



ST. VINCENT CHARITY MEDICAL CENTER TODAY

SPRING 2013

# Caritas

## St. Vincent Charity is leading innovative spine surgery

Back pain is unrelenting, but the thought of having back surgery can be scary. Patients worry about the invasiveness of the procedure, about the time it takes to recover and the fear that it won't work. At St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, patients are finding cures for their back pain through innovative spine surgery.

Jay Siringer, 55, of Mentor had horrible back pain for years. He tried every kind of nonsurgical treatment—physical therapy, cortisone injections, prescription pain pills. Nothing worked.

When the pain became too much, he went to see Dr. Jeffrey F. Shall, an orthopedic surgeon at St. Vincent Charity. After an MRI, Siringer was diagnosed with degenerative disc disease. “Jay had three degenerated disks. When you do a rigid fusion for three or more levels, the outcome is very poor—almost zero,” said Dr. Shall.

Instead he performed a minimally invasive dynamic stabilization surgery that allowed him to insert flexible rods that have enough rigidity to support his spine, but also flexes to maintain movement. “Dynamic stabilization uses similar screws to traditional fusions; however, the rods are stiff but slightly flexible. This adds stability to the spine, decreases the painful movement between the vertebrae and can be used to open up room for the spine nerves. It's like putting a brace on the spine,” said Shall.

“The surgery like Jay had gives people with multilevel degenerative disk disease options for treatment.”

Siringer is now able to golf, ride his mountain bike and rollerblade. “I wouldn't have even attempted those things prior to surgery because I was in so much pain. Even my headaches got better,” he said. “I'm in better shape now than I was when I was 30. The experience at St. Vincent Charity was wonderful. It's like a miracle to feel as good as I do,” said Siringer.

Since 2003, Dr. Mark Grubb has been performing minimally invasive spine surgery. Using a 7mm tube, he is able to perform spine fusions and other procedures with an incision the size of his pinky fingernail. By reaching the spine through a small incision,

*Continued on page 2*

**Dr. Mark Grubb**



## FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Welcome to Caritas, the newsletter of St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. Our physicians and Caregivers are doing some amazing work right in the heart of downtown Cleveland. We started this newsletter to share some of that great news with you.

A source of great pride to me both as President and CEO and as a practicing surgeon is the incredible innovation of our spine surgeons. You can read more about how they are improving the lives of patients through newer techniques that improve overall recovery and quality of life in our cover story. Don't just take our word, you'll also see that we have earned the Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Distinction in Spine Surgery for our outcomes.

Learn more about our leadership in health literacy, our new wound center, the amazing success of our Pizzazz fundraiser and hear from a grateful patient.

We have much to celebrate here at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center and we look forward to hearing from you. Send your thoughts to [caritas@stvincentcharity.com](mailto:caritas@stvincentcharity.com) or visit us on Facebook or Twitter.

David F. Perse, MD  
President and CEO

### COVER STORY

## Innovative spine surgery

*Continued from front page*

there is less disruption to tissue such as muscles, ligaments, blood vessels and abdominal organs.

This speeds recovery and lessens post-operative pain. Technically, it is more difficult to perform, but Dr. Grubb has been a leader in perfecting the technique and has been teaching it to surgeons from around the country at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center.

With a master's degree in biomechanics, Dr. Grubb combines his knowledge of how the body moves with his expertise as a surgeon. "We are able to treat most degenerative conditions using minimally invasive spine techniques," he said.

"Spine disease is a spectrum. There are many non-operative

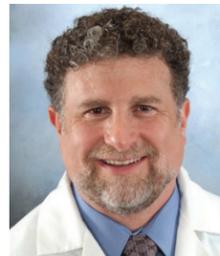
therapies that can treat spine disease, including physical therapy, acupuncture, injections, good chiropractic techniques. Surgery is a last resort," said Dr. Grubb.

