On Denzel’s Mind

Denzel Washington is making a difference in the lives of people with brain disorders.

Open Heart Surgery
Why Gwinnett County needs it
Page 52

All Options Included
Mammography Care-A-Van goes digital
Page 1

How this device can change your life
Page 4
Gwinnett Medical Center’s mobile mammography Care-a-Van has gotten a high-tech upgrade. Its conversion is the last piece of GMC’s transition to all-digital mammography services for the women of our community.

“The upgrade to digital mammography is a milestone at GMC,” says Carolyn Hill, chair of the TIME MATTERS in the fight against Breast Cancer campaign and president of the GMC Foundation Board of Trustees. “Women now have the benefit of digital versus the traditional film mammograms.”

The benefits of digital mammography include:

◆ Better pictures with the lowest possible dose of radiation.
◆ Better visibility of the breast, especially near the skin line, the chest wall and, for women who have it, varying density of breast tissue.

Since its inception in 1994, the Care-a-Van has performed more than 19,000 mammograms and been to more than 1,600 sites. In 2004, the GMC Foundation’s TIME MATTERS in the fight against Breast Cancer campaign funded a new van. The all-digital transformation was again spearheaded by the GMC Foundation, which has raised well over $4 million to improve access to routine and diagnostic mammograms and to expand services for breast cancer patients.

“My experience with the Care-a-Van was very pleasant,” says patient Aubrey Sensibar. “The best thing about it is that it’s so convenient and the wait was not long. My mammogram was thorough and very cost-efficient.”

The Digital Standard
Foundation funds have made digital mammography the standard of care at all GMC screening mammography locations: Gwinnett Women’s Pavilion, the Marion Allison Webb Center for Screening Mammography, the Outpatient Center at GMC – Duluth and now the Care-a-Van.

The digital Care-a-Van also gives the doctor and patient the most information in the shortest amount of time.

◆ Images are immediately available on a computer monitor in the Care-a-Van.
◆ Technologists can view the image for good positioning quality and let the patient leave.
◆ Radiologists instantly can review the electronic images no matter where they are: in the Care-a-Van, in the hospital, at their offices or even at home.

“All the support of the community and the time and effort put forward to making this possible is truly appreciated,” says Sue Woodall, R.T., R.M., the Care-a-Van supervisor. “The digital upgrade now gives us a great advancement in women’s health.”

Care-a-Van Qualifications
To have a screening mammogram on the Care-a-Van, you must meet the following requirements:

◆ Have a screening mammogram order/prescription from a physician.
◆ Be 35 years of age or older.
◆ Have no previous history of breast cancer, breast surgery in the last 24 months, breast implants or active breast problems.

Allison Webb Center for Screening Mammography, the Outpatient Center at GMC – Duluth and now the Care-a-Van.

The digital Care-a-Van also gives the doctor and patient the most information in the shortest amount of time.

◆ Images are immediately available on a computer monitor in the Care-a-Van.
◆ Technologists can view the image for good positioning quality and let the patient leave.
◆ Radiologists instantly can review the electronic images no matter where they are: in the Care-a-Van, in the hospital, at their offices or even at home.

“The support of the community and the time and effort put forward to making this possible is truly appreciated,” says Sue Woodall, R.T., R.M., the Care-a-Van supervisor. “The digital upgrade now gives us a great advancement in women’s health.”

How We Roll
Care-a-Van mobile mammography unit gets an all-digital upgrade

Gwinnett Medical Center’s mobile mammography Care-a-Van has gotten a high-tech upgrade. Its conversion is the last piece of GMC’s transition to all-digital mammography services for the women of our community.

“The upgrade to digital mammography is a milestone at GMC,” says Carolyn Hill, chair of the TIME MATTERS in the fight against Breast Cancer campaign and president of the GMC Foundation Board of Trustees. “Women now have the benefit of digital versus the traditional film mammograms.”

The benefits of digital mammography include:

◆ Better pictures with the lowest possible dose of radiation.
◆ Better visibility of the breast, especially near the skin line, the chest wall and, for women who have it, varying density of breast tissue.

Since its inception in 1994, the Care-a-Van has performed more than 19,000 mammograms and been to more than 1,600 sites. In 2004, the GMC Foundation’s TIME MATTERS in the fight against Breast Cancer campaign funded a new van. The all-digital transformation was again spearheaded by the GMC Foundation, which has raised well over $4 million to improve access to routine and diagnostic mammograms and to expand services for breast cancer patients.

