

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH *and WELLNESS* MAGAZINE

# MAKING ROUNDS

WINTER 2025

## In good hands

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CAPE FEAR VALLEY  
HEALTH

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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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**MAKING ROUNDS** is published by the Marketing & Communications Department of Cape Fear Valley Health.

Please direct all correspondence to:  
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## LETTER *from the* CEO

February is the part of the year when we all start to remind ourselves that winter is almost over, and spring is coming soon. Eventually the weather will warm – and stay warm for more than a day or two – the trees will have new leaves, and we’ll move into the growth season again.

Unlike Mother Nature, Cape Fear Valley Health doesn’t take a winter break, though. We seem to be blooming and growing all the time. Just a couple of months ago, we opened up two new floors when we expanded Cape Fear Valley Medical Center’s Valley Pavilion upward. Those new beds have tremendously expanded our ability to care for our community. The expansion also added two new helipads to the roof, with a direct elevator down to whatever area a medivac patient might need to go to.

I’m a tiny bit jealous of the staff and visitors on those new floors because they have wonderfully huge windows and enjoy great views from all sides. My favorite view from up there right now is a Village Drive construction site, the future home of the Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine. The planned medical school got fantastic news last fall when it received an official candidacy designation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). This was a huge benchmark for this historic undertaking, and I know we’re going to hear more good news about the school this year.

Over in Lillington, we hadn’t even cut the ribbon on the new Cancer Center and clinics building when we were already preparing for our next project there, an Adolescent Behavioral Health Unit. That facility will be like the one we built a couple of years ago in Fayetteville and will bring much needed services to families whose other options might be hours away for their children’s mental health needs.

February is also the part of the year when some of us start to reconsider our New Year’s resolutions and goals. Resolutions are good, especially ones that can lead to better quality of life, like resolutions to eat healthier, stop smoking, or get more exercise. They can be hard, though, and I understand that. But hang in there, folks! Your future selves will thank you later. Remember, each attempt to make changes for the better is a step toward a good habit.

One of my New Year’s resolutions is the same every year: for Cape Fear Valley Health to provide exceptional healthcare to all of our patients. This is something I and my teammates take very seriously, and we work hard on it year-round.

I hope your winter has been healthy and safe, and wish you all a good health and good habits for 2025.

Mike Nagowski  
CEO, CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH





# A rush of relief

Cardiac cath procedure provides immediate improvement *by Lia Tremblay*



## Eric Jackson doesn't have a lot of time for rest.

He works full time running a fertilizer spreader on fields near his Sampson County home. And when he's not doing that, he's tending to the family farm with his wife, Cassie, and their two boys.

So when the 36-year-old felt chest pains at work one afternoon last July, he powered through.

"I was in the office and noticed my chest was starting to hurt," he said. "But it was only about 10 minutes and then it quit. So I wasn't too worried."

On the drive home, the pain returned and felt a little more urgent. Eric called Cassie, who was on the way home herself.

"He was asking where I was, which was kind of an odd thing for him," said Cassie. "And he said, 'My chest hurts.' I didn't like the sound of that, so I started to drive a little faster."

At home, Eric still wasn't sure if this was anything to worry about. He was having pain in his arms too, but he figured that could be easily written off as muscle strain from work. Cassie asked him if he thought they should make the 20-minute drive to Betsy Johnson Hospital.

"I was back and forth," Eric said, "thinking, should I go to the hospital or not. But then with my family history, I said, 'Let's go.'"

In the emergency department, testing revealed an elevated level of troponin, a protein the heart releases into the bloodstream when its muscle is damaged. Further testing indicated that Eric wasn't in immediate danger, but something was clearly happening. He was admitted to undergo a two-day stress test under observation. The results were troubling.

"After the stress test," Cassie said, "things moved very quickly."

Eric was rushed to Central Harnett Hospital for a cardiac catheterization, where cardiologist Amol Bahekar, MD, would place a stent to open a severely blocked artery.

"He had a 90 percent blockage in his LAD," said Cassie. "That's what they call 'the widomaker.'"

During the catheterization, Eric was surprised to feel the effects of the stent immediately.

"It's hard to explain," he said. "It was like a big rush. No shortness of breath anymore, like I just relaxed and opened up."

When the procedure was done, Dr. Bahekar showed Cassie some video of the blockage before and after, taken from the same monitor he had watched while placing the stent.



**Months later, Eric is feeling a lot better. He has more energy, and to help keep his heart healthy, he has dropped about 30 pounds of excess weight. He's changed his diet, a shift that has given the whole family healthier habits.**

"Before the stent, it looked like when you squeeze a balloon animal," she said. "Seeing the blood flow before and after really brought it into perspective for me."

After an overnight stay, Eric was discharged with instructions to take it easy. The family headed to Oak Island, where a vacation with his family was already underway.

"I knew at home he would be worried about the farm and trying to look after things there," Cassie said. "I didn't want him to have that stress, so we went ahead with the beach trip. He was too tired to do much. Resting was good for all of us."

Months later, Eric is feeling a lot better. He has more energy, and to help keep his heart healthy, he has dropped about 30 pounds of excess weight. He's changed his diet, a shift that has given the whole family healthier habits.

"We don't eat red meat very often anymore," said Cassie. "We've gone to more greens, fresh greens and whole grain breads and pastas, which I actually make myself so that I can control what goes into them. I can control the salt content and things like that."

Looking back on that July day, Cassie is glad they made the right decision to go to the emergency department.

"It is always better to err on the side of caution," she said. "Even if it might be nothing, you don't want to risk things getting worse at home and then you can't get help in time. Go get it checked out."

Learn more about Cape Fear Valley Health's cardiac services at [capefearvalley.com/heart](http://capefearvalley.com/heart).





# In good hands

Relief after a  
broken wrist and  
two years of pain

*by Lia Tremblay*



## Anita Higgins was visiting a friend in Maryland

when she took a tumble that would haunt the next two years of her life.

“I was at my friend’s church,” she said. “I was inviting some people to use sanitizer and trying to give them some room. I stepped back, and I stepped back again, and the third time I stepped back, I ended up falling down steps.”

By the time she was back on her feet, she knew there was something seriously wrong with her left wrist. A stop at the nearest emergency room showed multiple fractures in the bones that connect the hand to the forearm. They gave her some painkillers and the name of a nearby surgeon, but she had to get back to North Carolina.

After bringing her swollen hand back home, she had surgery in which hardware was placed to stabilize the bones so they could heal. But the hardware seemed to be causing its own problem.

“It was hitting the nerve, and I was just in terrible pain,” Anita said. “I went back to the doctor and said I just could not take the pain anymore. So, they decided to go in the following week and take the hardware out. And that gave me some relief.”

