

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH *and* WELLNESS MAGAZINE

MAKING ROUNDS

FALL 2020




CAPE FEAR VALLEY
HEALTH

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CORRECTION: In the Summer 2020 issue of Making Rounds we omitted the following from the Health Foundation's 2019 Community Donations listing:

PRESIDENT'S SOCIETY : \$25,000 TO \$49,999

Dr. Karen Jones and Dr. Joel Horowitz

Thank you to all donors to Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation

MAKING ROUNDS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH

MAKING ROUNDS is published by the Marketing & Outreach Department of Cape Fear Valley Health System.

Cape Fear Valley is a non-profit community-owned health system. Please direct all correspondence to: Marketing & Outreach Department
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P.O. Box 2000
Fayetteville, NC 28302-2000

www.capefearvalley.com

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A Joint Commission
TOP PERFORMER



LETTER *from the* CEO

When the silver bell rings at Cape Fear Valley Cancer Treatment and CyberKnife Center, it is the sound of a patient who has completed treatment in his or her cancer journey.

Cancer affects all of us.

You can't go anywhere without meeting someone who has not been affected. We all know a loved one or a friend who has been diagnosed with cancer, is battling cancer or has died of cancer.

It took my mom at age 59, and I am still angry about it. She had so much more in life to look forward to and so much more to give. She had four sons, all of us who grew up in our home town of Buffalo, New York, and she was taken too soon before we ever could pay her back for all she gave to us as our mother.

This is October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and our Making Rounds publication is dedicated to the commitment of our physicians, oncologists, nurses and all of our Cape Fear Valley Healthcare team, who tirelessly give of themselves each day to treat and bring those diagnosed with cancer to full recovery.

You will find stories and photographs about Dr. Lief Nordberg and Dr. Elizabeth Sawyer, gifted surgeons in the

fight against breast cancer, and not to forget Gladys Hill, the community volunteer who again is staging her "Light Up Fayetteville Pink" fundraising effort to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month, with funding for Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation's Friends of the Cancer Center; the work of surgical oncologist Dr. Pragatheeshwar Thirunavukarasu to include hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy for advanced cancers; Dr. Melissa Stamates, a skilled neurosurgeon who has been with us since July of 2019; and Dr. Kamal Bakri, the retiring oncologist who has been with Cape Fear Valley Cancer Centers since 1988.

We've been fighting cancer with everything we can. We have had more than 120,000 patients visiting our Cancer Centers in the past year alone. While technology is so much better today, we have so much further to go ... and we are working for you. We have a medical team of more than 100 oncology specialists covering all areas of medical and radiation oncology. We have expanded our Health Pavilion North Cancer Center and have opened a Cancer Center in Harnett County, and we are exploring opening Cancer Centers in Hoke and Bladen counties.

Let me assure you that should cancer call, all of us at Cape Fear Valley Health are here for you. And may our Silver Bell be a forever reminder we always will be.

Mike Nagowski

CEO, CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH

Seeking



Mark, Anna Grace, Suzy and Emma Cobb with their dogs, Belle and Bailey

Peace Of Mind

A cancer survivor makes a difficult choice
during her journey back to normalcy

:: by Donnie Byers

No one really knows how they will react

to a cancer diagnosis until the time actually comes.

Suzy Cobb's moment of truth came in November 2018.

Doctors told her she had breast cancer after reading her needle biopsy results. The news stunned the Cape Fear Valley physician recruiter, as a sense of fear and uncertainty started to overwhelm her.

This wasn't supposed to be happening, she thought. She felt fine and had a busy career to think about. And what of her two teen daughters and husband? Who would help take care of them if she were to pass away?

"I was scared," Cobb said. "You spend all this time praying you don't hear the word 'cancer,' and when you do, it takes your breath away."

Her uneasy journey to that moment started just weeks before. A routine mammogram found something abnormal, which wasn't new in her case. She had false-positive screenings before, only to be cleared after further testing. But this time was different.

An ultrasound was immediately ordered and then the needle biopsy. Both confirmed a small tumor in the right breast. The cancer was caught early, but that didn't lessen Cobb's anxiety.

She met with Elizabeth Sawyer, M.D., a surgical oncologist with Cape Fear Valley General Surgery, to discuss treatment options, including radiation and chemotherapy. After considerable prayer and talking with her husband, Mark, she chose bilateral (double) mastectomy. It was a radical decision, because her cancer was early stage and isolated to one breast. But Cobb had her reasons.

Her mother had cancer, so Cobb always feared getting it too. She was so concerned that she started having annual mammograms in her early 30s. Most women start at age 40 or later.

Ironically, testing showed Cobb doesn't have the BRCA gene, which puts carriers at higher risk for getting breast cancer.

Still, Cobb wanted the peace of mind a double mastectomy could bring.

"It's such a personal decision for each and every woman," she said. "I wanted to limit the chance of ever having a reoccurrence of breast cancer again."

Dr. Sawyer performed the double mastectomy soon after. She says Cobb could have chosen a lumpectomy instead. The lesser-invasive procedure removes just the tumor and some nearby tissue, preserving most of the breast.



Leif Nordberg, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley Plastic
and Reconstructive Surgery



Elizabeth Sawyer, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley
General Surgery

But lumpectomies often require follow-up radiation treatments to ensure all the cancer is gone. Mastectomies can often eliminate the need for radiation.

“It doesn’t completely eliminate the risk of cancer reoccurring,” Dr. Sawyer said, “but it comes pretty close. What it does, more importantly, is eliminate the patient’s anxiety. That’s why some women choose to do it up front.”

Breast Reconstruction Surgery

Cobb opted to have immediate breast reconstruction surgery right after her mastectomies. The reconstructive procedure inserts a short-term tissue expander into the still-open breast area. The expander is a balloon-like sac that is slowly expanded in stages over time to stretch the skin.

Once the skin is stretched enough, the expander is removed and replaced with a permanent breast implant, according to Leif Nordberg, M.D., with Cape Fear Valley Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.

“Typically, we’ll stretch the skin out for two to three months,” Dr. Nordberg said, “before going back in with the permanent implants.”

The board-certified plastic surgeon works with Dr. Sawyer during surgeries where patients choose immediate breast reconstruction. He describes breast reconstruction as technically challenging, because the goal is to recreate the natural breast shape.

That requires extensive planning with Dr. Sawyer and other trained staff at Cape Fear Valley’s Breast Care Center. The center’s team of radiation and medical

oncologists, radiologists, pathologists and surgeons work the patient’s primary care physician to ensure the best treatment possible.

“We do individualized care here,” Dr. Nordberg said, “because not every patient is, or looks, the same, so we have to plan out the best incision location for each patient.”

Women with very large breasts can opt to have breast-reduction reconstructive surgery instead. Patients end up with a smaller, more contoured and lifted breast shape.

Surgery times can range from 1.5 to 2.5 hours, depending on which reconstructive procedure is done. And all patients can expect some pain or discomfort during recovery.

Cobb admits she had some post-surgical pain, but it was tolerable with medication and help from her family and support system. The good news is that follow-up tests showed she didn’t need secondary radiation or chemotherapy, as hoped.

After two weeks, she was back to work with a new perspective on life. She says having yearly mammograms was the best thing she could have ever done.

“When you hear you have cancer, you’re already thinking about everything you’ll miss about everyday life,” Cobb said. “You want to get back to that place as fast as you can – without cancer.”

When you hear you have cancer, you're already thinking about everything you'll miss about everyday life. You want to get back to that place as fast as you can – without cancer.



CAPE FEAR VALLEY Breast Care Center

Cape Fear Valley Breast Care Center has received accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC).

The three-year accreditation is granted to centers committed to providing the best possible care to patients with breast diseases.

Cape Fear Valley Breast Care Center underwent a rigorous application process and on-site survey before its accreditation was granted. The accreditation demonstrates the center's commitment to providing quality breast care to women throughout the region.

Patients can be confident their breast care team will work together to provide the best care possible. From detection to surgery, and throughout the treatment journey, Cape Fear Valley Breast Care Center is committed to providing the best possible outcome.

For more information about NAPBC accreditation, visit www.accreditedbreastcenters.org.



Pragatheeshwar Thirunavukarasu, M.D.

Call Him Dr. Prag

'My aim is to make them live better'

:: by Bill Kirby

His are the hands of a surgeon.

His is the profession of oncology.

