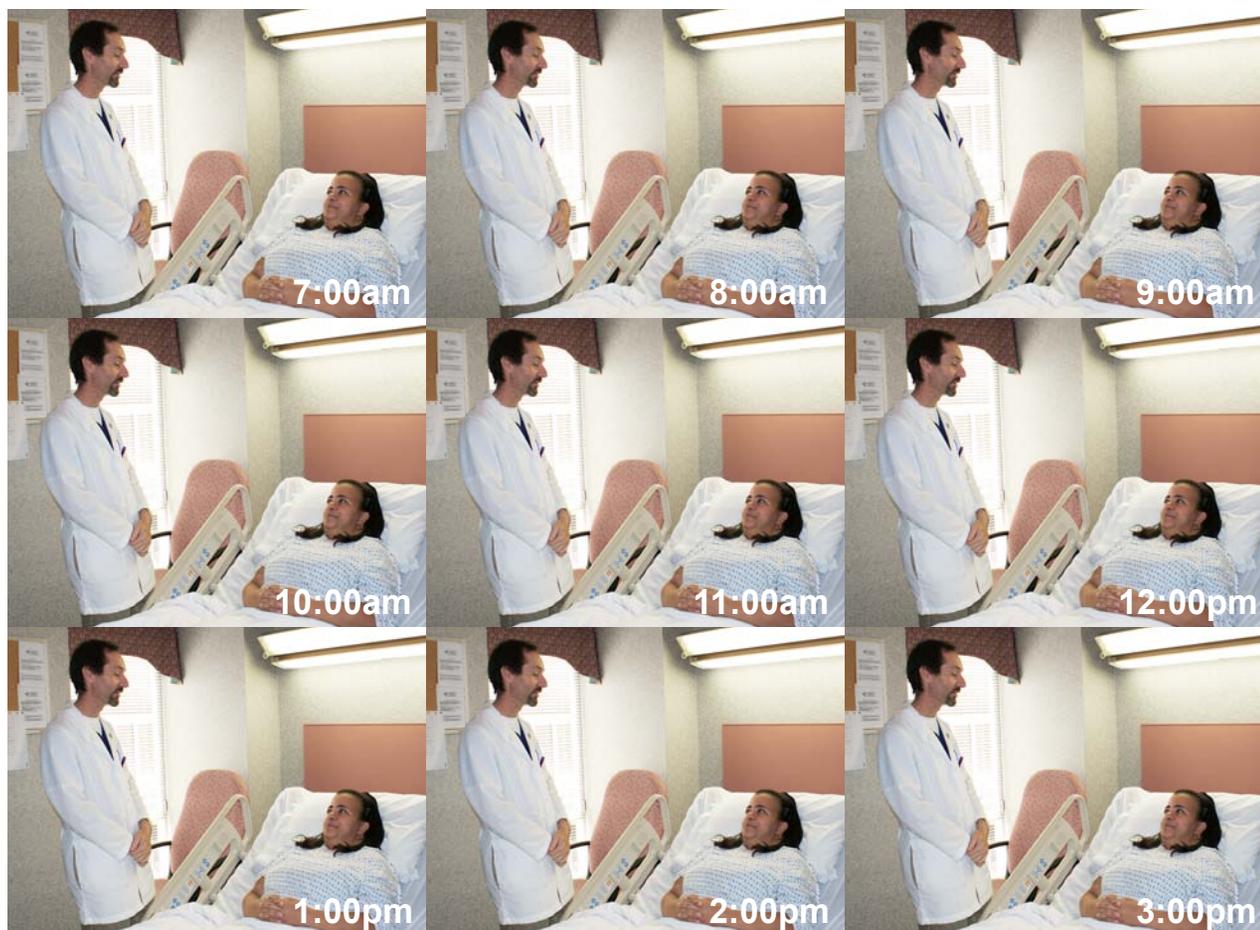


Spirit of Halifax

The Community Newsletter of Halifax Regional Medical Center



Michael Joyner, RN visits with a patient every hour.

Nurses check on every patient, every hour.

Patients have always had the opportunity to call for a nurse if they needed special assistance. And they still do. But now they don't call as often – because nurses visit each patient at least once an hour, often before a problem becomes urgent.

