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Rod Davis
St. Rose Dominican Hospitals

After nearly 18 years as president of the St. Rose Dominican hospitals, Rod Davis takes a certain pride in the growth and development of the three thriving campuses. In an industry, which he acknowledges can often be impersonal, Davis says he finds comfort in the mission and values that have served his family of hospitals well.

“The criticisms of healthcare generally are that we are too technology driven,” he says. “That we’re so focused on the medical care but lose sight of the actual person. We at St. Rose are relentless in our quest for quality care. We not only treat the clinical but know it’s just as important to consider the psychological and spiritual needs of the patient as well.”

Over the years, the growth and expansion of the St. Rose hospitals has made it possible to offer this level of care to more patients.

“When the development of the Sienna campus, the opening of the San Martin campus and program enhancements made to the Rose de Lima campus, we’re able to offer more care to more people,” he elaborates. “It also means hiring more staff and more physicians.”

The hospitals have been recognized with numerous awards including: Most Preferred Hospital in Clark County, state awards for professional excellence; and named one of Medicare’s Top Hospitals in Nevada. The Sienna campus was acknowledged by Health Grades’ as the #1 Hospital in Nevada for overall cardiac care and AARP's Top 125 Hospitals in the country.

“These wonderful recognitions are really the result of 3,500 dedicated, committed employees; 1,400 highly professional, well-trained physicians; and about 500 volunteers who are committed to efforts to improve the quality of life in our facilities,” notes Davis.

“We are rather unique as a not-for-profit hospital system and we place tremendous value on life and how a person is treated.”

Davis, who has a master’s degree in business administration, worked in various capacities at three other hospital systems prior to joining the St. Rose family, has applied his years of experience towards making a difference.

“I’ve been very fortunate to have worked in other hospital systems and gleaned some very valuable experience before ‘coming home to roost’ at St. Rose,” he says. “One thing I learned very early on is that there are some of the most dedicated and bright people who gravitate towards healthcare and they are the kind of people with whom I want to be associated. Consequently, I’ve always strived to hire the very best people and bring the right mindset and create a positive, creative environment where everyone can be their best.”

When informed that he was selected as the 2009 Administrator HealthCare Hero he expressed pleased surprise. “It’s certainly not something I would ever expect,” he said modestly. “If I were to be honest I’d have to give the credit to those who work so tirelessly here. They’re the ones who should be recognized.”

When asked how he views his role at St. Rose Dominican Hospitals, Davis said, “I believe my primary responsibility is to serve our employees and physicians in providing the best resources available, and creating the safest environment for patient care.”

James Parrish
Humboldt General Hospital

James Parrish, CEO of Humboldt General Hospital in Winnemucca is a good example of someone who has ascended through the ranks to get to where he is today.

While earning his bachelor’s degree, he progressed through various jobs in housekeeping at Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, Washington until he was promoted to the purchasing department of the 650 bed hospital.

He was fascinated with the healthcare industry and says he enjoyed the caliber of people he met along the way. “I feel I am working in an industry that really makes a difference,” he says. “And the people I encountered day-to-day were dedicated, compassionate, and intelligent people. I feel I’ve found my niche.”

Parrish was recruited by various hospitals to help them turn-around and by the time he moved on, each hospital was running smoothly.

“When I moved to Winnemucca, I was pleased to find the hospital in better shape than those I had encountered previously,” says Parrish. “Their primary obstacles were difficulties recruiting quality people and the fact that accounts receivables were taking over 160 days to collect.”

Five years later, Parrish can take pride in the smooth operations and strong community ties of this 29-bed critical access hospital. He’s brought change while respecting the unique “family-like atmosphere”.

“I think modernizing the management system is one of the things I feel most proud of,” he says. “We have an amazing team. We may be small but every one of our physicians, nurses and support staff are exceptional both professionally and as people.”

Respected by his staff and the community, Parrish has implemented changes that precipitated the hospital being ranked among the top ten critical access hospitals in Nevada.

“Through fiscal responsibility, cultural change and creating a cohesive team of health care professionals, Parrish has made Humboldt General a hospital that breaks the norm for rural hospitals in America,” says Humboldt General’s Director of Emergency Services Pat Songer. “He has empowered his supervisor’s with the ability to complete tasks without cumbersome policies that bog down processes. This has streamlined the process of procuring equipment and training.”

About a year ago Humboldt General implemented a new transport system resulting in a savings of nearly $3.5 million. “We invested in two large ambulances,” explains Parrish. “Prior to acquiring our own ground transport system, patients had to be flown by helicopter at a cost of $26,000 per flight. We can now transport patients to Reno for about $6,000, obviously a tremendous savings. We transport about 200 patients a year, and of those 200 roughly 180 can be moved using our ambulances. It makes sense on many levels.”

Named as one of the top hospitals last year, Humboldt General and James Parrish have demonstrated the ability to provide quality care in a comforting environment.

“But we’re also proud of the fact that for over 100 years, Humboldt General Hospital has provided a family environment for the residents of north-central Nevada,” Parrish adds.
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St. Rose Dominican Hospitals
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It takes a very special kind of person to work with seriously ill children. Dr. Ronald Kline is just such a person. One of only two pediatric oncologists in Southern Nevada, Dr. Kline says he loves the intellectual challenge and particularly enjoys working with children.

“I love kids,” he says, “and I always wanted to be a pediatrician. When I chose to go into Pediatric Hematology and Oncology my thoughts were, ‘if you’re going to be a doctor, be one in every sense of the word’.”

Together with his partners, Dr. Kline treats more than 7,000 patients a year at the Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada. These are children suffering from brain tumors, leukemia, bone cancers, and blood disorders.

As well known for his jovial bedside manner as he is for his medical prowess, Dr. Kline is popular with his patients and does his best to put them at ease.

“There’s a time for being serious and a time when it’s okay, even good to joke around,” he says, “I like to make my patients feel like normal kids. So yeah, we joke around and laugh. I think they enjoy it as much as I do.”

His concern for his patients isn’t contained within a nine-to-five schedule. Dr. Kline has helped raise money for organizations such as Candlelighters and the Childhood Cancer Foundation. Special events such as Klip It For Kidz and Locks of Love have raised thousands of dollars and raised awareness level.

Throwing himself wholeheartedly into each project, Dr. Kline recalls the delighted laughs he drew when he allowed his head to be shaved in support of Locks of Love.

“Oh they thought it was great,” he recalls with a grin, “Now granted, I don’t have nearly enough hair to make a wig but I’m happy to say that my example encouraged others to donate and the kids loved it.”

He also believes in treating the whole child, not just their disease. To this end, Dr. Kline instituted a special Tae Kwon Do class held in his offices. The waiting area at Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada becomes a martial arts studio once a week when the young patients take part in lessons every Friday night. This class is free not only to patients, but to their siblings as well.

“I know what a positive impact Tae Kwon Do has had on my son and daughter,” he explains, “and I thought my patients might have similar experiences. Everyone seems to enjoy the classes and I enjoy watching them rise through the ranks as they improve.”

Dr. Kline frequently takes time out of his schedule to observe the classes and see first hand how they are affecting his patients. He says he doesn’t want the children to think of the offices as just a place to receive treatment. In fact, the entire staff reflects his positive stance.