“My experience with the Care-a-Van was very pleasant,” says patient Aubrey Sensibar. “The best thing about it is that it’s so convenient and the wait was not long. My mammogram was thorough and very cost-efficient.”

The Digital Standard
Foundation funds have made digital mammography the standard of care at all GMC screening mammography locations: Gwinnett Women’s Pavilion, the Marion Allison Webb Center for Screening Mammography, the Outpatient Center at GMC – Duluth and now the Care-a-Van.

The digital Care-a-Van also gives the doctor and patient the most information in the shortest amount of time.

◆ Images are immediately available on a computer monitor in the Care-a-Van.
◆ Technologists can view the image for good positioning quality and let the patient leave.
◆ Radiologists instantly can review the electronic images no matter where they are: in the Care-a-Van, in the hospital, at their offices or even at home.

“All the support of the community and the time and effort put forward to making this possible is truly appreciated,” says Sue Woodall, R.T., R.M., the Care-a-Van supervisor. “The digital upgrade now gives us a great advancement in women’s health.”

On Tour
To bring the Care-a-Van to your location, call 678-312-4760. To schedule a mammogram on the Care-a-Van, call Gwinnett Medical Center’s HealthLine at 678-442-3000.
Articulating our vision: A healthy future for Gwinnett

Gwinnett Medical Center has an incredible vision for the future—a vision that will transform healthcare in our community.

In late 2006, the Gwinnett Health System board of directors adopted a new strategic plan to guide GMC over the next five years. However, what they adopted is much more than a plan—it is a vision that will impact healthcare now and for future generations.

At its core, the vision is simple: to ensure the very best care is available for every patient we serve. But the big-picture view, with all of its complexities and challenges, is truly visionary. That vision is called:

Project PATH
Planning, Advancing & Transforming Healthcare

Project PATH initiatives will enable Gwinnett Medical Center to advance programs, services and technology and transform our facilities to continue to attract the best physicians and staff. This is essential for us to be able to provide the highest level of clinical excellence.

GMC already has made many significant advances, including the opening of GMC – Duluth in October 2006 and the beginning of construction on a new 155-bed patient tower at GMC, which is scheduled for completion in 2009. These projects, along with other Project PATH initiatives, will help to:

◆ Expand capacity for new and existing specialty clinical programs.
◆ Reduce hospital overcrowding and long Emergency Department waits.
◆ Keep GMC at the forefront of medical technology and clinical excellence.
◆ Enable GMC to remain a strong pillar in the community.

Having a vision to transform healthcare is one thing. Implementing it is quite another. The initiatives outlined in Project PATH total more than $420 million in capital expansion needs over the next five years. However, what they adopted is much more than a plan—it is a vision that will impact healthcare now and for future generations.

At its core, the vision is simple: to ensure the very best care is available for every patient we serve. But the big-picture view, with all of its complexities and challenges, is truly visionary. That vision is called:

Project PATH
Planning, Advancing & Transforming Healthcare

Project PATH initiatives will enable Gwinnett Medical Center to advance programs, services and technology and transform our facilities to continue to attract the best physicians and staff. This is essential for us to be able to provide the highest level of clinical excellence.

GMC already has made many significant advances, including the opening of GMC – Duluth in October 2006 and the beginning of construction on a new 155-bed patient tower at GMC, which is scheduled for completion in 2009. These projects, along with other Project PATH initiatives, will help to:

◆ Expand capacity for new and existing specialty clinical programs.
◆ Reduce hospital overcrowding and long Emergency Department waits.
◆ Keep GMC at the forefront of medical technology and clinical excellence.
◆ Enable GMC to remain a strong pillar in the community.

Having a vision to transform healthcare is one thing. Implementing it is quite another. The initiatives outlined in Project PATH total more than $420 million in capital expansion needs over the next five years that will enable us to literally transform healthcare in our community.

We are confident that with the vision outlined in Project PATH and a strong commitment from our community, we will continue to remain the hospital Gwinnett Medical Center strives to be—a hospital that will transform healthcare in our community.
1 How We Roll  Gwinnett Medical Center’s mobile Care-a-Van has wheeled into state-of-the-art technology. Thanks to the latest in digital mammography, patients now receive better mammograms with the lowest possible dose of radiation and faster test results.

2 A Second Chance at Life  At age 31, Michael Jira nearly died in a motorcycle accident. Returning to a normal life as a husband and father of two required a courageous journey with numerous operations, including a new hip resurfacing procedure.

6 Learning Leadership  Take a behind-the-scenes peek at Gwinnett Medical Center’s unique program that is turning physicians into leaders during this challenging time in healthcare.

