

## Great River Medical Center receives Distinguished Hospital Award



Great River Medical Center is one of 258 hospitals nationwide to receive Healthgrades' Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence for 2017. These hospitals are among the top 5 percent in the nation that deliver high-quality care across at least 21 of 32 common inpatient conditions and procedures. Only three Iowa hospitals received the award.

Healthgrades is a comprehensive online resource for information about physicians and hospitals.

During the 2017 study period (inpatient stays from 2013 to 2015), Healthgrades Distinguished Hospitals for Clinical Excellence, as a group, had a 26.2 percent lower risk adjusted in-hospital mortality rate across 19 procedures and conditions where mortality was the clinical outcome, compared to all other hospitals.

During this same period, if all other hospitals performed at the level of Distinguished Hospitals for Clinical Excellence across these 19 procedures and conditions, 160,322 lives could potentially have been saved.

Healthgrades compared hospitals receiving the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence, as a group, to those that did not receive the award as a group. Healthgrades found that compared to nonrecipient hospitals, patients treated in hospitals receiving the award had, on average, a lower risk of dying from these common inpatient conditions and procedures:

- 22.5 percent lower risk of dying of a heart attack
- 30.5 percent lower risk of dying of heart failure
- 36.7 percent lower risk of dying of pneumonia
- 25.0 percent lower risk of dying of stroke
- 25.1 percent lower risk of dying of sepsis
- 24.4 percent lower risk of dying of respiratory failure

# Hospital visiting limited because of flu

Great River Medical Center is limiting visitors because of the high incidence of influenza in the community and in the hospital. People with colds, coughs and other flulike symptoms should not visit patients in the hospital.

Influenza is a viral infection of the nose, throat, bronchial tubes and lungs. It is highly contagious and is easily transmitted through contact with droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person during coughing and sneezing. Typical symptoms include:

- Body aches
- Chills
- Cough or sore throat
- Fever
- Headache

"It's important that people understand why we limit visitors," said Infection Control Coordinator Mary Moore. "People who have the flu are contagious 24 to 48 hours before they feel symptoms. This means that seemingly well visitors could pass the flu on to critically ill patients. Limiting visitors reduces this possibility."

Visiting restrictions are the greatest in the Women and Family Center's obstetrics and pediatrics units.

Newborns have limited immunity, and changes in the bodies of pregnant women can make them more susceptible to severe illness from the flu for up to two

weeks after delivery. Obstetrics Unit visitors are limited to parents, grandparents, significant others and siblings who have no flulike symptoms. Siblings must be free from symptoms for 48 hours before visiting.

"We understand this is a very special time in the lives of our mothers and families," said Desiree Martin, director, Women and Family Services. "But it is in the best interest of our littlest patients and their mothers to restrict visitors."

Visiting restrictions in other areas are:

- Pediatrics Unit – Parents and grandparents only
- Other inpatient units – Only two visitors ages 14 or older may be in the room
- Emergency Department – One visitor at a time

Moore said it's important to follow infection-control guidelines when visiting patients who are in isolation rooms because of their contagious illnesses.

"Visitors should wear gloves and gowns while in these rooms, and they should wash their hands thoroughly when they leave," she said. "Wearing protective clothing prevents visitors from carrying the illness out of the room on their clothing or hands."

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## New provider



**Christopher Nicholas, M.D.**  
**Great River Surgeons**

Eastman Plaza, Suite 202  
1223 S. Gear Ave.  
West Burlington, IA 52655  
319-768-4350

Medical degree: University of Iowa  
Residency: University of Kentucky  
Fellowship: University of Kentucky (cardiovascular and thoracic surgery)  
Certification: American Board of Surgery (general surgery); American Board of Thoracic Surgery (cardiovascular surgery)

## Casual days

Employees purchase \$2 stickers for the opportunity to wear jeans to work on designated Fridays. The next casual days and organizations they benefit are:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Feb. 3  | Camp Hertko for children with diabetes |
| Feb. 17 | Great River Friends                    |

# A year well-lived

## Nurses celebrate transplant anniversary

After a busy weekend celebration of her 41st birthday earlier this month, Samantha Ripple relaxed in a chair and sent a text to her friend and co-worker Margo White:

*"Thanks for giving me another birthday."*

On Jan. 21, 2016, the nurse manager donated one of her kidneys to the staff nurse who worked in the same Great River Klein Center neighborhood.

In an interview a few days before the anniversary of their surgeries, the women laughed and joked around like they've been doing for the last 11 years.

