

# Spirit of Halifax

The Community Newsletter of Halifax Regional



## Doctors Join Halifax Regional.

Three new physicians are joining the medical staff of Halifax Regional. You'll meet each of them in this edition:

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- Frank LaBarbera, MD, Women's Health Specialists - page 2
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Each physician is board certified in his specialty and is welcoming new patients. Call their offices for appointments.

Halifax Regional now has 53 physicians on its active medical staff.

They represent 21 specialties within the medical profession.

They are dedicated to serving your needs and, along with Halifax Regional, enabling you to receive quality healthcare right here at home.

## MRI Services Earn Gold Seal.



*Tim Grant, MRI Coordinator, and Diane Carter, MRI Technologist, discuss preparation for an MRI test.*

When your doctor orders an MRI at Halifax Regional, you can have confidence that you are receiving a high level of quality with the utmost in safety.

That's because Halifax Regional has received the gold seal of accreditation in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The accreditation is awarded only to medical facilities meeting the Practice Guidelines and Technical Standards of the American College of Radiology.

MRI is a test using a magnetic field and pulses of radio wave energy to make pictures of organs and structures inside the body. In many cases, MRI gives different information about structures in the body that can be seen

with an x-ray, ultrasound or CT scan. MRI also may show problems that cannot be seen with other imaging methods.

MRI is done to find problems such as tumors, bleeding, injury, blood vessel diseases or infection. MRI can be done for the head, chest, blood vessels, abdomen and pelvis, bones and joints, and the spine.

"Accreditation sends a message to the community that Halifax Regional meets the highest standards of quality of exams and reports, equipment and staff," said William Navarro, manager of the Imaging Department.

"At the MRI Center, you can be assured that your prescribed imaging test meets the highest level of imaging quality and safety," he added.

## In My View

### A Healthy Community Begins with a Healthy Hospital.

The entire healthcare field continues to change. Due to difficult economic conditions, hospitals face major challenges.



We rely on revenues from a narrow range of services and a small number of insured patients to offset losses from Medicare and Medicaid and the uninsured.

Three out of four hospital patients are Medicare and Medicaid, and those payments leave 10% to 20% of their cost for others to pay. At Halifax Regional last year, we provided \$19.7 million in services to patients who did not pay us.

At Halifax Regional, we continued our hard work and innovation in order to end the year positively. Please review our annual report by visiting [www.halifaxregional.org](http://www.halifaxregional.org) and clicking on annual report.

While 2010 was an improvement, the financial results were not enough to meet the total need for higher wages, new equipment and new services. We did take a step in the right direction, and we are grateful for your support.

Halifax Regional has an excellent medical staff. Of the 53 physicians on our staff, 90% are board certified. They are here to meet your needs, and I hope you will use their services when you are sick or injured.

Our success depends on you. We're your community medical center, and we put patients first.

Will Mahone, President  
[wmahone@halifaxregional.org](mailto:wmahone@halifaxregional.org)

# Promotion, Preservation, and Prevention. A Primer for the Practically Perfect Patient.

by Rory V. O'Connor, MD



*Dr. O'Connor*

In the realm of the liver and gastrointestinal tract, there are many opportunities for individuals to promote and preserve their health and well-being,

while also preventing potential problems.

Too often, we wait for symptoms before we pay attention to our intestinal health. We often take better care of our autos, bringing them in for oil and filter changes on a regular basis, rotating the tires, running routine diagnostic tests, checking the fluid levels, washing the car – not because the car has a problem, but because we know that these simple care items will promote and preserve the investment, while helping to prevent future problems.

We need to have a similar focus for our body and intestinal tract, even more so since we can't "trade in" our body. Eating a broad-based, well-balanced diet that is high in fiber and low in fat helps to "fuel" the body and intestinal tract with the proper "octane" we need. Some of our nutritional intakes may be erratic or too "rich" for us

and cause intestinal pains, akin to "knocking and pinging" when bad gasoline gets into your car. Proper directed evaluation and investigation to determine the cause is important to prevent damage and injury. With proper intervention, we look to ensure that our gastrointestinal tract is working effectively, efficiently, and effortlessly. Even when symptoms are absent, routine "maintenance" in the form of colon cancer screening is critically important to allow for prevention of colon cancer, by removing colon polyps if present.

