Welcome to Swedish Cares!
Explore the ways the Swedish team can help your health

We have a heart for cardiac care
And we’re expanding our team to serve you better

A ski emergency
Quick, expert care got Christy Martin back on the slopes

Robots in the OR
The latest technology helps surgeons perform precise surgery for better results
From the president’s desk

Exploring our role in the region

Welcome to the first issue of Swedish Cares. In the pages of this new magazine, we’ll bring you stories about what makes Swedish Medical Center the Rocky Mountain region’s healthcare leader. You’ll learn about the services we provide and meet some of the great people who work here and who’ve been our patients.

Speaking of people, did you know our team of 2,000 employees, 300 volunteers and more than 1,400 physicians could rival the population of a small Colorado town? Each year, they treat more than 200,000 patients with compassion and respect. And they stand at the ready to provide you and your family with the highest quality medical care.

Swedish is home to some of the most advanced treatments and technology. So whether you’re growing your family, thinking of having joint replacement surgery or looking for exceptional cancer care, the best is right here.

And yet there’s much more to explore when it comes to Swedish. For instance, we provide:

+ South and west metro Denver’s only level 1 trauma and burn center. Indeed more than 150 medical facilities in a five-state region regularly transfer their highly complex cases to Swedish.

+ Colorado’s first certified Comprehensive Stroke Center with some of the fastest treatment times in the world. You can read more about Bill O’Gorman’s Swedish stroke story in this issue.

+ A robust and innovative gynecologic cancer program.

+ Surgical robotics available for many surgeries, including cardiology, foregut, spine, gynecology, gynecologic oncology and urology.

+ A family-focused emergency room including pediatric specialists.

+ Comprehensive heart care and the only robotic-assisted cardiothoracic surgery program in Colorado.

+ The Sarah Cannon Institute at Swedish Medical Center, providing advanced cancer treatment that is personal, as well as cutting-edge.

Ready to explore more of what Swedish has to offer? Take a look inside.

Wishing you the best,

Richard Hammett,
President and CEO

Built for the strongest people we know.

HealthONEStrong.com
Talk to a Nurse. Make a Physician Appointment: 303-374-0777

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Remember—B.E. F.A.S.T. for stroke

B Balance Problems. Does the person have a sudden loss of balance or coordination?

E Eyesight Changes. Is the person suddenly having vision trouble, double vision or blurred vision?

F Face Drooping. Is one side of the face numb or drooping? Ask the person to smile—is the smile uneven?

A Arm Weakness or Numbness. Ask the person to raise both arms out to the sides, and take note if one arm drifts downward.

S Speech Difficulty. Can the person speak at all? Is speech slurred or otherwise difficult to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence.

T Time. If a person has any of these symptoms, call 911, even if symptoms go away. And note the time so you can let medical personnel know what time symptoms started.

How a grateful stroke survivor beat the odds

IT’S REMARKABLE, really, that Bill O’Gorman can actually tell you how grateful he is to be alive. The stroke he survived last April was the most severe kind of ischemic stroke.

“The typical outcome for someone with the stroke Bill had is to be unable to communicate or understand what’s said ever again,” says Jeff Wagner, MD, a fellowship-trained stroke neurologist and part of the highly specialized stroke team that treated Bill at Swedish Medical Center. “And most people can’t move the right side of their body again either.”

But 24 hours after his stroke started, Bill had completely recovered. This is the story of how everything went perfectly for him.

24 hours after his stroke started, Bill had completely recovered.

Bill’s first symptom occurred at work when his speech suddenly became garbled and a co-worker asked him to repeat what he’d said. “She looked at me funny,” Bill recalls.

When he still slurred his words, she rushed to get Bill’s boss, who immediately suspected Bill was having a stroke. His boss knew the red flags—besides slurred speech, one side of his face drooped and he had trouble lifting one arm. She immediately called 911.

That fast response was crucial for Bill, since treating a stroke is a race against time. Every second counts. “The longer blood flow is interrupted to the brain, the greater the chance of irreversible damage,” Dr. Wagner says.

