"She was in the parking lot crying when she saw me, and asked if I worked here."

On this particular day, a woman felt a lump in her breast and drove to CMC-NorthEast's Breast Health Center to have it checked. Ruth Smith, RN, MSN, escorted the frightened woman inside where she was provided with a free breast exam and taught how to perform a self breast exam. Fortunately, no abnormality was identified and the patient was referred to her primary care provider for follow-up care.

Ruth is the breast health nurse coordinator and navigator, and part of the team of experts at the Breast Health Center. Together they provide the highest level of care for women navigating breast health issues.

For patients that need further treatment, Ruth is at their side guiding them through the entire process from diagnostic exam and biopsy to treatment at Parke Cancer Center. As a nurse navigator, Ruth believes her role is to provide each patient with emotional support, education and advocacy.

Host a Mammogram Party!

Join us at the Breast Health Center for an evening of fun, food, friends, education - and have your mammogram!

Call 704-403-7515 to schedule your party today!
Since my arrival at Carolinas Medical Center–NorthEast a year ago, I’ve had the pleasure of working with a team of wonderful, caring physicians and staff. Relocating here, I’ve also become part of a very dynamic community that is growing along with this region and our state. CMC-NorthEast is the largest, most comprehensive hospital in Cabarrus, Rowan and Stanly counties. We are proud to be a referral center for residents in these communities, offering the highest level of patient care and service.

CMC-NorthEast is a magnet for excellence in our community. We attract the best physicians and staff to support new programs, meet the growing community need for specialized services and provide easier access to the latest technology. It is our vision to be chosen by consumers and physicians as a healthcare provider for high-quality and cost-effective health services.

Next year, CMC-NorthEast will celebrate 75 years of healthcare excellence in this community. Over those 75 years, we have grown from a small, local hospital to a regional referral center offering every service from outpatient X-rays to open heart surgery. We have established a reputation for clinical excellence in cancer care, neurosciences and cardiology. We are pleased with the fact that patients in our region see us as their comprehensive community hospital and recognize that they don’t have to leave our community to get specialized services.

Our goal is to reward that patient loyalty with an ongoing commitment to the highest quality patient care and service excellence. Thank you for putting your trust and health in our hands.

PHYLIS WINGATE-JONES, DIVISION PRESIDENT
Carolinas Medical Center–NorthEast

Join our FREE membership groups!
Sign up today at www.cm-cnortheast.org/groups
Active Women for women on the go. Prime Club for active adults, 55 and older. Get access to a phone triage nurse 24/7, free seminars and discounts at local stores and restaurants.
Beating Off Rhythm

Since Dr. Saxonhouse’s arrival at CMC-NorthEast nearly a year ago, the Rowan-Cabarrus region has gained convenient access to complex cardiac ablation procedures.

Burris spent six hours in surgery at CMC-NorthEast. Fortunately, cardiac ablation does not require open-heart surgery. Dr. Saxonhouse completed the minimally invasive procedure by threading a catheter through Burris’ blood vessels to reach his heart, where she worked to destroy, or ablate, the abnormal heart tissues that cause the arrhythmia.

“We apply a radio frequency to get rid of the electrical short circuits in the heart,” Dr. Saxonhouse said. To assist her during the procedure, Dr. Saxonhouse used a computed tomography (CT) scan to create a three-dimensional map of Burris’ heart.

“Patients often instantly feel like they have more energy,” Dr. Saxonhouse said. Burris was back to work the same week. “I had it [cardiac ablation] on Monday, and I was back to work on Friday,” he said. As a result of the ablation, Burris has reduced his medications and has energy to walk regularly for exercise.

“Dr. Saxonhouse was very thorough,” Burris said. “She wanted what was best for my health and explained all the options and risks I was taking.”

Sherry Saxonhouse, MD, FACC, FHRS, is a cardiologist with Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute at CMC-NorthEast.

