Winter is an unusual season for Gulf Coast communities. You never know from one day to the next if you’ll be wearing a winter coat or sporting flip-flops again at the beach. But whether hot or cold, some things always stay the same – such as the importance of good health.

Let’s start this New Year off right by carefully considering some of the most important health issues. February is Heart Month and not just because of Valentine’s Day. We take time this month to educate ourselves about the leading cause of death for both men and women – heart disease. Two of the leading causes of heart disease are obesity and smoking. Meet some people from our community who have met the challenge of heart disease (page 4). On page 9 we discuss the benefits of becoming smoke-free and why organizations around the country are adopting tobacco-free hiring practices. Barely out of the holidays, I’m sure many of us packed on a few pounds. On page 6 we take a look at weight-loss options and address the growing problem of obesity. For some patients, weight-loss surgery could be the answer. However, this option isn’t for everyone and a candidate must be prepared for the changes this surgery incurs as highlighted on page 10.

As we begin 2014, let’s all take a step back, set some goals and resolutions (page 3) and organize our records, including health records. Learn about how our health care systems are implementing patient portals that will help patients manage their care online (page 13). This edition of Gulf Coast Healthy Living is all about renewal. It’s time to take stock, make some goals and go forth with renewed conviction and vigor. Our resolution to you is to keep bringing you the most comprehensive, up-to-date news about health care in our community.

Happy New Year, everyone!

Mark Faulkner
President and Chief Executive Officer
Baptist Health Care
FIVE-A-DAY
Fruits and vegetables are part of a balanced diet and can help us stay healthy. That’s why it’s so important to eat plenty of them. A simple rule of thumb is to think FIVE-A-DAY. Eat five servings of fruit and vegetables every day. To get the most benefit, include a variety of choices because different fruits and vegetables contain different combinations of fiber, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.

Examples of one serving of fruits and vegetables:
1. small apple
2. large orange
3. cup leafy greens like spinach
4. banana
5. ½ cup berries or grapes

HOW TO DO A WALL PUSHUP

STEP 1: Stand in front of a bare wall and lift your arms up to shoulder level. Place your palms against the wall so that they are slightly wider than your shoulders with your fingertips pointing up. Back your feet a couple of feet away from the wall so that your elbows are bent as you lean at an angle into the wall. Don’t arch your back. Arching your back during a chest exercise can put too much pressure on the lower spine and cause injury. Hold your tummy in and tuck your hips under throughout the exercise. This helps to support your upper body.

STEP 2: Inhale before beginning the exercise and exhale as you push off the wall until your arms are in an outstretched position with elbows slightly bent. Inhale as you go back to the starting position.

REPEAT five to 10 times. Gradually work up to 20 or more wall push-ups for increased chest strength. When you can complete the exercise with ease using the proper form, increase the repetitions.
It’s a sobering fact we should all know, heart disease takes the lives of approximately 600,000 men and women every year, making it the No. 1 disease to cause deaths. Men, women, young, old, thin, overweight – heart disease doesn’t discriminate. However, as with all challenges in life, we also are presented with successes. Meet a few people who have met the challenge of heart disease head-on.

**Jace Thomas**

**Age 23**  
**Student**  
**Cardiac Electrophysiologist: Sumit Verma, M.D., FACC**

In 2007, Jace was just starting school at the University of West Florida when he began to experience heart flutters. Because his older brother (by three years) had just undergone five heart surgeries in eight months, Jace was quick to go see a doctor. The cardiologist fitted Jace with an implantable loop recorder, a small device implanted just under the skin that monitors the heart, to be kept in place for four years. The diagnosis was atrial tachycardia, which, as it turns out, was more easily treated than his brother’s condition. The recommendation was to get some rest and decrease his caffeine intake. Not everyone who experiences a heart condition needs something as drastic as surgery. For Jace, a simple treatment was appropriate, and he’s enjoying good health today.

