

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH *and* WELLNESS MAGAZINE

MAKING ROUNDS

SPRING/SUMMER 2019




CAPE FEAR VALLEY
HEALTH

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MAKING ROUNDS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH

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CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH



A Joint Commission
TOP PERFORMER



LETTER *from the* CEO

Every year 735,000 Americans suffer a heart attack, what cardiologists call a myocardial infarction. Most victims wait two or more hours after symptoms begin before seeking medical help. Waiting can lead to death or permanent heart damage that can greatly impair everyday activities.

It's always best to call 911, even if you're not sure you are having a heart attack. Emergency medical personnel can begin treatment immediately, including performing an EKG. The test results can be transmitted instantly to the Emergency Department, so medical providers are ready to provide treatment the moment you arrive.

Cape Fear Valley even has an express elevator from the ED to our Heart & Vascular Center to speed up the treatment process. The special route minimizes door-to-balloon times, or the time from arrival to the time it takes to open up the coronary artery through balloon angioplasty.

Our excellence in cardiac care has paid off through recent recognition by Healthgrades®. The U.S. company is the leading online resource for comprehensive information about physicians and hospitals, so the acknowledgement really means something.

Cape Fear Valley Medical Center was named one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Care and Coronary Intervention. Patients treated at hospitals that receive the coronary intervention award have, on average, 46 percent lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award.

For its analysis, Healthgrades® evaluated approximately 45 million Medicare inpatient records for almost 4,500 acute care hospitals nationwide. The numbers included three years of Medicare patient data (2015-2017), using a statistical model comparing actual vs. predicted performance.



A three-star rating reflects “outcomes as expected.” A five-star rating reflects “outcomes better than expected,” while a one-star rating reflects “outcomes worse than expected.” Cape Fear Valley received five-star ratings for treatment of heart attack, heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The hospital was also named among the top 10 percent in the nation for cardiology services. All results are publicly reported on www.healthgrades.com.

We are proud of our achievements, but we won't rest on our laurels. As long as heart disease impacts peoples' lives, our cardiologists and cardiac surgeons will continue to advance treatments and improve outcomes.

That includes the opening of our new TAVR hybrid operating room. It enables our TAVR team to replace leaky valves without open heart surgery. You can read about this revolutionary new service in this edition of Making Rounds.

When we opened our Heart & Vascular Center 10 years ago, we made a promise to the community that we would always strive to provide award-winning heart care to southeastern North Carolina. It was a promise made and a promise kept.

Mike Nagowski
CEO, CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH



Leon Bradford was the first person to have a new minimally invasive heart valve replacement procedure at Cape Fear Valley. The procedure occurred in December and the recovery was so quick he was home the next day.



photo by Matthew Wonderly



Good Things Come To Those Who Wait

A new heart procedure is making staying
close to home all the more worthwhile

:: by Donnie Byers



Leon Bradford is one tough customer.

The 83-year-old has beaten cancer three times and still gets out of bed every day at 5 a.m. to go to work. But even the toughest octogenarian is still human.

Last year, doctors told him he needed heart valve replacement surgery due to aortic stenosis. The condition is caused by calcium buildup on the aortic valve wings, or leaflets. Too much buildup makes it harder for the valve to fully open and close.

Aortic stenosis affects more than 2.5 million Americans, age 75 and older, and can lead to dizziness, fatigue, difficulty breathing and eventual heart failure. Symptoms can also include chest pain, difficulty exercising, swollen ankles and feet, and rapid or irregular heartbeat.

Roughly half of severe aortic stenosis sufferers die within two years if they don't have valve replacement surgery. Bradford didn't want surgical aortic valve replacement, however.

Instead, he recently became the first person to have a new minimally invasive heart valve replacement procedure at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. The recovery was so quick Bradford was home the next day.

"I'm glad I waited for the new OR to open at Cape Fear Valley," he said. "It made things so much easier for my wife."

The procedure performed on Bradford is called transcatheter aortic valve replacement, or TAVR. It requires significantly less operating time than open-heart surgery, which requires the chest to be surgically separated.



photo by Matthew Wonderly



As a result, recovery time for the more-invasive open-chest valve replacement surgery typically takes a week in the hospital and several more at home.

In contrast, TAVR is performed with special balloon catheters inserted through the femoral artery near the groin and guided up to the heart.

A man-made replacement valve is then slid into the aortic valve opening and expanded. The expansion pushes the old valve's leaflets aside so the new valve can take over and regulate blood flow.

"It's the future of valve replacement surgery," said Amol Bahekar, M.D., an interventional cardiologist.

Dr. Bahekar and his colleague Thor Klang, M.D., trained six months at UNC Hospitals so they could offer TAVR locally. Both are pleased at how quickly patients are recovering. Patients are up and walking six hours after the procedure.

That's vital for a good recovery. Studies show the quicker surgery patients are up and moving the lower the risk for blood clots, pneumonia and skin breakdown.

"Everything's gone very well so far," Dr. Klang said.

Cape Fear Valley's decision to begin offering TAVR was two years in the making, after physicians approached the health system with the idea. Once approved, a team was assembled and sent to UNC to train.

TAVR may be quicker than open heart surgery, but it requires just as much manpower to perform. It involves interventional cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, radiologists, imaging specialists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, cardiac cath lab staff and nurses, in addition to administrative support staff.

Cape Fear Valley built a new state-of-the-art, hybrid operating room to perform the procedure. It is a surgical lab equipped with a fixed C-Arm digital X-Ray system and other advanced imaging equipment to enable a safer, more minimally invasive surgery.

Cape Fear Valley expects to do 20 to 25 TAVR procedures a year, but the procedure isn't for everyone. It's currently reserved for patients who aren't good candidates for open heart surgery, although that may change soon.



Cape Fear Valley built a new state-of-the-art, hybrid operating room to perform the procedure. It is a surgical lab equipped with a fixed C-Arm digital X-Ray system and other advanced imaging equipment to enable a safer, more minimally invasive surgery.

Like Bradford, Ruby Williams, 80, opted to stay close to home and have TAVR. The retired daycare owner didn't even know she needed valve replacement until a few weeks before her procedure.

She was experiencing dizziness and having trouble breathing and walking short distances. She attributed the problems to her age. However, a routine checkup showed she had a heart murmur due to a bad heart valve.

TAVR made her feel better almost immediately.

"As soon as I got up and walked down the hall, I could tell the difference," Williams said.