But her hand was still not healed, and it was affecting her whole life. She even changed career paths, leaving a lifelong career in the beauty industry because it required full use of both hands all day.

“I had to cut my own hair as short as possible,” she said. “I couldn’t shampoo it. I couldn’t brush it. I couldn’t do anything.”

Finally, a visit to her primary care doctor presented a new option.

“She said, ‘Why don’t you go see Dr. Levine?’ She said he specializes in injuries like this. So, I called him and made an appointment.”

Benjamin Levine, MD, is an orthopedist at Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine. All orthopedists specialize in treating the musculoskeletal system, but Dr. Levine’s subspecialty is in surgery of the upper extremities: the shoulders, elbows, wrists and hands.

“There’s more subtle things you do in hand surgery,” Dr. Levine said. “Hand surgeons do a lot of tendon repairs, soft tissue reconstruction, nerve repairs, nerve decompressions. A lot of orthopedists do these, but some of the more complicated ones are left to the hand surgeons.”

He chose this subspecialty 25 years ago, in part because it requires not just intensive skill but also creative problem-solving. And he’s especially proud of the enormous difference it makes for patients.



– Benjamin Levine, MD  
Valley Orthopedics  
& Sports Medicine

“It’s returning them to the things they miss doing,” Dr. Levine said. “Helping them get back to working, playing and enjoying their families.”

On her very first visit to his office, Higgins knew she was in the right place.

“Everybody was so friendly,” she said. “One thing I really loved was that when he would leave the room, or when the nurses would leave the room, they didn’t close the door. So, you didn’t feel like you were locked away. You see people walking up and down the hall, and they all say, ‘Hello, good morning.’ It’s just a very welcoming place.”

They discussed the possibility of surgery down the road, but the first priority was getting her pain under control. Higgins says a shot of cortisone changed things almost immediately.

“It relieved the pain within a few hours,” she said. “This was after two years of pain. It made everything so much easier. I might need to go back in a couple of months, or a couple of times a year, but this is the best I’ve felt in two years.”

Dr. Levine says it’s not unusual to put surgery on the back burner when a faster, less invasive move might do the trick.

“Surgery should always be a last resort for some things,” he said. “There are various treatments we can do once we’ve found what’s causing the pain.”

Higgins is now a full-time student at Fayetteville Technical Community College, planning a new career in hospitality. She hopes her story will help raise awareness that there is specialized help available for injuries like hers, and that anyone in a similar predicament will find Dr. Levine more quickly than she did.

“He really and truly cares about what he is doing,” she said. “It’s made such a difference for me.”

For more information about orthopedics at Cape Fear Valley Health, visit [capefearvalley.com/ortho](http://capefearvalley.com/ortho).





# It didn't feel like a heart attack

Medical emergency started with a yawn

by Lia Tremblay

**Like a lot of moms, Sondra Bemederfer spent a great deal of time taking care of everyone but herself.** Even after a diabetes diagnosis 13 years ago, she was less concerned about her own health than doing a good job at work and taking care of her husband and two kids.

“My children are adults now,” she said, “but it doesn’t matter how grown your children get. You still worry.”

She knew she wasn’t managing her diabetes well, but she didn’t expect to end up in an ambulance at 53, in September of 2023.

“It started on the way home from work,” Sondra said. “I kept yawning. I didn’t feel tired, but it was like I just couldn’t get enough air. So I was yawning, over and over.”

Thinking it might be COVID, she took a test at her Hope Mills home, but it was negative.

“So I thought maybe pneumonia or bronchitis,” Sondra said. “I knew something was going on, because I just couldn’t catch a full breath of air.”

She changed out of her work clothes and sat down. Then things took a turn for the worse.

“I couldn’t get a breath at all,” she said. “Did you ever fall down hard and just have the air knocked out of you? That’s what it was like.”

Gasping, she called 911. Within minutes, an ambulance arrived, bringing a flurry of activity into her living room.

As the emergency crew started an ECG to measure her heart activity, Sondra’s children arrived. Her son, Paul, is a registered nurse.

“He’s watching the monitor,” she said, “and I hear him say, ‘She’s having a STEMI.’ And I thought, no. That’s not right.”

A STEMI is an ST-elevation myocardial infarction, a heart attack rooted in the heart’s lower chambers.


“I’m still thinking it’s pneumonia,” Sondra said. “I had no chest pain, no pain in my arms, nothing in my shoulders. It just didn’t feel like I thought a heart attack would feel.”

Next thing she knew, she was being transported to Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. There, cardiologist Mathhar Aldaoud, MD, confirmed that she was having a STEMI and would need a cardiac catheterization.

“Even there, on that table, I was worried about my family,” she said. “I thought, oh gosh, I might die. Do they know who my life insurance is through? They don’t know how to get into my phone or my laptop.”

Dr. Aldaoud placed three stents to reestablish healthy blood flow in Sondra’s blocked artery.





Sondra is grateful for the quick actions of everyone she encountered after calling 911 that day.

**“Everyone was wonderful and took great care of me, but there’s nothing that will change the way you take care of yourself more than an experience like that.”**

“It was blocked about 90 percent,” she said. “But what triggered the whole thing was a blood clot. That’s what caused my shortness of breath, and when it went through my artery, it hit the blockage. So the blocked artery would have caused a heart attack at some point anyway, but that day it might have kept the clot from traveling to my brain and causing a stroke.”

With the clot removed and the stents placed, Sondra was feeling a lot better. She began taking blood thinners to help prevent future clots and was discharged to recover at home. After an adjustment in her blood pressure medication led to pulmonary edema, she returned to the hospital.

“I ended up having two more stents placed then,” she said. “So there’s a total of five now. But it’s so odd, you just don’t feel them. Once they’re placed, you have no idea that anything’s in there.”

After learning the blood clot that triggered her heart attack was likely caused by her unmanaged diabetes, Sondra became much more vigilant about monitoring her glucose, staying on her medications and watching her diet.

“Looking back, you can see how it was kind of a domino effect,” she said. “You don’t see it all happening, but then you’re in an ambulance.”

Sondra is grateful for the quick actions of everyone she encountered after calling 911 that day.

“I have to thank God because everything played out perfectly,” she said. “It couldn’t have been scripted better than that.”

For her son, the registered nurse, the experience inspired a career move: he joined Cape Fear Valley’s Rapid Response Team, an interdisciplinary team of clinical professionals deployed to the bedside of a patient whose condition is rapidly declining.

“He said he was really impressed,” she said. “He’s been an RN since 2018, and he was really impressed with how quickly it went, from the time it all started to the time I was on the cath table.”

Recalling the worries she had about her family during the procedure, Sondra said she quickly got some things in order, organizing information about things such as insurance and passwords in case of an emergency.

With that peace of mind, and her healthier new habits, Sondra hopes it will be a long time before she sees the inside of an ambulance again.

