

# Spirit of Halifax

The Community Newsletter of Halifax Regional Medical Center



After being the Cardiac & Vascular Center's first patient, Patricia Dickens of Conway has resumed her teaching duties.

## Cardiac & Vascular Center opens to excellent reviews.



One of the most anticipated and important additions to Halifax Regional

is now serving patients and saving lives. The Cardiac & Vascular Center, a \$2.5 million investment in our community's health, opened in October. The Center is already making an impact through angiography, treatment for peripheral artery disease, and cardiac catheterization services.

"The response from patients so far has been fantastic," said Nadim Geloo, MD, interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Center. "They are happy not to have to travel to an out-of-town hospital, and they appreciate the attention they receive from our staff. All the details have been thought out, from check-in through consideration of their personal needs."

The Center's first patient was Patricia Dickens, a teacher from Conway, who underwent a cardiac catheterization procedure which was able to rule out heart problems as the cause of her symptoms. "I was very pleased

with everything," Mrs. Dickens said. "The nurses were very helpful and attended to all my needs. And I was relieved when Dr. Geloo told me he didn't find any problems."

Physicians who refer their patients to the Center are also pleased to have a local facility. "They're able to get results more quickly," Dr. Geloo said. "And there's more accountability, which is good for everyone concerned."

The Cardiac & Vascular Center is conveniently located on the hospital's first floor, and offers more than 3,000 square feet of treatment space. "We're able to save our neighbors the trouble and expense of traveling out of town for these services," Dr. Geloo said. "And we've taken another important step in making sure our Medical Center has the technology needed to serve the community for years to come."

For more information, visit [www.halifaxcvc.com](http://www.halifaxcvc.com)

## In My View



### When is BIGGER not BETTER?

In the healthcare field, Halifax Regional is known as a regional medical center or "community hospital." That's compared with large tertiary or teaching medical centers, which can have a thousand beds and combine education and research with patient care. Often, I hear residents in our community say they prefer to go out of town to a hospital because it's bigger.

The question they might ask, "Is it better?" How can you know?

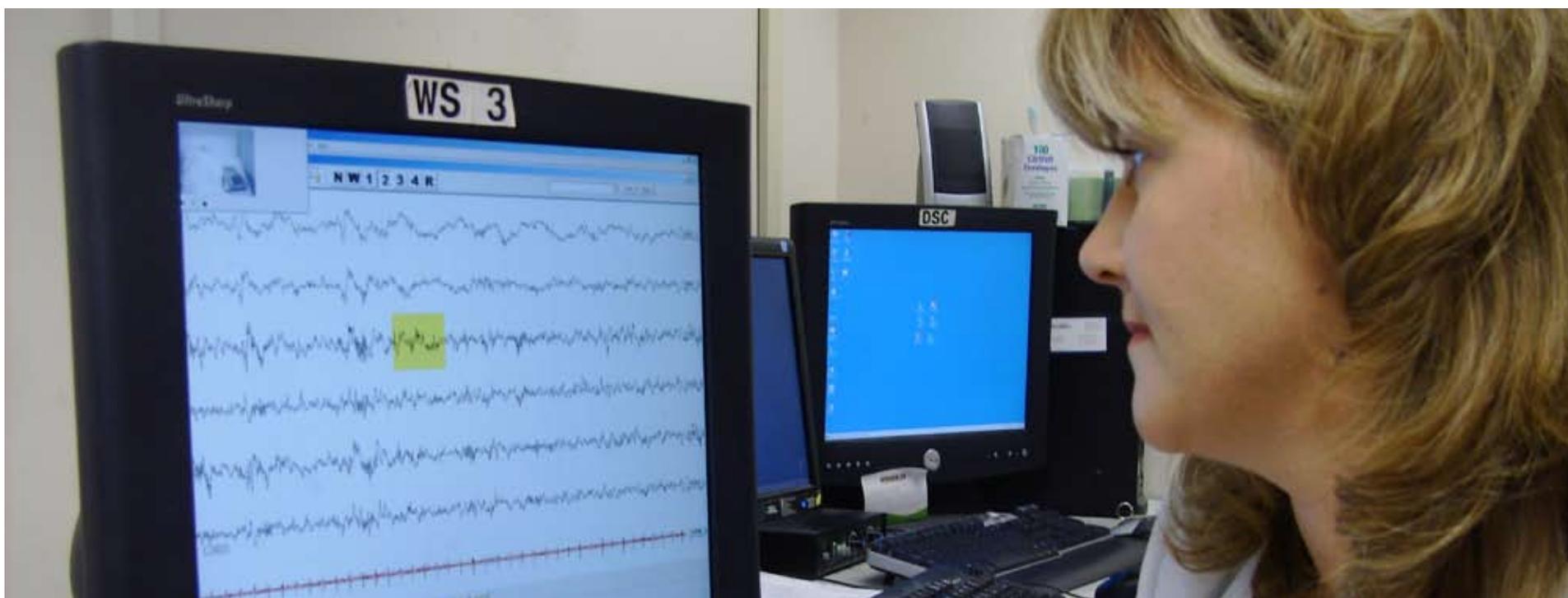
One way is by finding out how safe patients are. And while we all make mistakes, in the healthcare field they can be fatal. In a big hospital, everything is more complex than in a smaller hospital and that can lead to errors. Halifax Regional fully meets the National Safety Goals of the Joint Commission, our accreditation organization.

