

# Press Release

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**For Immediate Release**

## **Mission of Mercy Chronic Illness Treatment Soars**

Mission of Mercy, a nonprofit organization that provides free medical and dental care along with free prescription medications to the uninsured, under insured, working poor, homeless and other needy people reports a dramatic increase in the number of patients with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma and arthritis.

“Over the past five years, we have seen a steady increase in patients being treated for one or more chronic illnesses,” said Dr. Michael Sullivan, Medical Director of Mission of Mercy. “Many are desperately seeking help, because they cannot afford to pay for health care and risk getting sicker without treatment. One couple came to us after being homeless for two years. Each one had serious medical problems that had gone untreated. Between them, they take 21 medications a day. Another young woman, an unemployed former corporate officer, came to us with severe diabetes that endangered her life. She had not taken her medications in three years, because she lost her insurance and did not have the money to see a doctor.”

“People come to us as a last resort,” said Dr. Sullivan. “They have been in and out of hospital emergency rooms, tried over the counter drugs or have just gone without care.” The five year review shows a steady increase in patients with one or more serious medical conditions requiring long term treatment. “Our operational and medication costs have gone up sharply as we have met these new challenges,” said Dr. Sullivan. “In order to meet increased demand for services, we are going to need additional support from the communities where we operate mobile clinics.”

A five year review of patient illnesses by Mission of Mercy from 2001 to 2006 reports large numbers of patients with two or more chronic illnesses requiring several medications a day to maintain their health. During this time, there was more than a 200% increase in patients being treated for high blood pressure, diabetes or depression. Asthma sufferers, patients with arthritis, back problems and bi-polar disorders increased more than 150%. More than 3,425 patients, representing 71% of Mission of Mercy’s total active patients, were treated for chronic illnesses and were given free medications.

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