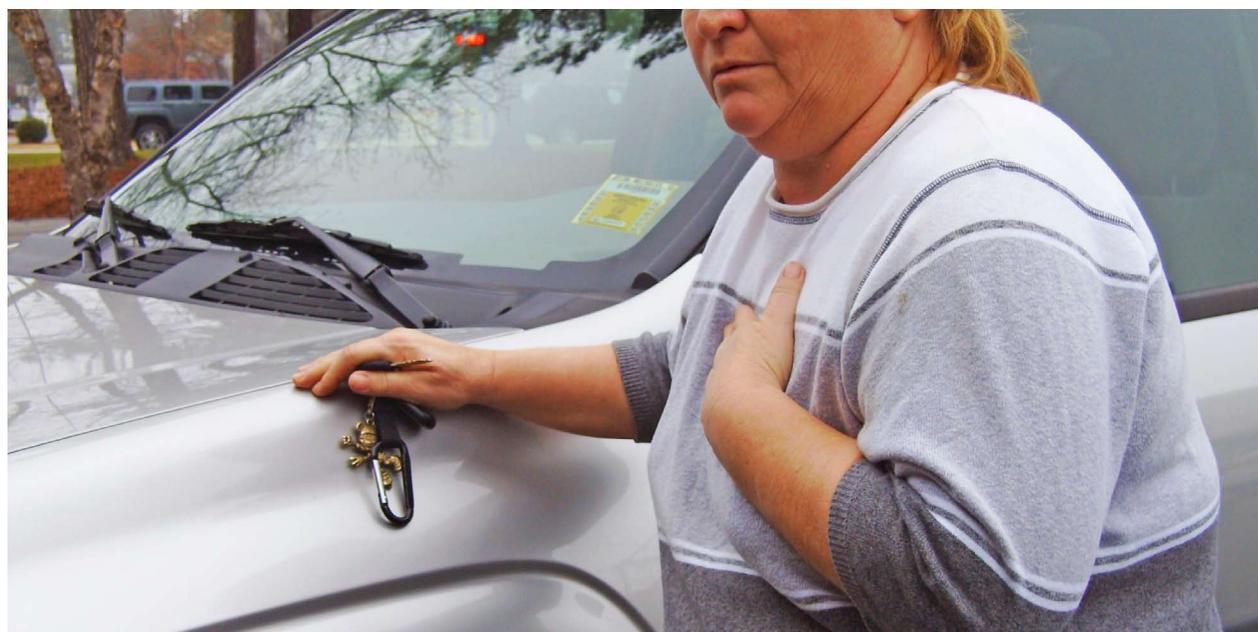


Spirit of Halifax

The Community Newsletter of Halifax Regional Medical Center



Chest pain often signals a woman's heart attack, but other symptoms are less obvious.

Women and heart disease: the untold story.

Did you know that more women than men have died from heart disease every year since 1984? Or that women are twice as likely to die following a heart attack than men? Or that 1 in 30 women dies of breast cancer, but 1 in 4 dies of heart disease? February is American Heart Month, a good time for women to learn the facts and reevaluate their risks.

"Women often wait longer to call for help when they're having a heart attack," said Somasekhara Balla, MD, cardiologist at Halifax Regional. "They don't want to cause trouble if it's a false alarm, and they may not realize that heart attack symptoms in women can differ from those experienced by men." (For women's symptoms, see sidebar.)

Halifax Regional has three experienced cardiologists

Chest pain is a common symptom in heart attacks, but women may instead have:

- Pressure or pain in shoulders, back, jaw or arms
- Dizziness or nausea
- Sudden fatigue or weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Unexplained anxiety

The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

on staff. We've recently added resources to diagnose and treat heart disease through the creation of our new \$2.5 million Cardiac & Vascular Center. The 3,000 sq. ft. Center offers angiography, treatment for peripheral artery disease, and cardiac catheterization services.

"There are some risk factors for heart disease that you can't control, such as your family history and your age," Dr. Balla said. "But many things you can control. High blood pressure has to be brought under control. In the US, thirty-three percent of women are now obese. Diabetes can affect the heart. And of course, smoking contributes to a world of problems."

As a cardiologist, Dr. Balla is awed by the capacity of the heart. "Each time the heart pumps, blood travels through 60,000 miles of blood vessels. The earth's circumference is about 25,000 miles. This means that with each pump of the heart, blood could travel around the earth several times. The heart is a unique and wonderful pump created by God, and it puts me in awe."

