MERCY HOSPITAL

Past, Present and Future

AND THE LEGACY OF SISTER ANNUNCIATA
A HOSPITAL AT THE HEART OF HEALING

Mercy Hospital has played an integral role in Maine health care since the hospital’s founding nearly 100 years ago. From its genesis as a place to treat those struck by the massive influenza epidemic of 1918 to its current status as one of Maine’s largest and most-respected hospitals, Mercy has consistently held to its commitment to be “at the heart of healing.”

What does this mean? Simply put, Mercy Hospital provides clinically excellent, compassionate health care, especially to the poor and disadvantaged, reflecting the mission and values of the Sisters of Mercy. As a mission-driven, faith-based organization, we care – in every sense of the word.

Because to us, this is the essence of what a hospital does. We care. For our patients, for our employees, for the community we serve. And we do this by attracting and retaining the most highly qualified doctors and nurses, acquiring the most advanced and effective technology to provide leading-edge diagnosis and treatment resources, and treating each and every person with compassion and respect for their individual dignity.

This has been our mission from the start. And it is what keeps us moving forward. For, in the words of Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, “We can never say it is enough.”

In the following pages, we invite you to take an armchair journey into Mercy’s past, present and future to gain a deeper understanding of the hospital’s evolution, and to share in our vision of the Mercy of tomorrow.
In 1918, a deadly influenza epidemic swept the world. It claimed an estimated 50 million lives in mere months – more than any other illness in recorded history. The death toll from this epidemic was three times greater than that of World War I, which was also being waged at the time. Here in Maine, nearly 50,000 cases of influenza were reported, and at least 5,000 Mainers died, many of them in Portland.

Bishop Louis S. Walsh, leader of the Portland Catholic community, appealed for help. Miss Marion Weeks, the Protestant daughter of a surgeon, responded by giving her mansion at 681 Congress Street to the Portland Diocese for use as a hospital. The mansion was renovated and equipped to care for 25 women patients. It was named the Queen's Hospital.

The Sisters of Mercy, an order with 60 active nuns in Portland at the time, mobilized to staff the new hospital and in 1922, four years after graduating from nursing school, Sister Mary Annunciata Quigley took her vows and took her place alongside them.

The patient census at Queen's Hospital steadily grew over the next decade, and additional buildings were added to serve those who needed the Sisters' care, compassion and charity most, particularly during the Great Depression. Then, with the introduction of Blue Cross pre-paid health insurance in 1933, the need for additional space grew even more imperative. In response, the hospital staff and trustees began formulating plans for a brand-new hospital. A ladies’ Auxiliary also was established, with civic-minded members of the greater Portland community contributing their time and talent to Mercy's mission.

Recognizing the need for someone to shepherd the hospital through this major transition and into the future, the trustees appointed Sister Annunciata as the hospital's first administrator. And in 1943, a new 150-bed Mercy Hospital opened at 144 State Street, with Sister Annunciata at its helm.

The story of Sister Annunciata's stewardship of Mercy Hospital from 1934 to 1969 – told with excerpts from her own diaries – can be found in the following insert.
The 2008 opening of Mercy’s new Fore River campus marked the successful completion of Phase I of a two-phase project that will eventually relocate all of Mercy Hospital’s services from the State Street campus to the Fore River campus. This milestone not only heralded a new chapter in Mercy’s history, but also in the history of health care in greater Portland. Phase II is expected to launch within the next few years, with the relocation fully completed in time for Mercy’s 100-year anniversary in 2018.

In the meantime, we continue to improve and refine our services, adding clinical capabilities and programs, and attracting respected physicians, surgeons, nurses and other health professionals. We streamline operations to ensure the most efficient and effective patient care. We acquire new technology and adopt new techniques to optimize patient outcomes. And we never lose sight of what matters most: to heed the call and the mission, set forth by the Sisters of Mercy, to reach out and minister to the sick and injured in our community.

The future has never looked brighter. Despite economic volatility and dramatic changes in federal and state funding of health and human services programs in recent years, something extraordinary happened. The generous individuals, corporations and foundations that help to support Mercy dug even deeper, finding the means to give even more to help those who have less. This exceptional generosity – both spiritual as well as financial – speaks volumes about how much people believe and trust in Mercy.

We believe this trust bodes well for Mercy’s future. As a faith-based and mission-driven organization, Mercy has always filled a unique niche in greater Portland’s health care community. In today’s fiercely competitive, profit-driven world, this commitment to the community – and from the community – truly sets Mercy apart. And it positions us for a successful tomorrow.

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**Mercy Health System of Maine — Reaching Out to Meet the Needs of the Community**

Mercy Health System of Maine (Mercy) includes several dedicated campuses, with a total of 230 inpatient beds. Each campus has a unique focus, but all work together to provide a broad mix of medical, surgical and outpatient services. Mercy Medical Associates represents Mercy’s growing network of primary care and multi-specialty physician practices that provide both inpatient and outpatient care. We offer additional services to our community through the following programs:

- **VNA Home Health & Hospice (VNA)** serves clients in southern Maine. Regardless of where clients receive medical services, VNA’s team of professionals works closely with physicians to provide the highest quality care in the comfort of the client’s own home. VNA’s Hospice Team provides comprehensive care and support to clients and their families facing end-of-life issues.

- **Mercy Recovery Center** is Maine’s largest substance abuse treatment program, offering inpatient and outpatient programs for adults. The Recovery Center’s team of skilled therapists, nurses and physicians treat the entire spectrum of addictions from alcohol to all types of drugs one step at a time, one day at a time, one person at a time.

- **McAuley Residence** provides a safe environment and a comprehensive transitional living program for women in need. The residential program offers housing, life skills counseling, emotional support and mentoring. It helps women, with or without children, learn to live in a manner that improves their lives in a meaningful and lasting way.

- **Gary’s House** is a hospitality home for families of patients undergoing medical treatment in a Portland area hospital. Gary Pike, for whom the home is named, wanted families to find comfort knowing they had a place to stay, near their loved one, without being financially burdened.