To learn more about minimally invasive valve replacement, visit www.newheartvalve.com or contact the Cape Fear Valley Valve Clinic at (910) 615-7083.



THE ULTIMATE GIFT

One Decision Can Save Eight Lives

:: by Lia Tremblay

Like most end-of-life decisions, organ donation can be hard to discuss with loved ones. But one productive conversation can make a huge difference to a family in crisis.

“On average, 78 people receive lifesaving organ transplants each day,” said Lisa Schaffner, Public Relations and Marketing Director for the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). “When you ask around at work, at church, in your community, you’d be amazed at the number of people who have been touched by organ donation.”

UNOS oversees the nationwide matching of organs between deceased donors and living recipients. Unfortunately, there’s a gap between the two that continues to widen: In a 20-year period, the number of people on waiting lists increased by more than 85,000. The number of donors increased by merely 8,700.

So why aren’t more people making the decision to donate organs?

“There’s a fear of talking about it,” said Schaffner. “People shy away from talking about death, but this is actually not a conversation about death. It’s about life.”

Multiple lives, in fact: One donor can provide a heart, two lungs, two kidneys, a liver, pancreas and intestines, all to separate recipients. That’s eight lives potentially saved by just one donor.

Dispelling the Myths

Some misconceptions about organ donation may be at the heart of many people’s hesitation to register. Which of these have you been accepting as fact?

Myth #1: If the hospital knows you're an organ donor, they won't work hard to save your life.

This is not true at all. The team working to save your life in an emergency is entirely separate from the people who would handle your donation if those efforts failed. In fact, hospital personnel are among the likeliest people to become organ donors, having seen for themselves that it can save multiple lives without endangering their own.

Myth #2: I'm too old (or sick) to donate my organs.

Age won't necessarily make your organs unusable (Schaffner recalls a recent donor who was 81 years old!). And very few medical conditions will automatically disqualify your organs from transplantation. Skilled, knowledgeable medical personnel can determine whether your donation is usable when the time comes.

Myth #3: Thousands of people die every day, so there are plenty of organs to go around.

People do die every day, but relatively few die under circumstances that make for a successful organ donation. If there were plenty of organs to go around, there would be no waiting lists.

Myth #4: My family will have an extra medical bill if I donate my organs.

Donor families are never charged for the procedures related to organ donation.

Myth #5: It's against my religion.

Are you sure? Most major religions have no restriction on organ donation at all. If you're not really sure where your faith stands on the issue, talk it over with a member of your clergy.

Becoming a Donor

It's easier than it's ever been to establish yourself as an organ donor. At the DMV, it's part of the process for obtaining or renewing your license. Just answer "yes" when asked about organ donation, and you'll get a little heart icon on your license that shows you've made that decision.

To register online, just go to donatelifenc.org and follow the directions there. You'll be added to an official statewide database, where your desire to donate will be recorded.

Both of these methods will make your decision to donate a legally binding contract, which means one less decision for your loved ones to make at the end of your life. And even if your death occurs in another state, your decision will be honored there.



Organ Donation Month Art Contest

Carolina Donor Services partnered with Cape Fear Valley Health in April to hold its third annual canvas painting contest to raise awareness about Organ Donation Month. This year's theme was "Bicycle: Life is a Beautiful Ride." Hospital units submitted their entries, which were displayed in the medical center lobby and voted on by the public and staff. The winner will be displayed later this year at the hospital's annual Organ Donor Memorial event.

Have the Conversation

At your next family dinner, talk about organ donation. Make your wishes known, so that it's not a surprise or mystery if something should happen to you. And see if some of those myths are keeping your family members from making a life-saving decision of their own.

Here are some interesting facts to get the conversation going:

The heart can only be in transit between donor and recipient for a maximum of six hours, so it tends to stay within a 500-mile radius of where it is donated.

Kidneys, on the other hand, remain viable for up to 48 hours, and can be sent to recipients just about anywhere in the nation.

Kidneys are also the most-needed organ and have the highest transplantation success rate.

Sicker patients and children take priority on the waiting list. Fame and fortune do not get you any higher on the list.

On average, 18 people a day die while waiting for the organs they need. (At unos.org, you can see a real-time update of the number of people on transplant waiting lists.)

With so many recipients adding years to their lives, and so many donor families seeing positive outcomes from their grief, there is much to be thankful for. Don't be afraid to consider what will happen to your organs when the time comes, or to talk to your family about the decision. One "yes" from you could bring tears of joy to eight other families.



bad medicine

:: by Donnie Byers

Not taking medication properly has major implications

Doctors write prescriptions every day with the belief that their patients will take the medication as prescribed. But that's often far from the case.

Just half of all patients take medication correctly, according to a Mayo Clinic study. Failure to do so can lead to real damage or severe consequences for not only the patient, but others, as well.

There's an actual term for taking medication properly. It's called "medication adherence." It requires taking medication on time and entirely.

The American Heart Association says poor medication adherence takes 125,000 American lives a year and costs the U.S. healthcare industry \$300 billion annually. The costs come from additional doctor visits, emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

There are a variety of reasons for non-adherence. A patient might not be convinced a medication will work or is working. They may fear side effects or have difficulty taking the medication. Or the medication may be too costly, or the patient simply forgets to take it.

Whatever the reason, taking medication as prescribed is vitally important. If a heart patient fails to take their blood pressure medication, then their risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and even death increases dramatically.

Autumn Mittleider, Pharm.D., is the Cape Fear Valley Ambulatory Care Track Residency Coordinator working with pharmacy residents. She says patients often fall into the non-adherence trap, which can significantly impact health and quality of life. She uses diabetic medication as an example.

“Failing to take it properly greatly affects blood sugar levels,” Mittleider said. “Blood sugars may become elevated for prolonged periods, leading to neuropathy, kidney disease, heart disease or blindness.

“The flipside is if the patient takes too much medication or self-adjusts their medications. It can put them at risk for low blood sugar levels. This could be potentially life-threatening.”

As bad as individual risks are, the potential for greater harm exists. Dangerous “super bugs” are on the rise due to decreasing effectiveness of many antibiotics. The effectiveness has decreased because people overuse or don’t finish taking prescribed antibiotics.

As a result, drug-resistant bacteria strains, such as MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus), have learned to adapt to many antibiotics. These superbugs were once confined to hospitals but are now spreading into the community.

Antibiotic resistant bacteria infect 2 million Americans a year, eventually killing 23,000. And the number of superbugs is growing, forcing the drug industry to find new “antibiotics of last resort.”