**Gretchen Patti**

**Age 55**  
**Business owner**  
**Cardiologist: William S. Pickens, M.D., FACC**  
**Surgeon: James L. Nielsen, M.D., FACS**

For a few months Gretchen had been experiencing what she though was indigestion. But when she mentioned to her husband that she also was experiencing tightness in the chest, they went straight to the emergency department. There, on Good Friday, she was told that she had two blockages that were about to combine, and if they did, she would suffer a heart attack. If she did not go in for a triple bypass she would not be alive past Monday. On Monday morning she went in for the surgery that saved her life. In this case, Gretchen needed emergency surgery to allow her to live the full and active life she enjoys today.
Earline Dunklin-Williams
Age 48
Teacher
Cardiologists: Ramon Aycock, M.D., FACC; Safwan Jaalouk, M.D., FACC
Interventional Cardiologist: Luther I. Carter, M.D., FACC, FSCAI

When Earline received a high cholesterol number during a routine checkup, she didn’t think too much about it. But in Nov. 2007, she suffered a heart attack and began an arduous journey as a heart disease patient. In spite of starting an exercise program and eating better, Earline suffered four more heart attacks between 2007 and 2013. The last heart attack resulted in her heart stopping twice. In July of 2013, Earline underwent a procedure to place a biodegradable stent, and since then, has been heart attack-free and living a good quality of life. Earline says she now fights every day, mentally and physically against this disease. She reminds other women to be proactive about their health, ask questions, and especially to ask about that cholesterol number if they don’t know what it means.

Chris Green
Age 71
Real estate developer/commercial broker
Cardiologist: Ramon Aycock, M.D., FACC
Surgeon: James L. Lonquist, M.D., FACS

Chris had just finished 90 radiation treatments for prostate cancer when it was recommended that he should be checked out by a cardiologist. Eight days after his first appointment with Dr. Aycock, Chris was having an open heart bypass to unblock two arteries. His heart had 90 percent blockage, and Chris had experienced no symptoms. He is now doing well, back at work and considers himself very lucky to have had his condition diagnosed in time for treatment.

So what does heart disease look like?
Despite the stereotype, heart attacks are not limited to gray-haired men with stressful occupations. The term “heart disease” includes coronary artery disease, heart rhythm problems, heart infections and congenital heart defects. Often the symptoms of these conditions go unnoticed until the patient suffers a heart attack or cardiac arrest.

Heart disease can look like anyone, and since everyone is different, treatments depend on each individual’s needs. The goal is to return you back to a normal functioning lifestyle using the treatment that works best for you.

One of the best ways to make sure risk factors and symptoms are detected early and treated is to develop a close relationship with a primary care physician who practices preventive medicine. If you don’t already have a physician who knows you well, visit BaptistMedicalGroup.org to meet caring physicians serving the Gulf Coast community.

Go to eBaptistHealthCare.org to learn more about these and other health care services or BaptistMedicalGroup.org to find a physician.
A WEIGHT OFF YOUR SHOULDERS …

and Thighs, and Hips, and Tummy!

As waistlines in America expand every year, it can be easy to lose sight of what a healthy weight actually is. Two-thirds of Americans are overweight. More than one-third — 35.7 percent — are obese.

More people today are overweight than not, and the tipping of the scale often leads to increased health risks. Popular culture emphasizes an unrealistic super thin appearance over common sense good health and weight. Add to that a multi-billion dollar weight-loss industry that thrives on the newest, often unproven diet trends, and it’s easy to see that we are bombarded with too many diet and food choices and not enough time to learn what our individual ideal weight should be and how to become healthy through proper fitness and food planning.

The general premise of weight-loss is deceptively simple; expend more calories than you take in. But in today’s busy lifestyle when prepared and fast foods pack way more calories than they should and time to exercise is non-existent, shifting the calorie balance to the expended side can seem close to impossible. Furthermore, there are other numerous factors beyond the direct control of the individual that can contribute to the chronic medical problem of obesity. Healthy Lives™ powered by Baptist Health Care is a wellness program available to the community that is dedicated to helping people make a commitment to good health and nutrition. On page 8 Healthy Lives helps decode nutrition labels, making food selection a little simpler for anyone trying to shed some pounds.

