

3 NEW BEGINNINGS  
FOR MOM, BABY

5 THE WONDERS OF  
REHAB SERVICES

6 END-OF-LIFE  
HEALING

SPRING 2012

# YOUR health

MATTERS

Award Winning Care



## The Best Kind of Message



J. Gene Faile

Rarely does a week go by that I do not receive a card or a letter of thanks from a patient

or family member in appreciation of the care they received at Wilkes Regional.

On the morning of Feb. 28, however, a patient in the hospital called and left a message asking to meet with me personally. After getting the room number, I proceeded to the third floor, located the room and knocked on the door. "Come on in," the man said. As I approached the bed, he reached forward to shake my hand. "Conley Call," he said with a smile. "Gene Faile, CEO," I replied. "I got your message."

He thanked me for coming up to see him, then introduced his wife, Gracie. "I just wanted to tell you personally what great care I have received here at Wilkes Regional." He went on to tell me of his years as mayor of North Wilkesboro. He closed by saying how proud he was of the growth at Wilkes Regional. As I was leaving the third floor, I stopped by the nursing station and shared Mr. Call's compliments with the nursing staff. Upon returning to my office, it occurred to me that we frequently get cards and letters from appreciative patients. But everyday our patients tell us how much they appreciate the excellent care they have received.

**J. Gene Faile, FACHE**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Wilkes Regional Medical Center



## OB-GYNs Near You

Three practices provide comprehensive care

Looking for an OB-GYN? You do not need to look far. Wilkes Regional Medical Center has three physician practices right here in North Wilkesboro. Here is information about the practices and their services:

### NORTHWEST CAROLINA WOMEN'S CENTER

► **Services:** High-risk obstetrics, menopause management, pelvic ultrasound, evaluation and treatment of infertility, evaluation and treatment of gynecological cancers, adolescent healthcare, laparoscopy and other minimally invasive surgeries, 3-D/4-D ultrasound, evaluation and treatment of urinary incontinence

► **Address:** 1405 Willow Lane, North Wilkesboro  
► **Phone:** 336-667-2232



**Michele Polidoro, M.D.**



**Ben Horton, M.D.**

### FOOTHILLS CENTER FOR WOMEN

► **Services:** Well women's care, NovaSure endometrial ablation, sterilization, ultrasound, amniocentesis, pregnancy testing, colposcopy, laser surgery, laparoscopy, infertility treatment, cryosurgery, Pap smears, pregnancy and high-risk pregnancy care

► **Address:** 112 Boone Trail, North Wilkesboro  
► **Phone:** 336-667-8241



**Duane Smith, M.D.**

### WILKES WOMEN'S CARE

► **Services:** Obstetric and gynecological ultrasonography, gynecological surgery, family planning, infertility treatment, fetal monitoring, laparoscopic surgical procedures, gynecological cancer screening and treatment, PMS and menopausal counseling and treatment, high-risk and routine obstetrics

► **Address:** 301 Eighth St., North Wilkesboro  
► **Phone:** 336-667-7171



**Michael Blackwell, M.D.**

# Hey, Baby!

The New Beginnings Birthing Center offers the best in care for moms-to-be

Having a baby is one of life's richest, most rewarding experiences. Wilkes Regional Medical Center wants to make sure the birth and delivery of your child exceeds your expectations.

To this end, the New Beginnings Birthing Center offers innovative technology, top-of-the-line amenities and expert care for delivering moms. As an example of our technological capabilities, the staff monitor mother and baby constantly. Anesthesiologists are available around the clock to administer pain medications and epidurals, as needed. Cesarean sections can be performed in the labor and delivery suite, so mothers requiring this surgery do not have to move to another floor.

## CREATURE COMFORTS

A hospital environment can seem sterile and unfriendly, but the New Beginnings Birthing Center strives to make its surroundings as homey and comfortable as possible. The seven labor and delivery rooms are designed to make everyone close to the mother feel comfortable.

Touches include a contemporary décor, sleeping space for husband or birthing partner, private bathroom with a shower/Jacuzzi tub, television, VCR/DVD player, glider rockers and private telephone. Following delivery, new mothers are moved to one of 11 postpartum rooms to continue their recovery.

## EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELD

The nursing staff at New Beginnings is not just trained to deliver babies. Together, the center's 25 registered nurses, one licensed practical nurse, and two operating room technicians and support staff have more than 500 years of experience. Every obstetrical nurse is certified in neonatal resuscitation. Also, several are certified in advanced obstetrical services, including neonatal nursing, labor and delivery, and breastfeeding. The obstetrical unit has low staff turnover (they love what they do!),

The New Beginnings Birthing Center strives to make every delivery experience a positive one for mothers and families.

and that contributes to its consistently high ranking on patient satisfaction surveys.

To ensure that parents have the best experience possible, the staff gives them the power to decide how long their babies will stay in the mother's room and when they will return to the nursery. Two board-certified lactation consultants are there to assist a mother who is breastfeeding. Follow-up visits are available for families who have additional questions or concerns.

It is our hope that you will have a positive experience at the center and that your baby will enter the world surrounded by joy and love.

## FIRST IN CLASS

The New Beginnings Birthing Center has several classes for mothers-to-be and new moms. To find out about a class or to sign up for one, call **336-651-8547**.



## IT'S TIME

### *Preparing for the visit to the hospital*

So the big day is finally here. What do you do now? First, follow what your doctor tells you about coming to the hospital. Call your doctor if you have questions. If you are unable to reach your doctor, call the hospital at **336-651-8100**.

When you reach the hospital, park in the parking lot beside the emergency room. Come in the ER door and tell the registration clerk at the desk your name. If you have been pre-admitted, they will have your information ready. You will be taken to the New Beginnings Birthing Center on the second floor.

# High-Tech Comfort

Bair Paws gown actively warms

Wilkes Regional Medical Center has a new high-tech hospital gown that not only fully covers patients, but actively warms them as well. The single-use Bair Paws gown offers soft, thick material, wrap-around coverage, and connects to the system's warming unit through a small hose. The warming unit blows warm air into the gown through specialized air channels with tiny perforations. Using a handheld controller, patients can adjust the temperature either warmer or cooler, depending on their personal preference.

The system provides adjustable warmth that not only offers comfort to patients, but has clinical benefits as well — including the prevention of unintended hypothermia in many surgical procedures. This step toward prevention is great for patients and Wilkes Regional Medical Center alike. As an example, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has implemented a national quality measure to ensure a broad range of surgical patients are properly warmed to help avoid hypothermia and reduce the incidence of surgical site infections, which the Bair Paws system helps to meet.

## GRIN AND BAIR IT

To find out more about the Bair Paws gown, contact Wilkes Regional Medical Center at **336-651-8523**.



# State-of-the-Art Colon Surgery

Laparoscopy leads to better results than traditional surgery

Those who undergo colon surgery may not be aware of a laparoscopic approach. This approach to colorectal procedures leads to better results than the traditional open surgery by ensuring less postoperative pain and a shorter length of stay in the hospital. This allows for a faster recovery time and permits patients to return to their normal daily activities earlier, which leads to a better quality of life.

Wilkes Regional Medical Center's general surgeons are experienced in performing laparoscopic procedures. The newest member of the general surgery team, Shane Hodge, D.O., specializes in minimally invasive procedures, including hepatobiliary and colorectal surgeries. He finished his residency focusing on advanced laparoscopic surgery, and his interests include colorectal procedures and complex hernia repair.

Laparoscopic surgery only requires small incisions to be able to perform the operation. Surgeons treating colorectal conditions have used a laparoscopic procedure for Crohn's disease, various colorectal cancers, diverticulitis, familial polyposis, fecal incontinence, rectal prolapse and ulcerative colitis. There has been some evidence showing that patients with colon cancer who have had laparoscopic surgery are able to start chemotherapy earlier due to the rapid recovery time. Before undergoing any surgery, especially a colorectal procedure, patients should research surgeons who offer this astonishing state-of-the-art approach.

## MEET OUR DOCS



**Shane Hodge, D.O.**

Shane Hodge, D.O., is a member of Wilkes Regional Surgical Specialists. To make an appointment with a doctor there, call **336-651-8700**.