Dr. Louis Keppler is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon who also performs a minimally invasive spinal fusion procedure known as XLIF (extreme Lateral Interbody Fusion), which is performed through small incisions and a probe on a person's side rather than the front or back. It can be used on a number of conditions, including lumbar degenerative disk disease, spondylolisthesis, scoliosis and deformity and some recurrent lumbar disc herniations and types of lumbar stenosis.

Many patients notice a difference right away. For others, the pain gradually goes away. Because the XLIF surgery only splits muscles but does not cut muscles, many patients are able to get up and walk around the night after they have had surgery. ♦



Dr. Louis Keppler

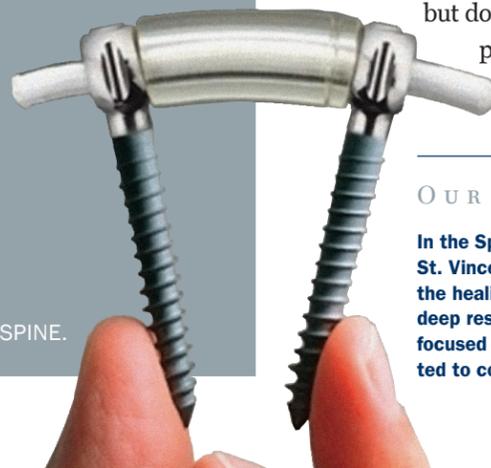


Dr. Jeffrey Shall

### SPINE AND ORTHOPEDIC INSTITUTE AT ST. VINCENT CHARITY MEDICAL CENTER

- John S. Collis, MD, Co-Medical Director
- Lou Keppler, MD, Co-Medical Director
- Deborah A. Blades, MD
- Mark Berkowitz, MD
- Mark Grubb, MD
- Patrick T. Hergenroeder, MD
- Young H. Kim, MD
- Matthew Levy, MD
- Audley Mackel III, MD
- Jeffrey F. Shall, MD
- Joel D. Siegal, MD
- D. Philip Stickney, MD

To make an appointment, call 877-98-SPINE.



### OUR MISSION

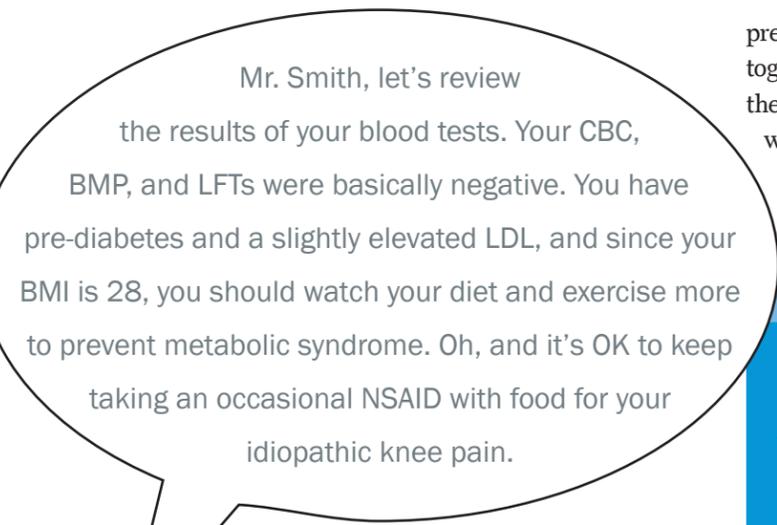
**In the Spirit of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the St. Vincent Charity Medical Center family is dedicated to the healing ministry of Jesus. As Caregivers we serve with a deep respect for the dignity and value of all persons, we are focused on quality care, dedicated to the poor and committed to continuing education.**

## Health Literacy Institute helps patients understand, act and live

Only 12% of American adults are proficient at understanding and acting on healthcare information. Up to 80 percent of medical information provided by healthcare providers is forgotten immediately by patients. Almost half of the information that is remembered is incorrect. Approximately 20 percent of American adults read at or below the fifth-grade level. However, most health information materials are written at the 12th-grade level or above.

