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Mercy, Southeast Missouri State University Extend Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Partnership

DECEMBER 17TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Mercy, Southeast Missouri State University Extend Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Partnership

Mercy Southeast will extend its game-changing partnership with Southeast Missouri State University to provide high-quality care to the university's student-athletes through 2029.

Mercy Southeast and [Southeast Missouri State University](#) signed a five-year extension on its collaborative partnership in which Mercy Southeast provides orthopedic and sports medicine services for the university's NCAA Division I athletics program. Mercy Southeast also will care for the university's intramural and club sport participants as well as performing arts students.

Mercy Southeast Orthopedic and Sports Medicine provides primary medical and orthopedic care, physical therapy and athletic training services to student-athletes. Dr. Andrew Lawrence, Dr. Brian Sutterer and Dr. Michelle Tedrowe will continue to serve as the official team physicians of Southeast Missouri State University.

"We are excited to continue our partnership with Southeast Missouri State University," said Jason Emmenderfer, executive director for specialty services at Mercy Southeast. "Over the last five years, we've enjoyed working with their student-athletes and performers, providing high-quality care to help improve their physical performances. This partnership with the university has been a game changer for both our physicians and the students."

Services provided by Mercy Southeast for Southeast Missouri State University include:

- Eight full-time certified athletic trainers with the athletic program and one full-time certified athletic trainer to work with performing arts, intramural and club sports
- Game-day coverage for all athletic programs
- On-campus clinic availability by both primary care and orthopedic physicians for student-athletes and performing arts students in the university's athletic training facility

Mercy Southeast and Southeast Missouri State University began this partnership in 2019, marking the first time the university contracted with an outside group for comprehensive medical services for performers and student-athletes.

Mercy, one of the 20 largest U.S. health systems and named the top large system in the U.S. for excellent patient experience by NRC Health, serves millions annually with nationally recognized care and one of the nation's largest and highest performing Accountable Care Organizations in quality and cost. Mercy is a highly integrated, multi-state health care system including 50 acute care and specialty (heart, children's, orthopedic and rehab) hospitals, convenient and urgent care locations, imaging centers and pharmacies. Mercy has over 1,000 physician practice locations and outpatient facilities, more than 5,000 physicians and advanced practitioners and more than 50,000 co-workers serving patients and families across Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. Mercy also has clinics, outpatient services and outreach ministries in Arkansas, Louisiana,

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Mississippi and Texas. In fiscal year 2023 alone, Mercy provided more than half a billion dollars of free care and other community benefits, including traditional charity care and unreimbursed Medicaid.

For interested students, now is the perfect time to learn more about SEMO! **Apply today with no application fee.** Eligible new Missouri undergraduate students with a 2.75 high school GPA and who are eligible for [Pell Grants](#) won't pay any tuition or fees at Southeast Missouri State with the [Will To Do Award](#). SEMO also offers one tuition rate nationwide for domestic students. Apply at [semo.edu/apply](#). Prospective students can explore SEMO's opportunities by scheduling a campus visit. For more information or to visit campus, visit the [Southeast Admissions page](#) or [admissions@semo.edu](#).

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Mercy Continues Tradition of the Golden Angel Tree Program

DECEMBER 17TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Mercy Continues Tradition of the Golden Angel Tree Program

Mercy Stoddard Hospital continued its tradition of blessing local nursing home residents with Christmas gifts through its Golden Angel Tree program, which displays the residents' wish lists on a Christmas tree for caregivers then to select and purchase.

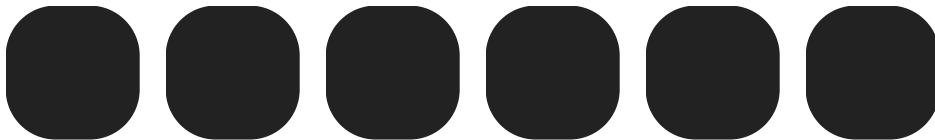
This year, 83 residents from eight facilities were nominated by their nursing home staff. This outreach tradition began more than 30 years ago with Mercy Stoddard nursing staff and has since grown. In the spirit of Mercy, Mercy Stoddard caregivers were excited to answer the call of service and spent the past two weeks preparing their gifts for distribution.

Pictured are: Mercy Stoddard co-workers and caregivers with all the Christmas gifts they purchased for local nursing home residents as part of their Golden Angel Tree program.

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Mercy Among Leaders in Quality Care While Saving Taxpayers Nearly \$100 Million Dollars

NOVEMBER 20TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Mercy Among Leaders in Quality Care While Saving Taxpayers Nearly \$100 Million Dollars

ST. LOUIS (Nov. 19, 2024) – Mercy is proving high quality care that aims to keep patients healthy and out of the hospital is an effective way to save money for everyone involved in the health care industry. Newly released [results from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#) ranks Mercy No. 6 nationally in quality among the 20 largest Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) and the fourth highest taxpayer savings among all ACOs serving Medicare patients.

CMS tracks more than 30 quality measures focused on care coordination, patient safety, appropriate use of preventive health services, improved care for at-risk populations and patient and caregiver experience of care.