Record-breaking speed

That’s why Swedish Medical Center—home to Colorado’s first Comprehensive Stroke Center—partners with local emergency medical services (EMS) providers. When EMS providers see a person with stroke symptoms, they notify the Swedish Stroke Center that a potential stroke patient is headed to the emergency department (ED). This way the whole stroke team is at the ED door—ready to assess the patient right away and start treatment.

For an ischemic stroke, that treatment is a clot-busting drug delivered intravenously. But safely administering it first requires a CT scan to make sure someone is having an ischemic stroke.

In Bill’s case, the stroke team was so incredibly efficient that they started the IV drip for the clot-busting drug in just seven minutes after Bill arrived at Swedish. “To the best of my knowledge, that’s a world record,” Dr. Wagner says. “Hospitals often struggle to get below an hour.”

Bill’s clot was so large that he also required delicate brain surgery to remove the clot.

A special reunion

One month after his stroke, Bill came back to Swedish for a chance to meet everyone responsible for his recovery, including the ambulance crew.

“I didn’t know how to express how truly thankful I was,” he recalls. “And everybody said, ‘That’s fine—this is our job. We’re just so glad you’re OK.’”

➤➤➤ FOR MORE INFORMATION find us online at swedishhospital.com/stroke
EXPANDING QUICK ACCESS TO HEART CARE

WHEN YOU NEED highly specialized care for a heart or vascular condition, you shouldn’t have to wait. After all, swift treatment can make a difference physically and emotionally.

“Having a heart or vascular health problem can be worrisome for patients,” says Denise Mathias, Administrative Director of Cardiovascular Services at Swedish Medical Center. “It can be mentally and emotionally exhausting when you’re not able to quickly access high-quality care. It prolongs the worry.”

And that’s a big reason why our cardiac program at Swedish—which already offers the most advanced and comprehensive services—is about to get even bigger and better.

Growing the program
Here are some of the changes that will allow us to offer timely access to highly trained specialists and more advanced treatments.

More experts. In order to serve you in a timely manner, we’re enlarging our cardiology and vascular team. We’re adding eight doctors and five advanced practice providers.

“They’re going to help us serve our growing community,” Mathias says.

For instance, the new providers will help the program expand these subspecialty areas:
+ Electrophysiology (EP). Electrophysiologists help diagnose and treat conditions involving the heart’s electrical activity. These include arrhythmias (abnormal heartbeats) such as atrial fibrillation, supraventricular tachycardia and atrial flutter.

At Swedish, we provide a wide range of minimally invasive EP treatments. Among them: cardiac ablation (treatment to reduce or eliminate arrhythmias and restore a regular rhythm) and implantable pacemakers or cardioverter defibrillators.
+ Peripheral vascular disease (PVD). This is a painful condition in which arteries and blood vessels outside the heart (often in the legs or arms) become narrowed or blocked. Our experts treat PVD with both traditional surgeries and minimally invasive procedures.
+ Cardiothoracic robotic surgery. We now offer minimally invasive robotic-assisted heart surgery. (See page 5.)

More surgical suites. We’re also adding more space in order to offer more treatments. This includes more clinic space, plus an additional heart surgery operating room, a new EP lab and a hybrid operating room (OR). A hybrid OR is a large operating space with advanced imaging technology that is used to guide complex surgeries, such as those in the heart or the legs.

“We are growing our services to expand our role as a regional cardiac referral center,” Mathias says. “We believe in quick access to high-quality care. And we want to ensure that we’re providing that for all of our patients.”

