

# MAKING ROUNDS

FALL 2024

## Pink Ladies

Volunteers warm hearts in Cancer Center and beyond

– Pg. 16



CAPE FEAR VALLEY  
HEALTH

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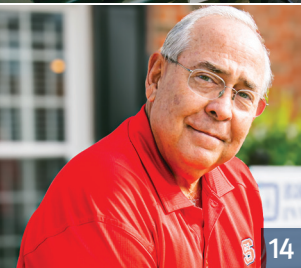
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## CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH

Making Rounds is the official magazine of Cape Fear Valley Health, a 1,000+ bed, 8-hospital regional health system, with more than 1 million inpatient and outpatient visits annually.

A private not-for-profit organization with 8,000 employees and 1,000 physicians on our medical staff, it includes Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, Highsmith-Rainey Specialty Hospital, Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center, Behavioral Health Care, Bladen County Hospital, Hoke Hospital, Health Pavilion North, Health Pavilion Hoke and Harnett Health.

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## LETTER *from the* CEO



Fall is back-to-school season, and we're very excited to know that in just a couple short years we'll be welcoming the first class of medical students at the Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine. The groundbreaking for the school's new building was held in September, and by the time you're reading this, there should be some progress on this construction project that you can see from Village Drive.

This project is going to physically transform the back half of the Cape Fear Valley Medical Center campus, and it's going to truly transform our region by drawing and retaining needed healthcare professionals. Partnering with Methodist University, such a highly regarded and successful university in our community, will ensure these students receive an exceptional education that will prepare them to become the next generation of physicians.

And I'm not the only one who says so. Local community members have stepped forward with an outpouring of generous support because they believe this, too. This summer, the Golden LEAF Foundation also gave \$8 million in support of the school's economic promise. Their donation highlighted at the state level how the medical school is going to improve healthcare and economic opportunities in our region. While these donations are a start, additional support is going to be needed to ensure the school is well equipped to meet the needs of today's medical students.

As we're gearing up on this new project, we're also coming to the end of the Valley Pavilion expansion project, which has literally taken Cape Fear Valley to new heights. The very top of the structure reaches to 161 feet and 3 inches, which makes it the tallest building in Fayetteville!

That's just a fun bragging point for me, because I'm honestly more thrilled by the more important details of the expansion: an additional 100,000 square feet of space and 92 added beds. Among those beds are 44 Adult Intensive Care beds and 48 Adult Step-Down beds, which will bring the medical center's capacity to 762 beds. We are hoping to have those beds open for patients by January.

And not to brag one more time about that very tall building, but there are also two helipads up on the roof that will allow our teams to bring patients directly down into the Emergency Department or Heart Center from the rooftop elevators, saving precious time when seconds count.

Thanks for taking the time to read the latest Making Rounds magazine. In the following pages, I hope you find some good news and some educational news and that you put this wealth of health news to use!

Mike Nagowski

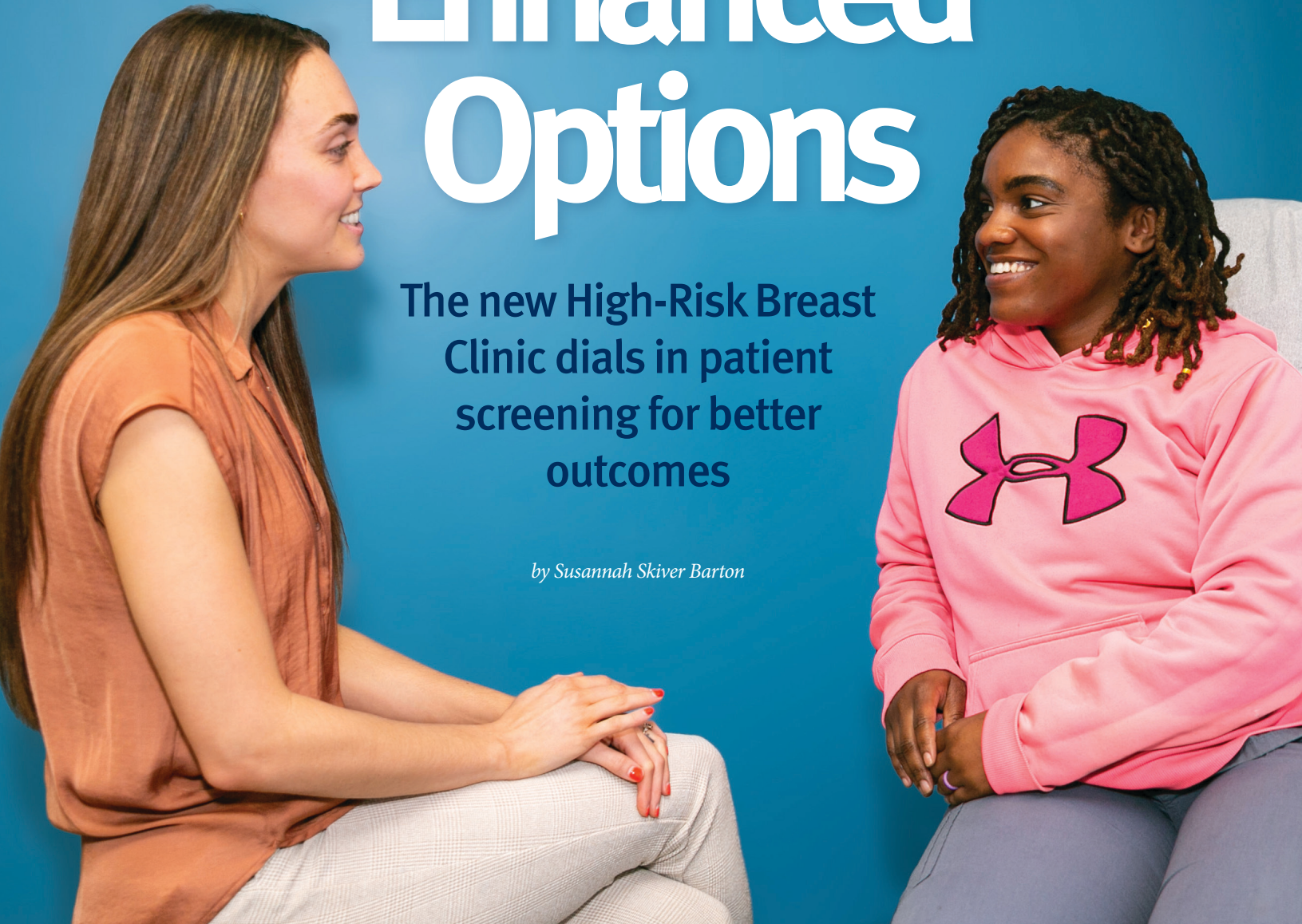
CEO, CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH



# Enhanced Options

The new High-Risk Breast Clinic dials in patient screening for better outcomes

by Susannah Skiver Barton



**When Hunter Hutson started work at Cape Fear Valley Health’s new High-Risk Breast Clinic in September 2023,** it was thanks to true serendipity. A native of Texas, Hutson had planned to seek work there after graduating from the Physician Assistant program of the University of Mary Hardin at Baylor. But after falling in love with a serviceman who wound up stationed at Fort Liberty, she suddenly had to find a job in a place where she knew no one.

Luckily, a colleague who had spent 30 years working at Cape Fear Valley before moving to Texas heard of her plight and put her in touch with the hospital. Hutson’s number-one

choice of job was to work in a high-risk breast clinic — and Cape Fear Valley was on the verge of opening one.

“The timing worked out perfectly,” Hutson said, adding she’s thrilled to be working with the rest of the team and helping so many women.

The High-Risk Breast Clinic is the first of its kind in the Sandhills region. It offers enhanced screening for patients who are at greater risk of developing breast cancer. Typically, one in eight women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime, but a high-risk patient has a one in five chance or higher.



“Screening is the name of the game,” Hutson says. “I can’t ever prevent breast cancer 100 percent, but I can do a lot to try and catch it early, and earlier treatment ends up significantly better for outcomes.”

Patients are typically referred to the High-Risk Breast Clinic by their primary care provider or OB/GYN, who may have noted an irregularity in a standard screening or biopsy. Hutson starts off her assessment with a computer tool that takes into account factors such as the patient’s health history, menstrual cycles or menopause age, family history and previous biopsies. Depending on the results, she recommends various options for next steps.

