Fighting infections
Rates down statewide as hospitals stress prevention

BY KRIS B. MAMULA
AND ANYA LITVAK

The problem three years ago at Grove City Medical Center was that, way too often, patients were picking up infections while hospitalized for other problems. The solution began by simply getting people to wash their hands, which helped drive down infection numbers and spawned a far-reaching campaign.

As a result, a little hospital achieved big results. GCMC has gone from having an infection rate that was among the highest in the state for hospitals of its size to the virtual elimination of some kinds of infections. And the overall number of infections at the 89-bed Mercer County facility fell 65 percent between 2009 and 2011 to just 11 infections, according to the state Department of Health. The hospital also nearly doubled the nationwide average of hand washing compliance among hospital care workers to 78 percent, Chief Nursing Officer Brad Vansickle said.

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SEIU organizing efforts intensifying at UPMC
Union cites crisis in health care

BY KRIS B. MAMULA

The gleaming UPMC letters atop the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's corporate offices downtown might as well be a bull's-eye for all the attention being generated by the biggest labor organizing effort in the system's history.

The Service Employees International Union represents janitors at Harvard University, home care workers in Los Angeles and employees at HCA, the biggest for-profit hospital chain in the country. Now, the union is going after UPMC, Pennsylvania's biggest hospital network.

To prevail, the health system has to convince employees they're better off with a union at a time when the health care industry is undergoing unprecedented change, experts say. A failure in such organizing efforts could be a bellwether for the future of labor organizing in the health care field, observers say.

Fifth-generation farmer Duane Miller had a photovoltaic array installed on his 160-acre Independence Township farm by using bonus money he received for signing a Marcellus Shale lease agreement.

Marcellus money becomes solar 'shelters'

BY ANYA LITVAK

On a cloudy day in early December, the disk in Duane Miller's electric meter was spinning clockwise, meaning his solar panels were generating more energy than was being used by his 160-acre beef farm in Clinton. Seventy-two years ago, Miller was born on that farm, in a house now powered entirely by solar energy. He helped his family produce milk, eventually taking over the business. His job grew more and more difficult -- both physically and financially -- as he got older. When he "retired," he quit producing milk and switched to raising cows for beef.

He doesn't farm because it's the only way to make a living, but because it's the only place he's ever lived and the only thing he's ever done. And he likes doing it. Now, he has the freedom to just do something because, in April 2011, Miller and his wife signed a gas lease with Range Resources. All of a sudden, like almost all the farms visible from
**INFECTIONS: UPMC Presby, Shadyside, Heritage Valley Sewickley see numbers rise**

**FROM PAGE 1**

**Getting sick at the hospital**

The Pennsylvania Department of Health calculates infection rates by dividing the total number of infections at a hospital by the number of days patients spent in the hospital. Rates are based on data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The rates are calculated for each hospital in the state and are reported annually on the Pennsylvania Health Information Network website.

The rates for UPMC Presbyterian, UPMC Shadyside, and Heritage Valley Sewickley are as follows:

- **UPMC Presbyterian**
  - 2009: 2.87, 2010: 2.82, 2011: 2.87
  - Percentage change from 2009 to 2011: +2%

- **UPMC Shadyside**
  - 2009: 2.87, 2010: 2.82, 2011: 2.87
  - Percentage change from 2009 to 2011: +2%

- **Heritage Valley Sewickley**
  - 2009: 2.87, 2010: 2.82, 2011: 2.87
  - Percentage change from 2009 to 2011: +2%

**FROM THE FRONT**

**Pittsburgh's housing market booms through November**

Pittsburgh's residential real estate market continued at a torrid pace in November.

There were 2,614 homes placed under sales agreement in the Pittsburgh region, a 31.3 percent increase compared to November 2011, according to data released Dec. 5 by the Pittsburgh Area Multiple Listing Service.

Average home sale prices are up 7.8 percent to $195,050 compared to a year ago, and homes are on the market five days fewer — 49 days — than they were in November 2011.

That's continued a trend for all of 2012, where homes placed under agreement are up 11.6 percent and the average home price is up 7.5 percent to $195,050.

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Dewey to lead Forbes Funds

The Pittsburgh Foundation on Dec. 4 announced that Kate Dewey has been appointed president of the Forbes Funds, an affiliate organization of the foundation, following a competitive search. She will begin the new post on Jan. 1, 2013.

Dewey has worked closely with nonprofit organizations and foundations for more than 30 years. Much of this work was through Dewey & Kaye, the consulting company she founded in 1996, which through a series of mergers is now part of ParenteBeard LLC, where Dewey is currently a principal.

She succeeds Ann B. Brown, who is joining the Pittsburgh Foundation as vice president.

The Forbes Funds provide management assistance and technical expertise to nonprofit organizations.

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