Non-adherence

One of the biggest barriers to proper medication adherence is the sheer number of pills patients often have to take. The number can be mind-boggling, and no manner of pill organizer can keep them properly sorted.

Cape Fear Valley Health is trying to eliminate the guessing game through a new medication adherence program. Patients who use Hoke Pharmacy and Center Pharmacy can opt to have their prescriptions pre-packaged in neatly organized blister packs.

Prescribed drug regimens are individually sorted and clearly labeled in the blister packs for morning, noon, night and bedtime. The days of opening multiple pill bottles and then having to differentiate one pill from another is eliminated.

“Everything is already thought out for you,” Mittleider said. “It gives you peace of mind, knowing you’ve already taken a medication on time.”

The blister packs can be delivered directly to a patient’s home at no additional copay cost. The best part is that patients who use other pharmacies can transfer their prescriptions to the Hoke or Center pharmacies to utilize the new program.

Word about the medication adherence program is growing. Center Pharmacy provides the service to roughly 85 patients a month, with 75 of them opting to have their blister packs sent directly to their home.

The best way to be more compliant may be to just talk to a doctor or pharmacist. They can explain in clear language why taking medication properly is important.

Not all patients will want to use pre-packaging, however. The importance of taking medication properly still remains.

Patients can use traditional pill boxes and set alarms on their phones or clocks to remind them to take their pills. Modern smartphones can download apps to help remind them to not only take medications but also automatically order refills.

However, the best way to be more compliant may be to just talk to a doctor or pharmacist. They can explain in clear language why taking medication properly is important.

To learn more about Cape Fear Valley’s Medication Adherence Program, call Hoke Pharmacy at (910) 904-8700 or Center Pharmacy at (910) 615-1800.

Recognition At Last

Cape Fear Valley is out to give
more credit where credit is due

Being a physician can be a thankless proposition.

People turn to physicians every day, but rarely does the patient ever thank, or even acknowledge, what they do. For their part, physicians are trained to do their best, regardless of recognition or compliments.

Cape Fear Valley Health wants to change that and has begun raising awareness about physician dedication through the health system's new Caduceus Society. The recognition program not only acknowledges quality physician care and leadership, but also serves as an avenue for physicians to collaborate and increase fellowship.

The Caduceus Society grew from discussions in 2017 between Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation and Cape Fear Valley's Medical Staff Services Department. The two sides wanted a way to honor physicians and get them more involved, according to Lynda Clark, Health Foundation Board Secretary.

"The goal was to try to recognize physicians for everything they do," she said, "Not just for the health system, but for the community at large."

A commemorative wall was chosen as the vehicle to do it. The display would quietly honor the names of physicians, including deceased and founding members, who have worked with the health system over the years.

Located in Cape Fear Valley Medical Center's front lobby, the wall exhibit was erected in bits and pieces over the course of a year before its official unveiling in December. The event drew numerous past and present physicians keen on seeing the new display.

Some audience members were still dressed in blue scrubs after a long day at the hospital. One of them was Scott Klenzak, M.D. The Cape Fear Valley Behavioral Health Care psychiatrist sneaked away from his ED rotation long enough to talk about the new wall's significance.



Dr. Klenzak said working in the community isn't enough. Being a part of it is just as important. He said giving to Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation and the new Caduceus Society are good first steps.

"I was struck by the idea behind this project," he said. "I had always donated to the foundation since I started working here, so when the possibility of this project came up, I was instantly attracted to it."

Names of major donors, like Dr. Klenzak, are etched onto glass and permanently displayed on the display wall. The public can be a part of the project by giving to the society in honor of a physician.

Mary Ussery was one of the first to donate. The 82-year-old Fayetteville retiree gave money in the name of four of her physicians, including Stuart Jordan, M.D.

The Fayetteville OB/GYN specialist was Ussery's doctor for nearly 30 years and helped her through a difficult cancer diagnosis. Ussery still gets emotional describing how she learned of the news.

Dr. Jordan called her at work and asked her if she was sitting down. Right then, Ussery knew she had cancer.

"He said we've got to get you a surgeon right away," Ussery said, with her voice starting to crack. "He made it a lot easier for me. He has been a good friend to me over the years."

Ussery beat the cancer and never forgot what her physicians have done for her over the years. Her contribution will go into a Caduceus Society endowment fund to help fund future physician projects, like new equipment purchases and physician services.

The funding endeavor will play a vital role in coming years, as hospitals nationwide face ever-tightening purse strings. The budget cuts are due to never-ending healthcare reform and decreasing insurance reimbursements from the government.

Despite all the hurdles, Cape Fear Valley will continue to provide the best patient care possible, thanks to the dedication of all its physicians, care providers and the gracious support of people like Mary Ussery.

COMMUNITY *giving.* COMMUNITY *healing.*

These words reflect the work of Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation. Gifts through the Foundation strengthen our community by improving and enriching healthcare. Thanks to a community of generous givers, we are making a positive impact and providing healing to you, your family and friends who receive care from Cape Fear Valley Health.

[NOW YOU KNOW] *In 2018, your donations helped provide:*

\$818,339

to enhance *patient*
care and facilities

\$288,392

enriching care for
cancer patients

\$106,944

training the next
generation of physicians

\$413,692

for *community*
health initiatives

\$122,509

enhancing *diabetes care*
for adults and children

\$87,363

enhancing *children's*
services

2018 COMMUNITY DONATIONS

We extend our gratitude to all donors to Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation and their financial support of our program. The following is a cumulative list of all donors who have given \$1,000 and above during 2018. Due to space limitations we are not able to list all our donors, but your gifts, no matter the amount, are all greatly appreciated. Any omissions or errors in the donor listings were unintentional. If there are errors, please accept our apologies and contact us at (910) 615-1285 or CFVHealthFoundation@capefearvalley.com so the situation can be corrected. Thank you.

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43 Donors Chose to Remain Anonymous

**Denotes Deceased*

the War within

:: by Lia Tremblay

Helping
your gut
bacteria
fight the
good fight

You probably don't think much about your digestive system until a dreaded ailment or ill-advised meal has suddenly put it in distress. But at every moment, even while you're peacefully sleeping, a dramatic war is being waged inside your belly.

More than just an empty conduit for food, the gut contains about 100 trillion bacteria. It may sound like the basis of a dreadful plague, but these bacteria aren't all bad. The beneficial ones help keep the number of harmful ones in check, and they help metabolize nutrients and medications as they pass through your body. They also keep your colon clean, break up gas bubbles, and help your immune system fight harmful pathogens that would otherwise make you sick.