There are several factors that contribute to your risk of heart disease and stroke. You cannot control your gender, age or family history. However, you can reduce or control other risk factors. The fewer your risk factors, the lower your chance of having heart disease or stroke.

HEART DISEASE
AM I AT RISK?

PLEASE CHECK ANY RISK FACTOR YOU HAVE:

☐ CIGARETTE SMOKING
☐ GREATER THAN 20 POUNDS OVERWEIGHT
☐ EAT A DIET THAT IS HIGH IN FAT AND SALT
☐ DO NOT EXERCISE REGULARLY
☐ HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
☐ HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL LEVEL
☐ DIABETES
☐ FAMILY HISTORY OF HEART DISEASE
☐ PREVIOUS HISTORY OF CHEST PAIN, CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE “HARDENING OF THE ARTERIES” OR HEART ATTACK

If you have three or more of these risk factors, you may be at risk for heart disease, possible heart attack or stroke. Talk to your personal physician about what steps you can take to reduce your risks.

For a more in depth heart risk assessment, visit www.cmc-northeast.org/heartaware. Once you’ve submitted your HeartAware risk assessment, a healthcare professional will follow up with you to schedule appropriate care if necessary.

When your heart beats, electrical impulses cause the muscles to contract and follow a predictable rhythm. An interruption to the rhythm can lead to heart palpitations, a racing heart rate and regular feelings of exhaustion.

That was the case for Ron Burris, 56, of New London. Burris was in good health, but a routine trip to his family doctor revealed an irregular heartbeat. To regulate his heartbeat, doctors tried electrical shocks, but two attempts were unsuccessful. Burris was a candidate for cardiac ablation.

“Cardiac ablation is a procedure that can correct heart rhythm problems. Ablation uses catheters, or long flexible tubes, to correct structural problems in the heart that cause arrhythmias,” said Sherry Saxonhouse, MD, FACC, FHRS, a physician specializing in adult cardiology.

Dr. Saxonhouse says all arrhythmias, such as the feeling that your heart is racing, fluttering or skipping a beat, are caused by abnormal electrical impulses in the heart.

It can be caused by coronary artery disease, rheumatic heart disease, mitral valve conditions or an overactive thyroid. Atrial fibrillation, the most common arrhythmia, is a fast and chaotic heartbeat in the upper chambers of the heart and is also a major cause of strokes.

Burris’ concern about a possible stroke and damage to his heart motivated him to have cardiac ablation. As the co-owner of Stanly Motors, Inc., a used car dealership in Albemarle, his business requires his day-to-day attention. “In the last 10 years, I have not missed a day at work,” Burris said.

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Delivering Miracles

Born at just 30 weeks and weighing only a fraction over three pounds, little Tinlee Lowder needed the best medical care doctors could provide.

Linda Bresnahan, MD, FACOG, a board-certified OB/GYN physician with Concord Women’s Specialty Care, worked to delay Brandy’s labor during the last days of her pregnancy, allowing Tinlee’s lungs to mature. Dr. Bresnahan said babies born early not only have trouble breathing but their kidneys and liver often are not fully developed.

When labor began again nine days later, it was time for Tinlee to arrive. “They reassured me that there are babies born earlier than this (30 weeks) that make it through and grow up healthy and strong,” Lowder said.

“You don’t know what will happen until the baby is born, but they take all precautions.”

The NICU at Jeff Gordon Children’s Hospital has operated for more than 16 years and includes a team of highly specialized physicians. Our neonatologists remain in the hospital 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Many other pediatric subspecialists are also available to provide care to NICU patients, including pediatric surgeons. The NICU team cares for patients and their families using a family-centered care model. Families are welcome and encouraged to participate in their baby’s care 24/7.

“We used to transfer babies under 30 weeks,” said Dr. Bresnahan, who has delivered at CMC-NorthEast since 1991. “Now we are able to care for babies born at 26 weeks.”

