



HEALTH CURRENTS

SUMMER 2007

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO HEALTHY LIVING

WWW.GRMEDCENTER.COM



Welcome to Health Currents!

WELCOME TO THE PREMIER issue of *Health Currents*, Guadalupe Regional Medical Center's new newsletter, provided as a community service to the region we serve.

It is our goal to use this newsletter to keep you informed about the exciting developments at Guadalupe Regional. It will provide information about the excellent physicians affiliated with the Medical Center, new hospital services and events, and other related news. Our hope is that you and your family will find this newsletter a valuable resource for medical updates, as well as information about:

- Common health ailments.
- Seasonal illness prevention.
- Living with chronic health conditions.
- Wellness education, including:

- Ways to recognize health risk factors.
- Important screenings.
- Healthy living tips.

Health Currents is your community health newsletter, and we welcome your input and suggestions.

Thank you for the privilege of serving your family's health care needs.

Sincerely,

Robert Haynes
Administrator



Robert Haynes,
Administrator

EXPANSION UPDATE

Planning for the future

MEMBERS OF GUADALUPE Regional Medical Center's governing board, administration and medical staff traveled to Washington, D.C., recently to attend a pre-application meeting with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding federal financing for the Medical Center's proposed expansion and renovation.

The hospital, built in 1965, has undergone minor expansions and renovations through the years but now requires a significant campus-wide expansion in order to meet the growing needs of the communities served by the facility. In-depth strategic planning conducted by the hospital revealed that it faces a mounting population base, as well as the need to expand hospital services. In addition, the financial stability built by the hospital in recent years allows the Medical Center to qualify for federally backed revenue bonds.

PLANNING PROCESS COMPLETED

Members of the board and administration described to HUD officials the extensive master planning process recently completed by the Medical Center. This process included a team of experts in hospital planning, such as financial advisors, project management, architects and construction managers, as well as significant input

from medical staff and employees.

In response to the presentation by the Medical Center's staff, HUD invited Guadalupe Regional to submit a formal application, including a feasibility study conducted by BKD, an independent accounting firm. The firm will study the Medical Center's financial ability to repay the loan from HUD. In addition, a guaranteed maximum price bid will be obtained. After obtaining revenue bond approval from HUD, the complete plan will be presented to the city, county and community.

GROWING TO SERVE YOU

During the application process, architects will continue to work on construction documents, which will increase the number of ER beds from nine to 25 (needed for the more-than-2,000 patients seen per month); increase inpatient bed numbers from 98 to 117, with potential for up to 154; construct new outpatient and inpatient entrances; increase operating rooms to five; add a chemotherapy unit and a three-suite endoscopy unit; and expand the lab, pharmacy and imaging areas.

If approved, the expansion calls for breaking ground between fall 2007 and spring 2008. Watch future issues of *Health Currents* for more exciting details. ❖

Sleep problems? For a free Sleep Center brochure, call 830-401-7828.

A NEW DOCTOR IS IN



Nicole Talbot, D.O.

Nicole Talbot, D.O., joins the Guadalupe Regional Medical Center medical staff as a family practice physician. She received her medical degree in osteopathic medicine from the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Des Moines University and completed her residency in family practice at Rapid City

Regional Hospital. She is board-certified in family medicine and is now accepting new patients in women's health, pediatrics, geriatrics and general health care.

Nicole Talbot, D.O.
Seguin Family Medicine
1339 E. Court, Suite 210
Seguin, TX 78155
830-372-5200



Albert Wood, M.D.

Albert Wood, M.D., also joins the Medical Center staff as an oncology specialist. He received his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and completed his residency at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. Dr. Wood is a fellow of the American College

of Physicians and is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Medical Oncology.

Albert Wood, M.D., FACP
515 N. King, Suite 103
Seguin, TX 78155
830-372-4270

Alex Smirnoff, M.D., will soon be joining the medical staff and community. Dr. Smirnoff is board-certified in neurology and electrodiagnostic medicine, and he will make his full-time practice and home in Seguin beginning this summer.

NEED A PHYSICIAN?

Physician Referral Line
830-303-4846

Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



GUADALUPE REGIONAL HOME HEALTH SERVICES

Providing elite home health care

Guadalupe Regional Home Health Services has been named to the 2006 Home Care Elite, the compilation of the most successful home care providers in the United States. According to the Texas Association for Home Care (TAHC), Guadalupe Regional Home Health Services is the only home health care provider in the Seguin area to receive this prestigious designation.

This listing names the Medicare-certified agencies whose performance measures in quality of care and quality improvement are among the top 25 percent of providers nationwide.

"Being noted as one of the top performers in the nation in this very competitive environment shows the Home Health team's dedication to quality and performance," says administrator Robert Haynes.

WHAT IS HOME HEALTH?

Home Health is a service provided to patients who are recovering from an illness or surgery that requires short-term professional medical care. Many patients prefer to have care delivered in their own home or assisted living center. For 20 years, Guadalupe Regional Home Health Services has provided home health care to patients in Guadalupe County and surrounding areas.