When these good bacteria become outnumbered or overpowered, you may begin to notice really uncomfortable symptoms: bloating, cramping, diarrhea and nausea. If you've ever had a bout of diarrhea after taking antibiotics for an infection, you have experienced this. While killing the bacteria they were prescribed to get rid of, those antibiotics were also doing a number on the helpful bacteria in your gut.

Maintaining a healthy balance of bacteria in your gut doesn't just keep those nasty symptoms at bay. Some research suggests it can also help you maintain a healthy weight, keep cholesterol in balance, keep your blood sugar in check, and even improve your mental health.

So how do you make sure to have plenty of helpful bacteria in there?

The Pros of Probiotics

One way to boost your good bacteria is to simply eat more of them. Probiotics are foods or supplements that contain these live microorganisms, which take up residence in your belly and begin their important work right away.

The most common example is yogurt, which is made by fermenting milk with a variety of bacteria. Other fermented, probiotic-rich foods include sauerkraut, kombucha and kimchi.

If that menu doesn't appeal to you, there are probiotic supplements on the market so you can get the goods in one gulp. Dozens of different varieties are commercially available, and while they're all formulated to thrive in the stomach's acidic environment, no two are truly alike. Some contain multiple strains of a single species, while others contain multiple species. They may contain hundreds of colonies, or billions.



Most probiotic supplements are intended for general health, but some are created to address a specific problem, such as irritable bowel syndrome or Crohn's disease. Your doctor can help you decide whether a specific formulation of probiotics is the one you need.

A Primer on Prebiotics

Whether you're adding probiotics or going with what you've got, you need to feed those good bacteria so they'll thrive. Eating particular plant fibers, called prebiotics, is a great way to stimulate their growth.

Prebiotics are found in many fruits and vegetables, particularly ones that contain the most fiber. Apples, bananas, oranges and pears are great fruits to keep on hand for this. Raspberries beat them all with eight grams of fiber per cup. Peas, broccoli,

brussels sprouts and turnip greens are the most fiber-packed veggies to have on hand.

Whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat pasta, quinoa and oatmeal, are high-fiber staples for any pantry. But the biggest fiber impact of all comes from lentils, black beans and chia seeds, all of which contain at least 10 grams of fiber per cup.

With so many great prebiotic foods to choose from, there's little reason for prebiotic supplements, but they are commercially available. If allergies or aversions prevent you from eating a wide variety of foods, consider consulting with a registered dietitian for advice on supplements.

Go with Your Gut

Now that you know about the tiny microorganisms fighting around the clock for your health, you may begin to think more about what you're feeding them. You already knew that eating a variety of plant-based foods was good for you, but now you know you're not the only life sustained by it.

Aside from probiotics and prebiotics, here are some dietary tips to help the good guys in your gut:

Watch out for sugar and fat. Everyone loves a good cheesecake, but if you make these things a habit instead of a rare treat, you're feeding the bad bacteria.

Be wary of processed foods. If your meal comes prepared in a box or a bag, it's likely been through processing that obliterates the fiber your good bacteria thrive on. Worse, it may be loaded with sugar and fat that aids the enemy.

Focus on fruits and vegetables. Challenge yourself to get five servings each day. This will help you feed the good bacteria, and will also help you lower your consumption of the animal proteins that help bad bacteria flourish.

Once you've established these good habits, you'll likely notice some pleasant changes from your gut, like more regular bowel movements and less bloating. You may even notice improved overall physical and mental health. That's a pretty sweet payoff for taking good care of yourself and your microscopic companions.

Working It Out



Cardiac rehab
lets patients
get back on
their feet and
in shape

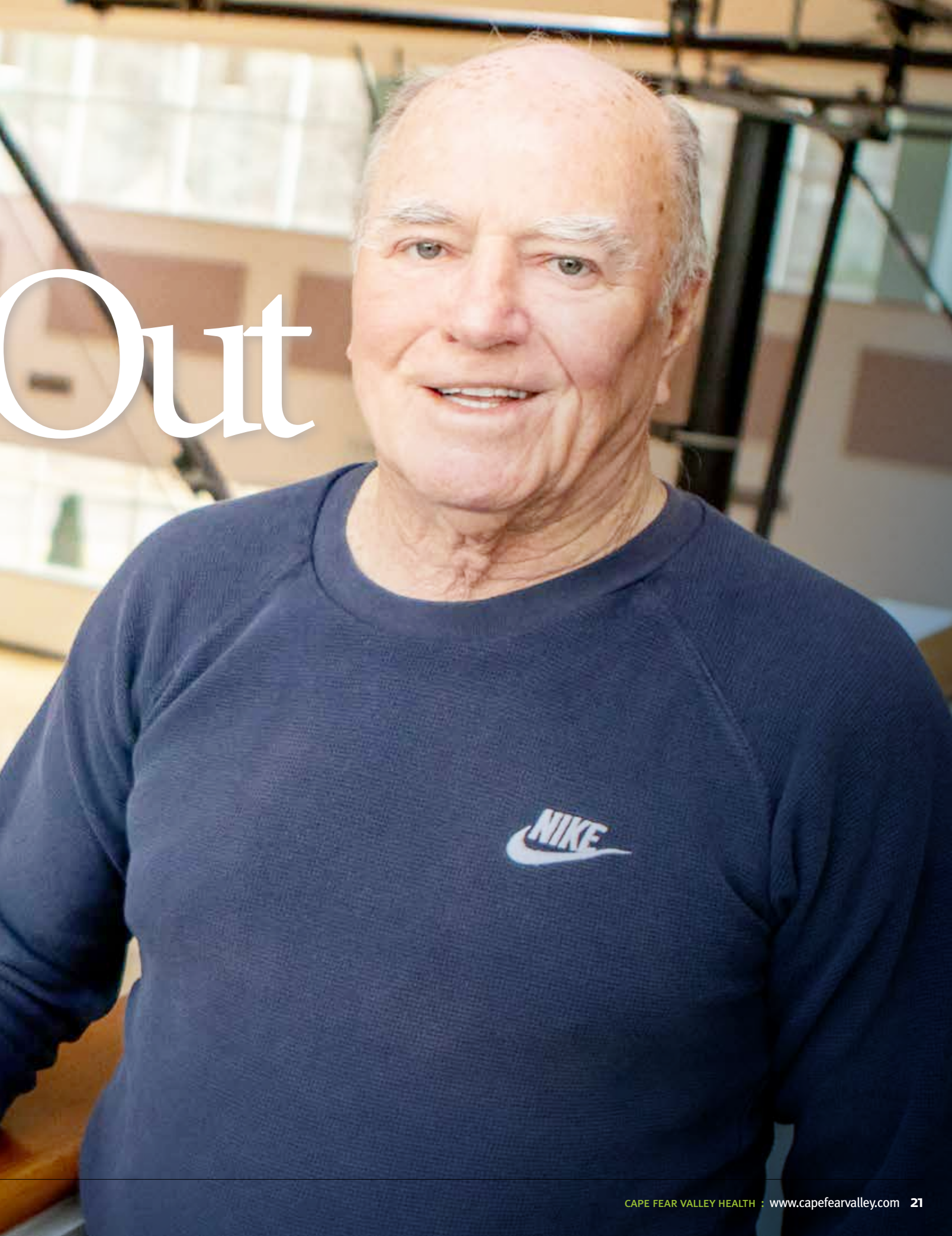
John Griffith has spent his entire adult life staying healthy and fit, first as a Special Forces soldier, then as a civilian combat instructor at Fort Bragg. But as always, Father Time caught up.

