

Winter 2016

health + care

A PUBLICATION FROM MERCY REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER AND MERCY HEALTH FOUNDATION

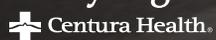
Taking the ride to heart

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Mercy Regional Medical Center



INSPIRE HEALTH

Behind the scenes of award-winning care



Dr. Bill Plauth,
Mercy CMO

Mercy Regional Medical Center is fortunate to have been recognized by several national health care industry organizations for the high quality care we provide. This recognition can be attributed directly to the doctors, allied health professionals, nurses and other employees who I am privileged to work with every day. These achievements are a result of their hard work and commitment to quality in caring for individual patients. Following is a summary of some of their more notable recent achievements and awards:

- Recognition by Leapfrog as one of 24 Top Rural Hospitals in the nation (2015)
- 2015 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Score of “A,” 7th consecutive year
- 2015 Consumer Reports Top 32 U.S. hospitals (out of 2,591) for Patient Safety and Experience
- 2015 Outstanding Patient Experience Award™ from Healthgrades, 7th consecutive year
- 2016 America’s 100 Best Hospitals for Orthopedic Surgery™ from Healthgrades, 4th consecutive year
- 2016 America’s 100 Best Hospitals for Spine Surgery™ from Healthgrades, 4th consecutive year
- 2016 Pulmonary Care Excellence Award™ from Healthgrades, 2nd consecutive year

- 2015 HIMSS Davies Award of Excellence to Mercy Family Medicine for its work in improving care continuity and reducing hospital readmissions
- 2015 HomeCare Elite™ Award to Mercy Home Health as a top 100 home health agency, 5th year of recognition

Many of these awards are based on factors such as low mortality rates, low infection rates, low risk of harm, low hospital readmissions, and high patient experience scores. As part of our journey to become a High Reliability Organization—where safe, reliable care is ensured—we have adopted safety as a core value, along with principles to anticipate, and thereby prevent errors. If errors do occur, we actively address them and look for opportunities so that they do not occur in the future. A key component of our success is to rely on the expertise of those with the most knowledge and expertise, regardless of title.

These many national awards are impressive for a community of our size and a testament to the excellent care patients and families can expect from Mercy’s hospital, clinics, home health and hospice services. This success is also a reflection of the benefits of being a part of Centura Health, which allows us to provide care as part of an integrated health care system across Colorado and creates access to referral services, telemedicine, and technology that would otherwise not be available locally.

We believe it is important to share these awards both as a testimony to the excellent care we provide to our patients, and as an opportunity to thank our community partners and wonderful physicians, allied health professionals, nurses and staff for their dedication, commitment and professionalism.

Be well,
Bill Plauth, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Mercy Regional Medical Center



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Mercy Regional Medical Center
INSPIRE HEALTH

On the Cover:

Dr. Eugenia Miller rides over Molas Pass in 2015 Iron Horse Bicycle Classic.

Read more on page 10.

Cover photo credit: Barak Naggan, High Desert Media.

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Correction from Fall 2015 issue: In hospice residence article (page 8-9), all images credited to Bauen Group, LLC Architecture & Design Studio and correction to spelling of architect Thomas Umbhau.



Internal medicine puts adults in driver's seat

By John Peel

It's quiet and friendly, and the staff goes out of its way to help. This might be what you expect at the typical doctor's office, but Mercy Internal Medicine is taking your comfort and care to the next level. They'll even park your car.

That's right, there's a valet onsite to take your vehicle at the curb if you're mobility challenged. The service is free.

"We want to set ourselves apart with ultimate customer service while providing high-quality care for our patients," said Chris Gerding, the primary care practice administrator for Mercy Regional Medical Center.

WHAT IS INTERNAL MEDICINE?

For those unfamiliar with the term, "internal medicine" is primary care for the older crowd. As people age they tend to encounter health issues that need greater oversight. The focus is on patients 50 and up, but certainly not limited to that age bracket. A patient could be as young as 18.