If decoding nutrition labels doesn’t do the trick, if every diet and exercise has done nothing to stop weight gain, speak with your doctor about the options that may be appropriate for you. You may be a candidate for bariatric, or weight-loss surgery.
One Patient’s Story

“I struggled with my weight for years. I tried so many diets while continuing a very hectic work schedule. I exercised. I did everything except lose weight. It was so discouraging as the weight continued to slowly come on. I felt bad about myself and avoided pictures or overly outgoing activities. The last straw was when I was diagnosed with diabetes. My eyes felt like they would explode! My joints ached. My back hurt. My feet hurt so bad that walking up and down the stairs was torture! I saw my dad die as a result of diabetes, and I decided to explore other weight-loss options. I am so grateful for how bariatric surgery has saved my life. Now, I’m healthy and happy and active.” – Emily

Visit eBaptistHealthCare.org/Bariatrics to read other patient stories about weight-loss surgery.

Read about the psychological impact of bariatric surgery and how to ensure success on page 8!

Baptist Health Care offers a support group to help you understand the topic of weight-loss surgery. Please join us:

Weight-Loss Surgery

Tues., Jan. 28, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Tues., Feb. 25, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Baptist Hospital, Medical Meeting Rooms

For information, call 850.469.5810.

Visit our website to learn about our Meet the Doc program and the opportunity to meet Dr. Gatmaitan at eBaptistHealthCare.org/Bariatrics.

The Baptist Hospital Bariatric Center offers two surgery treatment options.

Laparoscopic Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass. Gastric bypass surgery creates a small pouch at the top of the stomach making the stomach smaller and allowing food to bypass part of the small intestine.

Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy. A procedure in which the surgeon removes approximately 85 percent of the stomach, shaping the remaining stomach into a tube or “sleeve.”

Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding. Commonly referred to as LAP-BAND®, this surgery involves creating in the upper part of the stomach with a controlled and adjustable stoma (an opening for waste elimination) thus limiting food intake.

Weight-loss surgery is not a quick and easy fix and requires that very specific criteria be met for consideration. First of all, BMI must be at least 35 or above. This high BMI classifies an individual as severely obese. Surgery requires a commitment to maintain weight through a fundamental change in eating and exercise habits. For candidates who have tried everything else, weight-loss surgery may be the answer for to getting your health and weight on the right track.

Patricia Gatmaitan, M.D., is the newest addition to the Baptist bariatrics team. He is experienced in advanced laparoscopic and bariatric surgery, and trained in the use of the da Vinci® S HD Surgical System. He also performs gastric sleeves, Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery and adjustable gastric banding surgery.

WHAT’S YOUR BMI?

Visit eBaptistHealthCare.org/Bariatrics/OnlineAssessment.aspx and use our online calculator to find out how you measure up.

For more information, call the Baptist Bariatric Center of Excellence at 850.437.8746 or call Baptist HealthSource at 850.434.4080.
Are You Ready for **BARIATRIC SURGERY?**

Bariatric surgery, or weight-loss surgery, is a life-changing procedure that can be tremendously beneficial for the right candidate. However, this elective surgery with such a potentially high impact on an individual’s life must be carefully considered. The patient must be prepared to follow through with the lifestyle changes and post-operative care required to make such a surgery a success. That’s why psychological testing is often requested by the patient’s physician and may be required by the insurance provider.

Cheryl Robatzen, Psy.D, provides psychological assessments for bariatric patients at The Summit Group in Pensacola. “In my opinion, it’s an important piece,” says Dr. Robatzen. “We look at the patient holistically. The primary purpose is to enhance the chances of a successful outcome.”

When a patient is referred to Dr. Robatzen, she plans to spend two hours assessing the patient for any personality traits, disorders or anything else that might impede or obstruct a successful outcome of the surgery. She will talk to patients about their lifestyle: what they do for a living, general habits, routines and hobbies. She also likes to meet with the patient’s support system since strong, reliable support often results in a quicker, easier recovery time.

After the initial interview, the patient takes a formal psychological assessment, normally lasting about 30 minutes. This assessment will help the psychologist note areas of concern that could make it difficult for the patient to adjust after the surgery or maintain the lifestyle changes required for optimal results. “An ideal candidate is somebody with the ability to have healthy relationships because that really feeds the support system,” says Dr. Robatzen. “For example, someone fairly free of any moderate to severe depression or anxiety, who has the ability to follow directions and treatment recommendations, and who is not afraid to ask questions of their doctors.”

