Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is abnormally high pressure in the pulmonary artery leading from the heart to the lungs. It causes the blood vessels in the lungs to constrict significantly. This leads to an increased workload for the heart as it tries to pump blood through the narrowed blood vessels—a situation that can be suddenly life threatening. Symptoms of PH include shortness of breath with little exertion, fatigue, dizzy spells, fainting and chest pain. It strikes more women than men and usually occurs by age 30. Misunderstood and hard to diagnose, it's often fatal.

John Ujcich, RN, examines PH patient Jim Milbach, of Sturgeon Bay, at the Milwaukee Heart Institute at Sinai Samaritan. Jim's responded well to treatment. Males are less likely to develop pulmonary hypertension.

Dr. Dianne Zwicke (center) is interviewed at St. Luke's Medical Center by Channel 6 reporter Julie Feldman and photojournalist Gary Lies. Dr. Zwicke currently treats a child regarded as the first infant to survive PH through therapy that includes the newly released drug, Flolan. PH has also been linked to the use of certain diet drugs, but most cases of PH have no known cause. Dr. Zwicke holds pulmonary hypertension clinics at both St. Luke's and Sinai Samaritan Medical Centers.

Sinai Samaritan employees work with PH patients: (l-r) Sue Simon, RN, MSN, CNS, critical care; John Ujcich, RN, critical care; Wendy Dion, RN, cardiac rehab; Lana Levaccon, RN, CVICU; and Diane Solomon, RN, CVICU. Sue, Wendy and John are PH support group moderators. John says support groups offer patients with chronic disease a vital opportunity to share and gain insights.

PH patient LuAnne W. W., 35, of Wauwatosa, with Dr. Zwicke at St. Luke's. LuAnne was diagnosed with PH in 1986 after five years of symptoms. Dr. Zwicke referred her out of state so she could use the new drug, Flolan, before it was approved by the FDA. LuAnne receives the drug continuously infused through a vein into her heart.

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Employees offer hope

Pulmonary hypertension is rare, complicated lung disease.

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On a recent episode of "ER," a little boy who comes in for a vaccination complains of a numb chin. The nurse is stumped; the doctor is stumped. They go to the computer to check MEDLINE, the National Library of Medicine's biomedical database covering research from 3,800 biomedical journals, and find articles that lead to a diagnosis they never would have suspected.

Kathy Strube, manager of library services, says that MEDLINE access is now available throughout Aurora. Experienced librarians will perform MEDLINE searches upon request or Aurora employees and medical staff members may request a password to personally use MEDLINE on the Aurora Libraries Database Network (ALDN).

To request a password or for assistance with MEDLINE in the Metro Region, call the Sinai Samaritan Medical Center library, (414) 219-6710, if you're based at Sinai Samaritan or any of its satellites, Aurora Medical Group, Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital, Aurora Behavioral Health Services or Family Service of Milwaukee. Call the St. Luke's Medical Library, (414) 649-7357 or 649-7356, if you're based at St. Luke's or any of its satellites or Hartford Memorial Hospital. At West Allis Memorial Hospital, call (414) 328-7910, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; at St. Luke's South Shore, call (414) 489-4028, 8 a.m.-12 noon.

Questions specifically concerning access to the ALDN should be addressed to Jeff Hagedorn, systems librarian, (414) 649-7371.

St. Luke's Medical Center Golden Sneaker Awards were presented in November to 10 employees who exceeded the expectations of their patients, patients' families, coworkers and other customers. Recognized were Fred Blizzard, nuclear medicine; Monica Demuth, 10L; Bridget Flanigan, 6KLM; Barbara Haag-Heitman, women's health; Jan Clark, Johnston Primary Care Clinic; Judy Jakubczak, linen services; Mary Kay Kais, radiology; Sally Rezach, environmental services/materials transport; Nancy Swoboda, housekeeping; and Helen Williams, Family Practice Center.

Mary Kay Kais, nominated by MM, a grateful patient, is the randomly selected Golden Sneaker Service Provider of the Month. "She turned a difficult experience into a positive one [that] I'll long remember," writes MM, who added that Mary Kay arranged transportation on very short notice because of a mix-up that required tests to be rescheduled.