Halifax Regional cardiologists are:

Nadim Geloo, MD
Cardiac and Vascular Services
(252) 535-8259

Somasekhara Balla, MD
Halifax Medical Specialists
(252) 537-0134

Natarajan Manickam, MD
Halifax Medical Specialists
(252) 537-0134

In My View



We're Here for You. We Need You to be Here for Us.

As we drive to cities across this country, we see the familiar blue "H" sign, pointing the way to the local hospital. Most of us take it for granted that great hospitals will be there to meet our needs.

When there is a severe economic crisis, such as the one we have now, we must appreciate every organization in our community.

At Halifax Regional, we take seriously our responsibility to provide high quality healthcare services and to play a leading role in the area's economy.

We employ nearly 1,000 people (full and part-time) and pay them over \$47 million in salaries and benefits. That money is spread throughout the region. We invest in new services and recruit physicians to the community, all with one purpose—to meet your healthcare needs.

Both our healthcare and our civic roles are threatened with the downturn in the economy.

- Hospitals throughout the country are treating more people who do not have the ability to pay for their care. When you lose your job, you lose your health coverage;
- Hospitals throughout the country are finding it more difficult to finance new technology;
- Hospitals throughout the country are losing money on their investments.

At Halifax Regional, we are facing the same financial challenges.

Our mission is "to meet the healthcare needs of the community." But we can not fulfill that mission unless we have your support so we may buy supplies and equipment to improve the services of the medical center.

What can you do to help us and help keep our community strong?

(continued on page 3)

Cancer Soon to be World's Number One Killer



Oncologist Mahendra Patel discusses treatment instruction with Camille Hubbard, RN.

The World Health Organization recently announced that cancer is expected to replace heart disease as the world's most deadly disease by next year. Here in the Roanoke Valley, our incidence of cancer is roughly equal to the national average, according to oncologist Mahendra Patel, MD.

"The major difference is that we often

see more advanced cases," Dr. Patel said.

"That's because people often wait too long before coming in for a diagnosis. Early detection gives us a much better chance of successful treatment."

Halifax Regional offers comprehensive care for most common forms of cancer. "Our team of surgeons and oncologists determines a course of treatment for each

individual," Dr. Patel said. Typically, patients see their family physician, and if there is any suspicion that cancer exists, a biopsy is scheduled. If surgery is indicated, a general surgeon performs it; if radiation therapy is indicated, radiation oncologist Chanchamma Thannikkary, MD, supervises it; and if chemotherapy is required, Dr. Patel oversees it.

"Treatments are done locally on an outpatient basis, providing added convenience for patients and their families," Dr. Patel said.

Dr. Patel reminds that there are many things you can do to reduce your cancer risk. Most involve simple changes in lifestyle. "These aren't complicated and don't cost money, but can be extremely important. Eat healthier. Exercise regularly. Stop smoking. And get regular screenings through your family physician. Changing your life is within your power."

Dr. Patel's practice is Halifax Medical Specialists. He can be reached at (252) 537-0134. Dr. Thannikkary practices at Roanoke Valley Cancer Center. Her number is (252) 537-1717.

A new friend keeps Georgia on our mind.

We received a letter recently that we'd like to share with you. It's been edited slightly, with the author's permission, for space reasons.

Mr. Michael Joyner Mgr. Progressive Care Unit – 3rd Floor Halifax Regional Medical Center
November 25, 2008

Dear Michael:

My story begins November 5th when I drove from Savannah to Roanoke Rapids to attend a conference. After dinner the next evening, I began having an uncomfortable feeling in my chest. Because I had a mild heart attack in October, at which time stents were placed in two arteries, I thought it best to have it checked out at Halifax Regional.

In your emergency room, I was immediately examined and placed on monitors. A physician was soon specifying treatment and medication.

Later I was moved to the PCU. There, an extensive medical history was taken and my medical records ordered. After a quiet and restful night, I started to assess how to get control of a tricky situation. I was alone, my car was in the wrong parking lot, two miniature dachshund puppies were in the car, and everything else was in a motel.

A nurse entered to take my vital signs and ask how I was doing. When I started to tell her about all these issues, she said not to worry! She said that Security had resolved my parking issues, and a young lady named Tiffany Thicketman had volunteered to walk the puppies and take them to a kennel when she got off work. Someone else went by the motel and picked up my things there.

The peace and quiet and warmth of the surroundings seemed almost like home, except for the large addition of "new friends." Over time, the rhythm

(continued on page 3)

Free Clinic: Celebrating 10 Years Service to the Community

Ten years ago, Gupta Pandarinath, MD, had a vision for providing medical services to the poor and uninsured of our region who have a chronic illness. In 2009, we mark the tenth anniversary of the Roanoke Valley Medical Ministries Clinic, a service of Halifax Regional, which is fulfilling his dream. To date, there have been about 12,000 visits

...15,500 prescriptions written ...\$900,000 donated for patient visits and medications purchased.