18 Operation: Minimization  We live in an era of microchips and, now, “keyhole” surgery. Learn more about the medical breakthrough that’s bringing smaller incisions, shorter hospital stays, less scarring and faster healing to an operating room near you.

24 Ticker Tech  Old song lyrics lament, “How do you mend a broken heart?” It’s easier now than ever, thanks to these five technologies for ailing hearts.

34 Healthcare Career Day  Healthcare is predicted to provide more than 17 million jobs by 2014. One of them might just be your dream job—even if you can’t stand the sight of blood. Explore the possibilities.

38 Through the Years  If you think you’re feeling the pinch during your annual mammogram, flash back over the past four decades, from the era of the pet rock to today’s digital age. It brings new meaning to the term “women’s lib.”

44 Eye of the Beholder  When you look in the mirror, do you love what you see? If not, then discover nine secrets for feeling great in your own skin.

49 The Best Defense  Find out how Scott Maughon, M.D., is protecting our youths from sports injuries as head of a new prevention program that teams GMC with the Gwinnett Football League.

50 Quick Studies  Can you name the five common symptoms of stroke—without hesitating? If not, read this so you can take advantage of some of the best new time-sensitive stroke treatments.

52 Wanted: Open Heart Surgery in Gwinnett  Across the nation, 40 percent of all deaths are related to cardiovascular causes. Manfred Sandler, M.D., GMC’s chief of cardiology, reveals what Gwinnett County must do for its citizens to beat the odds.

54 Caring People Caring for People  They’ve given more than $2.9 million for the advancement of healthcare services at GMC. Meet these generous donors, who are members of the Keystone Society.

56 Precious Time  When writing a check isn’t enough, Gwinnett Medical Center’s Auxiliary donates another precious gift: time. A recent luncheon honored these volunteers, including Dick Berry, who clocked in a whopping 838 hours in 2006.
“The marks on the guardrail are still there five years later.”

This is what Michael Jira sees each time he drives past a familiar place near the intersection of Old Norcross and Herrington roads in Lawrenceville. It was there, in August 2002, that he lost control of his motorcycle, tumbled into that still-scarred guardrail and nearly lost his life. He did lose his right foot and suffered two broken arms, broken ribs, multiple fractures of his pelvis, fractured vertebrae and a severe head injury.

“I’m lucky I was less than 10 minutes from Gwinnett Medical Center,” Jira remembers. After being rushed to the GMC trauma unit, Jira was attended to by on-call trauma specialists including Gary Levengood, M.D., chief of orthopedics. Numerous operations were needed to stabilize Jira, with extensive work done on the multifractured pelvis. After undergoing years of physical, occupational and speech therapies, there was still one major source of pain.

“My biggest problem was my left side from where I broke my pelvis,” Jira says. “No words can describe the pain I endured around my left hip. Dr. Levengood would give me injections to help calm down the inflammation and bursa, but that relief lasted only about eight months. The injections stopped working and offered no relief from the pain I was enduring.”

Jira says Dr. Levengood told him he had arthritis in the hip joint that could have been adding to the pain, along with bone spurs that still existed. Dr. Levengood mentioned a newly approved procedure available as an option to total hip replacement: Birmingham Hip resurfacing.

The Birmingham Hip

“I knew nothing about hip resurfacing,” says Jira, who was 31, with a wife and two young children, at the time of the accident. “The first thing I thought was, I am too young for a hip replacement.”

But the Birmingham Hip resurfacing procedure is not like traditional hip replacement. Traditional total hip replacement removes the top of the femur bone and inserts a metal stem into the exposed bone shaft. A ball joint is locked onto the top of the stem and the new ball joint rotates against a plastic liner implanted in the pelvis.

This metal implant constantly rubs against the plastic liner, causing loose plastic particles to accumulate over time. This is particularly negative in active, younger patients, like Jira, who can easily wear out these replacement hips, requiring a second, more difficult operation.

However, both sides of the Birmingham Hip resurfacing joint are made from high-carbide cobalt...
This metal-on-metal joint means less friction and less wear—98 percent less than traditional metal-on-plastic implants. High-carbide cobalt chrome hip implants also endure wear better and last longer than plastic implants. After traditional total hip replacement, between 1 percent and 4 percent of hip replacement patients suffer a dislocation of the hip. The Birmingham Hip metal-on-metal joint reduces those odds of dislocation to 0.3 percent.