“It's a major step forward both in patient care and safety,” said Michael Joyner, RN, Manager of the Progressive Care Unit, who led the implementation of the program more than six months ago. Since then, nurse calls dropped by 75 percent, while patient satisfaction scores improved dramatically. “Nurses now have more productive time to complete their job duties,” he added.

“Patients now know we're coming soon,” said Angela Lee, RN, who works in the

unit. “If they have pain, or need help getting to the bathroom, they know help is on the way. Maybe they need to be in a more comfortable position, or want help reaching their personal items. We're never far away. And of course, they can still summon us at any time.”

Nurses say there's a less hectic environment, and they can more readily anticipate their patients' needs. Fewer patients have fallen, and there have been fewer urgent cardiac and respiratory incidents – probably because nurses are able to deal with problems before they magnify.

“Patient care and safety are always our top priorities,” Lee said. “This program is a win/win for both patients and nurses.” The program is being implemented in all other inpatient areas.

In My View



Patients Speak for Halifax Regional.

We are weary of the bad economic news in America. For the past eight months, we have been reading about the crisis that has spread throughout the economy. We all hope Spring ushers in improvements in the economy along with the beauty of the season.

As I wrote in the winter issue of Spirit, hospitals throughout America have been impacted by the economy. That is true in our area, too. As you know, Halifax Regional has reduced expenses by approximately 8 percent or nearly \$5 million. The reductions were made with great care to maintain the high quality of clinical services we offer the community.

While they will have an impact on everyone, we minimized job losses. As one employee told me, “the staff is grateful that careful thought and consideration was taken to reduce costs while safeguarding as many jobs as possible.”

Our staff is focused on patient care, and we are encouraged when patients and their families communicate with us about their experiences.

Jennifer of Halifax wrote me a letter that was meaningful to the entire staff. In discussing the treatment we provided for her father, she wrote:

“We were in the right place at the right time, and we experienced advanced care. I have full confidence in your staff and am so thankful that this hospital is in our community.

“From registration to discharge, courteousness and professionalism were displayed at every level.

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Surgery at Halifax Regional: On the cutting edge

One characteristic that defines a full-service medical center is its surgical capabilities. Halifax Regional is fortunate to offer a wide variety of procedures, performed by a talented and experienced team of surgeons.

Among the common surgeries performed at Halifax Regional are general surgery, orthopedic and joint replacement, pain management, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, otolaryngology, urology, and some dental procedures.

The Medical Center's Chief of Surgery is James Ketoff, MD. "We have approximately 20 professionals working in our surgical suites," he said. "They are deeply committed to customer service and quality outcomes."

Dr. Ketoff notes that there is frequent collaboration within the local medical community, and the surgical staff receives full support from Halifax Regional administration. "These are some of the reasons why the surgical department has seen significant growth in the last five years," he said. "But I think it's also clear that the community recognizes the talented people in our department."

Fred Wier, MD has been on the Medical Center's surgical staff for more than 19 years. "As you can imagine, I've seen great leaps forward in what we're able to accomplish during surgery," he said. "Incisions are smaller, recovery time is much shorter, and people are able to be home with family rather than remain confined to a hospital bed." As former Chief of the Medical Staff, Dr. Wier has helped raise standards and broaden the scope of surgeries available at Halifax Regional.

Another vital member of the surgical team at Halifax Regional is Shiva Rao, MD. He currently serves as Vice Chief of the Medical Staff, and assumes the role of Chief of the Medical Staff this fall.

"We offer a very comprehensive array of surgical services," he said. "Of course we don't do everything – all hospitals have limitations. But when patients need surgery, they want the comfort of friends, family, and home. We're able to give them that gift. And I work in a field where I change lives every day. What could be better than that?"

Meet our general surgeons.

James Ketoff, MD

Roanoke Valley Surgical Associates



Hobbies include: golf, tennis, and enjoying his son's school activities.
(252) 537-1933

Shiva K. Rao, MD, FACS



Hobbies include: golf, tennis, and travel
(252) 537-2254

Fred Wier, MD

Roanoke Valley Surgical Associates



Hobbies include: photography, snow skiing and travel
(252) 537-1933

Birthing Center Nurses Attain Advanced Training



Lisa Cooke, RN giving instruction to a new mom.

