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GMC goes green

how induced hypothermia saves lives

A NEW ERA OF SURGICAL PRECISION

Gwinnett Medical Center

GET A SNEAK PEEK AT THE NEW NORTH TOWER

A HEALTHY LIVING DIRECTORY FOR THE GWINNETT COMMUNITY
features

the art of the matter The addition of the high-tech da Vinci Surgical System brings a whole new level of minimally invasive surgical options to GMC patients.

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small change, big results You’ll be surprised to learn how charities can benefit from the most modest donations.

inside the north tower GMC’s new patient tower in Lawrenceville is set to open this fall. Here’s a sneak peek of what to expect on each of the floors.

community spirit Bill and Sherry Russell opened their hearts (and pocketbooks) in an effort to bring a lifesaving surgery program to Gwinnett County.

on the cover Musician Sheryl Crow beat breast cancer and emerged with a new attitude on health and life. Read about her personal journey and her message on early detection.

diabetes decoded Diabetes myths abound—find out what’s fact and fiction from a writer who has the condition.

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with gratitude

The GMC Foundation Gala celebrates the generosity of donors

The Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation hosted its inaugural Cornerstone Society Donor Appreciation Gala earlier this year. The Gala recognizes members of the Cornerstone Society, who have made an annual sustaining commitment of $1,000 or more to support ongoing programs and operations at GMC. Donors of $10,000 or more and underwriters for the evening were also able to meet guest speakers, political consultants James Carville and Mary Matalin, in a special reception.

In addition to dinner, dancing and speakers, two awards were presented. Manfred Sandler, M.D., received the Physician Champion Award, a new honor given to a physician who has championed the fundraising efforts of the Foundation in support of the mission of GMC. Dr. Sandler has been instrumental in the state’s approval of the Certificate of Need for an open heart surgery program, and has been influential in bringing new donors to GMC Foundation, including more than 100 physicians. In addition, Dr. Sandler serves as the Foundation Board chair. Also recognized was Carolyn Hill, who was presented the Distinguished Service Award. She is the third recipient of this award since 2000, which honors individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment, dedication and service to GMC.

Members of the Cornerstone Society receive an invitation for two to the annual Donor Appreciation Gala, to be held in February 2010. To become a member, donations of $1,000 or more must be received by Dec. 31. If you would like to donate to the Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation, visit gwinnetmedicalcenter.org/foundation or call 678-312-8500. Because of the support of our generous donors, we are able to provide the community with the highest quality care and transform healthcare every day.

Philip R. Wolfe, FACHE
President and CEO
Emmy Award winning ABC news journalist Bob Woodruff and Lee Woodruff, a contributor to Good Morning America, will serve as featured speakers for Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation’s Cornerstone Society Donor Appreciation Gala on February 27, 2010.

The black-tie event will be limited to donors of $1,000 or more in 2009. The GMC Foundation is a not-for-profit philanthropic organization that supports Gwinnett Medical Center.

Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation
Cornerstone Society Donor Appreciation Gala

Saturday, February 27, 2010

Those interested in attending must join the Cornerstone Society by December 31, 2009. For additional information, please contact the Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation at 678-312-8500 or visit gwinnettmedicalcenter.org/foundation.

gwinnettmedicalcenter.org
While many people experiencing back pain exhaust nonsurgical options in an effort to alleviate chronic back or leg pain, that's not always the best option. In fact, Gwinnett Medical Center surgeons are performing procedures each day that help members of this community lead happier and more comfortable lives.

Although it can strike anyone, baby boomers commonly suffer from unnecessary back pain. As arthritis develops in the joints, the ligaments shake loose and implications from wear and tear on the body start to become more evident. The spine has the most joints of any part of the body, and joints around the neck and lumbar region tend to degenerate more quickly than others. Other contributors to back and joint pain are obesity, smoking and overly active lifestyles.

