In February, WakeMed launched a comprehensive ECMO program in partnership with Duke Health and our Heart Care Plus+ collaborative. Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) is an advanced life support technique used in patients whose heart and/or lungs aren’t working properly due to severe injury or illness. ECMO is used when all other standard treatments have failed and can support patients for weeks – allowing the heart and lungs time to recover while physicians treat the underlying condition(s).

“A successful ECMO program is an essential building block for bringing new and advanced therapies to our cardiovascular and thoracic programs here at WakeMed,” explains David Kirk, MD, executive medical director, critical care medicine.

ECMO requires specialized training and the support of many areas within the hospital, including nursing, respiratory therapy, cath lab, pharmacy, information services and our physician practices. In 2016, WakeMed began initiating ECMO for pediatric patients who were then transferred to Duke, however this is the first time we have had a fully-supported program that allows patients to stay at our facility.

Depending on the type, ECMO can do the job a healthy heart or lungs typically perform. Like the lungs, ECMO can remove carbon dioxide and provide oxygen to the blood. ECMO can also work like the heart by pumping oxygenated blood back into the bloodstream.

“I am excited to leverage our expertise in pulmonary and critical care medicine with our top-rated heart surgery program to bring this innovative therapy,” shares Judson Williams, MD, executive medical director, Heart & Vascular.

“This is one example of our Heart Care Plus+ collaboration that is impacting our patients right here in Wake County.”
Leveraging Data as a Catalyst for Positive Change

As WakeMed continues our efforts to become a top 10 organization for quality, we have signed an agreement with Health Catalyst, a leading provider of data and analytics technology. Health Catalyst works with health systems across the country to support clinical transformation and the journey to value-based care. Health Catalyst tools will help us manage the incredible amount of clinical, business and operational data we have by bringing it together in one platform and delivering real-time insights.

“Health care is changing at a rapid pace, and this kind of partnership will help equip our incredible teams with the information they need to help WakeMed continuously improve,” explains Pete Marks, PhD, vice president & Chief Information Officer.

WakeMed plans to implement two Health Catalyst tools to help us provide more efficient, quality care:

• Data Operating System (DOS) is a data-first, analytics and application platform used to capture and map raw data into meaningful, actionable insights.
• Rapid Response Analytics (RRA) includes tools that allow analytics teams to integrate and customize data, logic and algorithms.

With the agreement now in place, we will spend the next several months building the infrastructure and governance needed to put these tools in place and launch new, analytics-enabled projects.

“This is an opportunity to accelerate innovation and support positive outcomes for our patients, families and communities by providing the right information, at the right time, in the right place,” said Chris DeRienzo, MD, senior vice president, Quality & Chief Medical Officer. “I’ve seen firsthand how powerful the right analytics can be in the hands of a team committed to driving continuous improvement, and we couldn’t be more excited about starting that work today.”

Stay tuned for more information and updates about these new analytics tools as this work gets underway.

EFFICIENCY IN ACTION
Improving Inpatient Consults

It’s very common for patients in the hospital to require consultation with a specialist – in fact, over 300 inpatient consults are ordered every day at WakeMed. Historically, requesting these consults was a largely manual process involving multiple phone calls, texts and pages, often over the course of several hours. It’s no surprise that this was a common cause of frustration and delay for patients, providers and staff.

Over the last year, a small team led by Ted Tsomides, MD (Hospital Medicine) has been working to improve the inpatient consult process by developing a faster, more efficient method. The new process allows providers to order consults in Epic with the desired specialist or practice – and the appropriate on-call provider receives a secure, HIPAA-compliant text message via RapidConnect within seconds.

Creating the workflow and getting providers on board with the new process took a lot of effort – but that work is paying off for patients. Today the median read time for inpatient consult requests is less than a minute! Some of the additional advantages include:

• Call schedules are maintained within RapidConnect so the appropriate provider is contacted
• Secure, HIPAA-compliant messaging permits more detail than simple texting
• The requesting physician can see a “read receipt” confirming the message was delivered
• Providers do not need to be logged into Epic to learn of a new consult request

The new process has been rolled out specialty-by-specialty and approximately 2,400 providers have now been able to participate in it.

