



Service Pillar

Mercy will continue to develop integrated programs and services to best meet the needs of its patients.

MIND to offer MS support group

Approximately 200 people are diagnosed each week in the

U.S. with multiple sclerosis (MS), an autoimmune disorder that attacks the central nervous system. In Rock County alone, it is estimated that over 200 people have MS, and over 150 in Walworth County are affected.

MS often takes an unpredictable course and varies in its effects on a patient's level of functioning. Quality of life, however, is usually diminished to some degree. Patients experience a host of neurological symptoms (e.g., fatigue, cognitive impairment) that can appear unnoticeable to an observer, thereby compounding their frustration in managing and living with the disease.

It is this nature of MS that makes finding support for patients so important. Sany Khabbaz, MD, board certified neurologist at Mercy Clinic West, states "It is very important for MS patients to have, in addition to their medical treatment, a support group where they can discuss their illness and its effects on their daily living, as well as sharing their thoughts with each other. This can also be a resource for information they will need to be able to deal with and be informed about MS."

The Mercy Institute of Neuroscience—Dedicated care for your brain and spine (MIND) hopes to assist patients in this process through a new collaboration with the Wisconsin Chapter of the National MS Society. Specifically, MIND hopes to assist the Society with some of their priority initiatives, including facilitating communication between the Society and newly diagnosed patients, providing educational and awareness opportunities for the community and professionals, and increasing social support options for patients.

Colleen Kalt, president and CEO of the Wisconsin Chapter of the National MS Society states, "We at the National MS Society-Wisconsin Chapter are looking forward to partnering

with MIND. Our hope is that this partnership will lead to improvements in the quality of life for persons with multiple sclerosis in southern Wisconsin."

One of the first initiatives MIND is working on is the creation of a second MS support group at Mercy Hospital for MS patients in the Janesville area. This group will be held in the evening to allow more individuals to attend.

Jere Johnson, director of radiology and oncology services at Mercy Hospital Janesville, is spearheading these efforts in conjunction with MIND, Dr. Khabbaz and Bonnie Debroux, programs director for the Wisconsin chapter of the MS Society. Jere hopes that the already established model of providing support for cancer patients can be applied to MS and potentially to other neurological disorders treated by MIND physicians.

One such method is a needs assessment patient focus group, a forum that provides patients with an opportunity to express their feelings about their experiences with a particular program or service. This interactive process allows Mercy to involve patients in determining the most appropriate and effective services, and MIND is hopeful that they can use this process to streamline neurological care in the future.

Jere has a personal connection to these efforts as well, as his wife has MS. He explained, "After my wife was diagnosed with MS the fear set in—fear for her health and fear for her future. I suppose it was this fear that kept her silent week after week with issues regarding her MS treatment. She felt she would just have to deal with it. She was wrong. You can get help. And she did! She sought out a support group for MS. She learned how to prepare to talk about her health condition with her physician in order to obtain the best treatment. Most importantly, she learned how to deal with her fear and prepare for the future."

Watch for more information about MIND's ongoing efforts to assist and support your neurological patients.

NEW - Mercy MS Support Group

This new group for individuals with multiple sclerosis and their support persons meets the third Tuesday of the month, 6:30-7:30 pm, at the Mercy Health Mall, 1010 N. Washington St., Janesville. The first meeting is August 15. There is no cost to attend. For more information, please call Jere Johnson at (608) 756-6142.

Physician earns certification



Ronald A. M. Garcia, MD
Board Certified
Physical Medicine and
Rehabilitation, and
Pain Medicine

Board certified physical and rehabilitation medicine specialist, Ronald Garcia, MD, has successfully achieved board certification in electrodiagnostic medicine and is now a diplomate of the American Board of Electrodiagnostic Medicine (ABEM). The ABEM establishes criteria for certification using a combination of academic training, clinical experience, and examination components selected on the basis of their relationship to knowledge, competence, or achievement in the field of electrodiagnostic medicine.

Dr. Garcia performs electromyography/nerve conduction studies (EMG/NCS) to diagnose and treat

nerve and muscle disorders. He also uses EMG guidance for injection of Botulinum toxin to treat muscle spasticity.

Dr. Garcia is the medical director of the **Comprehensive Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit of Mercy Hospital** and a member of the **Mercy Institute of Neuroscience (MIND)**. He sees patients at the **Mercy Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Centers** in Janesville, WI, and Lake Geneva, WI. Dr. Garcia is also certified by the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPMR) and the American Board of Pain Medicine (ABPM).