“Dr. Levengood said that eventually I would have to have a hip procedure of some type down the road, so I gave it some thought,” Jira says. “After being in constant pain for four years … I was tired of hurting and aching. We agreed to do the hip resurfacing, and I had the surgery in January 2007.”

Road to Recovery
Now months removed from surgery, Jira says the physical recovery is tough, but he believes it will be worth it in the end. “I do not have the nerve pain or aches I had before. Now it is muscle soreness and stiffness. I have experienced relief in my hip, but the recovery process is slow. Having to rebuild muscles is the problem.”

Says Dr. Levengood:
“A great benefit for Michael was that we were able to save a great deal of his hip bone by using the hip resurfacing. The resurfacing system fits over the existing bone, and mirrors the hip’s natural anatomic proportions. The end result for young patients like Michael is a good chance of getting back to being active.”

This focus on keeping more of the original bone was a great draw to the procedure for Jira. “You get to keep your bones,” he says. “From what I understand, keeping more bone gives you a stronger joint, and a better chance to return to a normal lifestyle with fewer problems.”

Jira says he is very thankful for Dr. Levengood and all of his other doctors who treated him at Gwinnett Medical Center. “They gave me a second chance at life,” he says. “I will always have a great deal of respect for Dr. Levengood and what he has done for me.”

Send In a Replacement
For more information on Gwinnett Medical Center’s joint replacement program, visit gwinnettmccenter.org/totaljoint. To find a physician, call HealthLine at 678-442-5000.

A Wife’s Perspective
By Denise Jira
I received the phone call no one ever wants to get, late in the evening of Aug. 7, 2002. I was asked by the person on the phone if I knew Michael Jira. They informed me that he had been in a serious accident and I needed to get to the hospital.

Upon arriving I was immediately whisked into a conference room where I was surrounded by family. At about 4 a.m. a doctor came to the Intensive Care Unit waiting area, shook my hand and then held it as he discussed with me what he had done to stabilize Mike’s right leg that had been amputated. This was Dr. Gary Levengood. He was so calm and reassuring but advised the next few days would be telling.

I then began the daily ups and downs of lab work, X-rays, procedures, pumps, feeding tubes, ventilator readings and reports of what the next hour to day would mean. Our clinical team at Gwinnett Medical Center always kept me up to date, even if I was not there—they would call me on my cell phone or at home.

Dr. Levengood always let me know when he was coming so we could discuss Mike’s care. He was always upfront and honest and he has kept our trust and respect over this entire journey. Mike knows Dr. Levengood is always looking out for what will give him the best chance at recovery. I appreciate everyone who came into our lives during this time and has given me back my husband and friend, and gave our kids the daddy they love and cannot live without.
Winnett Medical Center constantly strives to provide the highest quality healthcare to the community. Today, hospitals face mounting challenges to success, from competition to decreasing reimbursement. And in a growing community such as Gwinnett, meeting the need for more facilities and services as well as the latest and greatest technology is critical. We couldn't achieve our goals without strong relationships between hospital leadership and our medical staff.

One of the key alliances that hospital leadership can develop is with its local physician leaders. The most fully aligned hospital-physician leadership teams often are at the head of the pack of best performing healthcare institutions.

It is with this goal in mind that Gwinnett Medical Center launched the first of four Physician Leadership Academy meetings in spring 2007. The Physician Leadership Academy is a partnership between Gwinnett Medical Center and the Advisory Board Co., which began the Physician Leadership Academy in 2003 to strengthen working partnerships between hospitals and physicians.

Starting Out
Twenty-four Gwinnett Medical Center physicians attended the first meeting in February at the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce in Duluth. This core group of physician leaders set out to establish a vision for growth and partnership with Gwinnett Medical Center. Through a combination of presentations, case studies, simulations, and group and individual exercises, academy physicians learn the essentials of leadership and business in a series of half-day sessions. Workshop topics range from managing group dynamics to advanced business analysis. The curriculum, designed by and for physicians, is grounded in best practices research drawn from the nation's leading health systems and physician leaders.

Graduates of the Physician Leadership Academy will be better prepared to assume greater leadership in organizational decision-making, impacting the medical staff and Gwinnett Medical Center as a whole.