Nearly half of American adults—90 million people—have only basic or below-basic health literacy skills. Studies show that persons with limited health literacy skills have higher utilization of treatment services including the emergency department and hospitalization, and lower utilization of preventive services. Their difficulty understanding and acting on health information results in more than \$100 billion in health care costs annually.

Does this passage sound familiar to you?



Got all that? Probably not.

St. Vincent Charity Medical Center can help.

Health literacy is a patient's ability to understand and act on health information. It is also the health care provider's ability to communicate so patients can act appropriately on the information and take better care of their health.

In 2007, with funding from the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland, St. Vincent Charity was able to begin the Health Literacy Institute in collaboration with Project Learn. The initial goals of the Institute were simple: to increase the awareness of health literacy within the medical center, particularly among management, nurses and physicians, and to review all current patient materials for health literacy.

The Institute was successful in institutionalizing health literacy policies across the continuum of patient care at St. Vincent Charity. All Caregivers are now trained and audited regularly, beginning with their orientation to the medical center. They are trained to speak in plain language, to encourage patients to ask questions, and to use the teach-back method. The teach-back method asks patients to repeat, in their own words, what it is that they were told or instructed to do. This exercise is successful in identifying whether a patient clearly understood what they were told. It also gives the Caregiver the opportunity to re-teach the information if there was any confusion.

In addition to training, Caregivers are assessed on health literacy each year during annual competency testing. The Institute was also successful in revising the medical center's patient materials to a sixth-grade reading level, and revising all signage to plain language.

In October 2012, St. Vincent Charity and Project Learn presented the Ohio Health Literacy Conference. It brought together healthcare professionals from across all of Ohio, with the goals of educating them about the issues, providing them with tools to bring health literacy to their organizations, and to begin the conversation around a statewide collaborative.

Learn more at [stvincentcharity.com](http://stvincentcharity.com). ♦

## Ask Me 3

Ask Me 3 was developed by the Partnership for Clear Health Communication. It was written to help encourage patients to be active in their visits and empower them to be sure they know the answers to three questions at the end of every visit or conversation with a healthcare professional.

Answers to these simple questions will help patients understand their diagnosis, treatment and context.

The 3 questions are:

*What is my main problem?*

*What do I need to do?*

*Why is it important for me to do this?*

## Karen Komondor's passion is understanding

Karen Komondor cared for patients as a critical care nurse for more than 20 years. But after watching an American Medical Association video entitled, "Health Literacy: You Can't Tell by Looking," the film ignited a new passion—health literacy. "I had no idea the silent struggles so many endured in trying to understand their health issues and what to do about them," she says.

Now director of education at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Komondor has spearheaded the hospital's pioneering leadership in health literacy and serves as chair of the Health Literacy Institute at St. Vincent Charity.

A natural teacher, Komondor knew when St. Vincent Charity and its health literacy partner Project Learn received initial funding from the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland in 2007 that there was a unique opportunity to institutionalize health literacy across the hospital. Today, it is incorporated in patient education materials, hospital brochures, signage, Caregiver training, physician training and annual competencies for all Caregivers.

Komondor leads a team of Caregivers who are dedicated to improving the health of all through better communication. Throughout this work, she has become a subject matter expert sought after by health care organizations across the country for her knowledge and expertise.

In 2012, she chaired a committee of health care providers across Northeast Ohio to present the inaugural Ohio Health Literacy Conference. This series of workshops culminated last October with a conference for nearly 200 nurses, doctors, social workers and community health workers.

Komondor's passion for education was also at work throughout 2012 as St. Vincent Charity converted to the electronic health record. As a critical member of the team that toiled for 18 months of planning and training, the successful launch occurred in early December. ♦



# Caring for patient—and family

## A Strongsville woman recounts how Caregivers helped ease the burden for all



When Pat Piecuch found out she needed to have spine surgery and was told her surgery would not be covered at her usual provider, she was unsure of where to turn. A physician referred her to Dr. Lou Keppler, orthopedic and spine surgeon at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, an event her family now believes was an act of God.