When you're deciding where to have your baby, the training of the hospital's professional staff is vitally important. No wonder more than 800 women each year choose The Birthing Center at Halifax Regional to deliver and care for their newborns.

Here are some impressive facts:

- All our nurses have advanced training.
- All nurses are certified in neonatal resuscitation.
- Six nurses are certified in inpatient obstetrics, having passed a national exam demonstrating knowledge in all areas of

perinatal care – Angie Brown, RN, April Clay, RN, Lisa Cook, RN, Sarah Harris, RN, Amy Joseph, RN, and Joyce Smith, RN.

- Two nurses are certified in electronic fetal monitoring, enabling them to quickly detect a potential problem and ensure a safe delivery – Angie Brown, RN and Ernestine Werner, RN.
- Thirteen nurses are certified in breastfeeding education.
- We always call new moms 2-3 days after they go home to answer questions and

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What's our top priority? Our patients' satisfaction.



Cheryl Wheeler, Guest Relations Manager.

When you're a patient at Halifax Regional, we want you to have the best possible experience. That goal, which we shorten to "Patients First," is the mission of every employee at the Medical Center. Cheryl Wheeler, our Guest Relations Manager, makes sure that the needs and experiences

of patients are always our top priority. "I visit patients on a regular basis," Wheeler said, "and I ask them some simple, but very important questions. 'How have you been treated? Why did you choose Halifax Regional? Are you satisfied with the service you've received? What can we do better?'"

"If there is ever an issue, I assure them that I'll go to the proper manager and get action. But the responses I receive are almost always very positive."

Wheeler says that employees go above and beyond the call of duty every day in providing excellent care. Now Halifax Regional has a way to recognize that outstanding service. It's called REACT! - Responsiveness, Effective Communication, Accountability, Compassion, and Teamwork. Employees nominate their coworkers for providing thoughtful and

extraordinary service, and those selected are acknowledged at quarterly staff meetings.

One thing patients tell Wheeler they appreciate about Halifax Regional is that all patients have private rooms. Not only is this more convenient for families and visitors, it increases privacy.

"Private rooms enhance the experience for patients," said Karen Daniels, Vice President of Nursing. "Patients benefit from having a more therapeutic environment. Infection control is easier and, of course, visits from family and friends are more private."

"We understand that patients can often choose their hospital," Wheeler said. "We want to provide such a high level of service that they'll always choose Halifax Regional."

Lives are changed every day at Woodside.



Part of the Woodside team includes (l. to r.) LaSandra Clark, Unit Secretary; Leneisha Boone, CNA II; Pamela Wells, RN; Sharon Pair, LCSW; Tammy Perkinson, RN; Gail Lane, MSN, RN, Director; Heather Taylor, RT; Michelle Dickens, RN; Lou Ann Simmons, RN; and Rhonda Howell, CNA."

People experiencing issues with mental health concerns such as depression, bipolar disorder, and dementia are having their lives changed at our Woodside Psychiatric Unit.

"People are often reluctant to come to us," said Gail Lane, MSN, RN, BC, Woodside's director. "Some don't think their lives are worth living. But after our compassionate care, they often tell us,

'My life has changed so much. I have goals now. I know I can make it in the world.' That's the kind of positive outcome that keeps us committed to our work."

Woodside is located on the Medical Center's fourth floor, and its staff includes two psychiatrists, 20 RNs, two licensed clinical social workers, a licensed recreational therapist, discharge planner, licensed practical nurse, nursing assistants and an administrative assistant. The medical director is Prasad Degala, MD.

"One area that has changed so much in recent years is the medication available to treat mental health problems," Lane said. "They're not only more effective, but they have fewer side effects. Combined with the care and life instruction we provide, our patients are better able to live productive, emotionally healthy lives."

For more information about Woodside Psychiatric Unit, call 252 535-8440.

Patients Speak for Halifax Regional.

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The staff at Halifax Regional Medical Center provided superior service to my family, and I am forever grateful for the treatment we received, both medically and emotionally."