“If a patient is found to be high risk, I begin managing their mammograms. If they’re less than 40 years old, we discuss starting mammograms early,” Hutson says. “We also implement breast MRIs, so I have eyes on their breasts at two different points of the year to catch anything that comes up very early.” Patients with certain family histories of breast cancer may also be offered genetic screening when appropriate.

Another option for some high-risk patients is endocrine therapy. This is a type of hormone-blocking treatment that prevents estrogen and progesterone from creating breast cancer.

“The majority of breast cancer grows under the influence of female hormones, and this pill blocks that from happening and reduces risk quite a bit,” Hutson said. She can provide a referral for potential candidates for the therapy to the oncology team at Cape Fear Valley’s Breast Care Center. If screening detects an irregularity or malignancy, the High-Risk Breast Clinic provides a seamless transition for patients referred for additional treatment at the Breast Care Center.

**“I think that a lot of women get ignored when they’re concerned about breast cancer and their family history ... I love to listen to them and do everything we need to do to make sure that they’re getting the proper care that they need.”**

– Hunter Hutson  
High-Risk Breast Clinic

“There’s no lapse in treatment time,” Hutson said.

Many of the staff of the High-Risk Breast Clinic are also on the breast cancer treatment teams, so patients will encounter familiar faces. Hutson adds that nowadays, the options for breast cancer treatment are numerous. No matter a patient’s risk status, Hutson emphasizes the importance of knowing family history of breast cancer.

“I cannot stress enough how important it is to have that information,” she said. “It can drastically change the risk assessment.”

She notes that even if a patient has a single relative who had breast cancer, such as an aunt, knowing that information is critical. “It’s so very important to share that information in families,” she adds. “I know it’s very sensitive and emotional, but I can’t stress enough how beneficial it is.”

A referral to the High-Risk Breast Clinic may make some patients nervous, but Hutson wants them to know that she and her team will do everything they can to ease those anxieties.

“We take them seriously,” Hutson said. “I think that a lot of women get ignored when they’re concerned about breast cancer, concerned about their family history — I see that a lot of them don’t get listened to. I want them to know that I love to listen to them and take them seriously and do everything that we need to do to make sure that they’re getting the proper care that they need.”

**Talk to your primary care physician about a referral to the High-Risk Breast Clinic or call (910) 323-2626 for more information.**





# Pink Ladies

Volunteers warm hearts in Cancer Center and beyond



by Kim Hasty

**It's probably Cathy Wilt's face that likely comforts people right away.** It's a friendly face, punctuated by a warm smile and twinkling eyes, readily offering a measure of calm for a patient coping with a daunting diagnosis. Or just as readily offering support for that patient's loved ones.

Wilt is a volunteer at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center's Cancer Treatment & CyberKnife Center. She's one of the center's "Pink Ladies," a term coined when the Fayetteville

Woman's Club first sponsored a volunteer auxiliary for the then-new Cape Fear Valley Hospital. The auxiliary's first meeting was Aug. 14, 1956, just two months after the hospital opened.

"Have the ability to put yourself in the place of another, to feel his anxiety, share his joy or sorrow," the auxiliary's first president, Ann Corders, was quoted as saying at that first meeting. "And so approach each patient in such a kindly, courteous manner that the word hospital becomes synonymous with the word hospitable."



Pink Ladies has been an endearing and long-used term, and their bright fuchsia-hued blouses help make them immediately recognizable. But it's a term that could seem a bit old-fashioned considering the significant work being done by the health system's team of volunteers made up of diverse men and women who have varied and impressive backgrounds. They help throughout Cape Fear Valley Health in a variety of areas, including pediatrics, behavioral health and the Blood Donor Center.

"Our volunteers are incredibly special because they truly want to make a difference, and they're very passionate about what they do," said Pat Beasley, Director of Volunteer Services for the system. "And they want nothing in return except to do good for someone else. They're very loyal and they'll do anything we ask of them. They make a huge impact on patients and on our employees."

"I am in awe of them," she said. "And of their huge, giving hearts."

Wilt, who seems to epitomize the attributes the first long-ago auxiliary had in mind, began volunteering after a 31-year career with the U.S. Army, the last 21 of which she was a civilian contracting officer. She and her husband Cecil, a retired Army aviator, had planned to spend their time traveling.

"For a while, that was OK," she said. "But then I thought, I've got to do something else."

She started as a hospice volunteer but then heard that the Cancer Center needed help. That struck a chord with her. Her mother, stepfather and brother, who was her only sibling, all died from cancer. She herself is a cancer survivor, having undergone treatment for endometrial cancer after being diagnosed in 2011. That experience, along with a listening ear and that comforting smile, enables her to hand out a heaping helping of empathy along with the popular oatmeal raisin cookies that many patients love.

At the Cancer Center, volunteers operate the Oasis Café to the right of the entrance. They stock comforting snacks such as crackers, cookies and bananas and offer them to patients and caregivers.

"Sometimes, you know, the patients are getting the care they need, but a lot of times it's the caregiver who really needs someone to talk to," Wilt said.



**"Our volunteers are incredibly special because they truly want to make a difference ... and they want nothing in return except to do good for someone else."**

**– Pat Beasley,  
Director of Volunteer  
Services**

Quite often, volunteers say they feel as if they receive as much in return as they give. Certainly, that was the case when Cecil Wilt died in 2019 after a brief illness. The Wilts had been married 54 years.

"He was the love of my life," Cathy Wilt said. "When he first passed away, volunteering was a lifesaver for me. It really was. I have to say that the Cancer Center is my passion."

That passion has led her to expand her service. She volunteers at the Cancer Center on Tuesday afternoons, with the human resources office on Thursday mornings, and with hospice patients on Fridays. She also serves the vital position of treasurer for the volunteer auxiliary board, keeping track of the funds the volunteers help raise for equipment, projects and building expansions.

"She wears many hats," Beasley said. "She's very detail-oriented and has the auxiliary on a great path. She keeps us all straight too."

Beasley said the Cancer Center and other areas are always seeking to add more volunteers to their roster.

**For more information on becoming a volunteer in any area of the health system, call (910) 615-6783 or go to [capefearvalley.com/volunteers](https://capefearvalley.com/volunteers).**

# Give Platelets

## The Blood Donor Center is always in need of these super cells

by Jami McLaughlin

**Read the next chapter in your book, watch your latest TV show or make new friends – all while helping save lives** by giving blood platelets at Cape Fear Valley Health's Blood Donor Center at Cape Fear Valley Health.

And in a little less than two hours!

Alan Matula, 64, had been giving whole blood and platelets before moving here several years ago to work at Kuraray America in Fayetteville. Here, his company considers it community service.

"It's not only Kuraray, where I work. A lot of companies across the country also consider it community service," Matula said.

He has been donating blood since he was in college at Purdue University in the late 1970s and has continued to donate through his entire career.



"It's the right thing to do," Matula said. "You live in this world and have to give back to this world. It's a hard-core way to help a person."

Matula said he first donated platelets on a dare from a friend while he was donating blood.

"Back then, there were two needles in each arm, but it's much easier now," Matula said. "The needle is smaller and there is only one. They also make it very comfortable."

With AB+ blood, he is an ideal universal platelet donor. Now, he gives about every two weeks, which he figures to be around 24 weeks out of the year.

"I dare anyone to do it," Matula said. "Try it at least once."

Shirley Williams, an apheresis technician at the Blood Donor Center, said they count on their regular platelet donors.

"They are loyal and know how badly we need it," Williams said. "We can always use more to come in and donate. We have such a big population in Fayetteville, but a small donor population."

For the last 16 years, Williams has worked with the platelet program to keep seven to eight units on bay for use by patients at Cape Fear Valley Health.

She said a lot has changed since she first started in the field as a phlebotomist in the 1980s, like the automated machines that help separate the blood returning red blood cells and plasma back to the donor, but one thing has not changed: it helps local people here at Cape Fear Valley.

"These are your friends, family and neighbors," Williams said. "It is directly helping people you may know."

When cancer patients go through chemotherapy, they can lose nutrients in their blood, and the platelets help them with a fighting factor to replenish what they lose.





“The blood and platelets donated here go to cardiac patients, burn victims, NICU patients and cancer patients,” Williams said. “The blood provides healing for wounds and other care. Some cancer patients need it on a regular basis.”

Williams has also seen how quickly the platelet supply can be depleted.