In addition, Dr. Kline was asked by his colleagues to edit a textbook on pediatric bone marrow transplants. More than 50 physicians from some of the nation’s top children’s hospitals and research centers have contributed their knowledge to the book entitled: Pediatric Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation.

A Reno native, Dr. Shannon Zamboni began her undergraduate studies at UNR with the intention of becoming a pediatrician, but while completing her rotations in San Diego she found she preferred the variety of a family practice.

“Family practice suits my personality,” she says, “I get to see babies and children, as well as adults. In fact, frequently I treat the entire family, which is really wonderful. We have a kind of walk-in clinic so it really breaks up the day. I’ll see my regular patients as well as a few new faces.”

In fact, it was one of her patients who nominated Dr. Zamboni for the Healthcare Heroes award. The patient who was dealing with breast cancer felt there was little to no communication between herself and her surgeon. Frightened not only by the disease but the fact that she hadn’t been told the whole truth regarding her status, she turned to Dr. Zamboni for honesty and support as well as medical care.

She writes: “Dr. Zamboni was my God-sent angel when I learned in 2006 that I had breast cancer...she acted as my advocate, she interfaced with the oncologist, surgeons and after-care providers and ensured that I had a full and complete comfort level with the things we were facing. She didn’t let me walk the journey alone, she made sure that I knew the status, the options and challenges I was facing but through it all she offered guidance and support and went above and beyond to make sure that I was okay, physically and emotionally.”

Dr. Zamboni gives all the credit to her patients. “She was the one who went through it,” Zamboni says. “I try to be available. I tell all of my patients that I’m on call on Wednesday night so they know for sure they can at least reach me once a week. I also give my cell phone number to my special needs patients. But, as I said, ultimately they are the ones going through the tough times. Being available is important to me and I think it’s nice for them to know that they aren’t alone. And that particular patient was just so strong, I give all the credit to her.

“My philosophy is that I know medicine and they know their bodies. As a physician I listen and together we come up with a plan of attack. I try to sit down with each patient and take whatever amount of time is necessary to educate. They should know as much as I know about their disease, the risks and the possibilities. So I just offer as much information as I can and try to be available.”

She also makes a point of saying, “I don’t know everything” and is quick to refer her patients to the proper specialist when the need arises. Dr. Zamboni maintains an excellent rapport with other doctors.

“We have a wonderful network of physicians here in Northern Nevada,” she says, “I feel very comfortable calling upon any of them to consult on a case or refer one of my patients.”
Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada congratulates Dr. Kline, one of its heroes, for giving so much of himself (and his hair) to his patients and their families.
Carolyn Yucha, PhD, RN, FAAN
UNLV School of Nursing

It was just five years ago that Dr. Carolyn Yucha arrived from the University of Florida, to assume her role as Dean of the School of Nursing at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, which had recently been created from the School of Health Sciences. She viewed the school as a blank canvas.

“I thought it was an excellent opportunity with great potential,” she recalls. “Over the last five years we’ve done some really wonderful things, including doubling all of our programs, nearly tripling the enrollment, and launching a PhD program.”

“When I arrived we had 22 faculty members, today we have 36 as well as five professional staff members who assist with everything,” she continues. “It takes a while to get the right people in the right positions. I now have an associate dean for academic affairs and an associate dean for research, promoting our research efforts. So, I think it’s going very well!”

Essentially she was building from scratch, because when the School of Nursing broke off from what’s now known as the School of Allied Health Sciences, they left all the departments that were part of that school. Diving headlong into the daunting task, Yucha proved they had definitely made the right choice. In fact, Dr. Yucha was so successful that she was soon approached to double her responsibilities.

“Three years ago when the new provost arrived he toured nursing, met the faculty and administrators and was duly impressed,” Yucha explains. “Then he surprised me by saying, ‘We’d really like you to consider being the dean of Allied Health Sciences as well.’ Well, you don’t say ‘no thank-you’ to a new boss!”

“All in all I think things have gone fairly well,” she continues. “What makes it doable, is the fact that I have a lot of great support. I have strong, effective associate deans and very proactive department chairs. Right now I could not be happier because I believe we have exactly the right people for these critical positions.” She looks thoughtful for a moment and then adds with a good-natured laugh, “I guess I should be careful expressing my contentment, I might get another school!”

While her primary role is in administration, Dr. Yucha has taught research methods and grant writing online at the doctoral level and transitions to practice at the undergraduate level. As the dean, Dr. Yucha is responsible for the UNLV nursing program, which has grown substantially in the last five years. Under her guidance, the School of Nursing offers educational programs for the basic BSN degree, MSN degrees with Nurse Practitioner and Education tracks, and a PhD in Nursing.

Kenneth Maehara, PhD
University of Nevada, School of Medicine

Teaching for me is one of those fields that don’t benefit you monetarily, but certainly has multiple benefits in other ways,” notes Dr. Kenneth Maehara, associate professor of pathology as well as a course coordinator at the University of Nevada Reno, School of Medicine. “I feel I’ve gained so much from the relationships forged over the years with my students and faculty, and in the satisfaction of playing a role in the education of these young minds. I especially love teaching medical students they are so bright and very motivated.”

Dr. Maehara had a rather inauspicious beginning to his life. As the first infant born in the Portland, Oregon Japanese Relocation Camp during the beginning months of World War II, Maehara, along with his family faced many hardships in the years to come.

“My parents owned a modest grocery store prior to the war,” he explains. “Of course all that was confiscated and when the war was over, we had nothing. When we left the camp we had to find a way to survive. My parents joined other internees and found a farm where we share cropped for several years. Later, we moved to California where we worked picking strawberries. It was hard work and I decided then and there that I would get an education. I knew for certain, I didn’t want to do manual labor my whole life. To this day, I still hate strawberries.”

Dr. Maehara says that this era in America’s history is of particular interest to him. In fact, a few years ago he took a sabbatical to research and write about healthcare conditions in the relocation camps.

“Surprisingly, were not that bad,” he says. “They were not very good in the beginning primarily because they just were not prepared. One of the major problems affecting the internment centers was the lack of sufficient medical personnel. But by the end they had begun utilizing Japanese physicians and tried to put several at each camp.”

Dr. Maehara consistently ranks among the most popular faculty member and receives high marks from his students.

Carrisa Sparrow, class of 2010 calls him “my all-time favorite professor.” She says she greatly respects his knowledge and values his teaching methods. “I have never come out of a classroom learning so much,” she says. “He keeps your attention and truly cares about his students.”

Another indication of his popularity, Dr. Maehara recalls when he casually mentioned in class that he was moving across town in a few days. “About 10 of them showed up to help me move that morning and it was the smoothest move I’ve ever done,” he said.

For his part Dr. Maehara says, “I’ve been lucky in my career. I guess I’ve just always been in the right place at the right time. I feel very privileged to be teaching such motivated young people. This class is one where everyone passed their Step 1 national exam, which is necessary to get into the third year of medical school.”
Based in Reno, Saint Mary's is a fully integrated healthcare system that provides the highest-quality care and service to Nevada residents, a tradition that goes back more than 100 years. Saint Mary’s is a member of Catholic Healthcare West (CHW), the eighth largest hospital system in the nation and the largest non-for-profit hospital provider in the West.