“This was a major change – as some providers had been using the same process for decades, and now we are asking them to do something new,” commented Dr. Tsomides. “As with any project, we experienced both technical and workflow issues along the way, but we have addressed many of them and continue to refine the new process. It is granting that our providers have been receptive to new ideas, with an outcome of improved speed and accuracy of provider communication around new inpatient consults hundreds of times each day.”

Above: Members of the team that created and implemented the new inpatient consult request process include (left to right) Sal Hahiloglu, Christopher Bober, Ted Tsomides, MD, and Rex Nufer, along with (not pictured) Kelly Johnson and Mary Anderson (of RapidConnect).

WW2E Update: Standardizing On-Call Contact Processes
WakeMed is also using RapidConnect to improve the process for identifying and contacting on-call providers. Over the years, clinical staff have used numerous “sources” to find contact information for on-call providers. The lack of a standard process led to mis-connections, staff and provider dissatisfaction and delays in patient care. Following an RPW held last summer, Cary Hospital recently adopted RapidConnect as the one source for properly identifying and contacting on-call providers. The new process was rolled out in December, and has received positive feedback from nursing staff. Plans are underway to implement this standard work at Raleigh Campus and North Hospital by May 1.

PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL CARE DURING A BUSY FLU SEASON

For four of WakeMed’s seven emergency departments, February 4, 2020, was a memorable day – a day that cumulatively set new records for patient volumes! Since then, many of WakeMed’s emergency departments have continued to break records. This winter has been an incredibly busy one system-wide, due to flu season and other infectious illnesses that are impacting Wake County residents in an aggressive manner. Of course, high numbers of patients in our Emergency Departments also mean record numbers of admissions to our pediatric and adult inpatient units as well! Thank you to everyone who has helped care for our community during this cold and flu season – you have enabled us to care for very ill patients in their time of need while still delivering the scheduled care many patients have planned for. Keep washing your hands and let’s hope the worst of flu season is behind us!
Sternal wound infection is a serious, debilitating and expensive complication that can occur after cardiothoracic surgery. Patients who experience these infections face an intensive treatment plan, higher mortality rates and tremendous added costs – all in addition to recovering from open heart surgery. Nationally, between 1 and 8 percent of open heart surgery patients experience sternal wound infections – and while the WakeMed rate of all sternal wound infections of ~1.6 percent is very good, it isn’t good enough for our top-rated cardiothoracic surgery team. The “I Hate Infections Team” (IHIT) initiative has embraced “Chasing Zero” and is focusing efforts on eliminating sternal wound infections at WakeMed.

This work began last summer when IHIT was formed. “The goal was to create a multidisciplinary infection control team and use evidence-based concepts to minimize our patient’s infection risk – from pre-op to the step-down unit and everything in between. The hope is that we create lasting changes to our processes that will both improve patient outcomes and reduce cost,” commented Michael Modrow, JAVA-C. Modrow has designed and spearheaded this bold initiative with his CV surgery APP colleagues and is quick to acknowledge that, “all WakeMed CV surgery and service line colleagues are a part of this team.”

In just six months, numerous positive changes have been made – some small, some large – but all impactful. In one example, the team evaluated the process for screening outpatient patients for MRSA. This screening is important because the results determine the type of antibiotic patients receive in the OR to head off infections. The team introduced new, more efficient processes to ensure all patients are screened and receive tailored antibiotics.

Other important changes include:
- Engaging our valued Environmental Services team to standardize and optimize cleaning and maintenance efforts to ensure a clean OR environment.
- Re-training staff and providers on surgical scrubbing.
- Piloting efforts to reduce the introduction of bacteria into the ORs, including transporting patients on clean stretchers, rather than patient beds from the unit.
- Focusing attention on limiting how often the OR door is opened and closed during a procedure.
- Piloting new products – including disposable BGD leads and new neck line dressings – that are easier to use and maintain, thereby removing the opportunity for human error.