**stop suffering**

If you're one of the 30 million sufferers of back pain in the U.S., baby boomer or otherwise, there may be hope. Sean Keem, M.D., is the first physician to successfully use extreme lateral interbody fusion, or XLIF, to treat adult back pain and degenerative disks in Gwinnett County. "Extreme lateral" refers to the unique trajectory, from the side, the surgeon takes to access the spine.

The highly advanced, minimally invasive XLIF procedure was originally developed in Brazil and is optimal for patients experiencing back instability. It allows the surgeon to access the spine (for fusion) with as little disruption for the patient as possible. Dr. Keem, who traveled to Brazil to learn from the innovators who performed the first XLIF procedure, says that the benefits are both numerous and tremendous.

"In a busy society like ours, people don't have the time to recover like they used to," says Dr. Keem. “This is why the advantages of minimally invasive surgery appealed to me, and my patients have been extremely pleased with the results.”

Thomas Simmons is a 44-year-old patient who can attest to the benefits of XLIF. Simmons suffered chronic back pain for years to the point that he was unable to sit or stand for...
Each year in the U.S., more than 30 million people deal with back pain, and about one half of the workforce admits to having back-pain symptoms. More than 30 minutes at a time. “I felt constant tightening of my lower back, and the pain even trickled down to my left leg,” he recalls. Everyday activities as simple as yard work became nearly impossible to accomplish, and when he just couldn’t take the pain anymore, Simmons began searching for help.

“I wish I would have known how beneficial and easy the surgery was, and how quickly I would be able to return to my natural lifestyle,” Simmons says. “Had I known, I would have sought help much sooner. No one should live with the severity of pain that I did. I was walking 24 hours after the XLIF surgery, and had virtually no pain at all, just a little soreness.”

a better way

The minimally invasive component of XLIF means that incisions are three times smaller than in typical procedures—a need for a 10-inch incision in a typical procedure, for instance, may be reduced to only 3 inches. Shorter recovery time, less scarring and less pain are just a few of the many benefits patients have experienced with XLIF. In addition, many complications associated with anterior approaches (ALIF) and the major muscle stripping and subsequent trauma required by posterior fusions (PLIF/TLIF) are avoided using the XLIF technique.

Dr. Keem says that while this procedure has an extreme upside, not every patient with back pain is an ideal candidate. It’s best to consult with your doctor about whether the XLIF procedure is a good fit for you. For example, patients with a severe deformity of the spine may not qualify for the surgery. “But,” adds Dr. Keem, “those candidates who are the right fit can experience amazing results.”
With a bold brush stroke, Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth has brought a vital new healthcare tool to the community, one that gives patients a broader range of alternatives to conventional open-surgery procedures that were prevalent as recently as a decade ago.

GMC’s fellowship-trained and board-certified surgeons are using the da Vinci® Surgical System to assist them in several types of cases where minimally invasive surgery is a beneficial option.

The da Vinci system features robotic arms that mimic the surgeon’s motion to perform procedures with greater dexterity than humanly possible. Surgery with da Vinci does not replace the surgeon with a robot at the controls—your GMC surgeon is still controlling every aspect of the surgery.

The addition of the high-tech da Vinci Surgical System brings a whole new level of minimally invasive surgical options to GMC patients.
The difference in surgeries assisted by the use of the da Vinci Surgical System is that the surgeon operates while seated at a console, viewing a 3-D, high-definition image of the surgical field, as opposed to simply standing over the body. The surgeon’s fingers grasp the master controls below the display, with hands and wrists naturally positioned relative to his or her eyes. The system seamlessly translates the surgeon’s hand, wrist and finger motions into precise, real-time movements of instruments inside the patient.

**a cut above**

“Robotic surgery is one of the latest technologies used in the treatment of prostate and gynecologic cancer cases, as well as other procedures,” says Lea Bay, president of Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth. “We’re proud to expand our facility’s scope of services to include da Vinci robotic surgery and to be the first hospital in Gwinnett to offer this technology.”