The 83-year-old retiree suffered a major heart blockage 11 years ago, requiring triple bypass surgery. Being the fighter that he still is, Griffith bounced back quickly with the help of cardiac rehabilitation.

The rehab started while still in the hospital. Then he did three months as an outpatient in the phase II cardiac rehabilitation program at Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center.

:: by Donnie Byers

Out





Griffith could have easily gone on his way after that. He chose to continue rehabbing in the maintenance program at Cape Fear Valley's HealthPlex instead. The maintenance program allows patients to continue exercising and changing their lifestyle in a supervised setting, but with a bit more independence.

The program is open-ended so there's no completion date. Some patients have stuck with it for more than 20 years. The record is 27 years.

Griffith has been with the program for more than a decade. He loves the daily exercise so much, he signed up his entire family for HealthPlex membership. His wife, Cathy, and son, Michael, who is autistic, have even joined him in rehab sessions.

"It keeps you in shape," Griffith said, "and you get to know and work out alongside a really great group of people."

The camaraderie is great, but the health benefits are even better. A recent study showed cardiac patients who did one-on-one rehab exercise reduced their risk of death between 12 to 24 percent. Another study showed maintenance rehab can reduce death risk by 26 to 31 percent.

The more the exercise, the greater the long-term benefits, including living longer and a better quality of life.

Rae Ashley, Cape Fear Valley's Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation and Vascular Health Program Manager, says exercise is just like medicine.

"There's a dose effect," Ashley said, "in the number of sessions people attend and their long-term outcome. The longer they're in the program, the better the outcomes."

Members attend rehab sessions two to three times a week, usually in the morning. The program is a lifestyle-changer, with an educational component. Members learn heart-healthy eating and how to better handle daily stress.

Many insurances cover cardiac rehab, including Medicare. A physician referral is required to join Cape Fear Valley's program, and patients must be recovering from a heart attack, stent catheterization, angioplasty or bypass surgery. Enrollment is also open to patients with stable angina and congestive heart failure in some cases.

Ashley says heart failure patients can especially benefit from the program. It monitors their weight, medication compliance and leads to better disease management. These patients are continually at risk for hospital readmission due to difficulty in keeping water weight down.

The cardiac rehab maintenance program is technically separate from HealthPlex, but class members blend right in. The only giveaway is their close supervision by program staff. If a member's heart rate or blood pressure shoots too high, they are asked to take a break until their vitals normalize.

Program members have access to all the weights, aerobic equipment and walking track. They can also go downstairs and participate in stretching and strengthening sessions with a cardiac rehab instructor.

Family members are invited to join in, as the Griffith family can attest. Mr. Griffith attends class three times a week. His week starts off with his blood pressure, resting heart rate and oxygen levels being taken. He can begin exercising once he's cleared by the program nurse and exercise physiologist.

Cape Fear Valley Health offers outpatient cardiac rehab at Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center, Bladen County Hospital in Elizabethtown, and Betsy Johnson Hospital in Dunn.

Most cardiac rehab programs last 12 weeks or 36 sessions. Patients attend one session a day, three days a week. If a patient misses a class or goes on vacation, they can reschedule to achieve their 36-session goal. Cardiac rehabilitation is covered by most insurances, including Medicare.

FAYETTEVILLE

Cape Fear Valley Heart & Vascular Center offers Cardiac Rehab, Vascular Rehab and Cardiopulmonary Rehab classes Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Times vary depending on the program. The sessions meet in the Cardiac Rehab Gym at Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center. For more information, call (910) 615-6578 or (910) 615-4469.

ELIZABETHTOWN

Bladen County Hospital offers Cardiopulmonary Rehab classes six times a day on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Classes are held at Bladen County Hospital, 501 S. Poplar St. For more information, call (910) 862-5135.

DUNN

Betsy Johnson Hospital offers Cardiac and Cardiopulmonary Rehab classes Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m., through its Rehab Wellness Program. Classes will soon be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The hospital address is 800 Tilghman Drive. For more information, call (910) 892-1000, ext. 4610.

Griffith's favorite exercise is walking on a treadmill for 20 to 25 minutes. He also regularly goes downstairs to do balance drills, calisthenics and stretching with giant rubber bands.

On Fridays, Griffith will do light weights with dumbbells with classmates downstairs. After that, it's back upstairs to do more arm and leg workouts on stationary equipment.

The routine is far from ordinary for most octogenarians, but Griffith wouldn't have it any other way.

"I don't plan on stopping anytime soon," he said. "I'll come for as long as I can."





an *Epic* Change

Cape Fear Valley's new electronic medical records system will make a major impact

After nearly a year of preparation, Cape Fear Valley Health has switched to a new electronic health records system that should benefit not only the health system, but patients as well.

Called Epic, the software went online May 3 with little fanfare, despite a massive undertaking. The conversion involved nearly every IT staff member and more than 1,000 clinicians.

The end result is a new records system that provides a more tightly-integrated technology platform for the state's eighth-largest healthcare system. Epic is already used by many of *U.S. News & World Report's* top-ranked hospitals and provides records for roughly 64 percent of U.S. patients.

The immense popularity is significant. Organizations using Epic can seamlessly interoperate. That means they can easily exchange patient data, which closes treatment gaps and reduces duplication of services.

The software's key feature is its ability to maintain just one electronic record per patient, versus several. Electronic health records, or EHRs, are digital versions of the traditional paper charts once used in all doctors' offices, clinics and hospitals.