The focus at Mercy Internal Medicine, which opened in January, is on chronic disease management. Physicians are trained in adult medicine – preventing, detecting, monitoring and treating adult health issues. That often means caring for people with multiple conditions that interact. An example would be high blood pressure and diabetes. Treatment will consider both conditions and make certain that medications don't interact negatively.

The clinic's focus is on preventive care and wellness. Physicians regularly screen for diseases such as

high blood pressure, hyperglycemia (high blood sugar), colon cancer, and depression, just to name a few. They can manage medical conditions, and suggest healthy lifestyle tips to avoid diseases in the first place.

AN INSIDE LOOK

Mercy Internal Medicine is on the north end of Durango, 3235 N. Main Ave., giving residents in that area, and to the north, better access to primary care services. The building was formerly a family medical practice and was recently refurbished and modernized. A waiting area includes a large display that scrolls health tips. The "team" concept in the main room, with clinical staff in the middle surrounded by exam rooms, makes it easy for patients to find their way around. A procedure room can handle minor matters, such as inserting an IV.

Mercy Internal Medicine opened with two doctors, Erin Nealon and Julie Pysklo. There is also a registered nurse, three medical assistants and three support staff. The practice will expand as needed.

"We kept hearing from the community that we needed an internal medicine focus, and a presence," Gerding said. "That's especially true now, when the primary care options for Medicare patients are limited."

Being affiliated with Mercy Regional Medical Center, Mercy Internal Medicine will accept patients with Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance.

For more information, or to make an appointment, call **970-764-9300**.

SPECIALISTS IN INTERNAL MEDICINE

Erin Nealon, DO, earned her doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences and completed her residency in internal medicine at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago. She is board certified in internal medicine.

Julie Pysklo, MD, earned her medical degree and completed her residency in internal medicine at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver. She is board certified in internal medicine.



Drs. Julie Pysklo and Erin Nealon, Mercy Internal Medicine.



“Most often, your primary care provider has the ability to take care of whatever the issue is.”

I'm ill: Where do I go?

By John Peel

Dr. Krista Ault, Mercy Family Medicine, with patient.

If it seems the health care system offers a dizzying number of choices, here's some advice: Lean on your personal care provider.

When you're sick or injured, the system gives you several layers of options. If you're feeling chest pain or shortness of breath, have stroke-like symptoms, or have a major broken bone, large open wound, or other serious injury, call 9-1-1 or get to the ER quickly.

Absent these serious conditions, a good option is to call the people who know you best: your primary care provider, or PCP. The caregivers at your PCP's office can help you decide on your next best step, or they even may be able to get you in immediately to stitch you up or prescribe the medication you need. And it could save you money, too, as a primary care visit typically costs less than a visit to an urgent care and substantially less than a visit to an ER.

“Most often, your primary care provider has the ability to take care of whatever the issue is,” said Chris Gerding, the primary care practice administrator for Mercy Regional Medical Center. “Call us first. Let us help you make that decision. Don't feel like you're out on a limb.”

Mercy operates four primary care clinics – Mercy Family Medicine offices at Three Springs, Horse Gulch, and Bayfield,

and the adult-oriented Mercy Internal Medicine (more on page 3) on north Main in Durango. To make it even easier for the working person to schedule a visit, the Horse Gulch clinic is open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays. Same-day appointments can also be made at all four Mercy primary care locations.

During off-hours, you can call the office and a nurse is available 24/7 for consultation. The nurse will help determine the appropriate level of care you need and can answer general questions about taking medications and treatment options.

It's too hard to find a PCP, you say? Well, have you tried lately?

Several years ago, certainly, Southwest Colorado lacked for primary care providers. But although that perception may still exist, the reality is that the shortage has eased, particularly in La Plata County.

Mercy has led the effort in closing that health care gap. In less than two years, the number of primary care providers (including doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners) at Mercy Family Medicine and Mercy Internal Medicine has gone from 16 to 22. That's a 38 percent increase.