His is the heart of compassion and a hope for tomorrows to come in the days of despair for those who face a diagnosis of terminal cancer.

"All of us are going to die," Pragatheeshwar Thirunavukarasu, M.D., said. "All of us."

Some of us sooner than others, and most of us never are ready to say goodbye to our loved ones, our careers, our hopes, our dreams and our lives no matter the years.

Call him Dr. Prag.

He is there for you.

"It's not going to be a cure," said Dr. Prag, 38, who treats patients diagnosed with Stage-4 cancer and hoping for more time. "But it can make you look at life from a different perspective. My aim is to make them live better, not longer."

Neither living, he says, nor dying is in a physician's hands.

"Doctors don't cure diabetes," Dr. Prag said, or high blood pressure or heart disease. "What we do is manage diabetes. That's what we do in cancer, too. We control it until we can't. There is not a person we've been able to save for eternity."

His specialty is malignant tumors of the gastrointestinal tract, liver and pancreas, and he's certainly seen his share of colon and rectal cancers.

A Stage-4 diagnosis can be devastating. But in Dr. Prag, every patient will find an empathetic ear ... and time.

He grew up in Chennai, India, where his father still practices psychiatry and his mother was a chemist and homemaker. His medical school test results were so impressive he was admitted directly to medical school at Madras Medical College.

Dr. Prag eventually came to the U.S. for a surgical internship and general surgery residency at the University of Pennsylvania and later the University of Pittsburgh. Clinical fellowships in surgical oncology would follow at the renowned Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, N.Y., and at University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

'I am not ready'

Dr. Prag has been practicing at Cape Fear Valley Health here since May, as has his wife, Kothai Divya Pratheeshwar, M.D., a nephrologist who treats kidney disease.

He was drawn to the health system because it has the eighth-busiest Emergency Department in the U.S. and because statistics show that while cancer cases in the community are moderate, the mortality rate is higher than other areas. This indicates a real need to diagnose cancer earlier in the community.

His days begin early.

His days end late.

"I have to make rounds," Dr. Prag says as twilight settled into darkness on another of his days.

There is a patient to see.

A family member to call.

And his words of assurance that there can be days and months and sunrises of perhaps years to come.

His mind drifts to his many patients and their angst, like the father who wanted see his son play one more game.

"He had three children – two boys and a daughter," Dr. Prag said. "His oldest son was all about baseball or football. His dad always got him to practice. He had colorectal cancer. His bowel was blocked. He also had cancer in the lung."

Dr. Prag still can hear the father's words.

"He said, 'I am not ready,'" Dr. Prag said, looking back. "He said, 'I want to see my son play his final game.' He went to the stadium for the game and sent me a picture. He wouldn't let go. He was happy."

He knows cancer

Dr. Prag knows cancer.

He has seen it up close.

He surgically removes it and treats it, most notably through his specialty, HIPEC or hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy. The procedure treats

patients with cancer in the abdomen. The process essentially suctions toxic fluid and removes as much of the tumor as medically feasible, followed by heated chemotherapy in the abdomen.

But before any surgery, you listen.

"I learned it from my dad," Dr. Prag said. "He would sit and not open his mouth."

And it was a lesson reinforced by Dr. Kenneth Lee, his mentor and at the University of Pittsburgh.

"He would know everything, about the patient," Prag said. "And if you can't establish trust, nothing works. The only way this surgery works is if they trust you."

They know cancer

Meet Tonya Barnes and Rodney Raines. They know cancer, too, and Dr. Prag.

"He's awesome," said Barnes, 50, a cosmetologist who was diagnosed with Stage 4 leiomyosarcoma or uterine cancer in July. "He got me back on track. He took all the cancer out. He is an amazing doctor. He really cares about his patients and their well-being. He makes no promises, but I connected with him. I felt comfortable with him."

Barnes says leiomyosarcoma is an aggressive cancer.

"I met Dr. Prag about two months ago," Barnes said. "My mindset was that I was going to live. I was not going to die. I put my trust first in God. I'm a Christian and strong in my faith. It has tested my faith and made me stronger."

Dr. Prag says he loved Barnes' attitude. The feeling is mutual.

"With his bedside manner, you just feel you are in good hands," Barnes said. "He welcomes what you say. He makes no promises and tells you what's going to happen. He makes no promises, but, yes, I believe he and his medical team saved my life."

Rodney Raines, 56, was diagnosed with Stage 3 colon cancer on May 29.

"I go from waking up to 'You have colon cancer,' and scheduled to see a surgeon on June 4. Dr. Prag tells me, 'This needs to come out.' He was very specific and detailed. He took time to answer every question. He took



Tonya Barnes

the time to make sure my wife and I knew what was going on and how he was going address it. He said, 'I will do your surgery, and I want you to maintain your lifestyle after cancer.'"

Raines says after the surgery, Dr. Prag was never far.

"His follow up was excellent," said the former banking notary loan officer and now a Journey Life Ministry co-pastor. "On weekends he would send me a text and want to know 'How are you doing?' He wanted to know what was happening with me. He made sure I had all the care I needed. When he wasn't there, he had other surgeons there.

Raines takes pause.

"It was a whirlwind, and I'm and so thankful to God, and Dr. Prag and my wife, who works at the hospital, for telling me about this new cancer surgeon at Cape Fear Valley Health," he says. "This man came here just in the nick of time for me." he says. "And today, I am cancer-free."

'Only my best'

His are the hands of a surgeon.

His is the profession of oncology.

His is the heart of compassion and a hope for tomorrows to come in the days of despair for those who face a diagnosis of terminal cancer.

"The cases I have, I cannot pull them off alone," Dr. Prag said. "We have great surgeons in this community."

And Dr. Pragatheeshwar Thirunavukarasu, is now part of that Cape Fear Valley Health community. He is here for you in the face of cancer.

"I give all my patients my best," he said.

They call him Dr. Prag.



Light Up Fayetteville

pink

Gladys Hill hopes to raise \$10,000 for Cape Fear Valley Cancer Centers

:: by Bill Kirby



Gladys Hill is a woman on a mission.

The 80-year-old Fayetteville resident wants to see her community glowing pink again in October as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. To do it, she plans to literally go door-to-door to sell pink lightbulbs as part of her annual “Light Up Fayetteville Pink” campaign.

Hill created the nonprofit crusade in 2017 to help raise funds for Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation’s Friends of the Cancer Center. The group’s mission is to assist woman who can’t afford mammograms due to financial hardship or other reasons.

Light up Fayetteville Pink isn’t a one-person show, however. Hill has help from Carl and Chris Birk of Mid-South Lighting, who donate pink lightbulbs to sell for the cause. Together, the trio have helped raise more than \$18,000 over three years for the Friends of Cancer Center.

But Hill wants to out-do herself this year.

“This year I’m shooting for \$10,000,” she said.

Her pink lightbulbs sell for \$5 each and can be found glowing on front porches and at businesses this time of year, from Fayetteville and Eastover to Spring Lake and Hope Mills. The attention is needed.

Nearly 290,00 women in the U.S. are expected to be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer this year, according to the American Cancer Society. From that number, 42,000 are expected to die.



The figures don't include the roughly 43,500 additional women expected to be diagnosed with carcinoma in situ (CIS), a non-invasive form of breast cancer, this year. Nor do the figures include men, who can also get breast cancer.

About 2,620 men are expected to be diagnosed this year with invasive breast cancer. And an estimated 520 will die.

Hill is a breast cancer survivor herself. Last year, she was diagnosed with ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), a non-invasive cancer that starts in the milk duct. She sought treatment from Elizabeth Sawyer, M.D., a surgical oncologist with Village Surgical Associates, but also relied on her faith to beat her cancer.

"I left Dr. Sawyer's office and said, 'God, I'm putting it in your hands.'" Hill said. "And I have had excellent treatment at the Cancer Center from Dr. (Hugh) Bryan and Dr. (Kenneth) Manning."

Her drive to "Light Up Fayetteville Pink" started soon after her recovery. This will be her first year going door-to-door. She previously hawked her lightbulbs at local events and festivals, but COVID-19 prevented that this year.

Despite the setback, Hill and her friend, Diane Wilson, plan to knock on every door they can.

Sabrina Brooks, Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation Executive Director, has nothing but praise for Hill's continued efforts to help breast cancer patients. Brooks points out that approximately 25 percent of Cape Fear

Valley Cancer Center patients are diagnosed with breast cancer.