We are here to help you stay well and thrive. Call us at 252 535-1800 so that we can work together to help you achieve that balance of promotion, preservation, and prevention.

For more information, please visit [www.halifaxdigestivehealth.com](http://www.halifaxdigestivehealth.com).

## About Dr. O'Connor.

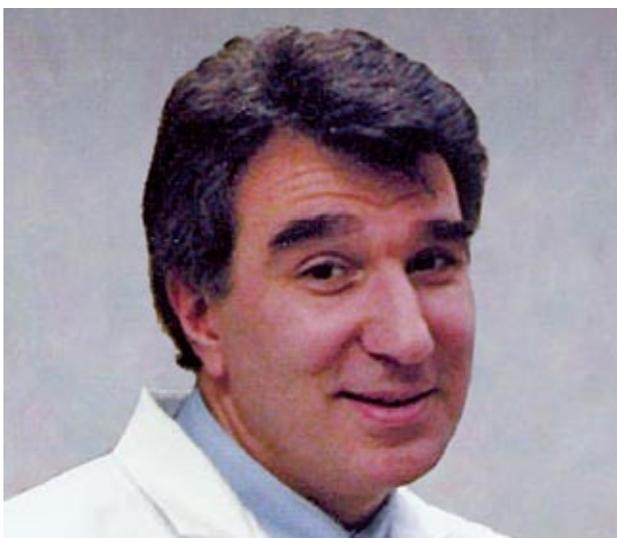
Dr. O'Connor's office, Eastern Carolina Gastroenterology, opened in February in Building 5 of the Medical Plaza on the Halifax Regional campus.

He is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in both internal medicine and gastroenterology. A graduate of the School of Medicine of the University of California, San Francisco, Dr. O'Connor completed his residency at the Wadsworth VA/UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles.

In addition, he received a Fellowship in gastroenterology at the University of California, San Diego. He has 25 years' experience in gastroenterology.

For an appointment with Dr. O'Connor, call 252 535-1800. For more information about the Digestive Health Services at Halifax Regional, visit [www.halifaxdigestivehealth.com](http://www.halifaxdigestivehealth.com).

## Dr. LaBarbera Joins Women's Health Specialists.



*Dr. LaBarbera*

An experienced physician has joined Women's Health Specialists in Roanoke Rapids.

Frank R. LaBarbera, MD, now is practicing obstetrics and gynecology with Thomas J. McDonald, MD.

Dr. LaBarbera is a Fellow in the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Society for Reproductive Medicine.

Dr. LaBarbera came from Chowan Obstetrics and Gynecology in Edenton. Previously, he was in private practice in White Plains, NY. There, he was president of the Westchester County Obstetrical and Gynecological Society.

"Dr. LaBarbera is warm and friendly and a highly competent physician who shows a great deal of care and compassion for the well-being of his patients," said Dr. McDonald. "We are happy to have him

serve the needs of our patients."

Dr. LaBarbera earned both his undergraduate and medical degrees from New York University. He was Chief Resident in Obstetrics and Gynecology at NYU-Bellevue Hospital Center.

He and his wife, Anna, have three children – Paul, who will graduate this year from UNC, Matthew, a senior in high school who will attend UNC in the fall, and Nina, a 7th grader. Dr. LaBarbera enjoys outdoor activities, including kayaking and hiking, and likes to cook.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. LaBarbera, call 252 535-1414. Women's Health Specialists is located at 1381 Medical Center Drive on the campus of Halifax Regional.

## Family Physician Joins Halifax Regional Staff.



Dr. Sorensen

Christian (Chris) F. Sorensen, MD, a board certified family physician, joins the staff at Roanoke and Wildwood Clinics in May.