*Margo: I feel no different than I felt before surgery.*

*Sam: I feel a little different [laugh]. Shortly after surgery, people were asking if I had been tanning. I said, 'No, I'm just not dying anymore. I'm healthy. This is what it looks like.'*

Samantha hasn't had a sick day in the last year, despite immunosuppressive therapy – drugs that reduce her immunity to prevent her body from rejecting Margo's kidney. Before the transplant, she took about 13 different types of medicine to keep her alive. Now, she takes two.

*Margo: You get to eat breakfast instead of a handful of drugs.*

*Sam: Our insurance came through like a champ. I'm really grateful.*

*Margo: Do you remember what they called donating a kidney on the insurance statement?*

*Sam: Requisition of body part — \$130,000. See, Margo, you can put a price on it!*

### March

Margo received Great River Health Systems' EXCEL Service Hero award for actions that extend beyond routine, expected employee behavior.



**Top: Margo White, left, and Samantha Ripple pose for a picture before their surgeries.**

**Bottom: Samantha and Margo one year later**

### April

At an appointment three months after surgery, Samantha's physician said a blood test showed her Hepatitis B immunity was good. But she had never been vaccinated because she hadn't been healthy enough. Immunity was transferred from Margo. Samantha called it a "transplant imprint."

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A similar thing happened after her first transplant surgery in 2003. After receiving a deceased donor's pancreas and kidney, Samantha had a strong desire for milk, which she had disliked. Later, she learned from the donor's mother that he drank about a gallon of milk a day.

Now, Samantha has an insatiable craving for Cheetos. She likes them more than Margo.

"I'm hoping this Cheetos thing will subside," Samantha said. Her desire for milk eventually went away.

### May

Samantha received the health system's Excellence in Practice in Nursing award.

"When Sam walks into work, she leaves her troubles at the door so she can focus on her elders," read her nomination. "She looks beyond the words they speak and listens when they feel they aren't being heard ... She spends as much time as needed to ensure their questions are answered. When family members have concerns, she tackles them head-on. She is skilled at leading difficult discussions and handling them with ease and comforting words."

### June

Sam and her then-6-year-old daughter Harlow had a "celebrate life" vacation at Disney World, staying at the All-Star Movies Resort and meeting nearly every princess in the four theme parks.

*Margo: I told her, "You need to do it." I've regretted not going with my kids.*

*Sam: I never would have been able to go before the transplant. I didn't have the stamina to teach Harlow how to ride a bike, and I couldn't swim with her because of my dialysis port.*

*Margo: At home, I say, 'I can't take out the garbage. I have only one kidney.' It doesn't work.*

### August

Samantha reached two other milestones. First, she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, which she had started before her kidney began failing. The second was bittersweet.

Dubbed "Samargo" by their co-workers, the Klein Center's super couple split in August when Samantha was promoted to nurse manager and transferred to the Stony Hollow and Cobblestone Hill neighborhood..

### December

At Christmas, young Harlow said, "We probably should give Margo like \$10 for giving you her kidney." A small sum for adults, but it means all the money in the world to a girl who has shared another year with her mother.



## **Hospital receives accreditation from The Joint Commission**

Great River Medical Center has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seals of Approval for hospital and home care accreditation by demonstrating continuous compliance with its performance standards. The Gold Seal of Approval is a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to providing safe and effective patient care.

The Joint Commission accredits and certifies more than 21,000 health care organizations and programs in the U.S. Accreditation is granted for three years.

A rigorous, unannounced onsite survey was conducted in October. During the review, a team of Joint Commission surveyors evaluated compliance with hospital standards in several areas, including emergency management, environment of care, infection prevention and control, leadership, and medicine management. Surveyors also conducted onsite observations and interviews.

Home care survey standards included provision of care, treatment and services, and individual rights and responsibilities.

"Joint Commission accreditation provides hospitals with the processes needed to improve in a variety of areas from the enhancement of staff education to the improvement of daily business operations," said Mark G. Pelletier, RN, M.S., chief operating officer, Division of Accreditation and Certification Operations, The Joint Commission. "In addition, our accreditation helps hospitals enhance their risk management and risk reduction strategies. We commend Great River Health Systems for its efforts to become a quality-improvement organization."

## **Great River Health Systems offers diabetes classes**

Great River Diabetes Education Program offers four-week group diabetes classes every month. The next afternoon series will be from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Mondays beginning Feb. 6. Morning classes are from 10 a.m. to noon Thursdays beginning Feb. 16.

Group diabetes classes are for people newly diagnosed, making a change in treatment, or having complications or concerns. A physician referral for diabetes education is required.

Class topics include:

- Proper eating for diabetes
- Managing blood sugars
- Medicines
- Diabetes-related health problems
- Exercise

Diabetes educators will assess needs for specific information and skills, teach self-care and provide continuing help. Most insurance companies cover the fee for the class series. A family member or friend is encouraged to attend at no additional cost.