"We live in Strongsville and would never have thought of St. Vincent Charity," said Susan Lyon, Pat's daughter. "From the first moment we arrived it became clear that St. Vincent Charity was where Mom was supposed to be."

Lyon described her mom's care as loving, compassionate and patient-centered. "She felt safe and nurtured. St. Vincent Charity just felt different," said Lyon. She believes it was the work of the spirit of Jesus illuminated through the Caregivers.

"Every professional we encountered demonstrated caring values, from the parking lot attendant and the aide who drew Mom's blood, to the physicians, administrators and nurses," said Lyon. "Every Caregiver performed their jobs with joy and showed a true interest in the patient's well-being."

Her mom, who cared so much about her environment, appreciated the calm, nurturing feel of the renovated private patient rooms. But it was the attention her family received that makes Lyon truly grateful.

"When a loved one is facing a long illness, the family members need a place where they can feel nurtured and respected as well," said Lyon. "Our entire family felt that way whenever we visited."

While Pat initially came for surgery, she came back to St. Vincent Charity several more times over the course of a year. When it came time to choose a hospital for her follow-up care, she knew exactly where she was wanted to go.

**"When a loved one is facing a long illness, the family members need a place where they can feel nurtured and respected as well."**

"We did have other choices, but after Mom's first experience at St. Vincent Charity, there was no doubt that would be our first choice for follow-up care," said Lyon.

Dylan, Pat's 22-year-old grandson, accompanied Lyon and Pat to the Wound Center. "The Wound Center nurses made

him feel comfortable and natural as he stood by his Grandma's side. I was amazed at how comfortable everyone felt—the staff, my son and especially Mom. She appreciated having him near, and we appreciated the staff allowing him to be with her."

While Pat passed away in August 2011, her experience at St. Vincent Charity has left an indelible mark on her family.

Kathleen, Pat's 19-year-old granddaughter, is now studying to become a State Trained Nursing Assistant. She hopes to be

able to give back to patients and families in the same way the Caregivers at St. Vincent Charity gave to her and her family.

"My family and I all grew to become better, more faithful and compassionate people through Mom's illness, thanks to her experience at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center," said Lyon. ♦

## FULFILLING AN UNMET NEED— WITH CHARITY TOWARD ALL

St. Vincent Charity Medical Center has thrived in the city of Cleveland and in the hearts of patients for nearly 150 years. As we begin to approach our landmark 150th anniversary in 2015, we reflect on significant moments in the medical center's history.

St. Vincent Charity Hospital opened in 1865 after long discussions by Mother Ursula Bissonette, first superior of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine; Dr. Gustave E. Weber, a prominent retired Army surgeon; and Bishop Amadeus Rappe, first Bishop of Cleveland. The property on which the medical center still sits was purchased for \$10,000. Though Mother Ursula did not live to see the building completed, her spirit of sacrifice remained with the Sisters who willingly gave their



pillows to furnish the hospital while they slept on straw. "Charity towards the poor," said Bishop Rappe at the dedication, "was ever to be the motto of the hospital." ♦

## Advanced healing found in renovated Wound Center

Over the past 10 years, wound care has become a growing issue over a wide spectrum of specialties, including podiatry, infectious disease, general surgery and plastic surgery. Chronic wounds are difficult to treat and require expensive applications to heal.

Most primary care physicians do not have the equipment, or the time in the office to treat complex or chronic wounds. However, treatment is essential since the untreated wound, particularly in the legs or feet, can lead to amputation.

“In order to meet the growing demand for wound care, we recently renovated and expanded our department to include state-of-the-art hyperbaric oxygen therapy,” said David F. Perse, MD, president and CEO of St. Vincent Charity Medical Center.