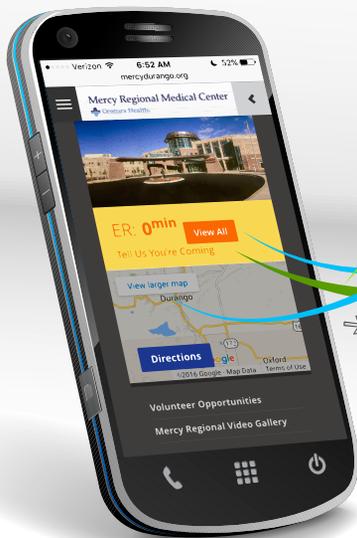
“We heard constantly how hard it was to get primary care, how hard it was to even call in and get an appointment,” said Will McConnell, vice president of operations and strategic outreach at Mercy.

It's a matter of improving community-wide health, he said. By making primary health care more available, and by taking away the obstacles to getting it, the likelihood grows that people will use it. And if people use it, potential chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension can be prevented or at least monitored and managed.

“Things that can be caught early and controlled don't end up putting people in the hospital,” McConnell said.

Paul Gibson, director of emergency services at Mercy, emphasized that Mercy will not turn away any patient who arrives at the ER. But if you're visiting the ER during your lunch hour, that's a clue that primary care is likely a better (and cheaper) option. The 2015 Colorado Health Access Survey showed 40 percent of Colorado's ER visits occur for non-emergent reasons.

Mercy Urgent Care at Purgatory Resort is another option to consider. Urgent cares handle minor fractures, illnesses, and cuts, and minor infections and burns. The clinic is only a 25-minute drive from Durango and patients rarely wait to be seen.



SO MUCH INFO AT MERCYDURANGO.ORG

Like every business, Mercy has a robust web site. But what many people don't know about mercydurango.org is how convenient the site is—if you know where to look. Following is a list of some of the site's more helpful features:

HOME PAGE: If you're looking specifically for family medicine, spine, cancer, orthopedic, or any other specialties available at Mercy, the home page has links to Mercy's specialty clinic pages. Some links are accessible toward the center of the home page screen, and a comprehensive list can be found in the specialties dropdown tab at the top of the page.

ER WAIT TIMES: There it is, right at the top of the home page: it's a constantly updated average time based on the number of minutes patients wait between ER check-in and evaluation by a medical provider. You can also let Mercy Regional Medical Center's ER know you're coming, and click a link to a map that will show you the way.

FIND A DOCTOR: A search engine located on the home page helps you find a specialist in any of a variety of fields, and lets you specify the distance you want to travel.

MYCENTURAHEALTH: At the patient portal, assuming your doctor is in the Mercy system and you've set up an account (easy to do), you can review your medications, see lab results, and communicate with the doctor's office.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Here's the key to a library of information on heart health, cancer, digestive disorders, etc. Also, calculate your BMI (body mass index) or the number of calories you're burning.

PRICING: Curious how much a common procedure is expected to cost? You can find it on the site. You can also request a custom price estimate on a procedure.

ONLINE BILL PAY: No need to even write a check and walk to the mailbox. The site talks you through making an online payment.



**IF YOU'RE A PATIENT, OR
WOULD LIKE TO MAKE
AN APPOINTMENT, THE
NUMBERS TO CALL ARE:**

Mercy Family Medicine at Three Springs
970-385-9850

Mercy Family Medicine at Horse Gulch
970-764-1790

Mercy Family Medicine at Bayfield
970-764-9150

Mercy Internal Medicine
970-764-9300

**FIND SUPPORT 24/7 FOR
YOUR HEALTH CARE NEEDS:**

24/7 Nurse Line*

Call any of the numbers above, 24 hours
a day, seven days a week, to speak with
a registered nurse.

*Available only to established patients of Mercy Family Medicine
and Mercy Internal Medicine.