For patients who have never been to a psychologist before, the idea may be daunting, but Dr. Robatzen wants patients to understand they shouldn’t fear the exam, which is not just a box to be checked by the insurance company. “This is an important piece that ensures the patient will have the best possible outcome with the shortest possible recovery time,” shares Dr. Robatzen. “The patient should look at this assessment as a sign that their doctor cares enough to see the whole ‘me’, not just the physical part of ‘me’ that’s going to have this surgical intervention.”

Dr. Robatzen provides psychological testing for bariatric patients at The Summit Group. To find out more, contact Dr. Robatzen at 850.437.8952.

To learn more about mental health and addictions services offered at The Summit Group, visit eSummitGroup.org.
A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), worldwide tobacco use results in nearly 5 million deaths.

If current trends continue, it is predicted that tobacco use will cause more than 10 million deaths annually by the year 2020. These statistics are troubling, but starting in January 2014, one local health care provider is bringing a breath of fresh air to the community it serves.

The only locally owned not-for-profit system, Baptist Health Care is encouraging healthy lifestyles by adopting a tobacco-free hiring policy. The change took effect January 1, 2014.

Not only did national statistics provide good reason to encourage a smoke-free environment, but a local health assessment supports the need for action along the Gulf Coast.

Last June, Baptist participated in a community health summit to review the assessment that yielded startling results. The report shows that the state of health in Gulf Coast communities fares poorly compared to other areas of the state.

“I feel strongly that we have a responsibility to lead our community into a healthier future. Adhering to smoke-free hiring practices is just one way we can proactively pave a healthier path for the families who live here,” says Mark Faulkner, president and CEO of Baptist Health Care.

Team members currently employed at Baptist who use tobacco will not be affected by the new hire policy, but they are encouraged to take part in cessation classes available through the Healthy Lives™ work place wellness program.

Smoke-free work environments are not new. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) website states that upon examination in 1999, nearly 70 percent of the U.S. workforce worked under a smoke-free policy. Not only does a smoke-free environment lead to a healthier workforce, but it also reduces second-hand smoke that may affect others. A smoke-free environment closely aligns with health care organizations whose focus is patient-centered care and a safe, comfortable health care experience.

Read the Community Health Needs Assessment at eBaptistHealthCare.org/BHC/CommunityHealth.aspx.

Interesting Facts

Cigarette smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and is responsible for an estimated 438,000 deaths per year, or about one out of every five deaths.

— Centers for Disease Control

Among adult smokers, 70 percent report that they want to quit completely, and more than 40 percent try to quit for at least 24 hours each year.

— Centers for Disease Control

Members of Healthy Lives can take advantage of a free smoking cessation class. Learn more at eBaptistHealthCare.org/HealthyLives.
Good to Know -

UNDERSTANDING NUTRITION LABELS

You know it’s important to pay attention to nutrition. You know to limit certain things like fat and sodium, and to consume nutrient-rich foods. But how many times have you pored over a nutrition label only to have your eyes glaze over? It can be confusing at first, but when you understand how to read a nutrition label, you can make wiser food selections that won’t sabotage your health with “hidden” ingredients.

You’ve probably heard about RDA, commonly known as your Recommended Daily Allowance. Mayo Clinic defines RDA as the amount of vitamins and minerals needed to provide adequate nutrition for most healthy persons. RDAs for a given nutrient may vary depending on a person’s age, gender, and physical condition (e.g., pregnancy). Daily Values (DVs) are used on food and dietary supplement labels to indicate the percent of the RDA nutrients that a serving provides. DV replaces the previous designation of United States Recommended Daily Allowances (USRDAs).

Bottom line — each day you should strive to consume a certain amount of some nutrients while limiting others. On a nutrition label, the ingredients to limit are at the top: fat, sodium and cholesterol. On the right side of the label are percentages. You want the fat, sodium and cholesterol on the label to have low percentages. You want the protein, vitamins and minerals at the bottom of the label to have high percentages. These percentages are for a 2000-calorie diet, but even if your calorie intake is different, you can still use these percentages to compare different food products.