Guadalupe Regional Home Health Services is accredited by the Joint Commission and is licensed by the state of Texas. Home health services are provided to individuals regardless of their financial ability and are covered by Medicare, Medicaid and most insurance companies. For more information, please call **830-401-7561**. ❖



To find out more about home health services, please call 830-401-7561.

Pharmacist of the Year

The Central Texas Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists (CTSHP) recently selected Larry Hicks, Guadalupe Regional Medical Center Pharmacy Department director, as the 2006 Pharmacist of the Year.

CTSHP is the professional organization for hospital-based and hospital-related pharmacists and pharmacy technicians for the San Antonio area. Hicks served on the CTSHP board of directors for two years and as CTSHP president for two years. He previously received the honor of being selected CTSHP Pharmacist of the Year for the year 2000.

Hicks has 32 years of pharmacy experience, including more than seven years as the director of Pharmacy at GRMC. ❖



Larry Hicks



Overweight kids at risk for bone and joint problems

Being overweight can be hard on your joints.

In adults, for example, it raises the risk of osteoarthritis. But research reported in the journal *Pediatrics* suggests it may also have an impact on the bone and joint health of kids.

In a study of 355 school-age children, researchers found that those who were overweight were more likely than their leaner peers to experience broken bones, joint and muscle pain, and difficulty getting around.

These problems join a list of already known health risks for overweight kids. Among them: type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, poor self-esteem, and heart and blood vessel problems.

Researchers involved with the study noted that when kids experience pain during physical activity, they may be less likely to take part, potentially adding to their weight problems over time.

Exercise that limits discomfort may therefore be best. The study's authors suggest that swimming or riding a bike can be good choices for kids who are significantly overweight. ❖

DIABETES

Looking for answers about life with diabetes

IT'S LIFE-CHANGING—the day your doctor says you have diabetes.

It's all so new, maybe even frightening and confusing. And you may wonder about your future and what you'll need to do now to deal with diabetes.

It's best to talk things over with your doctor.

"Diabetes represents a serious threat to your health if not treated appropriately," says Robert Frets, M.D., internal medicine specialist at Guadalupe Regional Medical Center. "Therefore, elevated blood sugar should be taken very seriously."

Here are answers to some common diabetes questions:



Robert Frets, M.D.

Q. What problems can diabetes cause?

A. Over the years, uncontrolled diabetes can cause all sorts of trouble. It can damage blood vessels and nerves and raise your risk for kidney disease, heart disease, blindness and even amputations.

You should also know that many problems can be prevented or delayed by taking care of your diabetes each day. It takes effort, but it's well worth it.

Q. How will I need to care for my diabetes?

A. Blood sugar control is a major part of managing your diabetes. Your doctor can help you get started on a plan that can include exercise, keeping a healthy weight, eating right, checking your blood sugar and taking medicines if needed.

You'll also get advice about other care, such as blood pressure and cholesterol control and what to do if your blood sugar gets too high or too low.

Q. Will I need insulin?

A. It depends. If you have type 1 diabetes, you'll need insulin every day. Insulin is a hormone our bodies use to turn glucose, or sugar from foods, into energy. In type 1 diabetes the body lacks insulin, so glucose builds up in the blood instead of entering the body's cells.

Type 2 is the kind of diabetes most people have. It usually starts when the body has trouble using insulin. You may be able to control type 2 diabetes by eating right and exercising, but you may also need to take medications, including insulin. When diabetes requires insulin, it can be injected or taken with a small pump. A new inhaled form may also be an option.

Q. How and why should I check my blood sugar?

A. Your doctor can tell you how often to check your blood sugar using a

drop of blood and a meter. This helps you track your diabetes control day to day. There is also a test you should have at least twice a year; it's called A1C and it can show you how well you're controlling your diabetes over time.

Q. What foods can I eat?

A. Eating right helps with blood sugar control—but you needn't worry about having to eat special foods. A dietitian can help you with an appropriate meal plan.

For starters, you'll need a healthy diet that includes well-balanced meals. It can also help to eat at regular times.

Some of the best news is that your favorite foods can be part of your meal plan.

Q. Where can I learn more about living with diabetes?

A. In addition to your doctor, help can come from a diabetes educator, a dietitian and other specialists. Ask how often you need checkups—and speak up when you have questions or concerns. ♦

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse



Understanding pre-diabetes

Your doctor says your blood sugar is higher than normal, but not high enough to be diabetes. So what does that mean?

Chances are, you have a condition called pre-diabetes—and it's not something you want to ignore.

As the name implies, having pre-diabetes means you're at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes, the American Diabetes Association notes. People who have pre-diabetes often go on to develop diabetes within 10 years. And like diabetes, pre-diabetes raises a person's heart disease risk.

But even if you already have pre-diabetes, you could still head off or at least delay diabetes.

