and the best use of current cardiovascular pharmacological therapies. Some of these research projects provide patients drug therapies not available at other medical centers.

The Cardiac Center’s researchers have made numerous contributions to the fund of coronary care knowledge, especially in the areas of valvular heart disease, cardiac catheterization, pacemaker technology, drug therapy, and exercise testing. Our cardiologists are responsible for teaching cardiovascular medicine to more than 100 students, interns, and medical fellows annually.

Cardiac Center Sets the Pace

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Dr. Nemec co-authored two other articles:

William Parmley, MD (Professor of Medicine and Chief, Cardiovascular Division at the University of California, San Francisco) presented “Calcium Channel Blockers and the Risk Continuum” on Grand Rounds January 8th., as the guest of the Cardiac Center. While here, Dr. Parmley met with the Cardiology Fellows to discuss the care of their patients.

In regard to Creighton Medical School Grand Rounds and departmental conferences, Cardiology has been cited for having conducted 113 programs during this year.

Michael Peters, MD (Chief Cardiology Fellow), and Mark Williams, PhD (Co-Director of Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation) were asked to provide a review of the book, Pocket Guide to Cardiology, Ed. 2. Their review was published in the Journal of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation, 12:67, 1992.

Dr. Sketch spoke on “Treatment Scenarios in the Spectrum of Acute Myocardial Infarction” as part of Cardiology ’92: Links Between Clinical Medicine, Technology, and Basic Science Conference at the Scripps Memorial Hospitals Cardiovascular Institute in San Diego, Calif. on January 16th.

Lisa Thalken, BS (Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation Exercise Leader) recently completed the Basic CPR Instructor course offered at the Cardiac Center.

Dr. Williams served as a presentation reviewer at the Midwest Medical Student Research Forum, held February 15th at Omaha’s Red Lion Hotel.