The ever expanding IHIT team can be proud of these efforts. “Seeing Mike and many others on this team come together to achieve positive change has been remarkable and represents what I love about WakeMed. Our patients and community will continue to benefit from this work for many years to come,” commented Judson Williams, MD, MHS, executive medical director, Heart & Vascular. One long-term goal is to replicate the IHIT framework for other surgical service areas.

A New Way to See Patient Images

Patient images (x-rays, scans, swallow studies and much more) are key pieces of information that help providers make sound clinical decisions in the best interest of their patients. Until recently, patient images at WakeMed were stored in several locations, on computers and platforms that did not always communicate with each other. The result? Images were not easily accessible for providers, and rarely available for patients.

In an effort to bring together all patient images into one, standardized location, last fall, WakeMed implemented Fuji’s VNA (vendor neutral archive). Some of the benefits of this new tool are:
- Increased accessibility for providers and patients
- Improved continuity of care and provider satisfaction
- Standard workflow for acquiring, storing and accessing patient images

Today, Fuji VNA is being used to store cardiology, radiology, speech, wound and sensitive Children’s Emergency Department images. In the coming months, we will add speech videos, images from Surgical Services Stryker towers, Endoeye, dental images and QPath to the platform. All of these images will be accessible with the Fuji Mobility Viewer along with images stored in WakeOrtho PACS and MPM ViewPoint PACS.

Bringing the Fuji VNA platform online has been an interdisciplinary effort that involved departments across the health system working together. This is just one more way WakeMed is working to create standard work and improve efficiency in the interest of delivering exceptional patient care.

Kelly Thompson-Brazil, NP, (Heart & Vascular Physicians) published an article titled “Pain Control in the Cardiothoracic Surgery Patient” in the journal Critical Care Nursing Clinics.

Siddhartha Rao, MD, (Heart & Vascular) has been selected as national principal investigator for an upcoming peripheral vascular clinical trial. A paper comparing different bariatric surgery approaches co-authored by Paul Enochs, MD, SCOTT Bovard, MD, and David Pilati, MD (all of Bariatric Surgery & Medical Weight Loss) and others has become the most read paper on the Surgery for Obesity and Related Diseases website. Trauma Research resident Mary Kate Bryant (WPP Clinical Research) presented two topics at the Southeastern Surgical Congress (SESC). “Does Blood Alcohol Content Affect Clinical Outcomes After Trauma in Older Adult Patients?” and “Exploring Functional Outcome and Return to Work after Blunt Chest Injury.”

Congratulations to Scott Stewart, Mensha Marlin and Mark Walker (all of Surgical Services – Raleigh Campus) who recently earned certification in reprocessing flexible endoscopes and were promoted to Endoscopy Technician II. Only about 1,000 people nationwide hold this certification – and these employees are the first in our area.

Tracy Brock was promoted to manager of Talent Acquisition & Employment.

COMINGS & GOINGS

The Compensation team welcomes Vira Hogan. CICU welcomes Shannon Starke, RN, and Susanna Hodge, RN. 6C Surgery & Trauma welcomes Aidan Wilson. Emergency Department – North Hospital welcomes Whitney Zimmerman; Nicole Moody, RN; Carmen Obregon; Nancy Reavis, RN; and Blakie Watkins, RN. 1 East Clinical Evaluation Area – Cary Hospital welcomes Isabelle Berube, Vanessa Castro, Stacey McManamy, Chris Jarvis and Allen Williamson, RN. Health Information Management welcomes Karen Barry and Valerie Bullock. Pathology Transfusion Services welcomes Sarah Jensen. OneCall welcomes Megan Phillips. Shelly Sturgill, RN; and Interventional Radiology welcomes Sarah Jensen. Home Health welcomes Mindy Mendoza, RN, Youngmee Hahn, SLP; Sarah Fleming, OT; and Patrice Brown Parker, RN. Financial Clearance welcomes Brinda Rangasamy.