"Ms. Hill's efforts to create 'Light Up Fayetteville Pink' not only provides much needed financial support for patients receiving treatment at the Cape Fear Valley Cancer Centers," she said, "but it also offers a noticeable reminder to breast cancer patients that the community is behind them during their journey."

"Ms. Hill, and those who have contributed to her efforts, offer a visible reminder of the community's support and encouragement. We are inspired and grateful to Ms. Hill for 'Lighting Up Fayetteville Pink!'"

Mary Kulig is the clinical manager for Cape Fear Valley's Cancer Centers. She said approximately 1,600 new cancer patients have been treated in the past 11 months. That includes patients seen at the Cancer Treatment & CyberKnife Center on Cape Fear Valley's main campus and Health Pavilion North Cancer Center.

"'Light Up Fayetteville Pink' provides much needed support to our cancer patients," Kulig said. "Funding helps patients with a variety of needs."

It is emotionally supportive to ride through Fayetteville and witness all the pink lights burning. It is a visual reminder that our patients are not alone in their fight with cancer.

Those needs include financial assistance obtaining prescription medications, pain medications and medications to help with potential side effects of treatment. Donations also help with patient dietary supplements, transportation to appointments, and even utilities or rent.

"The generosity of Gladys Hill through 'Light Up Fayetteville Pink' touches our patients and their families in a time of need," Kulig said. "It is also emotionally supportive to ride through Fayetteville and witness all the pink lights burning. It is a visual reminder that our patients are not alone in their fight with cancer."

Her name is Gladys Hill. She's a cancer survivor too.

And she is here to let other survivors know they are not alone.

IMPACT by the numbers • FRIENDS of the CANCER CENTER giving 2019

PROVIDED OVER **200**
SCREENING
MAMMOGRAMS
[free of charge]
to uninsured women



provided over
\$166,000
CANCER CENTER
patient support



OVER **220** CANCER
PATIENTS
RECEIVED FINANCIAL assistance

MORTGAGE
and RENT
PAYMENTS
\$48,770

UTILITY
PAYMENTS
\$27,835

COMMUNITY *giving.* COMMUNITY *healing.*

 **MASSAGES**
and
REFLEXOLOGY
\$12,315

 **ARTFUL reflections**
\$14,529

COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
 **\$8,432**

\$3,233

transportation VOUCHERS
to assist cancer patients and their
families with travel for treatments.




MEDICATION
assistance
\$5,562

THANK YOU for your support!


FRIENDS of the CANCER CENTER
cfvfoundation.org

OTHER
patient
SUPPORT

\$4,300



searching for answers

Judith Borger, D.O.

Cape Fear Valley's clinical trials program is in the race to end a global pandemic

:: by Donnie Byers

COVID-19 has led to the worst public health crisis in 100 years, with no end in sight, so the race to find a working vaccine is unprecedented.

Currently, there are more than 150 coronavirus vaccines in development around the world. But fewer than 10 have reached stage three, the final study phase before approval and production.

One Phase-3 vaccine is being tested in Fayetteville through a clinical trials partnership between Cape Fear Valley Health and Wake Research of Raleigh. The joint venture company's name is Carolina Institute of Clinical Research (CICR).

Cape Fear Valley launched its clinical trials program in 2018 to help provide more advanced research and treatments to the community and to enhance the health system's residency program.

Two years later, the trials program is already in the national spotlight, helping test Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine candidate, mRNA-1273. The vaccine is being codeveloped by the Massachusetts-based pharmaceutical giant and the National Institutes of Health.

Fayetteville is one of just six locations affiliated with Wake Research to participate in Moderna's Phase-3 trial. The other sites are Raleigh, San Diego, Dallas, Las Vegas and Chattanooga, Tenn.

CICR has received approval from Moderna to test up to 500 volunteers for the two-year study. Participants are given two injections 28 days apart upon joining the study. Then they report their experiences to testers.

The testing is double-blind so neither the volunteer nor staff know if volunteers receive the vaccine or a saline placebo. This ensures test objectivity.

Judith Borger, D.O., a Cape Fear Valley Emergency Department physician, is CICR's lead clinical investigator for the vaccine. She says the study is going extremely well and volunteer interest has been better than expected.

Cape Fear Valley was initially approved for 300 test volunteers when the study launched in July but has been approved for another 200 test subjects.

"We're one of the top 10-enrolling sites in the country for this vaccine," Dr. Borger said, "which is why we're getting more testing product."

The hope is that the vaccine helps build up antibodies against the COVID-19 virus after exposure. That's important, because the human body's response to the virus can sometimes do more damage than the virus.

Experts believe many gravely ill patients often die due to a disastrous immune system overreaction called the "cytokine storm." Cytokines are chemical molecules that normally guide a healthy immune system response to invaders.

Cytokine levels can soar out of control during storms, allowing immune cells to attack healthy tissues. This can cause blood pressure drops, blood vessel leaks or clots, and even catastrophic organ failure.

Patients can eventually wind up on ventilators, struggling to breathe, as infection builds up in their lungs. The potentially fatal condition is called acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

"The cytokine storm is a really huge inflammatory response," Dr. Borger said. "All the treatments currently being tested are meant to decrease inflammation in the lungs."

This also applies to trial drugs used on inpatients at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, which is also conducting clinical trials through CICR. Not every patient qualifies for the drugs, however. Patients are screened by Dr. Borger and her clinical team for possible inclusion in any drug study.



Samuel Fleishman, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley Health

Chris Tart, Pharm.D., is Cape Fear Valley's Vice President of Professional Services. He says the health system is currently testing four inpatient drugs, on top of providing Remdesivir, to seriously ill COVID patients. Remdesivir is an investigational antiviral, which was fast-tracked for use by the federal government.

"The primary goal is to decrease morbidity," Tart said. "The second is to decrease the patient's length of stay, so they can leave the hospital and return to their daily lives."

The most promising of the inpatient drugs is the Blade Therapeutics offering. The Phase-2 oral medication is showing good success at helping alleviate COVID-19 pneumonia in patients. Tart says starting it as soon as possible yields the best results.

“It’s a tremendous honor and responsibility to do something that is going to get us out of this pandemic.”

"We've come to learn that the key to saving lives is to start giving these trial drugs early," he said.

The Moderna vaccine and inpatient drug studies are just the beginning for CICR and Cape Fear Valley's clinical trials program. The health system is expected to land several more COVID-19 investigational studies in the near future. One of the biggest could be a Janssen vaccine trial that would need 1,500 volunteers.

Samuel Fleishman, M.D., Cape Fear Valley's Chief Medical Officer, says all the early success bodes well for the future of the clinical trials program. But what is more important, he said, is that Cape Fear Valley is doing its part to help end a global crisis.

"It's a tremendous honor and responsibility," Dr. Fleishman said, "for the health system and our community to do something that is going to get us out of this pandemic."

Neurosurgeon with a Passion

Neuroscience Institute
was her calling card

:: by Bill Kirby



You will not want to delay if you're following in the footsteps of Melissa Stamates, M.D.

She is a neurosurgeon on the move. She is up before the morning sun rises, with a peck on the cheek for her husband, Nick, before his day as Assistant Director of Camp Rockfish and Retreat Center in Parkton, and a quick walk around the block for Wrigley, the couple's basset hound, who moves at something of a slower pace.

And then Dr. Stamates is off for another day.

You'll find her early in the morning at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, consulting with neurologists and making her patient rounds before heading to her office at Cape Fear Valley Neurosurgery on Walter Reed Road.

"I'm just a country girl living my dream," says Dr. Stamates, who is sharing her medical skills and talents with Cape Fear Valley Health. "I am passionate, and I work really hard to be a resource for my colleagues, and my patients." She's confident with a caring way, something Dr. Stamates learned from her late mother.

A native of Covington, Ky., on the south bank of the Ohio River, Stamates found herself at the University of Kentucky. She first considered a career in communications before turning her attentions to medicine.

"I knew I was going to medical school," she says, earning her medical degree from The Ohio State University in 2011. "I was first interested in epidemiology."

A neurosurgery rotation and a mentor with a specialty treating the spine inspired Stamates' career path during her residency at the University of Chicago.

"You've got to keep your head down and not look up," she says of studies to become a neurosurgeon. "I liked it. It was a good fit ... the type of procedures, the people, the variety."

Stamates completed a fellowship in endoscopic and skull base neurosurgery in 2018 at North Shore University Health System in Evanston, Illinois.

