

Spirit of Halifax

The Community Newsletter of Halifax Regional Medical Center



Halifax Regional Earns Reaccreditation.



Many people remember the "Good House-keeping Seal of Approval," a promotion of the famous magazine for selected products and services.

In healthcare, there is a similar endorsement. It is The Joint Commission, an independent organization which evaluates more than 15,000 healthcare organizations and programs.

Last summer, representatives of The Joint Commission came to Halifax Regional for an unannounced survey to evaluate the quality and safety of care we provide patients.

The result is that we have been reaccredited

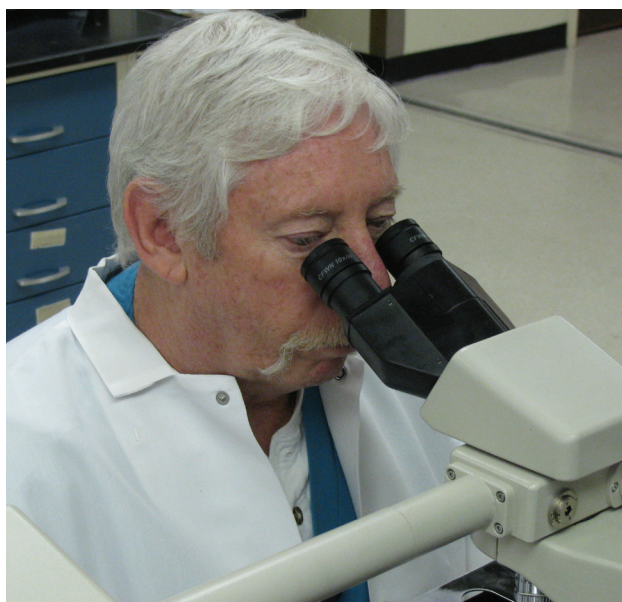
by The Joint Commission for three years. "Accreditation reflects Halifax Regional's commitment to providing safe, high-quality care and to continuous improvement," said Will Mahone, president.

"Accreditation demonstrates that Halifax Regional meets rigorous national standards continuously," added Mahone. "It sends a strong statement to the community about our effort to provide the highest quality services.

"Our staff and physicians demonstrate their commitment to Patients First in every action each of them takes every day at the Medical Center," Mahone continued.

He credited a team of employees which reviewed all aspects of clinical care to prepare for the survey. "Our team worked together to show that the highest standards of quality of care and patient safety are top priorities at Halifax Regional."

Lab Also Passes Inspection.



Bill Pearson, Medical Lab Technician

In addition to the Medical Center's being reaccredited, the lab has been accredited. Halifax Regional's lab handles more than one million tests a year, including those for Roanoke Clinic and Wildwood Medical Clinic.

The lab is accredited by the College of American Pathologists, which conducted an unannounced inspection of the lab recently. Inspectors examined records, quality controls, staff qualifications, equipment, the safety program and overall management.

"Accreditation means the community should have confidence in the lab," said Wanda Catt, lab manager. "This was a stringent inspection designed to ensure the highest standards of care for all lab patients."

In My View

Let's Reform Ourselves.



We do not know if Congress will pass a healthcare reform bill, but we do know reform is needed. We never will agree on changes, but we must agree that changes are needed.

Many of the problems in our healthcare system can not be solved by legislation. We are in a complex and often contradictory business. Hospitals, physicians, pharmaceutical companies and insurers have different interests.

The long-term success of reform should be based on a different perspective. We must adopt a culture of health and wellness, not sickness. We must support physical fitness, good nutrition and lifestyle changes that will improve our individual health. Taking personal responsibility for our health is the key.

Halifax Regional has a way to get you started on the road to maintaining good health. Join Halifax HealthLink, a fitness and resource center at Becker Village Mall in Roanoke Rapids.

Halifax HealthLink has a trained staff, exercise equipment and educational materials to help you start your journey to better health. Your first month's membership is free if you sign up for our educational email message, Health Ed. Visit www.halifaxregional.us and click on "Sign up for Health Ed."

The long-term key to your health is prevention of illness and managing the costs associated with sickness.

It just makes good common sense.

Will Mahone
President

P.S. I appreciate your comments and questions about Halifax Regional. Please write me at wmahone@halifaxrmc.org. I'll get back to you.

Peripheral Procedure Saves Leg of Enfield Resident.

