Welcome to our five-year anniversary magazine. Through the pages of this publication, we celebrate our 60-year history, evaluate the present and glimpse into the future of Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare. We are honored to have served as your health care provider since 1949. As president and CEO of Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare, it is a privilege to be a part of an organization that has transformed the delivery of health care in our region.

In the five years since we welcomed our first patient through the doors of Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center, our Women and Children’s Center has birthed more than 5,000 babies, our ER has treated more than 165,000 patients and our private rooms have accommodated more than 55,000 patients.

Since opening Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center in December 2005, our ability to treat the full spectrum of our patients and our private rooms have accommodated more than 5,000 babies, our ER has treated more than 165,000 patients and our private rooms have accommodated more than 55,000 patients.

Carson Tahoe’s master-planned campus has grown to include several private physician groups, an award-winning Cancer Center and the Merriner Cottages — delivering the highest quality medical care in a convenient setting. To increase community access to quality health care, we have recruited more than 30 new physicians and added primary care clinics in Carson City, Dayton and Douglas County. The most uplifting part of my job is hearing from you, our community members. Every day I receive letters expressing gratitude for care received at Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center. In many letters, longtime residents express appreciation that they have not had to travel for cardiac surgery, higher-level medical needs and advanced cancer care. These personal stories of hope, healing, respect and dignity are a testament to the staff, physicians and volunteers who serve our community through our new facility, our local partnerships and our outpatient facilities.

Thank you for your continued support and here’s to your health.

Sincerely,

Ed Epperson President and CEO

On the right track

Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare looks back at five amazing years, and prepares for the future.

Cardiology program, regional patients now are receiving the highest level of cardiac care — close to home — without a lengthy trip to Reno.

Carson Tahoe’s master-planned campus has grown to include several private physician groups, an award-winning Cancer Center and the Merriner Cottages — delivering the highest quality medical care in a convenient setting. To increase community access to quality health care, we have recruited more than 30 new physicians and added primary care clinics in Carson City, Dayton and Douglas County. The most uplifting part of my job is hearing from you, our community members. Every day I receive letters expressing gratitude for care received at Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center. In many letters, longtime residents express appreciation that they have not had to travel for cardiac surgery, higher-level medical needs and advanced cancer care. These personal stories of hope, healing, respect and dignity are a testament to the staff, physicians and volunteers who serve our community through our new facility, our local partnerships and our outpatient facilities.

Thank you for your continued support and here’s to your health.

Sincerely,

Ed Epperson President and CEO

We’re turning five! (And we’re not the only ones)

Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center, which opened its doors in December 2005, is celebrating its fifth anniversary. Sharing this important fifth milestone: Kylie McGrew, the first baby born in our new facility. Obviously, she has changed over the years, and just like Kylie, Carson Tahoe just keeps getting better with time.

Greater convenience

Placing the expansive 80-acre, master-planned Carson Tahoe campus in northern Carson City, practically free of neighbors and physical constraints, was a strategic decision allowing the campus to grow and add convenient patient services in one centralized destination. Now serving a core of 250,000 people and boasting an ever-expanding geographic reach, Carson Tahoe attracts patients from Lone Pine to South Lake Tahoe, Bishop to Silver Springs, Carson Valley to Reno and beyond.

State-of-the-art technology

Carson Tahoe is committed to providing the community with the best possible technology and greatest medical innovations available. In fact, you’ll find equipment in our halls that you’ll only find in the biggest of big-city hospitals. But of course, technology is only as powerful as the hands and minds employing it. Our accomplished team of physicians and practitioners consistently demonstrate a commitment to expertise, compassion and innovation.

Expanded services

The true measure of Carson Tahoe’s success is reflected through its ever-expanding services, providing the community with one destination for its health care needs. Carson Tahoe Cancer Center, for example, is Northern Nevada’s first and only freestanding comprehensive cancer center accredited with commendation. Carson Tahoe’s commitment to cardiac care is reflected through its distinction as the only hospital in Northern Nevada to offer the CardioOne Open-Heart Surgery Program.