“Everyone was wonderful and took great care of me,” she said. “But there’s nothing that will change the way you take care of yourself more than an experience like that.”

**Hear more of Sondra’s story at [capefearvalley.com/heart](https://capefearvalley.com/heart).**





# Joint strength

**By combining multiple practices, Cape Fear Valley Health now provides almost total orthopedic services**

*by Laurie Willis Davis*

**With an aging population and more people migrating to the area,** Cape Fear Valley Health began planning three years ago to increase its capacity to treat orthopedic patients.

Successful negotiations with Cape Fear Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, Fayetteville Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, and Huff Orthopedics and Sports Medicine led all three practices to join the health system.

The expansion was significant for the health system, but it's the patients they serve who will benefit most.

“Now we're able to offer orthopedic services within

Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore and Sampson counties,” said Colby Warren, Service Line Administrator for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine. “Now we can offer more specialized orthopedic services in those areas, and we've also brought in other specialties, including spine and orthopedic trauma.”

Today, Cape Fear Valley offers adult spine surgery for patients and has a surgeon specializing in hand surgeries and an orthopedic trauma surgeon specializing in pelvic fractures. Moreover, the health system offers hip, shoulder and knee replacements and provides robotic hip and knee replacements.

Sports-related injuries, including ACL, muscle and bicep tears, fractures and hip and knee pain are among the most common ailments treated by Cape Fear Valley Health's orthopedic doctors. The health system's full range of orthopedic care includes feet, ankles, hands, elbows, shoulders, hips, knees, spine orthopedics and sports medicine.

Cape Fear Valley Health believes in a comprehensive and collaborative approach to orthopedic care, with a team of specialists who work closely with patients to develop personalized treatment plans that address their specific needs and goals. Providers at the eight orthopedic clinics in the system will complement each other by communicating to determine the best plan of action for patients while making visits more seamless for them.

That's good news because Americans are living longer, and it's no secret that as people age, they tend to need more orthopedic care.

"The population here is aging for people that are going to need knee and hip replacements," Colby said. "People are moving here with the military ... we have accidental injuries, broken bones, muscle tears and things like that. The need is definitely there."

Edwin Newman, MD, a general orthopedist who graduated from East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine and performs dozens of different orthopedic procedures, but most enjoys hip replacements, was hired by Cape Fear Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in 2007 and said joining forces with Cape Fear Valley Health is a win-win for everybody.

"The environment in medicine is getting more difficult for private practices, and we found ourselves spending more time worrying about the business aspect of it and taking away opportunities to focus on patient care," Newman said. "We also started thinking about protecting our employees."

Newman cited Physician's Assistant Averil Brown as the glue keeping everything together. At any given time, he said, the hospital has close to 100 orthopedic patients whom Brown monitors.

"She seems to be the one common denominator that helps us take better care of the patients," he said. "She's a really pleasant, professional person who's an asset and helps take care of the hospital."

## "We've expanded our ability to care for a wider range of orthopedic conditions"

— Edwin Newman, MD  
Cape Fear Orthopedics  
& Sports Medicine of  
Cape Fear Valley Health



So, what's among the biggest advantages to patients now that Newman's practice and the others are part of the Cape Fear Valley family? Patients won't have to make three-hour roundtrip commutes to Chapel Hill or Durham for top-notch orthopedic care.

"I think it ensures that they have access to our clinic," Newman said. "Before, not too long ago, there were some conditions that we'd sort of universally transfer out of the local area, conditions that were complex enough to be at one of the tertiary care centers like Chapel Hill or Duke."

"We've expanded our ability to care for a wider range of orthopedic conditions," Newman continued. "I'd say other than complex pediatric conditions, we pretty much have other fields covered. Some of the complex orthopedic sarcomas we refer, and there's thankfully not a lot of those."

Word has spread about the expanded orthopedic services in various ways, including online notification to patients, providers marketing themselves, Making Rounds LIVE radio show, and one doctor appearing on TV to discuss joining the health system.

"We already have a lot of patients that are part of Cape Fear Valley Health in some capacity, whether it be primary or specialty care," Colby said. "So, a lot of patients in the community are already familiar with Cape Fear Valley, and to have another service under our umbrella, a lot of patients are really happy about it."

For more information about orthopedics at Cape Fear Valley Health, visit [capefearvalley.com/ortho](http://capefearvalley.com/ortho).



# Back in one piece

For accidents big and small, orthopedic traumatologist is ready to respond

*by Lia Tremblay*

One November evening, Heather Faircloth was at home with her 4-year-old granddaughter, Luna, when suddenly Luna let out an awful scream from the playroom.

“It was that kind of cry that makes you come running,” Faircloth said.

Luna, while shuffling around in her “princess shoes,” had slipped and fallen, injuring her arm when she tried to break her fall. Faircloth knew right away it was serious.

“I knew it was broken,” she said. “When she cried out, it was a different kind of cry. And when I felt her arm there was kind of a knot, and it was very warm.”





Faircloth said there was no question they'd be going to the hospital. She and her husband scooped Luna up and took her to the car.

At Cape Fear Valley Medical Center's Pediatric Emergency Department, Faircloth went back with Luna while her husband waited in the lobby. She immediately felt they were in good hands.

"The ER doctor was outstanding," she said. "Everyone was amazing. The nurses were so good with her, and with me. I was more afraid than she was!"

Faircloth was anxious when she learned she wouldn't be able to accompany Luna into the X-ray procedure. She stood in the hallway just outside, waiting for the door to open, certain that Luna was terrified and in pain.

"But when it was over and they said I could go in," Faircloth said, "Luna was laughing with the tech and picking out stickers."

By that time, Faircloth had something else to worry about: after seeing Luna's X-ray, the doctor was calling a specialist in to talk to her about the possible need for surgery. That's when she met David Kerr, MD, Director of Orthopedic Trauma Surgery.

Dr. Kerr is Cape Fear Valley's first fellowship-trained orthopedic traumatologist. He handles not only injuries of the bones and joints, but specifically the kind that happen abruptly — often due to accidents like Luna's.

"Any way you could imagine getting injured," he said, "we take care of it. Motor vehicle collisions are very common, as well as falling from ladders, slip and fall on ice ... we see it all."

By specializing in these kinds of injuries, orthopedic traumatologists can offer the best care for what may be a very complex injury in very chaotic circumstances. Because children's growing bones and daring natures can make them especially prone to orthopedic trauma, Dr. Kerr said pediatric care was an important part of his training.

"A lot of casting and splinting of all kinds of injuries for kids," he said. "I spent some time down at the Children's Hospital of Atlanta doing that. That's one of the larger centers in the country for pediatrics and pediatric orthopedics."

After reviewing Luna's chart and talking with the family, Dr. Kerr recommended surgery to repair the fracture. He admitted her for an overnight stay to get some fluids and prepare for the surgery.