Dr. Sorensen has 15 years' experience in family medicine in Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey/Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He completed his internship and residency at Sacred Heart Hospital in Allentown, PA, where he was Chief Resident in 1993.

"My practice includes children and adults of all ages," he says. "I also perform some minor procedures including suturing and removal of simple skin lesions."

His wife, Anna, is from North Carolina. He has two children, Erik, 15, and Nicolas, 11. "We chose the Roanoke Valley because of the beauty, the lakes, friendly people and the location halfway between Anna's family and mine," he said.

"We are delighted to have Dr. Sorensen join our staff," said Will Mahone, president of Halifax Regional, which operates Roanoke and Wildwood Clinics. "He has a broad

range of experience in family medicine."

Dr. Sorensen joins Dr. Kenneth Robert and Dr. Abraham Chaparro, also board certified, at Roanoke and Wildwood Clinics. In addition, Diana Dillard and Sharon Lynch, family nurse practitioners, and Cassandra Owens, physician's assistant, treat patients at the Clinics.

Roanoke and Wildwood Clinics provide care to patients beginning at age 3 and continuing throughout life. Services include general family healthcare and chronic illness management to immunizations and laboratory services.

New patients are welcome at both locations.

Roanoke Clinic, 1385 Medical Center Drive on the campus of Halifax Regional. Call 252 537-9176 for an appointment.

Wildwood Clinic, 2053 River Road, Henrico. Call 252 537-9400 for an appointment.

For more information, visit [www.halifaxregional.org](http://www.halifaxregional.org) and click on Roanoke Clinic or Wildwood Clinic.

## A Miracle of Life – A Unique Experience.

Tony Smith was standing outside Trauma Room 1 in the Emergency Care Center at Halifax Regional and heard over the intercom, "Code Blue, Trauma 1."

He knew the reference was to his wife, Gail. He'd taken her from their Roanoke Rapids home at 4:30 a.m. when she awoke saying she could not get her breath and her heart was racing.

Smith rushed her to Halifax Regional. "In the ER, they responded immediately," he recalls. "The next thing I knew, six or seven people and Dr. Westover were treating her."

Gail's heart stopped.

Charlotte Ferguson, RN, manager of the Emergency Care Center, was trying to comfort him. The Smiths' physician, Gerardo Maradiaga, MD, was called in and checked on Gail. Then, he embraced Tony and sat down to explain the critical nature of Gail's condition.

Tony Smith is pastor of Liberty Pentecostal Holiness Church and a 29-year employee at Kapstone. He went into another Trauma Room and prayed with Geoffrey Hardy, the coordinator of the Halifax Regional Foundation and Auxiliary. Hardy is an ordained minister who often is called to counsel with families at the Medical Center.

"You could see the look on the faces of the nurses," Tony said. "It seemed death was going to rule over life. I was grabbing for hope."

Then, she coded, meaning either cardiac or respiratory arrest. "She lost her heartbeat," Tony said.

The team resuscitated her. Smith heard, "We've got her back"

from the voices in the Trauma Room.

"They let me in the room, and my wife's beautiful eyes were looking toward heaven. Her hands and her feet were cold, but she was alive," he said.

"Something was saying, don't give up hope. Don't fear; have faith." Tony prayed for Gail and held on to her as she was taken to the helicopter for the flight to Pitt Memorial in Greenville.

When he arrived there, Tony was met by a physician who said Gail was very critically ill. "My interpretation was he meant she was not going to make it," Tony said.

"I stayed by her side," Tony continued. "The nurses told me that if it were not for the work of the nurses and doctors at Halifax Regional, she would not be alive."

Overnight, Gail began what has been called a miraculous recovery. Her vital signs improved. The next day she was responding and breathing on her own. "I knew she was back," Tony says.

She was discharged a few days later and was back at home in Roanoke Rapids.

"The Lord used the physicians and nurses at Halifax Regional," Tony said. "They were willing to let their training and knowledge be applied to the situation. I was impressed with their calmness and professionalism."