Mercy Urgent Care

970-259-4553, located at Purgatory
Resort, open daily, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Emergency Care at Mercy

970-247-4311, located at Mercy
Regional Medical Center (Three Springs),
always open.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

Dishing up a healthy heart

FOOD AND OTHER INGREDIENTS TO KEEP YOU FROM MISSING A BEAT

By John Peel

Not that you need an excuse to take good care of your hard working heart—after all, it beats about 100,000 times each day, pumping about a gallon and a half of blood every minute. But February is American Heart Month, so now's a fine time to give your ticker some extra attention.

The key to heart health? According to Carmen Ritz, manager of cardiopulmonary rehabilitation and wellness at Mercy Regional Medical Center, it's proper nutrition, adequate sleep, good stress management, and, finally, healthy levels of exercise. Focusing on all four key ingredients, and striving for balance, is key, Ritz says.

Here's a breakdown of the four elements, with Ritz's myth-breaking advice tidbits for each:

NUTRITION

Don't be concerned so much about calories as about nutrition. Concentrate on a nourishing, low-fat diet. And don't substitute sugar for fat.

- Grains are fine, but we really don't need that much. Instead, eat lots of vegetables and a few fruits (go easy on the fruits to limit sugar). Greens are good. Root veggies such as yams and sweet potatoes have fiber, potassium, antioxidants and other nutrients.

- Eggs are healthy. Yes, eggs have cholesterol. But they're low in fat and don't have a huge negative effect on cholesterol level. Egg yolk has calcium, iron, and more, and the whites are a great source of protein.
- Eat oatmeal instead of boxed cereals, which are highly refined and processed. "Dr. Kellogg did not do us any favors," Ritz says. While you're at it, try to steer clear of processed foods in general.

SLEEP AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Take a cue from your family pet. They play hard for a while and then go to sleep. Without eight hours of sleep we're "adding fuel to the stress fire," Ritz says.
- All the stress management techniques in the world won't make up for a lack of sleep, which causes irritability. "A calm human makes better choices than a stressed human," she says.
- Understand your biology. Your body wants to sleep when it's dark. Watching television and working on a computer stimulate you instead to be more awake. Avoid that blue light of TV and computer screens for a couple hours before bedtime.
- If you do wake up at night, try to stay in bed. Occupy your mind with a mantra, use visualization techniques, or find a relaxation method that helps you rest.

\$25 KNOW YOUR HEART HEALTH

HELP DETERMINE YOUR RISK OF HEART DISEASE WITH A COMPREHENSIVE LIPID PANEL TEST*.

Available at any Mercy laboratory location, without a provider's order or an appointment. More information: **970-764-1105**

**Fasting is recommended prior to blood draw. Call for details.*

Carmen Ritz (right), manager, and Susan Smith (left), RN, conduct class with patients at Mercy's Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation and Wellness Center.

ACTIVITY

- First, get away from the idea that you have to work out hard and be some kind of “elite” endurance athlete to be healthy, says Ritz, who calls herself a “recovered competitive athlete.”
- There’s no difference in life span between competitive athletes and those who simply remain physically active. The Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation and Wellness Center at Mercy focuses on functional exercise, not getting in shape for a race.
- An exercise model the center uses: 45 minutes of moderate intensity workouts three times a week. Of that 45 minutes, perhaps 20-30 minutes of aerobic training on, for example, an elliptical machine, and 15-25 minutes around a weightlifting circuit. After that, 10-15 minutes of cool-down and stretching.
- Recovery time is as important as the exercise itself.

Although some of these tips don’t seem to affect the heart directly, they certainly will—especially in combination. You can’t just address the heart separately and call it good, but rather should consider heart health in context of the health of the whole body. A motor isn’t worth much when your car has a broken transmission or four flat tires. “If you don’t address the health of the entire body, you’re building a straw house,” Ritz says.

WE’RE HERE TO HELP

If you do find yourself wondering about your heart’s health or diagnosed with a heart condition (hypertension, coronary disease or circulatory problems, for example), Mercy Regional Medical Center can help. It offers a variety of services and a team of highly-skilled specialists including cardiologists and vascular medicine specialists, vascular surgeons, radiologists, and others. Care ranges from blood screening and nutrition counseling to advanced diagnostics, medical management, and specialized procedures, and even post-procedure, medically supervised rehabilitation.