Saint Mary’s Regional Medical Center ranks first in the region for quality care, according to HealthInsight, a non-profit community organization in Nevada and Utah under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to monitor and foster patient care quality improvement in Nevada’s hospitals. The ranking is based on 25 different federally mandated quality measures including responses and procedure for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical infection prevention.

In the state of Nevada, Saint Mary’s is ranked second only to St. Rose Dominican Hospital – de Lima campus, also a member of CHW. The HealthInsight ranking is computed using voluntarily-reported, public data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

While providing quality patient care, Saint Mary’s is also working to continue to meet the needs of a growing community. The William N. Pennington Emergency Department opened in January 2009 and features 47 private rooms and a paperless patient tracking system designed to expedite a patient’s stay. Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, Northern Nevada’s newest accredited center for cancer, is also the only facility in Nevada that features the CyberKnife, a revolutionary radiation delivery system that is able to treat tumors that before were considered untreatable.

In addition, Saint Mary’s offers a network of urgent care centers and primary care physician practices throughout the Reno/Sparks region.

Saint Mary’s mission of caring, and core values of Dignity, Collaboration, Justice, Stewardship and Excellence are also exemplified in the organization’s community based programs to benefit those who need care. Saint Mary’s outreach clinics, mobile health programs, prevention and wellness programs and community partnerships are helping to make healthcare available to more people than ever before.
The Economic Development Manager of one of the fastest growing cities in the country, Henderson’s Bob Cooper sees his primary role as bringing people together. Back in 2002 he took a long look at the healthcare industry in Southern Nevada and recognized the tremendous growth potential and opportunity to unite an industry.

“I saw it from the standpoint of an economic development opportunity,” he explains. “All you have to do is look around and see the increase in our age 50-plus population. The second half of that equation is, this demographic demands more healthcare services. Compared to other communities like Florida or Arizona, we’re out of proportion as far as health related industries. That tells me there’s a void, or as I prefer, an opportunity for growth.”

He knew however, that in order to make the most out of this opportunity it would require an entire community working together. The answer seemed obvious, bring together community leaders and healthcare representatives and combine efforts. He took his idea to Mayor Gibson and St. Rose Dominican Hospitals Administrator, Rod Davis.

That was the genesis of the Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition. Now more than 600 strong, this group is comprised of representatives from five different sectors: healthcare professionals, healthcare institutions and organizations, higher education, local and state governments and local chambers of commerce. Their mission is to have a collective voice to improve access and the delivery of quality healthcare in Southern Nevada by fostering strategic alliances in the healthcare community, collaborating on human resource issues, and by being a proactive force for legislative improvements.

“We bring people together that should know each other,” says Cooper. “They look at collaborative projects and decide which to move forward. It’s a very free and safe environment to collaborate and bring their own specialty to the table.”

Nurturing the burgeoning city’s development is a job that seems to suit him as well. A very overt supporter of Henderson’s growth, Cooper is also quietly appreciative of the residual small town charm. “It’s like a breath of fresh air,” he muses. “The people here are very genuine. There’s a great community spirit. Henderson is the kind of place where people still wave at one another and if you ask for help everyone pitches in.”

When it comes to serving his community, Cooper favors the small town approach as well. An integral part of his regular routine includes monthly visits to local businesses. “I like to meet face-to-face, ask them how they’re doing and how they think we’re doing. It gives me a better feel for what’s really going on in my town,” he says.

With more than 35 years of experience in economic development, Cooper served as the President/CEO for five regional economic development corporations and has been recognized by numerous organizations for his work. The Clark County Medical Society presented him with the President’s Award for his leadership and creation of the Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition. In 2005, Cooper became the first public sector representative to be honored as the Henderson Chamber of Commerce’s Member of the Year.

Valerie Clark has always felt a strong affinity for healthcare. “I grew up in the prominent healthcare community of Loma Linda, California,” she says. “I have a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Loma Linda University and I worked my way through college at the hospitals. After college I went into community health nursing. I just feel that my whole life has been connected somehow to healthcare in one way or another.”

Her marriage to a military man who was transferred frequently, added variety to Clark’s nursing experience. “We moved around a lot so I would just find whatever job was available in nursing wherever we wound up,” she explains. “I was medical case manager for a workman’s comp insurance company, medical supervisor for UPS, director for an employee’s assistance program, just a lot of different types of nursing and various healthcare exposure.”

She says eventually she felt burned-out and wanted to return to a place that she loved and felt like home. So, about 17 years ago Clark returned to Reno and joined her mother-in-law in the family business.

“Clark & Associates was just a good fit for me,” she explains. “Healthcare was something I’d always understood, it’s just that now I was on the insurance side of it. It’s not just insurance sales to me it’s really helping people access the healthcare that they desire. It’s about packaging benefits as creatively as possible to make it affordable, to do the most good for the best price.”

Soon Clark found a way to reach even more people and use her talent for finding affordable healthcare for those who had been without. Two years ago she was named chair-elect of the Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce and realized it was her chance to create something significant for her community.

“The chamber had never really been directly involved in healthcare,” she explains. “It’s a huge issue, especially as our community continues to grow and I felt it was time that we, as community leaders focused on it. So as Chairman of the Board I made the decision that it would be designated ‘Healthcare Year’. I was fortunate enough to get both Renown and St. Mary’s CEOs on the board and I created the healthcare committee. Then we put together a big healthcare forum called ‘The Chairman’s Agenda’ held in October with speakers from all over the country.”

Held in October of last year, this significant event featured a Healthcare Panel which included representatives from Nevadans for Affordable Healthcare; Nevada Hospital Association; Nevada State Medical Association; and the National Association of Health Underwriters.

“It was highly successful,” says Clark, “so much so that I’ve been asked to chair the committee on healthcare again this year. It’s not a formal committee, just so necessary with all the reforms. So we’re busy planning this year’s healthcare forum. I’ve discovered I really enjoy doing this and my background seems to offer a unique, unbiased perspective. Personally, I feel very gratified to have made a difference.”
The legacy of St. Rose Dominican Hospitals in Southern Nevada dates back over six decades, when seven Adrian Dominican Sisters traveled from Michigan to Henderson to operate a fledgling government hospital. Since those humble beginnings in 1947, St. Rose has become a trusted and beloved institution in Southern Nevada – having delivered generations of babies and provided care and support to any and all who have needed it, regardless of ability to pay. Now with three hospitals across the valley, St. Rose holds true to the commitment that those original Sisters made in 1947 – that through hard work, faith and dedication, a hospital can be a source of compassionate care for an entire community.

As Southern Nevada’s only not-for-profit, religiously-sponsored hospital system, St. Rose focuses on healing not only the body, but the mind and spirit as well. The hospital’s not-for-profit status means that any operating margins are re-invested into expanding care at their facilities or to the community as a whole.

That original hospital, now the Rose de Lima Campus, has been expanded and renovated to provide the latest technology such as a Level II Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Nevada’s first – and only – Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine Center to receive UHMS certification. Rose de Lima has also been recognized by HealthInsight as the best in the state for quality measures.