Halifax Regional is proud of our partnership with the Free Clinic. We've provided \$600,000 in lab services, \$208,000 in x-rays, and \$62,000 in cardiac tests. Members of our team have given generously of their time and resources.

But the Free Clinic's ten years are about much more than numbers, according to Executive Director Rose Fleming. "It's about all the volunteers who have provided services and given their time to help their neighbors," she said. "And it's about all the people whose lives have been saved, whose suffering has



Among the many volunteers who faithfully serve the Free Clinic are (L-R): Betty Cook, Connie Hill, Gary Holder, Rita Baxter, and Ann Martin.

been relieved, and whose lives have been changed." Ms. Fleming is a volunteer herself.

If you'd like to be a part of the Free Clinic's next ten years, volunteers are always needed. For more information, call Rose Fleming at (252) 308-1261.

The Free Clinic Needs Your Help!

The Free Clinic is funded solely through donations, grants, and support from area businesses. As demand for services grows, so does the need for additional support. Won't you help? Send your check to Roanoke Valley Medical Ministries Clinic, P.O. Box 1344, Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870.

of PCU-3 became obvious. The staff was friendly and very professional. There was no rush, but everything was on time. Staff floated in and out of the room as if an invisible arm was directing traffic. Everyone had a task and went about doing it almost independently. No bells rang, no banging of doors, and no loud voices. Shift changes were seamless and would not have been noticed except for a new face to review progress and answer any questions.

By the time I was released on the 10th, I had walked the PCU hallway circuit many times. I am 71 years of age and have been admitted to many hospitals and clinics. I often claim to have the best health care in Georgia, but I have seen nothing like this before. Your staff on PCU-3 shows the confident professionalism and quality of care that makes "Patients First" a reality in fact. It's easy to come up with good slogans; it's difficult to get everyone to buy into the mission. Physicians and miracle drugs make us well and whole again but it's the personal care and caring of the nursing staff that heals our spirit.

Michael, to you and your wonderful staff, please accept my heartfelt thanks for the care and caring during my stay on PCU-3. Halifax Regional is doing an outstanding job serving the needs of its citizens.

Kindest personal regards,
Joseph B. Vincent

Health Information: On-site and On-line

Halifax Regional has a Medical Library available to patients, their families and the community. Here you can get personal assistance and check out materials. Also, we've added lots of new information and health links to our Web site. Go to www.halifaxregional.us, click on "services" and then click on "medical library."

New Chief of the Medical Staff Seeks to Improve Care, Communications



Dr. Jonathan Jack

Jonathan Jack, MD, MRCP, is the new Chief of the Medical Staff at Halifax Regional. In his new position, he has two objectives in mind. First, he wants to make sure that patient care remains top priority, and encourages people to find a personal physician. And second, he wants to maintain good working relationships between the hospital and area physicians.

"As we build mutual appreciation with area physicians, we'll see more services offered to the community," Dr. Jack said. "And we'll work closely with our entire medical staff toward the goal of better patient care. Patients First is more than a motto, it's a model for all staff members."

Dr. Jack joined our medical staff in August, 1997. He's seen many changes in the ensuing years.

"We're much more technologically advanced in just a decade," he said. "We now have a high-res CT scanner, an excellent MRI, and much-improved cardiology care. Our patient records are now maintained electronically. And we've made our campus smoke-free, a significant change that reflects the importance of healthful lifestyles."

Medical Staff Officers:

Chief of Staff
Jonathan Jack, MD, MRCP
Halifax Medical Specialists
(252) 537-0134

Vice Chief of Staff
Shiva K. Rao, MD, FACS
(252) 537-2254

Secretary/Treasurer
Gerardo Maradiaga, MD, FACP
Halifax Medical Specialists
(252) 537-0134

New physicians enjoy serving families.

Ankur Shah, MD Pediatrics

Dr. Ankur Shah knows when it's cold and flu season. "We have lots of children coming through here with the typical colds, coughs, and asthma symptoms," he said. Dr. Shah is a native of a small city in Virginia, so Roanoke Rapids seemed a natural fit when he was looking to move closer home following a stay in Orlando. "I love working with children and families," he said, "and I



Dr. Ankur Shah enjoys spending time with his niece.

enjoy the slower, more relaxed pace this area has to offer. There's a portion of the population here that's underserved, and serving them is what I came here to do." During those rare times of leisure, Dr. Shah participates in sports such as tennis and golf, and enjoys reading.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Shah, call Rural Health Group at (252) 536-5000.