Physicians who use the da Vinci Surgical System benefit from its capability to go beyond the limitations of human hands. This allows physicians to quickly and efficiently perform surgical procedures more precisely with instruments that allow them increased visibility and versatility.

Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth surgeons use the da Vinci robot for prostatectomy (prostate removal), gynecologic procedures (hysterectomy and laparoscopy) and thoracic surgery. Patients undergoing prostatectomy procedures via robotic surgery will experience a much smaller risk of postoperative complications than with typical open procedures.

“Our acquisition of the da Vinci robotic system has enhanced our surgical capabilities and will improve our clinical outcomes,” says Bay. “It is just another way that Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth continues to transform healthcare.”

**benefits at a glance**

Some of the primary benefits of procedures performed using the da Vinci Surgical System for patients at Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth include:

- Reduced scarring
- Fewer and smaller incisions (usually an inch wide or less)
- Reduced trauma to the body
- Less time in the operating room
- Reduced risk of infection
- Shorter hospital stay
- Less postoperative pain and discomfort
- Reduced blood loss and fewer transfusions
- Faster recovery time and quicker return to normal daily activities
It may not be easy being “green,” but that hasn’t stopped the team at Gwinnett Medical Center, who is actively developing and implementing solutions focused on reducing energy consumption at its facilities and reducing its impact on the environment.

“As a not-for-profit healthcare network, we believe care must be taken to ensure that GMC’s facilities are using energy most efficiently while ensuring patients are kept safe and comfortable,” says Phil Wolfe, president and CEO of Gwinnett Medical Center.

GMC’s healthcare network, which includes Gwinnett Medical Center in Lawrenceville, Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth and several supporting medical facilities, has implemented a number of initiatives leading to energy savings and a reduction of waste items delivered to landfills.

One of the easiest ways GMC has saved energy has been to switch from fluorescent and incandescent light bulbs to more efficient T8 fluorescent tubes, or to transition to light-emitting diode (LED) technology when appropriate and available. These technologies allow for equal light output at a fraction of the energy cost, as well as longer-lasting bulbs. These high-efficiency, low-temperature bulbs are now the standard lighting source throughout GMC facilities.

Another of GMC’s energy-saving efforts is the use of variable speed drives on pumps and air handlers for air conditioning needs. This technology, coupled with digital controller systems, allows for air conditioning systems to run at peak efficiency without wasted heating or cooling. GMC has also implemented power management tools for computers, leading to reduced energy usage for monitors as well as more efficient methods for maintaining computers.

“Our renovated areas, as well as our brand-new north tower, are meeting and exceeding new standards for energy efficiency,” Wolfe says. “As GMC’s services continue to expand, our facility design and energy usage options will maximize energy efficiency.”

In addition to these advances, GMC has also made other energy-conscious decisions, including recycling of used batteries, corrugated boxes, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, office paper, and medical and electronic equipment, as well as donating used computer equipment to local charities.

Wolfe, for one, is proud of what’s been accomplished thus far. “I believe these efforts have developed a strong foundation for the future and continue to make Gwinnett Medical Center a good neighbor in our community.”
cold cure

Crazy, but true—giving patients hypothermia can save lives

This issue marks the first appearance of a new department from Gwinnett Medical Center. In “Best-Kept Secret,” we’ll share with you some secrets of GMC that really have no business being kept secret—cutting-edge technology and new and innovative procedures that provide our community with the best care available.

Keep reading future issues of Vim & Vigor to learn more about the “best-kept secrets” at Gwinnett Medical Center. As they’re revealed, you’ll see more and more ways GMC is transforming healthcare!

The emergency departments at Gwinnett Medical Center and GMC – Duluth are helping heart attack victims by making them chill out—literally. It may seem strange, but it truly is cutting-edge medical science to save a life by giving a heart attack victim a mild case of hypothermia.