To find a heart care specialist at Swedish, visit swedishhospital.com/physicians or call 303-575-0055.
Meet the new providers
Bridget Beck, MD,  
general cardiology  
Chirag Chauhan, MD,  
interventional cardiology  
Jason Huang, MD,  
electrophysiology  
Sameer Mehta, MD,  
interventional cardiology  
Brad Nelson, MD,  
interventional cardiology  
Christopher Stees, DO,  
electrophysiology  
Vijay Subbarao, MD,  
general cardiology  
Michael Wahl, MD,  
interventional cardiology

Robotic heart surgery: One benefit is a speedier recovery

Swedish Medical Center is taking minimally invasive heart surgery to the next level. Expert cardiothoracic surgeon Sanjay Tripathi, MD, is using robotic assistance to perform many procedures that are most often done as open-heart surgical procedures. Swedish is the only hospital in Colorado to offer these advanced techniques.

Robotic-assisted surgery—which is performed through small incisions instead of a large open one—can be used for some of the most advanced heart procedures. Among them: mitral heart valve repairs, maze surgery for atrial fibrillation, coronary artery bypass grafting and heart tumor surgery.

The surgeon controls the system’s robotic arms from a console. The robot’s arms hold small instruments, which are highly maneuverable. This allows the doctor to perform precise surgery in tight spaces. In some cases, the robot’s wrist-like instruments may move more freely within a patient’s body than a human hand can.

Some of the benefits of robotic-assisted surgery may include:
+ Less bleeding.  
+ Less post-surgery pain.  
+ A shorter hospital stay.  
+ A quicker recovery.

➤➤➤ FIND US ONLINE at swedishhospital.com/robotics

swedishhospital.com
Protect your child from concussions

HERE’S A CRUCIAL HEADS-UP if you’re the parent of a child who loves sports: Concussions don’t only occur on football fields. They can occur in any team sport, from baseball and basketball to hockey and soccer. And they can happen outside of organized sports too—for instance, when your child is biking, skiing or snowboarding.

Concussions affect tens of thousands of kids in the U.S. every year and are among the most dangerous sports injuries.

Which is why “every concussion needs to be taken seriously,” says Darcy Martin, RN, Injury Prevention Coordinator at Swedish Medical Center. “Even a mild one can affect a child’s developing brain.”

While most children recover fully with proper care, some concussions can permanently affect thinking, memory and learning. What’s more, once your child has one concussion, the risk of another goes up.

“That second one is also likely to be more severe,” Martin says.

Fortunately, you can help protect your child from concussions and their harmful effects. Here’s what Martin advises to help keep kids safe:

1 Make helmets a must. Be sure your child always wears a properly fitting helmet for any contact sport; for any activity with wheels (such as biking or skateboarding); or when skiing, snowboarding or sledding. Although there’s no such thing as a concussion-proof helmet, a properly fitting one can reduce a concussion’s severity, Martin says.

2 Stress proper play. See that your child follows the safety rules of whatever sport they engage in.

3 Encourage honest communication. “Kids with a hit to the head or possible signs of a concussion may hesitate to tell a coach or other adult because they don’t want to stop playing,” Martin says. “But tell your child to always speak up.” Explain that it’s better to miss one game than face lingering problems from a concussion.

4 Know a concussion’s red flags. They include:
   + A headache.
   + Nausea or vomiting.
   + Dizziness or balance problems.
   + Sensitivity to light or noise.
   + Feeling sluggish or groggy.
   + Fuzzy or blurry vision.
   + Confusion or memory problems.
   + Irritability.

If your child has any of these signs or symptoms after a bump, blow or jolt to the head, he or she needs to stop all activity and see a doctor. “If kids with a concussion return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—they risk serious complications,” Martin says.

Comprehensive pediatric care
Swedish Medical Center offers comprehensive pediatric medical services, including a dedicated pediatric emergency room. Learn more at swedishhospital.com/pediatrics.
Back on the mountain

A speedy recovery after a near-fatal accident let an avid skier return to her favorite sport

For Christy Martin, RN, BSN, Jan. 25, 2017, at the Snowmass ski area started out like another fabulous powder day. Overnight, seven more inches of the white stuff had fallen.

“We had received an amazing amount of snow,” recalls Martin, a critical care nurse at Swedish Medical Center who skis upward of 100 days per year.