“The need is so great,” Williams said. “Sometimes the hospital calls and we are scrambling to call donors, but it takes time. It’s not instantaneous.”

The shelf life for platelets is five days, and purchasing it costs money and time – two days to receive it when purchased.

She said that the Blood Donor Center is a true blood center, licensed for human blood transfusions that will go to local use.

“We need local donors and welcome anyone who comes through our doors to donate platelets because we do need it,” Williams said. “We do a lot of pampering here too.”

She said each donor can have their own headphones, beverages such as hot chocolate and sodas, heated blankets, movies/TV or they can just “veg and disconnect.”

Matula agreed that the cushy recliners, pillows for comfort and snacks are a great perk. He said once the machine is on, it is easy to relax.

Williams said it is easy to get tested to see if you can donate and many people who think they can’t donate actually can.

“You can donate if you are diabetic as long as it is under control, if you have high blood pressure or even if you have previously had cancer,” Williams said. “Some are surprised to hear that and love to come in to give back.”

According to Williams, anyone can donate as long as they are 16 years old (with parental consent), weigh at least 110 pounds and can tolerate a finger stick to make sure all of their levels are healthy.

Blood can be donated every eight weeks. Platelets can be donated every two weeks.

If anyone would like to take Matula’s dare, a chair is open for you.

**For more information, call (910) 315-LIFE (5433)  
or visit [capefearvalley.com/blood](http://capefearvalley.com/blood).**





# Caregiver Support

**Alzheimer's support  
groups provide  
community and  
knowledge**

*by Joy Cook*

When faced with the daunting challenges of Alzheimer's disease and dementia, a strong support system can make all the difference. For many caregivers in our region, the two Alzheimer's support groups offered by Cape Fear Valley Health's Senior Health Services offer a lifeline of hope, understanding and community. Led by outpatient social workers Sam Hutchison and Deborah Steele Arosemena, the groups provide much-needed solace and guidance.

Cape Fear Valley has had a support group for caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease since 2000. With the backing of resources from Alzheimer's NC and Dementia



Alliance, the groups create a space where caregivers can share their stories, find resources, and receive the emotional support they need. The groups are open to anyone in the community.

“We’ve been doing this for over two decades, and it’s all about providing a safe haven for caregivers,” said Arosemena.

One support group meets every third Tuesday of the month in the Foundation Conference Room at the Medical Arts Building in Fayetteville, and another group meets the first Wednesday of every month at Harmony of Hope Mills. These meetings are informal and open-ended, allowing participants to join and leave as needed. Topics vary from dealing with new diagnoses to sharing success stories and strategies for daily challenges.

“It’s all about giving them an environment where they can be accepted and understood,” said Hutchison, who is also manager of Senior Health Services.

One of the standout features of these support groups is the wealth of knowledge that Hutchison brings to each meeting. With over 25 years of experience, he offers practical advice and emotional reassurance, helping caregivers understand that it’s okay to feel overwhelmed.

“I encourage them to cherish the good days and remind them they’re doing their best,” he says. This compassionate approach helps caregivers find solace in knowing they are not alone in their struggles.

Occasionally, guest speakers are invited to discuss topics of interest such as hospice care, legal concerns and power of attorney. These sessions empower caregivers with the information they need to navigate the complexities of Alzheimer’s care.

“The group is theirs, not ours,” emphasizes Arosemena, highlighting the participant-driven nature of the meetings.

## Overcoming challenges together

The challenges faced by caregivers are numerous, from the financial burden of care to the emotional toll of watching a loved one deteriorate. The group helps caregivers understand the importance of self-care and provides strategies for dealing with the stress and isolation that often come with the role.

For many participants, the support group has been a game-changer. Caregivers learn to redefine success by celebrating small victories and finding a sense of normalcy in their daily lives. **“Medically, their loved one may be struggling with the disease, but through the support group, we’re helping caregivers find success in different ways.”**

– Sam Hutchison  
Manager, Senior Health Services

“Support is one of the biggest challenges,” notes Arosemena. “We teach people how to ask for what they need and remind them that their efforts are invaluable.”

For many participants, the support group has been a game-changer. Caregivers learn to redefine success by celebrating small victories and finding a sense of normalcy in their daily lives.

“We get very good feedback from our members,” Hutchison said. “Medically, their loved one may be struggling with the disease, but through the support group, we’re helping caregivers find success in different ways.”

Cape Fear Valley Health’s Alzheimer’s support groups are more than just meetings; they are lifelines for caregivers. Thanks to a private grant from a generous donor to the Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation, the Alzheimer’s care navigation program offers one-on-one counseling, crisis intervention and long-range planning assistance. This program has been a vital resource, helping caregivers with everything from advanced directives to managing challenging behaviors.

For more information about Cape Fear Valley Health’s Alzheimer’s support groups, please call (910) 615-1781 or (910) 615-1633.



# A Step Ahead

Podiatry clinic's new continuity model is the first of its kind in the nation

by Lia Tremblay

**Billy Richardson is enjoying an active retirement.** He tends a garden that is bursting with fresh tomatoes and cucumbers. And when he can get away to his favorite place on Bald Head Island, he loves to spend a day surf fishing.

"I'm as active now as I've ever been," he said.

But he didn't always feel this good. Years ago, back trouble led to complications that affected his feet. He developed neuropathy, a condition where nerve damage can cause weakness and loss of sensation in the extremities. When this happens, small injuries to the foot can become big problems.

"The problem is I don't feel it," Richardson said. "Because of the nerve damage, I don't feel the problem starting. So what happens is it gets out of control."

His doctor advised him to see a podiatrist, and the timing was perfect: Cape Fear Valley's growing residency program had just added podiatry to its offerings, opening a clinic in which new doctors would train in the specialty under the guidance of an experienced podiatrist.

Kristen McGinness, DPM, is the director of the podiatry residency program and a practicing podiatrist herself. When she arrived in 2020 to establish the residency program, she walked into an already bustling practice.



“Cape Fear Valley Podiatry has been here since the 80s and has grown to be a very large practice,” she said. “We see more than 50,000 outpatient visits annually.”

With such a high demand for podiatry in the area, the need for a residency program was clear. Each year it has admitted four residents to complete a three-year program of increasing responsibility in podiatric practice, including surgeries of the foot and ankle.

This year, as its first class graduated, the residency program took a big step forward. It has changed its clinic to a continuity model, which means patients will see the same resident on every visit.

“This residency clinic is the first of its kind in the country,” said Dr. McGinness. “It allows residents to build a rapport with the patient because they’re not always meeting someone for the first time.”



This continuity is associated with faster healing and fewer complications. It also gives patients time to build trust with the resident they see on every visit.

“It’s also great for the residents and their education,” said Dr. McGinness. “It lets them follow up with the things that they’ve recommended for patients, to see what’s working and how it looks over time.”

Usman Javed, DPM, is a second-year resident who was happy to see this development.

“It means when I sit down with a patient, we are both on board with the treatment goals,” Dr. Javed said. “We can see if we’re achieving them appropriately instead of trying to figure things out with someone you haven’t seen.”

Being able to build an ongoing relationship with patients is one of the reasons he chose this work.

**“I really like the fact that we’re able to see the patients in clinic and then coordinate with other teams. Sometimes we need to consult with [other] specialists. Having them at our disposal really offers the best for our patients quickly.”**

– Usman Javed, DPM  
Resident

“Mobility is so important, in terms of exploring this world and being engaged in it,” he said. “It’s nice to be able to help people enjoy that freedom and enjoy their lives.”

Dr. Javed has appreciated his experience so much that he plans to choose a similar setting after graduation.

“I would really love to join a hospital-based practice like we have here,” he said. “I really like the fact that we’re able to see the patients in clinic and then coordinate with other teams. Sometimes we need to consult with vascular specialists or infectious disease or endocrinologists. Having them at our disposal really offers the best for our patients quickly.”

That is music to Richardson’s ears. Before his retirement, he served in the North Carolina General Assembly and took a special interest in the state’s healthcare capacity.

“I was able to work with the delegation in ensuring that we got permanent funding for the residency program,” he said. “It has improved the quality of medical care in this area immensely already. And it’s only going to get better.”

Richardson has been happy to see how many residents choose to make the Fayetteville area their home after graduation.