St. Rose’s second acute-care facility in Henderson – the Siena Campus – provides much needed services such as an open heart surgery center, Level III Trauma Center, Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and a 24-hour pediatric emergency room. Siena was named one of the 125 best hospitals in America by Consumers’ Checkbook, a nonprofit watchdog group for its dedication to excellence, both in clinical care and patient and physician satisfaction.

In late 2006, St. Rose opened the San Martin Campus in southwest Las Vegas. San Martin offers a full array of services with a Level II Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Joint Replacement Center and new Wound Healing Center. The campus has already been recognized by Avatar as being in the top two percent in the nation for patient satisfaction.
It’s been noted that the work of a skilled plastic surgeon can be likened to that of a great artist. If that’s true, then Dr. Benjamin Rodriguez would rank among the masters. And while he has a thriving Southern Nevada practice, some of his real “masterpieces” have been crafted thousands of miles away in places like Vietnam, Bolivia, Galapagos, Croatia, Honduras, Russia, India and Mexico.

Partnering with distinguished organizations such as Operation SMILE, Medical Aid for Children of Latin America, Smile Train and Interplast, Dr. Rodriguez has been traveling to sleepy little villages and battle-torn cities since before opening his Las Vegas practice.

“I truly cannot adequately express in words the impact these trips have had on my life,” he says with raw sincerity. “This is my 20th year of traveling around the world with these organizations. I routinely make between four and five trips a year, each trip is between two and three weeks.”

A nurse once tallied up the number of days he’s spent on these humanitarian expeditions and was surprised to find it added up to more than four years. Colleagues frequently question his sanity, or at the very least his business sense. Why leave a perfectly good practice several times a year, to travel to remote locations where even the surgical accommodations are questionable? Rodriguez just laughs and shrugs his shoulders. “What can I say, it’s addictive. When you get to participate in a life-altering procedure, and then see the life changed,” he pauses as if revisiting a recent patient in some far-away locale. “That is such a soul-burning experience. It really is addictive!”

While there have been hundreds of trips and countless lives impacted, Dr. Rodriguez seems to carry a mental picture of virtually every one. “I still have vivid recollections of my very first trip back in 1989 when I was a surgery resident,” he shares. “The mission was to Cotija de La Paz, Michoacan, Mexico about three hours south of Guadalajara by car. On the drive down we stopped in a small town and there was a teenager with health and social service resources. The approach, as the name implies, is to knock on doors, establish a rapport and then reach out to remove barriers and provide support.

“They’ve found that this is very important for pregnant women,” she adds, “because one of the leading causes of low birth weight is poor dental hygiene. This is just tremendous because many of these women have never been to a dentist in their lives.”

Of course there’s no monetary compensation, despite the corporate sponsorships, trips typically carry significant expense, but Dr. Rodriguez says the real rewards are intangible. “I derive my financial income through my practice here in Las Vegas,” he says with a wry grin, “and my psychological income from my trips.”
Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada (CCCN) began in May 2000 as a collaboration between the Southwest Cancer Clinic and Nevada Radiation Oncology Centers, which have helped Las Vegas residents fight cancer since 1974.

The oncology practice provides medical services such as chemotherapy, pediatric oncology, radiation oncology, medical oncology, nursing services by oncology certified nurses, hematology, diagnostic imaging, pharmacy, hydration, physicist, therapeutic phlebotomy, nuclear medicine and cancer prevention and screening.

CCCN initiates and conducts phase I, II and III clinical trials, which are key to advancing cancer care in the U.S. and around the globe. The trials provide patients with access to new treatment options overseen by local experts. In 2009, CCCN received the Clinical Trials Participation Award from the American Society of Clinical Oncology. It is one of only two medical practices in the state to have earned the award.

Many of CCCN’s 26 physicians have practiced for more than 10 years in Las Vegas and, like Dr. Ron Kline, have donated time and expertise to a variety of community organizations and causes.

“Our physicians are very passionate about their patients and the organizations they support,” says Executive Director James Kilber. “Dr. Kline’s devotion to his pediatric patients and their families, as well as the foundations and outreach groups that assist those families, knows no boundaries. His shaved head is one example of the effort he puts forth to ensure those fighting cancer have the best means to defeat the disease.”

CCCN’s eight medical offices also provide supportive services including financial counseling, nutritional counseling and community support groups.

CCCN is the only medical group in Nevada affiliated with the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) as part of the Translational Oncology Research International (TORI) network. The medical group is also affiliated with the US Oncology physician network, the Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP) established by the National Cancer Institute, and received in 2009, a three-year accreditation by the American College of Radiology.

Dr. Volker is Nevada’s top Premier Physician after founding what has quickly become one of Nevada’s leading medical malpractice insurance carriers. His vision and leadership paved the way to create a physician-owned and controlled model that works for doctors, regardless of their specialty. It is Dr. Volker’s belief that Med Mal companies can improve insured risk by keeping practices running smoothly and effectively. With that in mind, Premier Physicians provides physicians with a wide array of Practice Management, Risk Management, Financial, Insurance and Educational Resources. No other carrier is offering Nevada doctors such a comprehensive platform of services. Please join us in congratulating our founder and chairman for all he has done! Premier Physicians’ vital signs are strong; a direct result of a regular dose of responsible underwriting, stable rates and solid leadership by Dr. Volker.

Interested in becoming a Premier Physician?
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The big news in Nevada healthcare in the year 2000 was the mass exodus of physicians. Skilled, successful healthcare providers could no longer stand up under the weight of the exorbitant cost of medical malpractice insurance. With no relief in sight, the state lost excellent doctors to states with better regulation and physician friendly climates.

One of the many professionals facing this dilemma was Dr. K. Warren Volker, whose own OB/GYN practice fell into a "high-risk" category with skyrocketing insurance rates. As managing partner of Women’s Specialty Care, LP, the chairman of OB/GYN at Summerlin Medical Center and Director of the Minimally-Invasive Surgery Program at Southern Hills Medical Center, Dr. Volker didn’t relish the idea of pulling up stakes like so many of his colleagues.

“I think Nevada got hit first with this crisis,” he says. “Like so many other physicians I seriously considered relocating, but neither I nor my family cared for that option.”

Rather than give up, Dr. Volker utilized his business savvy and formed a physician-owned risk retention group, in order to provide high quality and affordable medical malpractice insurance to Nevada physicians.

“Nevada seemed to be one of those states that fell into kind of a catch-22, we’re large enough to attract insurance companies but not the size of California, so it was easy for them to come in and leave when they wanted or to pick and choose who they’d insure. I just believed there had to be a better way to do this,” explains Dr. Volker. “So I started doing my homework and realized what made the most sense was a physician-owned company.”

Traveling the country, Dr. Volker met with experts from both sides of the issue and delved into research materials. Gradually his vision for a new company began to take shape. Premier Physicians is based on a unique model encompassing evidence based medicine, binding arbitration and active risk management strategies, to provide a stable, long term solution for medical malpractice liability insurance. “Premier Physicians was created so that physicians could own and control their own insurance company,” he explains. “Our goal is to ‘make a difference’ and bring consistency, continuity, and stability to the market. If there is one thing that physicians need from their professional medical liability provider, it’s stability.”