"It was like the launch pad," she says of her career.

Soon enough, Cape Fear Valley Health was on Stamates' radar, especially since the health system had a vision for a \$30



million Center for Graduate Medical Education and Research to include a state-of-the-art Neuroscience wing.

“By bringing the neuroscience team together,” Stamates says, “it’s going to be convenient for patients and enhance department efficiency considerably. With the affiliation with Campbell University Medical School, it will also help facilitate learning across the board.”

There will be state-of-the-art lecture halls, simulation laboratories and electronic libraries.

“And we can have community education there, so area providers can see all we are doing at Cape Fear Valley,” Stamates says.

The neuroscience floor is something Charles Haworth, M.D., championed before becoming director of neurosurgery for Cape Fear Valley Health in 2013.

There was a time when Dr. Haworth will tell you that neurosurgery cases were farmed out to other facilities. Times are changing though, and Dr. Stamates is dedicated and committed to being a part of it.

“I’ve been here more than a year now,” says Stamates, who arrived on July 8, 2019. “There are things that have changed and things we are working toward. The administrators and hospital are committed to changes and improvements.”

The vision is for Cape Fear Valley Health to become a destination for not only neuroscience education, but for neurology and neurosurgeons treating a plethora of health issues. Whether it be disorders and diseases of the brain, spine, or of the central and peripheral nervous system, Cape Fear Valley can treat it all.

“Patients should feel the increasing access to specialty physicians,” Stamates says. “From the first visit to follow-up, surgical patients and the community will feel we are listening to their concerns.”

The Center for Graduate Medical Education and Research, with the Neuroscience Institute overlooking the medical center landscape, is scheduled for construction and completion in 2022.

“When I think about the Neuroscience Institute, we will have a center that matches the expertise of neurosurgeons and neurologists,” says Mike Nagowski, Chief Executive Officer for Cape Fear Valley Health. “That’s really important. It would have been started and under construction if not for COVID-19. It will take about 18 months for completion.”

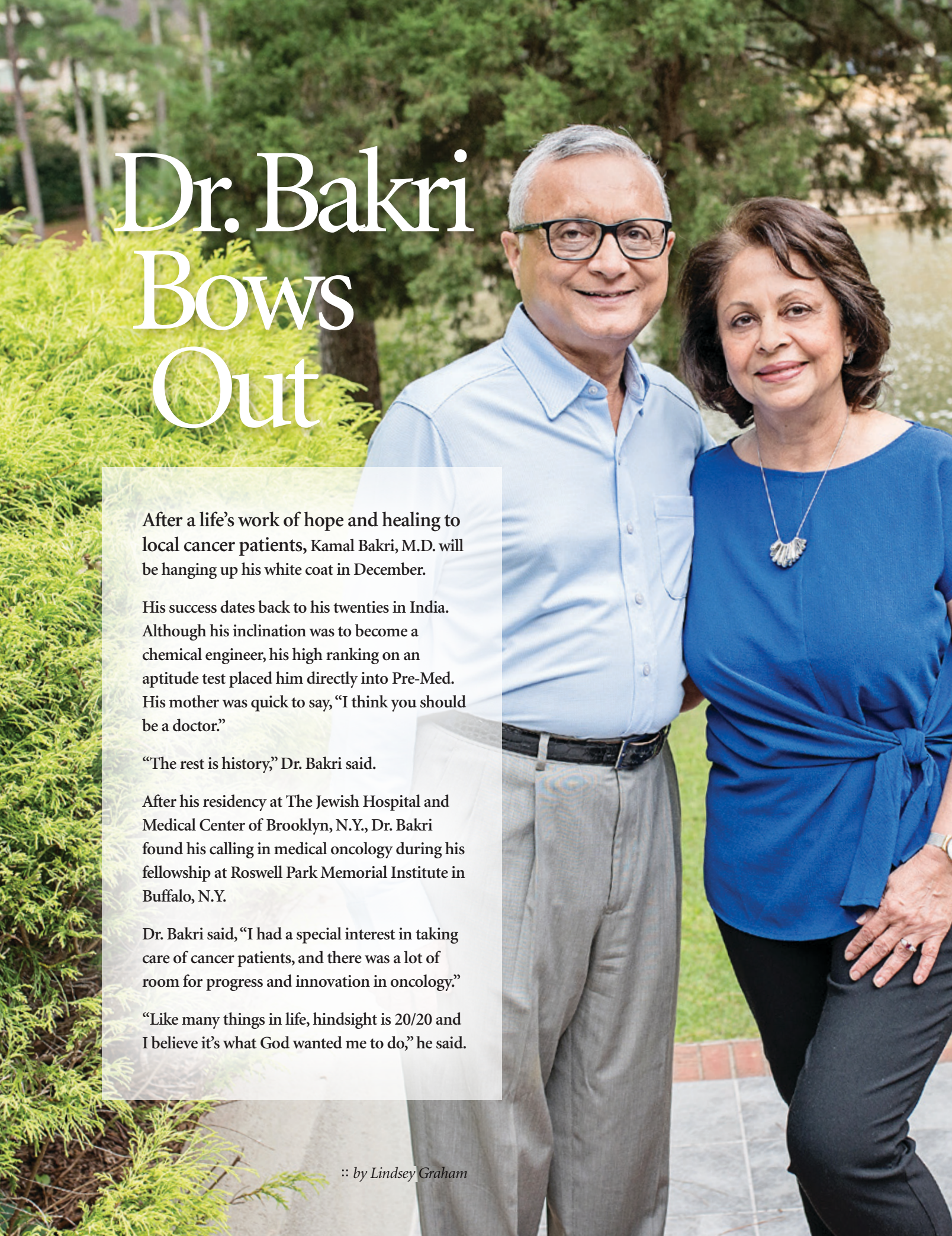
And, Nagowski says, Dr. Stamates is a welcome addition in joining with Dr. Haworth and to Dr. Prithvi Narayan as Cape Fear Valley Health neurosurgeons.

“We are blessed Dr. Melissa Stamates chose us,” Nagowski says. “She is talented. Her interests and expertise are exactly what this health care region needs. We were impressed by her skill, talent and demeanor. And she wants it right.”

Dr. Stamates specializes in cranial surgery, including brain tumors and other skull-based surgeries, as well as minimally invasive and complex spine surgeries.

“I like brain surgery,” says Dr. Stamates. “It is intricate and complex. One’s accounting career may be dependent on the ability to work well with numbers, while some have already adapted to dyslexia.

“I could never cover all of the side effects of a brain surgery, even in the most comprehensive discussion, but I feel the essence of my job is preparing patients for this life-altering experience and to let them know of my care and concern. It is a truly individualized scenario, and I’m happy to be here and help.”



Dr. Bakri BOWS Out

After a life's work of hope and healing to local cancer patients, Kamal Bakri, M.D. will be hanging up his white coat in December.


His success dates back to his twenties in India. Although his inclination was to become a chemical engineer, his high ranking on an aptitude test placed him directly into Pre-Med. His mother was quick to say, "I think you should be a doctor."

"The rest is history," Dr. Bakri said.

After his residency at The Jewish Hospital and Medical Center of Brooklyn, N.Y., Dr. Bakri found his calling in medical oncology during his fellowship at Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, N.Y.

Dr. Bakri said, "I had a special interest in taking care of cancer patients, and there was a lot of room for progress and innovation in oncology."

"Like many things in life, hindsight is 20/20 and I believe it's what God wanted me to do," he said.



Dr. Bakri had a brief stint as an Assistant Professor at Chicago Medical School for the Department of Medical Oncology. Tired of the cold, he and his wife, Bharti, moved to Fayetteville in 1982. Together, they opened a private practice in medical oncology. A dynamic husband and wife partnership, Dr. Bakri helped patients and Bharti put her degree in microbiology and chemistry to work, running the lab and office.

After just five years of living and working in Fayetteville, Dr. Bakri saw a paramount need for a cancer center where patients could receive complete cancer treatment and care without having to leave the community. At that time, patients could only receive radiation therapy locally and had to travel for other treatments, such as chemotherapy.

Hugh Bryan, M.D., a Radiation Oncologist, and Dr. Bakri partnered to pioneer Fayetteville's first cancer center. They submitted a Certificate of Need to the state for all radiation and medical oncology services to be offered under one roof, making cancer care more convenient and streamlined for patients.

The partnership led to a great friendship and allowed Bharti the chance to focus on raising their children. Both of whom are successful; their son is a radiologist and their daughter is an art therapist.

