

# be well

A DIGNITY HEALTH PUBLICATION | SPRING 2021

Feeling Well?  
Catch Up  
With Your Checkups

Primary Care vs.  
Urgent Care vs. ER:  
Know Where to Go

Reach Your  
Goals With  
Therapy

**Close to  
Home**



**Dignity Health®**

Mercy Medical Center  
Mt. Shasta

# Leadership Letter

HELPING YOU

## BE WELL



What a difference a year makes. Phase 1 of the vaccination rollout in California is well underway, and a return to a new normal that seemed unreachable a

few months ago is on the horizon.

For over a year, the health care heroes across Dignity Health have persevered and excelled at delivering the highest quality care through these uncertain times. Behind the personal protective equipment and COVID-19 protocols are people in your community who are committed to doing their utmost to support your health goals and provide quality care when you are sick.

Make your long-term physical and mental health a priority, and access care with confidence. Now is the time to catch up on missed screenings or speak with your provider at your annual visit. Call 911 in an emergency, and keep your provider in the loop if you experience concerning symptoms.

We will continue to provide the best health care safely. Rely on the providers of Dignity Health North State as we work to see it through together.

Todd Strumwasser, MD  
President  
Northern California Division,  
Dignity Health

At Dignity Health, we believe the two pillars of humanity and kindness are the yin and yang of healing: powerful alone, but **better together**.

## North State News

### Mercy Medical Center Redding



Awarded the highest level of accreditation for the last 30 years, our Mercy Redding Cancer Centers are an amazing resource for all patients in our region as we provide quality comprehensive cancer care. In addition to the wide range of leading-edge treatments we offer, our care teams of oncologists and other specialists take the time to meet

together and carefully customize each patient's plans based on their individual needs. Through this collaboration, our experts at Mercy Medical Center Redding are able to help their patients navigate the entire process with education and support.

—G. Todd Smith, President, Mercy Medical Center Redding

### St. Elizabeth Community Hospital



When it comes to chemotherapy and immunotherapy infusion treatments, we know our cancer patients value receiving exceptional care close to home. At the Oncology and Infusion Center in Red Bluff, our comprehensive cancer care team includes medical oncology and infusion services, collaborating with radiation oncology services both locally and

within our North State network. We are proud to offer access to this high level of expertise, in a safe and relaxing healing environment for patients of all ages in our community.

### Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta

To offer a full range of rehabilitation services for all ages right here in our community is in line with our mission—to improve the health of the people we serve. At Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta, our passion is to meet our patients' needs with personalized plans to help restore, improve and maintain function. Our physical, occupational and speech therapy programs connect inpatients and outpatients alike with personalized plans to help them live their best life.

—Rodger Page, President, St. Elizabeth Community Hospital and Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta

**CONNECT**  
WITH US



**Dignity Health®**

For questions, comments or to  
unsubscribe, please contact  
us at  
[bewell@dignityhealth.org](mailto:bewell@dignityhealth.org)

Dignity Health  
2175 Rosaline Ave.  
Redding, CA 96001  
**530.225.6000**

For help choosing a primary care  
physician, call  
**888.628.1948**

A stethoscope with a grey tube and silver chest piece is positioned diagonally across the upper right portion of the image. Below it, a spiral-bound calendar is partially visible, showing dates from the 6th to the 31st. The entire scene is set against a solid orange background.

# Prioritize Your Health

KEEPING TABS ON CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SEEING YOUR PROVIDER ABOUT NEW CONCERNS ARE IMPORTANT, EVEN IN A PANDEMIC.

**In February, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** released an alarming new statistic—life expectancy in the United States had dropped by an entire year in the first half of 2020. But the massive losses from the COVID-19 pandemic weren't the only reason for the fall.

The CDC estimates hundreds of thousands of excess deaths since the pandemic started. While some are likely undiagnosed COVID-19 deaths, many others account for people putting off annual screenings for diseases like cancer or heart disease, and those who are not getting the regular care they need for diabetes or kidney disease until it's too late.

## **Don't Delay Care**

If you haven't seen a doctor since 2019 or early 2020, now is the time to catch up on all your postponed care. Dignity Health North State can help get your health back on track with needed screenings, vaccines and well-person visits.

The health care you need will vary by your age, sex and any other health conditions you have. But in general, you need regular screenings for your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol. Women also need regular cervical cancer screenings and, once they are older than 40, mammograms to screen for breast cancer. Men 55 and over need prostate cancer screening.

Both sexes should have screenings for colon cancer starting at age 45 and osteoporosis at age 50. If you are at high risk for lung cancer, you should begin screening at age 55.

Several of these tests can be performed during a regular physical exam by a primary care provider (PCP). Your PCP can also check for moles that could be a sign of skin cancer and ensure you are up to date on your needed vaccines. And if you have insurance, they are required to offer you an annual well-person visit at no cost, whether or not you have met your deductible. Lung cancer screenings, mammograms, colonoscopies and Pap tests are also included.

If you have existing health conditions like diabetes or heart disease, it's even more important to keep up with your primary care. And for minor concerns, Dignity Health also now offers virtual visits, making it easy to receive medical care without leaving home.