“Putting the patient first, making sure their needs are met and coordinating their care keep patients healthier and happier,” said Dr. Gavin Helton, Mercy president of primary care. “When we do that, quality scores reflect the outstanding care we provide.”

This patient-centered approach to keep patients healthy helps lower costs and can make health care in the U.S. sustainable. For 2023, Mercy’s ACO saved taxpayers \$95.5 million, an increase of \$12 million from the previous year ? the fourth largest savings in the country while serving the ninth most Medicare members.

Over the last six years, Mercy’s ACO has saved taxpayers \$359.9 million dollars.

“Our focus on preventative care and keeping patients healthy translates across the board to every population we serve,” said Steve Mackin, Mercy president and CEO. “It is proving effective for our Medicare patients year after year. Working with all payers, including those in the commercial insurance market, to streamline care, eliminate red-tape and prevent illness in this manner is beneficial for patients in every age group, payers and health care providers and is the way we must work in order to keep health care sustainable.”

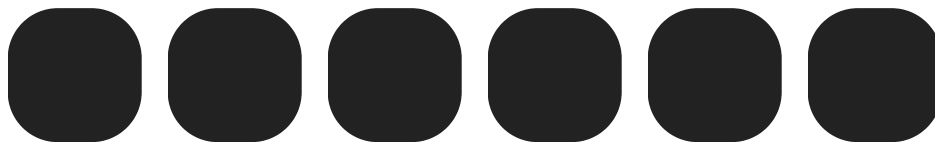
Mercy physicians were among the first in the nation more than a decade ago to voluntarily participate in an ACO to better coordinate care for Medicare patients while eliminating unnecessary costs. To become an ACO and maintain the designation, Mercy has to score high on specific quality measures and prove that its medical providers sustain streamlined team-based care.

Mercy, one of the 20 largest U.S. health systems and named the top large system in the U.S. for excellent patient experience by NRC Health, serves millions annually with nationally recognized care and one of the nation’s largest and highest performing Accountable Care Organizations in quality and cost. Mercy is a highly integrated, multi-state health care system including more than 50 acute care and specialty (heart, children’s, orthopedic and rehab) hospitals, convenient and urgent care locations, imaging centers and pharmacies. Mercy has over 900 physician practice locations and outpatient facilities, more than 4,500 physicians and advanced practitioners and 50,000 co-workers serving patients and families across Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. Mercy also has clinics, outpatient services and outreach ministries in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. In fiscal year 2023 alone, Mercy provided more than half a billion dollars of free care and other community benefits, including traditional charity care and unreimbursed Medicaid.

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Mercy Southeast Provides Tuition Assistance for Health Care Students

NOVEMBER 18TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Mercy Southeast Provides Tuition Assistance for Health Care Students

Mercy's Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing and Health Sciences is welcoming its first class of Win From Within students. These students are all co-workers at Mercy Southeast who receive tuition assistance from Mercy.

Win From Within students work at Mercy Hospital Southeast as patient care associates, nurse technicians or in non-clinical support roles as paid, part-time co-workers while attending the college's nursing or health sciences program. Students ultimately transition into a clinical health care role in their respective field at Mercy Southeast after graduation.

"The up-front cost of going to school can be a huge factor," said Katie Finder, Mercy Southeast chief nursing officer. "This program is a win for us and the college. We're able to fill vacant roles while at the same time boost enrollment at the college and help these co-workers further their health care education. There's no out-of-pocket cost to them, and we have the peace of mind to know they will stay with us after graduation."

The program is offered at other Mercy hospitals and schools, but this is the first group through Mercy's [Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing and Health Sciences](#). To mark the occasion, Mercy Southeast recently held a signing dinner for its caregivers taking part in the program, [similar to](#) events held when student-athletes sign with colleges.

"Historically, alumni from Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing and Health Sciences remain in the area," said Amy Beussink, associate of applied science program director at the college. "Mercy's introduction of the Win From Within program is innovative and supports the need for health care workers in the Southeast Missouri area and other Mercy communities. We are excited to introduce Win From Within to our students and to get the word out to the community. This program helps reduce financial barriers for those seeking a health care education and fulfills the mission of the college to respond to the health care educational needs of the region by preparing qualified health care professionals."

The program is open to any Mercy co-worker interested in pursuing a nursing or health sciences degree, even new hires. Mercy pays up to \$10,000 per year for eligible expenses, paid directly to the school for up to three years. Students must be enrolled in a nursing or health sciences program at a qualifying school such as Mercy's Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing and Health Sciences, must work a minimum of 16 hours every two weeks and sign a contract that states they will remain with Mercy after graduation for one year for each year of program participation.

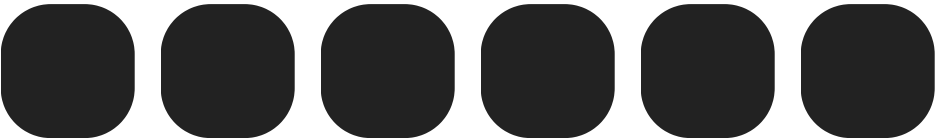
The first class of Win from Within students recently participated in a signing dinner at Mercy Hospital Southeast, similar to events held when student-athletes sign with colleges, to show their commitment to Mercy’s Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Students are pictured here with leadership teams from the college and Mercy Hospital Southeast.