"He said the way she caught herself, breaking right at the elbow like that, is a very common injury," said Faircloth. "He placed two pins near her elbow to fix it, and she did great."

Faircloth said Dr. Kerr's expertise was reassuring, but it was his calm, engaging way with Luna that really impressed her.

"He printed out her X-rays and explained everything to her," Faircloth said. "She's only 4, but she's a very bright girl and she likes to be told exactly what's going to happen. So we appreciated that."

Even Luna's stuffed animal, Puppy Duppy, got top-notch treatment.

**"I'm just glad this experience was healthy, happy and nice. We couldn't have asked for better."**

– Heather Faircloth

"Apparently Puppy Duppy also got injured in the fall," said Faircloth, laughing. "So Dr. Kerr said he would have surgery too. He went off to surgery with her and came out all bandaged up."

Luna was excited to leave the hospital, taking copies of her X-rays so she could show her friends at school what happened. She also left with a white cast on her arm, but that didn't last long.

"He told her when she came for her checkup in a few days she could pick whatever color she wanted," Faircloth said. "So as soon as we got to the office that day, she said, 'You have to put on a different color because this one isn't pretty.'"

Encased in hot pink, Luna's arm continued to heal for several weeks and is finally good as new. Faircloth said as scary as that night was, she's glad Cape Fear Valley made it easier for the whole family — especially Luna.

"I think it was important because at 4 years old, if it had been traumatic, that could have scared her from ever wanting to see a doctor for anything again in the future," Faircloth said. "So I'm just glad this experience was healthy, happy and nice. We couldn't have asked for better."

For more information about orthopedics at Cape Fear Valley Health, visit [capefearvalley.com/ortho](http://capefearvalley.com/ortho).





# The way forward

by Lia Tremblay

## Bariatric surgery gives a new outlook on life

**Taylor Angel is a petite woman, but please don't say she's five feet tall.**

"I'm five foot one," she said, laughing. "I definitely claim that one inch. I have to claim every centimeter I can!"

From a young age, Angel always had an interest in fitness. When she was barely 8 years old, her father made a little platform out of wood to encourage her interest in step aerobics. Her first job, at age 16, was teaching water aerobics in Raeford.

But later in life, Angel's interest in exercise dwindled and her weight began to creep up.

"I let circumstances and different life events take me down the path of turning to food," she said. "I used food to soothe my soul, and that's when my weight became a problem."

Before long, she was carrying 250 pounds on her tiny frame.

"When you are on the shorter side," Angel said, "just 10 or 15 extra pounds will definitely show. And when it adds up to 120 pounds overweight, it's like you don't even recognize yourself. I didn't want to go out, and I hated having my picture taken. I just didn't want to see myself."



It wasn't just her confidence that was suffering. Her back and knees began to ache until even shopping trips became an uncomfortable ordeal. Angel tried everything she could think of to get the weight off.

"I had tried different diets, different programs," she said, "but nothing seemed to lead to lasting results. I would lose weight, but then it would come back with even more."

By 2022, when routine blood work showed rising cholesterol and signs of prediabetes, Angel knew she needed a way to turn things around. Her mother had previously undergone bariatric surgery, so that option wasn't far from her mind.

"My mom's surgery was over 20 years ago," she said. "Watching her all these years, being at a healthy weight and how it changed things for her, that was a real-life example of what was possible for me."

Soon Angel was sitting with Ijeoma Ejeh, MD, FACS, discussing options at the Cape Fear Bariatric Surgery Center. Dr. Ejeh specializes in laparoscopic surgeries of the abdomen, including the "Roux en Y" bypass that Angel would undergo.



"I felt like she understood my challenge," Angel said. "Her whole team was professional and compassionate. I really felt like they had my best interest at heart."

After surgery and an overnight hospital stay, she went home to recover with the help of her parents and two older sisters.



"I had such a wonderful support system with my family," she said. "They were with me every step of the way. They stayed for a week, walking my neighborhood with me, helping with my meals and offering emotional support. It really made all the difference."

Over the next several months, Angel adapted to her new lifestyle. She carefully followed post-op guidelines to get optimal nutrition through a much smaller stomach. Soon, the extra pounds that had lingered for so long began to drop off — and stay off.

"My highest weight was 250 pounds, and I am now at 130 pounds," she said. "So I have lost a total of 120 pounds. A whole person."

Angel is no longer hiding from cameras and has enjoyed all kinds of activities without aches or fatigue. Her cholesterol and blood sugar are back to healthy levels. She looks forward to her follow-up visits with Dr. Ejeh.

"I just had my two-year checkup," she said. "It's always like a family reunion. Dr. Ejeh hugged me, and we just talked like old friends. Her staff has been amazing, from the first visit to these follow-ups. They have made the whole process so seamless."

As smoothly as the process went for her, Angel still has a word of caution for anyone who thinks bariatric surgery will be an easy path to take.

"One of the biggest surprises has been the mental journey," she said. "I knew that making healthy changes would require effort, but I didn't realize how it would reshape my mindset and my relationship with food. Overcoming old habits, dealing with emotional eating, learning to be kind to myself during setbacks or challenges or stressful times ... all of that takes work, but it's so worth it."

For more information about Cape Fear Valley Health's weight loss services, visit [capefearvalley.com/bariatric](https://capefearvalley.com/bariatric).





# Full



## Cape Fear Valley Health Pavilion Lillington brings complete cancer care and more to Harnett County

by Roxana Ross



**Over 100 community members and local government officials gathered** with Cape Fear Valley Health in October to cut the ribbon at the new Cape Fear Valley Health Pavilion Lillington. Front-row seats were reserved for some people who might be the most excited for the new facility: local cancer patients and their families.

Located at 225 Brightwater Drive, Lillington, the new building is next door to Central Harnett Hospital. The three-story, 66,000-square-foot building is anchored by the new Cape Fear Valley Cancer Center – Lillington. Also included in the facility are a variety of specialty clinics, including General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat; Heart and Vascular Specialists; Neurology; Orthopedics and Sports Medicine; Rheumatology; Pharmacy and Podiatry.

Cape Fear Valley Health CEO Michael Nagowski thanked all the former board members of Harnett Health, without whose perseverance and leadership the center would not exist.

“We’ve been so proud to be affiliated with all the good citizens here in Harnett County and to help to enhance the healthcare that’s being provided here,” Nagowski said. “This facility is a symbol of Cape Fear Valley and Harnett Health’s commitment to healthcare in this community. It’s the latest project in a long list of expansions and continued improvements.”

Medical Oncologist Dr. Madhuri Vithala also spoke briefly about the Cancer Center.