“The level of cardiac care and breadth of services available in Durango is outstanding and also unusual for a community this size,” says Jessica Baken, Mercy’s administrator of specialty care.

Through its affiliation with Centura Health’s Penrose-St. Francis Health Services in Colorado Springs, Durango patients have seamless access to surgeons who can perform a spectrum of more complex heart operations not available locally. Penrose-St. Francis doctors travel regularly to Durango for follow-up care so local patients can stay close to home.

✦ To contact Mercy Cardiology Associates, call **970-764-2600**. Read more about one cardiologist’s journey to live a healthy life on page 10.



APPS FOR YOUR HEART

Maybe it shouldn’t come as a surprise that your phone can measure your heart rate.

There are many apps that claim to measure your pulse. Try downloading one for your iPhone or Android and follow the instructions. For the **Runtastic** app, for example, it’s pretty simple:

Put your finger over the camera lens and flash, and about 20 seconds later, you’ll have your heart rate. Feeling skeptical? Get on a stationary bike, get your heart rate up and measure again. It’s spot-on!

As you can imagine, this is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to heart health-related apps. Here’s a quick look at a few others. Most are free, and most are available for iPhones and Androids:

HEART RATE APPS: There are many, including **Cardiio**, **Cardiograph**, **Instant Heart Rate** and **Runtastic**.

BLOOD PRESSURE APPS: Some claim to measure your blood pressure or oxygen count, but don’t trust them, and certainly don’t rely on them for medical use. **Hello Heart** doesn’t make that claim; it simply reminds you when to take your BP (with a medical device), and can share that information with a doctor.

EXERCISE APPS: **MapMyWalk GPS** gives your route, distance and calories burned. For the more competitive, try **Strava**, which also compares your times with others doing similar routes on foot or a bike.

CPR APPS: The **PulsePoint AED** app shows where there’s an automated external defibrillator nearby; Heart Safe La Plata is in the process of entering the county’s 350-plus AEDs into the PulsePoint system. **PocketCPR** helps you learn and practice CPR.

Mercy Health Foundation supports cardiac services at Mercy: Foundation board member Miss Jane Fogleman says she and her husband, retired Air Force Gen. Ron Fogleman, felt confident moving to Durango 17 years ago despite her prior diagnosis of pulmonary hypertension, inflammation in an artery wall, and a family history of heart issues. “We feel very lucky to be in a community that has a facility like Mercy,” she says. “We tout our medical facility to visitors and anyone who asks us about it.”



FOUNDATION

Halos for Heroes: Honoring heroes at Mercy

**MAKE A GIFT TO HONOR AN INDIVIDUAL WHO
MADE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR CARE AT MERCY**

WHAT IS HALOS FOR HEROES?

Halos for Heroes provides an opportunity for patients or family members to honor a Mercy Regional Medical Center staff member(s) who treated you or a loved one with outstanding care. This grateful patient program acknowledges those who exemplify the Mercy values of compassion, respect, integrity, spirituality, stewardship, imagination and excellence.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Patients or family members wishing to pay tribute to a special employee at Mercy may honor this individual, or that of an entire department, by submitting a Halos for Heroes contribution in his or her name. Donations can be made online at www.mhffnd.org, or by calling **970-764-2802**.

Upon receipt of your donation, Mercy Health Foundation will arrange to honor the Hero with a special award and pin. A photo of the staff member or department receiving the award will be placed on Mercy Health Foundation's website.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Your gift honors service excellence provided at Mercy Regional Medical Center.
- Donations from Halos for Heroes benefit patients through support of vital programs, services and technology.
- Halos for Heroes helps promote world-class health care in our communities.



Left to right: (front row) Mark Saddler, MD; Gwendolyn Grant, MD; (back row) Kelsey Lyons Hocker, RN; Josh Magyar, lead chaplain; and David McCune, environmental services.