In less than a year, Dr. Bakri and Dr. Bryan were off and running the Cancer Center at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. They ushered in comprehensive cancer care to Fayetteville. Dr. Bakri regards being able to offer local treatment of all types of cancer, alongside his colleagues, a highlight of his career.

"Being able to hold someone's hand who feels troubled or anxious when first diagnosed," Bakri said, "and knowing I can help treat them, is the best part of being an oncologist."

Dr. Bakri offers patients additional hope by participation in scientific studies with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Many of his studies have been published in medical journals, advancing the study of oncology. He says putting himself in the patients' shoes and keeping up with the latest science and technology are the best ways to improve and serve them.

Dr. Bakri initiated auxiliary services offered to cancer patients. He helped develop patient-centered programs, so patients aren't alone in their fight against cancer. Some programs include social services, resources, nutrition counseling and survivorship care.

An artist himself, Dr. Bakri knew the healing power of creating art. He developed an art therapy program for cancer patients so the Cancer Center could treat both the body and soul. Through these services, Dr. Bakri set the tone for how to approach cancer care.

"Keeping one's spirit up is the hardest part of cancer treatment," Dr. Bakri said. "Hope is the best medicine."

For 32 years, Dr. Bakri has served as Medical Director of Medical Oncology while Dr. Bryan has served as Medical Director of Radiation Oncology. Their collaboration has grown to two cancer centers: Cape Fear Valley Cancer Treatment & Cyberknife Center and Health Pavilion North Cancer Center. Both provide complete cancer diagnosis, treatment and support to patients across a six-county region. The centers will be a lasting legacy of Dr. Bakri's work as a healer.

His successes didn't come without sacrifice. Dr. Bakri is quick to point out the sacrifices of others and not his own as a credit to his success.

"It's not my own doing," Dr. Bakri said. "Success came with sacrifices by my wife, children, and staff on the frontline. They work hard to make me look good."

Most of his staff has been at his side for 15 to 20 years. Humbled, Dr. Bakri acknowledges the distinction of his counterparts in healing: Colleen Kritz, NP; Mary Kulig, R.N.; and colleagues: Hugh Bryan, M.D., Kenneth Manning, M.D., and Sajjad Malick, M.D.

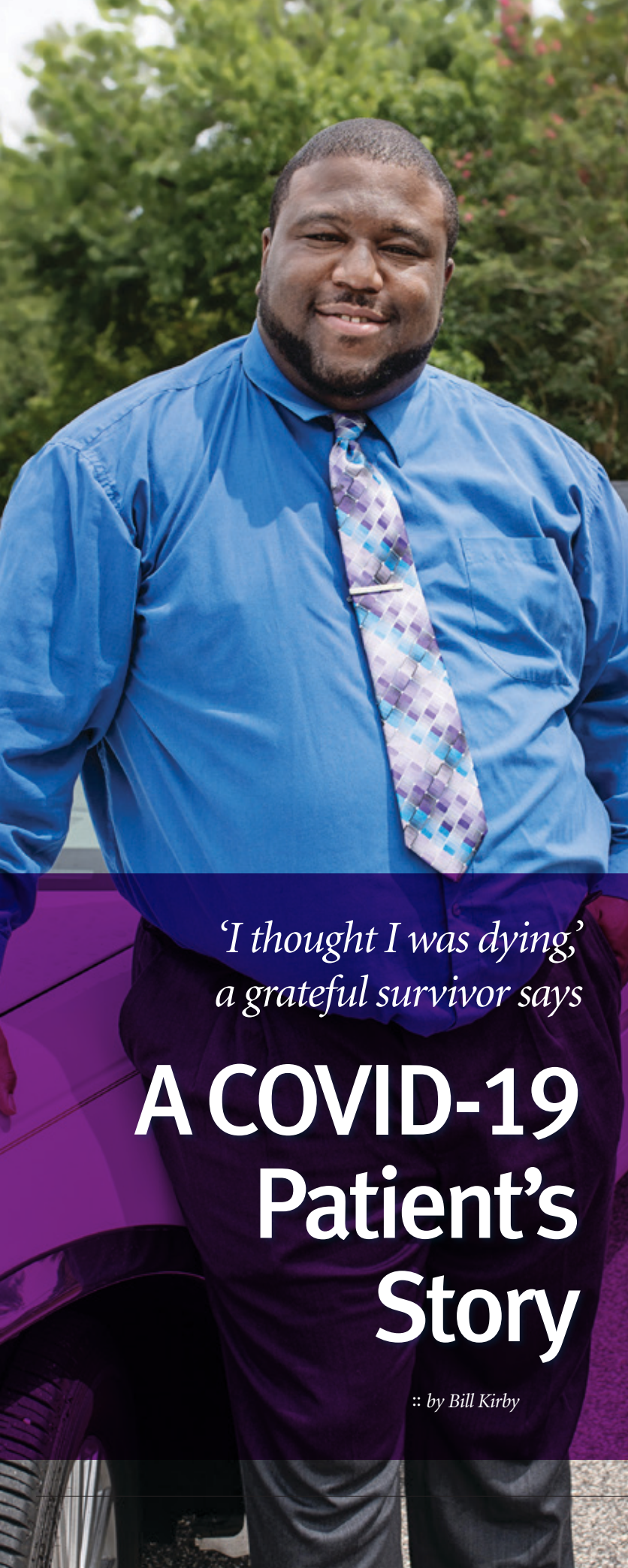
Kulig has been with Dr. Bakri for 31 years.

"He is a true treasure," Kulig said. "Dr. Bakri teaches you to embrace life and help others along the way. Witnessing him with his patients is seeing true dedication."

In the past 44 years, Dr. Bakri has treated thousands of patients. Soon he'll be treating himself to retirement. He has plans to travel more, cook and watch plenty of movies with his wife. There will be more time for reading, golfing, studying scripture and creating art with his pastels and colored pencils. He also looks forward to spending more time with his grandchildren.

But before he goes, he offers some words of wisdom to those he's leaving behind.

"You don't have to prove that you're better than anybody else," Dr. Bakri said. "Just be better than you were yesterday."



*'I thought I was dying,'
a grateful survivor says*

A COVID-19 Patient's Story

:: by Bill Kirby

When it comes to COVID-19, Alfred Payne knows the perils of the potentially deadly virus, because he's survived it. But it wasn't an easy fight.

"I feel great!" Payne said, six months after his recovery.

The Fayetteville limousine service operator says he wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for the amazing care he received by frontline caregivers at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. He spent 26 days at the hospital fighting the virus that has infected more than 5 million Americans and killed another 180,000 (as of this publication).

The problems started for Payne, 39, on March 18 at his Fayetteville home. He woke up around 3 a.m. with severe breathing problems. His mind started to race.

He had a fever of 102 and was sweating. He thought it was a bad cold, so he took Nyquil, hoping he could sweat it out and be good to go the next morning.

Payne is a busy man with a business to operate. He also has two special-needs sons, ages 18 and 20, so he had little time to deal with a virus. But he started feeling worse; much worse, so he called 911.

"I was so tired," he said. "I was positive I had COVID-19. As soon as I walked in to the Emergency Room, they gave me a face mask, set me in triage and took my vitals. I wasn't scared yet. I was still pretty optimistic it was something I would get past quickly. I don't get sick often."

This time was different. He had never felt like this before and his chest was heavy.

It was COVID-19 alright. He had contracted the virus he kept hearing about, and his road to recovery would be difficult.

'I gave up.'

He was placed on a ventilator and then into a medically induced coma, where he would remain until he awoke on April 9. He didn't know who he was, where he was, or why he was there. And he couldn't move, because his body was still weak from fighting the infection.

"I remember feeling like I was in prison," he said. "I pulled out my ventilator and started screaming to let someone know, I am here. I could hear things, but I couldn't see anything."

Payne can see his COVID-19 days in his minds-eye, however. He sees the medical staff constantly by his bedside. The doctors and nurses in their protective equipment, giving their all so he could live.

He thought of his sons. He thought of his daughter, who lives with her mother. He thought of his life.

“I thought I was dying,” Payne said.

The days and nights of recovery were long and tested both his faith and resolve, so he apologized to God for giving up.

“I gave up when I thought I could trade myself for the safety of my kids,” he said. “There was a point when I was fighting for my life, and I was willing to make a deal. But my boys and my daughter are literally why I kept fighting.”