“We heard this during the planning, and now we’ve seen it in real life,” he said. “At least half of the residents that go into this program will stay within a 50-mile radius of the area. That’s so important.”

After all the work to assist in Cape Fear Valley’s progress, Richardson says it has been gratifying to be a patient and see the benefits up close.

“The team there is so good at what they do,” he said. “But more than that, they’re so friendly and kind. They have educated me on what to look for and how to avoid new problems. And it’s just a pleasure to see them when I’m there.”



# At Ease

An active retiree finds relief in minimally invasive spine surgery

by Lia Tremblay

**Bruce Brown is not one for sitting still.**

The retired paratrooper has always enjoyed an active lifestyle, full of adventure and travel.

“I love hiking, swimming, surfing, snorkeling, all of that,” he said. “In 2018, I was hiking in the Alps.”

But a couple of years ago, back trouble began slowing him down.

“I’d get an ache in my lower back,” he said. “It extended down into my legs, and I would get spasms in my thighs.”

The culprit was two bulging discs: the cushions between vertebrae in his lower spine were getting compressed, pushing outward into nerves that run down into the legs.



“I would stand up,” he said, “and then both of my thighs would kind of lock up for a second. I’d have to stop and move my legs a little bit. And then finally it would ease up, and I could walk.”

He began physical therapy to strengthen his core and decrease the pressure in his spine. Steroid injections also provided some relief, but not for long.

“I got to the point where standing for more than 10 to 15 minutes was really painful,” he said. “I just had to find a chair.”

The best option left was surgery, and that decision was timely: orthopedic surgeon Daniel DeRosa, DO, was joining Cape Fear Valley with a specialty in minimally invasive spinal surgery at Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine.

That may sound like a contradiction in terms, but it’s a breakthrough for patients like Brown.

“I think when people hear about spine surgery, they are picturing big, open incisions on your back,” said Dr. DeRosa. “But what I do is through very small incisions, about an inch long.”

Keeping the incisions small has a number of benefits: decreased blood loss, fewer complications, a shorter hospital stay and a faster return to mobility and function.

“Only about 30 percent of spine surgeons in the country perform the type of surgery that I do,” he said, “and really no one in Cumberland County does this.”

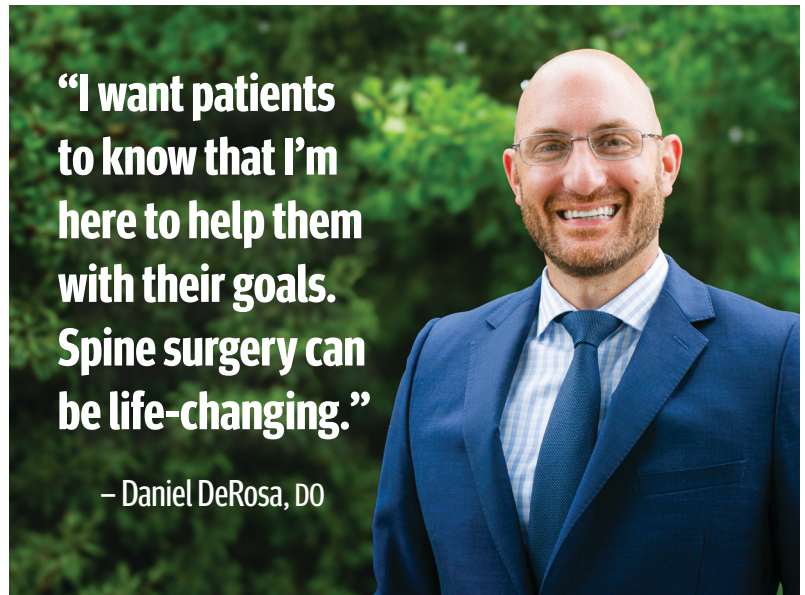
Brown knew he would be in good hands, not just because of this expertise but also because Dr. DeRosa was coming to Cape Fear Valley after a long career in the Army.

“Both of us being prior military, we had that camaraderie, and I liked him a lot,” Brown said. “He showed me exactly what needed to be done, and I was ready.”

Surgery day came a couple of weeks after that first consultation. After about two hours in the operating room, Brown was awake and recovering. As predicted, he was discharged to go home the very next day.

At home, Brown continued to get stronger. Between careful laps around the house, he sent an email to Cape Fear Valley CEO Mike Nagowski, who he knows from Kiwanis Club, to express gratitude for the nursing care he had received during his short hospital stay.

Dr. DeRosa says it’s not unusual for great nurses to make the experience so pleasant and memorable for his patients.



“Spine surgery is a hundred percent a team effort,” he said. “Cape Fear Valley has been phenomenal every step of the way. We have amazing surgical techs and nursing staff. And at my clinic, the nursing and office staff just are unmatched, truly.”

Dr. DeRosa hopes stories like Brown’s will help others feel more at ease with the possibility of surgery, should they need it.

“I want patients to know that I’m here to help them with their goals,” he said, “whether that’s addressing nerve pain so they can run again, or helping a grandparent who’s desperately wanting to get on the floor and play with their grandbabies. Spine surgery can be life-changing.”

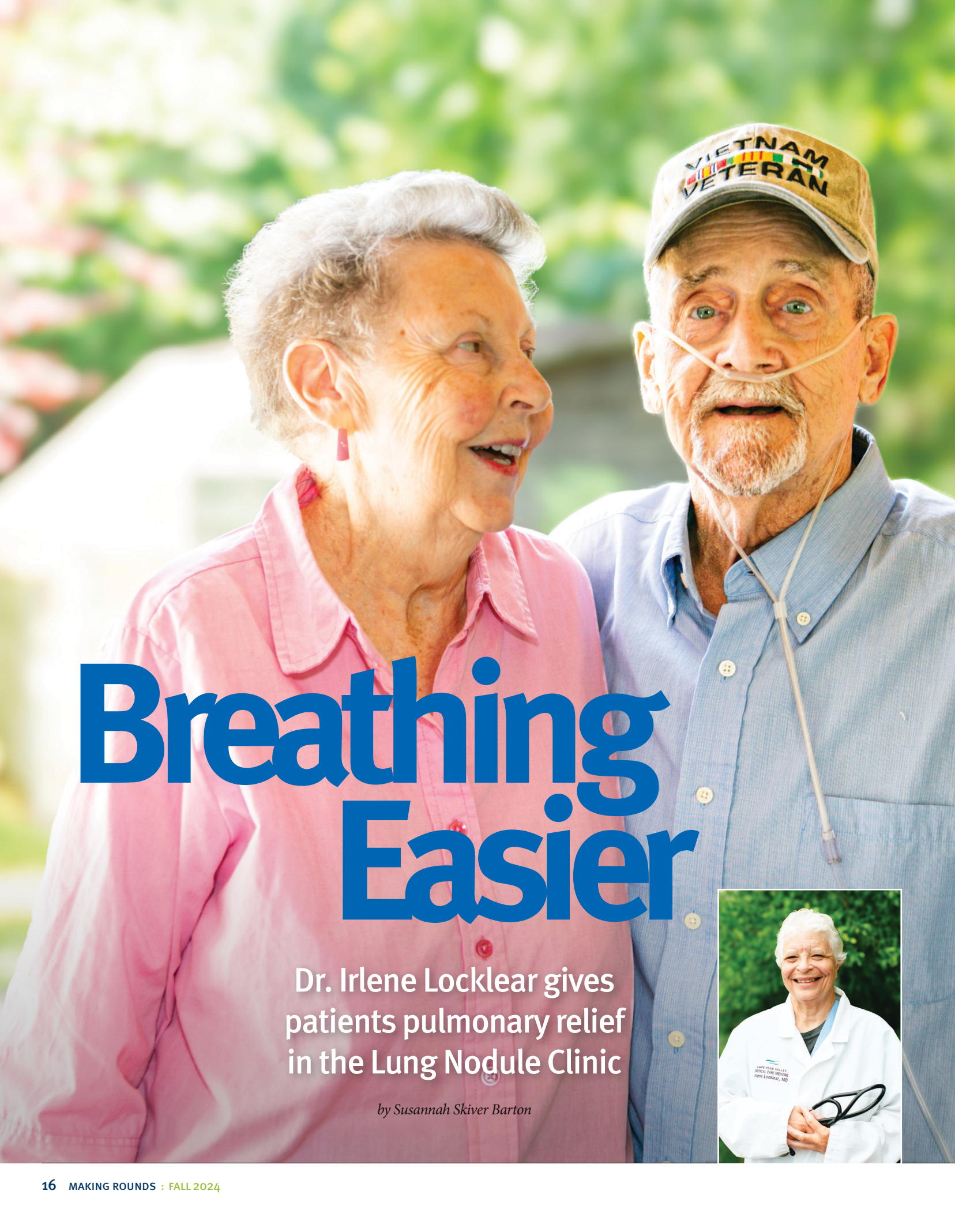
Brown is continuing to recover at home, taking slow and cautious steps toward his usual energy level. He’s looking forward to getting back to Kiwanis and to his active involvement with Hay Street United Methodist Church.