Gwinnett Medical Center salutes its 2007 Physician Leadership Academy physicians.
GMC’s Academy Partner

The Advisory Board Co. (advisory.com) serves a membership of approximately 2,500 healthcare organizations across the country. It provides best practices research and analysis to the healthcare industry, focusing on business strategy, operations and general management issues. Gathering data across and beyond the membership, the Advisory Board publishes daily and weekly news services, 50 major studies and 3,000 customized research briefs each year on progressive management and clinical practices in healthcare.
CLINICAL QUALITY SERIES

Intensive QUALITY

GMC’s ICU is a Beacon of critical care excellence

The team’s most satisfying moments come when patients who were once critical return to their families and their lives. Imagine, then, what an affirmation it was to find our critical care team standing in the Beacon Award’s spotlight. In May, GMC became only the second hospital in Georgia that has raised the bar to the elevated standards required by the AACN and that now serves as an example for other hospitals.

"We are honored to be recognized by our peers for the work that we do in critical care,” says Joanne Culvern, R.N., CCRN, clinical manager of the Intensive Care Unit. “We believe an exemplary ICU is a place that lights the path to recovery and provides guidance through obstacles and challenges. We are prepared for those challenges, thanks to our constant quality improvement efforts and our patient focus. It’s great to be rewarded for our efforts with the Beacon Award and national recognition.”

To be considered a Beacon Award candidate, a hospital must have:
◆ Recognized excellence in the intensive care environments in which nurses work and critically ill patients live.
◆ Recognized excellence of the highest quality measures, processes, structures and outcomes based on evidence.
◆ Recognized excellence in collaboration, communication and partnerships that support the value of healing and humane environments.
◆ Developed a program that contributes to actualization of AACN’s mission, vision and values.

“We are very pleased to receive this award and we’re very proud of the hard work it represents,” says John Zedick, vice president of quality at GMC. “It is not only a validation of the excellent care we provide, but it also assures the members of our community that we are right here, close to home, with the very best in critical care when it’s needed.”
The chairman of Gwinnett Medical Center’s Sports Medicine program takes injury prevention seriously. That may be because Scott Maughon, M.D., is not only an orthopedic surgeon, but also a dad who coaches his son’s football team in Gwinnett County. Dr. Maughon is the architect of a two-year-old partnership between GMC and the Gwinnett Football League (GFL).

The partnership is built on injury prevention and educational training for more than 250 GFL team trainers. “The decision for Gwinnett Medical Center and the GFL to work together was forged by a common belief and commitment that both organizations share—that it’s never too early to stress the importance of safety,” Dr. Maughon says.

Erik Richards, president of the GFL, says he wants youth-level football to be as fun and injury-free as possible. “The physicians are here and the hospital is here providing medical care regardless of the age of the players,” he says. “It just made good sense to partner up.”

The GMC-GFL partnership is designed to provide additional layers of protection from injury and heat illness and to respond quickly and effectively if and when injuries occur.

On the Front Line
GMC and the Sports Medicine program hosts a four-hour GFL trainers clinic in early August for the parent volunteers who will serve as team trainers on the field. The instructors are GMC-affiliated Sports Medicine physicians and certified athletic trainers. Team trainers are taught basic first aid and attend breakout sessions to learn about taping, cardiovascular health, heat exhaustion and use of an automated external defibrillator. They even learn about appropriate snacks, hydration and pre-game meals. All trainers are given medical supplies and training kits for sideline use.

Certified athletic trainers provide coverage at the field for 12-year-old seventh- and eighth-grade players. In addition, EMTs provide coverage at parks, and GMC Sports Medicine physicians are on call for teams with older players.

These trainers are medical professionals who are experts in injury prevention and who assess, treat and rehabilitate, especially in orthopedic and musculoskeletal disciplines. They are recognized by the American Medical Association as allied healthcare professionals. Certified athletic trainers have knowledge and skills in:

- Injury prevention
- Clinical evaluation and diagnosis
- Immediate care
- Treatment, rehabilitation and reconditioning
- Organization and administration

Scott Maughon, M.D.

GMC Has You Covered
Gwinnett Medical Center offers a broad range of sports medicine expertise. To learn more about the physicians who make up the sports medicine team, visit gwinnettmEdicalcenter.org/sports. To find a physician who’s right for you, call HealthLine at 678-442-5000.

The Best Defense

Scott Maughon, M.D.
Sudden ...

Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side
Confusion, or trouble speaking or understanding
Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
Difficulty walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
Severe headache with no known cause

Why do we want to raise awareness about signs and symptoms of stroke? Some of the most effective stroke treatments must be administered within specific time frames following a stroke. If you recognize the

Saving Lives ▼

Marshall Nash, M.D., is dedicated to stroke research for the benefit of our community. Each new method of treating stroke that is discovered equals lives saved. For more information on neuroscience at GMC, visit gwinnetmedicalcenter.org/neo.