HONORING HEROES IN HEALTH CARE

You have the opportunity to pay tribute to someone who provided you with world-class service or care during your stay. Your contribution will be used to help support the vital programs, services and technology at Mercy Regional Medical Center.

To make a contribution: Visit www.mhffnd.org and click Halos for Heroes (in left navigation bar), or call **970-764-2802**. When donating, please specify the staff and/or department you would like to recognize, donation amount, and designation you would like your contribution to support (optional).

100 percent of donations support the mission and programs of Mercy Regional Medical Center.

THANKS AND APPRECIATION

Mercy Health Foundation is pleased to provide you with a way to pay tribute to an outstanding caregiver, and we are confident your gesture will inspire others to give.

Thanks to the community's generous support, Mercy Health Foundation has provided funding for the following that benefit patients and families in need of care at Mercy Regional Medical Center:

Equipment

- Blanket Warming Cabinets
- Cardiac Catheterization
- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Durango Cancer Center
- Emergency Preparedness
- Computed Tomography (CT) Scanner
- Flight for Life
- Mercy Regional Breast Care Center
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
- Operating Room
- Orthopedic and Spine
- Photopheresis Machine (specialized blood treatment for serious diseases)
- Primary Care Clinic
- Sleep Studies
- And much more

Programs, Services and Charity Care

- Cancer Center Pharmacy
- Da Vinci Robot Delivery
- Journey of Hope Fund – Free mammograms for women in need
- Gray Matters Program – Traumatic brain injury prevention with education and distribution of helmets for children
- Hospice Program
- Hospice Residence Campaign
- Labyrinth
- Mercy Cardiology Clinic
- Mercy Child Care Center
- Mercy Project – Patient Financial Assistance
- Surgery Welcoming Center

✚ Mercy Health Foundation qualifies for Enterprise Zone State Tax Credit of 25 percent for cash donations of \$250 or more. Donations may also be eligible for federal charitable donation tax deductions. Please consult with your financial advisor for more information.

Mercy
Who is your hero?



Credit: Martha Goetz

A few weeks ago, I had been feeling tired and not like myself. One day, I stood up and felt very unbalanced. I immediately called Dr. Firnat, my primary physician, who saw me in his office right

away and ordered a cardiac workup. Dr. Miller, who was on call that evening, took it from there, ordering an EKG, and found I needed a pacemaker. I was immediately admitted to Mercy for a pacemaker the next day with Dr. Kim. Having traveled all over the world and not being a fan of hospitals in general, Mercy is the most amazing hospital I have ever encountered. During my three days at Mercy, I encountered physical challenges, but everyone went above and beyond with my care and took time with my family members as well. Thanks to Dr. Kim and the team at Mercy Hospital, I am no longer out of breath. I am more active and able to enjoy my life again.

- Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Retired)



Mercy Health Foundation is honored to be recipient of a portion of the proceeds from the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic.

Dr. Miller upon completion of the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic, 2009.



Cardiologist's personal Rx: Long bike rides

By John Peel

Dr. Eugenia Miller recalls vividly her first Iron Horse Bicycle Classic experience.

She reached the top of Coal Bank Pass (10,600 feet) and started down, tires slipping on the falling snow. It was too dark and foggy to see with her sunglasses on, but the blinding snow made it impossible to see with her sunglasses off.

"I was going down the hill at eight miles an hour because it was so slick," she says. "I thought, 'This is just stupid.'"

Dr. Miller, a longtime cardiologist with Mercy Cardiology Associates, couldn't complete the 50-mile ride from Durango to Silverton that day in May 1996. She and many of the other riders huddled around a pullout and took turns warming up inside the one vehicle there. They eventually finished their trip on a bus.

But that didn't deter Miller from trying again. By her count, she's now finished the Iron Horse 11 times.

For her, doing something like the Iron Horse is part of a healthy lifestyle. It also gives her credibility when consulting with a patient.

“A lifestyle with regular exercise improves the likelihood you'll live a healthier, longer life.”