# Move That Body

Rehab serves many purposes, including falls prevention, strength building

**R**ehabilitation comes in various forms. Falls prevention, strength building and hydrotherapy are three such types.

## FALLS PREVENTION

Falls are among the leading causes of injury and death in the United States, particularly among older adults. Therapy can be used to reduce the risk of falls among the elderly. Falls prevention may encompass a combination of physical exercises, mental exercises, home safety, and daily care and attention to prevent accidents.

To start off, physical and occupational therapists assess a family member's balance. They then create a system of exercises to help retrain vestibular (inner ear) health and improve muscular strength and mobility. They also may evaluate daily habits and risk factors at home and then recommend aids. These may include safety railings on stairs, near toilets and in other key areas.

## STRENGTH BUILDING

Therapy can also be used to build strength if someone has lost functioning or is recovering from an injury or disease. Weight training is often a part of physical



therapy. Leg exercises, for example, can help if someone has undergone knee or hip surgery.

Strength training also may increase functioning among older adults. Research has found that frail elderly persons who follow a physical therapy program consisting primarily of balance exercise and strength training experience a significant reduction in disability after several months.

## HYDROTHERAPY

This type of therapy involves using water for pain relief and treating illness. It can be particularly beneficial for those suffering from osteoarthritis. Because

movements in the water are low-impact, hydrotherapy can be soothing for the joints.

Wilkes Regional Rehab has its own heated indoor hydrotherapy pool dedicated to the aquatic programs that it offers. Exercise programs are delivered by staff at poolside to direct patients in exercises specific to their condition.

Water Shiatsu (WATSU), another aquatic program, is available through our massage therapist and is being integrated into physical therapy treatments for chronic pain management. WATSU is a soothing passive treatment that mobilizes joints and soft tissue using the water's resistance.

**WILKES REGIONAL**  **rehab**  
Restore your Health | Restore your Life

## REHAB WORKS

Find out more about rehab services at Wilkes Regional Medical Center. Call **336-903-7850** or visit [www.wilkesregional.org](http://www.wilkesregional.org).





## DYING WITH DIGNITY

Learn more about hospice services at [www.wilkesregional.org](http://www.wilkesregional.org). Go to Health Services and click on Hospice. Or call 336-903-7700.

**Don't think of hospice as giving up; think of hospice as a gift to give to your loved one.**

# Hospice Offers Support

## End-of-life caring



**W**hen hospice enters your life, most likely someone you love is seriously ill and nearing the end of life. Hospice is there to make the best of a frightening situation. It does not just care for the patient; it is there for everyone involved in the patient's care.

The hospice team has a nurse, social worker, bereavement coordinator and chaplain who are there to meet the needs of the patient, caregivers and family. Hospice nurses coordinate the plan of care, which focuses on palliative care (comfort measures and pain control), and are available 24 hours a day. A CNA (certified nursing assistant) can help with personal care and small chores. The social worker offers emotional support, counseling and referrals for other resources if needed. He/she can assist with completing advance directives, writing letters, making a video or even planning a trip or vacation. The bereavement coordinator provides support to the patient/family before, during and after the death, and stays in contact with them for 13 months. A chaplain is

available for spiritual support, and physical therapists, occupational therapists and nutrition counselors are available for consultations.

### A DIFFICULT TIME

It is not easy to confront the painful reality of an impending death. It is easy to ignore and hope it does not exist. However, if it is inevitably going to happen, it makes more sense to learn as much as possible about the final chapters of life than to have regrets afterwards.

Comments heard frequently from hospice families include: "I wish we had called hospice sooner," and "We had no idea hospice could do so much."

Patients and families are reluctant to accept hospice services because they see it as giving up. But hospice is not just about dying; hospice is about living — how to make the most of the time your loved one has left. Yes, talking about death is a hard conversation to have, but not talking about it does not make it go away. Commonly, a child does not want to talk to their parent about dying

because they do not want to upset them. Conversely, the parent does not talk to their child because they do not want to upset them. There are questions, fears and final conversations to discuss. Don't think of hospice as giving up; think of hospice as a gift to give to your loved one.