Nurses, neonatologists, respiratory therapists and lactation consultants were on hand to coordinate the special medical attention needed when Tinlee was born. Tinlee spent two months at CMC-NorthEast before coming home to her family. Today, Tinlee is normal weight and is a healthy, smiling baby.
Linda Salter’s symptoms of endometrial cancer were so slight they could have been overlooked. But the 55-year-old X-ray technician had worked in healthcare long enough to know that her symptoms probably shouldn’t be ignored. “I felt in my gut that something was wrong,” said Salter, who lives in Concord.

An endometrial biopsy revealed carcinoma sarcoma, an aggressive cancer. Salter was soon in the hands of Brigitte Miller, MD, the area’s first gynecologic oncologist at Batte Cancer Center at Carolinas Medical Center-NorthEast. Previously, Dr. Miller was head of the gynecologic oncology program at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.

“I’m here so that more people can get convenient treatment close to home,” Dr. Miller said.

The cancer had not spread outside the uterus but major surgery was needed to remove the uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries and pelvic lymph nodes. Dr. Miller, who practices with NorthEast Oncology Associates, performed the minimally invasive surgery using the da Vinci® Robotic Surgical System. “These robots are commonly used for male prostate surgery but are increasingly used for gynecological surgeries,” said Dr. Miller.

Endometrial cancer, a cancer of the lining of the uterus, is frequently diagnosed in more than 40,000 women a year, typically over the age of 45. For many women, the first sign of a problem is post-menopausal bleeding. “Often with other cancers such as ovarian cancer, there are no signs or symptoms until the cancer has spread,” said Dr. Miller.

“Because we do surgery, chemotherapy and follow-up care, we are with our patients throughout the disease process. It enables me to develop a very personal relationship with my patient.”

Salter said receiving exceptional care at Batte Cancer Center made the difficult time easier for her and her family. “Between Dr. Miller’s expertise and the prayers of my family and church, I didn’t have any complications,” Salter said. “I think my recovery has been exceptional.”

To learn more about the signs and symptoms of gynecologic cancers, visit www.cmcknifecom. If you think you may be at risk, talk to your personal physician or call 704-403-1275 to establish a relationship with a physician today.
Small Patients, Big Challenges

When adults are not well, they can usually describe their symptoms to a doctor, but children aren’t little adults. When a child is in pain, he or she is more likely to be quiet and often can’t describe where it hurts.

“Children are resilient, but they can’t tolerate a lot of pain for a long time,” said David Hoover, MD, Medical Director of Jeff Gordon Children’s Hospital Pediatric Pavilion. “When they do become critically ill, if you don’t intervene in time, you may miss the opportunity to have a good outcome.”

Three-month-old Ayden Gheen was brought to see his pediatrician with constipation and abdominal distension. Ayden was found to have a congenital absence of nerve cells, which prevented him from passing stools. To correct the problem, Dr. Hoover performed laparoscopic surgery. Conducting the operation laparoscopically created less scarring internally and allowed Ayden to recover quickly.

“It was comforting to know that we had finally figured out what was wrong with him,” said Ayden’s father, Brandon Gheen of High Rock Lake.

David Hoover, MD, and Sri Pillai, MD, are pediatric surgeons with Carolinas Pediatric Surgery and experts in congenital defect correction, abdominal and oncology surgery and removing foreign bodies, such as tumors. Both specialize in neonatal surgery and are among just 500 board-certified pediatric surgeons in North America.

Specializing in conditions affecting children from newborns through the teenage years, pediatric surgeons also learn to be aware of the often hard to read signs given by critically ill children.

As part of an increasingly sophisticated level of services to patients at Carolinas Medical Center-NorthEast, pediatric surgery provides experienced, skilled and caring surgeons trained to work with children. Supporting the pediatric surgeons are the hospital’s round-the-clock team of neonatologists, obstetric hospitalists, anesthesiologists and a Level IV Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) providing the highest level of neonatal care.