Raising awareness


In this case, “others” are the millions who stand to benefit from neurological breakthroughs. Edgerly, for one, is grateful for Washington’s efforts. “I really commend Denzel for focusing on this,” she says. “It’s time to raise awareness. And the time to do it is now.”

Quick Studies

Stroke patients benefit from programs under way at GMC

Top of Mind continued from page 33

Symptoms. In some cases surgery can help. A therapy called deep brain stimulation—in which electrodes that help decrease involuntary movements are implanted into the brain—holds promise. “Deep brain stimulation has proven to be hugely beneficial with movement disorders and Parkinson’s disease in particular,” Charles says.
Oh, What a Night

**ANNUAL BALL & AUCTION HEATS UP WITH DINING, DANCING AND DONATING**

The Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation held its 15th Annual Ball & Auction, “Havana Nights,” on May 5 at the Atlanta Marriott Gwinnett Place in Duluth. More than 400 guests enjoyed the evening of dining and dancing, which also included live and silent auctions. The event raised more than $260,000 to fund Project PATH, GMC’s new strategic plan, unveiled during the event by President and CEO Philip R. Wolfe.

Read more about Project PATH in “Phil’s Feature” on page 2.

Whitney Sue Jones performs at “Havana Nights.” Jones, who was in a devastating automobile accident in December 2005, will become a professional dancer in August.

From left: Wayne Sikes, chairman of the hospital board, and Philip R. Wolfe, president and CEO of Gwinnett Hospital System, meet with Jim Maran, president and CEO of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. James and Beth Elsey break from bidding on one of the 300 silent auction items.

For information on sponsorship and underwriting opportunities, call the Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation office at 678-312-2655.

---

**TEE IT UP**

FOR THE 10TH ANNUAL DR. MILES H. MASON JR. MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

- Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2007
- Legends, Chateau and Woodlands courses at Chateau Elan Golf Club
Dear Gwinnett,

Cardiovascular disease remains the No. 1 killer of Americans. Sadly, even with the most up-to-date care, 40 percent of all deaths are related to cardiovascular causes. Gwinnett County is no different from the national scene.

Gwinnett Medical Center has done and continues to do a great deal to improve the cardiac and vascular care in our community, with national recognition in clinical quality. GMC’s nationally accredited Chest Pain Center and cardiology services have staffs that are specially trained in the latest protocols and treatments to manage and initially treat a heart attack or heart pain victim. They also are fully equipped to diagnose, manage and treat all other vascular disorders not involving the heart. GMC has a stroke program nationally certified by The Joint Commission.

National guidelines recommended by the American College of Cardiology (ACC) for the optimal treatment of heart attack patients call for interrupting the heart attack by opening up the blocked blood vessel with a balloon and stent within 90 minutes of the patient’s arrival at the emergency room. An alternative, which only works about 60 percent of the time, is to inject clot-busting medication into the patient’s vein within 30 minutes of arrival.

Quick Intervention is a Must

The clot-busting medication procedure has been successfully performed by GMC’s Emergency Department physicians, cardiologists and nursing staff for a number of years. We know from worldwide clinical trials that this option is second best to acute intervention. The final caveat in this treatment saga is that in order to perform the first choice procedure (balloon angioplasty and stent), the cardiologist must have an open heart surgery backup team available in the facility where the patient is being treated. This is mandated by the ACC and the American Heart Association.

The doctors and ER staff at GMC are extremely efficient at making the diagnosis of a heart attack, which may require acute intervention, within six minutes of the patient’s arrival (versus the national median of nine minutes). The next step in treatment is to get the patient transported from the ER to a cardiac cath lab in a hospital that has open heart surgery available as a backup.

The Heart of the Problem

And here is where Gwinnett County citizens have a tremendous problem—in accordance with state regulations, there is no hospital within Gwinnett County that has open heart surgery available as a backup. Therefore, patients need to be transported via road or air to either Atlanta or Gainesville. This is archaic and unnecessary given the fact that GMC has two on-site cardiac catheterization laboratories and private cardiologists ready, willing and able 24/7 to perform these procedures. Incidentally, the same cardiologist currently has to travel along with the patient being treated, in some cases following behind the ambulance, to these facilities to perform the procedure. This seems counterintuitive and illogical.
The national average time to transport a patient between hospitals for this procedure is 117 minutes. Remember, the clock is ticking—and the more time that transpires before opening up the blocked blood vessel, the more heart muscle dies during the heart attack. Valuable time is wasted transporting the patient and the ultimate prognosis worsens, ultimately raising the mortality rate from heart attacks. Upon arrival to the next facility, the procedure still needs to be performed, taking an average of 30 minutes more. You do the math!

