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# Mercy Stoddard Welcomes New Primary Care Physician

MARCH 04TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Mercy Stoddard Welcomes New Primary Care Physician

Mercy is now able to care for more patients in Stoddard County and surrounding areas with the addition of a new primary care physician.

Dr. Natasha Ware has joined [Mercy Primary Care – Stoddard](#) in Dexter. Dr. Ware comes from a diverse health care background, having worked in various roles including emergency room registration, switchboard operations, phlebotomy and home health, all of which provided different perspectives on caring for patients.

Dr. Ware earned an associate degree from Three Rivers Community College in Poplar Bluff and a bachelor's in biomedical sciences from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau. She then earned her medical degree from American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine in Sint Maarten before completing her family medicine internship and residency at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences – Texarkana.

“My passion for family medicine stems from recognizing the significant lack of access to quality health care and a deep desire to give back to the underserved rural community,” Dr. Ware said. “I’m looking forward to providing compassionate, patient-centered care through education and shared decision-making to enhance the quality of life in every stage of aging.”

Though she was born overseas on a military base, Dr. Ware spent most of her childhood in Southeast Missouri, graduating high school from a small town near the Castor River.

“Throughout college and medical school, I’d traveled and lived in several areas of the country only to find myself drawn back to the comforts of rural Southeast Missouri – my home,” she said.

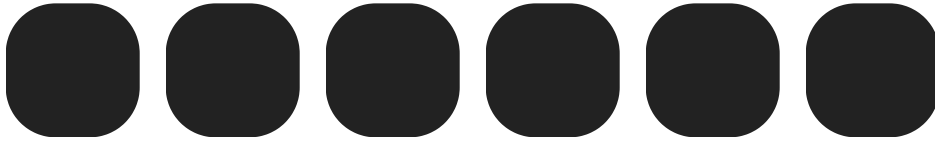
Dr. Ware enjoys spending time with her husband, a superintendent at an area school district, and their three children, twin 17-year-olds and a 6-year-old. They cherish their busy lives together, which are filled with sports, school commitments and outdoor activities like fishing, hunting, gardening, hiking and camping.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Ware at Mercy Primary Care – Stoddard, call 573-624-7575. The primary care clinic is open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

*[Mercy](#), one of the 15 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, Illinois, 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 Health Foundation Southeast Presents 2025 Journey Gala

JANUARY 07TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Mercy Health Foundation Southeast Presents 2025 Journey Gala

Mercy Health Foundation Southeast will present the “Kings & Queens of London Journey Gala 2025” this month, benefiting the Mercy Cancer Center – Cape Girardeau.

Guests and sponsors will enjoy an elegant evening, dining like royalty on Saturday, Jan. 18, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Drury Plaza Conference Center, 3351 Percy Drive, Cape Girardeau. The ninth-annual benefit also includes silent and live auctions, raffles, entertainment from [Cape Specialty Entertainment Group](#), a cirque acts group, and live music from [Shades of Soul](#). Guests are encouraged to “polish their crowns” and “prepare their finest attire” for this black-tie optional event.

Each year, the Journey Gala changes “locations” with its around-the-world themes. Past years have “traveled” to Italy, Morocco, Brazil, France, Japan and more to benefit the Mercy Health Foundation Southeast Cancer Care Fund, which provides essential services for patients in need, including transportation, lodging, nutritional supplements and medication assistance.

“We have been so grateful for the overwhelming support the community has shown for the Journey Gala over the last eight years,” said Darah Jirkovsky, Mercy Health Foundation Southeast director. “We are grateful to everyone who attends, because they are helping support those living with cancer right here in Southeast Missouri. It’s going to be an amazing evening of entertainment and a wonderful celebration.”

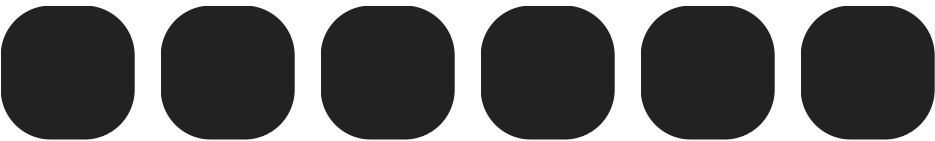
Chairs for this year’s gala are Sara Crocker, Victoria Moon and Jeanette Austin. Since the event began in 2017, \$1.4 million in proceeds have helped cancer patients in need.

Gala tickets are available for purchase at \$250 each. Corporate sponsorships are also available. Event sponsors will have the opportunity to attend a VIP reception prior to the event. Learn more about sponsorships or purchase tickets online at [mercyhealthfoundation.net/journeygala](https://mercyhealthfoundation.net/journeygala) or by calling Mercy Health Foundation Southeast at 573-519-4922.

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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.

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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.

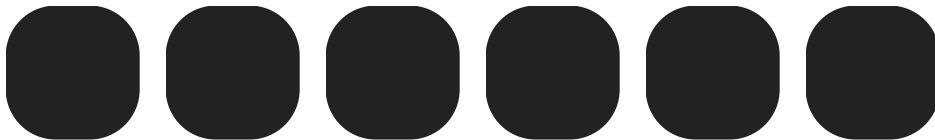
This year, 83 residents from eight facilities were nominated by their nursing home staff. This outreach tradition began more than 30 years ago with Mercy Stoddard nursing staff and has since grown. In the spirit of Mercy, Mercy Stoddard caregivers were excited to answer the call of service and spent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

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