EHRs do far more, however. They can track patient data in real time over long periods. This allows providers to analyze how a patient's treatment progresses. They can also identify patients for preventive office visits and screenings and automatically send appointment reminders. The added functionality makes EHRs actual care-providing tools.

Epic records go a step further. They contain complete patient health histories from a primary hospital, as well as other facilities where the patient receives care. That includes Cape Fear Valley Health physician offices.

Every hospital, emergency department and clinic at Cape Fear Valley now uses the Epic system. Every health system provider has all the information they need to treat patients from one system, regardless of the clinic or hospital where the patient is seen. The information includes, patient medications, allergies, immunizations and test results.

Epic also replaces numerous other software systems Cape Fear Valley previously used, including those for patient billing. The switch consolidates bills into one combined hospital and physician clinic statement. Bills are easier to pay online, as a result.

Phill Wood, Cape Fear Valley's Chief Information Officer, says the Epic name is fitting, since the new software affects nearly every aspect of patient care at Cape Fear Valley.

"This is going to be a game-changer for us," he said.

Patients also benefit from the software switch because of Epic's myChart feature. The free online patient portal allows users to view test results, update information, communicate with providers, and manage their appointments and prescription renewals with a single password.

Android and iPhone users can even download the myChart app directly onto their phone.

MyChart's biggest selling point is its accessibility. If a patient is injured or hospitalized out of town, chances are the treating hospital also uses Epic. Roughly 80 percent of hospitals in N.C. are on the Epic network.

The popularity means those hospitals have nearly instant access to the same patient medical records, versus having to request records stored on a different platform. The wait time – no matter how short – can be pivotal during emergencies.

Physicians also have 24-hour access to the records. They can log into the Epic network using a dedicated physician portal.

Wood says Cape Fear Valley is fully embracing its new EMR system and urges patients to sign up for a free myChart account as soon as possible. The more patients sign up, the greater the software's functionality.

"It'll truly put patient records in the patient's own hands," he said.

To sign up for myChart, visit www.capefearvalley.com and click on the myChart icon.

myChart at CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH

► Manage Appointments

Schedule new appointments or view details about past and upcoming appointments.

► Request Prescription Renewals

Send a request for any renewable prescription.

► Cancel Appointments

Patients on a waitlist can be notified via text when an opening becomes available and can reschedule their appointment for the new opening.

► Access Test Results

View results and doctor's comments within days. No more waiting for a phone call or letter.

► Communicate With Your Doctor

Get answers to medical questions without having to call or scheduling unnecessary appointments.

► Pay Bills Online

Access and pay copays and bills from home.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a man with short dark hair and a light beard, smiling broadly and looking upwards towards a bright blue sky with soft white clouds. He is wearing a white polo shirt with thin horizontal stripes. The background is slightly blurred, showing green foliage.

take your body
for a

tune up

:: by Ginny Capiot

The human body is a finely tuned engine.

It has to have fuel and good lubrication to run properly. But just as an engine's oil must be filtered to remove contaminants, so must the body's blood to maintain performance.

Kidneys are the human body's equivalent to automotive oil filters. They filter out toxins created by food, as well as regulate how much water to retain. The body can't run properly when kidneys don't function properly.

Unfortunately, kidneys can malfunction without visible symptoms. Ninety-six percent of kidney disease sufferers don't even know they have the condition. That's why it's important to have kidney function testing during yearly physicals.

Moses Aboagye-Kumi, M.D., a Nephrologist at Carolina Kidney Care, sees hundreds of patients with kidney disease each year. He says many don't learn of a problem until they go to an emergency department and need life-saving dialysis, a process that filters blood.

"There are no symptoms until the disease becomes really advanced," said Dr. Kumi. "Then we see swelling, nausea, weight loss and protein in urine."

To the human eye, this protein makes urine look foamy.

There is no reversing kidney disease. But if treated properly, the disease can be slowed. If left untreated, kidneys fail and regular dialysis or a kidney transplant is needed to survive.

Anyone can develop kidney disease. African Americans, diabetics and those with high blood pressure are at greater risk. African Americans make up 35 percent of all U.S. patients receiving dialysis but represent just 13 percent of the population.

"African Americans are predisposed to kidney disease," said Dr. Kumi. "We believe there is a genetic component."

Some experts are studying a gene that may link African Americans to higher risk. Others think higher blood pressure and diabetes rates are a more plausible link.

An estimated 5 million African Americans over age 20 have diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes. The chronic condition can lead to kidney disease, because high blood sugar can make the kidneys work too hard. Over time, the organ's filtration system is permanently damaged.

High blood pressure can also damage the kidneys and eventually lead to failure. Dr. Kumi says the best way to prevent kidney disease is to lead a healthy lifestyle.

"If you are diabetic or have high blood pressure, control your disease," he said. "Avoid NSAIDs if you can, as they can damage your kidneys. Instead take Tylenol for pain."

NSAIDs are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen, aspirin and Aleve.

Dr. Kumi advises his patients to avoid eating too much protein and to minimize their salt intake, especially if they have high blood pressure.

"Consuming up to 2 grams of salt per day is what I recommend," he said. "It's very easy to get, so we need to be aware and check food labels to make sure we are not eating too much salt each day."

Patients unsure about what to eat or what medication to take should talk to their primary care physician. It is important for everyone to have a physician for this reason and to have yearly physicals.

Fail to do so, Dr. Kumi said, and the human body can eventually suffer, just like a car's performance.

"You *need* a primary care physician," he said. "They can test you for diabetes and screen for high blood pressure. They can test your blood and urine for kidney problems."

To learn more about kidney disease, visit www.niddk.nih.gov or speak to your physician. If you don't have a primary care physician, visit www.capefearvalley.com and choose the "Find a Physician" search function to find a physician near you.



No Regrets

Life is where it takes
you for this Board of
Trustee member

:: by Donnie Byers

Tammy Thurman is a firm believer in destiny.

The Dunn native once dreamt of going into the military, just like her brother and father. She even took the ASVAB test in anticipation. But the aspiring Air Force cadet changed her mind at the last minute, opting for college instead.

The decision weighed on Thurman for years, before she finally accepted it. She went on to graduate from St. Augustine's University in Raleigh before going to work for Progress Energy. She's been with the company, now owned by Piedmont Natural Gas, ever since.

"Now that I look back, I know I wouldn't have been any good in the military," Thurman said with a hearty chuckle. "I'm where I'm supposed to be."