**What Does This Mean for Gwinnett?**

This information raises the following questions:

**How does traffic within Gwinnett County impact heart attack sufferers?**

The average time to transport a patient from any facility in Gwinnett County to a hospital that has an open heart surgery program is 209 minutes. Once again, you do the math—and don’t forget to add time to actually do the procedure after arrival. This has absolutely nothing to do with the decision to transfer the patient. The problem lies solely in the fact that traffic on our major highways and freeways from Gwinnett and other outlying counties has become a veritable nightmare. Indeed, the downtown commute in morning traffic takes the majority of us more than an hour. That is if there is no accident or road construction. Imagine how the patient, ambulance driver and treating staff feel. Transport via air ambulance is no more efficient. One merely has different obstacles—availability of a helicopter and inclement weather play major impeding roles.

**What prevents any hospital within Georgia, Gwinnett Medical Center included, from establishing an open heart program?**

The Georgia Department of Community Health requires that all healthcare facilities performing any health service obtain a certificate of need to provide that particular service. This program is designed to ensure the availability of adequate healthcare services, while also safeguarding against unnecessary duplication of services that raise the costs of healthcare. This is the case with open heart surgery in Gwinnett County.

Unfortunately, treating doctors and staff play little or no role in deciding which hospitals should offer services such as open heart surgery. The decision lays almost solely in the hands of politicians and the strength of lobbying dollars of the hospitals that may be financially affected by such decisions.

**A Need for Closer-to-Home Care**

You now know the need for an open heart program in Gwinnett County, which I believe strongly should be at Gwinnett Medical Center. The population of Gwinnett County has grown beyond 750,000 in 2007. The predictions are that this county, which is Georgia’s second largest, will assume the top spot by 2010. Having to transport citizens suffering heart attacks to another county is simply not acceptable.

How many counties within our great nation have a population greater than 700,000 and do not have an open heart facility available to provide services to its citizens?

Only one: Gwinnett County.

This is quite frankly a recipe for disaster and a disservice to our citizens.

I think it’s time that Gwinnett Medical Center had an open heart program to serve the growing community’s residents. In the coming months, I hope you’ll begin to understand the need for your support of an open heart program at GMC—a need that, in order to be met, will require a great deal of community support.

As you hear more about this problem, I hope you’ll be educated and ready to support open heart surgery at Gwinnett Medical Center. We can be saving the lives of our residents. Gwinnett County needs open heart surgery.

Manfred Sandler, M.D.
Chief of Cardiology, Gwinnett Medical Center
Private cardiologist, Cardiovascular Group PC

To learn more about open heart surgery and Gwinnett, visit gwinnetmedicalcenter.org/openheart.
A keystone, in architecture, is the stone that sits atop an arch. It is the supporting piece and element for the entire arch. Without this stone, the arch would collapse.

The Keystone Society of the Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation holds true to that definition. The society recognizes individuals who have made a personal commitment of $10,000 or more to the Foundation. Currently there are 82 members in the Keystone Society, and collectively they have given more than $2.9 million to fund the advancement of healthcare services in Gwinnett.

**Impacting the Bottom Line**

“Our contributions make more of an impact than you realize,” says Miguel Candelaria, a new member of the Keystone Society. “Many people don’t know what it takes to add money to the bottom line of a hospital, and the difference between money the hospital earns and our gifts.”

Gwinnett Medical Center must generate $40 of revenue for every dollar that goes to the bottom line. For example, it would take $400,000 in revenue to generate $10,000 that could be used to fund programs and expand services. However, a contribution of $10,000 can be invested in whole—at 100 percent—to provide $10,000 of benefit for our community.

Healthcare technology is always changing and improving. Staying up to date with this technology and meeting the rapidly accelerating costs of hospital facility construction combine to create significant financial challenges that must be overcome.

This demonstrates well why philanthropy is a vital component in funding new expansion projects for Gwinnett Medical Center. The Keystone Society, as well as all donors to the GMC Foundation, provides the means for meeting more of our community’s healthcare needs.

**Your Gift Makes a Difference**

These healthcare needs will continue to grow and expand. Greater capacity in our hospital facilities...
is a critical priority to be able to keep up with the pace of growth. The GMC Foundation is committed to making Gwinnett Medical Center the hospital Gwinnett deserves, but community support is vital to maintain this standard of excellence.