All of us are facing challenges these difficult days. With the committed employees and physicians at Halifax Regional, the community can be confident we are continuing to place Patients First.

Will Mahone
President

P.S. I'd like to hear from you. Please write me at wmahone@halifaxrmc.org. I'll get back to you.

Birthing Center Nurses Attain Advanced Training*(continued from page 2)*

offer advice on newborn care. Our nurse performing this service, Cindy Eaton, RN, just received her Master's Degree in Education.

Our team of obstetricians**D. James Brown, MD***Smith Church Obstetrics and Gynecology*

(252) 535-4343

Thomas J. McDonald, MD*Women's Health Specialists*

(252) 535-1414

Richard Minielly, MD*Smith Church Obstetrics and Gynecology*

(252) 535-4343

Richard Shea, MD*Women's Health Specialists*

(252) 535-1414

Lawrence Singer, MD*Smith Church Obstetrics and Gynecology*

(252) 535-4343

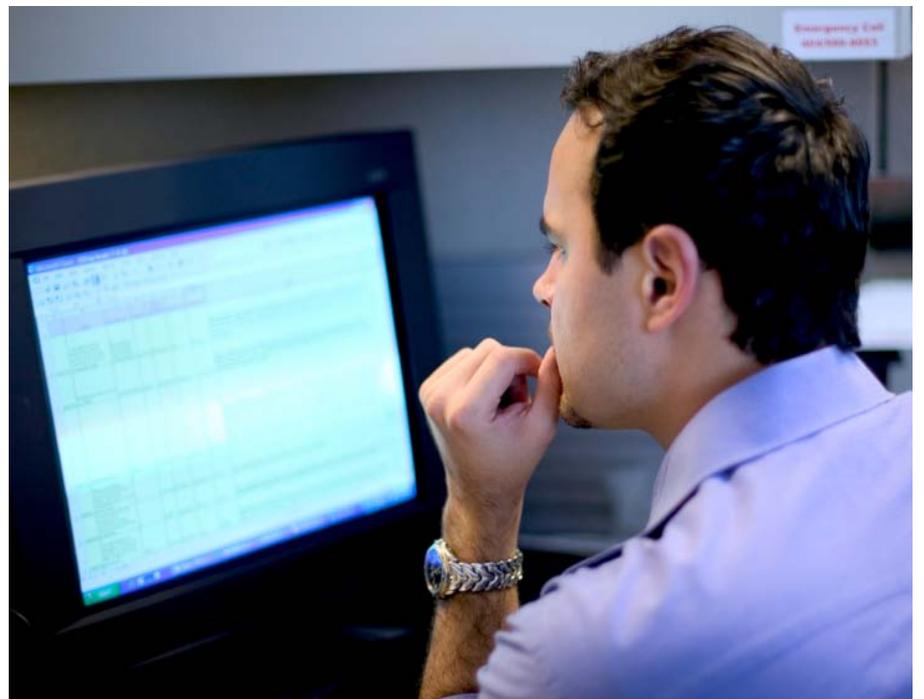
That level of training is comforting when you're making one of the most important decisions of your life. Women also like The Birthing Center for other important reasons. We're the only hospital in the region that has exclusively LDRP (Labor-Delivery-Recovery-Postpartum) rooms, and they're designed to be comfortable and homelike. Our team of obstetricians is experienced and understands the changes a newborn brings in a family.

"When the nurses and doctors work together as a team and support each other the way we do at Halifax Regional, everyone is focused on what's best for the patient," said Amy Joseph, RN, manager of The Birthing Center. "Studies have shown that this experience and cooperation result in better outcomes for patients."

Free health info in your e-mail is a click away.

E-mail is a convenient way to get information you need. Now, when you sign up for HealthEd, you'll receive e-mails with lots of tips for a healthy lifestyle, info about special events and programs at HealthLink, and news about the services at Halifax Regional. PLUS, you'll also get a FREE one-month membership at Halifax HealthLink, with access to exercise equipment and much more.

Call Jackie Cieslinski at (252) 535-4334 or click on the HealthLink icon at www.halifaxregional.us to learn more.



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