

FALL 2009

HouseCalls

THE MAGAZINE OF GADSDEN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Junkins Talk Heart Health



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offers
WiFi**

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Welcomes
new CEO**



GADSDEN REGIONAL
medical center

www.gadsdenregional.com

FROM THE CEO



Stephen Pennington, GRMC CEO

I am excited to be the new CEO at Gadsden Regional Medical Center.

Gadsden Regional has a firm foundation – a history of more than 100 years of providing excellent healthcare to this region.

We plan to build on that foundation of excellence to be

the best hospital in Alabama, in all the healthcare services we provide. Whether we're helping deliver your baby or delivering intensive care and comfort when serious illness or injury strikes, our goal is to provide you with the best care possible.

GRMC's philosophy – as a healthcare provider and employer – rests on excellence in five pillars: **Service**, **Quality**, **People**, **Finance**, and **Growth**. We believe excellence in the first three pillars will drive the other two pillars.

We are committed to showing you and your family the kind

of **Service** we would expect for our families. We are committed to providing **Quality** healthcare to the people of northeast Alabama and to giving our **People** – our medical staff and all employees – the tools and the support they need to do so. We are committed to maintaining the **Financial** stability needed to provide **Growth** in technology and services so that GRMC can meet these commitments.

I look forward to meeting more of you as we strive for excellence in the community GRMC serves.

H1N1 FLU UPDATE

The H1N1 flu is back in the news and may be in the neighborhood as well. Many more cases of what is commonly known as the swine flu have been reported as students returned to grade schools and colleges.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, H1N1 flu spreads from person to person in the same way the seasonal flu does. Public health experts

caution that the best defense against the flu is being vaccinated. This year people are encouraged to get a seasonal flu vaccine, as well as a vaccination against H1N1.

Everyone is urged to get the seasonal flu vaccine, while the CDC recommends giving some population groups priority for H1N1 vaccine, with pregnant women and children heading the priority list.



MEET THE JULY 14 MIRACLE

Terrance Dixon Returns



Terrance Dixon and his mother Sabrina paid a joyous visit to GRMC's Emergency Room last month, where from left, Jeanie Tate, Dennis Wolfe and Debbie Brooks, right, greeted them.

The *July 14 miracle*, as **Terrance Dixon** has become known around the GRMC ER, recently visited the hospital to meet and thank the doctors and nurses who cared for him when he suffered from cardiac arrest.

Terrance, just 13, toured GRMC like a rock star – with employees coming from all directions into the Emergency Room to *ooh* and *aah* and maybe get a hug. Employees recalled the last time Terrance came to GRMC, in the back of an ambulance, with EMTs

fighting to save his life.

“His heart stopped beating or ‘coded’ for more than two hours in the ER (that day),” GRMC ER Director **Pam Rosson**, RN, said.

When a code is called, a team of caregivers work together to resuscitate patients with CPR, by shocking the heart, and with medicines to stimulate the heart.

The longer a code lasts, **Jo Dunn**, RN, GRMC Emergency Room, said, the less optimistic the outcome for the patient.

Sabrina Harris said her son Terrance has had a pacemaker since he was 7.

Terrance was stabilized at

GRMC then airlifted to Birmingham and was hospitalized there until mid-August. Medical personnel at GRMC kept track of Terrance’s condition through his step-grandmother, **Sandra Harris**, who works in the hospital pharmacy.

Terrance believes that God has a purpose for him, to have brought him through such a serious medical crisis.

“God just put His hands on this entire hospital that day,” Sabrina said.



Terrance Dixon got the chance to meet people who save his life July 14. From left, Chaplain Norris Hilton, Sabrina Harris, Peggy Benson, Laura Barrows, Dixon, Joy Breedon, Josh Davis, Jennifer Tucker, and Serena Gramling (front).



Knowing your history helps with heart health

Etowah County Probate Judge **Bobby Junkins** and son **Jason Junkins, M.D.**, have plenty in common: There's a ready smile and a warm handshake and a leaning toward serving their fellow man – Bobby, through his position as probate judge and prior to that as state legislator, and Jason, as a physician.

And there's a family history of heart disease indicating they both need to stay mindful of their heart health.

"I've always heard with your heart, it's stress and your genes," Bobby said.

Bobby had his first heart scare around age 45.

"I'd just left the Legislature and been elected probate judge," he said, when he had an episode of burning chest pain. It was not

something he took lightly.

Fortunately, the chest pains were not caused by a heart attack. He said after several heart tests he was told his arteries were "slick as a baby's butt."

HEART TROUBLE

However, about five years ago, the symptoms of a heart problem were more subtle, but ultimately a sign of something more serious.