St. Luke's South Shore Big Storm Awards for Service Excellence were presented in November to seven employees who exceeded the expectations of their patients, patient's families, co-workers or other customers. Awards were presented to Wendy Edwards, ICU; Jean Helstowski, radiology; Jela Kesich, food service; Sedaet Nazifi, food service; Ann Ottow, 3MESG; Darlene Peter, 3MESG; and Linda Samz, 3MESG.

Sedaet Nazifi, nominated by Bonnie Henneman, admitting, and Scott Williams, loss prevention, is the randomly selected service provider of the month. Sedaet and co-worker, Jela Kesich, were serving the dinner meal when a gravely ill patient's daughter entered the cafeteria and went to them for comfort. "When employees were served, their immediate attention went back to the woman who most definitely needed, wanted and received the best comfort available."
Farewell to Ann Towell. After 18 years, Ann is retiring as the librarian at Sinai Samaritan Medical Center. An advocate for the importance of nursing research, Ann has also had a major role in preserving the history of Deaconess, Lutheran and Mount Sinai hospitals. Stop to wish her well before her last day Dec. 31.

Sinai Samaritan Medical Center Nursing Award
Kate Ellen Polacheck Awards nomination forms will be available in January. Deadline to submit a nomination is Feb. 13. Call Lenore Wetzel, ext. 6977, for more information. The program is set for May 5 at the Pfister Hotel.

Diabetic Foot Ulcer Prevention & Treatment Modalities
8-9 a.m., Wednesday, Jan. 14
St. Luke’s Medical Center, HS 2
Speaker: Cynthia A. Nissen, RN, MSN, CETN
Free program sponsored by Hyperbaric Medicine Wound Care Clinic & Smith & Nephew. Call (414) 649-6577 to register. Continental breakfast provided.

Eat Right, Be Light Weight Loss Program
6-7 p.m.
Mondays, Jan. 19-Feb. 16
Community Affairs Room
St. Luke’s New Berlin
Call St. Luke’s nutrition services (414) 649-6757 for more information and to register.
Fee is $50 for the class, plus $69 for individual diet instruction which is required before the first class meeting.

Chanukah Menorah Lighting
Sinai Samaritan Medical Center
East Campus Main Lobby
1 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 23.
Rabbi Dr. Tsori G. Schur will speak & Milwaukee Jewish Day School choir will sing traditional and modern songs.
Chanukah celebrates the defeat of the Syrian Greeks by Judas Maccabaeus in 165 BCE and the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem.

St. Luke’s Medical Center
Sleep Disorders Center &
Dr. Michael Katzoff & Dr. Geraldine Braunt Banks have moved to suite 445 in the new Physicians Office Building. The doctors’ phone number is (414) 649-5288; the center’s phone number is (414) 649-6373.

Congratulations to Kathleen Martinson, RN, Prenatal Care Coordination lead nurse, Sinai Samaritan Medical Center. She recently won professional recognition for her paper, “Prenatal Care Coordination: A Home Visiting Model.”
Wisconsin Avenue Family Care Center employees participated in a Habitat for Humanity rehab last month. Spending a whole day to mark Family Practice Week, they put in seven windows including the window sills and the prep for window installation.

They are (top row, l-r) Mark Behar, PAC, and the Habitat house manager; (middle row, l-r) Mike Goss, MD, Heidi Blumberg, MSW, and Gregg Sargent, MS; (bottom row, l-r) Aamir Saddiqi, MD, Joann Brooks, MD, and an unidentified volunteer.

Aurora Pharmacy opens in Wales located in Pick ‘N Save W320 S1807 B State Road 83 Wales M-F 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (414) 968-9570

St. Luke’s Medical Center offers Infant Massage 6:30-7:30 p.m. Dining Room C Tuesdays, Jan. 6, 13, 20 & 27 $30 for the four sessions Call Women’s Health, (414) 649-7726 for more information and to register.

Consistent, high-quality service boils down to two equally important things: caring and competence.
— Chip R. Bell and Ron Zemke, writing in Service Wisdom

Teamworks, Metrow Edition, is a bi-weekly newsletter for employees and volunteers in Aurora Health Care’s Metro Region. Comments, questions and suggestions are always welcome and may be directed to Susan Lebergen, internal communications coordinator, Public Affairs Department, 3031 W. Montana, Milwaukee, WI 53215. Phone (414) 647-3126, Fax (414) 671-8560.

Mark Ambrosius
President, Metro Region