Another factor is the number of infections acquired while a patient is in the hospital. In national or international hospitals, they treat patients who have incurable diseases from all over the world. The national average for hospital acquired infections is 5.00 percent. Halifax Regional's rate is 0.75 percent.

These are important indicators of quality used by all hospitals. You can go to web sites such as Hospital Compare ([www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov/](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov/)) to learn more.

Access to physicians is something else you should consider. At a community hospital, you're more likely to be treated by a board-certified physician of your choosing. If you go to a big medical center, you may have a physician or intern assigned to you at random.

As one who has lived in smaller towns  
*(continued on page 2)*



Sleep Lab technician Doris Ivey monitors a patient's brain and body activity during a sleep study.

## The Sleep Lab: From A to ZZZZZ

His snoring sounds like a freight train. Her insomnia keeps her up all night, leaves her drowsy all day. These and other sleep disturbances are diagnosed – and changed – almost every night in Halifax Regional's Sleep Lab.

"We've relieved a lot of suffering over the years," said polysomnographer Doris Ivey.

Every evening except Saturdays we have up to four people in for a sleep study, and they're suffering from sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, and insomnia. Sleep disorders have even been linked to hypertension and diabetes. Our tests are the first step in getting them relief."

Pre-registered patients come to the lab at 8 p.m., settle into their

own private room, and watch a video about the test they'll undergo. Of course, they don't have to do anything but sleep, and their comfort is a priority of the staff. "We let them do their evening routine as much as possible," Doris said. "We even let them have their preference of a soft or firm mattress." Patients are free to go

home when the test ends at 6 a.m.

If sleep apnea is confirmed, patients may get a CPAP machine, which assists with breathing. "They sleep much better, and so do their spouses," said N.C. Sekaran, MD, Medical Director of the Sleep Lab. To find out more about the Lab, or to schedule a sleep study, call (252) 535-8216.

### When is BIGGER not BETTER?

(continued from page 1)

and metropolitan areas, I realize the importance of receiving medical treatment from a doctor or nurse who knows you. Perhaps your neighbor is a nurse. Perhaps you see your doctor at the local stores. They care about you as a person, not as just another number to be called. And they know they'll see you again and again in the community.

At big teaching medical centers, they list their priorities as research first, teaching second, and then patient care - in that order. At Halifax Regional, we treat "Patients First".

*Will Mahone*

Will Mahone, President

PS. I'd like your reaction to this column. Please write me at [wmahone@halifaxrmc.org](mailto:wmahone@halifaxrmc.org). I'll respond.

*Editor's Note: This is the first column by Will Mahone, President & CEO of Halifax Regional. He is a graduate of Elon University and earned his Master's Degree in Health Administration from Duke University. Will has 24 years of experience in healthcare.*



Hilda Jeffers, RN reminisces with Will Mahone, president of Halifax Regional. She was recognized for 35 years of service at the Employee Service Awards banquet in October. Maggielene Price, Shirley Allen, Nathaniel Ausby and Mary Davis also were employees when the medical center opened 35 years ago.

## Raising the bar for patient safety.



Nurse Katrina Alston scans Arletha Hendricks's wristband to be sure she's giving the correct medication.

Halifax Regional has recently invested in new technology to prevent patient injuries due to the danger of possible incorrect administration of medications. It's called the IntelliDOT system, and it's already being hailed as a major benefit for patients.

Nationally, medication problems are a serious concern. A 2006 report by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies estimated that medication errors harmed 1.5 million people each year, costing hospitals \$3.5 billion in additional treatment expenses.

"We made the decision to purchase this technology because patient safety is our top priority," said Karen Daniels, Vice President of Nursing. "We saw this system in action, and knew it would help us protect Halifax Regional's patients."

All floor nurses carry a light, handheld IntelliDOT device. They receive a reminder when a patient's medication is due, and the Pharmacy ensures that it's delivered to the floor. Nurses then scan a barcode on the patient's wristband to verify that they have the correct medication to be administered. If something is wrong, the nurse receives an immediate warning.

IntelliDOT has been well

received by both the hospital nursing staff and patients. "I asked one nurse, not long after we installed the system, how it was going," Daniels said. "She told me, 'Last week when you brought this up here, I wanted to give it back to you. But today, you can't have it back, because I feel safe using this piece of equipment.'"