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Focus on wellness

Carson Tahoe’s mission: “to enhance the health and well-being of the communities we serve.” A reflection of that mission is our commitment to being a foundational part of a healthy community, providing tools to help residents stay healthy — and being here for them when they are not. Through professional partnerships, outreach to underserved populations, events centered on healthy living and websites like www.hereistoyourhealth.net, we provide continual inspiration for leading a healthy life.

Kylie McGrew, right, and her mother, Brooke. Photo by Jamie Kingham

Then & Now

Carson Tahoe’s new hospital brings top technologies, maintains community connection.
Five years ago, the first patients crossed the threshold of a brand new building, signaling a new era of health care in the Carson region. The new Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center, on the north end of Carson City, did more than replace the old hospital on Fleischmann Way. It marked the beginning of Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare, a comprehensive medical system devoted to patient care, poised to serve Carson City and beyond.

A driving force behind the transformation: the ever-expanding needs of the burgeoning Carson region. “As the growth of the area seemed to catch up with the (old) hospital, it was evident that changes needed to be considered,” said Mark St. Germaine, facilities and environmental services manager for Carson Tahoe. Continuous expansion to the old Carson-Tahoe Hospital — which had dutifully served the Carson area for five decades — was ruled out, as the old, land-locked site no longer fulfilled the needs of the region or the vision of its leadership. “As a result, the idea of relocating and building a new facility became an obvious need,” St. Germaine said. The leadership team at Carson Tahoe ultimately chose an 80-acre site at 1600 Medical Parkway for a master-planned medical campus, one that would start with the construction of Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center, but would eventually include other medical facilities.

Carson Tahoe leadership envisioned a comprehensive medical campus that would bring all patient services to one convenient location, accessible from its own dedicated freeway exit off U.S. 395. Today, that vision is becoming reality, as the site has evolved to include the Carson Tahoe Cancer Center, the Merriner Cottages (providing housing for families of rural patients undergoing cancer treatment), Sierra Surgery Hospital, a medical office building and several physician practices.

“It’s a beautiful healing environment that continues to provide room for expansion when necessary,” said Richard Lawley, vice president of human resources and support services.

And that’s not the extent of Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare’s offerings. “We also provide care at other locations throughout the region,” Lawley said, “such as our Specialty Medical Center campus, Minden Medical Center, Dayton Professional Building and Carson Tahoe Physician Clinics.”

It all aligns with Carson Tahoe’s commitment to plan ahead. “We will continue to evaluate the medical needs of our community and make adjustments accordingly. We are confident that our main campus location will enable us to grow with our ever-expanding region and will continue to enhance the health and well-being of the communities we serve — well into the future,” Lawley said.

Looking Back
Changes through the eyes of Carson Tahoe staff

“The biggest difference between the old hospital and the new medical center is that the new Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center has a true state-of-the-art heart program with coronary angioplasty as well as open heart surgery. Our quality is on par with every facility in our region, and our patients get the benefit of earlier treatment closer to home. Our expertise in treating heart attacks has been particularly successful, treating patients from outlying communities such as Lake Tahoe, Mammoth and Bishop as well as our surrounding areas.”

Scott Cochran, 5-year employee, manager of Cardiac and Imaging Services.

“I have seen many changes since we transitioned to the regional medical center, such as the addition of new and enhanced equipment, more staff, private rooms, a new computer system and an entirely new hospital. All these things have enhanced the patient experience. We now have more rooms with additional staff to take care of the patient flow. The new technology and computer systems have made patient monitoring faster and easier for the staff and more comfortable for our patients.”

Carmen Sawyer, 12-year employee, E.R. technician.

“The most significant change over the course of my career here is the beautiful new building we have to work in and the many additional services we now offer patients. From a bedside nursing standpoint, it is a huge benefit to have patient rooms that are not private. This enhances the patient experience and allows families a peaceful place to visit and stay. It is important for patients to have their own private space when they are ill to encourage healing.”

Carole Malley, 15-year employee, charge RN — surgical orthopedics.

Leadership team

(left to right, Richard Lawley, vice president of human resources and support services; Cathy Dinaner, vice president, patient care services; Ed Epperson, president and CEO; Ann Beck, vice president of finance; and Anthony Field, vice president of medical affairs.)
Dayton resident Mark Colley knew he was in trouble when the chest pains began. He was having a heart attack, and needed help fast. In such a situation, every minute counts, because the longer care is delayed, the more damage can be done. Fortunately, Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center was right around the corner.