The American Diabetes Association has awarded Great River Diabetes Education Program with its Education Recognition Certificate for providing a high-quality diabetes self-management program. Recognition assures that education programs meet the National Standards for Diabetes Self-management Education and are an essential component of effective diabetes treatment. The Iowa Department of Public Health also has accredited the program.

For more information or to register, please call 319-768-4165.



## **High in Plain Sight: You Can't Stop What You Don't Know** **9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 7**

**Blackhawk Room, Great River Wellness Plaza, 1401 W. Agency Road, West Burlington, IA**

It's difficult for school, law enforcement, medical and other professionals who work with youth to keep up with the changing world of drugs and alcohol. And if you don't understand the culture, you won't see it at all.

### **Learn about:**

- Alcohol and drug indicators of at-risk youth
- How alcohol and drugs are concealed on school property, in the classroom, and on or in clothing
- Logos and terms related to underage drinking, marijuana use and over-the-counter drug abuse

### **Intended audience**

Counselors, educators, law enforcement officers, nurses, prevention providers, school administrators and social workers.

**Continuing-education credit is offered for nurses.**

### **Speaker**

Regarded as one of America's top experts in drug and alcohol trends, Idaho law-enforcement officer Jermaine Galloway has specialized in underage drinking and drug enforcement for more than 15 years.

### **Registration**

High in Plain Sight: You Can't Stop What You Don't Know is free. The registration deadline is Friday, Feb. 24. More information and registration is available at [www.GreatRiverMedical.org/events/professional](http://www.GreatRiverMedical.org/events/professional). For questions, email [jesse.mumm@scottcountyiowa.com](mailto:jesse.mumm@scottcountyiowa.com) or call 563-326-8221.

Sponsored by

**Quad County Decategorization and Great River Health Systems**



## High in Plain Sight: You Can't Stop What You Don't Know

**A free program for parents and caregivers of youth**

**6 to 8 p.m. Monday, March 6**

**Blackhawk Room, Great River Wellness Plaza, 1401 W. Agency Road, West Burlington, IA**

Our youth are exposed to a constantly changing world of drugs and alcohol. There are new drugs and methods for using illegal and prescription drugs every year. It's difficult to keep up with changing information. Unless you understand the culture, you won't see it at all.

### **Learn how:**

- Alcohol and drugs are concealed on or in clothing
- To identify children who are abusing alcohol and drugs
- To recognize terms and logos related to underage drinking, marijuana use and over-the-counter drug abuse

### **Speaker**

Regarded as one of America's top experts in drug and alcohol trends, Idaho law-enforcement officer Jermaine Galloway has specialized in underage drinking and drug enforcement for more than 15 years. He has received four national awards and one international award for his work.

### **Registration**

The registration deadline is Friday, Feb. 24. To register, visit <http://scottcountykids.org/training-registration>.

If you have questions, please email [jesse.mumm@scottcountyiowa.com](mailto:jesse.mumm@scottcountyiowa.com) or call 563-326-8221.

**Sponsored by**

**Quad County Decategorization and Great River Health Systems**

# Organ Donor Awareness T-shirt Order Form

In recognition of Donate Life Month in April, Great River Health Systems is selling T-shirts to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation. Proceeds will benefit the Iowa Donor Network.

## Organ donation facts

- An average of 22 people die each day while waiting for an organ.
- Every 10 minutes, another person is added to the national organ transplant waiting list.
- Every driver's education class in Iowa must have one educational session on organ, tissue and eye donation for students.
- In 2014, the lives of 29,532 Americans were saved by organ donation.
- On average, 81 transplants occur every day in the U.S.
- One donor can save up to nine lives through organ donation, and save or heal more than 100 lives through tissue donation.

## 2016 Iowa Donor Network statistics\*

Organ donors – 50  
 Organs recovered for transplant – 158  
 Tissue donors – 756

## Iowa organ waiting list\*

Heart – 41  
 Lungs – 5  
 Liver – 33  
 Kidney – 586  
 Kidney/pancreas – 8  
 Pancreas – 2

\*As of Dec. 1.



## Organ Donor T-shirt Order Form Orders must be received by Friday, Feb. 10.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

*(Great River Health Systems employees)*

Price	\$8 – S to XL				\$10 – 2X and 3X	
Size	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X
Quantity						

T-shirts may be picked up between 2 and 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 5, in Great River Medical Center's lobby near the Gift Shop.

## If you have questions, please call:

Tiffany West, 319-768-4013

Please make check payable to Great River Health Systems

Send the check and form to:  
 Tiffany West  
 Great River Corporate Education  
 1221 S. Gear Ave.  
 West Burlington, IA 52655

**Total amount due \$** \_\_\_\_\_