He’s also looking forward to some fun.

“I’m not allowed to play golf until at least the three-month mark,” he said. “Maybe closer to six months. But I’ve got some trips on the calendar, and I can ride around in the golf cart until I’m ready to get out and play.”

**If you have chronic back pain, call (910) 609-5000 to get help with Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine.**





# Breathing Easier

Dr. Irlene Locklear gives patients pulmonary relief in the Lung Nodule Clinic

*by Susannah Skiver Barton*





## People from all around the Sandhills come to the Lung Nodule Clinic,

referred by primary care physicians and often fearing the worst.

“When patients come to see me, most of the time they’re scared because they think I’m going to tell them they’ve got cancer,” said Irlene Locklear, MD, a pulmonologist who heads the Lung Nodule Clinic. “Their doctor will tell them, ‘You’ve got a spot on your lung.’ They don’t tell them how big it is or sit down with the CT scan.”

But Dr. Locklear does, and much of the time, she’s able to show patients just how small the spot is. “A lot of times patients think they have a big old mass sitting in their lungs, and it could be a little 6-millimeter nodule the size of a stick pin,” she explains. Those moments of relief — and the care that Dr. Locklear and her team provide across the board — create bonds among patients and providers.

Milton and Donna Sue Bass, a husband and wife from Bladen County who are both followed at the clinic, refer to Dr. Locklear as family. “She’s easy to talk to,” Donna Sue said. “I feel good about sitting there with her.”

Dr. Locklear has been seeing Milton for years, treating his COPD and other pulmonary issues that arose in part from his time in Vietnam. Her care has given him back the ability to do things he couldn’t before, like help around the house.

“I can walk outside a lot, too, and see my birds and tend to my little tomato bushes and cucumber bushes,” Milton said. “I’m able to do those things on account of Dr. Locklear.”

The Basses say they trust Dr. Locklear and the staff of the Lung Nodule Clinic completely. So when Donna Sue’s primary care physician needed to refer her to a pulmonary specialist for what turned out to be a mycobacterial infection, she insisted on seeing Dr. Locklear.

“She’s just fantastic,” Donna Sue said.

A graduate of the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, Dr. Locklear has served in the Lung Nodule Clinic since it opened 13 years ago. She primarily works with patients with newly diagnosed nodules that may or may not be malignant tumors, doing workups that could involve a bronchoscopy, biopsy, CT or PET CT scan or other procedures.

“We’re doing a lot of procedures that are noninvasive,” Dr. Locklear said.

Among the most cutting-edge tools is an Illumisite platform

for navigational bronchoscopies. This allows Dr. Locklear to precisely pinpoint the location of extremely small nodules to biopsy them in real time, which enhances the accuracy and safety of the procedure.

“We map out a pathway, so we can go straight to the nodule rather than guessing where it is based on an X-ray image,” Dr. Locklear explained. “We can go after smaller nodules — 1 or 1.5- or 2-centimeter nodules — that we might have otherwise sent to radiology for CT-guided biopsies. That’s good, because with CT-guided biopsies the risk of lung collapse is 10 percent, but with navigation bronchoscopy it’s less than 1 percent. Some of our patients are high risk, so we do that.”

Another noninvasive method Dr. Locklear employs is called EBUS, short for endobronchial ultrasound, which is often used to biopsy mediastinal lymph nodes or masses in the mediastinum, the area of the chest between the lungs that contains the heart.

“Several years ago, those patients were going to thoracic surgery,” Dr. Locklear said. But now they can get an endobronchial ultrasound at the Lung Nodule Clinic instead. “That is much more noninvasive than having the patient go for general anesthesia and get a mediastinoscopy.”

In the event that a patient’s nodule is malignant, Dr. Locklear determines the best next steps, which could be a referral for surgery, chemoradiation or another procedure that can be done in Cape Fear Valley’s Cancer Center. She monitors all her patients as they are treated in the Lung Nodule Clinic, taking special care to have them seen quickly for follow-up procedures “so that they’re not sitting home anxious and scared.”

That level of care and compassion is cherished by patients like the Basses.

“If she feels like you need a few extra minutes, you’re going to get that,” Donna Sue says. “If you’ve got a question to ask her, she’s not looking at that watch, like ‘I’ve got to get out of here.’”

Dr. Locklear’s pleasant demeanor eases the stress of every appointment. Milton puts it simply: “She’s got a smile on her face that’ll put a smile on yours.”

**If you are ages 50 to 80 years old, currently smoke or have quit smoking within the last year, with an average smoke history of smoking one pack of cigarettes a day for 20 years or two packs for 10 years or more, talk to your doctor about scheduling a yearly low-dose CT scan.**



# Reasons to Hope

Diabetes & Endocrine Center gives patients with diabetes and pre-diabetes a way forward

by Susannah Skiver Barton

Living with diabetes means daily **management**, and having your medical team nearby can make a huge difference. For patients in Harnett County, Cape Fear Valley Health's Diabetes & Endocrine Center - Dunn ensures easy, local access to treatment, maintenance and follow-up. And it can change their lives.

"I'm off all insulin now," said Lois Giese, who has Type 2 diabetes. She has been a patient at the center for about two years, seeing Adithya Kattamanchi, MD. "When I first went to him, my A1C was 9.5," Giese explained, referring to a blood test that measures glucose levels. "The other doctors I'd been to couldn't get it down. But now it's at 7.1, which is excellent for my age."

Giese noted that Dr. Kattamanchi went the extra mile to help her — more than other doctors she had seen in the past. "He's not afraid to step outside the box and try something different to make sure we get the right approach," she said. "I've been diabetic for 25 years and out of all the endocrinologists I've seen, he's the best."





Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases in the United States, with 11.6 percent of the population having Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. In North Carolina, that number is 12.5 percent, with another 34.5 percent of people being pre-diabetic. Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in childhood or adolescence, and accounts for about 5.7 percent of all diabetes cases. Type 2 diabetes typically manifests in adulthood and is much more common. Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include hereditary factors as well as conditions such as obesity.

Each type of diabetes requires a different approach. With Type 1 diabetes, the body produces antibodies that stop the natural production of insulin, a hormone that regulates blood sugar levels. Type 1 diabetes patients need regular doses of insulin to counteract their body's lack of it. Type 2 diabetes works differently; the body has a hard time processing insulin and develops resistance to it. The pancreas responds by making more insulin, but eventually it's unable to keep up with the demand, and blood sugar levels increase.

Dr. Kattamanchi heads up the Diabetes & Endocrine Center in Dunn and is assisted by a team that includes Clinical Pharmacist Practitioner and Doctor of Pharmacy Heather McLeod. A big part of their work involves education, helping patients to understand the implications of their diagnosis and the steps they should take to best manage their disease.

"For diabetes, education is important," Dr. Kattamanchi said, adding that treatment pathways are varied, with more options than ever before. These include blood glucose monitors that take automatic sensor readings so that patients know when their blood sugar is getting low and can take steps to mitigate it. There are also options such as pills, semaglutide injections like Ozempic and insulin pumps which allow for precise and flexible dosing.

"With these devices and medications, we can make the regimens as simple as possible to make patients' lives easier," Dr. Kattamanchi said.

Most crucial, according to Dr. Kattamanchi, is educating about healthy lifestyle modifications that can help manage diabetes and pre-diabetes. Number one is limiting carbohydrate intake, and especially sugar intake.

"Glucose is one of the purest forms of carbs, and it's really hard to control diabetes if the patient is taking a lot of sugars," he explains, pointing out that soft drinks, juice and energy drinks should be avoided. Other lifestyle

**"With these devices and medications, we can make the regimens as simple as possible to make patients' lives easier ... There are a lot of resources nowadays to control diabetes"**

– Adithya Kattamanchi, MD

modifications include exercising regularly and working to reduce weight. "For patients with pre-diabetes, most of the time these things work," Dr. Kattamanchi said.