If you’d like more help deciphering nutrition labels and learning more about how to make healthy food choices why not enlist the assistance of a health coach? Healthy Lives™ Powered by Baptist Health Care is now offering individual memberships to the Gulf Coast community. Call 1.850.469.6903 to learn how you can join this popular wellness program.
Successful Surgery
DOESN’T HAVE TO HURT

One reason that some people don’t choose to have surgery for an injury is that they want to avoid a painful recovery. Gulf Coast families are in luck. They have easy access to the Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine. Since they opened their doors in 2007, the team at Andrews has provided leading-edge treatment to everyone from residents in our community to elite athletes from around the globe. One secret to their successful and less painful recoveries is — the anesthesiologists.

The skill of surgeons and recent surgical advancements have helped improve outcomes for everyone, but what most people don’t know is that Andrews Institute Ambulatory Surgery Center’s anesthesiologists also play a key role in vital recovery efforts such as rehabilitation.

“We use a combination of techniques for post-operative pain, including nerve blocks and pain pumps,” said Gregory Hickman, M.D., Andrews Institute (AI) Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) medical director and anesthesia director. “The blocks greatly reduce the need for post-operative narcotics, which is the perfect set-up for success, allowing our patients to rehab sooner and with a great attitude since they will have little or no pain.”

Typically, the use of narcotics is standard procedure following surgery in most ASCs or hospitals across the country. However, at the AI ASC, only about 8 percent of patients receive post-operative narcotics in the recovery room.

Nerve blocks and pain pumps are just a few of the innovative procedures used by the AI ASC and the benefits are numerous. For example, reducing the possibility of side effects that can come with narcotics; allowing patients to eliminate or manage pain; and improving a patient’s mental clarity and overall feeling of well-being.

Here’s how nerve blocks and pain pumps work. Anesthesiologists use ultrasound to guide them as they inject a local anesthetic around the nerve that extends to the area of injury. The anesthetic prevents pain impulses from reaching the spinal cord and brain by stopping the nerve from firing. The nerve is numb. Then, following surgery, patients can return home pain-free. A nerve block lasts about 12 to 18 hours. The same evening on the day of surgery, patients are instructed to turn on the pain pump to prevent and manage levels of pain. The pain pump is connected to a catheter that supplies numbing medication to the nerve that feeds the surgical site. The numbing effect can last up to three or four days. Patients are able to interact with family, eat and drink normally, while experiencing little or no pain. Typically, patients are ready to start rehabilitation within one to three days after surgery due to excellent pain control.

“Getting started within a day or two after surgery allows us to limit muscle atrophy and stiffness that are typical following surgery. We begin with gentle range of motion, which helps improve circulation and decreases the risk of scar tissue formation,” said Stephen LaPlante, a physical therapist at the Andrews Institute. “While surgical techniques have improved over the years, so has rehabilitation. We have a better understanding of the importance of treating the entire body, not just the affected region.”

While physical therapists at Andrews Institute Rehabilitation are known for working with professional athletes who expect the highest level of care available, they use the same techniques for non-athletes and families. Communication with physicians is an important part of their team approach, and each patient is treated with a tailored plan of care specific to their individual needs. The goal is to return every patient to his or her previous level of function.

For more information about specialists at the Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine or to make an appointment, call 850.916.8700, option 1 or go online to TheAndrewsInstitute.com.
Words of Wisdom

from Dr. DeJoubner

“Be happy, keep active, eat healthy, stop smoking and if you notice something seems wrong, seek medical attention. Pay attention to your body and screen for preventable cancers such as breast cancer, colon cancer and cervical cancer.”
Managing Your Health Online

Easy, convenient, one-stop online service. That’s what we’ve come to expect from many of our service providers and healthcare is no different. Management of your health services and information is now available online, providing you with greater control and convenience.

Health organizations throughout the country are now shifting their records to electronic medical records (EMRs) to provide greater efficiency in managing their families’ health while maintaining the safety and security of their patient information. As more health systems make the switch to EMRs, patients will benefit from greater access to their comprehensive health story, all in one location called a “patient portal.”