After most cardiac arrests, long-term survival and positive brain function outcomes are very rare. The objective of therapeutic hypothermia, the name given to this technology, is to help the body deliver blood back to essential organs during a heart attack in a way that doesn’t damage the body even more. This is accomplished by cooling down the body and slowing down its processes.

“The only effective and proven concept to increase the survival rate and neurological outcomes is mild therapeutic hypothermia,” says Kim Smith, CNS, an emergency department nurse at GMC. “This treatment is highly recommended by the New England Journal of Medicine and the American Heart Association.”

Clinical trials from 2002 showed that cooling resuscitated patients within four hours of defibrillation increased their survival rate by 20 percent. A recent study at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, which has been using the technique for five years, showed that the cooling process doubled the survival rate of some patient groups.

GMC is happy to be providing this “cool” technology to save the lives of heart attack victims. Now that you know, share this best-kept secret with your friends.
Keith Carnes, M.D., an anesthesiologist from Toccoa, Ga., and his wife, Lori, moved to Gwinnett 18 years ago, and over that time, he’s done a lot to give back to the community that has given a lot to him.

Keith and Lori married during Dr. Carnes’ second year of medical school at the Medical College of Georgia, and later came to Gwinnett to start his medical practice, Gwinnett Anesthesia Service, while raising two children, Chip (now 21) and Mary Claire (18).

Dr. Carnes’ passion for contributing his time and effort back to the hospital on a volunteer basis has made a difference in many ways. Earlier this year, Dr. Carnes and his wife were the chairs for the inaugural Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation Gala. “Lori and I were honored to be a part of an event that clearly marked the accomplished contributions to GMC from the community and businesses in Gwinnett,” he says. “This year was a celebration to recognize the donors for the future of our healthcare system.”

Dr. Carnes also serves on the Gwinnett County Hospital Authority Board and is an active member and advocate of the citizens advisory board for Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful. He recently joined several other GMC physicians and associates on a surgical mission trip to Nicaragua. In addition, as a member of Duluth First United Methodist Church, the Carnes family has traveled to Buffalo, NY., and New Mexico on mission trips to assist with medical needs and lead Bible study.

From left: Chip, Lori, Mary Claire and Keith Carnes, M.D.
1. When I was a child I dreamed of becoming a physician.

2. My first job was working at a grocery store as a bag boy. That was the best job I ever had—maybe I will do it again someday after I retire.

3. I realized I wanted to be a doctor when I was a child. My family physician amazed me. I thought he was the smartest person I had ever met.

4. If I weren’t a doctor I would be a sports announcer.

5. To unwind after a long day I enjoy relaxing and eating dinner with my family to catch up on the happenings of everyone’s day.

6. Right now on my iPod I’m listening to ‘70s music.

7. My favorite thing about Gwinnett is the community atmosphere and the pride that residents display in all aspects of their living and working environment. The parks, community events and family-oriented activities make Gwinnett great!

8. My favorite restaurant is Stoney River Legendary Steaks, on State Bridge Road in Duluth.

9. When I really want to get away, I like to go to University of Georgia football games. We have a large festive tailgate tradition in which we represent a different theme each game day, such as Cajun or Mexican food. I have tickets to all the home games, so that’s where you’ll catch me every autumn.

10. Right now I’m reading 1776, by David McCullough. I’m intrigued by American history.
inside the north tower

GMC’s new patient tower in Lawrenceville is set to open this fall. Here’s a sneak peek of what to expect on each floor.
Center for Women’s Specialties and Surgical Services. With 31 acute care beds, this floor will be a dedicated specialty care and postsurgery unit for women, with a focus on gynecological and general surgery.

Center for Orthopedics and Surgical Specialties. Housing 31 acute care beds, the seventh floor will be a dedicated postsurgical unit and will contain our Center for Orthopedics as well as other surgical specialties, such as general surgery, urology, colon and rectal.

Center for Neuroscience and Spine. Holding 21 acute care and 10 critical care beds, the sixth floor will accommodate our patients suffering from stroke and head injuries as well as spinal surgery cases.

