

“The *first* in the nation.



The *only* one in the nation.”

**Mercy Medical Center is proud to be the first—and only—hospital in the nation certified by The Joint Commission for its Heart Disease and Women Program.**

Nearly twice as many U.S. women die of heart disease, stroke or other cardiovascular diseases as from all types of cancer combined. Heart disease kills 11 times as many women as breast cancer, according to the National Center on Health Statistics. But frequently, women experiencing a heart attack are under-recognized and under-treated by medical professionals.

The mission of Mercy’s Heart Disease and Women Program is to passionately provide the same level of care for women and men with heart disease. This is a very different mindset, as the national perception is that heart disease is a man’s disease.

Nationally, women between the ages of 35 and 54 are more likely to die from heart disease than their male counterparts. A major research study, released in March 2008 by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, concluded that “men with chest pains are treated the fastest in emergency rooms across the United States.”

Clinical Outcomes and Cardiac Research Nurse Sue Dawson, MA, RN, CCRP, cites the case of 49-year-old Beatrice Vance, who died in

2006 after her daughter brought her to a Chicago area emergency room complaining of chest pain and other heart-attack symptoms.

“Mrs. Vance complained of the typical heart-attack symptoms like chest pain, feeling cold, sweating and shortness of breath. But she was repeatedly asked to wait while they treated what were considered to be more serious patients. Her daughter kept asking them to take care of her mother, yet they did not. She died in the waiting room – literally 20 feet away from life-saving care,” says Dawson.

Vance’s death was later ruled a homicide at a coroner’s inquest after an autopsy confirmed the cause of death was due to a heart attack. This unprecedented ruling of a homicide due to “a gross deviation from the standard of care” (stated on the verdict form from Richard L. Keller, MD, coroner of Lake County, IL) sent shock waves through the medical community across the nation.

In a January 2008 national press release, Dr. Dan Jones, President of the American Heart Association, stated “we still need to eliminate the striking

disparities in cardiovascular care for women and minorities.”

The story of Mrs. Vance, and others like it, keeps the Heart Disease and Women team committed to gender analysis of all heart care at Mercy. Through continual education on early recognition and treatment, Emergency Department (ED) staff members, physicians and cardiologists have saved the lives of many women, as well as men, who come to the ED with heart attacks.

“Regardless of age or gender, all patients receive the highest level of care in a timely manner in Mercy’s ED. We evaluate the symptoms—not age or gender – when treating heart-attack patients,” says Dr. Mark Pospisil, Medical Director of Mercy’s ED.

“We have been working on this initiative for a long time,” says Dawson. “This is something that seems so simple—but no hospital in the U.S. pursued it like we did from the standpoint of making sure heart disease is recognized in women as quickly as men.”

Tim Charles, Mercy’s President and CEO, agrees, “This is an extraordinary accomplishment. It reflects a commitment to women and their heart health to the same degree as that of men. It may be surprising, but this is a novel and unique commitment. Mercy’s Heart Disease and Women team

has literally worked for years on developing this state-of-the-art program.”

Mercy is committed to treating all men and women the same in all aspects of heart care, including prevention, education, early identification and treatment. Information is tracked and submitted to The Joint Commission to earn and maintain certification or a gold standard of care achievement in women’s heart care.

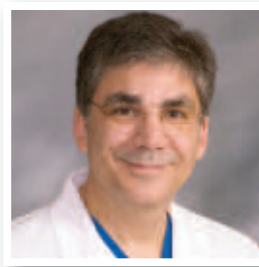
Also a Gold Sustained Award winner from the American Heart Association for the treatment of Coronary Artery Disease, Mercy has earned a regional and national reputation as a heart health-care leader.

To learn more about your risk for heart disease, sign up for a personal assessment conducted through the

Mercy Women’s Center Heart2Heart program. You will receive disease information, education, screening and treatment information, as well as a personalized print-out with information and guidelines to follow in order to minimize your risk for heart disease. Call the Mercy Women’s Center for an appointment or more information at (319) 398-6821.

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*Tim Charles,  
Mercy’s President and CEO*



**Dr. Mark Pospisil**  
Medical Director  
Emergency Department