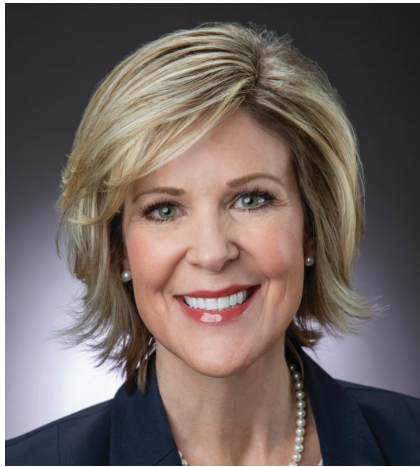
Managing diabetes may seem like a grind, but failing to do so can have serious repercussions. Unmanaged diabetes can result in heart attacks, blindness, hearing loss, chronic kidney disease and many other problems, including some—like diabetic ketoacidosis—that can be fatal. North Carolina is number seven in the United States for diabetes-related deaths, according to the North Carolina Diabetes Advisory Council.

"Diabetes affects most of your organs," Dr. Kattamanchi said. "It affects your blood vessels, including the smaller ones, causing issues with the eyes, kidneys and nerves. It also impacts the bigger blood vessels, causing stroke and heart issues."

That's what the Cape Fear Valley Health's Diabetes & Endocrine Center - Dunn is working to change, one patient at a time.

"A lot of patients get scared and think they have to be on insulin, but not necessarily," Dr. Kattamanchi says. "There are a lot of resources nowadays to control diabetes much better."

**To make an appointment with the Cape Fear Valley Health's Diabetes & Endocrine Center – Dunn, call (910) 230-7920. For more information, visit [myharnetthealth.org/cape-fear-valley-diabetes-endocrine-center](http://myharnetthealth.org/cape-fear-valley-diabetes-endocrine-center).**



**As the new President of Hoke Healthcare**, Sonja McLendon brings a wealth of experience and passion to her role. McLendon, who is originally from Wake Forest, joined Cape Fear Valley in her new position in July.

Before coming to Hoke Healthcare, McLendon spent 11 years as the Chief of Operational Excellence at Northeast Georgia Health System in Gainesville, Ga. She has also served as the Interim President of the Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) Barrow and NGMC Lumpkin campuses. She holds a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of North Carolina, a master's degree in education and sports medicine from the University of Virginia and a Master of Business Administration from the University of South Carolina.

McLendon made the decision to return to North Carolina after her mother was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer and required aggressive treatment. .

“We realized as a family that we needed to be closer to her to help her through this journey,” she said. “It was important to me to be with her as she was undergoing treatment. It was such a gift to be able to have this time with my mom when she needed me most, to be able to drive her to appointments, cook her meals, clean her home, run errands, and spend time with her as she navigated this new phase of her cancer journey.”

Being on the other end of the healthcare relationship also taught her more about patient care.

“I’ve been in healthcare administration for a lot of years, but I hadn’t really been on the patient side in this way,” she said. “At the same time I was learning more about North Carolina’s health systems. I was really interested in joining a healthcare system that was focused on community medicine, rural healthcare, and patient-centered care.”

# Moving Forward

## Hoke Healthcare welcomes new leadership

*by Roxana Ross*





McLendon was also looking for a place that was sharply focused on safety and high quality care, and on furthering education for graduates in our state who desire to be medical professionals. She found all that and more at Cape Fear Valley Health.

“I couldn’t believe how closely our values were aligned,” she said. “To discover a healthcare system that is so focused first on exceptional care for patients, and bringing care close to where patients live and work, along with their existing residency programs and the commitment to bringing a medical school to southeastern North Carolina, was so exciting to me. Having a chance to lead one of the hospitals in the system was a wonderful opportunity, so it was kind of a marriage made in heaven.”

McLendon and her husband, Scott, are living in downtown Raeford, just off Main Street. She said they’re loving a return to small town life in Hoke County.

“I’m a small town girl who’s lived all over the country, but like James Taylor, I have always thought, ‘In my mind I’m going to Carolina.’ I grew up in a tight-knit town much like Raeford, and we have had a wonderful time getting to know this community. Neighbors stop by to introduce themselves, area businesses actively support and promote one another, and there is active engagement in local activities that promote education, healthy lifestyles, and economic development. Hoke County isn’t just where I work, it’s where we live, shop, and play.”

Though she had been at Hoke Hospital for less than a month at the time of this interview, she said she was already impressed with the passion and dedication of all the staff she’s met.

“They want to make sure nobody has to travel a long distance for care that we can provide right here in Hoke County,” she said.

“Everyone really works together well, is extremely friendly and involves patients in their care.”

As someone who is new to lead this top-rated hospital, which has a history of repeated 5-star ratings from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and A ratings from the Leapfrog group, McLendon recognizes that the hospital staff are already doing a lot of things right.

**“I’m looking forward to learning more about what other services our community needs and how we can work together to bring them to Hoke County.”**

– Sonja McLendon, President, Hoke Healthcare

“Name a department, and you will see exceptional care happening there,” she said. “And I think they’re also really focused on improving care, and not happy to rest on our laurels. I want to continue to work with our staff and physicians to improve processes that impact patients and families.”

McLendon said she’s interested in getting more input from the community and staff about what more the hospital can offer to Hoke County and beyond. Currently, the 41-bed healthcare complex includes an Emergency Department, Radiology, Surgical Services, Laboratory, Retail Pharmacy, Cardiopulmonary Services, Physical and Occupational Therapy. They also have Primary Care, OB/GYN and Podiatry clinics.

“It’s early days,” she said, “but I’m looking forward to learning more about what other services our community needs and how we can work together to bring them to Hoke County, whether it’s inside the hospital, in an outpatient facility, or through partnerships with other organizations.”





# Back to Life

Rehab Center helps patients pick up where they left off

by Lia Tremblay

**Joshua Soto-Perez came to Fayetteville from Texas**, the way a lot of people do: in service to the U.S. Army and ready for whatever that required of him.

But just three months later, last September, a motorcycle accident changed everything for the 21-year-old. He survived, but with a serious spinal cord injury.

“I was in the hospital for about two weeks,” he said. “And then transferred to the rehab facility for about a month and a half.”

Located behind Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, the Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center is a 78-bed facility that helps patients regain their strength and skills after a serious illness or injury. Patients often require this phase of treatment after spending time in the hospital for a brain or spinal cord injury, stroke, orthopedic surgery or prolonged illness.

For Soto-Perez, the first days in rehab were spent making cautious moves after two weeks in a hospital bed.

“At first it was just mostly learning how to move in and out of my wheelchair,” he said. “And slowly they started showing me how to get dressed, how to do typical everyday tasks.”

Being a young man in good physical shape helped to speed things along, and he soon realized that using a wheelchair didn't have to completely change his lifestyle.

“They helped me realize I could still go to the gym,” he said. “I could still go out with friends, do wheelchair basketball, things like that.”

Felicia Barnes-Cummings, the center's Inpatient Rehab Supervisor, says it's gratifying to see patients “graduate” from rehab with renewed hope about the life ahead of them.

“We have so many patients who come back and say, ‘Look, I'm able to take care of myself now,’ or take care of their family or go back to work. They'll come through and visit with the staff and it's just so nice to see the progress they've made.”

The rehab center offers recreational, speech and aquatic therapies to help patients increase their functioning in a variety of skills. These are in addition to the core services of physical and occupational therapy.

Physical therapy is focused mostly on mobility, helping a patient learn to get up and move around their environment with or without a wheelchair, walker or other mobility aid.

**“You're going to get stronger. And you'll leave there knowing you not only had good care, but you've made good friends.”**

– Lois Black  
Patient

Occupational therapy focuses on a variety of things that occupy a person's time: cooking, dressing, tending to household chores or enjoying a favorite hobby.

“People want to get back to the things they used to do, not just the things you want to show them,” said Barnes-Cummings. “So if someone loves to cook, we can break that down into steps and work with them on gathering the ingredients, chopping the vegetables. We had a man who



used to ride his bike everywhere, so one of the therapists brought her bike in, and when his balance and strength were better, they rode the bike up and down the hall to help get him back to what he was doing before.”