“They saved my life,” Colley said. “The quality of care was excellent, and I’m just so grateful they were there.” Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center opened in 2005 at the north end of Carson City, equipped with the latest technologies and procedures. Before then, regional residents such as Colley would have had to travel out of the area to receive such sophisticated care.

“Before our new facility opened, we only provided diagnostic cardiac services — patients would have to go outside the community for other treatment,” said Annette Patellios, director of cardiac, imaging, emergency and critical care services at Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare. “Expanding our cardiac services has been a life-saving measure for patients in our community who are going through a heart attack.”

In addition to better cardiac care, the new hospital offers many cutting-edge procedures including neurosurgery and minimally invasive endovascular surgery.

CardioOne, EKG in the field
Cardiac care is one of the areas in which Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center excels. The new hospital is equipped with the staff, space and technology to perform open-heart surgery, which was not an option in the old building.

Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center is also Nevada’s only hospital to employ the CardioOne Program based on what’s called the Universal Bed Concept. This program allows patients who have heart surgery to stay in one room — one bed — during their entire hospital visit. Only when they go into the operating room do they leave these familiar surroundings. The same team of health care professionals stays with the cardiac patient from the beginning to the end of their procedure, which increases the comfort level. In fact, recent studies show the Universal Bed Concept improves patient satisfaction and often reduces recovery time. There also are EKG devices in the ambulances, and helicopters that transport patients to the hospital from four of the six counties served by Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center. Real-time data is streamed from those emergency vehicles to the medical team awaiting the patient.

Better served
Mark Colley benefited from CTRH’s state-of-art cardiac services department. Before the new Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center, patients such as Colley would have had to travel outside the area for treatment.

Photo by Richard Stokes

Tech meets tradition
Carson Tahoe’s new hospital brought advanced technologies and procedures while maintaining traditional values of individual patient care

PATIENT FILES
Advanced technology, caring staff made the difference

Carson Tahoe had his back
Gardnerville resident Danny Hansaert was rushed to Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare after falling at his home. The situation was dire — he had broken his neck, and was paralyzed from the shoulders down.

“Carson Tahoe not only saved my life,” Danny said, “but with the help of neurosurgeon Michael Song, I have regained 70 percent of feeling throughout my body.”

A heart attack was the last thing
Maria Falconieri expected
An emergency sent teacher Maria Falconieri to her local neighborhood hospital, which wasn’t equipped to handle the situation.

“I was having a heart attack and had to be transported to Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center, where they immediately took me into surgery,” Maria said. “I owe my life to them.”

CTRMC is the only medical center in the greater Carson region that had the resources to save her.

“I am so grateful Carson Tahoe was there for me,” Maria said. Today, she is enrolled in the hospital’s cardiac rehabilitation, and feeling great.

A nasty fall left Mary Jolly fighting for her life
Normally, a brisk walk through the neighborhood is a good thing for your health. But when longtime teacher Mary Jolly accidentally tripped on a raised portion of sidewalk, she hit the ground so hard she shattered her spleen.

“I didn’t know what to do at first,” Mary said. “But my husband noticed some changes in my demeanor and rushed me to Carson Tahoe emergency. Mary was bleeding internally, but within the hour, Dr. King and the surgery staff at Carson Tahoe performed an emergency splenectomy, saving Mary’s life.
Upon opening in 2005, Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center was lauded as one of the top hospitals in the nation. A key component of that ranking, which has been maintained year by year, is staying up-to-date with the latest informational technology. “Having the latest informational technology can give us an advantage, not only in business, but also in patient care,” said Magnus LeBlanc, director of information technology at Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare. “Such advancements in technology offer better patient care with improved outcomes and shorter stays.”

Also among the high-tech advancements at Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center is the near-complete transition to Electronic Health Records for all patients, as well as an electronic patient tracking system in the emergency room.

Commitment to the individual

Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center may have gone high-tech, but it hasn’t lost the personal touch that means so much to the community. The hospital blends the best of both modern and traditional medicine, says Kathy Molina, director of nursing and an array of programs. “I believe what our staff and facility offers is unique,” Molina said. “We combine state-of-the-art technology and best practices with the love and devotion of days gone by.”