4C Mother/Baby welcomes Nikki Sexton, RN, Jazmine Bakare, RN, Sandy Freeman, RN, and Kat Coezenski.

ADDITIONS + ATTACHMENTS

Becky Riggin (Mother/Baby – Raleigh Campus) married Larry Rochelle on January 31.
our sincere apologies for this oversight.

We learned that several employees were left out of the recent Service Awards Microscope Correction

Congratulations, Health Care Heroes!

The Triangle Business Journal recently announced its 2020 class of Health Care Heroes and two members of the WakeMed family and one close partner are among this year’s list of 24 honorees. The annual program recognizes leaders in their field who have made significant contributions to health care.

As a Transitional Care Navigator with Support Services Supplemental Pool, Teresa Batten, RN, Staffing Resources – Cary Hospital, goes above and beyond to provide compassionate care. Magelli McKeown also oversees several NICU support programs and is a facilitator for You Are Not Alone, a support group for those with mental health issues and their loved ones. In her role as WakeMed Children’s family navigator in 2018, today, she advocates with and for WakeMed Children’s families when medical decisions need to be made or when there are crisis moments in their child’s care. Whether it is helping families through a hospital stay, providing support in times of loss or, in one memorable instance, officiating the wedding of the parents of a NICU patient, she consistently goes above and beyond to provide compassionate care. Magelli McKeown also oversees several NICU support programs and is a facilitator for You Are Not Alone, a support group for those with mental health issues and their loved ones. As a Transitional Care Navigator with Cancer Care Plus+, Brenda Wilcox, CNS, is a familiar face at WakeMed. A Duke Health employee who is based at Raleigh Campus, Wilcox helps families navigate the complex world of follow-up care that comes with a cancer diagnosis. She is a resource for all WakeMed patients with a Duke referral who receive a cancer diagnosis to help them understand next steps as they transition from WakeMed to Duke oncology services in Wake County. She also works closely with care team members to ensure patients have a comprehensive care plan and identify opportunities to streamline the process for patients.

WakeMed APPs Recognized by County Commissioners

On Monday, February 17, the Wake County Board of Commissioners recognized WakeMed’s Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) with a resolution that declares the first week of March as “Advanced Practice Providers Appreciation Week” in Wake County! Our dedicated team of APPs, represented by Michelle Schweitzer, NP, executive director, APPs, was honored for their excellent patient care, their dedication to their profession and commitment to teaching the next generation of health care professionals. The designation will be celebrated during the first annual APP Symposium in March. Congratulations to all of our APPs and thank you for all you do for WakeMed and the patients we serve!

WakeMed was recently named a 2019 TCAR Center of Excellence for improving carotid artery disease treatment using a new procedure called TransCarotid Artery Revascularization (TCAR). TCAR is a clinically proven, minimally invasive and safe approach for high-risk surgical patients to reduce their risk of stroke.

TCAR developer, Silk Road Medical, reviewed hospitals across the country to recognize the centers that have demonstrated excellent patient outcomes through appropriate patient selection and a well-trained and credentialed vascular specialist team. This recognition demonstrates WakeMed’s commitment to delivering the highest quality care for carotid artery disease.

WakeMed Named TCAR Center of Excellence

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Kris Wolfe, PT, (Physical Therapy – Cambridge Village) specializes in working with older adults and knows that people are afraid they are going to fall or often lose balance in participating in activities and social events they enjoy. To help address a need for more falls-prevention education and programs to keep seniors safe and steady on their feet, she helped develop Ready, Steady, Go!, a free WakeMed program for seniors and adults whose parent(s) are unsteady on their feet. Launched in 2018, Ready, Steady, Go!, focuses on awareness, prevention, risk factors, and ways to achieve optimal balance, muscle strength and improved coordination.