Center for Cardiac Services. There will be 31 acute care beds on this floor, serving inpatients before and after having cardiac procedures. Patients with cardiac conditions such as congestive heart failure and cardiac arrhythmias will also be assisted here.

Pulmonary and Complex Medical Unit. The floor will have a 12-bed progressive care unit (for patients requiring extra nursing attention) and 19 acute care beds, and will accommodate our complex medical patients including pulmonary, renal, and those requiring special isolation precautions.

Observation Unit for Surgical and Medical Patients. This 18-bed observation unit will be for short stay medical and surgical patients.
Bill and Sherry Russell opened their hearts (and pocketbooks) in an effort to bring a lifesaving surgery program to Gwinnett County.

Donor profile: Bill and Sherry Russell

Giving to Gwinnett Medical Center Foundation during economic struggles is a true testament of leadership. Bill and Sherry Russell recently donated $100,000 to GMC’s Project PATH campaign in support of bringing an open heart surgery program to Gwinnett County.

Bill and Sherry have lived in Gwinnett County for the past 27 years. Their family relocated to Gwinnett from Kansas City in 1982 when Bill was promoted as the Southeastern pesticide research director for Eli Lilly & Co.

They both grew up in Shelbyville, Tenn., where Sherry was the daughter of the mayor and Bill lived on a farm and was involved in the show horse industry. Their first date was to attend the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration in 1972. Now, nearly 40 years later, they have raised two children and are proud grandparents of three grandchildren.

“We chose Gwinnett to live because of its outstanding amenities, excellent school system, favorable taxes, phenomenal infrastructure and visionary political leadership,” Bill explains.

＊business blessings

In 1987, Bill decided to leave the corporate world to start the family’s commercial landscape contractor firm, Russell Landscape Group Inc. “We currently have seven sister companies and have eight Russell family members involved in the executive management of the day-to-day operations,” Bill says. “It’s the largest commercial landscape contractor with its corporate headquarters in Georgia.”

Sherry and her daughter Angie also have formed an entrepreneurial team, opening a store in Duluth in 2005. Montage Gifts & Boutiques is a lifestyle store that carries a variety of items from clothing to jewelry to home store items. Sherry’s background in interior design and Angie’s love of fashion have been a great fit for the business.

Bill and Sherry believe their success is focused and based on the three R’s of business: reputation, relationships and revenue management. “I’ve always been committed to the winning principle that if I helped enough people achieve what they wanted, I could have what I needed,” Bill says.
the future looks bright
Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures kicks off eighth year of fighting breast cancer

Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures was founded by Bruce E. Carter, DMD, who has a passion for raising money to fight breast cancer. Dr. Carter began this grassroots effort in 2001, when he raised $28,000 by providing cosmetic bleaching to patients in exchange for a donation to the Gwinnett County Relay For Life.

“I have a great desire to help find a cure for breast cancer,” Dr. Carter says. “I have had many friends who have been diagnosed with this disease, including some who have passed away.”

Dr. Carter decided to focus his fundraising efforts on expanding and enhancing cancer services in Gwinnett County. Since it began donating to GMC in 2004, Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures has given more than $600,000 to GMC Foundation.

“The impact that Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures has had on GMC is incredible,” says Wayne Sikes, hospital and Foundation Board member. “The dentists who donate their time and services are truly admirable.”

Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures has helped fund systemwide digital mammography, the Center for Screening Mammography at Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth, and an ultrasound machine for the Center for Women’s Diagnostic Imaging at GMC – Duluth, which opened in May.

“We are so grateful for the persistent and continuing support of Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures,” says Lea Bay, president of Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth. “It is amazing what this organization of a caring group of dentists has done for the women of our community for breast health initiatives. Their contributions are awesome.”

“Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures has been a great way to get my staff and patients involved in raising money to fight cancer here in Gwinnett,” says Tina Heil, DMD. “We all know someone who has been affected by breast cancer, and this is a fun way to make a difference.”