The results speak volumes. Now entering it’s fourth year, Premier Physicians underwrites more than 200 top physicians in five states. It was recently ranked seventh of Nevada’s dozens of medical malpractice insurance companies based on direct premiums and was offered an almost unprecedented, three-year renewal by its reinsurance carrier, Lloyd’s of London.

Premier Physicians Insurance Company continues to overcome the adverse environment for physicians with affordable medical malpractice rates, a physician owned model and active risk management. The impressive 99 percent retention rate and vote of confidence from Lloyd’s of London indicate a very healthy future.

Longtime Carson City resident Ruth Merriner understands only too well the anguish, sleepless nights and desolation experienced by those with a loved one battling a long and ultimately, fatal illness. Merriner remained resolutely by her husband Delbert’s bedside as he struggled through the final phases of heart disease at Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center (CTRMC).

Spending many nights on a foldout bed in his hospital room, Ruth witnessed first-hand the excellent care her husband received. When Delbert eventually succumbed to his disease, Merriner, who was almost a fixture by this time, decided to offer her support of the facility and its people by working with the Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare Foundation. “I cannot say enough about the high level of care that Del received,” she says. “Everyone - the nurses, doctors, technicians - were just wonderful!”

She wanted to find an appropriate way to simultaneously honor her late husband and contribute to the hospital that had provided such nurturing care during his last days. Merriner sought out advice from various sources including her pastor, an attorney and her four children. Memories of long nights spent at her own husband’s bedside were still quite vivid in Merriner’s mind as well as a request Delbert had made. “Before my husband died, he asked me to build a place where cancer patients could go to recover from their treatments,” she says. “He wanted to build a home away from home, a place that even those who couldn’t afford it could go.”

Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare’s Merriner Cottages were completed in December 2006. The first hospitality housing of its kind in Nevada, the 15 cottages are adjacent to the hospital and available to patients undergoing cancer treatment and their families. Made possible by a generous $2 million donation by the Merriner Family Trust, the cottages were built with just one stipulation by Merriner: that they are offered at no set charge but rather in exchange for donations based on the ability to pay. When available and at the hospital’s discretion, the cottages are also offered to patients with other debilitating illnesses such as Delbert experienced.

During the 18-month construction Merriner was busy selecting lamps, books and other furnishings from her own home to donate. She even embroidered something special for each room. The cottages each accommodate up to four adults and offer many amenities including two flat-screen TV’s, a fireplace, washer and dryer and private patio.

Now in her late 80’s Merriner continues to stay actively involved in the community. She has been a member of the Soroptimists International since 1972, supporting this world wide organization’s mission to advance human rights and the status of women.

In referring to what she has helped accomplish at Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare, she says, “This is beyond my imagination.”
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is Nevada’s second largest health benefits provider, and the only one licensed to sell insurance in every county. Among the oldest Nevada health insurers (established in 1969), Anthem’s Nevada operations are headquartered in Las Vegas and staffed with a friendly and knowledgeable local team – from a state president, to sales staff, to medical personnel. Located in two offices – one in Las Vegas and one in Reno – the company employs approximately 250 Nevadans.

Anthem offers a full spectrum of benefits, including medical, dental, vision, life and disability, pharmacy, behavioral health and an Employee Assistance Program. Not only do Anthem’s total benefit offerings meet the needs of a diverse workforce, they also eliminate the need for multiple carriers.

Anthem offers a broad variety of products for individuals, and small and large employers, that are innovative, simple to administer and affordable. For example, their Lumenos Consumer-Driven Health Plans put consumers in control of their health care dollars and offer incentives to spend wisely and demand better health care quality and value.

EmployeeElect, a portfolio of 14 health plans, puts control and flexibility in the hands of small group employers. Employers can choose to offer one, a mix-and-match, or all 14 plans to their employees. The Tonik health plans, which were designed to expand health care access to 19 to 29 year-olds – one of the fastest growing uninsured populations – are easy to use, all online and very affordable.

Anthem offers one of the largest provider networks in Nevada. Because Anthem is a member of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, members also have access to the BlueCard provider network – nationwide and around the world – when they are away from home.

Anthem’s community efforts for 2008 were highlighted by a $19,000 contribution from its own 150 employees that will support over 40 community-based non-profit organizations throughout Nevada. Through its annual Associate Giving Campaign, Anthem associates can direct their giving to any 501(c)(3) organization. The funds pledged by Anthem associates will receive a 50 percent match from the parent company’s foundation, increasing the total to nearly $30,000. Each year, Anthem also partners with Nevada Business Magazine to host the Healthcare Heroes Awards.
Nevada is unique in that its university system is the only higher education system in the country governed by one central authority. As a part of that authority for the last five years, Chancellor Jim Rogers has been very vocal about his beliefs, goals, and concerns. And one of his biggest concerns remains the education of healthcare professionals.

Rogers was and continues to be a major force behind the formation and development of the Health Sciences System (HSS) of the Nevada System of Higher Education. His innovative and pioneering vision for the creation of the HSS is based on the conviction that the best way to address many of the healthcare challenges facing Nevada’s citizens is through strengthening individual health science programs and promoting collaboration, and integration.

During his tenure as chancellor, Rogers’s strategy has been to attack the problems of education on several fronts. Enlisting support from the State Legislature, university presidents, students, and the general public, he’s put forth numerous ideas and proposals. Rogers also understands that timing can be as important as the message itself.

“You cannot go to a legislative session that starts January 5th and start educating the legislators at that point,” he explains. “They are overwhelmed by information from myriad directions. The way we handled it was that for the entire year prior to the legislative session we met one-on-one with each legislator. We presented our agenda. Then, we began issuing weekly memos.”

With his legal background and methodical business mind, Rogers has approached each obstacle with calm determination and rational arguments. His initiative for the HSS, designed to increase productivity of health sciences programs across the state by pushing them to share space and resources, was backed by lawmakers in 2007. The state committed $88.7 million toward programs across the state by pushing them to share space and resources, was backed by lawmakers in 2007. The state committed $88.7 million toward building and renovating facilities with the stipulation that higher education officials deliver $38.7 million in non-state money to match Nevada’s contribution.

“I’m very pleased to report that the Nevada Health Sciences System is a reality,” says Rogers. “It exists thanks to many people working together. I have always maintained that these institutions working separately have little hope of rising above mediocrity but that together, ours can become a system of higher education competitive with the best.”

This historic decision has led to the expansion of Nevada’s educational facilities to ultimately educate more nurses, medical doctors and other specialty health care providers, as well as more medical fellowships. Chancellor Rogers also pushed to support expanding partnerships among physicians, hospitals and researchers in the hopes of raising the quality of medical care throughout Nevada.

Rogers who is a graduate of Las Vegas High School has degrees in accounting and law from the University of Arizona, a Master of Laws from the University of Southern California, and a Masters of Laws in International Law from the University of Arizona. He also holds several honorary doctorates from universities across the nation and is a member of the State Bar Association of Nevada, Arizona and California.

As he closes the door on his service to the Nevada System of Higher Education, Rogers has relocated to Montana where he says he’s seeking “a quiet life in God’s country”.

**Innovator • Southern Nevada**

Jim Rogers
Nevada System of Higher Education

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For the uninsured working poor in Nevada, 2007 was a banner year. Hope arrived in the form of an energetic redhead with a quick smile and a no-nonsense attitude. Sherri Rice has been a champion for the underdog, tackling the financial and organizational tribulations of non-profit groups and helping them restructure into stronger, viable entities.