# spectrum

“This is a very special and much awaited moment for me and the staff here at the Cancer Center,” Dr. Vithala said. “Going through chemotherapy is a very hard and difficult time for patients and their families. For them to be able to receive care in a state-of-the-art facility that’s close to home is very comforting and immensely benefits not only our patients but also their family. Our community in Harnett County has a huge need for a facility like this. Many of



our patients need chemotherapy and radiation at the same time. Right now, patients travel to Fayetteville for radiation treatment. These patients are very ill and have a lot of difficulty to travel. We are now very excited that our patients have access to radiation treatment right here at home.”

The new 17,000-square-foot Cancer Center offers the full spectrum of cancer care, including radiation oncology services. In the past, cancer services in Harnett County included diagnosis and chemotherapy, but radiation treatment hadn’t previously been available within Harnett County.

Adding radiation therapy to the treatment options in Harnett County greatly enhances the treatment experience for patients. At least half of all cancer patients receive radiation as part of a comprehensive cancer treatment

program, often administered through multiple daily sessions for several weeks. Without a local option, patients in Harnett County had to travel many miles to receive radiation therapy.

Lillington resident Christine Ellis was one of the first patients to receive radiation treatments at the new Cancer Center, where she’s undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

“I thought I was going to have to go to Fayetteville, and I’m not good with driving that far,” she said. “I’m glad this one opened. The people here are very nice and it’s a really nice facility. Everyone there makes you feel like family. I’m so glad I don’t have to drive an hour to sit for a 15-minute treatment and then drive another hour back home. This is less than 10 minutes from my house.”

Frequent travel is both difficult and expensive for cancer patients, who are often already feeling ill and experiencing a great deal of stress about their health and finances. The new facility, with new technology and the collaboration of a dedicated Radiation Oncologist on staff, allows cancer patients to receive every necessary treatment in one place – and close to home.

The facility also expands the number of infusion chairs available for patients receiving chemotherapy. Thanks to the generosity of donors, several major sections of the building received naming gifts. The Cancer Center’s waiting area is named in honor of local physician Dr. P. K. Vyas, and the Healing Garden is supported by the Aldredge Family and Arc3 Gases, named in memory of Carla Parker Aldredge.

“I am grateful to be able to financially support a cause that is near and dear to my heart, rural health,” Dr. Vyas said. “The addition of a full-service cancer center to Harnett County will bring the same resources and treatments, once only available in large cities, closer to my patients and their families. It is my hope this donation will give everyone the opportunity to prevent, detect, treat and survive cancer.”

For more information about Cape Fear Valley Health’s cancer services, visit [capefearvalley.com/cancer](http://capefearvalley.com/cancer).



# Turning 10

  
CAPE FEAR VALLEY  
HOKE HOSPITAL

## Hoke Hospital celebrates a decade of exceptional healthcare

*by Roxana Ross*

**Cape Fear Valley Hoke Hospital has a lot to celebrate.** On top of turning 10 this March, the 41-bed hospital in Raeford was recently recognized nationally as a Top General Hospital by The Leapfrog Group, one of only 36 in the country. This honor was in addition to the Leapfrog A announced last year, which was the third consecutive time the hospital earned that honor.

The hospital is organizing a celebration in honor of its 10th birthday in mid-March. They are planning a community health fair, hospital tours, educational sessions, and opportunities to interact with health professionals from across the Cape Fear Valley Health system.

There were no hospitals in the county when Hoke Hospital was approved. At 180,000 square feet, it is currently the largest hospital in Hoke County. It includes operating rooms, inpatient beds, an emergency department, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology services, cardiopulmonary services, physical and occupational therapy, as well as other services that allow most patients to be treated on-site, rather than being transferred elsewhere.

The Leapfrog Top Hospital award is widely acknowledged as one of the most competitive awards American hospitals can receive. The Top Hospital designation is bestowed by The Leapfrog Group, a national watchdog organization of





employers and other purchasers known as the toughest standard-setters for healthcare safety and quality. Top Hospitals were honored at December's 2024 Leapfrog Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner in Washington, D.C.

"This recognition as a Leapfrog Top Hospital is a testament to the dedication of our entire team at Hoke Hospital," said Hoke Healthcare President Sonja McLendon. "Every day, our physicians and caregivers are focused on providing the highest quality of care and ensuring the safety of our patients. Achieving this elite national distinction reflects our commitment to excellence and reinforces the trust our community places in us."

Cape Fear Valley Hoke Hospital's success is the result of several initiatives aimed at enhancing patient safety, including:

- **Advanced Infection Control Practices:**

Implementation of evidence-based protocols to prevent hospital-acquired infections.

- **Technology-Driven Safety Measures:** Use of Bar Code Medication Administration (BCMA) and Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE) systems to reduce medication errors.

- **Staff Training Programs:** Ongoing education and training focused on patient safety and hand hygiene compliance.



**Sheri Dahman, Chief Nursing Officer, and Sonja McLendon, President of Hoke Hospital accepted an award for Top General Hospital by The Leapfrog Group**

Hoke Hospital was also recognized last year as a High Performing Hospital for Pneumonia by U.S. News & World Report.

"Our team of caregivers is committed to the highest standards for quality and safety, and these recognitions are a result of that commitment," said Mike Nagowski, CEO of Cape Fear Valley Health.

Hoke Hospital has grown into a trusted healthcare destination for Hoke County and beyond, offering exceptional emergency care, advanced orthopedic surgery, and personalized primary care. With an average Emergency Department wait time of arrival to a room of just under 49 minutes, patients receive timely, compassionate care when they need it most. The hospital's skilled orthopedic surgery team helps patients regain mobility and return to their daily lives with confidence, while dedicated primary care providers focus on preventive care and managing chronic conditions to keep the community healthy.





# 30 years of impact

## Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation celebrates milestone

by Sabrina Brooks

The past 30 years have formed strong roots for the Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation and the impact runs deep in the communities it serves. In 1995, the Foundation was established thanks to the vision of then CEO John Carlisle and the leadership of Dr. Harold Godwin, Tony Cimaglia, Leonard Hedgepeth and John Buie.

In addition to establishing a fundraising program to support Cape Fear Valley Health, time was spent serving as the parent organization for various “Friends” groups such as Friends of Rehabilitation, Friends of the Cancer Center, Friends of Children and Friends of the Heart Center.

As healthcare needs in the community evolved, the Foundation branched out to lead the efforts to establish the Cumberland County Medication Access Program, created the Lighthouse Society to support Cape Fear Valley employees, generated support for the Regional Diabetes and Endocrine Center, and much more. As Cape Fear Valley Health continued to grow, the Foundation grew as well, playing a major role in the Medical Residency program to train the next generation of physicians for this region and beyond. The more recent the alignment of fundraising efforts with its affiliates, Bladen County Hospital Foundation and Harnett Health Foundation, will allow fundraising efforts across the Cape Fear Valley Health enterprise to have an even greater impact on healthcare in southeastern North Carolina.