In other words, Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare combines the perks of a small-town hospital with the advanced services one would expect to find at a major metropolitan medical center. Patients at the Carson City facility have access to brand-new technology, including the latest minimally invasive surgical techniques. “In the ever-evolving world of medicine, in order to be able to compete, we have to be able to invest in the technology that provides the best care possible,” Patellos said. “I think we have staged ourselves in an environment where we have that ability.”

High-tech advantage:

Left: When Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center opened in 2005, it offered residents state-of-the-art treatment that hadn’t been available locally. Above: Dr. Roger Miercort shows that commitment to patient care has remained a top priority.

Information from the field:

Below: EKG in the field allows data from emergency vehicles to be transmitted to the hospital, improving patient care.
D

octors and medical staff are the heart behind Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center. They embody the hospital’s mission statement: to enhance the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

“We put our patients first,” said Anthony Field, MD, vice president of medical affairs at Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare and a Carson City physician for the past 33 years. “That’s the underlying theme of everything we do.”

For years, Carson Tahoe has brought top doctors together with such initiatives as the hospitalist program, an active recruitment agenda and partnerships with other physicians and agencies.

Hospitalist program creates win-win situation

At Carson Tahoe, physicians trained in the comprehensive care of hospitalized patients are available around the clock. These hospitalists focus on inpatients, freeing doctors in the community to tend to their other, non-hospitalized patients.

Carson Tahoe’s hospitalist program — which began in 2000, at the old hospital — is staffed daily with five physicians and one physician’s assistant.

“There is on-site coverage 24/7,” said Jose Aguirre, MD, president of Lake Tahoe Regional Hospitalists, the physician group that provides these services at Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center. “Our physicians are available to respond to patient needs and emergencies, and we can also visit our most ill patients multiple times a day because we are on-site.”

In complex cases, hospitalists consult with those specialists who are treating the patients, in order to better assist in managing their overall care.

“We are also available to accept and admit patients directly from outlying hospitals and physicians’ offices so they do not have to endure multiple ER visits,” Aguirre said. “This, in turn, decreases the use of resources and costs, and it improves the patient’s overall experience.”

For community doctors, the hospitalist program at Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center translates to more time for office patients, since the daily intensive care of inpatients is supervised largely by the hospitalists. For patients both inside and outside the hospital, the program aims to create a win-win situation.

“Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare has been ahead of the curve in prioritizing the success of our hospitalist program,” Aguirre said.

Drawing top doctors

Another way Carson Tahoe serves the community is by recruiting physicians who best fit the current and future health care needs of local patients.

“We keep the lines of communication open with physicians in our community, and we pay attention when they tell us about the needs of their patients,” said Field, Carson Tahoe’s vice president of medical affairs.

The hospital also hired an independent research firm to survey residents about their current and anticipated health care needs. The first assessment was conducted in 2000; a second was released in September 2010. Carson Tahoe plans to conduct the survey every three years from now on, Field said.

“Our recruitment committee goes over information from physicians and the community every month to determine where we stand,” Field said. “We then recruit and help coordinate doctors coming to town and joining our team whenever there’s a need.”

Christopher Lynch, MD, is one such doctor. He came to Carson City from Kansas in 2009, bringing with him advanced knowledge in the treatment of Barrett’s esophagus, a premalignant condition that often leads to esophageal cancer.

“Over the last year, it’s become clear that Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center delivers many of the big hospital services to the community, with the warmth and friendliness only a smaller hospital can bring,” Lynch said.

Not long after his arrival in Carson City, the fellowship-trained gastroenterologist requested the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment known as HALO technology to treat Barrett’s esophagus in a minimally invasive way.

“The hospital supported my wish to bring that service to Carson City,” Lynch said, “and we have now been treating patients with this condition since December 2009.”

Michael Song, MD, is another physician who came to Carson City equipped with advanced skills, including the ability to perform an array of minimally invasive spine surgeries. He is a board-certified neurosurgeon who specializes in complex spine and brain surgery, including minimally invasive techniques that allow the patient to undergo a procedure with less blood loss and less tissue trauma.

“Carson City has very good orthopedic spine...
“Our partnerships help us to fulfill our mission — the more closely we align with our physicians, the more resources we can offer our regional patients.”