Joking aside, the community relations manager firmly believes in the statement. She works for an energy corporation with more than 1 million residential, commercial and industrial customers throughout North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Her responsibility includes all of Piedmont's customers east of Interstate 95.

The vast swath of territory requires her to wear a variety of hats. She has a hand in everything from philanthropy and interacting with local governments and community nonprofits, to finding community volunteer opportunities for company employees.

There's almost never a boring day at the office either, because she's rarely in it. She's always in her car, but life on the road does have perks. Thurman sees parts of the East Coast most people will never lay eyes on, like impossibly beautiful sunsets along the outer banks or quaint little towns and villages invisible to passersby.

She also gets to eat at some of the best delicatessens and food dives this side of Guy Fieri. Her favorite is Bahama Breeze in Raleigh, but the shrimp and grits at Chelsea's in New Bern also keeps her coming back. And then there's the crab dip served at Elijah's, right off the river in Wilmington.

"It's the best crab dip ever," Thurman said with excitement swelling her voice. "No one has crab dip like they do!"

The unabashed foodie isn't afraid to admit she also likes to shop. And boutique stores are a fun distraction. However, much of her free time is spent at church. She's a woman of faith, and her faith means everything to her.

"I work, and work, and work," Thurman said, "but I'm a thankful person and my faith in God is number one to me. If I'm not working, I'm in church building my relationship with Christ.

it's just amazing the things
we're able to do when we
put our mind to it

She also works in the community as a Cape Fear Valley Health board member and mentor. She laughs when describing the confused looks she gets when mentioning the latter.

Most people think mentors are therapists. They are quite the opposite. Instead of trying to explain problems, mentors help identify goals and ways to achieve them.

Thurman has worked with everyone from Future Business Leaders of America students to at-risk youth in Cumberland County public schools. She also mentors young girls and college students. Her goal is to explain life's bigger picture and how not to get caught up in road blocks.

The work recently led to her receiving the Governor's Volunteer Service Award. Created in 2006, the annual honor recognizes the top 20-25 volunteers in the state.

If nothing else, the award is confirmation Thurman's decision to go to college and not into the military was the right one. And that's enough for her.

"It's just amazing the things we're able to do," she said, "when we put our mind to it."

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : *NEWS briefs*

Cape Fear Valley Named Top 100 Hospital

Cape Fear Valley Medical Center was named a top 100 Hospital for Cardiac Care and Coronary Intervention by Healthgrades, which studies patient quality at more than 4,500 hospitals nationwide every year. The medical center was also honored for the following:

- **Top 5% in the Nation** for Coronary Interventional Procedures
- **Top 10% in the Nation** for Overall Cardiac Services
- **Top 10% in the Nation** for Cardiology Services
- **Top 10% in the Nation** for Coronary Interventional Procedures, two years in a row (2018-2019)
- **Five Stars** for Coronary Interventional Procedures, Heart Attack, Heart Failure and COPD



Governor Roy Cooper Visits Harnett Health

Governor Roy Cooper visited Betsy Johnson Hospital in Dunn with other local leaders to discuss rural healthcare and assess damage done to the hospital during Hurricane Florence last September. During the tour, Governor Cooper made sure to stop and thank nurses and staff for their hard work.





Senator Thom Tillis Visits Steven A. Cohen Clinic

On March 21, U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis visited the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Cape Fear Valley. The clinic director, Sheila Weaver, gave a tour of the facility, and the senator talked with a former client about how the Cohen Clinic has positively affected her life.



Hometown Strong

State officials met with Bladen County leaders to discuss ways to better partner under a new grassroots initiative. Governor Roy Cooper's Hometown Strong program was created last year to provide better support for local economies, improve infrastructure and strengthen rural communities such as Bladen County. The goal is to help local business thrive by focusing on projects such as infrastructure improvements, broadband internet access and better workforce training. Bladen Healthcare officials took part in the discussion.



Hoke Healthcare Earns Hip and Knee Replacement Distinction

Hoke Healthcare has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™ for healthcare quality in the areas of Total Hip Replacement Surgery and Total Knee Replacement Surgery. Established in 2016 and awarded for a two-year period, the certification process was developed in response to a growing number of patients undergoing total hip or total knee replacement surgery. Hoke Hospital began performing total hip and knee replacement surgery in 2018. Bradley Broussard, M.D., and James Flanagan, M.D., of Cape Fear Orthopedics, perform the surgeries.



Heartfelt Banquet

Former cardiac arrest patients recently thanked their rescuers and care providers during a Heartfelt Banquet for Cardiac Arrest Survivors. Guests included survivors treated at Cape Fear Valley Health during the past year. Everyone who helped save their lives, including 911 dispatchers, first responders, paramedics, emergency department physicians, cardiac catheterization teams and cardiologists, were in attendance.

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : **NEW physicians****Family Medicine****Sterling Riddley, M.D.**

Southern Regional Area Health Education Center

Family Medicine: Southern Regional Area Health Education Center, Fayetteville, N.C.

Medical Degree: Ross University School of Medicine, Portsmouth, Dominica

Board Certification: Family Medicine

**Oral Surgery****Jeffrey Aycock, D.M.D.**

Southeastern Dental Specialists

Oral Surgery: John Sealy Hospital/ University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas

Dental Degree: University of Mississippi, Jackson, Miss.

Board Eligible: American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

**Orthopedics****Benjamin Levine, M.D.**

Cape Fear Orthopedics

Hand and Upper Extremity: University of Rochester, Rochester, N.Y.

Orthopedics: University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Medical Degree: University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Board Certification: Orthopedics, Hand Surgery

Research and Educational Symposium Awards

Cape Fear Valley Health Physician Residents were the big winners at Campbell University's Second Annual Regional Research and Educational Symposium held on Feb. 15. Cape Fear Valley's residents took home seven prizes in nine award categories. There were more than 100 poster presentations during this year's symposium.

The grand prize winners were second-year Internal Medicine Residents **Nicholas Biondi, D.O.**, **Michael Samiratedu, D.O.**, and **Adam Rosenblum, D.O.**, and Riley Bowers, PharmD, BCCP, BCPS, Clinical Assistant Professor at Campbell University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. The group worked together on *The Impact of Interprofessional Monitoring and Education on the Usage of Systemic Glucocorticosteroids in Acute Exacerbations of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)*.

