

Spirit of Halifax

The Community Newsletter of Halifax Regional Medical Center



Michael Newton thanks Ida Conwell and Angela Lee for the excellent care he received in the Clinical Decision Unit.

Getting the diagnosis right: the Clinical Decision Unit.

Mike Newton and his wife, Becky, were driving from their home at Lake Gaston to Roanoke Rapids for a dinner when Mike's stomach began to feel queasy. It's probably indigestion, he thought. By the time the meal was served, it felt "like an elephant was sitting on my chest," Mike recalls.

Becky said, "We're going to the hospital." Mike didn't object, recalling that he had lost two friends recently from heart attacks.

When he arrived at the Emergency Care Center at Halifax Regional, he was treated as if he had a heart attack. After an hour, the physician said he wasn't sure if it was indeed a heart attack, and Mike was being moved to another place within the Medical Center for further evaluation.

That's how Mike Newton became the first patient at Halifax Regional's new Clinical Decision Unit.

He spent 16 hours in the unit, where his vital signs were monitored constantly, and he was on a heart monitor. After reviewing test results, his physician, Abraham

Chaparro, MD, said he had not suffered a heart attack. He was experiencing a complication resulting from an accident he had months ago. He was sent home with medication. Mike then saw Dr. Chaparro in his office and has since resumed normal activities.

"I was treated promptly," Mike recalls, "and with dignity and respect. The staff was attentive and answered all my questions. They went above and beyond the call of duty." Mike appreciated the privacy and comfort of being in a private patient room, compared to an emergency room.

"Patients can feel comfortable knowing we will make the best possible evaluation in an appropriate setting," said Mike Joyner, RN, Nurse Manager of the Unit. "The Clinical Decision Unit is working as we intended, and we are proud of the staff."

Minutes count when you have a potential cardiac issue. If you are unsure, ask your physician if you are a candidate for the Clinical Decision Unit.

Three things you should know about chest pain.

1. It's not always in the chest.

What we call "chest pain" due to coronary artery disease is actually angina pectoris. It feels like uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest. It can also be felt in the neck, jaw, shoulder, back or arm.

2. It often occurs when the heart needs more blood.

That's why an attack of angina is more likely when you're exercising, experiencing strong emotions or enduring extreme temperatures.

3. Chest pain should be treated as an emergency.

This is especially true when heart pain is new, worsening or persistent. It could be a sign of increased risk of heart attack, severe arrhythmias and even cardiac arrest.



Angiograms will be performed by Nadim Geloo, MD (right), Medical Director of the cath lab.

Coming in June: Angiography treatment for artery disease.

Peripheral artery disease often goes undiagnosed, making it a particular concern here in eastern North Carolina. It's a major disease in this area, however, help is on the way – Halifax Regional will begin performing angiography procedures to diagnose the
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Chief of Medical Staff sees significant improvement.



Dr. Richard Minielly

When you've worked somewhere for 14 years, you can speak with some authority about the talents of your coworkers. We're pleased that

Richard Minielly, MD, the chief of our medical staff, has good things to say about the physicians practicing at Halifax Regional.

"We've added specialists and subspecialists and have many board-certified physicians," said Dr. Minielly, board-certified himself in obstetrics and gynecology. "We have a highly regarded medical staff and handle a majority of medical problems and emergencies. Unless your condition calls for a few specialty areas, there's no need to leave this region for care."

Things have changed at Halifax Regional, according to Dr. Minielly. "During my time at the Medical Center, I've seen considerable improvement," he said. "Not only can patients stay close to home for subspecialty care, but they generally receive care quickly. Physicians understand the need to schedule appointments to be convenient for our patients. In most cases, medical care is readily available without long waits."

What's it like to be chief of the medical staff? Dr. Minielly sees his role as bringing physicians and the hospital together. "I have the honor of representing a diverse group of highly trained medical and surgical specialists," he said, "while maintaining a successful practice of my own."

Dr. Minielly practices at Smith Church Obstetrics and Gynecology, 63 Office Park Road in Roanoke Rapids. He may be reached at 535-4343.

Service with a smile.



Faye Wallace is the chauffeur taking visitors, including Chanice Taylor, to the Medical Center and staff to the buildings on our campus. The Halifax Regional Express provided complimentary transportation to more than 1,000 visitors and staff in January.

Angiography treatment

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disease starting in June.

The symptoms of peripheral artery disease are often misunderstood. They include pain in the calf, hamstring and buttocks. The pain typically starts while walking and is usually relieved with rest. Severe cases can cause continuous foot pain. If you're experiencing leg pain, consult your primary care doctor who may recommend an angiogram.

During an angiogram, dye is injected into the arteries of the leg. As the dye progresses, any blockages that may exist will become evident so that treatment can begin. Treatment may involve the use of balloon angioplasty, stenting or the use of other advanced equipment which will allow the physician to open a blocked artery. The procedure is designed to alleviate pain and allow patients to derive the benefits of an active lifestyle.

Angiograms will be performed at Halifax Regional by Nadim Geloo, MD, Director of the Medical Center's cath lab. He will be assisted by an experienced team of three specialized vascular technologists. Angiography is part of a \$1.5 million commitment Halifax Regional is making to improve the cardiac and vascular health of the community.

Honor your doctors by supporting their mission. Doctor's Day is March 30th

We all owe so much to the doctors who care for us, heal us and see us through difficult times. A good way to show our gratitude is to make a contribution in honor of a physician to the Halifax Regional Medical Center Foundation. Each gift of \$5 or more will be acknowledged by a letter to the physician of your choice and will allow the Foundation to support the Medical Center with the purchase of patient care equipment and educational programs.