Mohamad Shakir, MD Family Medicine

"The nice thing about seeing all members of a family is that you can build a relationship with them, and see how family lifestyles affect each member's health," said Dr. Mohamad Shakir. "And for a physician, it's interesting getting to treat conditions from all ages of life." Dr. Shakir believes it's important to listen to his

We're Here for You. We Need You to be Here for Us.

(continued from page 1)

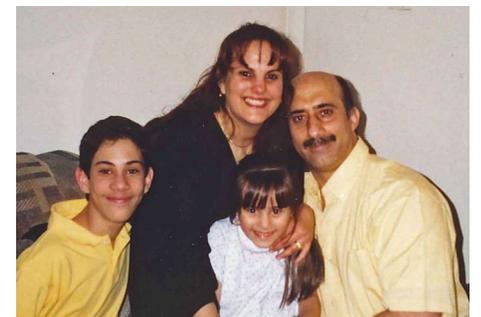
The answer is easy.

- When you need to see a physician, see one that is a member of our Medical Staff. We have more than 80 local physicians here.
- When you need hospital services, come to Halifax Regional. We are an accredited hospital, with dedicated staff providing excellent services.

We are here for you 24/7. Will you be here for us? At Halifax Regional, we put "Patients First."

Will Mahone
President

P.S. I'd like your reaction to this column. Please write me at wmahone@halifaxrmc.org. I'll get back to you.



Dr. Mohamad Shakir and his family.

patients, to spend the extra time that demonstrates his compassion and respect. He encourages his patients to practice healthy living, including proper diet, exercise, and regular check-ups, even if you're not having symptoms of disease. What does Dr. Shakir enjoy when away from the office? "I like to travel, especially to the beach," he said. "And I occasionally play the guitar, just so I don't forget how."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Shakir, call Roanoke Clinic at (252) 537-9176.

Sign up for free health information in your e-mail.

And get a free one-month membership at Halifax HealthLink!

It's a win-win situation. Sign up for HealthEd, and you'll receive e-mails with lots of tips for a healthy lifestyle, info about special events and programs at HealthLink, and news about the services at Halifax Regional. You'll also get a FREE one-month membership at Halifax HealthLink, with access to exercise equipment and much more. Call Jackie Cieslinski at (252) 535-4334 or click on the HealthLink icon at www.halifaxregional.us to learn more.

How do you sign up? Just fill in the form below and mail it to Henry Robertson at the address below, or you can sign up online by clicking on the "Sign up for HealthEd" icon at our Web site.

Sign up for HealthEd

Please add me to HealthEd, the e-mail service of Halifax Regional.

First Name _____ Last Name _____
 Year of Birth: _____ Gender ____ (M) ____ (F)
 E-mail address _____ ZIP Code _____

(To be sure you receive HealthEd e-mails in your box, please add this address to your safe sender list or e-mail address book: info@halifaxrmc.org. You will always be able to unsubscribe using the link provided in every HealthEd email.)

Return to:
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 Halifax Regional
 250 Smith Church Road
 Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870
 (252) 535-8585
hrobertson@halifaxrmc.org

Did you know?

- 100,000 Americans die each year from chronic kidney failure
- People with diabetes and high blood pressure are at the greatest risk of developing Chronic Kidney Disease



KIDNEY DISEASE BEFORE IT STARTS!

Sign up today for a FREE kidney screening at Halifax HealthLink on Saturday, March 7th, 2009 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM.

You **MUST** be 18 or older, have diabetes or high blood pressure or have a close relative with diabetes, high blood pressure, or chronic kidney failure. This **FREE** screening includes blood pressure, weight, blood and urine tests. You **MUST** pre-register at Halifax HealthLink in Becker Village Mall. Call Jackie Cieslinski at (252) 535-4334 for more information.

Don't forget:

Roanoke Clinic has longer hours for your convenience!

If you can't see a doctor during regular hours, don't worry – Roanoke Clinic is now staying open till 8 p.m., Monday – Friday, for your convenience. The Clinic is located at 1385 Medical Center Drive in Roanoke Rapids – (252) 537-9176.

Tenth 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. If you have questions or comments, please contact Henry Robertson at (252) 535-8585 or hrobertson@halifaxrmc.org. © 2009, Halifax Regional Medical Center

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www.halifaxregional.us

Patients First.
HALIFAX REGIONAL