The federal government's Diabetes Prevention Program study showed that eating right and exercising can make a difference for at-risk people. In the study, overweight people with pre-diabetes reduced their risk for developing type 2 diabetes by 58 percent through lifestyle changes—they lost a modest amount of weight and exercised regularly.

Talk to your doctor. Millions of Americans don't even know they have pre-diabetes or diabetes. Ask your doctor about a blood-sugar test to check for these conditions, especially if you're 45 or older and overweight.

Diabetes Education Course

Aug. 2, 9 and 16 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Downstairs Classroom

Guadalupe Regional Medical Center offers classes designed to help people newly diagnosed with diabetes, as well as those previously diagnosed. The three-week series is a comprehensive presentation of medical and nutritional information for the proactive management of the disease. Classes are offered in August, November and April, with each series beginning on the first Thursday of the month. Family and friends are welcome to attend. Preregistration is requested. For more information, please contact the Nutritional Services Department at 830-401-7349.

CARING. FOR LIFE.



Hospitalist Services

GUADALUPE REGIONAL Medical Center (GRMC) is pleased to welcome the Inpatient Medicine Physicians Hospitalist Group to our medical staff. Hospitalists are hospital-based physicians whose primary focus is the general medical care of adult hospital inpatients. Guido Calderon, M.D., Steve Slagle, M.D., and Martin Levett, M.D., recently joined GRMC as hospitalists. Each is board-certified in internal medicine and has years of experience managing medical and critical care patients.

Several local family practitioners refer their patients to these hospitalists. Hospitalists keep family practitioners notified of patient test results and progress, coordinating discharge plans and continuity of care with the patient's personal physician. Many local surgeons also utilize the Hospitalist Program to benefit their medically complex patients.

Nationwide trends in medicine have led to this relatively new service. Traditional family practice physicians have recognized that it is increasingly difficult to juggle a busy outpatient clinic while also directing the care of patients who require hospitalization.

Because hospitalists do not have a separate office practice, they are able to dedicate a full day's time and attention to their patients in the hospital and coordinate with the appropriate medical and hospital staff for high quality and efficient care. ❖



Guido Calderon, M.D.



Steve Slagle, M.D.



Martin Levett, M.D.

Hospitalists—a new breed of doctors

If a hospital stay is in your future, don't be surprised if you're cared for by a kind of doctor you've never heard of: a hospitalist.

Unlike traditional doctors, this new breed of physician doesn't see patients away from a hospital. In fact, the hospitalist's sole responsibility is to care for hospitalized patients, from admission to discharge—hence the name.

Although the public may not yet be aware of them, these specialists belong to the fastest-growing field in medicine, says Larry Wellikson, M.D., CEO of the Society of Hospital Medicine.

Not all that long ago, there were only a few thousand hospitalists in the entire country. Now, there are as many as 15,000 practicing hospitalists. "And it's plausible that within a decade every hospital will have at least one hospitalist on staff," says Dr. Wellikson.

These doctors practice exclusively on site, ordering appropriate diagnostic tests, monitoring their patients' conditions, making treatment decisions with input from primary care doctors and coordinating patient care among all members of the hospital staff.

HEALTH CURRENTS

HEALTH CURRENTS is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of GUADALUPE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, 1215 E. Court St., Seguin, TX 78155. Telephone: 800-506-6394 or 830-379-2411. Web site: www.grmedcenter.com

GUADALUPE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER'S mission is to be the preferred provider of excellent and comprehensive health care, making a positive difference in every life we are privileged to touch.

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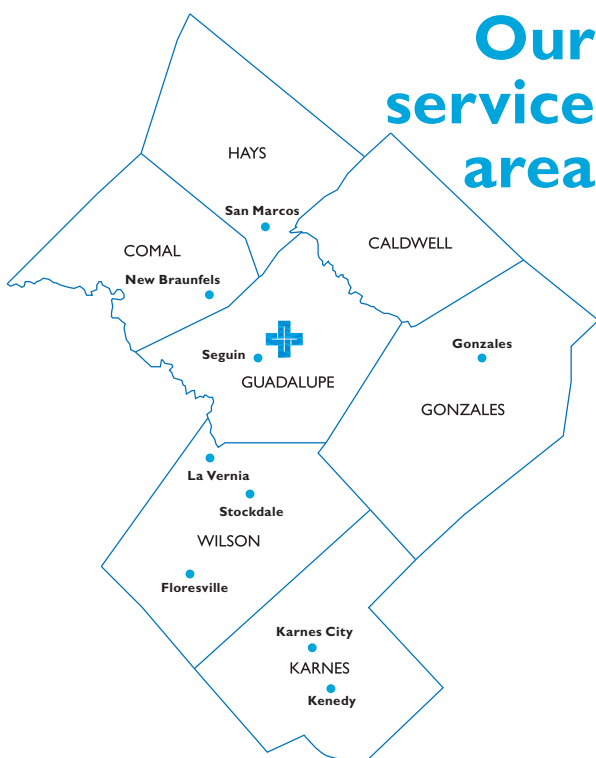
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