"Halifax Regional was pleased to make this investment to ensure patient safety. Our nurses appreciate being able to go home after work knowing they've done the best job they can, and not worrying about medication delivery."

### *The Five "Rights" of Patients*

The Right patient  
gets the  
The Right medication  
in the  
The Right dose  
at the  
The Right time  
via the  
The Right route

## Wi-Fi? Why, yes.

Visitors (and patients, when permitted by physicians) can now send and receive e-mail or use any online application from personal wireless enabled laptops, thanks to Halifax Regional's free Wi-Fi service. Share important news with friends and keep up with the news on CNN.com. Visitors can get work done without having to leave the hospital so you can spend more time with loved ones. Ask any caregiver for a set of instructions to access our guest network.

## New Lo-o-o-nger Hours

If you can't see a doctor during regular hours, don't worry – we're now staying open later for your convenience.

Roanoke Clinic (1385 Medical Center Drive, Roanoke Rapids) is now open till 8 p.m., Monday – Friday. And Rural Health Group (2066 NC Highway 25, Roanoke Rapids) is now open till 7 p.m., Monday – Friday for treatment of children only. The days may be getting shorter, but our hours are getting longer to serve you and your family.

## Medical Center welcomes TherEX



Trisha Voeltz, a therapist at Halifax Regional, works with Kevin Clark to help him regain his motor skills.

Halifax Regional has selected TherEX to manage rehab services. TherEX is a national company that specializes in rehab solutions for hospitals.

Halifax Regional offers physical, speech, and occupational therapy at two locations, the medical center and at 120 Professional Drive in Roanoke Rapids. Our staff of qualified professionals is available to assist with your therapy needs.

If your doctor orders physical or speech therapy, call (252) 535-3028 for information.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Healthy BINGO

Mondays, 9 a.m.

All welcome. Prizes donated by Wal-Mart and Halifax Regional.

### Gentle Fitness Exercise Class

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 4 p.m. Free and open to the public.

### Glucose Monitoring

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Charge is \$1.

### Blood Pressure Monitoring

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

### Cholesterol Screening

Have your cholesterol checked the 1st Tuesday of the month from 9 a.m. – noon (by appointment only). Call 535-4334 to schedule an appointment. Charge is \$20.

### Diabetes Support Group

2nd Monday of every month, 7 p.m. Call 535-8276 for more information.

### Better Breathers Support Group

4th Monday of every month, 7 p.m. Call 537-6912 for more information.

### NAMI Mental Health

#### Support Group

1st & 3rd Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m. Call 537-0320 for more information.

### Families of Victims of

#### Violent Deaths

4th Tuesday of every month, 6:30 p.m. Contact Dianne Elliot at 583-4801 or [diane.t.elliott@nccourts.org](mailto:diane.t.elliott@nccourts.org) for more information.

### HIV / AIDS Support Group

Call Misty at 535-8173 for more information.

### A.W.A.K.E. Sleep Disorder Support Group

Quarterly on the 4th Thursday of every month. Call 537-2400 for more information.

*For more information on any events, please contact Jackie Cieslinski at 535-4334.*

*Check out the Daily Herald Events Calendar for upcoming seminars and health screenings at HealthLink.*

## New physicians with new perspectives.



*Dr. Smita Sampat enjoys staying physically fit through exercise.*

Internal medicine specialist Smita Sampat, MD has practiced in Roanoke Rapids for a year. "People are nicer here than in where I formerly practiced in New Jersey, there's no question about that," she said. "But our patients tend to be older, and we see more illness." She attributes it in part to lifestyle differences and occupational hazards.

When not working, Dr. Sampat enjoys travel and entertaining. And she likes to exercise. "It's something I encourage for all my patients. So I want to be sure to set a good example."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Sampat, call Halifax Medical Specialists at (252) 537-0134.



*Photography is a favorite hobby of Dr. Gwenn Coath.*

The town of Jackson in Northampton County is fortunate to have the services of family medicine specialist Gwenn Coath, MD. "We serve a community that needs timely health information and care," she said. A native of South Carolina, Dr. Coath works through the National Health Service Corps, an organization dedicated to bringing medical professionals to underserved areas. In her limited leisure time, Dr. Coath enjoys gardening and photography. "I still use film and an SLR camera at times," she said, "but I've just bought a digital camera and I'm enjoying its capabilities as well."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Coath, call Rural Health Group in Jackson at (252) 534-1661.

**Ninth Edition.** Spirit of Halifax is the newsletter of Halifax Regional, published quarterly to inform residents of the Roanoke Valley about the advancements at the Medical Center. If you have questions or comments, please contact Henry Robertson at (252) 535-8585 or [hrobertson@halifaxrmc.org](mailto:hrobertson@halifaxrmc.org). © 2008, Halifax Regional Medical Center

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