This tailored, intensive therapy translates not only to improved function for the patient, but also to a much lower likelihood that they’ll need to be readmitted to the hospital for a related issue.

“They’re the reason I’m up and walking now,” said Lois Black. She’s endured a great deal in her 86 years, including colon cancer and a knee replacement. After breaking her ankle in a fall in 2022, she had it surgically repaired and then was transferred to the rehab center.

“They know their jobs well,” she said. “They always set the bar a little higher than I thought I could do things, and then I saw I could do it after all.”

With two children, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, Black worried at first that her injury might limit her ability to spend time with them. But she says the staff at the rehab center restored her optimism and courage.

“They were very, very compassionate,” she said. “They understood what I was going through, and I always felt better emotionally when I left therapy. They always lifted my spirits, besides helping me heal my body.”

She has advice for rehab patients who may feel as discouraged as she once did.

“Hang in there,” she said. “You’re going to get stronger. And you’ll leave there knowing you not only had good care, but you’ve made good friends.”





# Medication Assistance

Program helps people fill prescriptions for free

*by Kim Hasty*

**Julia McLellan regularly hears the news stories. Each time, she feels upset and frustrated.**

“I cannot stand the thought that anyone would go without their medication,” she said. “It just drives me crazy.”

McLellan, PharmD, is Pharmacy Manager for the Cumberland County Medication Access Program (CCMAP), a collaborative effort between the Cape Fear Valley Health System, the Cumberland County Health Department and other community partners. She and her staff of four pharmacy technicians and two pharmacists are available to help people who cannot afford their prescription medication due to a variety of reasons.

“If we can find a way to help them, we want to do that, and we want to make it as easy as we can,” she said. “We have a great team, and I feel like we work together well.”



Gail Stewart readily attests to the fact. She carefully planned her 2023 retirement after working for 27 years in Cape Fear Valley's LifeLink Specialty Care Transport office, intending to help care for her young grandchild. But she didn't realize that even with Medicare coverage, the co-pay for her diabetes medication would be prohibitively high. A friend told her about CCMAP.

"I don't think a lot of people realize how wonderful that program is," Stewart said. "I've never had anyone treat me any better. Every time I've been in contact with them, by phone or in person, they've been extremely nice."

Diabetes medications, in particular, can be among the costliest. McLellan and her team helped Stewart receive both of her prescribed medicines at no charge.



"One of my medicines is actually mailed to me now," Stewart said. "The other I get every four months."

People struggling to pay for medications certainly should know they aren't alone. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that millions of Americans struggle to afford the medications they need. The reasons can range from being without health insurance to qualifying for Medicare but missing the enrollment period for a supplemental prescription plan. McLellan suggested that Stewart might feel inclined to help spread the word about CCMAP, and she has. Stewart even advised her primary care doctor to let his patients know about the program.

The program began as a way to help the uninsured but has since branched out to help Medicare patients.

"Some people don't realize they have to sign up for a Medicare prescription plan," McLellan said. "When they first enroll in Medicare, they may be healthy and not taking medications. But then they have a heart attack or some other

**"There's no charge for anything we do. We're just here to help them get what they need so they can lead healthier lives."**

**– Julia McLellan, PharmD**



issue. Medications for diabetes, COPD, heart failure and a lot of other chronic conditions can run more than \$1,000 a month."

McLellan said she often meets patients who feel they are faced with deciding between paying for the medications that can help them lead healthier lives and keeping up with mortgages and utility bills or even being able to afford groceries. She and her staff can help with a variety of challenges in addition to helping with prescription needs.

"We work with our community partners," she said. "A lot of people don't know about us, but there are other resources people don't know about either. We might point them to the CARE Clinic or to Meals on Wheels, or for someone who might need a walker, we'll send them to Better Health of Cumberland County. Someone might need a test, and we may know a resource that has some funding."

"There's no charge for anything we do," she said. "We're just here to help them get what they need so they can lead healthier lives. If we can take that off their plate, that means the world to me."

Cape Fear Valley Health System helps fund CCMAP, along with grants and donations from the community. Someone in need of help simply needs to call (910) 433-3602 to start the process. When they do, they can expect to find a kind and caring voice on the other end, ready to help.

"It's an immensely gratifying job," McLellan said. "I love what I do."

**CCMAP isn't just for Cumberland County residents! Residents in Bladen, Hoke, Harnett, Robeson and Sampson Counties can also be eligible. For more information, visit [ccmap.org](http://ccmap.org).**



# 30 YEARS of IMPACT

Since the Foundation was formed in 1995, over \$31 million of philanthropic gifts have been invested in the region's healthcare in these areas and more:

Regional Diabetes and Endocrine Center

Cancer Patients

Cumberland County Medication Access Program [CCMAP]

Families with Hospitalized Children

The Future Growth of philanthropic support

Nursing Education

The Center for Medical Education and Neuroscience Institute

Dorothea Dix Adolescent Care unit

Children's Services

Community Paramedic Program

The Children's Center at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center

Imaging Services in Bladen County

Neurological Diseases



Hands-Only CPR Training



The Simulation Center

METHODIST UNIVERSITY  
CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



The Caduceus Society

Bereavement Support

Scholarship Opportunities

Giraffe Beds in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit



Research Endowments

Therapeutic Outdoor Playground

Diabetes Care and Programs

EKG Equipment and Lucas Chest Compression Systems



Inpatient Hospice Care Facility

Philanthropic Gifts



Year round support of Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation impacts all facets of healthcare, from a newborn's first days to those approaching the end of life, and each day in between. Your gifts provide patient care enhancements, allow for new innovations in healthcare for our community and help educate the healthcare workforce for the next generation. Gifts from our caring community supports local healthcare, for all the days of our lives.

Make your year end gift by using this QR code, visiting [cfvfoundation.org](http://cfvfoundation.org), or contacting our office at (910) 615-1285.



THANK YOU for your caring and impactful generosity!



# What our patients are saying...

## Cape Fear Valley Podiatry

Dr. Eaton and the staff at his clinic are warm, caring and ultimate professionals. When you are under their care, you know you are going to get their best. Been going there for years for care of problems stemming from a rare, inherited disease. During one visit he picked up on a 'spot' on my leg. I had never noticed it and it seemed to show up overnight. He did a biopsy and this turned out to be melanoma thought by the oncologist who removed it to be metastatic. Had Dr. Eaton not taken this action, it would have continued to grow and spread and likely be fatal. So, he saved my life.

– Ron W.

## Cape Fear Valley General Surgery – Ferncreek

Staff was helpful and friendly. Dr. Annamaneni was competent and compassionate. My wife was anxious, and he worked her into his surgery schedule much sooner than we anticipated. He called as soon as the biopsies were available setting our minds at ease. And, realizing we wanted to make a trip, he worked us in early for our post-operative appointment. We highly recommend Dr. Annamaneni.

– Robert T.

## Central Harnett Hospital

Don't believe the negative hype. We walked in at 11 p.m. and walked out at Midnight. From check-in to check out, we had professional, polite treatment. Special thanks to doctors William and Tolley.

– Stephen J.

## Cape Fear Valley Medical Center

Had the best labor and delivery. This was my last pregnancy and I wanted things to be special and they did just that. Met some of the most down-to-earth genuine nurses. An experience I would never forget – 10 out of 10, definitely recommend!

– Andrea W.

## Cape Fear Valley OB/GYN

Dr. Shakespeare is truly compassionate and professional! I would recommend him a million times over. He is genuinely concerned about his patients. The front desk staff and intake nurses are very friendly. Shout out to Kelli for being amazing, simply taking the time to explain and help me well over and above my expectations.

– Samantha H.

## Cape Fear Valley Plastic Surgery

Dr. Nordberg and his staff are absolutely amazing! I'm sitting in my car overjoyed and in tears! He went wayyy over my expectations of abdominal plastic surgery! Also, the explanations and questions he answered were above and beyond! Thank you to the team of Dr. Nordberg!

– Michelle R.

## Cape Fear Valley Medical Center Emergency Department

Kudos to the ED Department, from the check-in to all nurses and doctors. Had an accident on Thursday and everyone that I've encountered throughout my stay was awesome, from Quinn RN, Natalie RN, Dr. Blomgren, and Barbara RN, I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for an exceptional job. You all made me feel like I was your family member. I appreciate you and my family does, too.