Other winners included:

First-year Obstetrics and Gynecology Residents **Melissa Wyche, D.O.**, and **Krista Morgan, D.O.**, and **David Schutzer, M.D.**, with Hoke OB/GYN, for their presentation on *Unruptured Rudimentary Uterine Horn Pregnancy: A Case Study*.

First-year Internal Medicine Resident **Sanad Alshareef, D.O.**, and **Teshome Hailemichael, M.D.**, with Cape Fear Valley Hospitalist Group, for their presentation on *A 45-year-old Female with Hepatobiliary Candidiasis*.

Mayank Singhal, M.D., with Cape Fear Valley Hospitalist Group, **Mohammed Abdel-Rahim, D.O.**, first-year Internal Medicine Resident, and Brandis Moore, Campbell University Medical Student, for their presentation on *Facial Droop: Keeping an Ear Out for Ramsay Hunt Syndrome*.

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : *PHYSICIAN briefs*

Nicholas Biondi, D.O.



Michael Samiratedu, D.O.



Adam Rosenblum, D.O.



Melissa Wyche, D.O.



Krista Morgan, D.O.



David Schutzer, M.D.,



Sanad Alshareef, D.O.

Teshome Hailemichael,
M.D.

Mayank Singhal, M.D.

Mohammed
Abdel-Rahim, D.O.

Matthew Shakespeare, D.O., first-year Obstetrics and Gynecology Resident, James Wert, Campbell University Medical Student, and **Mayank Singhal, M.D.**, with Cape Fear Valley Hospitalist Group, for their presentation on *FSGS: A Case of End Stage Renal Disease in a Young Patient*.

Mayank Singhal, M.D., with Cape Fear Valley Hospitalist Group, **Scott Stockholm, D.O.**, first-year Internal Medicine Resident, and Zachary Brooks, Campbell University Medical Student, for their presentation on *Understanding Multiple Myeloma: A Case Report and Review of Literature*.

Beulah Vaz, D.O., first-year Emergency Department Resident, **Laura Adams, D.O.**, Transitional-Year Intern, and **Fred Caruso, M.D.**, with Valley Radiology, for their presentation on *Mirizzi Syndrome: Case Report in a 14 Year Old Female Status Post Cholecystectomy*.

Matthew Shakespeare,
D.O.

Scott Stockholm, D.O.



Beulah Vaz, D.O.



Laura Adams, D.O.



Fred Caruso, M.D.

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : **PHYSICIAN** *briefs*

Nancy Finnigan, D.O.

board certified in Internal Medicine and Nephrology. In her new duties, Dr. Finnegan will provide support and assistance for the growing graduate medical education programs at Cape Fear Valley Health and Harnett Health.

Nancy Finnigan, D.O., has been appointed Regional Assistant Dean and Program Director for Cape Fear Valley Medical Center's Internal Medicine Residency Program. Dr. Finnegan was previously Program Director of the health system's Transitional Rotating Internship program within the department of Graduate Medical Education. She is



Bikramjit Grewal, M.D.

fellowship in sports medicine at The Hughston Clinic in Columbus, Ga. Dr. Grewal previously was Team Physician for the Fayetteville Fireantz and Columbus Cottonmouths ice hockey teams. He is board certified in orthopedic surgery. For an appointment, please call (910) 893-4041.

Bikram Grewal, M.D., has joined Harnett Health Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, located at 716 S. 10th Street in Lillington. Dr. Grewal specializes in joint replacement surgery and arthroscopic surgery for sports-related injuries. He completed his orthopedic residency at University of North Carolina Hospitals in Chapel Hill and a

New Residents Coming to Campus

Cape Fear Valley Health received 4,811 applications for its 47 residency slots in the program's third year. More than 460 fourth year medical students traveled to the medical center to interview, and 270 applicants ranked in National Matching Service (NMS) and National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) matches. Cape Fear Valley has 155 residency positions approved in internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, general surgery, psychiatry, and transitional year internship. The new residents will arrive for orientation in late June and begin rotations July 1.

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH SUPPORT *for the* Community

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group

Third Tuesday of each month
2 – 3 p.m.

Medical Arts Center
101 Robeson St., Suite 106

Sam Hutchinson at (910) 615-1633

Arthritis Support Group

Fourth Monday of each month
(except February, July and December)
7 – 8 p.m.

Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center
Library

Stacia Britton at (910) 615-4078

Better Breathers Support Group

Second Thursday of each month
5 – 6 p.m.

Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center
Cardiopulmonary Rehab Classroom
(910) 615-7822 or (910) 615-7845

Cancer Support Group

Mondays
10 – 11 a.m.

Health Pavilion North Cancer Center
6387 Ramsey St., Suite 140

(910) 615-3856 or (910) 615-3844

Defibrillator Support Group

Meets quarterly, Jan. 17, April 18,
July 18, Oct. 17
6 – 7:30 p.m.

Cape Fear Valley Cancer Center
1638 Owen Drive

Laurie Costello at (910) 615-8753

Facebook Cancer Support Groups

*There are two online groups:
Ladies Only and Just the Guys*

Join an online group where patients
can share issues and concerns that arise
from a cancer diagnosis and its impact
on daily life.

To join a group, call (910) 615-6580

Mended Hearts of Fayetteville

Second Thursday of each month
6 – 7:30 p.m.

HealthPlex, Room C
1930 Skibo Road

(910) 615-6580

Scleroderma Support Group

Third Saturday of each month
10 a.m. – noon

Medical Arts Center, Room 106A,
101 Robeson St.

(910) 308-9792 or (910) 237-2390

Spinal Cord Injury Support Group

First Monday of each month
3 – 4 p.m.

Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center
Patient Cafeteria

(910) 615-4051 or (910) 615-6066

Stroke Support Group

Third Wednesday of each month
3 – 4 p.m.

Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center
Physical Therapy Gym

(910) 615-4344

Laid-back *vibes*
saving lives


CAPE FEAR VALLEY
BLOOD DONOR CENTER

Summer is here! It's time to kick
back, relax and save some lives.

For more info, call (910) 615-5433 or visit www.savingliveslocally.org



Your heart.
Our Hands.
One focus.

When a hospital focuses on quality care, it's the patients who come out the winners.

So when Healthgrades named Cape Fear Valley Medical Center one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Care *and* Coronary Intervention we knew our patients would benefit the most.

Patients treated at hospitals that receive the Coronary Intervention award have, on average, 46 percent lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award. The risk of dying was 27 percent lower at hospitals that received the Cardiac Care award.*



CAPE FEAR VALLEY
HEART *and* VASCULAR CENTER

www.capefearvalley.com/heart