



## Teamwork

### *Trendsetters*

In this initial edition of an occasional series highlighting outstanding staff contributions to Penn Presbyterian, we're featuring two people who have enlisted team support to activate cost savings projects.

**Trendsetter Vernice Perry, RN, MSN, CNOR** a Peri-Op nurse in Orthopaedic Surgery, identified a simple way to reduce waste that stands to save her department nearly \$40,000 a year: reprocessing the tourniquet cuffs used to temporarily restrict blood flow in orthopaedic and other surgeries.

While working on a project for a graduate nursing course, Vernice learned that these traditionally single-use devices are approved by the FDA to be "reprocessed" and can be repurchased at less than half the original price, without compromising patient safety.

Now nurses, technicians, OR coordinators and physicians are working together on the project. After the tourniquet device is used in surgery, it is taken to sterile processing where it is put into a dedicated reprocessing receptacle. The vendor picks up the used tourniquets and ships them to a reprocessing plant, where each device is cleaned, function tested and then sterilized for reuse. Tourniquet cuffs can only be reprocessed three times, then they are disposed.

By participating in a third-party vendor's reprocessing program, PPMC Orthopaedics will reduce the amount of biomedical waste sent to the landfill by an estimated 1,400 pounds per year. In addition, with more than 4,000 cuffs used per year, the department estimates savings of \$38,866 a year. In December alone, 380 devices were reprocessed, saving more than \$4,600.

*"Based on the success of this program, we have the opportunity to look at other devices and instruments that are approved by the FDA to be reprocessed," said Steve Chapman, RN, MS, CEN, CFRN, Director of Value Analysis, who worked closely with Vernice on this project. "She personally connected with the doctors, nurses, technicians and OR coordinators to get this project up and running."*



**Trendsetter Michael Atweh, MBA, MHA**, Director of Laboratory Operations, has brought the 75 employees in Clinical Laboratory and Pathology together to work on a common goal - meeting their departmental financial targets.

Since arriving at Penn Presbyterian in July, Michael noticed that the department was frequently paying overtime to dual-entity and external agency employees. Working closely with department managers and supervisors, Michael's team was able to dramatically scale back overtime costs by filling any scheduling gaps with internal per diem and part-time employees first and cutting unnecessary overtime completely. In emergency situations directly impacting patient services, necessary overtime is approved by the Director or Senior Administrator.

In the first half of the fiscal year, the department was spending \$10,000 over their budgeted salary costs per month. Since implementing these changes, the department is now only \$800 over budget each month and is much closer to reaching their goal.

*"We are working as a team to meet patient service needs in a financially sustainable, efficient way," according to Michael. For a department that processes, prepares, and performs up to 1.5 million tests per year, teamwork, cooperation and supportive staff members have made the difference in reaching their common goal.*

## Atwood Café Gets "Refreshed"

Thanks to a generous contribution from Aramark, the Atwood Café will undergo a series of upgrades and renovations starting in February and ending in March.


Cafeteria visitors will notice new countertops, fresh paint, updated tile, display cabinets and a comprehensive new cash register system. Once finished, this system will allow employees to use credit and debit cards as well as their PPMC ID cards (when funds are added) to pay for purchases, both in the main cafeteria and at the Java City coffee kiosk.

Behind the scenes, a new fire suppression system, flat top griddle, char-broiler, fryer, refrigeration and freezer systems will also be installed.

During the four-week renovation, the cafeteria will remain open with selected items on the menu.

If you have any questions about the cafeteria renovation, please contact Craig Ross ([craig.ross@uphs.upenn.edu](mailto:craig.ross@uphs.upenn.edu) or (215) 662-9455) or Gary Ginsberg ([gary.ginsberg@uphs.upenn.edu](mailto:gary.ginsberg@uphs.upenn.edu) or (215) 662-9103).

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## Penn Presbyterian Cardiologists Implant Pacemaker in Oldest Reported Recipient, 108 Year Old Philadelphian

Anna Henderson, born in March of 1900, received a pacemaker at Penn Presbyterian on January 26 and is the oldest living person to have a pacemaker implanted. Her heart was beating only 26 times per minute when she arrived in the Penn Presbyterian Emergency Department, showing a critical degeneration in her cardiovascular conduction system. Her cardiologists – Gary Vigilante, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Kent Volosin, MD, Electrophysiologist in Cardiology – carefully considered whether to perform the minimally-invasive procedure, given her advanced age. After observing her overnight and consulting with her family, they decided to perform the procedure and successfully corrected her heart rhythm.

Mrs. Henderson is the oldest person in Philadelphia – turning 109 years old in March – and the only surviving member of her eight siblings; her 99-year-old sister died the day after President Obama was elected in November. For her 108th birthday, she received the key to the Georgia town she grew up in, going into City Hall for the first time (African-Americans weren't allowed to enter City Hall when she left Georgia in 1922). She's lived a simple, healthy life – doesn't drink or smoke – and is still motivated to take care of her children, all retired, ranging from 70 to 82 years of age. She enjoys reading the newspaper daily, cooking and going to church. In March, five generations of her family will be gathering to celebrate her 109th birthday.

Otherwise healthy for her age, Mrs. Henderson was recovering well enough to go home the day after her procedure.