**PROVIDERS ARE HERE WHEN YOU ARE READY. VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG](https://dignityhealth.org) AND WATCH THE VIDEO TO LEARN THE MANY WAYS TO SAFELY ACCESS CARE.**

# Therapy Services in Your Backyard



AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE  
REHABILITATION SERVICES  
OFFERED AT MERCY MEDICAL  
CENTER MT. SHASTA.

## Where to Find Us

Looking for outpatient physical, occupational or speech therapy? We're right down the street.

Mercy Physical Therapy  
914 Pine Street  
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067  
**530.926.6111**

Mercy Physical Therapy of Weed  
100 Alamo Ave.  
Weed, CA 96094  
**530.938.4417**

Rehabilitation requires a physician's referral. To find a Dignity Health primary care provider, call **888.628.1948**.

**Joint replacement surgery.** Back and neck pain. Stroke. Speech impediments.

There are countless reasons to seek therapy services. Fortunately for residents of the North State, it's all here at Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta.

"Living in a rural community, it's rare for a facility to offer the full spectrum of therapy services, and we're fortunate to do that here," said Paul Schwartz, MS, PT, Therapy Services Manager at Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta. "Our neighbors should know there's no need to travel outside of the county for rehabilitation. It can be done right here, close to home."

## What services can you find through Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta?

Whether you're an inpatient at the hospital or coming for outpatient services, you have access to the three key therapy areas.

**Occupational Therapy**—Following a stroke or bad fall, things change. Your body may not respond as it once did. It becomes difficult to do things you used to do with ease.

"Occupational therapy is a comprehensive, physical, mental and emotional rehabilitative service that starts with what matters to you," said Gita Bhushan, occupational therapist at Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta. "We work across the lifespan, using activities of daily living [ADLs] as a tool for therapy, on an inpatient and outpatient basis."

Children with developmental delays also benefit from occupational therapy, learning ADLs for the first time. Tying shoes, cooking and bathing are a few tasks occupational therapists help patients master.

## Numbered Excellence.

Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta is home to **15 therapy specialists** who help inpatients and outpatients every day: **8 physical therapists, 3 physical therapy assistants, 2 occupational therapists and 2 speech therapists.**



If a task is impossible for an individual to perform, therapists develop workarounds. These help patients to maintain independence and enjoy the highest possible quality of life.

**Physical Therapy**—Exercise is vital to make the most of joint replacement or to address weakness from a stroke or other event. Whether the issue involves bones, muscles, joints or nerves, physical therapy can help. In addition to exercise, physical therapy uses special devices to help patients regain strength and range of motion. Over time, physical therapy prepares people of all ages to return to life with renewed energy and strength and reduced pain.

**Speech Therapy**—The power of oral communication can't be overestimated. Losing that power has significant impact. But speech therapy at Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta covers more than pronunciation. A lot more.

"Our patients range from infants to senior citizens," said Hannah Craig, speech language pathologist at Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta.

Along with fellow speech language therapist Madison Melo, Craig helps picky kids eat better. She also helps children with autism and Down syndrome communicate who otherwise couldn't. Additionally, Craig and Melo help adults overcome swallowing disorders, regain speech after stroke and help individuals suffering from dementia and other degenerative diseases maintain communication.

"Our services have a significant impact on our patients. Parents are grateful that their children are better able to communicate and express themselves using their language skills and have reduced risk of choking, or worse," Craig said. "It is very rewarding work, and we love helping families meet their goals."

## On the Road to Wholeness

At Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta, our compassionate therapists have their patients' best interests at heart. They're passionate about rehabilitation, and it shows.

"Many of our patients could get by without therapy, but their lives would be much more challenging. **That's why we're here: to improve life for our patients.** We see where they are and what their struggles are, then we find ways to help them move forward, one step at a time."

—Paul Schwartz, MS, PT, Therapy Services Manager at Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta

However, passion isn't the only driver in our rehabilitation services. Excellence is as well.

Many of our therapists have twenty or more years of experience under their belt. They've seen a lot of illness and injury. They've worked with mild cases, extreme cases and everything in between. They know how to get good results. And that's what they do every day.

Whether the need arises from illness, injury or a congenital issue, Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta therapists help patients move forward. They help children speak clearly. They work with other children to communicate for the first time.

"Here, we have strong emphasis in pediatrics, working with kids and helping families," Bhushan said. "You want to do something? We're gonna find a way for you to do it."

They prevent stroke victims from swallowing food into their lungs. They empower seniors to live independently and safely at home.

Simply put, our therapy specialists make life better.

"Our therapy program has a unique combination of experience and expertise, professionalism and compassion," Schwartz said, "and I'm thankful to be part of such a quality team. It's a gift to come to work each day and help our neighbors maintain and improve their lives."



# Emergency Care

## in the Midst of a Pandemic

SEEKING TIMELY MEDICAL CARE FOR EMERGENCIES IS STILL CRITICAL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.