"I'd been scuba diving," Bobby said, and was on the phone with Jason. "He told me I was breathing too hard."

When his son with a medical degree recommended seeing a cardiologist, this father listened. He went to a local cardiologist, and more tests were recommended.

Bobby's doctor prescribed a

heart catheterization to check for blockage or signs of problems of the heart and blood vessels. During the heart catheterization, Jason recalled problems were discovered in three areas of Bobby's heart.

For Your Information

Coronary risk factors include:

- Tobacco smoke
- High Blood Pressure
- High Blood Cholesterol or Triglyceride levels
- Lack of Physical Activity
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Stress
- Alcohol
- Family history of heart attack
- Higher blood levels of homocysteine, C-reactive protein and fibrinogen

Source: MayoClinic.com

DR. JASON JUNKINS & JUDGE BOBBY JUNKINS



Judge Bobby Junkins

“One of them was the widow maker,” Bobby jokingly added, “the left main (artery).” Despite the serious problem, Bobby said he’d not experienced chest pain or debilitating symptoms. “My doctor kept saying ‘you’re sure you never had pain?’” Bobby said.

FAMILY’S DECISION

After the Junkins family considered their options, Bobby had heart surgery at GRMC. “I told him ‘they aren’t going to let the probate judge die in Gadsden,’” Jason joked.

“I was scared to death,” Bobby said, but the surgery went well, as did his recovery. “The nurses were excellent. Everyone was very special.”

He said he was released from

the hospital on a Sunday and within a couple of days went to a fitness center and began the first steps to return to that active lifestyle that served him so well.

He got back to scuba diving quickly, too. “I was amazed at how much better the breathing was,” he said. “I reckon I’ve done everything I wanted to do since then.”

While the heart surgery has not held Bobby back, it is not something his family can – or should – forget.

JASON’S TURN

For Jason, there was an incident not too long ago that brought him to see a cardiologist and the cath lab.

Jason had experienced “a little bit of chest pressure,” he said. “I didn’t think it was much of anything.” Later on, while seeing patients, he noticed some tightness in his chest and he felt a little clammy – two symptoms that can be a sign of a heart attack or other cardiac problem.

An EKG performed at the office didn’t show anything, but Jason followed up with a stress test and a catheterization just to be on the safe side.

“It was pretty uneventful –

clean as a whistle,” he said, with no signs of a problem. But considering his family’s history and his father’s health, Jason believed that he would rather be safe than sorry.

JUNKINS ADVICE

Jason and Bobby will affirm that it is important that anyone having heart attack symptoms should find out what’s happening and see their doctor.

“If I hadn’t been checked out when I was, I’d probably be dead,” Bobby said. “And I’ve got too much left to do.”



Jason Junkins, M.D., works as a Hospitalist for GRMC.

News Briefs

American Heart Association Heart Walk



Left: GRMC's department directors, from left, Rebecca Smith, April McElroy, Lisa LeQuire and Santos Smith, submitted the winning design for GRMC's AHA Heart Walk t-shirts.



Above: GRMC's AHA Heart Walk Team included Leslie Harp, Karen Bearden, Jocelyn Riddle, Donna Nicholson, Amy Nicholson, Araceli Defensor, Angie Gaddis, and Grayson Pennington. Back row: Jessie Payne, David Bearden, Cathy Names, Sandra Thornton, Belinda Snellings, Jerrie Floyd, and Stephen Pennington.



GRMC's Sandra Thornton (right) provides blood pressure checks for AHA Heart Walk participants.

Nurses Earn Top Honors



(Left Photo) GRMC Critical Care Nurses Kim Elliott, Oakley Patterson, and Melissa Duckett and (Right Photo), Jeff Wagnon and Donna Putman have completed certification in critical care nursing, based on national standards which is part of the staff's ongoing effort to make provide the most skilled nursing care to our patients.



Not pictured: Brett Lavender and Janie Goodwin.

Physicians Who Care Health Fair



Robin Simon, seated, waits for GRMC's April Reed to check her cholesterol levels at the health fair.



Margaretta Singleton, right, of GRMC's OHC, checks Betty Grove's blood pressure.

Happy Retirement!