After three years as a WakeMed chaplain, Mallory Magelli McKeown moved into the role of WakeMed Children’s family navigator in 2018. Today, she advocates with and for WakeMed Children’s families when medical decisions need to be made or when there are crisis moments in their child’s care. Whether it is helping families through a hospital stay, providing support in times of loss or, in one memorable instance, officiating the wedding of the parents of a NICU patient, she consistently goes above and beyond to provide compassionate care. Magelli McKeown also oversees several NICU support programs and is a facilitator for You Are Not Alone, a support group for those with mental health issues and their loved ones. As a Transitional Care Navigator with Cancer Care Plus+, Brenda Wilcox, CNS, is a familiar face at WakeMed. A Duke Health employee who is based at Raleigh Campus, Wilcox helps families navigate the complex world of follow-up care that comes with a cancer diagnosis. She is a resource for all WakeMed patients with a Duke referral who receive a cancer diagnosis to help them understand next steps as they transition from WakeMed to Duke oncology services in Wake County. She also works closely with care team members to ensure patients have a comprehensive care plan and identify opportunities to streamline the process for patients.

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Welcome New Advanced Practice Providers

Melissa Scott, PA Hospital Medicine
Mark VanViegen, NP Urgent Care

We’re Moved!
WakeMed Children’s PM Pediatrics Urgent Care – Morrisville has moved to a new location at: 1125 Hatches Pond Lane Suite 101 Morrisville, NC 27560 Open daily, noon to midnight.

Don’t Forget Your Biometric Screening

Biometric Screenings are ongoing through April 2

Things to remember:
• Know the time and location of your screening and allow approximately 25 minutes, start to finish.
• The screening includes height, weight, waist circumference, blood pressure and a basic lipid panel (cholesterol) with blood glucose.
• Employees can also bring current blood work results to the screening (to qualify, it must have been conducted after January 1, 2020, and must include full lipid panel and a total glucose).
• The screening requires fasting for a minimum of eight hours unless prohibited for medical reasons. Pregnant employees do not need to fast.

Screening results will be posted to WakeMed MyChart, usually within 72 hours. Blood work results (lipid panel and glucose) will be under “View Test Results” and measurements (height, weight and BMI) can be found in “Letters”.

Remember, you must meet a certain level on each standard to receive the reward. If you do not meet the standards, you can complete an alternate standard requirement to make up points. More details about alternate standards will be shared next month. Questions? Contact Bob Nelson, ext. 06903.
Ted Tsomides, MD, (Hospital Medicine) recently received the Transitions LifeCare’s “Champion of Palliative Care” award. The award recognizes outstanding WakeMed staff who demonstrate the values of palliative medicine for their patients and families each day. Transitions LifeCare cares for individuals and families with compassion, support, and expertise as they navigate the end of life or life-changing illness.

A huge thank you to Athens Drive Magnet High School, who recently raised over $6,000 for the WakeMed Children’s Hospital at their Second Annual Charity Gala. Additionally, the Athens Drive HOSA-Future Health Professionals club made and donated beautiful paper flowers, which our volunteers passed out to patients on Valentine’s Day!

The annual Well-Being Fairs (left) were held in January, providing staff with an opportunity to learn about health and wellness benefits available to WakeMed employees. Participants could also get their blood pressure checked, enjoy chair or hand massages and sample new café menu items. Thanks to everyone who came out to these great events and to all the groups that provided information!

WakeMed’s Core Lab (above) recently upgraded to a brand new, state-of-the-art automation line. The new machine provides automation for hematology testing and will help eliminate our current manual process for loading/unloading hematology specimens. Members of the Pathology team gathered for a ribbon cutting shortly after the machine was installed.

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WakeMed Children’s and Marbles Kids Museum teamed up to bring a new speaker series to our community. The series will feature a variety of speakers and interactive programs throughout the year – some just for parents, and others that foster positive interaction between parent and child. The goal of the series is to spark the imagination of parents as they face everyday challenges of parenting and childhood. Visit www.wakemed.org/playfulparenting to learn more.