• **Convenient.** Patient portals give you access to a wealth of knowledge about your personal health and allow you quick and easy control over things like prescription renewals and appointment scheduling. Quick access to your physician’s office is only an email away. Patient portals also may help you to manage an elderly parent’s health online, even if you live in different states. And if you have children, a patient portal can give you quick access to their immunization records and schedules when you need them. No more coordinating faxes between doctors’ offices. Your health information is at your fingertips, 24/7.

• **Safe and secure.** Many of us are used to using secure forms online, either to purchase merchandise or to manage our checking accounts. Your patient portal will require a secure log-in, just like your online banking requires a user name and password, ensuring that no one sees your health information except you and others you may authorize.

• **Direct communication.** Through your patient portal you will have access to an online database of information on various health topics and may be notified of current medical updates such as recalls, health alerts and advisories. You can rest assured that the information you need to know about your health is in one place. In addition, you can directly correspond with your physician’s office when it’s convenient for you, in the evening or while running errands throughout a busy day.

Baptist Medical Group and Cardiology Consultants provide patients with access to a patient portal that can be used to renew prescriptions, schedule appointments and request health records. Call Baptist Medical Group at **850.437.8600** or Cardiology Consultants at **850.484.6500**, to learn more about the patient portal at Baptist Health Care.

Go to [eBaptistHealthCare.org](http://eBaptistHealthCare.org) to learn more about these and other health care services or [BaptistMedicalGroup.org](http://BaptistMedicalGroup.org) to find a physician.
**in the news**

PEOPLE, PROJECTS AND PRAISE

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**Baptist Health Care Recognized as Fit-Friendly Worksite — Wins Health at Work Award**

Baptist Health Care (BHC) was recently recognized as a Platinum Level Recipient of the American Heart Association's Fit-Friendly Worksites Recognition program for making the health and wellness of its employees a priority. Platinum is the highest level of recognition.

BHC also was named a Silver winner of the ninth-annual Health at Work Awards sponsored by ComPsych and its HealthyGuidance® program. This award was based on the comprehensiveness, delivery, promotion, participation rates and results achieved by Healthy Lives™, BHC’s wellness program.

Learn more of more achievements at eBaptistHealthCare.org/Awards.

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**Baptist Hospital Is ‘Protector of the Environment’**

The Protector of the Environment award was presented to Baptist Hospital by the Emerald Coast Utilities Authority (ECUA) for promoting a positive, clean, and safe working and eating environment through the ECUA's Fats, Oils, Grease (FOG) and Backflow programs. Award recipients properly train their employees on Best Management Practices (BMPs), participate in scheduled cleanliness inspections, and have no FOG and Backflow Program violations or warnings within a one-year period.

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**Baptist Medical Group Offers New Walk-In Care Service in West Pensacola**

Baptist Medical Group physicians Mickey Daum, M.D., Edwin Taylor, M.D., and Don Mason, M.D., at Baptist Medical Group Family Medicine - Westside now offer Saturday walk-in care services. Patients with minor injuries or illness can seek medical treatment by visiting the office located at 6715 Highway 98 W in Pensacola on Saturdays. No appointment is needed. For office hours and further details, please visit BaptistMedicalGroup.org or call 850.453.6737.

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**‘This Is Lakeview’ Brings Services to Life**

A touching three-minute YouTube video is telling Lakeview Center’s story to the online community.

Introduced in September, “This Is Lakeview” walks viewers through the organization’s behavioral health, child protective and vocational divisions. While no words are spoken by the actors, the superimposed text offers powerful and touching descriptions of the many ways Lakeview Center helps people meet some of life's challenges.

“This Is Lakeview” can be viewed on eLakeviewCenter.org.

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**Best of the Coast**

Baptist Health Care was voted “Best of the Coast” in an Independent News 2013 reader survey. Locals weighed in, sharing their favorite places for dining, shopping, health care and more. This recognition is a reflection of our team members who make Baptist Health Care a great place to work and receive care. From simple “hellos” to escorting patients and visitors to their destinations, treating people like family is our expectation.

