

THE WEEK'S TOP STORIES

THREE HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS PARTNER TO FORM CARRIS HEALTH

ACMC Health, CentraCare Health, and Rice Memorial Hospital are collaborating to create a new entity called Carris Health that will serve as a health care hub serving West Central and Southwest Minnesota.

Initial discussions about the partnership began in May, when the organizations signed a letter of intent to join forces. After months of discussion, strategy meetings, and town hall meetings, the Willmar city council voted unanimously to approve plans for the city-owned Rice Memorial Hospital to join the new health care system on Nov. 20 and ACMC Health's board of directors and its 89 physician shareholders also voted to proceed with the integration with a final decision made at a shareholder's meeting, also on Nov. 20. Carris Health will be a subsidiary of CentraCare Health.

According to the agreement, Rice Memorial Hospital will retain its name and its assets will continue to be owned by the City of Willmar. Carris Health will lease it for a total of 60 years and the 100-bed hospital's more than 1,300 staff and physicians will become employees of Carris Health. The new entity will make a capital investment of at least \$32 million in Rice Memorial Hospital during the first decade of the lease.

The 174 employees of Willmar Medical Services, a joint venture between the hospital and ACMC Health, also will become employees of Carris Health.

Through its separate agreement, ACMC Health will become part of Carris Health. Operations at its 10 clinics and two ambulatory surgery centers will continue and its 955 employees will become employees of Carris Health.

The organizations intend to finalize the agreements in 2018, when the formation of Carris Health will begin. Integration will take place over the next several months.

RIISING HOME HEALTH CARE COSTS OUTPACE NATIONAL AVERAGE

The cost of long-term care services at home with a home health aide has increased in Minnesota and across the U.S., according to the 14th annual Cost of Care Survey

NEWS IN BRIEF

HEALTHPARTNERS, WISCONSIN PROVIDERS TEAM UP TO OFFER EMPLOYER HEALTH PLANS

Wisconsin health care providers Bellin Health and ThedaCare are collaborating with HealthPartners to offer new health insurance products for employers in the state. The first products offered from the partnership, called Robin with HealthPartners, are for large employers with more than 51 employees and will be available starting in 2018.

ThedaCare, based in Appleton, is Wisconsin's third largest health care employer with more than 6,700 health care professionals. It serves more than 200,000 patients at seven hospitals and 32 clinics in Northeast and Central Wisconsin. Bellin Health, based in Green Bay, is an integrated health care delivery system with 4,000 employees. It serves patients at its hospital, psychiatric center, 31 primary care physician clinics, and several retail health clinics across Northeast Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Bellin also operates Bellin Health Oconto Hospital, a critical care access hospital, Bellin Fitness, and Bellin College.

Published every Monday, MEDFAX is copyrighted by Minnesota Physician Publishing Inc., and is transmitted solely to the subscriber. Any unauthorized copying, duplication, or retransmission is strictly prohibited under U.S. Copyright laws. Editor: Amanda Marlow
To subscribe, please call (612) 728-8600.



MEDFAX THE WEEK'S TOP STORIES

from Genworth Financial, a study that surveys 47,000 long-term care providers including nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult day health facilities, and home care providers nationwide.

The annual median cost of care of long-term care services in Minnesota increased by an average of 8.26 percent from 2016 to 2017, according to the study results. In most cases, cost increases for home care in Minnesota outpaced the national average both in median monthly costs and in year-over-year cost increases.

From 2016 to 2017, Minnesota's median monthly costs for a home health aide increased by 4 percent to about \$5,150, compared to a national increase of 6 percent to about \$4,100; homemaker services (costs of housekeeping and household management) increased by more than 8 percent in Minnesota to about \$5,000, compared to a less than 5 percent increase nationally to about \$4,000; assisted living facilities increased 12 percent in Minnesota to about \$3,600, compared to a 3 percent increase nationally to \$3,750; and adult day health care services rose 3 percent both in Minnesota and nationally, to about \$1,800 and \$1,500 respectively.

"Given today's increasing labor costs, strict Medicaid eligibility requirements, and more stringent Medicare regulations, we are seeing a corresponding increase in the cost of long-term care services across most states," said David O'Leary, president and CEO of Genworth's U.S. Life Division. "Although home health care is far less expensive than care in a facility, in Minnesota, home health care costs can add up to as much as \$61,776 per year. Government programs may not cover all of these costs, if any, which is why it's so important for people to plan ahead for how they will pay for these costs."

Minnesota ranked third for median cost of homemaker services, tied with Alaska and Wyoming; second for median cost of home health aids, tied with Wyoming; 12th for median cost of adult day health care; and 19th for median costs of both nursing home care in semi-private rooms and private rooms. The state's worst ranking was for median cost of assisted living facility private rooms, coming in at 29th.

SURVEY SHOWS FEW OPIOID USERS AWARE OF POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION

A survey from pharmacy benefit manager Prime Therapeutics has shown that few people safely dispose of unused prescription medications and most who received opioid prescriptions weren't told about the potential for addiction.

Overall, 87 percent of the 1,014 survey respondents over the age of 18 across the U.S. said they view addiction to prescription painkillers as a serious problem, and 72 percent view it as very serious. In addition, half said they are concerned about becoming addicted to opioids if they were to receive a prescription and 28 percent said they are very concerned.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Both health care systems have selected a Robin with HealthPartners plan for their own employees.