On Friday, February 7, employees from across WakeMed dressed in their best reds for Go Red for Women’s Day! This annual event is part of American Heart Month and is intended to help raise awareness of cardiovascular disease. It’s also a great way to recognize everyone at WakeMed who provides compassionate care and service to our heart patients and their families!

WakeMed President & CEO Donald Gintzig addressed members of the North Carolina Healthcare Association at a meeting in February. Gintzig is Chair of the organization’s Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees this year.
April 1 & 2
Andrews Center
Presented by WakeMed Children's & Nursing Education
Fees, registration and further details are available at https://2020wakemedpediatricneonatalconference.eventbrite.com.

Nursing Education
Searching the Medical Literature – March 19, 9 to 10:30 am, Cary Hospital (WakeMedU code: N014-19035)
Generalist Nurses Caring for the Suffering of Mentally Ill Patients – March 21, 9 am to 3:30 pm, Raleigh Campus; April 21, 9 am to 3:30 pm, Raleigh Campus (WakeMedU code: N014-18004)
The Older Adult Education Series: Polypharmacy, Beers Criteria and the Elder Patient – April 5, 7:30 to 8:30 am, Raleigh Campus (WakeMedU code: N014-18012)
The Role of the Competency Validator – April 15, 10 am to 12:15 pm, Raleigh Campus (WakeMedU code: N014-17108)
Essential Oil Basics: Aromatherapy at WakeMed – April 20, 11 am to 12:30 pm, Raleigh Campus; April 23, 7:30 to 9 am, Cary Hospital (WakeMedU code: N014-19108)

Wake AHEC
Behavioral Treatment of Chronic Pain: Evidence-Based Tools to Move from Hurt to Hope – March 9, Andrews Center
10th Annual Faith Connections on Mental Illness Conference – Hope and Healing: Faithfully Practicing Community Inclusion – March 13, McKimmon Center
North Carolina Surgery: Time Out for Colon Health – March 14, North Carolina Heart & Vascular Hospital
Motivational Interviewing II – Practice & Feedback – March 19, Andrews Center
2nd Annual Diabetes Management Conference: Navigating the Journey from Hospital to Home – March 21, Andrews Center
Trauma Informed Care/ACES – March 30, Andrews Center
4th Annual CCEP Program: Safety in Complex Healthcare Environments – April 3, Andrews Center
Ethics Reboot: Aligning Your Digital Practices with Current Ethical Standards – April 15, Andrews Center
Balancing Change and Acceptance: Use of Dialectical Behavioral Strategies in Work with Families – April 16, Andrews Center

Employee Forums 2020
Don’t miss this opportunity to talk informally with WakeMed President & CEO Donald Gintzig and hear what’s on the horizon for WakeMed in the months ahead. Employees are welcome to attend any session at any facility, regardless of where they work.

North Hospital – Tuesday, March 10, 2:30 pm
Raleigh Campus – Thursday, March 12, 2:30 pm
Cary Hospital – Tuesday, March 31, 2:30 pm
Corporate Center – Thursday, April 2, 10 am
Garner Healthplex – Tuesday, April 14, 2:30 pm
Apex Healthplex – Thursday, April 23, 2:30 pm
Brier Creek Healthplex – Tuesday, May 19, 2:30 pm

Macy’s Sales
The Volunteers at WakeMed will host fundraising events at each of our three hospitals in April. Pre-shop weeks are available at Crabtree Valley Mall.

Cary Hospital
Tuesday, April 7, 7 am to 4 pm, Conference Center
Pre-shop: March 30 – April 5
North Hospital
Tuesday, April 14, 7 am to 4 pm, Conference Center
Pre-shop: April 6 – 12 (pickup only)
Raleigh Campus
Wednesday, April 15, 7 am to 4 pm, Andrews Center
Pre-shop: April 6 – 12

Want to learn more about what’s happening at WakeMed? Follow us on social media or download the WakeMed App!