— Cheri Glockner

**Partnerships**

Radiation oncologist Roger Miercort, left, and medical oncologist John Kelly are two doctors partnering with Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare to achieve better care for patients.

Photo by Jeff Dow

coverage already, but I felt there was a need for neurosurgery,” Song said. “We wanted to give people more options and enhance health coverage in the community.”

**Working together**

Carson Tahoe physicians work closely with CTRH leadership to provide quality, accessible health care. In the past several years, partnerships between CTRH and local physicians have increased services and enhanced programs to better meet the needs of our region.

“Our partnerships help us to fulfill our mission,” said Cheri Glockner, director of development and public relations for Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare. “The more closely we align with our physicians, the more resources we can offer our regional patients.”

For example, Carson Tahoe’s partnership with Sierra Surgery Hospital allows patients to stay in the area for most forms of elective surgery. With 15 outpatient and 15 inpatient beds, Sierra Surgery allows patients undergoing elective surgery an alternative to a traditional hospital surgery setting.

Another key partnership is between CTRH and Radiation Oncology Associates. As a tenant in the award-winning Carson Tahoe Cancer Center, Radiation Oncology Associates has treated thousands of patients from around the region.

“One of the many benefits of these partnerships is that they allow us to pool our resources,” Glockner said. “By working together with Radiation Oncology Associates, we were able to purchase equipment and technology that’s on par with Stanford and UC Davis when it comes to fighting cancer.”

To ensure thorough, consistent care for the area’s general population, Carson Tahoe worked with community physicians to create Carson Tahoe Physician Clinics, with offices in Carson City, Dayton and Minden. Those clinics create an umbrella group, making it more convenient and appealing for primary care physicians to stay and work in these local towns.

“We need to make sure we have enough primary care doctors to take care of the population,” Field said. “Primary care doctors include family doctors, doctors of internal medicine, pediatricians and so on.”

MedDirect Urgent Care, with clinics in both Carson City and Dayton, is another one of Carson Tahoe’s partnership projects, helping walk-in patients with their urgent-care needs while easing the burden on local emergency services.

The list of valuable connections goes on with Carson Tahoe Continuing Care Hospital, located on Fleischmann Way in Carson City. This facility specializes in long-term acute care for complex medical conditions that may need 18 to 35 days of integrative treatment.

“By working within these partnerships,” Glockner said, “we’re able to find creative and strategic ways to meet the evolving needs of our community.”

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**Living well**

Carson Tahoe provides the tools to keep you fit and healthy

**BY BRANDI SCHLOSSBERG**

When Janice Wright wanted a health evaluation, she turned to a trusted source: Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare, which offers the Comprehensive Personal Physical Program.

“This is one of the best things I have done for my health,” Wright said. “Any time you can learn early about a tendency toward a disease or unhealthy condition, you can take immediate steps to improve your lifestyle or treat the disease early.”

The same-day physical and thorough health assessment was covered by Wright’s health insurance as a state employee. It falls under the category of a wellness benefit, which is something more insurance companies are beginning to offer.

“Wellness and prevention is the medicine of the future,” said Delsye Mills, coordinator of the Comprehensive Personal Physical Program. “You don’t wait until some big catastrophe happens — you don’t wait for that heart attack, you try to prevent that heart attack. “People are living a lot longer these days,” she added, “and it pays to provide a benefit like this.”

In addition to the broad spectrum of testing, from blood count and cardiac stress test to urinalysis and abdominal ultrasound, the Comprehensive Personal Physical Program also includes a sit-down assessment with one of the program’s five physicians.

“It was amazing to have Dr. Bottenberg (the program’s medical director) spend a couple of hours reviewing my test results with me and teaching me how to improve my health,” Wright said.

Access to lab screenings — even without health insurance

Another wellness service Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare provides is HealthCheck, which offers affordable, comprehensive lab screenings with or without a physician’s order.

“For those who participate in HealthCheck on their own, a board-certified physician analyzes each test, and the results are mailed directly to the patient. If a problem is indicated, the patient is directed to see his or her primary care physician.

“For participants without insurance or with a high deductible, this program offers them the chance to stay on top of their health without breaking the bank,” said Laurie Burt, development specialist at Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare. “Quite often, we offer HealthCheck to local businesses that take advantage of these prices to help with their wellness programs.”