Along the way, donors have helped hospitalized children heal and stay healthy; given cancer patients access to cutting-edge, comprehensive treatment close to home; helped heal patients’ hearts and mental health; improved physical rehabilitation services; and ensured nursing and graduate medical education is occurring in all our hospitals, putting well-trained healthcare providers in our communities to meet the needs of current and future patients. The impact of the almost \$40,000,000 that has been entrusted to the Foundation spans each of these service areas, and so much more.

The Foundation’s impact for the next 30 years and beyond is just getting started. The partnership with Methodist University to create the Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine will educate a diverse population of expertly trained medical doctors attentive to the needs of rural and underserved populations. And thanks to our deep and strong roots, patients of all ages will continue to receive care enhanced by strong philanthropic support which moves healthcare from good to exceptional.

For more information about Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation, visit [capefearvalley.com/foundation](http://capefearvalley.com/foundation).



**1995**

*November 1995*

Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation established

**2007**

*November 2007*

Diabetes and Endocrine Center opens



**2012**

*March 2012*

Bladen County Hospital becomes affiliated with Cape Fear Valley Health

**2014**

*June 2014*

Pediatric Room Renovation Campaign begins



**2017**

*July 2017*

Medical Residency program begins



**2021**

*March 2021*

Harnett Health becomes affiliated with Cape Fear Valley Health



**2022**

*Summer 2022*

Dorothea Dix Adolescent Care Unit opens



**2023**

*January 2023*

The Center for Medical Education and Neuroscience Institute opens

**2023**

*February 2023*

Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine announced




**2024**

*October 2024*

Health Pavilion Lillington hosts Ribbon Cutting (home of the new cancer center in Harnett County)







# Shift change

Nursing Leadership  
transitions into next era

*by Roxana Ross*

**At South View Senior High School, Susan Dees played volleyball, basketball and softball** and thought about being a basketball or softball coach. Fortunately for her patients, fate intervened and led her into nursing, instead. Moving up the nursing leadership ladder, her team player skills served her well, and she did end up doing a lot of coaching – in the breakroom and at the bedside, if not in the dugout or courtside.



When Chief Nursing Executive Debbie Marshburn announced her retirement at the end of 2024 after 42 years with Cape Fear Valley Health, Susan stepped up to her biggest coaching and leadership role yet. As the newest Chief Nursing Executive for the health system, she officially oversees a network of more than 1,500 nurses.

After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a bachelor's degree in nursing, Susan worked briefly at Duke University Hospital before returning home to what was then Highsmith-Rainey Memorial Hospital. She came to Cape Fear Valley Medical Center in 1990, where she moved up through nursing leadership in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit and then Surgical Services.

Eight years ago, she was promoted to her most recent position, Chief Nursing Officer for Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. That's now held by Pat Blue, who was promoted from Corporate Critical Care Service Line Director.

"I'm excited," Susan said. "I've been very fortunate to work with Debbie for a long time, so I think I've learned a lot from her. I'm very excited about what the future holds for Cape Fear Valley."

Along with Marshburn, Susan has championed nursing education, especially with the health system's assistance.

"Over the years, we've determined that it's better for us to grow our own nurses," Susan said. "That started with CRNAs years ago when I was in Surgical Services. We started partnering with CRNA schools, offering stipends, then when they graduated, they would come work for us. It was very successful. As education has become so much more important, we've realized that this is the way we're going to be successful. We have a lot of nursing schools in the community, and we've been grateful to be able to partner with them and all the things we're doing now to help nursing education."

Thinking back to how the nursing profession has changed since she graduated, Susan said that while the scope of care hasn't changed much, the technology in healthcare has.

"It's much more innovative and technical," Susan said. "There's just so many more advantages now than we had then, so many things developed to assist us, whether it's the LEAF Patient Monitoring System, which tells us when to turn patients to help prevent bedsores and other issues, or the computerized records in Epic."

With the country still feeling the lingering impacts of the pandemic – which caused many nurses to leave the profession and highlighted the professional challenges many nurses face – educating and training more nurses is a top priority. Cape Fear



Valley Health offers many incentives and assistance programs to employees who want nursing education.

"It has really ramped up in the last three years, and a lot of the credit for that goes to our Human Resources folks," Susan said. "We reached out to our local schools and we're offering much more assistance now than we've ever done before. So many people are taking advantage of all the programs that we've created to connect them to education."

The health system also recently welcomed Jennifer Wells as the first Director of Nursing Education, a new position responsible for Nursing Core Orientation, Nurse Agency Orientation and growing the Nursing Residency Programs. Jennifer partners with Clinical Educators in the rollout of inpatient education and helping to standardize nursing education as the system grows.

Nursing Residency is one way for nurses to ease the transition from school to the bedside. That, combined with education partnerships and an extended Nursing Orientation program, is a flexible way to meet the individual needs of new nurses and the different ways each nurse learns.

Jennifer, who holds a doctorate, has a strong academic and clinical backgrounds. She's worked at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke's School of Nursing and was a former nurse in Cape Fear Valley Medical Center's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

"Our ultimate goal is to train nurses well and to retain them," Jennifer said. "We want to be a really good resource for our nurses and assist them with anything they might need. If they want to come back to the Sim Lab to practice skills, we're here. If they say they want more education to keep current in their practice, I want them to feel comfortable seeking it out."

Jennifer said research shows that the more educated a nurse is at the bedside, the better the patient's outcome is.

To learn more about Cape Fear Valley's nursing program, visit [capefearvalley.com/careers/nursing](https://capefearvalley.com/careers/nursing).





# New heights



Cape Fear Valley Medical Center opens two new patient floors and two new helipads

*by Roxana Ross*



The newest patient rooms at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center opened this winter, taking patient care to new heights in the upward expansion of the Valley Pavilion section of the hospital. With the highest point of the building now at 161 feet, 3 inches tall, it also makes it the tallest building in Fayetteville.

The vertical expansion has added two floors for patient care, bringing the Valley Pavilion up to eight floors, including a mechanical space between floors. This adds 100,000 square feet to the hospital, bringing its total square footage to over 1.7 million square feet.

“We recognized that we needed this expansion to meet the growing needs of our community, and to provide meaningful assistance to reduce delays in our Emergency Department,” CEO Michael Nagowski said.

Inside the new floors are 92 new beds, each in a private room, including 44 Adult Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and 48 Adult Step-Down unit beds – bringing Cape Fear Valley Medical Center’s capacity to 762 licensed beds. The expansion roughly doubles the available Adult ICU beds, now at 85, while there are now 106 Adult Step-Down beds in total. Step-Down beds are for intermediate care, when a patient needs more than observation but does not need ICU-level care.