"I preach that here every day," Miller says in her first-floor office tucked inside Mercy Regional Medical Center's Three Springs campus. "Probably about 80 percent of cardiovascular disease is preventable. One of the best ways to prevent it is to be physically fit."

Among the benefits of exercise for your heart and overall health:

- Preventing high blood pressure and controlling diabetes.
- Stemming the buildup of lipids (fats) in the blood vessels.
- Keeping your weight down.
- Avoiding or easing depression.
- Aiding cognitive function. Miller says studies show that risk factors for Alzheimer's disease are the same as those for cardiac disease.

Miller, now 68 and a role model for both patients and friends, did her first cycling tour in the inaugural Ride the Rockies in 1986. More recently, she joined husband Steve Parker in El Paso, Texas, to complete

the last 1,700 miles of a coast-to-coast ride to St. Augustine, Florida.

The Iron Horse has been a big part of her life since she moved to Durango in 1995. It's a goal that has helped nudge her outside in the spring with similar-minded citizens and racers.

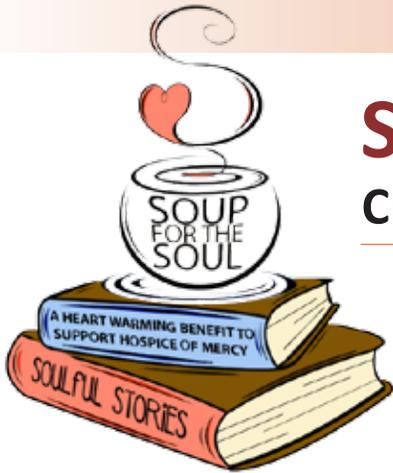
"I think that's why something like the Iron Horse is so helpful," she says of the event that officially began in 1972. "There is all that social overlay. Everybody in town is excited about it."

To be clear, Miller isn't just a cyclist. She's a regular exerciser who runs or swims or skis or hikes several times a week. Her advice for people trying to get into the exercise habit:

"You want to do something that is fun for you, because if it's just really boring you're not going to continue to do it."

While there are a few who have medical conditions that won't allow them to exercise, "For the great majority of us, the life that we live will be determined by our lifestyle choices."

A lifestyle with regular exercise, Miller says, improves the likelihood you'll live a healthier, longer life.



Soup for the Soul CELEBRATES 12TH SEASON

By John Peel

It's well-known that Soup for the Soul is a hot ticket, and it's a fact that if you want to attend the upcoming fundraiser and community gathering, you'd better act soon.

But as keyed up as the attendees get for the annual big splash, the truth is that it's the local restaurateurs who take the deepest dive each year. Those delicious soups, appetizers, and desserts you'll find **March 24** at the La Plata County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall won't just be tossed together. Far from it.

"Every restaurant really puts in a ton of effort," says Ryan Lowe, co-owner of the Ore House, a participant since the event began in 2005.

Karen Barger, owner of Seasons Rotisserie and Grill, says she and chef David Stewart aim to be the best in line at the fundraiser. It's a showcase for their business, but just as important, it's for a cause – Hospice of Mercy – that's easy to get behind.

"We don't take it lightly," she says. "We wouldn't want to let anyone down."

Lowe says there are "no holds barred" on the time and effort that he and two or three Ore House employees put into Soup for the Soul annually. The fine-detail work needed to prepare one soup for hundreds of people is way beyond the restaurant's daily norm. Consider, for example, just the time needed to cut 20 pounds of carrots into quarter-inch-square pieces for lobster bisque.

After food prep is done, it takes a couple of hours to set up and decorate the booth, and there's serving time and cleanup. With 16 or more restaurants involved, the total number of hours worked is, well, staggering.

"To see all the restaurants doing it is pretty neat," Lowe says. "We're just lucky to be a part of it."

There is even some friendly competition among the dining establishments. Each event-goer can vote for the best soup by placing a chip in that restaurant's bowl.