### Stroke and the Importance of Acting FAST

As one of the most time-sensitive health care emergencies, stroke must be treated as quickly as possible. The longer you wait to treat a stroke, the more likely it is that you or a loved one will sustain irreversible brain damage. If you notice:

- + face drooping
- + arm weakness
- + slurred speech
- + time is of the essence, and you need to call 911 immediately.

**Health events do not** always happen during business hours, and waiting until Monday morning for medical care may not always be safe. While the COVID-19 pandemic may be causing you to second-guess a trip to see a health care provider, you should not hesitate to seek out medical attention for an emergency because you are afraid of the virus. As other medical institutions have done across the United States, Dignity Health North State has taken rigorous steps to ensure our facilities are as safe and as clean as possible.

### Is It an Emergency?

If you suspect you or a loved one is experiencing a critical situation, such as a heart attack or stroke, calling 911 for immediate medical attention is absolutely essential. If care is not administered quickly enough, the consequences could cause loss of function, or worse, loss of life. But those are not the only two situations that require emergency care. Multiple conditions may need emergency attention, while others may be more conveniently addressed at an urgent care center.

At an urgent care center, a medical professional, such as a nurse practitioner or a primary care provider (PCP), can provide treatment for acute or chronic illnesses and injuries on an outpatient basis. The urgent care provider can also refer you to specialists when needed. Urgent care is a good option in the evening or on the weekends or holidays, when most doctors' offices are closed.



## Where to Go When

Whenever a medical event occurs, calling your PCP is a good first step to take. Together, you can quickly review symptoms and determine where to go for the most effective and efficient treatment. In certain instances, your PCP may determine that your condition is not emergent and you can wait until his or her office is open to schedule an appointment. However, if your condition needs to be addressed more quickly in the emergency room or at an urgent care center, the following chart can help you determine where you need to go.

### Urgent Care

- + allergic reactions that are minor
- + back pain that is mild
- + bronchitis
- + burns that are minor
- + cold, cough, fever or flu
- + ear pain or sinus pain
- + eye irritation, redness or swelling
- + headache
- + infections of the skin
- + mild asthma
- + minor injuries, such as bumps, cuts and scrapes
- + nausea
- + rash
- + sore throat
- + sprains, strains and minor fractures

### Emergency Room

- + chest pain
- + heart attack
- + major fractures where the bone is visible
- + major head injuries
- + poisoning
- + seizures
- + severe burns
- + difficulty breathing
- + uncontrollable breathing



## Could the Condition Be COVID-19?

If you or a loved one is experiencing symptoms of a mild to moderate case of COVID-19, your PCP may recommend a virtual visit. This option allows you to connect with a health care provider from the comfort of your home. These consultations can happen over the phone or through video chat. To request a video chat, you can use the Dignity Health mobile app or by visiting [dignityhealth.org/videovisitsresources](https://dignityhealth.org/videovisitsresources). Once your request is received, a virtual health provider from our team will meet with you in the virtual exam room to review your symptoms and discuss a care plan.

Virtual visits are available to anybody who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, such as cough, low-grade fever and shortness of breath. Many insurers offer coverage for virtual visits that may also be categorized as a qualified medical expense that you can pay for with your FSA or HSA account.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW DIGNITY HEALTH IS ADDRESSING WELLNESS DURING COVID-19, VISIT [DIGNITYHEALTH.ORG/CORONAVIRUS-DISEASE-2019](https://dignityhealth.org/coronavirus-disease-2019).

## Prioritizing Wellness

Many people often shy away from the doctor's office when they feel fine, but seeing your health care provider for routine medical visits—even when you don't feel sick—is an important step to staying well in the future.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, health care facilities across the country suspended nonemergent medical services in an effort to free up resources for individuals experiencing the virus. As a result, many individuals were forced to cancel routine wellness visits that included critical screenings to detect conditions such as cancer and heart disease.

Now that hospitals and doctors' offices have put safety protocols in place to shield patients from COVID-19, make an effort to reschedule any wellness exams or other routine appointments that you may have missed during the past year.

During routine visits with your health care provider, you can also discuss when the COVID-19 vaccine will be available to you if you have not had it yet.

To find a primary care provider at Dignity Health, visit [dignityhealth.org/ourdoctors](https://dignityhealth.org/ourdoctors).





2175 Rosaline Ave.  
Redding, CA 96001



NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 830



This is a  
recyclable product.

Dignity Health complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate against, exclude or treat people differently on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, language, physical or mental disability, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. For more information, see [dignityhealth.org](http://dignityhealth.org).

*Be Well* is published by Dignity Health. The material in *Be Well* should not be considered specific medical advice, as each individual circumstance is different. Consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1.800.481.3293. (TTY: 1.916.349.7525).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。  
請致電 1.800.481.3293. (TTY: 1.916.349.7525).

# Caring for you in health and wellness.

Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta is your partner in health. Specializing in occupational, physical and speech therapy, we offer customized support on your road to feeling your best. Learn more at [DignityHealth.org/MercyMtShasta](http://DignityHealth.org/MercyMtShasta).

**Hello humankindness®**



**Dignity Health.**  
Mercy Medical Center  
Mt. Shasta