– Lori R

If you've had a great experience at any Cape Fear Valley Health or Harnett Health facility, we'd like to hear about it. Email us at [info@capefearvalley.com](mailto:info@capefearvalley.com) or leave us a review on Google!

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : NEWS *briefs*

## Cape Fear Valley Medical Center and Hoke Hospital earn seven “High Performing” specialty recognitions in U.S. News & World Report rankings

Cape Fear Valley Medical Center has been recognized as a High Performing Hospital for 2024-2025 by U.S. News & World Report in six different care areas, and Hoke Hospital was also recognized as High Performing for one specialty.

Cape Fear Valley Medical Center was recognized as “High Performing” for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), colon cancer surgery, diabetes, heart attack, heart failure and stroke. Hoke Hospital also received a “High Performing” rating for Pneumonia. In addition, Cape Fear Valley Medical Center was named a Best Regional Hospital for Equitable Access, based on U.S. News analyzing data on various dimensions of equality for historically underserved patients.

## Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine breaks ground

Text...



## Huff Orthopedics & Sports Medicine joins Cape Fear Valley Health

Huff Orthopedics & Sports Medicine has joined Cape Fear Valley Health and is now open at a new location under the name “Cape Fear Valley Huff Orthopedics & Sports Medicine.” This grows Cape Fear Valley Health’s orthopedic options to five clinics in the region.

In August, the clinic moved from 520 Beaman St., Clinton to 417-B Vance St., Clinton. Patients can look forward to the same smiling faces, however. Physician W. Alexander Huff, M.D., as well as the clinic’s entire practice team continues to serve their patients under the Cape Fear Valley banner, including physician assistants John McElhinney, PA-C; Daniel Hawkins, PA-C; and Elizabeth Nagengast, PA-C.



## Five receive Partners For Life Scholarships

Each year, Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation awards a number of scholarships to high school seniors in communities served by Cape Fear Valley Health. This year, five high school seniors who helped organize blood drives at their schools each received a \$500 Partners For Life scholarship and three seniors who are considering a career in the health sciences field were each awarded a \$1,000 Caduceus Society Scholarship.

The Partners For Life winners were: JaKayla Duell, Overhills High School, attending NC AT&T; Carolina Ramirez-Contreras, Triton High School, attending Campbell University; Jocelyn Santos, Pine Forest High School, attending East Carolina University; Laney Talley, Cape Fear High School, attending University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Nicole Wetzberger, Pine Forest High School, attending University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Caduceus Society Scholarship winners were Nadia Shezad, Jack Britt High School, attending Duke University; Lindsey Knoll, Triton High School, attending East Carolina University; and Elizabeth Cortez-Pena, Hoke County High School, attending Fayetteville Technical Community College.

## Mark Your Calendars for the Health Foundation's 2025 Gala

Join us for next year's Gala as we celebrate Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation's 30th Anniversary! The "Greatest Needs Gala: 30 Years of Impact" will take place Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025 at the Center for Medical Education on the campus of Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. The evening will be an opportunity to celebrate Foundation projects, hear from grateful patients, and learn how we are continuing to make an impact on healthcare in our community.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. To learn more about sponsorship or purchasing tickets, please contact Ashley Lee at (910) 615-1434 or [alee@capefearvalley.com](mailto:alee@capefearvalley.com).



## Cancer center in Harnett County receives \$250,000 donation

The new comprehensive cancer center in Harnett County has received a \$250,000 commitment from Arc3 Gases of Dunn and the Aldredge family. The new Cape Fear Valley Cancer Center – Central Harnett Hospital will be located in the Cape Fear Valley Health Pavilion-Lillington currently under construction near the campus of Central Harnett Hospital. Harnett Health and Cape Fear Valley broke ground on the facility in August 2023, and it's on schedule to open in November of this year. Windows in each of the new Center's infusion suites will look out on a peaceful "Healing Garden" that will be named in memory of Emmett and Christopher Aldredge's mother, Carla Parker Aldredge.

"Our family is proud to support the new Cancer Center at Central Harnett Hospital," the family said in a statement. "There are many people in our community touched by cancer. It is exciting to see new services like this that enhance local care and improve the wellbeing of patients. We are also pleased that Arc3 Gases associates and their families have access to such a robust local health system."

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : *NEWS briefs*Southern Regional AHEC  
celebrates 50 years

Southern Regional Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is celebrating 50 years in our community. Southern Regional AHEC and Cape Fear Valley Medical Center have been partners in health throughout the last 50 year. Cape Fear Valley Medical Center is the main teaching hospital for Southern Regional AHEC's Family Medicine residents. Their continuing medical education programs are often designed to meet the specific needs of health care providers who work at Cape Fear Valley Health. We also celebrate this strong relationship that has endured and grown into the expansive collaboration today that helps to meet the health care needs of our community.

NEW *physicians*

## OB/GYN

Michelle deBlaquiere, DO

Harnett OB/GYN in Dunn

**Medical Degree:** Kansas City University**Residency:** University of Missouri -  
Kansas City

# Your community needs you.

## Donate blood and **save lives locally!**

Cape Fear Valley Blood Donor Center is the only community blood program dedicated to serving the needs of Cape Fear Valley Health patients in Cumberland, Hoke, Harnett and Bladen Counties through blood donation by individual donors, community organizations and businesses.



Cape Fear Valley Blood Donor Center offers local volunteers an opportunity to Save Lives Locally. Located at 3357 Village Drive in the Bordeaux Shopping Center, the center is open for donations Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the third Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There are also two blood mobiles out in the community for mobile blood drives. Find those blood drives by scanning the QR code.



### CAPE FEAR VALLEY BLOOD DONOR CENTER

For information about donating or hosting a blood drive, please call (910) 615-LIFE (5433) or visit [savingliveslocally.org](http://savingliveslocally.org).







## Support Groups

### Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group

Meets the third Tuesday of each month from 2 – 3 p.m.  
Medical Arts Center 101 Robeson Street, Suite 106, Fayetteville  
For more information, call (910) 615-1781 or (910) 615-1633.

### Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group [second location]

Meets the first Wednesday of each month from 2 – 3 p.m.  
Harmony of Hope Mills, 7051 Rockfish Rd., Fayetteville  
For more information, call (910) 615-1781 or (910) 615-1633.

### Art Therapy for Cancer Patients

Cape Fear Valley Health Cancer Patients meet every Wednesday from 1:30 – 3 p.m. in the Cape Fear Valley Cancer Treatment & CyberKnife Center on Owen Drive in Fayetteville.  
For more information, call (910) 615-4626.

### Bariatric Support Group

Meets the third Thursday of each month from 6 – 7 p.m.  
Cape Fear Valley Village Surgical 1841 Quiet Cove, Fayetteville  
For more information, contact Debbie Wooten at [dwooten@capefearvalley.com](mailto:dwooten@capefearvalley.com).

### Better Breathers Support Group

Meets the second Thursday of each month from 5 – 6 p.m.  
Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation, 1638 Owen Drive, Fayetteville  
For more information, contact Diane Schultz at (910) 615-7822.

### Dystonia Support Group

Meets virtually the second Tuesday of each month from 3 – 4:30 p.m.  
January, March, May, July, September, November  
For more information, contact Crystal Edmonds at [cedystonia1920@gmail.com](mailto:cedystonia1920@gmail.com).

### Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) Support Group

Meets every three months, on the third Thursday of the month.  
The next meeting is October 17 from 6 – 7:30 p.m. in the Cape Fear Valley Cancer Treatment & CyberKnife Center on Owen Drive in Fayetteville. For more information, contact Laurie Costello, (910) 615-8753.

### Life After Stroke Team

Meets the third Wednesday of each month at 3 p.m.  
Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center  
For more information, please call Meghan Dornan at (910) 615-7077.

### Mended Hearts

Meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.  
Cape Fear Valley Rehabilitation Center Auditorium  
For more information, call (910) 615-6580 or email [williamfarr88@gmail.com](mailto:williamfarr88@gmail.com).

### Parkinson's Disease Support Group of Fayetteville

Meets the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m.  
Kiwanis Recreation Center, 352 Devers St., Fayetteville  
For more information, contact Stephen Koetter at (910) 518-0045 or [pdsgfay@gmail.com](mailto:pdsgfay@gmail.com).



**CAPE FEAR VALLEY**  
**HEALTH SYSTEM<sup>SM</sup>**

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Daniel DeRosa, DO

