

## To Provide Exceptional Care

St. David's Healthcare

Jon Foster

President/CEO



St. David's Healthcare in Central Texas is one of three 2008 recipients of the Texas Award for Performance Excellence. "Achieving this recognition is indeed a great honor for the organization and reflects the results of the individual physicians, nurses and caregivers throughout St. David's Healthcare" said Jon Foster, President and CEO.

A system of five hospitals, surgery centers and outpatient clinics serving the Central Texas area including Austin, Round Rock and Georgetown St. David's HealthCare (SDH) is a joint venture partnership between the not-for-profit St. David's HealthCare System, Georgetown Healthcare System, and HCA - The Healthcare Company, the nation's largest provider of health care. St. David's Medical Center, St. David's North Austin Medical Center, St. David's South Austin Hospital, St. David's Round Rock Medical Center, and St. David's Georgetown Hospital, are five comprehensive acute care hospitals that provide a wide array of healthcare services in inpatient, outpatient, and emergency settings. Primary services include Medical, Surgical, Women's Services, Neurosciences, Orthopedics, Cardiology, Rehabilitation, and Emergency Services. St. David's also provides dialysis, occupational health, geriatric psych, and oncology. St. David's serves more than 270,000 people each year and is Austin's fourth largest employer with more than 5,200 employees.

Although SDH was formed in 1996, the hospitals of St. David's HealthCare have a long history stretching back to 1924 of serving the residents of Central Texas with outstanding health care and service to the community. The mission drives everything that happens within St. David's and the staff, volunteers and physicians take the Mission very seriously and very personally.

The mission of the organization is "To provide exceptional care to every patient every day, in a spirit of warmth, friendliness and personal pride." Jon Foster, CEO of St. David's Healthcare explains, "The Mission of the organization describes WHAT we do for the patients we serve, and the values describe HOW we carry out that mission." The values, which define how the Mission will be accomplished are summarized by the acronym ICARE and represent Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Excellence.

Below the mission and values St. David's has three overarching GOALS which provide alignment with the mission and the values. The goals for the organization are  
Exceptional Care

Financial Strength  
Customer Loyalty

The organization aligns measures against these three goals, holds leaders accountable by the measures and evaluates its performance through them. This common set of goals in support of its mission, allow St. David's to continue to grow and garner success as an organization.

St. David's hospital workforce is comprised of both professional and non-professional staff. SDH is a union-free environment and strives to create an exceptional workplace for its employees, a great place for physicians to practice medicine, and a place for volunteers to contribute.

Its facilities have received regional and national recognition, including designation as one of the 100 Top Hospitals in America (as recognized by the Solucient Company), the best hospital in the area for maternity services, and one of the leading hospitals in the state for cardiac care (by HealthGrades).

St. David's also shared the honor as Texas' Top Employer of the Year as recognized by the Texas Workforce Network.

“Using the criteria as a framework is just good business practice” states David Thomsen, VP, Quality of St. David's Healthcare. “We use the criteria to evaluate our gaps against world-class organizations and then incorporate best practices as they made sense to accomplish our goals.”

### **An example of Engaging the workforce**

St. David's HealthCare's culture is based on five core values, called ICARE, that guide the activities of the organization and its employees:

**Integrity:** Be honest and do what you say.

**Compassion:** Be sympathetic to the needs of others.

**Accountability:** Take ownership for how actions impact outcomes.

**Respect:** Value the rights of others and accept differences.

**Excellence:** Take personal pride in exceeding expectations.

These values are presented to prospective employees during the recruiting process, discussed during orientation, and included in the employee handbook. Each facility has developed specific behavioral standards to demonstrate how the ICARE values manifest themselves in daily activities. Each employee signs his/her support of the standards and performance on them is a major component of each individual's annual performance evaluation. The criteria for the Employee of the Quarter Award include performance on the ICARE values. Behavioral standards groups, comprised of employees at the facility, develop the list of standards and communicate them.

SDH promotes cooperation and communication within and across facilities, professions, departments, service lines, and units through cross-functional and clinical councils and committees, shared governance for nursing, shared directories, the organizations intranet, and Employee Advisory Groups. SDH has dramatically increased cross-facility communication through regular meetings of leaders from each facility including top executive leaders, middle management and direct care givers. One method of communication is the “Standard of the Month,” a short description of a

standard, worded differently by each hospital, that is publicized on the intranet and in newsletters to reinforce the values consistently and to promote the mission.

St. David's is committed to continuing to learn from the best organizations and apply these lessons in order to continue to provide exceptional care to those we are privileged to serve. As the CEO explains "Taking care of people is the noblest of professions and the people we serve deserve nothing less than the best."

---

**St. David's Healthcare** is a partnership between the not-for-profit St. David's HealthCare System, Georgetown Healthcare System, and HCA – The Healthcare Company, the nation's largest provider of health care. St. David's provides quality, compassionate care through five comprehensive acute-care hospitals in Austin. Primary services include Medical, Surgical, Women's Services, Neurosciences, Orthopedics, Cardiology, Rehabilitation and Emergency Services, as well as dialysis, occupational health, and oncology. St. David's serves more than 270,000 people each year and is Austin's fourth largest employer with more than 5,200 employees. St. David's Healthcare System's ICARE Values of integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence, as well as the over-arching GOALS of exceptional care, financial strength and customer loyalty, are imbedded in all areas of the organization. St. David's Healthcare System deploys an effective approach for its Strategic Planning Process (SPP) which includes an Environmental Assessment which includes a geographic analysis, competitor analysis and market assumptions. This detailed analysis of the organization and its competitors provide the basis by which to plan health care services and to pursue new business opportunities. The continuous strategic planning process is also used to establish short and long-term strategies and performance expectations, as well as to ensure across facilities alignment with the organization's strategic goals. The Institute for Learning helps employees meet the organization's strategic goals. The Institute has three main branches: Leadership Academy providing managers and supervisors with the skills and tools they need to succeed; Clinical Development Academy providing continuing education through classes aimed at professional growth; and Workforce Development which coordinates with city, state and national organizations to create employment opportunities for healthcare professionals through grants, scholarships, clinical student placements, clinical development and community liaison. These educational programs allow St. David's Healthcare System to recruit and retain employees in a competitive environment.