"There is no doubt that the Halifax Regional team values life and shares in the celebration of life," Tony continues.

"I am overwhelmed and more thankful than I can convey."

## If you could help improve the quality of healthcare in the Roanoke Valley, would you?



Working together, Halifax Regional and our community provide opportunities to improve healthcare through the

Halifax Regional Foundation.

Gifts to the Foundation provide essential financial support for our Medical Center's mission of always putting patients first. We are fortunate to live in a caring community where residents demonstrate their care for family and friends in a variety of ways.

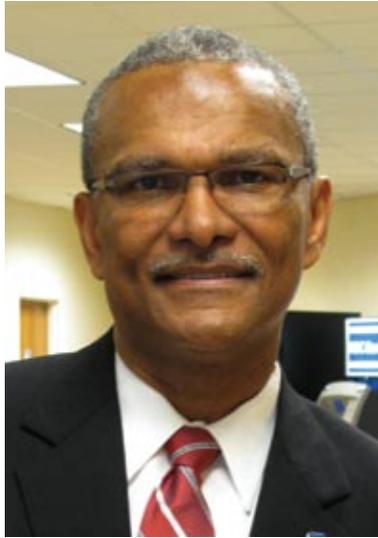
The Foundation is pleased to be the link between the Medical Center and the community that helps to improve the quality of healthcare for all citizens of the Roanoke Valley.

To learn more about the Foundation, visit [www.halifaxregionalfoundation.org](http://www.halifaxregionalfoundation.org) or you can become a "fan" on Facebook.

## Officers of the Board of Directors.

- **Vernon Bryant**, Chairman
- **Bob Patterson**, Vice Chairman
- **Tom Lynch**, Treasurer
- **James Pierce**, Secretary
- **Gerardo Maradiaga, MD**, Chief of Staff
- **Will Mahone**, President & CEO
- **Johnny Draper**, Past Chairman

## Vernon Bryant Is New Chair of Halifax Regional's Board.



*Vernon Bryant, Chairman*

Halifax Regional's new board chair is a knowledgeable member of the community and an active civic and government leader.

Vernon Bryant was elected last month as Chairman of the Board of Directors after having served as Vice Chair last year. He replaces Johnny Draper, who has been chairman for two years.

"We have lots of good assets in Halifax County," said Bryant, "and Halifax Regional is at the top of the list."

"Despite the impact of the economy, the medical center is moving in the right direction," Bryant says. "We offer great services, recruit the best doctors and are keeping our facilities and equipment up to date. The commitment of the board and staff is truly to 'Put Patients First.'"

Bryant encourages residents of the region to use the physicians and services of Halifax Regional when they are sick or injured. "We need the support of the community," he says.

Bryant currently is a Halifax County Commissioner, president of Exodus of Youth,

Inc., which mentors at-risk youth, a member of the Board of Directors for the Dallas Jones Veteran's Museum, and a Realtor with Heaton Real Estate. He is retired from the North Carolina Division of Community Corrections, where he was Judicial District Manager for Halifax County.

He also has been chairman of the Roanoke Rapids Board of Education, chairman of the Board of Deacons of First Baptist Church in Weldon, and chairman of the State Employee's Credit Union Advisory Board.

He and his wife, Sandra, are parents of two adult children, Kendel and Kevin, and grand godparents of a grand grandson, Eric.

## Sign Up Today.

*Halifax Regional wants you to have more information about how to take care of your health. We are expanding our health education program and would like to send you information via email.*

*When you sign up for HealthEd, you'll receive emails with tips for a healthy lifestyle, information about special events at Halifax HealthLink and news about the services at Halifax Regional. PLUS, if you are not a member of HealthLink, you'll get a FREE one-month membership.*

*To sign up, go to [www.halifaxregional.org](http://www.halifaxregional.org) and click on the "Sign up for HealthEd" icon.*

**Eighteenth 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 Gail Wade at 252 535-8111 or [gwade@halifaxrhc.org](mailto:gwade@halifaxrhc.org). © 2011, Halifax Regional Medical Center.

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