The Wound Center at St. Vincent Charity, located on the ground floor within the outpatient Health Care Center, is responsible for the treatment of recurring and advanced wounds, often caused by diabetes and other chronic medical conditions, trauma or surgery, radiation therapy, medication, ulcerated varicose veins and pressure sores.

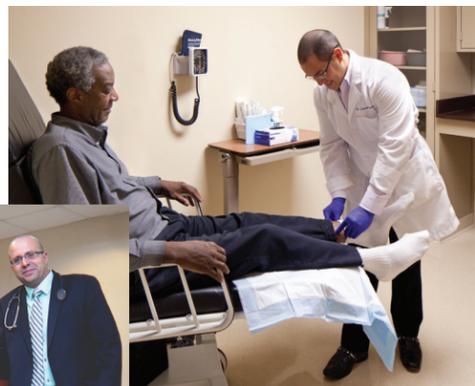
**“St. Vincent Charity is a wonderful hospital staffed with kind, compassionate people,” said Hinson. “Not only did they save my foot, but the Caregivers provided me with treatment that also saved my life.”**

Lewis Hinson was referred to St. Vincent Charity after developing a severe diabetic ulcer on his foot. Hinson’s original healthcare provider told him that his foot would need to be amputated. Knowing that amputation is a serious, life-changing procedure, Hinson refused repeatedly. He knew there had to be another way to heal this wound.

“After months of rehabilitation at another hospital and being told I would need to amputate my foot, I turned to St. Vincent Charity and was given an alternative, life-changing solution,” said Hinson. “Dr. Perse was able to do surgery and provide me with wound treatment that saved my foot.”

Along with the renovated space that allows for private treatment rooms in a comfortable setting, the Wound Center added three new hyperbaric oxygen therapy chambers. The larger size allows the accommodation of larger patients, while also providing a more comfortable experience for the all patient.

Hyperbaric oxygen treatment delivers 100 percent oxygen to the body, encouraging the development of new capillaries that transfer blood and oxygen to damaged tissues. This promotes advanced wound healing and improved infection control. In addition, treatment within the chamber constricts blood



vessels, reducing swelling in patients suffering from severe burns and crush injuries.

The therapy chambers are also used in emergency situations such as severe smoke inhalation and carbon

monoxide poisoning. Having access to these chambers in an emergency is extremely vital and often life-saving. St. Vincent Charity is proud to be the only facility in Northeast Ohio that offers 24/7 emergency access to the hyperbaric oxygen therapy chambers.

Leading an experienced team of Caregivers in the Wound Center is Dr. Emad Elbadaway. Recently appointed Medical Director of the Wound Center at St. Vincent Charity, Dr. Elbadaway is no stranger to the practice of hyperbaric medicine.

He has served as the medical director of wound care at three other medical facilities in the Cleveland area and is well known as an expert in the field. He is an independent physician, board-certified in Internal Medicine and Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine.

Call 216.363.2646 to make an appointment. ♦



Caritas is the Latin term for charity. Charity is in our name, but it means much more than “to give.” Charity is love. It is how we care for others. And it is central to our mission, which began in 1865 with our founders—the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine.

PHILANTHROPY

## 2012 Pizzazz Gala raises record funds for St. Vincent Charity

The mission of St. Vincent Charity Medical Center was strengthened in 2012 thanks to the tremendous support of those who attended Pizzazz, the biennial gala.

Held at historic Cleveland Public Auditorium on October 13, nearly 900 guests dined and danced the night away under the gorgeous glow of the venerated Cleveland landmark. A place that many knew from high school graduations, dances and concerts was the place for making new memories, all in support of St. Vincent Charity, a place that for nearly 150 years has cared for all regardless of ability to pay.

Heartfelt thanks goes to Christopher M. Connor, Chairman and CEO of the Sherwin-Williams Company, who served as Chair of the event. We were also grateful to have Mayor Frank G. Jackson, a longtime friend and supporter of St. Vincent Charity, serve as Honorary Chair for the evening.

Through their leadership and support, Pizzazz raised a record-breaking \$723,000 in support of St. Vincent Charity’s mission.