For more information, contact Gwynell Butts at 535-8476 or gbutts@halifaxrhc.org.

Putting technology to work for you: electronic medical records.



Dr. Jafar Sadiq

What if a doctor could view a patient's record from home, saving time and possibly saving a life? What if there was no more confusion

from reading a doctor's handwritten notes? What if all manner of hospital communications could be recorded electronically, providing

quick and easy access for all who need them?

That's the exciting world of today's electronic medical records, now in use at Halifax Regional. Julie Bain, RHIA, Director of Health Information Management Department, can now find x-rays, nursing documentations, plans of care, nursing notes, lab work, radiology reports, medication histories and physician orders through a secure Internet link - without leaving her office.

"Electronic medical records provide so many advantages," Bain said.

"Now, several people can see a patient's record at the same time in different places.

Physicians can see them in the hospital, in their offices, even at

home. We eliminated the confusion that occasionally occurred with handwritten notes. And we saved space - imagine how much less space a collection of CDs will occupy than hundreds and hundreds of paper-filled folders!"

Privacy and security had to be absolutely assured before the transition was made. "We went to great lengths to assure that our security measures were at full industry standard and that our Internet firewall was impenetrable," Bain said. "We understand and deeply respect our patients' desire for privacy, and this new system actually enhances it."

Moving to electronic medical records is another way Halifax Regional is using advanced technology to put Patients First.

Patient sees dramatic change in new MRI suite.



Mary Noble

Mary Noble of Halifax has had two MRI tests performed at Halifax Regional. The first was in 2004, the latest this past January. She's happy to report there's a world of improvement.

"The first facility was adequate," she said, "but there was no dressing room, no waiting room - it was very basic. In the new MRI suite, not only is there a dressing room, but it has a TV to help pass the time."

Mary felt like she was treated as a valued patient by all the staff. "During registration, they took the time to answer all my questions. And during the procedure they were genuinely interested in my well-being, making sure I was comfortable and doing okay. I could even choose the music in the room. Everyone was really pleasant and friendly."

Our new MRI unit has recently completed its first anniversary of use, and has produced more than 2,100 detailed images to assist physicians in making accurate diagnoses.

"The imaging capability that this MRI brought to the Roanoke Valley is amazing," said Bill Navarro, Manager of the Imaging Department. "Never before were we able to produce this level of detail in images. We have made every effort to make this a comfortable experience. We place the needs of our patient first."

New director believes Halifax Works.



Russ Gardner (right) meeting with Freddie Silva, Plant Manager for Roanoke Valley Energy Facility.

"We want to keep employees healthy and safe at work."

That sums up the philosophy of Russ Gardner, the new Manager of Halifax Works, the occupational health arm of Halifax Regional Medical Center. Gardner will lead Halifax Regional's Clinics. His experience includes serving as the vice president of a hospital in Iowa, and managing a large occupational health and urgent care group in suburban Washington, DC.

"We want to be as flexible as possible to serve our customers," he said. "We can go to them, or their employees can come to us. It

is our goal to build an occupational health program that is tailored to each company's needs so they will receive exactly the services they need and want. We are always looking for new ways to serve our business partners."

Halifax Works provides a full complement of employee health services including treatment for workers' compensation injuries, physicals and drug screening, vision and hearing tests, on-site wellness services, employee training and much more.

"Being new in the area, I am very eager to learn the needs of companies," Gardner said. "We have a great team of people who are focused on helping businesses keep employees healthy, safe and at work."

If you would like to discuss your company's needs, please call Russ at 535-1398. To schedule an appointment for an employee, please call Halifax Works at 535-8463.



Halifax HealthLink

UPCOMING EVENTS

Healthy BINGO

Mondays – 9 a.m.

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

Gentle Fitness Exercise Class

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

Cholesterol Screening

Have your cholesterol checked the 1st consecutive Tuesday and Wednesday of the month from 9 a.m. – noon (by appointment only). Call 535-4334 to schedule an appointment. Charge is \$15.

Diabetes Support Group

2nd Mondays – 7 p.m.

Call 535-8276 for more information.

Better Breathers Support Group

4th Mondays – 7 p.m.

Call 535-4334 for more information.

NAMI Mental Health Support Group

1st & 3rd Tuesdays – 7 p.m.

Call 537-0320 for more information.

Families of Victims of Violent Deaths

4th Tuesdays – 6:30 p.m.

Contact Dianne Elliot at 583-1301 / diane.t.elliott@nccourts.org for more information.

HIV / AIDS Support Group

Call Misty at 535-8173 for more information.

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

Meets quarterly on the 4th Thursday of the month.

Call 537-2400 for more information.

Smoking Cessation Class

Classes are offered for Halifax Regional employees and patients and for the general public. Call 535-2163 or 535-4334 for more information.

K.E.E.P. (Kidney Early Evaluation Program)

Planned for January, 2008.

Please watch for further details.

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



Our message was seen in a television commercial and on outdoor billboards.

I'm here because they're here.

If you've watched ACC basketball or driven around the area lately, you've seen this message on behalf of Halifax Regional.

"We've earned a good reputation for providing outstanding care across a variety of specialties," said Val Short, Vice President. "We also have an exceptional team of physicians

and nurses. Now we're running a combined television and outdoor advertising campaign for the first time because it's a priority for us to make sure our story is told throughout the region." The campaign is running in Halifax and Northampton counties, as well as in the adjoining counties in Virginia.

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

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