*transforming healthcare*
Bill has served on the GMC Foundation Board since 2002 and has played a vital role in its expansion, as well as currently serving as chair of the Major Gifts committee. Bill and Sherry were also instrumental in donating funds to the Legacy Campaign for Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth.

“Our family has always believed that we should give back to the community, which allowed us to financially prosper,” Sherry says. “Healthcare is a part of what makes our county so great.”

Bill and Sherry believe that the best is yet to come for Gwinnett Medical Center. They have always felt compelled to give back and participate in a variety of philanthropic endeavors.

Nevertheless, their family’s emphasis on philanthropy in healthcare significantly elevated after the birth of their third grandchild, Jackson. He has been diagnosed with one of the world’s most rare metabolic diseases and every six months they travel to Spain for treatment.

Add Bill and Sherry, “While racing against the clock to find a cure for Jackson, we believe our family has gained a greater appreciation for the transforming value of healthcare and the need for philanthropic dollars at Gwinnett Medical Center.” wv
Four lifestyle changes that can help you avoid diseases like prostate cancer and stay healthy for the long term.

1. Lower Your Fat Intake. It’s a fact: Most Americans don’t exercise enough, and they consume diets high in calories, fat, sugar and salt. Excess fat intake is associated with increased risks of many diseases, including prostate cancer—and you don’t even have to be overweight to be at risk. Body fat secretes hormones and specialized proteins that increase inflammation and oxidation in body cells, which are natural processes that contribute to the development and progression of prostate cancer. Although risk factors like aging and altered hormone secretions are difficult or impossible to change, nutritional and exercise habits can be altered, by making sure to steer clear of greasy high-fat fare like fast food, fried food and rich desserts, and being sure to get at least 20 to 30 minutes of activity (like walking, biking or lifting weights) every day.

2. Visit Your Local Produce Aisle or Farmers Market. There are many anti-inflammatory and antioxidant substances found in fruits and vegetables, whole grains and spices. Eating a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, ocean-caught fish and whole grains will increase the protective anti-inflammatory components of your diet. In addition, regular exercise is one of the best natural antioxidants. Endurance exercises, like walking, running, cycling and swimming, are very effective at increasing the body’s natural levels of antioxidants, which helps eliminate inflammatory molecules that drive cancer growth.

3. Steer Clear of Carcinogens. Exposure to carcinogens (chemicals that cause or lead to more aggressive forms of cancer) can also be limited by focusing on healthy eating practices.

4. Say No to Sugar. Sugar is a prime energy source for many cancers, including prostate cancer. The more excess sugar that is consumed, the more a tumor is stimulated. Cutting simple sugar intake can slow prostate cancer growth.

Studies show that reducing overall caloric intake can slow advancement of prostate cancer. Maintaining a healthy diet rich in antioxidants, low in inflammatory and carcinogenic substances and low in simple sugars, as well as exercising regularly, all help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, as well as slow cancer growth.

Are you a man age 40 or over? Take a giant step in protecting your health by attending PrimeTime Health’s Annual Prostate Screening Sept. 30, at the GMC Pain Management Center, 575 Professional Drive, Suite 150, Lawrenceville, GA 30045. To register, call 678-442-5000 or visit gwinnetmedicalcenter.org and click “Classes & Events.” Coming to this great event may be the best $20 you’ll ever spend!
It’s not about a building. It’s about healing. And as one of “America’s safest hospitals,” according to Forbes,1 we’re taking the lead as the best healthcare provider in the region with the opening of our new patient tower this fall.

Our new tower will be a shining example of the right way to expedite the healing process for every patient we treat. Each room will be private, spacious and staffed by highly trained nurses and supported with the latest technology.

We’ll also feature comfortable guest retreats and suites that allow family members to be even closer to patients.

Every detail of our healthcare system has been designed with the patient in mind. Which means the most advanced and complete care possible not just in Atlanta, but in the nation.

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