‘This is not the flu’

Payne eventually recovered, but countless others didn’t. He’s constantly reminded about the fact whenever he reads the news on social media. He’s also constantly reminded that some people believe COVID-19 is nothing more than a hoax, which blows his mind.

No hoax, he thinks to himself, but rather a lethal virus.

He was so disturbed by the naysayers that he uploaded a video to Facebook while still recovering in the hospital.

His body was weak. His voice was strained. His message was clear.

“This is not the flu,” he said with a labored voice in the video. “This corona(virus) can and will kill you. It’s not a game. Treat this like your life depends on it, because it does. How serious you take this can mean your life.”

The video has since gone viral and garnered him national attention. Payne says COVID-19 is a deadly virus, which can claim many more lives unless taken seriously.

He wants his message to be heard loud and clear, especially by African Americans, because they are more like to become infected and die, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Yes, there is fear of what happens in hospitals,” Payne said. “It’s not so much we don’t trust the medical community. We don’t trust the business that is medicine, and a lot of people don’t have insurance.”

Reaching out

Roxie Wells, M.D., Hoke Health President, is leading a COVID-19 task force directly addressing the African American community about the perils of medical care denial. Payne wants to be a part of the message for all people – no matter their race – who fear coronavirus.

“Across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic seems to affect minority and marginalized communities,” Dr. Wells said.

“Hospitalizations for more severe complications and death seem to affect these communities most.

“This pandemic has illuminated the disparities in not only health care, but in economics, education, housing and income in communities of color. I believe we as a society are beginning to recognize these and understand that each of these adversely affect the health of the people in our communities.”

Wells goes on to say Cape Fear Valley and other health systems across the U.S. are working to address these disparities, because they are true social determinants of health and well-being. The region mirrors national statistics, according to Dr. Wells. She says more than 65 percent of COVID-19 patients treated at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center are African American.

“Our health system believes in equitable health care,” Dr. Wells said, “and believe that we can assist with decreasing the rate of spread of the virus by promoting educational opportunities and distributing PPE.

“We are focusing on sources of truth for communities of color and these tend to be community mainstays like religious organizations, targeted media outlets, i.e. newspapers and radio stations with content designed to reach these communities, and barber and beauty salons to name a few. We are concentrating our efforts on these areas and are reaching out to leaders in each of these segments for assistance. We are coordinating testing sites, the sharing of education materials and personal protection equipment for our community.”

Payne is doing his part for the task force by conducting radio station interviews with Foxy 99 FM, WUKS 107.7 FM, and WIDU 99.7 FM.

“More than 170,000 people have died,” he said, “and part of me feels like this could have been prevented. I say to people: ‘If you are feeling off and you just don’t feel right, it is worth being checked out regardless of what it costs you. It’s not worth the risk of your own life or those you love.’”

Today, Payne is living life to the fullest. He is down 100 pounds from his previous weight of 385 and no longer has high blood pressure.

He’s also happier and more thankful, especially toward the staff who literally fought to provide him care at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. For that, he says, he is sorry.

“The first thing I would do is apologize to my caregivers,” Payne said, “because I was not kind. I was afraid and in pain. I was terrified. I was trying to survive. I owe them a debt of gratitude.”



Big Time Dreamer

Sometimes life
doesn't go as
planned. And
that can be a
good thing.

:: by Donnie Byers

Growing up, Pamela Story dreamed of the day she could run off to New York City and become a famous movie actress. Good thing for her, it never happened.

After graduating from E.E. Smith, the diminutive would-be-starlet was ready to pack her bags and hit the road to stardom. But her father implored her to do the sensible thing and go to college instead; perhaps, even become a teacher like her mother.

Chalkboards and classrooms just didn't excite her, however. She was far more interested in helping others. So, she decided instead to enroll as a sociology major at her mother's alma mater, North Carolina Central University. Four years later, Story was at UNC Chapel Hill attaining her master's degree in social work.

The acting career had turned into a dreamed deferred by then, but Story learned to use her outgoing personality to build relationships and connect with others in her new chosen profession. She's made the most of the new direction.

Over the years, Story has worked as a social worker in a variety of fields and capacities, including in mental health, as a clinical social worker, and as a supervisor, before eventually joining the Cumberland County Schools System.

Today, she works with a team of 66 social workers as a Social Work Coordinator and Homeless Liaison at the school system's Central Office. The work can get hectic, but Story embraces the daily challenges of working with students, parents, staff and the community – even during these unsettling times.

"COVID-19 has been a paradigm shift for our society," she said, "but we're all doing the best we can under the conditions. We're being creative, while focusing on providing remote instruction, as well as focusing on the mental health and social-emotional needs of students and staff."

The heavy workload is balanced with family and church time and giving back to the community. She also volunteers on so many boards and committees, including Cape Fear Valley Health's Board of Trustees, that she's lost count.

She recalls at least "seven or eight" but that doesn't include church committees. Lucky for her, she likes to stay busy. But she's too demure to admit it.

"We're all busy," Story said before letting out a quick giggle. "I'm just a busy bee; a trait I've passed down to my children."

Family and friends all know about the penchant for giggling and smiling. She was nicknamed "giggle box" as a child by her favorite aunt. The youngster giggled so much she often had to sit outside elementary school classes until the giggling subsided.

If she's not in a meeting or consulting with social workers, then this busy bee actually enjoys real downtime. She loves to lay on the beach or take quiet walks. Or she might hit the road in her beloved candy-apple red, convertible VW beetle; top-down of course.

Story also enjoys reading newspapers and books, as well as writing poetry and journaling her daily experiences. Such hobbies are quickly fading into obscurity, thanks to Facebook and social media. But Story proudly calls herself "old school."

And then there is her love of collecting African artifacts and elephants. She began collecting elephants with uplifted trunks after joining the Fayetteville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Story loves the animals so much that she and her family always go to elephant exhibits at the North Carolina Zoo and watch documentaries about the gentle giants on National Geographic.



“God has a plan for all of our lives, and I know He put me right where he meant for me to be.”

Ironically, Story would have never picked up the hobby had she pursued her original dream of movie stardom. But Story seems more than OK with it, looking back.

And then she realizes that she's worked in the education field for more than 25 years, despite dismissing the idea so many years ago. So, the giggling begins again.

"God has a plan for all of our lives," Story said, "and I know He put me right where he meant for me to be."

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : *NEWS briefs*

High School Seniors Awarded Partners for Life Scholarships

Cape Fear Valley Health has awarded \$500 scholarships to four Cumberland County high school seniors for helping organize school blood drives.

The winners are Elizabeth Buffaloe, Paige Cameron and Davia Rypdahl of Cape Fear High School and Deja Fulton of Southview High School.

Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation and Cape Fear Valley Blood Donor Center partnered to offer the scholarship grants. To qualify, students had to coordinate at least two blood drives with the Blood Donor Center during the school year.

Students also must maintain a 2.5 GPA, be nominated for the scholarship, and have plans to pursue a health science or health occupation degree in college. The scholarship is funded through donations to the Health Foundation.

The Blood Donor Center and Cumberland County Schools have partnered 21 years to hold blood drives under the Partners for Life Program. High school donations provide for half the blood supply at Cape Fear Valley between August and May. The donated blood is used to help Cape Fear Valley Health patients.

For more information on this annual scholarship, visit www.savingliveslocally.org.

Cape Fear Valley Receives Fill The Gap Grant

Cape Fear Valley Health has been awarded nearly \$150,000 from the North Carolina Hospital Healthcare Foundation's COVID-19 "Fill the Gap" Response Fund. The money will help fund three health system needs. They include behavioral health support for frontline healthcare workers, enhance discharge support for underserved patients, and increase nursing coverage to allow additional breaks in COVID-19 treatment units.

Cape Fear Valley Receives Golden Leaf Foundation Grant

The Golden Leaf Foundation has awarded Cape Fear Valley Health a \$461,200 grant for the health system's new Center for Medical Education and Research.

The money will help purchase new technology for the center's auditorium and classrooms. The 500-seat auditorium will anchor the Owen Drive facility's first floor. Simulation labs, study spaces and student lockers will be on the third floor.

The Center for Medical Education and Research is being built to accommodate Cape Fear Valley's rapidly growing physician residency program. When complete, the center will span five floors and headquarter more than 300 physician residents. The program is set to grow from its current 134 residents to 305 residents in three years.

