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Today as we write this article, 180 Aurora St. Luke’s patients are listed and waiting for organ donations to save their lives. They join the 96,023 patients waiting for organs throughout the United States. Every 12 minutes a new name will be added to this national list.

Thanks to our expert thoracic and abdominal transplant program at Aurora St. Luke’s, we hope to save the lives of these patients, but must wait for a donor match to make that happen. Since 2004, we transplanted 91 hearts, 10 lungs, 33 livers, 5 pancreas, 88 kidneys (22 from living donors) and helped hundreds of patients who benefited from tissue donation. We want to be able to help more patients but the need for organs outweighs the number of available donors. April is Donor Life Month, a perfect time to consider becoming a donor.

Become an Organ and Tissue Donor
It is easy. Simply by signing your drivers license or a donor card and sharing your wishes with your loved ones, you can ensure your organs are donated to a patient in need.

“There are many ways organs and tissue can benefit others,” explains Joan Heimler, manager of organ and tissue recovery. “Most organs are donated after a patient is declared brain dead and the family agrees to donating organs. We now have a new policy in place that allows a family to donate loved one’s organs after cardiac death. Organ Donation After Cardiac Death was put into place only a few weeks ago and since then 5 patients on waiting lists have benefited.”

You also can donate as a living donor. In fact, over 180 employees were living donors on April 9 when they supported our blood drive. You even can donate a kidney as a living donor. “Kidney transplant has revolutionized the lives of people with kidney failure in the last twenty years,” explains Joan. Kidney donation from deceased donors has not matched the increase in patients waiting for organs. With living donors we can save many lives. While many donors are related to recipients it is not a requirement. Just look at the sidebar story of Leslie Kallenbach who helped a fellow church member.”

While most people are familiar with donating organs, many do not realize the thousands of patients who benefit from tissue donation. Rebecca Hilson, coordinator with the Wisconsin Tissue Bank, a department of Aurora St. Luke’s, explains, “One tissue donor can help up to 50 people. Bone can be used in spinal surgeries, skin can be used to help burn victims, corneas can restore sight, heart valves can replace damaged ones and veins can be used to help patients with poor circulation. Again, simply by signing your drivers license and sharing your wishes with family you can help improve the health and well-being of so many patients.”

Tragedy Brings a Gift
Each year, thousands of families say “yes” to tissue donation throughout the country. The Wisconsin Tissue Bank has the privilege to help nearly 300 families with this difficult decision. Even in the face of sadness and loss of a loved one, family members who fulfill the patient’s wishes to donate find a
If you answered “false” to all of the questions above, good for you! Here are some “true facts” about high blood pressure:

- Normal blood pressure is different from person to person. When your blood pressure stays below 120/80 at rest, that’s a healthy level. If it stays at or higher than 120/80 at rest, you are at increased risk for health effects from high blood pressure. If your numbers stay over 140/90 at rest, your blood pressure is high and you are at high risk for stroke, heart disease and other complications.

- High blood pressure is often called the “silent killer” because it has NO symptoms. About 30% of adults in this country have high blood pressure – and many of them don’t even know it. High blood pressure affects men and women, young and old, with or without risk factors (such as being overweight or not physically active).

- Unfortunately, only about one-third of people with hypertension have their blood pressure under good control. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and many other health problems. This is why high blood pressure is the focus of Aurora’s newest care management initiative.

What are we doing to help patients with high blood pressure?
Medical science tells us that by controlling a patient’s high blood pressure, we can significantly reduce his or her chance of developing heart, blood vessel or kidney disease. Our goal is to treat every patient with high blood pressure according to proven “best practices,” striving for optimal blood pressure control.
To help meet this goal, the initiative includes several components: 1) reports for providers and clinics with blood pressure control information on their patients; 2) provider and staff education regarding the latest national guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of hypertension; and 3) patient education materials about the benefits of lifestyle changes, compliance with medications and the importance of follow-up with their health care providers.

What can YOU do to help prevent or control high blood pressure and support this care management initiative?
- Sign up for your free Health Risk Assessment to learn your blood pressure numbers plus much more about your health. It is completely confidential and provides excellent information about your health and what you can do to maintain or improve it. Health screening times are still available at Aurora St. Luke’s. Sign up at www.Aurora.org/HRA.
- To reduce your risk factors for developing high blood pressure OR to help control your high blood pressure:
  - Control your weight, be physically active, stop smoking and manage your stress level.
  - Watch your salt and alcohol intake – follow your health care provider’s recommendations.
  - Take medications exactly as prescribed for as long as your doctor tells you to take them.
- Find out more about high blood pressure through the AuroraNet Care Management and Patient Education sites.
- Clinic providers and staff – learn about the initiative, its goals and interventions, and your role with your patients through the AuroraNet Care Management site and your regional care management department.

In most cases, high blood pressure is a lifelong disease. It can be controlled but not cured. But it CAN be found and treated early. Working together, we can improve the health and quality of life for our patients with high blood pressure.
In the first year of her nursing career, Natalie Hanson, nurse on 4KLM, knew deep down she made the right career decision. When she first started in hospice care she knew the difficult and stressful times would be outweighed by the good and fulfilling ones. Now, with only three years under her belt, Natalie has many examples that prove her right and fill her with pride every day.