"Our shared goal is to improve the health and well-being of our communities is a solid foundation on which to build this collaboration," said Imran Andrabi, MD, president and CEO of The daCare. "This is an opportunity to extend access to safe, expert local care while managing costs over time."

U OF M RESEARCHER RECOGNIZED BY NAMI

Sophia Vinogradov, MD, the Donald W. Hastings Endowed Chair in Psychiatry and Department Head of Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota Medical School, has received the 2017 Scientific Research Award from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

Vinogradov directs a translational clinical neuroscience laboratory that focuses on cognitive dysfunction in schizophrenia. In collaboration with basic scientists, she studies neuroscience-informed computerized cognitive training exercises for patients with schizophrenia that aim to drive enduring plastic changes in cortical processing. She probes brain changes in both early sensory processing and higher-order cognitive operations in subjects who undergo this cognitive training. Recently, she has begun to apply these methods to the study of adolescents who are prodromal for schizophrenia and young adults in early psychosis with the goal of delaying or preventing the onset of a deteriorating psychiatric illness. Her work has contributed to a growing interest in

**Lending to
small
businesses
is a #1 priority for us**

usbank.com

 All applications are subject to normal credit approval. Call your business banking expert for current rates and terms. Standard fees apply. Refinance of existing U.S. Bank business loans are excluded. Member FDIC.

To help you succeed, we've developed a variety of flexible business solutions designed to keep cash flowing and businesses growing. And, it's backed by the expertise and stability of one of America's strongest banks.

• Working Capital Lines of Credit • Owner & Investment Real Estate • Cash Management Solutions • Payment Solutions

Visit your local U.S. Bank today!

Ehren McGeehan *Twin Cities West* (651) 604-1622

All of  serving you®

usbank

“As organizations come together to solve this crisis, there is opportunity to maximize tools available today and fully inform patients of the risks of controlled substances while providing access to overdose and addiction resources if needed,” said Jonathan Gavras, MD, chief medical officer at Prime Therapeutics. “The opioid crisis is claiming thousands of lives a year and everyone needs to do more to help ensure safe pain management and prevent abuse and misuse. Our survey finds that perhaps there’s room for more solutions and greater diligence to help educate patients about opioids.”

The results also showed that 44 percent of respondents see physicians as those best equipped to solve the opioid crisis and just 9 percent believe the government can solve it. Only 17 percent had spoken with a medical professional about safe disposal of unused medication. Nearly 25 percent of people who have taken opioids keep unused prescriptions instead of disposing of them, and only 27 percent of those who dispose of old medications use a take back program to dispose of them.

In addition, while more than half (51 percent) reported having taken opioids in the past, only 25 percent of opioid users had spoken with a medical professional about the potential for addiction. Only 11 percent had a conversation with their doctor about what to do in the event of an overdose.

“Physicians are on the front lines of this crisis, but they may not have the information they need to identify which patients are at greater risk of abuse or may be misusing their controlled substances,” said Gavras. “Through our GuidedHealth program, we proactively reach out to prescribers to alert them to potential concerns, enabling them to guide their patients to safer doses, alternative pain treatments, or other supports sooner. More efforts like this—that prevent overuse and promote safe disposal—are also needed.”

HUTCHINSON HEALTH PHYSICIAN AWARDED FOR WORK WITH STUDENTS

Erin Knudtson, MD, pediatrician at Hutchinson Health, received the Specialty Preceptor Achievement Award for her work in pediatrics with students in the Rural Physician Associate Program. The Rural Physician Associate Program is a nine-month, community-based educational experience for University of Minnesota third-year medical students who live and train in rural communities, offering students experience hands-on learning as they care for patients of all ages.

Each year, students in the program nominate outstanding faculty members for the Rural Physician Associate Program Preceptor Achievement Award. The student who nominated her for this award said, “I will never forget the kindness and empathy she showed her patients. She is the physician I aspire to be.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

the use of computerized “brain training” to treat some of the brain information processing abnormalities of psychiatric illnesses. She received her medical degree from Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit, Mich.

STATE HEALTH EQUITY ADVISORY COUNCIL FORMED

Minnesota commissioner of health Ed Ehlinger, MD, has appointed 25 Minnesotans to a new advisory council that will provide guidance on how to advance the health of communities across the state that are most impacted by health inequities.

The Health Equity Advisory and Leadership (HEAL) Council was created as part of a broader effort by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to address disparities in health status, particularly those persistent disparities across various ethnic, racial, and regional groups. The council represents the voices of communities that are most severely impacted by health inequities, including racial and ethnic minority groups, rural Minnesotans, those with disabilities, American Indians, LGBTQ community members, refugees, and immigrants. It will assist MDH in carrying out the efforts outlined in the department’s strategic plan and its Advancing Health Equity report, including advising on specific MDH policies and programs, and in developing performance measures related to advancing health equity. The council will prepare and submit a report to Ehlinger summarizing its activities and objectives for the upcoming year by Feb. 15, 2019, and every year thereafter.

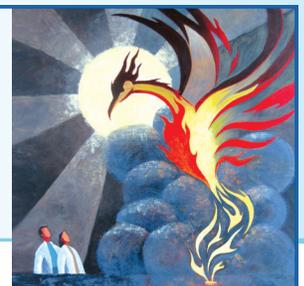
48TH
SESSION



REGENERATIVE MEDICINE: *Efficacy, Economics, and Evolution*

Tuesday, December 12, 2017, 1-4 pm

The Gallery, Downtown Minneapolis Hilton and Towers



Click for registration information • **TICKETS \$95**