[Mercy](#), one of the 20 largest U.S. health systems and named the top large system in the U.S. for excellent patient experience by NRC Health, serves millions annually with nationally recognized care and one of the nation’s largest and highest performing Accountable Care Organizations in quality and cost. Mercy is a highly integrated, multi-state health care system including more than 50 acute care and specialty (heart, children’s, orthopedic and rehab) hospitals, convenient and urgent care locations, imaging centers and pharmacies. Mercy has over 900 physician practice locations and outpatient facilities, more than 4,500 physicians and advanced practitioners and 50,000 co-workers serving patients and families across Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. Mercy also has clinics, outpatient services and outreach ministries in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. In fiscal year 2023 alone, Mercy provided more than half a billion dollars of free care and other community benefits, including traditional charity care and unreimbursed Medicaid.

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Mercy and Anthem Negotiations Op-Ed from Eric

Ammons, Regional President, and Sue Ann Williams, Mercy Hospital Stoddard Administrator

OCTOBER 28TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Mercy and Anthem Negotiations Op-Ed from Eric Ammons, Regional President, and Sue Ann Williams, Mercy Hospital Stoddard Administrator

Mercy's Commitment to Southeast Missouri Patients

At Mercy, our priority has always been the well-being of our patients and their families. We truly believe that we have a duty to advocate for our patients and co-workers to continue our long history of delivering high-quality care at the lowest average cost. As we negotiate with Anthem Blue Cross Blue

Shield to secure a mutually beneficial agreement that will improve the patient experience, we want to ensure that the facts are clear and that our communities in Stoddard County and beyond understand why these negotiations matter.

Why We Are Negotiating

Mercy is dedicated to providing high-quality, accessible health care to the people of Missouri, and we've worked hard over the past year to reach an agreement with Anthem that allows us to continue doing so. Unfortunately, despite months of negotiations, Anthem has consistently presented terms that undermine our ability to deliver the care our patients need.

Contrary to what Anthem suggests, this is about more than financial terms — it's about ensuring our patients have uninterrupted access to comprehensive, compassionate care in a timely manner without the red tape and barriers put into place by Anthem. Though Mercy's costs, like those of every health care provider, have risen due to factors outside of our control, such as inflation and labor shortages, we are simply asking for a contract that reflects the realities of today's health care landscape.

Addressing Misinformation

Mercy is not demanding drastic rate hikes, as Anthem's statements have claimed. We are seeking fair reimbursement that enables us to continue providing high-quality care without placing undue financial pressure on our system, the employers who rely on us and patients and families in Southeast Missouri who choose us for their health care. Anthem's characterization of our proposals does not align with the facts. In the St. Louis region, according to payer transparency files, Mercy is currently 22% less expensive on average than other providers. Having Mercy in your network helps keep costs down, without us, costs will go up.

It's also important to address the claim that we are jeopardizing access for Medicaid and Medicare Advantage members. Mercy has been a steadfast provider of care to vulnerable populations for decades, and this commitment will not change. We remain focused on serving all members of our community, regardless of their insurance status or financial circumstances. Each year, Mercy provides about a half billion dollars of care and support to those unable to pay.

Putting Patients and Co-Workers' Care First

The heart of this matter is simple: Mercy is here to care for communities in Southeast Missouri and across the state, and that means advocating for agreements that reflect our mission. Anthem has had the opportunity to step up and work with us to build a contract that supports patients and caregivers alike. Yet, their approach has focused more on protecting shareholder profits than on ensuring frictionless or timely access to essential services for patients.

We are advocating for a deal that addresses systemic issues with Anthem's practices. Among our patients and co-workers, we have seen the detrimental effects of Anthem's complex processes, denied claims and delayed approvals. We have heard from a number of our patients who have voiced concerns on how tests and procedures ordered by their health care provider are repeatedly denied; even instances when a covered claim was paid and then retracted, leaving the patient on the hook. For health care co-workers, Anthem is creating barriers to care by placing unnecessary administrative burdens on them, which leads to increased costs for patients, delays in receiving necessary care and a negative impact on patient wellbeing.

At Mercy, we're looking toward the future — investing in virtual care, expanding primary care access and providing solutions to keep patients healthy, not just treat people when they're sick. This isn't about individual price points; it's about creating a system that works for everyone — patients, employers and health care providers alike.

What Happens Next

Mercy will remain in Anthem's network through the end of 2024, and we will continue to provide our patients with the care they need during this time. If a new agreement is not reached, we will do everything possible to ensure smooth transitions for all our patients.

We hope that Anthem will continue to be at the table with us, prepared to negotiate in a way that reflects our shared responsibility to our community. In the end, we believe that putting patients first should guide these discussions, and we remain committed to making that happen for Stoddard County and Southeast Missouri.

For more information, please visit mercy.net/anthem.

— *Sue Ann Williams, administrator, Mercy Hospital Stoddard*

— *Eric Ammons, regional president, Mercy Southeast*

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