Patients with ongoing medical issues also have access to a wealth of wellness services through Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare. These include diabetes education, a stroke support group, wound care, cardiac rehabilitation, pulmonary rehabilitation, the Cancer Resource Center and coming soon, the Women’s Health Institute.

“Our objective is to help these patients sustain their health while lowering any risk of complications,” Burt said. “We provide these programs as a means for community members to have an active say in their health care,” she added, “and to give them access to programs that will maintain or increase their quality of life.”

Want to get healthy?

Here’s where to get started: www.herestoyourhealth.net.
Fiscal responsibility

Financial stability ensures a “healthy” healthcare system

In the world of health care providers, solid business acumen is as important as expert health care knowledge. Fortunately, Carson Tahoe leadership has both. They have helped Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare raise the bar on good fiscal management and, as a result, solidified the fiscal foundation of the organization.

While health care systems around the nation are delaying capital improvements and foregoing expensive technology purchases, CTRH has posted a positive bottom line for the past three fiscal years and has used its resources to both enhance and improve services and programs throughout the system. Examples of investments include:

- $1.7 million in information technology to ensure CTRH meets electronic health records timelines required by the federal government
- $16.8 million to provide increased treatment options to physicians for their patients. Funded projects include new, state-of-the-art equipment for patient rooms and patient care items, along with updated equipment for operating suites and technological enhancements
- Purchase and installation of state-of-the-art emergency room tracking technology to increase physician efficiency and patient satisfaction
- Nearly $1 million in acquisition of primary care physician practices in order to retain physicians and better meet the needs of our community
- More than $1.8 million for physician recruitment opportunities

Along with investment in capital and equipment, Carson Tahoe contributes to the community through health education and seminars, wellness screenings, scholarships to medical students, the Maternal Obstetrical Management clinic (MOM’s clinic) for low-income prenatal care, and affordable lab screening.

Investments and contributions over the past 5 years:
- $120,624,519 for charitable care
- $8,991,241 in community health improvement services
- More than $18 million invested in new equipment and technology
- Largest private employer in Carson City with more than 1,200 employees
- 313 physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners
- More than 5,000 inpatients served
- More than 600,000 outpatient services rendered
- More than 165,000 emergencies treated
- Birthed more than 5,000 babies

As we look to the future, our community can rest assured that Carson Tahoe will remain dedicated to providing for the health and well-being of our region through continued commitment toward charitable care and fiscal stewardship.

DID YOU KNOW?

CTRH provides financial strength to our region

At a cost of $132 million, the Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center was the largest single construction project in Carson City history. Today, the regional medical center and the Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare organization provide strength to our economy by supplying well-paying jobs for more than 1,200 employees.

As an active partner within the community, Carson Tahoe also supports local vendors and offers affordable health care to our region. Carson Tahoe does more than provide exceptional care for our region; it’s an economic driver for our community.

A message from Pete Livermore

on behalf of the Board of Hospital Trustees

As the Carson Tahoe Board of Hospital Trustees, it is our honor to represent you — our community — as part of the Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare system. As physicians, teachers, retired state administrators, bankers, financial advisors and small business owners, we are your neighbors from Carson City, Douglas County and Lyon County. CTRH’s mission, “to enhance the health and well-being of the communities we serve,” is at the forefront of every decision. We work closely with the leadership at CTRH to ensure quality and to make certain that health care is accessible to every resident in our region. The opportunity to take stock of the many accomplishments that accompany this five-year milestone brings us both pleasure and pride.

Through superior fiscal management and diligent attention to quality initiatives, CTRH has evolved as a leader in every measurable health care category in Northern Nevada. Our role as a regional health care provider is confirmed by the thousands of residents who access our services each year from Carson City, Douglas County, Lyon County, Lake Tahoe, south Reno, eastern California and far rural Nevada. Since 2005, CTRH has added services and programs that have considerably increased our ability to serve the full spectrum of our region’s health care needs. Oncology, cardiology, orthopedics and neurosurgery are just a few of the service specialties that have risen to a higher level of care thanks to our new medical campus.