Capping the evening was the opportunity to recognize the amazing support of special friends of St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. The St. Vincent de Paul Award honors friends, supporters and community leaders who best exemplify the charitable spirit of our patron saint, St. Vincent de Paul.



From left to right, each photo: 1– Dr. David Perse, Joanne Clark and Mayor Frank Jackson; 2– Melvin Pye and Deborah Pye; 3– Jack Breen, Mary Jane Breen, Sara Connor and Christopher Connor; 4– Jack Breen, Mary Jane Breen, Sister Judith Ann Karam, CSA, The Most Rev. Richard G. Lennon and Dr. David Perse; 5– Peter Carfagna, Rita Carfagna, Sister Rosemarie Carfagna, OSU, Mike Carfagna and Alyson Gilbride; 6– Paul Clark, Jill Clark and Ray Marvar

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Check [www.stvincentcharity.com](http://www.stvincentcharity.com) for the latest details on events or become a fan of our Facebook page.

- April 8 Bariatric Seminar 6 p.m., Canton-Belden Village Holiday Inn
- April 11 Total Joint Replacement Class, 2 p.m., St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Cleveland
- April 13 Health Carnival, 12–4 p.m., Tri-C Metro Gym, Cleveland
- April 22 Bariatric Seminar, 6 p.m., St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Cleveland
- May 6 Bariatric Seminar, 6 p.m., Holiday Inn, Independence
- May 9 Total Joint Replacement Class, 2 p.m., St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Cleveland
- May 13 Bariatric Seminar, 6 p.m., Holiday Inn, Westlake
- May 20 Bariatric Seminar, 6 p.m., Embassy Suites Hotel, Beachwood
- June 3 Bariatric Seminar, 6 p.m., St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Cleveland
- June 13 Total Joint Replacement Class, 2 p.m., St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Cleveland
- June 17 Bariatric Seminar, 6 p.m., Middleburg Heights Recreation Center

Receiving the 2012 St. Vincent de Paul Award for their long-time commitment to the mission and values of St. Vincent Charity Medical Center were Jack and Mary Jane Breen. Chris Connor presented the award to his mentor and predecessor at Sherwin-Williams, along with Sister Judith Ann Karam, CSA, president and CEO of the Sisters of Charity Health System.

PNC Bank not only was the presenting sponsor for the evening, but also was recipient of the inaugural St. Vincent de Paul Corporate Award. We were honored to have the regional president, Paul Clark, in attendance to accept on behalf of the company. The medical center is thankful to be supported by such great community partners like PNC Bank.

“We are so thankful to ALL our sponsors for their outpouring of support for our signature fundraiser,” said Joanne Clark, president of the St. Vincent Charity Development Foundation. “Their generosity is a testament to our mission and ministry. We are grateful.”

Donate online at [stvincentcharity.com/giving](http://stvincentcharity.com/giving). ♦

# St. Vincent Charity Medical Center earns Blue Distinction in spine surgery

One of two such centers in Cleveland area



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Blue Distinction Centers are nationally recognized and trusted programs that provide excellent specialty care. It is a national designation program by the BlueCross BlueShield Association that identifies facilities that demonstrate expertise in delivering quality specialty care safely, efficient-

ly and cost effectively.

The objective of the program is to help consumers find facilities that provide both quality and value for their specialty care needs, while encouraging healthcare professionals to strive for over-all quality care. St. Vincent Charity Medical is proud to be

recognized as a Blue Distinction Center for Spine Surgery.

To receive this honor Blue Distinction Centers for Spine Surgery must first be reviewed based on patient results and outcomes, treatment expertise, procedure volume, structure and process. St. Vincent Charity met all the requirements needed to receive this distinction.

Currently, only 310 facilities across the country have been designated as Blue Distinction Centers for Spine Surgery. St. Vincent Charity is

honored to be one of only two Blue Distinction Centers in the Cleveland area. ♦

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