"We are grateful to the Golden Leaf Foundation for providing this grant," said Mike Nagowski, Cape Fear Valley Health CEO. "The Center for Medical Education and Research will help us meet the region's needs well into the future, as we train the best and brightest physicians for coming generations."

The \$30 million construction project will also help pump \$11.7 million into Cumberland County's economy. The residency program is projected to add an additional \$25.2 million into the region's economy every year.

The Golden Leaf Foundation was established in 1999 to receive a portion of the state's funding received under the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with cigarette manufacturers. The foundation has since worked to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantmaking, collaboration, innovation and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.

Hoke Hospital Rated 5 Stars

Cape Fear Valley Hoke Hospital has earned a five-star rating from the federal government for Patient Experience. The ranking makes Hoke Hospital one of just seven hospitals statewide, and 266 hospitals nationwide, to receive a top rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for 20120. More than 3,400 hospitals nationwide were assessed before CMS released its 2020 Patient Satisfaction Survey findings.

Cape Fear Valley Earns Quality Awards

Cape Fear Valley Health has received several Get With The Guidelines® Patient Care Quality Awards from the American Heart Association (AHA). They include Gold Plus awards for Heart, Stroke and Heart Failure, as well as Gold for AFIB (Atrial Fibrillation) treatment. The awards were bestowed for implementing specific quality improvement measures for patient care.

The health system also received a Gold Plus for STEMI Receiving Center and Gold for STEMI Quality Achievement through the American Heart Association's Mission Lifeline® Patient Care Quality Program. The program's goal is to reduce system barriers to prompt treatment for heart attacks.

Hoke Hospital Receives Geriatric ED Accreditation

Cape Fear Valley Hoke Hospital is being acknowledged for taking senior emergency care to the next level.

The Hoke County hospital's Emergency Department (ED) is now accredited as a Level-3 Geriatric Emergency Department by the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP). It is the only hospital in the region to have earned such accreditation, which recognizes hospitals focused on the highest standards of care for older adults.

"Hoke Hospital has worked hard to earn this accreditation," said Roxie Wells, M.D., Hoke Hospital President. "From our award-winning Joint Replacement Program to our stellar ICU unit, everything we do helps elevate the care of geriatric patients in our community."

The geriatric emergency department concept was developed by leaders in emergency medicine to ensure older patients receive well-coordinated, quality care at the appropriate level at every emergency department stage.

ACEP began accrediting geriatric emergency departments in 2018. To date, accreditation has been granted to fewer than 150 hospitals nationwide.

Having a geriatric ED does not mean creating a separate space for older patients, but rather employing specific treatment processes for seniors. They include screening for geriatric syndromes, employing structural enhancements (such as appropriate beds and dimmed lights), specific provider and nurse education, and community resources to facilitate care for older adults.

Geriatric emergency department accreditation is provided at three levels. Level 1 is the most comprehensive designation. Most Geriatric EDs are level 3.

Cape Fear Valley Specialty Pharmacy Earns URAC Accreditation

Cape Fear Valley Specialty Pharmacy has earned URAC accreditation in Specialty Pharmacy.

URAC is the independent leader in promoting healthcare quality through leadership, accreditation, measurement and innovation. By achieving this status, Cape Fear Valley Specialty Pharmacy has demonstrated a comprehensive commitment to care, improved processes and better patient outcomes.

Cape Fear Valley Specialty Pharmacy coordinates the medication education, coordination of benefits, dispensing, and clinical management of high cost or difficult-to-manage medications for a variety of disease states, including oncology, rheumatology, multiple sclerosis and chronic migraine headaches.

Cancer Center Receives Radiation Oncology Accreditation

Cape Fear Valley Cancer Treatment & CyberKnife Center has earned the American College of Radiology (ACR) Accreditation, the gold standard in imaging certifications.

This is the first time the Cancer Center has received the accreditation. It is valid through July 2023.

Started in 1987, the ACR accreditation assures imaging facilities across the nation meet equipment, medical personnel and quality assurance requirements that patients, payers and referring physicians can rely on.

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : *NEW physicians*

Urology



Karl Pete, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley Urology

Urology: Medical College of Wisconsin/
Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital,
Milwaukee, Wis.

General Surgery: University of California
San Francisco, San Francisco, Calif.

Medical Degree: Duke University School
of Medicine, Durham, N.C.

Board Certifications: Urology

Oncology



Madhuri Vithala, M.D.

Harnett Health Cancer Center

Hematology Oncology Fellowship:
University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt.

Palliative Care Fellowship: University of
Connecticut, Farmington, Conn.

Internal Medicine: University of
Connecticut, Farmington, Conn.

Medical Degree: Siddhartha Medical
College, Vijayawada, India

Board Certifications: Medical Oncology

Pediatrics



Kyle Torni, M.D.

Bladen Kids' Care

Pediatrics: Greenville Health System,
Greenville, S.C.

Medical Degree: Michigan State
University College of Human Medicine,
East Lansing, Mich.

Board Certifications: Pediatrics

Psychiatry



Anupama Sundar, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley Behavioral Health Care

**Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
Fellowship:** Vanderbilt University
Medical Center, Nashville, T.N.

Psychiatry: New York Medical College
at Westchester Medical Center, Valhalla,
N.Y.

Medical Degree: J.J.M. Medical College,
Davangere, India

Internal Medicine

Tracy Muhammad, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley Internal Medicine

Internal Medicine: Rosalind Franklin
University of Medicine and Science,
Chicago, Ill.

Medical Degree: Rosalind Franklin
University of Medicine and Science,
Chicago, Ill.

Board Certifications: Internal Medicine

Emergency Medicine

Ashley Herrin, D.O.

Cape Fear Valley Emergency Department

Emergency Medicine: New York Medical College, New York, N.Y.

Medical Degree: Kentucky College of Osteopathic Medicine, Pikeville, Ky.



Phillip Hall, D.O., M.S.

Cape Fear Valley Emergency Department

Emergency Medicine: Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine, Stratford, N.J.

Medical Degree: University of Health Sciences Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, Kirksville, Miss.



Brian Julich, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley Emergency Department

Emergency Medicine: University of North Carolina Hospitals, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Medical Degree: Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, Richmond, Va.

Gregory McWhir, D.O.

Cape Fear Valley Emergency Department

Emergency Medicine: New York Medical Center Metropolitan Hospital, N.Y.

Medical Degree: Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, Harlem, N.Y.

Thomas Davis Miller, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley Pediatric Emergency Department

Pediatric Emergency Medicine

Fellowship: University of North Carolina Hospitals, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Emergency Medicine: University of Florida, Jacksonville, Fla.

Medical Degree: East Carolina University Brody School of Medicine, Greenville, N.C.

Podiatry

Kristen McGinness, D.P.M.

Cape Fear Valley Podiatry

Podiatry: Yale New Haven Health, Bridgeport, CT

Medical Degree: Des Moines University College Of Podiatric Medicine And Surgery, Des Moines, IA