As a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, our ability to weather the financial woes of the past few years is significant. In the past five years, the CTRH administration and leadership have taken measures to solidify our financial stability, while at the same time investing nearly $20 million in capital equipment and improvements — continually upgrading and maintaining technological preeminence.

Hearing all the accolades people use to describe our facility is certainly rewarding. “Carson Tahoe is the most beautiful hospital I’ve ever seen.” “Like a five-star hotel only better.” And “I felt like a guest at a five-star resort during my recent stay at your beautiful facility.” Yet our facility is only as exemplary as the physicians, nurses, technicians, support staff and volunteers who care for our patients each and every day.

On behalf of our board, administration and entire team, thank you for choosing us as your health care provider. Be assured that while forging ahead, our mission remains steadfast — we are always here for you as this region’s thriving health care system, devoted to your health and wellness.

Sincerely,

Pete Livermore
Chairman, Carson Tahoe Board of Hospital Trustees

Photo provided by CTRH

Not pictured: Dr. Basel Chtryow, Jack Davis, Andrea Wied.
The value of volunteering

CTRH Auxiliary improves patient experience

Lauren Byer

Little things matter

Flat-screen televisions are attached to beds in the pre-op department, providing a welcome distraction for patients, thanks to the CTRH Auxiliary.

Photo by Jon Tyler

Lend a hand

For more information about the CTRH Auxiliary or to become a volunteer, visit Carson Tahoe’s gift shop or call (775) 445-8008.

Carolyn Knutsen knows that televisions are vitally important.

The president of the Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare Auxiliary also understands the value of teddy bears, a reclining chair and layettes for babies.

All of these items have fundamentally improved the patient experience at Carson Tahoe, and all have been funded through the CTRH Auxiliary.

“We work hard to provide things that patients will like, that will provide extra comfort,” Knutsen said of the Auxiliary, which has been supporting Carson Tahoe since 1952. “It’s our way of doing something for the community.”

In the past year alone, the Auxiliary has utilized funds raised through operating the hospital’s gift shop and other efforts to pay for six flat-screen televisions that were placed on the arms of beds in the hospital’s pre-op surgical department. Members also have contributed teddy bears to calm the hospital’s tiniest patients, bought a reclining chair for the oncology department’s infusion center and purchased six layettes per month for needy babies.

And that’s just a snapshot, a small example of the breadth of contributions made by the all-volunteer, 192-member Auxiliary.

“We’re busy all the time,” Knutsen said. “But we don’t mind. Membership in the Auxiliary is a reflection of our willingness to go the extra mile to help our patients.”

Carson Tahoe Foundation

improves health care offerings

BY MIKALEE BYER

Cancer treatment and recovery at Carson Tahoe are only a few steps apart — literally and figuratively.

A generous donation by a patient’s grateful wife helped fund the literal part. Ruth Merriner, after watching her husband receive unparalleled care during a lengthy illness, contributed $2 million to Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare following her husband’s death.

And while the largest single donation ever received by Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare helped construct the unique Merriner Cottages, a home-away-from-home for cancer patients and their families, it is the ongoing efforts of the CTRH Foundation that keep the facilities in operation and have helped fund the adjacent Carson Tahoe Cancer Center, Nevada’s only freestanding, accredited, full-service cancer center.

“It’s amazing to realize that through the incredible efforts of our Foundation, we now have a mature Cancer Center that provides comprehensive services to patients every day,” said Soraya Aguirre, president of the CTRH Foundation. “We provide a welcoming presence for patients and their families. Through donor support, we have achieved amazing things for the community.”

To date, and since its beginning as a nonprofit corporation in 1998, the Foundation has received close to $9 million in direct financial support from the community.

“We have a very broad mandate,” said Aguirre, who also is a partner for law firm Holland and Hart, LLP. “We are here to support the hospital. Our biggest focus thus far has been the Cancer Center, and we have worked diligently to raise the funds necessary to repay that debt.

Foundation leadership heeded the community’s call and worked to achieve the $9 million in direct financial support from the community.

And now Aguirre is happy to report that the Foundation and CTRH jointly retired that debt. “That’s a significant accomplishment,” she said. “But it’s not only the large donations that drive the everyday fundraising necessary to support our services.”