But on one early turn, Martin’s skis dug in and she crashed into a rock.

“I felt immediate pain,” she says. Later she would tell a ski patrol member, “I think there’s something wrong with my liver.”

An ambulance rushed Martin to a nearby hospital, where imaging tests confirmed her suspicions: Her liver was severely lacerated (a grade 5 tear—one of the worst), and it was bleeding internally.

“I knew I needed to get to a hospital that provided the correct care as soon as possible,” she says.

Caregiver becomes patient

Martin was eventually transferred to Swedish’s level I trauma center. Doctors were able to treat Martin without major open surgery. Instead, they inserted a catheter into her groin and threaded it to her liver to repair the damaged organ.

Martin was then admitted to the intensive care unit where she works. During her weeklong stay, she was able to experience firsthand the personal connection for which nurses at Swedish are known (her hair was brushed and braided daily, for instance). And they treated her family like their own.

“That’s the same type of care that all of our patients get,” she says.

An emotional return

On Oct. 17, 2017, Martin stepped into a pair of skis again—less than nine months after her accident. “It was emotional,” she says. “After a few minutes, I said, ‘Let’s take a lift up.’”

Martin credits her speedy recovery in part to her less-invasive treatment at Swedish. Afterward, just a small bandage was placed over the tiny incision. “That was it. No other stitches,” she says.

➤➤➤ LEARN MORE about trauma services at Swedish by visiting swedishhospital.com/trauma.

Why a ski helmet is a must

If you’re going to hit the ski slopes, better grab some headgear first.

Wearing a proper helmet during snowboarding or skiing significantly reduces your risk of a severe brain injury, research shows. It could even save your life.

If you fall or collide with an object, the helmet will absorb part of the force and cushion the blow to your skull.

But not just any helmet will do. Choose one designed for skiing or snowboarding. Often, such helmets have a label that says they meet the standards of the Snell Memorial Foundation or the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
Exploring emergency care—with a personal touch

If you’re treated at one of Swedish Medical Center’s three emergency departments (EDs), don’t be surprised when you get a follow-up phone call the next day.

“We do patient callbacks at all of our EDs,” says Victoria Owens, RN, Vice President of Emergency Services at Swedish.

These callbacks aren’t to find out if you were satisfied with your care, Owens is quick to add. “We’re calling patients the next day to find out how they’re doing,” she says. “Did they understand their instructions? Did they get their follow-up appointment? How are they feeling?”

Patients are usually surprised by the callback, Owens says. But it’s just one of the ways that the EDs operated by Swedish—one on the hospital’s main campus, and the freestanding Swedish Southwest ED and Swedish Belmar ED—exemplify their dedication to patient care.

“I think one thing that sets us apart is our absolute, unwavering commitment to quality, patient safety and the patient experience,” Owens says. “You can find a lot of places that are on the cutting edge of whatever they do. But I think the difference for us is that we have an incredible approach to the patient experience.”

**Excellent adult and pediatric care**

Swedish’s main campus houses south and west metro Denver’s only level 1 trauma and burn center. It helps support the hospital’s designation as a certified comprehensive stroke center.

All three of Swedish’s EDs also treat pediatric emergencies. The main campus ED dedicates six of its 44 emergency beds to children needing emergency treatment.

For the second time in a row, the ED on the main campus has been recognized for excellence with the prestigious Lantern Award from the Emergency Nurses Association.

“The award is really a reflection of those three pillars of emergency care—quality, patient safety and patient experience,” Owens says. “We’re very proud of that.”

**6 fast facts about Swedish’s EDs**

- Three convenient locations: one at the main hospital in Englewood, the Southwest ER in Littleton and the Belmar ER in Lakewood.
- The only level 1 trauma and burn center in south and west metro Denver.
- Together they treat about 90,000 patients each year.
- Our stroke treatment times are among the fastest in the world.
- Short wait times are standard—95 percent of patients are taken directly to a treatment room when they arrive.
- One of the region’s most advanced traumatic limb reconstruction programs.