When community leaders decided they needed to create a program that would offer assistance to the impoverished uninsured of Northern Nevada, they called Rice for help and the Access to Healthcare (AHN) network got underway.

“I always take full ownership of whatever project I’m working on,” she says. “I had just finished up a project with Head Start so the timing was right. Healthcare is a very important issue to me so that made it even more appealing.”

“AHN is the first, non-profit medical discount plan in the state of Nevada and, according to the IRS, the only one in the United States,” says Rice. “We have charted new territory here. What we’ve done is enroll the physicians, hospitals, the community, the employers and the uninsured themselves into a shared responsibility model that asks something of each one but tries not to overburden anyone, to get access to care for our working poor and uninsured.”

Today, as CEO of AHN Rice looks back with pride and satisfaction at all they have accomplished. She also looks ahead to a future that will hopefully broaden the circle to include more Nevada families desperately in need of affordable healthcare. When asked what has been the most satisfying aspect of this ambitious project, her answer was quick and succinct. “That it works!”

“Relationships are what make non-profits work,” she explains. “So I figured if I didn’t make this work, after all the shoulders I’d tapped, I’d either have to retire or leave town. With this project I called on a lot of relationships to make it happen, some of them 20 or 30 years old.

“Our concept and design sounded like it had a lot of merit and we were anxious to move forward,” she continues. “But to be honest, I think we’re a little surprised. Not that it works, but that it works at such a tremendous level. I really believe that the shared responsibility model is at the heart of its success.”

AHN offers affordable health care with access to over 500 local primary care and specialty doctors, health care services and dental and vision services, all at greatly reduced rates.

“We have put more than 3,000 people through the program,” notes Rice. “We’re very proud to say that 99.5 percent of our members have always paid cash at the time of service. If our members have two no-call, no-shows to one of our providers or any non-payment, I will ask them to leave the network and they can never come back. It’s a shared responsibility. But I have never had an uninsured person ask for this for free, they pay what they are able. When asked what she sees for the future of Access to Healthcare Network Rice responded, “We are only limited by our imaginations.”

**Innovator • Northern Nevada**

Sherri Rice
Access to Healthcare Network

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A woman with big ideas, tremendous drive, and a huge heart, Ann McGee has spent her life seeking ways to help make the lives of seriously ill children and their families just a little easier.

Twenty years ago she recognized the need for the coordination of aviation services that could provide no cost transportation for blood, donor organs, and to quickly deliver sick children to medical facilities around the country. Inspired that the separate entities existed within our community she sketched out plans for a grass roots program called Miracle Flights for Kids.

“The whole idea was conceived in my little apartment, sitting on the floor,” she says with a laugh. “Remember this was long before computers or even cell phones, so everything was fairly simple. I knew there had to be a way to coordinate services so that we could provide families with free flights to hospitals and treatment centers they could otherwise not reach because of financial hardship.”

Today, more than 60 thousand flights and 30 million miles later, Miracle Flights for Kids is the nation’s leading nonprofit medical flight organization. Children from 39 different countries have been helped and the program continues to grow through individual donations, corporate sponsorships, and grants.

“We live for happy endings,” says McGee. “The people we help are the miracles, their stories keep us going. Given the growing costs of health care today and how often illnesses can lead to monetary troubles, the need and demand for the Miracle Flights for Kids program has never been greater. When you think about it everyone knows of someone whose family is struggling with a serious health problem. No child in America should be denied proper medical treatment because of money.”

After more than two decades McGee, the founder and president of one of the largest and most successful philanthropic organizations in the country, says she’s learned a few things over the years. “Probably the most important insight I’ve gained is just how significant a second opinion is. Over the past 22 years, I’ve borne witness time and again of a child who was suffering and even made worse from misdiagnosis that, through the miracle of flight, was able to see that one specialist who could help get them better. We want families in Las Vegas and beyond to know the Miracle Flights for Kids program is here for them.”

When she first set the wheels (or wings) in motion in 1985, McGee was recruiting as many pilots of light planes as possible. Today, the majority of flights are made on commercial aircraft though private planes are still used when schedules or locations demand. And although a few aspects of how Miracle Flights for Kids operates have changed over the years, the mission, vision and values have not: To improve access to health care by providing free air transportation to hospitals across America; to promote awareness of our services through targeted outreach programs; to enlist the help of community-minded people through strategic calls to action.

Nor has the woman whose vision, persistence, and dedication turned a dream into reality creating miracles for countless children and their families.

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Making a difference, one life at a time. That’s the philosophy of the Orvis School of Nursing Clinic in Reno and that of its director, Doreen Begley.

It was just a struggling nurse-practitioner clinic with high hopes and ambitious aspirations when Doreen stepped in and took over the reins.

“I knew that the only way to make the clinic a success would be to collaborate closely with our community partners,” she explains. “I started developing relationships with the Washoe County School District and Health Department, the local emergency rooms and other organizations that provide care to this population. My goal was to let everyone know that there was another option in town.”

Though there was virtually no marketing or advertising budget, Begley launched her “awareness campaign” with enthusiasm and a one-page flyer she created herself. With just a few updates and revisions, this original promotional piece still serves the clinic today. Printed in English on one side and Spanish on the other, this was essentially the only marketing tool Begley carried with her as she made her sojourn into the community.

“There was no money for advertising so everything was face-to-face,” she explains. “I think what really made us successful however, was the fact that we were willing to take on programs that other people had declined. We’re the ‘yes we can’ people. When all else fails, they call us.”

One of the programs that was rejected by other providers was Head Start. There was a need for someone to visit daycare sites and provide healthcare services. Doreen and her team volunteered to visit four hours twice a month, providing child check-ups and physicals.

“We jumped right in. We gave immunizations and well-child checkups. Then we took it one step further,” Doreen explains. “We also offered our nurse practitioner services to the employees as well as the parents and siblings of the Head Start participants. This had an even bigger impact than we could have imagined. Many of the children at Head Start are from single-parent households. These women couldn’t afford immunizations for their children, so they certainly weren’t getting any healthcare services for themselves. I think when we began this it went a long way in developing trust.”

Trust, as Begley began to realize, was an important element. When reaching out to the senior community they discovered a similar situation. “They’re tired of being poked and prodded by doctors and nurses who seem indifferent to them or don’t see them as individuals,” she says. “I guess you might say that I subscribe more to the nursing model as opposed to the medical model,” Begley says. “The medical model tends to be more focused on diagnosis and treatment. The nursing model is focused on health and wellness.”

Through her diligent efforts the clinic patient base has grown from less than 1,000 and is now serving more than 6,500 a year. Their outreach programs include visiting long-term care facilities for the elderly and providing TB testing. “My philosophy is, sometimes you have to take healthcare to where the patients are, not simply sit behind the walls and wait for them to come to you,” Doreen adds.
Entrepreneur, artist, and hot rod enthusiast, Andrew Johnson has found a way to live his philosophy of “doing what you love”. Founder and President of iMed Design, Inc., Johnson combines today’s interactive technology with his other passions to create successful, informative and creative visual communications for clients around the world.