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**Baptist Medical Park – Nine Mile celebrates a 14-year anniversary in January 2014.**

Thanks for all you do to ensure good health for all the families who depend on the Baptist Health Care system for care!

Learn more at BaptistMedicalPark.org.
What is eConsults and what can it do for you? Read Sara’s story to find out.

In the mind of OB/GYN Erika Schneider, M.D., every patient is unique. That was especially the case of 42-year-old Sara.* Sara, expecting her second child, was considered to be of advanced maternal age and a high-risk pregnancy. But age wasn’t her biggest risk factor. Sara was diagnosed with BRCA positive, or genetically inherited, breast cancer in her first trimester. Dr. Schneider immediately saw an opportunity to leverage the expertise of the Mayo Clinic Care Network to help provide Sara the best outcome.

“This is an extraordinarily unusual case, that I felt the patient would benefit from a multidisciplinary consultation and review,” said Dr. Schneider. “Sara underwent a unilateral mastectomy, and we needed recommendations for complementary therapy after surgery to help her maintain a healthy pregnancy. Specifically we needed evidence-based guidance on whether or not Sara would require chemotherapy while pregnant.”

Baptist Health Care (BHC) entered into a collaborative agreement with Mayo Clinic Care Network in July 2013, and prior to that relationship, Sara planned a trip to Rochester, Minn., for a consultation about her case. As soon as the affiliation was announced, Dr. Schneider eagerly told Sara there was no need to book that flight! She could now consult with Mayo right here at home, through the eConsult technology facilitated by Baptist Health Care.

eConsults connect local BHC physicians with expert physician members of the Mayo Clinic Care Network in order to collaborate on the best care options for patients who are experiencing difficult health care concerns. Cases are submitted through a secure web-based portal and reviewed by a Mayo Clinic physician within 48 hours. The Mayo physician then circles back to the BHC doctor, and the two discuss the best plan of care.

“Submitting the eConsult was very user-friendly, and Baptist has all the resources to support facilitation, questions and assistance,” said Dr. Schneider. “Mayo provided a comprehensive review followed by evidence-based, up-to-date recommendations that were specifically tailored to Sara,” said Dr. Schneider. “Then we created a local team to include a surgeon, an oncologist, and a maternal fetal medicine specialist and myself, to provide a multidisciplinary approach to Sara’s care while leveraging Mayo’s evidence-based recommendations.”

Needless to say, Sara was relieved and very pleased with the level of care she received right here in her own community. It meant a lot to her to work alongside her local physician whom she trusts, as well as accessing Mayo Clinic’s rich knowledge-base of medical research. “I was very impressed and reassured to see how thoroughly my case was evaluated by a team of doctors I had never met,” said Sara. “Their review and recommendations were very comforting, and the eConsult saved us time and a lot of energy, when I didn’t have much to spare.”

Baptist Health Care’s Vision is to be the best health care provider in the country. However, the organization also sees the value in sharing resources for the benefit of patients. “As the local leader in providing quality health care, we have a responsibility to lead in transforming health care in the region,” said Brian Matson, Senior Vice President Chief Strategy and Business Development Officer of Baptist Health Care. “Collaboration with the Mayo Clinic Care Network helps our team ensure care that’s always patient-centered, quality-focused and accessible.”

If you find yourself confronting a challenging health care concern like Sara did, isn’t it nice to know you can access the latest medical knowledge, delivered by a local physician you’ve come to know and trust to care for your family?

As for Sara, she did not require chemotherapy after surgery. She is in the third trimester of a healthy pregnancy with a renewed appreciation for her health and life.

*Name changed for patient privacy

For additional helpful health tips or to learn more about Baptist Health Care’s caring, compassionate physician network, visit BaptistMedicalGroup.org.
BAPTIST and MAYO CLINIC

ALL PRIVATE ROOMS

Baptist Health Care is more than just a health care system. As a locally-owned member of this community, our top priority is the health and well-being of those we serve.

As a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network, we’re bringing more innovative health care to our community. This means better care for you and the ones you love through access to the best medicine in the world. Now we guarantee a quiet Private Room to help you heal in comfort. Visit us online to learn more.

eBAPTISTHEALTHCARE.ORG