## LEND A HAND

*Volunteer opportunities available*

If you are looking to give your time, energy and compassion to a cause, you may want to consider becoming a hospice volunteer. There are many ways to help. Volunteering can include providing support for patients, respite and support for the family members, childcare assistance and bereavement support. Our hospice strives to effectively utilize the time and talents of those who choose to volunteer. Many of our volunteers, who range in age from teenagers to seniors, just want to help their friends and neighbors and serve their community. To ensure that all volunteers feel comfortable working with terminally ill patients, hospice requires that volunteers complete an orientation process. To learn more about becoming a hospice volunteer, contact Hospice of Wilkes Regional at 336-903-7700 for more details.

# Award Winning Care

Wilkes Regional receives Record Breaker awards



Wilkes pride: (Left) Sandy Sheppard, VP of Nursing Operations; Gene Faile, president/CEO; and Barbara Overby, VP of Quality, celebrate their Record Breaker finalist awards.

**W**ilkes Regional Medical Center was the only regional facility to be a finalist in three of the six categories for Record Breaker Awards in the Carolinas HealthCare System. Wilkes Regional ranks among the best of the 33 hospitals in the system. Being selected as a Record Breaker for Quality, Customer Service and Growth is an outstanding achievement that validates our deep commitment to excellence. Here is more on how we scored in the categories:

► **Quality** — Wilkes Regional earned the best hospital performance for 2011 quality-specific goals. Wilkes reached the highest goal in five out of eight acute care goals (hospital acquired conditions, infection prevention, mortality rates,

readmission and length of stay), patient safety indicators and appropriate care.

► **Customer Service** — Wilkes Regional achieved a score of 88.5 percent on Inpatient Overall Quality of Care in 2011 as validated by a random survey of our patients.

► **Growth** — Wilkes Regional Medical Center's market share increased by 4.8 percentage points in fiscal year 2011. This was the largest market share increase of any facility in the Carolinas HealthCare System.

## GIVE US YOUR SCORE

How did we do? Feel free to let us know by calling **336-651-8103**.



## MY HOSPITAL OF CHOICE

*Mayor Inscore selects Wilkes Regional for his surgery*

As the top elected official for the town of Wilkesboro, Mayor Mike Inscore wanted to lead by example. When Mayor Inscore decided that he was in need of surgery, he made up his mind that Wilkes Regional would be his hospital of choice. He is a huge proponent of Wilkes Regional and feels strongly that the hospital's level of care and quality of services are equal to or greater than those of other hospitals outside the county.

"My experience was so positive," he says. "The compassion and attentiveness that I received during the whole experience from pre-op to post-op, and through my overnight stay, was excellent. I could not say enough about the staff who cared for me. They were professional, courteous and considerate. Dr. Jon Thompson made me feel at ease. He made sure that I understood the procedure that he would be performing and the expectations of the recovery process. I knew I would be in good hands."



**GOLD SEAL OF QUALITY**

[www.wilkesregional.org](http://www.wilkesregional.org)

# PHYSICIAN DIRECTORY



## ANESTHESIOLOGY

Barber, Richard, M.D. .... 336-651-8500  
Barnette, Daniel, M.D. .... 336-651-8500  
Henrick, William, M.D. .... 336-651-8500  
Roberson, V.O., M.D. .... 336-651-8500

## CARDIOLOGY

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Thomas, Julian, M.D. .... 336-651-8760  
Vybiral, Tomas, M.D. .... 336-667-1001

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Keys, Alan, M.D. .... 336-667-9300  
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Jewel, James, M.D. .... 336-651-2980  
McMahan, Thomas, M.D. .... 336-667-2634  
Pinkerton, Jerry, M.D. .... 336-838-9553  
Rathmell, Dariel, M.D. .... 336-903-2900  
Redman, Michelle, M.D. .... 336-667-0335  
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Pontzer, John, M.D. .... 336-903-0147  
Raman, Anand, M.D. .... 336-903-0147  
VanNoy, Timothy, M.D. .... 336-903-0147

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## PODIATRY

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McLarney, Jack, M.D. .... 336-651-8100

## UROLOGY

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Peterson, Donald, M.D. .... 336-838-4158

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