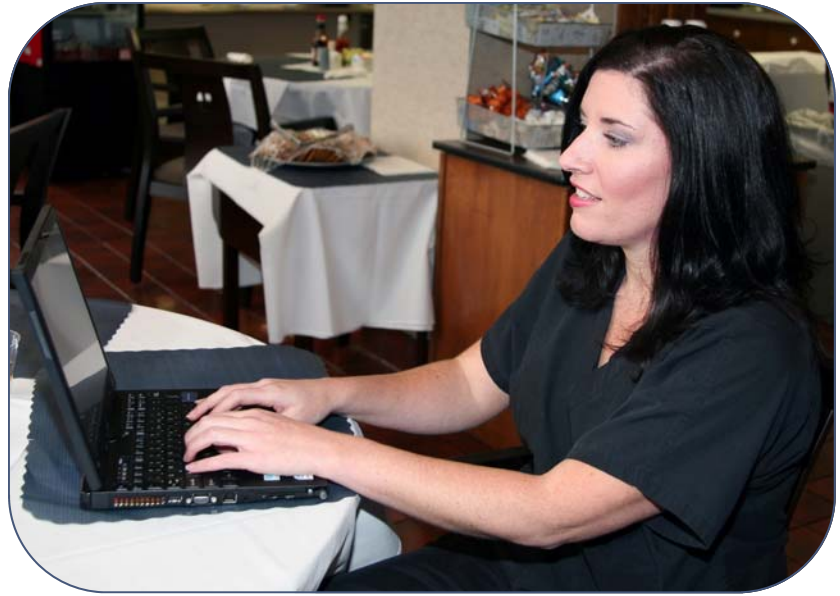
A group of co-workers, friends and family gathered at a reception for Suzanne Long, who retired recently after 18 years at GRMC.

GRMC Volunteers Celebrate



Back row: Stephen Pennington, Fay Holland, Robert Freeman, Joy Wilson, Betty Sue Owen, Linda Godfrey, Jerri McNeal, Nina Tenerani, Mariette Smith, and Greg Dial. Front row: Melba Buttram, Lucille Lindsay, June Duras, Joe Ann Dooley, Betty Freeman, Sheila Morgan, Martha Gray, Jeanette Breedon, and Naomi Tarvin.

Patients, Docs enjoy new service



GRMC understands having someone in the hospital is not always convenient. To make your visit a little easier, GRMC offers a wireless network (WiFi) in key locations around the hospital. WiFi access will help you to stay in touch – to update friends and family on a loved one’s health and to maintain your life outside of the hospital.

WiFi is available in the first floor lobby and cafeteria, the second floor surgery waiting area and the Physicians’ Lounge on the second floor, GRMC Information Systems Director **Glenn Phillips** said.

“Visitors and physicians have really shown an interest in WiFi,” Phillips said of the recently added service. “When

people are visiting or waiting to see someone they want to be able to stay in touch with family members or their jobs.”

For physicians and their staffs, WiFi allows them to stay in touch with their office. **Kim Richee**, (pictured above) nurse and patient coordinator for **The Rumley Center for Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery**, is excited about wireless access in the hospital, which enables her to schedule procedures, check patient charts – to virtually have access to the office while she’s in the hospital.

It’s a time saver – eliminating the need for her to return to the office in Professional Office Building 300 to check a surgery schedule – and it allows **Dr. Thomas Rumley** to access

photos and records to help communicate with families when someone has surgery.

“You can pull up pictures to show someone and say ‘this is what it looked like and this is what it will look like,’” she said. “If it’s a skin cancer case, Dr. Rumley can pull up a picture and show the family the spot that he’s concerned about.”

Having wireless connection allows doctors to write prescriptions electronically, and to check patient records to determine what other medications a patient is taking, Kim said.

CALENDAR CHECK

TOUCH

1st Tuesday of each month

6 p.m.

GRMC Professional Office Building 300

RSVP to Jerria Carter at 256-494-4986.

Volunteer speakers and sponsors are welcome.

WOMAN TO WOMAN BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Last Monday night of each month

7 p.m.

GRMC Professional Office Building 300

Conference Room

LOOK GOOD ... FEEL BETTER

December 14

5 p.m.

GRMC Professional Office Building 300

To register call Jerria Carter at

256-494-4986.

CROP 'TIL YOU DROP

November 20

December 11

6 p.m. to midnight

GRMC Professional Office Building 300

Bring your pictures & scrappin' supplies – we'll bring the snacks! Door prizes given away each hour.

Proceeds to benefit the Gadsden-Etawah County

Physician Scholarship Fund (GECPSF).



MONTHLY MEETINGS

November 18

December 9

Call for times and locations of these events.

Reservations required by calling 256-494-4894.

HEALTHY WOMAN™

MONTHLY MEETINGS

November 17— Brenda Ladun, Speaker

December 1 — Benny Campbell, Speaker

Call for time and location of these events.

Reservations required by calling

256-494-4894. Membership is FREE!



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For more information about events, please visit www.gadsdenregional.com.

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