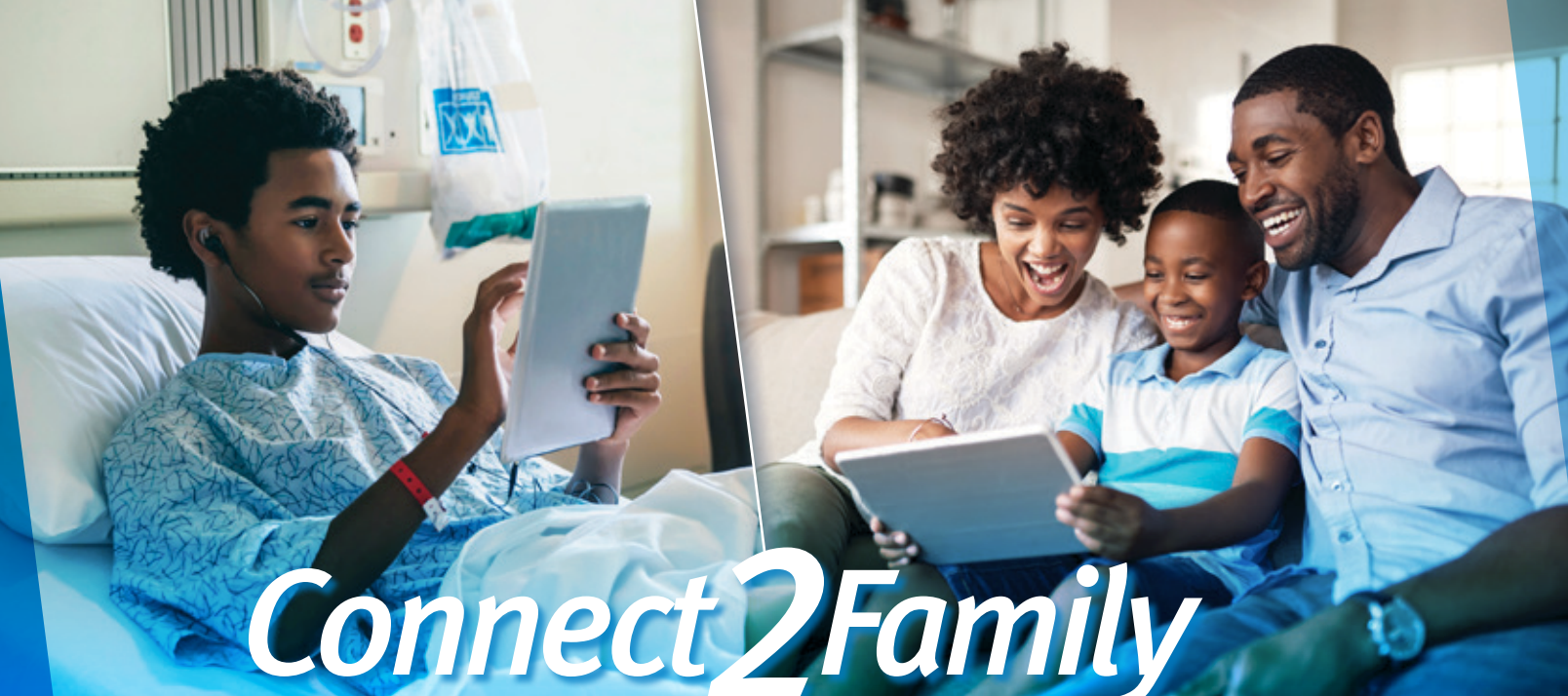
Board Certifications: American Board of Podiatric Medicine

Urgent Care

Fuad Bashjawish, M.D.

Cape Fear Valley ExpressCare

Medical Degree: Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, Stratford, N.J.



Connect2Family

Phoning home has never been easier at Cape Fear Valley Health

Telemedicine visits between doctors and patients are booming, due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. So, it was only a matter of time before virtual visits between hospital patients and families take off too.

Cape Fear Valley Health is already using such cutting-edge technology, thanks to a new app called Connect2Family. Launched earlier this summer, the powerful app is based on Microsoft's powerful Zoom videoconferencing technology.

The health system's nursing administration requested the app in March, when the health system started restricting visitor access as a safety precaution. A two-man team of Cape Fear Valley engineers worked closely with Microsoft to deliver a working app by July.

The app is simple, easy to use, and frees nurses from having to use their own cellphones to accommodate calls. It is installed onto iPads which were purchased by Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation.

Phill Wood, Cape Fear Valley Chief Information Officer, says the app was created fairly quickly because it's based on existing Microsoft software. That makes it secure and instantly compliant with the hospital network.

"When nursing administration asked for something, we immediately put our heads together," Wood said. "We wanted to make something innovative that could really help our community."

Marcus Jackson, was one of the IT engineers who worked on the app. He says Connect2Family is cross-platform, making it possible for nearly anyone with an electronic device and internet connection to dial into patient rooms.

"It can work on a cellphone, computer or tablet," Jackson said. "You just have to install it, and it doesn't require an account to log in. If you use it on a computer, you don't have to install anything. You can connect through your web browser."

Although simple, the app is still powerful. Wood says it can connect patients in any room, on any floor, at any of the health system's hospitals. All that's needed is a few seconds of set-up time.

Nurses at the bedside set up calls for patients just like a videoconference call or online classroom. When set up, families simply click an email link and begin video chatting with their loved one.

Kelly Steere, Chief Nursing Officer at Highsmith-Rainey Specialty Hospital, says Connect2Family was an immediate hit at Highsmith-Rainey Specialty Hospital. The hospital's Long-Term Acute Care (LTAC) unit treats an extremely vulnerable population, so a no-visitor policy was enacted in the unit to keep patients and staff safe.

“It puts families at ease, many of whom haven't seen their loved ones in months.”

Many of the unit's patients are also older or too weak to call home by themselves. The new app takes all the work out of bringing families virtually together.

"It puts families at ease," Steere said, "many of whom, haven't seen their loved ones in months. Being able to at least talk to the patient and hear their voice puts their mind at ease."

Clinical Trials Enrolling Patients *in our* Community

Carolina Institute for Clinical Research, a partnership between Cape Fear Valley Health and Wake Clinical Research, is currently accepting patients for several new clinical trials.

To learn more about the trials or to apply, contact Toree Gomez, Clinical Trials Coordinator, at (910) 302-8151.

COVID-19

Have you or a loved one been diagnosed with COVID-19? Judith Borger, M.D. is currently conducting several inpatient and outpatient trials for COVID-19 investigational treatments.

COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 vaccine research is now being conducted. Interested volunteers can sign up to be included in a clinical trial. Participants will be compensated for their time.

Endometriosis Study

Connette McMahon, M.D., Jones Center for Women's Health, and the EDELWEISS clinical research study are evaluating the effectiveness and safety of an investigational drug to treat endometriosis-related pain.

Hot Flash Study

Connette McMahon, M.D., and the Skylight clinical study are seeking eligible candidates for a non-hormonal, investigational drug for hot flashes.

Urinary Tract Infection Study

Richard Ferro, M.D., is seeking participants for testing the safety and effectiveness of an investigational drug in women with UTI symptoms.

Gonorrhea Study

Gonorrhea can cause serious health problems. Connette McMahon, M.D. is conducting a study for patients with Gonorrhea.

Mobile Blood Drives

Fayetteville and Hope Mills

Parker Pawn & Jewelry

2898 Owen Drive, Fayetteville
Friday, Oct. 2, 1 – 3 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 16, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 3, 4 – 6 p.m.

I-95 Muscle

4115 Legion Road, Hope Mills
Monday, Oct. 5, Noon – 2 p.m.

Townes at Northridge Park

3304 Green Valley Road, Fayetteville
Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2 – 5 p.m.

Fayetteville VA Health Care Center

7300 S. Raeford Road, Fayetteville
Wednesday, Oct. 7, 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 9, 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Cape Fear Valley Medical Center

1638 Owen Drive, Fayetteville
Thursday, Oct. 8, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 9, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Advanced Physical Therapy Solutions

501 Executive Place, Fayetteville
Monday, Oct. 12, Noon – 4 p.m.

Greater Fayetteville Chamber

225 Ray Ave., Suite 165, Fayetteville
Wednesday, Oct. 21, 1 – 4 p.m.

Trinity United Methodist Church

6974 Raeford Road, Fayetteville
Saturday, Oct. 24, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Hidden Lake Apartments

6406 Hidden Lake Loop, Fayetteville
Friday, Oct. 30, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.

St. Ann Catholic Church

357 N. Cool Springs St., Fayetteville
Saturday, Nov. 7, 9 a.m. – Noon

Powers-Swain Chevrolet

4709 Bragg Blvd., Fayetteville
Wednesday, Nov. 18, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Cumberland County Courthouse

117 Dick St., Fayetteville
Thursday, Nov. 19, 1 – 4 p.m.

Fayetteville VA Medical Center

2300 Ramsey St., Fayetteville
Wednesday, Dec. 2, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.



In the Region

Beaver Dam Fire Department

11042 NC Hwy 210 South, Roseboro
Tuesday, Oct. 27, 3 – 7:30 p.m.

Union United Methodist Church

2212 Nursery Road, Lillington
Thursday, Oct. 22, 3 – 7 p.m.

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



CAPE FEAR VALLEY BLOOD DONOR CENTER

3357 Village Drive, Fayetteville
across from the Emergency Department

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
3rd Saturday of every month, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.



IRENE THOMPSON BYRD CANCER CARE ENDOWMENT

A gift to the Irene Thompson Byrd Cancer Care Endowment will provide ongoing support for patients receiving care at Cape Fear Valley Cancer Treatment & CyberKnife Center for generations to come. Contact Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation for more information on how you can provide support to those undergoing cancer treatment in our community today.



cfvfoundation.org | (910) 615-1285
foundation@capefearvalley.com