“Gwinnett Medical Center has an incredible vision for the future,” says John Riddle, executive director of the GMC Foundation. “It is a vision that will advance and transform healthcare in our community. To accomplish that vision, we need community support. The Keystone Society provides a strong foundation of support that we need to build upon.”

Want to Give?

For more information on the Keystone Society or other giving opportunities, please contact the GMC Foundation at 678-312-4634, or visit gwinnettmedicalcenter.org and click “Foundation.”

Tootle Family Leaves a Legacy

Surgery suite at GMC – Duluth named for the late George Tootle, M.D.

In the early 1950s, George Tootle, M.D., and his family moved to Duluth so he could join the practice of Miles H. Mason Jr., M.D., who was a college classmate and friend. At that time, Duluth was a small town and Gwinnett County was considered rural. Because there were not many doctors practicing in Gwinnett in the ’50s, Dr. Tootle spent the majority of his waking hours either at his office or at Joan Glancy Memorial Hospital (now GMC – Duluth).

Dr. Tootle’s three daughters, Susan, Jane and Mary, and their children recently donated $50,000 to name a surgery suite at GMC – Duluth in memory of the beloved Dr. Tootle. “The names and faces of the hospital family became a part of our lives,” says Jane Tootle Hinnant, one of Dr. Tootle’s daughters. “Many times we witnessed the benefits that patients received as a result of having a hospital in the community. As our children grew older, we spent many vacations and weekends in Duluth. They grew to realize that the hospital family was also a part of our family.”

“We wish to donate in memory of our father and grandfather, because he gave so much to us, to his patients and to the hospital system. These things were important to him, they are important to us and they are important to the community.”

Keystone Society members whose cumulative gifts total $100,000 or more are recognized in Keystone Leadership. Philip R. Wolfe (center), president and CEO of Gwinnett Medical Center, and Carolyn Hill (right), president of the Foundation Board of Trustees, recognize members at this level including (from left) Kathryn Parsons Willis, Barbara Howard, Marion Allison Webb, and Jim and Jeanine Gullett. Members not pictured: Jim and Billie Ellis, Jacqueline Hudgens, and Clyde and Sandra Strickland.

Daughters of the late George Tootle, M.D., Mary Tootle Wilkie (clockwise from left), Jane Tootle Hinnant and Susan Tootle Minter, recently attended a reception and tour at GMC – Duluth, where they were recognized for their $50,000 contribution.
Each year, Gwinnett Medical Center reflects on the impact the Auxiliary has made on the hospital system. On April 13, volunteers were honored for their service hours and giving at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, at the Atlanta Marriott Gwinnett Place in Duluth.

The GMC Auxiliary has two main functions: service and fundraising. Service refers to the amount of hours spent in the hospital assisting associates and patients. Dick Berry, who has volunteered since 1997, was recognized for working the most hours. In 2006 he volunteered 838 hours. This is the second year in a row that Berry has earned this distinction.

“We have a wonderful, dedicated group, and they do a lot of work,” says Auxiliary President Carole Martin. “Being a volunteer is so rewarding because you’re giving and helping others. Volunteers are just special people because of the way they feel about helping others.”

The top service activities in which the Auxiliary has participated include:
- Making 300 holiday stockings for babies born in December.
- Organizing Breakfast with Santa for GMC associates and their children.
- Assembling activity kits for hospital patients.
- Holding monthly birthday parties for residents of Gwinnett Extended Care Center.

The Auxiliary also has donated funds to areas throughout the hospital to purchase equipment, such as rocking chairs for the mother/baby unit in the Gwinnett Women’s Pavilion and teddy bears for pediatric surgery patients. They also have given money to help fund the GMC Foundation’s TIME MATTERS in the fight against Breast Cancer campaign.

“Volunteers are valued members of Gwinnett Medical Center’s healthcare team and provide many services for our patients, families and staff,” says Cynthia Chandler, director of volunteer services. “I can’t say enough about their dedication to our hospital system. They bring great comfort to our patients and family members and truly do make a difference for so many who are visiting our hospital.”
Gwinnett Medical Center can help get you back to your old hobbies — or maybe even some new ones. The Joint Replacement Center offers an approach to total joint replacement, developed by our physicians with you, the patient, in mind. Our commitment to providing cutting-edge care includes being one of only two hospitals in Georgia with surgeons who perform the Birmingham Hip resurfacing procedure. All to get you feeling like yourself again — the one without joint pain. Visit gwinnettmedicalcenter.org/ortho for a list of our physicians.