Joy Hess, development officer for Mercy Health Foundation, is amazed by restaurants' devotion to Soup for the Soul. And she's grateful for the community support, which, in turn, supports Hospice of Mercy.

"From start to finish, it's really a pretty special evening," Hess says.

The event began with less than 100 attendees in two seatings at the Durango Arts Center. It moved to the Fort Lewis College ballroom, outgrew that, and now attracts several hundred to the Fairgrounds. And, if history is an indicator, the 12th annual event will sell out again in 2016.



Wayne and Karen Barger,
Seasons Rotisserie and Grill.

ENJOY GOURMET SOUPS,
APPETIZERS AND DESSERTS
FROM THESE FINE ESTABLISHMENTS:

Bread

- Carver Brewing Company**
- Chimayo Stone Fired Kitchen**
- CJ's Diner**
- Cyprus Café**
- Digs Restaurant and Bar**
- DoubleTree Hotel**
- East by Southwest**
- Eolus Bar & Dining**
- Hot Tomatoes Café & Catering**
- Mercy Garden Terrace Café**
- Mutu's Italian Kitchen**
- Glacier Club**
- Mahogany Grille**
- Norton's Catering**
- Ore House Restaurant**
- Seasons Rotisserie and Grill**
- The Red Snapper**

Beer and wine provided by:

- Star Liquors**
- Steamworks Brewing Co.**

✚ For tickets, call
Mercy Health Foundation
at **970-764-2800**
or visit **www.mhffnd.org**.



Ryan Lowe, Ore House Restaurant.

Mercy Health Foundation



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mercydurango.org

A center for healing and hope opens

In the U.S., nearly seven million individuals suffer from non-healing, advanced wounds at an annual cost of more than \$50 billion. The incidence of chronic wounds is increasing with the aging of the U.S. population and the increase in the number of patients with diabetes and other diseases that can cause or contribute to non-healing wounds.

A wound is considered non-healing if it has not healed in approximately two weeks. These wounds can come in many forms, including venous ulcers, chronic foot ulcers, tissue damage from radiation therapy, failed skin grafts and flaps, and more. Some wounds are so severe that they may result in amputation.

Now, there's help. In December, Mercy Wound Care Center opened as Southwest Colorado's only outpatient clinic dedicated to the healing of chronic wounds. "We're excited to introduce a much needed service to a currently underserved population," said Dr. Dennis Cirillo, medical director for Mercy Wound Care Center.

THERAPIES TO HEAL

Dr. Cirillo and staff employ a variety of advanced therapies to promote healing. They also believe in a team-based approach, working with each patient and their providers to create an individualized plan of care. And if additional care is needed, such as surgical repair of a damaged blood vessel, the clinic staff coordinates care with other medical specialists at Mercy.

One of the unique therapies available at the clinic is called hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT). HBOT patients are enclosed in a pressurized chamber where they breathe 100 percent oxygen. Many chronic wounds are caused by poor circulation and a resulting lack of oxygen to the wound, so this process helps the healing process by boosting blood oxygen and accelerating the body's wound-healing mechanisms.

Here's how it works: In the HBOT chamber, the pressurized oxygen molecules are smaller, and more oxygen can pass from the lungs and be dissolved into the blood. In fact, the blood can carry between 15 to 20 times the normal amount of oxygen. So while the blood flow may be restricted, the blood that does get through contains much more oxygen that the body can use to heal the wound.

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the center's two HBOT chambers, specialized dressings, procedures and other tools that help many chronic wounds disappear, the staff offers support to patients. "Many people have had non-healing wounds for so long that they simply give up. We're here not only to help, but to support them and give them hope again," said Cirillo.



Mary Bloom, hyperbaric technician, with patient in HBOT chamber.

Physician referral to Mercy Wound Care Center is not required, and most insurance covers the cost of care, however, it is advisable to verify insurance coverage prior to seeking care. For appointments, call 970-764-3390.

The center is located in suite 200-B of the Mercy Medical Plaza, the medical office building on Mercy's main campus, at 1 Mercado St. in Durango.