Based in Reno, iMed Design offers a one-stop design and production studio that serves the healthcare, corporate and public agency markets by creating presentations that effectively capture an audience whether designed to educate, promote, or entertain.

Johnson is a veteran producer/videographer, designer and animator, with more than 25 years experience in all phases of visual communication production. His career duties have ranged from magazine illustrator to 3D animator, visual effects supervisor to videographer and editor. He began iMed Design as a way to provide a “soup to nuts” menu of services to clients, including concept development, pre-production and scripting to shooting, editing and graphics/animation to final package design and distribution.

“I think a unique aspect of my work as it relates to the health and medical industries is that I am an artist/designer at the core and I bring those sensibilities to my medical projects,” says Johnson. “The results are not just dry interpretations of presentations, data, procedures, etc., but rather compassionate programs that make a connection with the viewer.”

An example of this humanistic approach is the creation of Healthvues, a specialized “division” of iMed Design formed specifically to develop authoritative self-empowerment and wellness titles that present often complex and emotional subject matter in an accessible and approachable format.

“Healthvues was borne out of personal experience,” says Johnson, referring to the lack of down-to-earth educational materials when he and his wife were experiencing infertility issues. “We strive to develop programs that speak on a personal level, recognizing that there are strong emotional sides to most human conditions. We also ensure our projects are authoritative by enlisting nationally recognized experts to help with the content.”

Current titles include “Stress and Relaxation Explained”, “Infertility Explained: The Complete, Authoritative Guide to Everything You Need to Know on Your Journey to Parenthood”, and DVDs covering domestic and international adoption.

“This sets a new standard for healthcare education by presenting complex information from a patient’s perspective,” says co-developer and women’s health pioneer Dr. Alice D. Domar, founder and director of the Domar Center for Mind/Body Health in Boston. “Our development teams have personal life experience with each subject, so we bring a unique perspective to the final product.”

And it shows. These DVDs have been recognized nationally for their excellence in wellness programming, garnering several prestigious awards and receiving rave reviews from viewers and industry experts alike.

“In addition to our medical projects, we produce marketing and promotional programs; educational and training titles; special event, trade show and broadcast commercials; and even complete branding projects that include print, packaging and Web,” says Johnson. “We also work equally well with ad agencies and other production companies to enhance their own production capabilities.”


But one of Johnson’s favorites is Hot August Nights. “I’m a life-long hot rod enthusiast,” says Johnson. “I’ve been passionate about cars and racing since I was in grade school and actually still own my first car - a 1949 Chevy coupe that my dad got for us to work on before I could even drive. The projects I produce for HAN allow me to combine all of my loves: cars, art, video and my family who goes cruising with me in ‘Sally’!”

iMed Design offers complete in-house capabilities, including HD video production, motion graphics and 3D animation, interactive DVD and CD authoring, special effects and Web, online and mobile support.

For more information contact Andrew Johnson at:
(775) 787-2601
or visit our websites:
www.imed-design.com
www.healthvues.com
Dr. Colleen Morris met her first Williams Syndrome patient in the early 1980’s and immediately set out to learn all she could about this relatively unknown condition.

Williams syndrome is a rare congenital disorder characterized by a mix of physical and developmental characteristics. While the severity of symptoms varies among patients, common physical characteristics include an excessively impulsive and outgoing personality, intellectual developmental delays and learning disabilities, mental retardation or attention deficit disorder.

Discovering there was very little information available, she initiated research that has uncovered critical facts and continues today. In her first study Dr. Morris described the natural history of Williams Syndrome.

“This was prompted by the mother of one of my patients,” she explains. “She asked me what happens when her child grows up, or if he would grow up. I discovered there was no information regarding adults with Williams, so we began a study to identify adults with this condition and how they were doing. I got so interested that we began working on what causes Williams Syndrome.”

Dr. Morris and her team are responsible for the initial discovery of the elastin deletion in Williams Syndrome and continue to work to define the possible other causes as well as determining the roles of the approximately two dozen genes in the syndrome critical area on chromosome 7.

“It’s very interesting,” explains Dr. Morris, “actually it’s due to a very tiny deletion, or missing piece, on one copy of chromosome 7 that occurs by accident. The reason it occurs at all is because the way chromosome 7 is structured, which means that everyone in the world has the same chance to have a child with Williams Syndrome because of an error that can occur on this particular chromosome.”

“Having identified this, what we’ve been working on since then is to try to identify what the different genes in the deletion are doing,” she continues. “There are now 25 genes in that region of chromosome 7 but not all of them are causing symptoms. We’ve identified which one is causing the heart problems, and the one that affects cognition, and we’re gradually discovering which gene contributes to what part of the clinical picture. We hope that the next step will be that we’ll be able to come up with better methods of therapy.”

Dr. Morris continues this ongoing research on genotype/phenotype correlation of Williams Syndrome with collaborators at the University of Utah and the University of Louisville. Current projects underway in Williams syndrome include the evaluation of individuals with Williams syndrome with atypical phenotypes, evaluation of individuals negative for elastin deletions who have phenotypes overlapping Williams syndrome, physical mapping of the commonly deleted region of chromosome 7 in, and characterization of families with the autosomal dominant disorder, supravalvar aortic stenosis.

Dr. Morris established the clinical genetics program in Nevada in 1988. She holds joint appointment with the pediatrics and pathology departments at the University of Nevada School of Medicine and directs genetic clinics throughout Nevada. Considered a leading authority on Williams syndrome, Dr. Morris has published extensively on the subject and co-authored Williams-Beuren Syndrome: Research, Evaluation, and Treatment.

Dr. Philip Goodman has been on what he describes as “the most exciting quest” since 1983. Dr. Goodman’s research has come far since then, but ultimately, he foresees a day when epilepsy, MS and Parkinson’s disease can be effectively treated by altering the biochemistry of the brain.

Dr. Goodman currently splits his time between practicing internal medicine at Renown Hospital in Reno and his ongoing research at the University of Nevada, School of Medicine.

“The bulk of my research has to do with understanding how the brain works or, in the case of certain diseases how it doesn’t work, as well as doing parallels on healthcare quality research along the lines of supplying modern statistical techniques to healthcare databases,” he explains.

By the time he served his residency in Internal Medicine at the UC Irvine Medical Center in Orange, California, Dr. Goodman was interested in finding a university where he could teach medicine and have a medical practice as well as conduct research. Add his love of skiing to the mix and Reno was the perfect choice.

“The most exciting work I have going right now are the results of our collaboration that I’ve put together between the University of Nevada, Reno and the EPFL, a technical institute in Switzerland,” he says. “Another institution that’s coming on board this fall is in Germany. Basically, this involves a linkage with our lab, which does a super computer modeling of the brain, especially the human brain, using actual measurements from brain cells. The collaborating group in Switzerland provides information on small mammals like rats and mice, recording the bio-chemical and gene measurements that we can then put into the computer simulation of the same parts of the brain. Then the center in Germany will be providing information on human brain cells because they have real recordings from deep inside the human brain from patients that are being prepared for surgery. These are patients who have epilepsy that hasn’t been successfully treated with drugs.