Ernestine Bandy of Enfield already had one leg amputated, so she was quite anxious when her physician told her that she might need the other one amputated.

Then, she went to the Cardiac & Vascular Center at Halifax Regional and was pleased when Brian Go, M.D. of Raleigh Cardiology performed an interventional peripheral procedure that saved her leg.

Peripheral Artery Disease affects the arteries outside the heart and brain. The most common cause of PAD is a hardening and narrowing of the arteries, often in the legs and pelvis.

Dr. Go opened the artery and put a stent in Mrs. Bandy's upper leg and re-established blood flow. That improved circulation, eliminated pain in her leg and allowed a sore on her foot to heal.

Ms. Bandy was delighted with her treatment at the Cardiac & Vascular Center and is doing well.

Her procedure was performed on an outpatient basis at Halifax Regional. She was at the Medical Center for several hours and home the same afternoon.

For more information on the services of the Cardiac & Vascular Center, visit www.halifaxcvc.com.

Sleeping the Night Away.



Doris Ivey, Sleep Lab coordinator, prepares patient for sleep analysis.

Dan Hutchinson of the Darlington area is a retired veteran, having served in the Navy. His sleep was restless, his blood pressure was up and his heart rate was up. "I felt as if I had been awake all night when I got up each morning," he said.

His physician referred him to Halifax Regional for a sleep analysis. He checked into a private room at 8 o'clock one night, watched television and then went to sleep.

The next morning, he left the Medical Center, and the results of his sleep were reviewed by N. Sekaran, MD, Medical Director of the Sleep Lab.

Dan has sleep apnea, a breathing disorder related to sleep. "It causes you to stop breathing during sleep, preventing deep sleep," said Doris Ivey, coordinator of the Sleep Lab. "Obstructive sleep apnea occurs when the tissue in the back of the throat

collapses and blocks the airway."

Sleep apnea can be dangerous. "It is an independent risk factor for cardiovascular complications such as cholesterol, hypertension and diabetes," said Dr. Sekaran.

Dan was fitted for a C-pap (continuous positive airway pressure) machine, which regulates how much air pressure is required to keep your airwaves open.

Today, Dan sleeps soundly with the aid of his C-pap. His blood pressure and heart rate are lower. "That machine is essential to my health," he says.

The experience of going to the sleep lab was unique, Dan says. "The staff explained the procedure and answered all my questions. Everything was real good," he adds.

If you are having difficulty sleeping, call Doris Ivey at 252 535-8216.

Our Patients Say It for Us.

At Halifax Regional, we regularly receive letters from patients complimenting us on our care. Occasionally, there are some letters that we want to share with you. Here are excerpts from three of them:

- *"I was in a minor boating accident and one of my toes was severed and the bone was broken. Dr. Snow and the rest of your staff made my experience in your emergency room a wonderful one. I hope you recognize the kind of people you have staffing the hospital. They are wonderful."*
- *"Our experience with Dad's care was in our opinion the best he could have received anywhere in North Carolina. When offered the option to move him to another hospital closer to our home, we decided to have Dad stay at Halifax as we felt he was getting the best care available in North Carolina."*
- *"I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and the staff at the Joint Care Center for the wonderful care I received for both of my surgeries from the minute I walked through the door filling out paperwork until my release. I still am blown away by my rapid recovery and it is all due to the Joint Care staff and the protocol put in place by Dr. Holm."*

Thank you for sharing your opinions. We work hard every day to put "Patients First," and your feedback helps us serve you better.

New Surgical Technology for Women.



Dr. McDonald performs laparoscopic hysterectomies at Halifax Regional.

Halifax Regional is the first hospital in northeastern North Carolina where single incision laparoscopic hysterectomies have been performed.

Thomas McDonald, MD, of Women's Health Specialists in Roanoke Rapids, has performed several of the advanced surgical procedures at Halifax Regional.

In the procedure, Dr. McDonald uses the patient's belly button as the only access point to remove the uterus. "The benefits to patients are the potential for no visible scar, less pain and a quicker recovery," said Dr. McDonald. "The patient may not see evidence of the surgery."

Patients often return home the day of surgery. "This procedure is another example of advanced technology that results in improved experiences for patients," adds Dr. McDonald.

"Halifax Regional is equipped to offer patients an advanced form of laparoscopic hysterectomies and other gynecological procedures in the minimally invasive arena so patients will not have to travel out of town," Dr. McDonald continued.