Atop the Valley Pavilion section’s roof are two new helipads that allow patients to be taken by elevator directly into the hospital’s Emergency Department, Heart and Vascular Center, ICU or operating room. One of the new helipads is designed to accommodate a Black Hawk helicopter. Previously, the hospital’s helipad was located on the front lawn, which required longer transport times for patients.

**“We recognized that we needed this expansion to meet the growing needs of our community.”**

– Michael Nagowski, CEO





# New names, familiar faces

Harnett Health completes rebranding in final step to joining Cape Fear Valley Health

by Roxana Ross

**In the fall, there were some signs of change in Harnett County** as all of the former Harnett Health facilities received new signage and new names as part of a rebranding campaign. The rebranding campaign was the final step in the process that began in 2021, when Harnett Health joined Cape Fear Valley Health.

“The exceptional care our patients in Harnett County receive remains our top priority, and we are proud to continue delivering it with the same dedicated team of professionals they know and trust,” said Cape Fear Valley Health CEO Michael Nagowski. “What changed was the continued expansion and enhancement of services in Harnett County under the Cape Fear Valley Health brand, as well as facility names, as the Cape Fear Valley brand replaced all the older Harnett Health signage and names.”

In almost all of the cases, the name changes were minor and should feel very familiar to patients. Several clinics that had opened not long before the rebranding in Harnett County already had “Cape Fear Valley” in their name.

“The names are nearly the same as they were before, now they’ll just say ‘Cape Fear Valley Health’ instead of ‘Harnett Health,’” said Cory Hess, who was President of Harnett Health at the time. “Our employees and internal systems like Epic have already joined under Cape Fear Valley’s naming and branding, so we’re excited to finalize this process.”

Harnett Health was previously partnered with Cape Fear Valley under a management agreement for seven years before officially joining the health system in 2021. The partnership allowed Harnett Health to stabilize operations, expand services and streamline operations and technology.

Since joining in 2021, Cape Fear Valley Health has expanded care with new clinics for Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Heart and Vascular, Neurology and Orthopedic services, and the new Cape Fear Valley Health Pavilion – Lillington. The Pavilion in Lillington includes the new Cape Fear Valley Cancer Center – Lillington as well as General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat; Heart and Vascular Specialists; Neurology; Orthopedics and Sports Medicine; Rheumatology; Pharmacy and Podiatry.







# What our patients are saying...

## Stedman Medical Care

I always get very good treatment at Stedman Medical Care. They are very friendly and professional.

– Rammi B.

## Cape Fear Valley Cancer Treatment & CyberKnife Center

What a pleasant place to go for treatments! From the time I walked in the front door, I felt welcomed.

– Carol K.

## Cape Fear Valley Primary Care - Highland Family Practice

Dr George Pantelakos has been my primary care physician for many years. He cared for me when I was younger and didn't have many health issues, and he has cared for me like I'm his own mother for the last 10 years or so in my not-so-healthy years. I dearly love and appreciate him and his staff. They are wonderful and caring.

– Sheliah A.

## Bladen Medical Associates – Bladenboro

I love going to see my doctor. When I go, I just love to see all of the staff. I thank God for Dr. Hines; he has been like a son to me. He takes time to talk and listen to me. To God be the glory. He is a wonderful person.

– Sadie F.

## Hoke Family Medical Center

My husband and I started going here a little over a year ago. Dr. Sam is our doctor, and I love her attitude. She is on top of our needs and is very thorough. She is the best doctor I've had since moving here in 2000. My husband agrees.

– Shari C.

## Cape Fear Valley Podiatry – Dunn

I was seen for the first time yesterday in the Dunn office by Dr. Siceloff and I have nothing but great things to say about him and his staff! I was very impressed with how informative and comforting he was the whole visit (I was pretty scared/nervous). He was easily the nicest doctor I've ever met in my life. We went over all my options during my visit and he really listened to me and made sure I fully understood what I can do at home to help my issue further along. Now when I return, I feel much more at ease with these awesome people!

– Christine H.

## Cape Fear Valley Interventional Pain Specialists

I love my doctor and the staff here. They are always helpful and caring when I have to have my procedures done.

– Laronda M.

## Cape Fear Valley Perinatology

The staff and doctor at this OB-GYN clinic are truly amazing. Everyone was so kind and attentive. The doctor took the time to thoroughly ask about my situation and provided detailed explanations, which I deeply appreciated. I was especially touched by their respectful and caring attitude toward patients. I just want to say thank you for such wonderful care!

– Jane L.

## Cape Fear Valley Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery

Dr. Maughn and his whole team and the Cardiovascular ICU is absolutely amazing, and I could never thank them enough!

– Sam S.

## Cape Fear Valley Family Medicine Continuity Clinic – Coats

My appointment: No waiting

The assistant and Dr. Page were very attentive. They didn't rush and they listened when I talked. Dr. Page was very thorough.

All were very professional.

– Brenda A.

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*

Murali Meka, MD



Osmani Deochand, MD



Tirth Patel, MD

## LUCAS Chest Compression system lends a hand and saves lives

Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation is proud to provide support for LUCAS Chest Compression systems to ensure that all EMS and Lifelink specialty care transport units have access to this critical piece of equipment. The LUCAS Chest Compression system delivers consistent chest compressions for extended periods of time, allowing our care team to work more efficiently.

According to Cumberland County EMS Director David Grovdahl, “High-quality CPR provides the best chance of survival from sudden cardiac arrest. The LUCAS device provides precise, uninterrupted effective compressions when CPR is extended and during emergency transport. This investment in our system is another example of how Cape Fear Valley is taking care of our community.”



## Golden LEAF awards \$8 million for School of Medicine

Methodist University will receive an \$8 million grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation for equipment and other costs associated with the Methodist University Cape Fear Valley Health School of Medicine.

“Research has shown that resident doctors trained in rural areas are more likely to practice in rural areas,” Golden LEAF

Board Chair Ralph Strayhorn said in a release. “The funding to Methodist University will not only help build hundreds of jobs throughout southeastern North Carolina, but also increase the number of physicians serving the region. This project will substantially move the needle for rural healthcare in North Carolina.”

## Cape Fear Valley Interventional Radiology opens

Valley Radiology Interventional Clinic has joined Cape Fear Valley Health to create the newly formed Cape Fear Valley Interventional Radiology.

The clinic’s providers are Murali Meka, MD; Osmani Deochand, MD; and Tirth Patel, MD. The clinic is located at 101 Robeson St., Suite 200, Fayetteville. The clinic is open Monday to Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., closed on Fridays. To make an appointment, call (910) 615-1860.