“With that data we’re able to further expand our super computer brain simulation,” he explains. “So even though it might take thousands of processors to even get close to the complexities of the human brain, we may be able to mimic decision-making, the emotional effects, day-to-day living and also diseases such as seizures, Alzheimer’s, Multiple Sclerosis, and Parkinson’s. By having a computer we’re able to create experiments where we change the biochemistry and we can study the affect of drugs without actually having to harm a real patient.”

This is just a brief glimpse into the innumerable studies Dr. Goodman’s research has made possible.

“We try to take advantage of the fact that our ‘biggest little university’ doesn’t have a large program in brain research,” Dr. Goodman adds. “We’ve been able to pull together the resources of our computer science and bio-medical engineering activities, which are very strong, and bring together collaboration with actual brain tissue researchers to build up this project.”
Renown Regional Medical Center, located in Reno, offers the da Vinci Surgical System for mitral valve repair. The da Vinci is the world’s most advanced physician-guided robotic surgery, allowing physicians to perform complex procedures through small incisions.

This innovative surgery relies on the expertise of board-certified surgeon Athan Roumanas, MD, FACS, director of cardiac surgery at Renown.

Benefits for patients include:
- improved heart function
- longer life expectancy
- significantly reduced blood loss with less need for transfusions
- small incisions, resulting in less scarring and faster recovery times
- no need to take blood thinners for life

In May 2008, Richard Stovall was one of the first patients to undergo a mitral valve repair with the da Vinci Surgical System. Four weeks later, Stovall walked four miles to his follow-up appointment—simply to see whether he could do it. Stovall says his physician, Dr. Roumanas, was astounded.

“He couldn’t believe that I walked that far,” Stovall says. “I felt great.”

Stovall, 65, elected to have the da Vinci procedure based on the benefits—namely a shorter recovery time, less pain and less time in the hospital than if he had open-heart surgery. Stovall had a hard time believing that there wasn’t going to be any pain. After the surgery, “there was absolutely no pain,” he says in amazement.

He spent only four days recovering at Renown before being cleared to go home. He was able to get back to his daily routine right away. Less than two weeks after surgery, he was walking one to two miles for exercise.

“There was no downtime,” Stovall says. “I recommend this for anyone.”
Ann Lynch is among the state’s most respected professionals in healthcare, or any other industry for that matter. Lynch has become an institution in Carson City, where she has lobbied for years on behalf of the healthcare industry. Lynch is also a consummate volunteer. A Las Vegas resident since 1959, she has generously donated her time and talents to numerous organizations and causes making a difference in countless lives.

Lynch volunteered in hospitals as a teenager and worked as a volunteer at Sunrise in the late ’60s, before being offered a position with the hospital in 1972.

“Like most little girls in my day, I was very interested in becoming a nurse at one time. Then I thought I’d be a teacher. Of course I didn’t become either, but my interest was always there,” says Lynch. “Since I had the time, it seemed to me that volunteering at a hospital would be a good thing. I hoped I could be of some help to people.”

After six years of working in various capacities as a volunteer she was offered the position of Director of Volunteers. “I just became immersed in it,” she says. “I really enjoyed everything about my work at the hospital; the people and being part of something that was helping others.”

In 1993 Lynch, together with Dr. John Parker Kurlinski and a small, dedicated group of people began the Sunrise Children’s Foundation whose mission statement is, “Helping children to fulfill their potential of safe, healthy and educated lives.”

“I’m so proud to have been a part of this,” says Lynch. “This became a springboard for so many incredible programs designed to support the health and education of our children. We asked Dee Ladd to be our first executive and she’s still there. It’s truly grown into an amazing program.”

Today, Sunrise Children’s Foundation has more than a dozen programs that are produced in-house or in partnership with other organizations. Each year, the group reaches 200,000 children, half of whom are low-income, minority or limited in English proficiency.

When her son came along and started school, Lynch poured her time and energy into the Parent Teachers Association (PTA). “That brought together a real concern I have for children and healthcare,” she says. “It became the driving force in what’s been important to me all my life.”

Lynch started with the PTA group in her son’s school, but her energy and gift for organizing did not go unnoticed. She served as the state president and then national president. At the state level she was instrumental in passing legislation designed to protect our children.

“I still get hassled about some of those laws even today,” she says with a laugh. “One of the most unpopular was the Helmet Law. Most young men hate that law, but I guarantee you it’s saved many lives!” Then there was the Immunization Law, which insures that children have to be immunized before they can attend school. Those were two big bills we got through while I was state president.”

Ann Lynch, who began her volunteer career at Sunrise Hospital delivering newspapers and mail, today serves as the hospital’s Vice President of Government Affairs. There is also an elementary school named after her commemorating all she’s done for this community.

Thomas R. Kozel, PhD
University of Nevada, School of Medicine

Dr. Thomas Kozel has dedicated his life to teaching and research. He joined the microbiology and immunology faculty in 1971 to be part of the new medical school; Dr. Kozel has served as that department’s chair from 1978 through 2008. Additionally, he has served as the chair of several governance committees and currently serves as a member of the University of Nevada, Reno’s Faculty Senate and the School of Medicine’s medical education steering committee.

“I’ve taught every medical student who’s attended here,” he says with satisfaction. “I had other offers from other medical schools, but I saw this as a rare opportunity to get in at the very beginning. It’s been a lot of fun.”

During his first few years with UNR, Kozel’s duties primarily revolved around teaching, but during the mid-70’s as the faculty and the school began to grow, he was able to return to his passion for research.

“I wrote my first NIH [National Institutes of Health] grant in 1975,” he says. “I have the same grant still to this day. At 31 years it’s one of the longest running grants in NIH.”

While his research is varied, a significant portion is dedicated to studying bio threats such as anthrax.

“We’re also interested in developing diagnostic tools, specifically tools that can be used at a ‘point-of-care’ where patients are initially seen,” he elaborates. “For instance what would someone who presents symptoms of Anthrax? That’s important, because currently that takes days to diagnose. We’re working on rapid diagnostics. Timely treatment can mean the difference between life or death.”

Studies in the Kozel Laboratory have examined fungal infections that are particularly dangerous to cancer or HIV infected patients who have compromised immune systems. His research team has identified an anti-fungal activity by existing drugs and hopes to further study the affects this summer when they travel to Africa.

In addition, to his varied research projects and his extensive teaching career, Dr. Kozel has shared his expertise as a reviewer of multiple medical and research journals as well as authoring or co-authoring over 135 research papers, book chapters and articles.

Over the years the students have expressed their appreciation and respect for Dr. Kozel by voting the Department of Microbiology & Immunology as an outstanding basic sciences department eight times. Currently, Dr. Kozel supervises ten graduate students and research assistants who assist with his research.

In reference to his work at the school, Dr. Kozel says, “If you can foster a sense of inquiry, teaching students to ask the right questions, well that’s timeless.”
Thank you for making a difference.

St. Rose Dominican Hospitals proudly recognizes Rod A. Davis for his guidance, passion, and commitment to our hospitals, employees, patients, and residents of Southern Nevada.

His 17 years of service, opening of two new hospitals in the valley, and dedication to the mission of the Adrian Dominican Sisters has positively impacted the lives of so many people. Under his leadership, St. Rose has continually met the growing health care needs of our city with a special emphasis on healing the body, mind and spirit.

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