Soraya Aguirre, president of the CTRH Foundation, says her group’s main focus has been the Cancer Center.

Foundation initiatives. Gifts of all sizes are welcome, funding everything from state-of-the-art equipment to advanced training materials to helping finance capital initiatives like the Cancer Center.

“Philanthropy allows Carson Tahoe to continue to deliver quality health care every hour, every day,” said Michelle Schmitter, development manager. “While hospital fees-for-services contribute to the overall cost of caring for patients, today, additional sources of support are essential.”

Schmitter notes that many donors are grateful patients and their families — like Ruth Merriner — but that all members of Carson Tahoe’s community benefit from donor support.

“Philanthropy allows Carson Tahoe to become stronger and more responsive to our community needs,” she said.

Learn more about giving opportunities by contacting the Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare Foundation at (775) 445-5161, or visit www.carsontahoe.org.
The years ahead

Five-year plan ensures continued quality, excellence in the future

BY BRANDI SCHLOSSBERG

In the ever-changing realm of health care, keeping an eye on the future is key to best practices across the board. Planning to meet future needs in the community, to address federal health care reform, and to continue providing quality care is a priority at Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare.

“We have a five-year strategic plan in place, and that plan aims to identify, as best we can, the health care needs of the community and how we are going to meet them,” said Ed Epperson, CTRH president and CEO, who has been with the hospital for the past 16 years.

To identify exactly what residents want and need in health care, the hospital recently conducted a community survey, the results of which are the subject of ongoing discussions with local leaders.

“Another important way we manage to stay ahead of the curve in health care is by staying active in our professional associations,” Epperson said. “Myself and other lead people in the organization continually participate in discussions and education programs with the various associations of which we’re members.”

By attending these conferences, programs and networking events, Carson Tahoe staff has kept a collective finger on the pulse of cutting-edge health care from coast to coast and even around the world.

“Staying active in these professional organizations allows us to find out what’s going on in the rest of the country when it comes to health care, as well as what the experts are saying,” Epperson said.

His passion for helping people through quality health care stems from the time he spent working with patients as a doctor of pharmacy. He made a transition to the management side of medicine to have a greater impact on the overall quality of patient care.

“For years, I’ve been telling our staff that I want all of us to provide care as if we were taking care of our own mothers,” Epperson said.

This zeal for patient care, along with active involvement and discussion among professional groups networking events, Carson Tahoe staff has kept a collective finger on the pulse of cutting-edge health care from coast to coast and even around the world.

Measuring the effectiveness of current practices and procedures is crucial to providing the best care possible.

“We generate internal quality improvement data that is used in strategic planning sessions and patient-care processes,” said Cathy Dinauer, vice president of patient care services at Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare.

“This would include, but is not limited to, collecting information that has a direct impact on patient care,” she added.

In this endeavor, CTRH works in alignment with state and federal regulatory agencies. Regular visits and chart audits allow objective observations on the delivery of health care, which creates the transparency in health care that is so important to the residents of our region.

According to Dinauer, this transparency provides CTRH with the framework to identify evidence-based quality improvement initiatives.

In the past five years, this focus on quality has resulted in a Healthsight Quality award in 2006 and a five-star Heart Surgery rating from Healthgrades, an independent health care ratings company. CTRH has been accredited by the Joint Commission, a nonprofit group that certifies more than 18,000 health care organizations in the United States, for more than 50 years.

Left to right: Todd Chipman, MD; Gary Campbell, MD; Timothy King, MD; Michael Fry, MD; Amy Sue Hays, MD; Andrea Weed, DO; Ed Epperson, president and CEO.

is important as the nation’s hospitals and health care providers prepare for federal health care reform.

“The reform is much more of a transformation than I think people realize,” Epperson said. “The degree to which this will change how we pay for and deliver health care is very much underappreciated.”

As for how federal health care reform is expected to affect Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare and the surrounding community, Epperson described the change as placing much more responsibility on the hospital for “almost everything that has to do with health care.”

“All the components that have been required for us to be successful are going to continue, but much more intensely,” he said. “The requirement is there to work more directly with physicians than ever, to be more efficient than ever, and to look at even more ways to stay healthy outside the hospital.

“None of these are new initiatives,” he added, “but I think they are all going to get much more intense.”