Natalie’s entry was chosen among several excellent entries submitted by employees from all different departments. Each year the Wisconsin Hospital Association awards one employee from each hospital the pride award. As this year’s winner, Natalie along with her family will stay overnight at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Natalie will be recognized that night at an award dinner at which her entry will be read.

Natalie’s commitment to her patients and her nursing career are evident in the following excerpt from her winning entry:

In my three years of nursing thus far, every day I am reminded by my patients that I am needed, that I make a difference. In just three years of nursing I have experienced more lessons about life with my patients than I can count. The holistic aspect of nursing has allowed me to laugh and cry with my patients, to listen and empathize with them, to be an advocate for them — this is why I chose nursing.

My co-workers, nurses and other specialized fields offer an abundance of knowledge and are eager to share it with others. Each individual experience with them helps enhance my ability to care for my patients. Nursing is a coordination of care for patients; each experience of learning and observing from other professionals is valuable to my own growth as a nurse. Every day is something new — this is why I chose nursing.

Nursing offers many opportunities; you are not confined to one area. You can challenge yourself to work with a variety of populations, nurses are everywhere, and are needed everywhere. You control your own destiny! Experiences encountered as a nurse help build confidence — believing in yourself that you have a unique gift — a gift that enables you to act calmly in a moment of panic to save a life, and a gift to change a life.

I now can validate my reasons for being a nurse through my experiences. It’s not just another job, but a passion of mine. I confidently await the experiences that will challenge me tomorrow!
On-line Access for Employees:
Looking for evidence to update a policy? Working on a paper for school? Access to the Aurora Libraries Intranet Site (ALIS) with its wealth of on-line books, journals and databases, is available from any Aurora computer via iConnect. Select the link to ALIS on the left side of the iConnect page; no logins or passwords are necessary from an Aurora computer.

From home or an other remote location, your iConnect password is required. Just login to iConnect, and click on the ALIS link for access to all the Aurora Libraries on-line resources, except UpToDate. You can reach the Aurora Employees link.

VPN is another option for remote access. This option is fast and reliable, but requires downloading and configuring the VPN client software on your workstation. A VPN connection will allow you to access all resources available from iConnect, CERNER and other applications. Contact the IS Help Desk, 414-647-3520 and ask for a VPN account.

For assistance in using any of the library resources please contact the library at 414-649-7356.

Did You Know We Are an Accredited Chest Pain Center?
Knowing that we are an accredited Chest Pain Center will actually help us renew our accreditation. This fall, surveyors from the Society of Chest Pain will be on our campus to review our progress as an accredited chest pain center. We received our initial accreditation in November, 2004.

What is an Accredited Chest Pain Center?
To earn Chest Pain Center status, Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center successfully completed the Society’s formal process in the eight key elements such as our emergency department’s integration with community emergency medical systems (EMS), our emergency assessment of patients with chest pain, staff competencies and much more.

Maintaining Our Accreditation
To maintain our Chest Pain Center Accreditation, we must show even more progress with the eight elements. For example, to maintain accreditation we must demonstrate more integration with the EMS within our community. An example of this is having EMS staff use a 12-lead EKG while in transit to Aurora St. Luke’s so we can quickly identify if the patient is having a specific type of heart attack that warrants direct admission to the Cath Lab. By getting these patients to the Cath Lab faster we save more heart muscle.

We must also show that employees throughout the hospital are aware of our status as an accredited Chest Pain Center. Surveyors from the Society of Chest Pain will visit Aurora St. Luke’s in November. During their survey they will walk through the hospital and may ask you if we are an accredited Chest Pain Center. Please remember to give surveyors a resounding “YES” that you are aware that we are an accredited center!” Your awareness will go a long way to helping us maintain our accreditation.

Giving the Gift of Life
(continued from front)

sense of consolation and comfort knowing it is helping others. No one knows this more personally than Debi Biederman, a patient here who directly benefited from her son’s tissue donation.

When Debi and Perry Biederman’s son, Shea, committed suicide, she never hesitated to donate his tissues to help others in need. “I wanted to do whatever I could to help someone,” says Debi, adding that his tissues have helped more than 60 people.

And then, in an unusual twist, she received his gift, too. When Debi learned she needed cervical fusion surgery of her spine, she inquired whether some of her son’s donated tissue could be used for her surgery.

Shea Biederman’s bone was used in his mother’s surgery. “He’s not just in my heart,” shares an emotional Debi, “He walks with me. I have a piece of him inside me like when I carried him. It’s amazing.”


Keeping InTouch
Using InTouch is simple. Call toll-free 1-877-MY-INPUT (1-877-694-6788). When your call is answered you will be asked to enter our Passcode Number: 649. Then, just follow the instructions to record your message. InTouch is completely confidential.

Ideas or articles can be submitted to: Karen Schaefer, Editor Phone: 414-649-6504 Fax: 414 385 2692 Email: karen.schaefer@aurora.org

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