Daniel Weatherly



Michael Tart

## Daniel Weatherly and Michael Tart named hospital Presidents

Two of the hospitals in Cape Fear Valley Health system recently received new leadership. Chief Operations Officer (COO) Daniel Weatherly added the title “President of Cape Fear Valley Medical System” to his name, in addition to COO. This change brings the medical center in line with the other hospitals in the health system, giving a point person for issues that specifically concern the medical center. Weatherly has been with Cape Fear Valley since 2011, when he joined as Director of Outpatient Operations. He has more than 25 years of healthcare experience. Weatherly has been the Chief Operations Officer since 2016 and is responsible for many non-nursing operational functions across the health system. He has previously led both Bladen County Hospital and Harnett Health

Highsmith-Rainey Specialty Hospital President Michael Tart was named to succeed Harnett Health President Cory Hess, who stepped down at the end of December. Tart, who is a native of Harnett County, has been with Cape Fear Valley Health for ten years. During that time, he has held roles as Vice President of Ambulatory Services, Executive Director of the Cape Fear Valley Medical Group and Director of Finance for Ambulatory Services. He stepped into his current position in 2023.



## Elevate Healthcare event provides dinner with a view for a good cause

Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation hosted 115 guests on the roof of our recently completed state-of-the-art Valley Pavilion and helipad expansion. Enjoying a five-course meal and beautiful sunset views from the highest point in Fayetteville, guests were able to elevate healthcare by raising enough funding to provide give Lucas Chest Compression systems for Cape Fear Valley Health EMS transportation vehicles. The focus of the night was to highlight the importance of our critical care teams and access to exceptional health care as well as honor Cape Fear Valley Health team members who had recently returned from supporting our neighbors during the devastation in the Western part of the state. The night ended with a one-of-a-kind drone show in the sky, creating wonderful memories that will last forever, all while making a difference in our local healthcare and community.



CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH : NEWS *briefs*

## UnitedHealthcare invests \$100,000 in Community Paramedic Program

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of North Carolina recently invested \$100,000 in Cape Fear Valley Health's Community Paramedic Program, which serves marginalized populations with a team of community paramedics, a social worker and a peer support specialist. The program hosts monthly outreach events that provide services for the homeless. The grant will be used to help address food insecurity in those communities.



## Save the date for Step Up 4 Health

Start your year with health and fitness in mind and register for the Step Up 4 Health & Wellness Expo on Saturday, April 12, from 9 a.m. to noon at Methodist University. Hosted by Methodist University, the event will feature 4k and 1-mile routes through MU's campus, a Wellness Expo, food vendors, kid's area and more! Your support will enhance patient care services through Friends of the Cancer Center, Children's Services, Heart Care, CAP (Community Alternatives Program), CCMAP (Cumberland County Medication Access Program) and the Nursing Education Scholarship.

Sign up as an individual or create/join a team. The early-bird registration fee to run or walk in the main event is \$30 for adults or \$25 for children under the age of 12 through March 14 (3 and under are free). Take advantage of special discounted pricing during registration for families of 4 or more. All registered participants will receive a t-shirt.

For more information and to register, scan the QR code. Questions? Contact Ashley Lee at (910) 615-1434 or [alee@capefearvalley.com](mailto:alee@capefearvalley.com).



# 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

For patients and caregivers.  
Meets the third Wednesday of each month at 3 p.m.  
Center for Medical Education and Neuroscience Institute on the campus of Cape Fear Valley Medical 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 [pdsfay@gmail.com](mailto:pdsfay@gmail.com).





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

P.O. BOX 2000  
FAYETTEVILLE, NC 28302-2000

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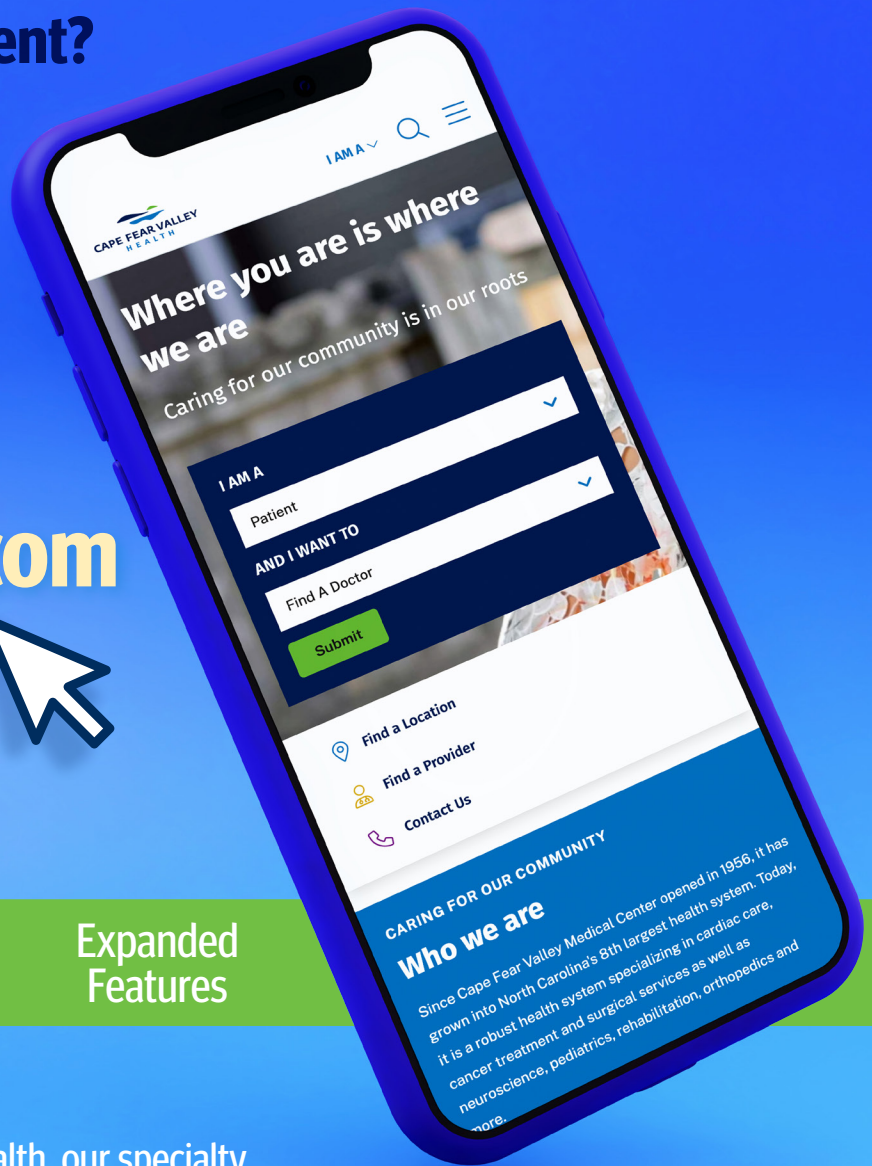
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