For more information on gynecological surgery, call Women's Health Specialists at 252 535-1414.

Emergencies Are a Way of Life.



DeBenjamin Winter, MD, and Charlotte Ferguson, RN review information on Emergency Care Center.

Running the Emergency Care Center at Halifax Regional is not an 8 to 5 job for Charlotte Ferguson, RN. It is a way of life.

After 28 years in emergency and critical care medicine, the Roanoke Rapids native still says, "I love this."

She also gets support from home in an unusual way. Her husband, Warner, is manager of Emergency Medical Services for Halifax County. Often when he is called out in the middle of the night, he calls Charlotte at home to alert her that there is a serious emergency, thus allowing her to be a back up to her staff.

Charlotte and Warner met in 1985 going on emergency transports together. They have 3 children all over 18. Their children are following the same footsteps. The oldest is a nurse in the Intensive Care Unit. The other two are in college, one studying to be a nurse and the other studying Emergency Medical Technician/fire fighter.

"It's the only career they know, growing up with parents constantly on the go and being shuffled around to multiple baby sitters when they were young," Charlotte says. "It's their way of life as well. They would not be able to sleep without scanners constantly going off."

The Emergency Care Center at Halifax Regional treated more than 41,000 patients last year with a staff of 48 employees and 10 physicians and 8 mid-levels. "We are a team of caring people taking care of sick

people," she says. "You can't do it alone."

"You have to have a team approach to assessing and caring for the patients."

The challenging aspect of emergency medicine is not knowing what to expect next. You can go from "calm to chaos" in less than 10 minutes. To the outsider, "it may look like a chaotic environment, but to the team it is organized chaos," she said.

She wants to make certain that the community understands a few things about the Emergency Care Center:

- *The Emergency Department is not a doctor's office, so there are no appointments. "We are here for emergencies, and we take patients on the basis of their illness or injury," she says. "Life threatening and limb threatening situations take priority. Your situation is important but we must prioritize."*
- *Wait times vary. "Patients waiting do not know what is going on in the treatment area," Charlotte points out. "We could be trying to save the life of a patient with a heart attack," or just overloaded and no available beds.*
- *All persons who come to the Emergency Care Center will be seen, regardless of their ability to pay. "We look at each person as an individual, not whether they have insurance or what their name is," she says.*
- *The average length of stay for a patient is 3 hours, 48 minutes from the time they enter until the time they leave. "We always are trying to reduce that time, but it is about average for a community hospital," Charlotte says.*

"Our staff does a fabulous job," says Karen Daniels, RN, vice president of nursing, pointing to patient satisfaction scores of 95 per cent.

"Emergency medicine is one of the most difficult services we provide, because you never know what situation you will face next," she says. "We must be prepared for the entire spectrum of medical issues."

Making the Difference

James Ponton of Margarettsville, N. C. was brought to the Emergency Care Center recently. His wife, Heidi, tells us the quick action of the team "saved my husband's life." She says there is not enough money in the world that could take the place of what they did. She thanks each team member.

A Little Therapy Goes a Long Way.



Brandi Ross works with patient at Physical Therapy Services.

Physical therapy often makes the difference in reducing pain and improving or restoring mobility.

Halifax Regional offers physical therapy in two settings, based on the patient's need. The service is delivered at the Medical Center when needed by inpatients who are being treated for serious illness or for outpatients at 120 Professional Drive in Roanoke Rapids.

We offer customized individual outpatient treatment programs that improve daily functioning and physical conditioning while you recover.

For back and neck problems, chronic pain, sports injuries and many other conditions, physical therapy is an effective treatment, and the cost is quite reasonable.

Since Physical Therapy Services at Halifax Regional is hospital-based, there is no cap for Medicare patients in an outpatient setting. Some commercial insurers do not require co-pays.

Please call us at 252 535-8268 for information.

Sign Up Today.

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

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

To sign up, go to www.halifaxregional.us and click on the "Sign up for HealthEd" icon.

Fourteenth Edition. *Spirit of Halifax* is the newsletter of Halifax Regional, published quarterly to inform residents of the Roanoke Valley about the advancements at the Medical Center. If you have questions or comments, please contact Gail Wade at 252 535-8111 or gwade@halifaxrmc.org. © 2010, Halifax Regional Medical Center.

Halifax Regional Medical Center
250 Smith Church Road
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870
www.halifaxregional.us