Ayden did well in surgery and in a few weeks was no different from any four-month-old baby. Gheen said having the surgery at CMC-NorthEast, which is just a 30-minute drive from home, made the surgery and hospital stay much easier on family. “It didn’t take Ayden long to heal, and I believe what he’s gone through made him stronger,” Gheen said of his son.

“Dr. Hoover is a great doctor. I knew everything was going to be all right, and Ayden was in good hands.”

Carolina Pediatric Surgery has offices in Concord, Huntersville and Salisbury with a new office opening in the University area. For more information on the specialized pediatric services we offer our most special patients, visit www.carolinapediatricsurgery.org.

Jeff Gordon Children’s Hospital, our 53-bed hospital on the campus of Carolinas Medical Center-NorthEast, provides highly specialized, exceptional pediatric subspecialty and intensive care in one convenient location. The Pediatric Pavilion at Jeff Gordon Children’s Hospital houses our physician practices for pediatric subspecialty care including cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, hematology/oncology, neurology, pulmonology, surgery and urology. The Pediatric Pavilion recently opened a new satellite office for outpatient care in Salisbury, providing easier access to pediatric surgery and neurology.

Jeff Gordon Children’s Hospital is proudly affiliated with Levine Children’s Hospital in Charlotte, the largest and most comprehensive children’s hospital between Atlanta and Washington, DC with board-certified pediatric physicians in more than 30 medical and surgical specialties.
CMC-Kannapolis
Breaks Ground

Residents facing emergencies and life-threatening conditions can access the highest level of care when CMC-Kannapolis opens this winter. The free-standing emergency department, which can receive patients transported by Emergency Medical Services (EMS), will be staffed with board-certified physicians and nurses who have access to the latest technology to treat patients experiencing all degrees of emergencies.

“We’ll have the ability to come to clinical decisions quickly and be able to take care of any emergency or condition that comes through the door,” said Jeffrey Galvin, MD, Medical Director of CMC-Kannapolis and emergency medicine physician. Patients needing additional treatment for critical or chronic conditions will be transferred and admitted to Carolinas Medical Center-NorthEast via awaiting transport.

Using a state-of-the-art physician ordering system, CMC-Kannapolis will be connected to 22 hospitals in Carolinas HealthCare System (CHS), including CMC-NorthEast. The benefits are that physician orders, lab results, computed tomography (CT) scans and the results of other procedures performed at CMC-Kannapolis can be shared easily between facilities and attending physicians. This technology will enable CMC-Kannapolis to serve as an extension of the much utilized emergency department at CMC-NorthEast, while expanding care further into the community.

“We already take care of a huge number of people from Rowan County and this facility will be more convenient to those residents as well as those in Kannapolis,” Dr. Galvin said. Located at 2711 Lane St., near Exit 63 off I-85, CMC-Kannapolis will operate 24-hours a day, offering sophisticated healthcare services by board-certified emergency trained physicians. The 26,000 square foot facility will have 10 treatment bays and two observation rooms. Radiology services will include X-ray, ultrasound and CT scanning equipment. Other support services include an on-site laboratory.

Dr. Galvin said particular emphasis has been placed on the design of CMC-Kannapolis to create a comforting environment staffed by professionals admired not only for their clinical skills, but also their ability to treat patients with outstanding courtesy.
Total Care for the Mind, Body & Soul

Like many patients with chronic conditions, Nancy Thompson of the Rowan County community of Faith couldn’t find relief. But ancient techniques used for thousands of years in other cultures, and now offered through a medical approach known as integrative medicine, have brought her comfort.

After years of seeking treatments and medication that didn’t help, Thompson began seeing Bridget Bongard, MD, a board-certified internist with NorthEast Internal & Integrative Medicine. A graduate of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, a program conducted by physician and author Andrew Weil, MD, Dr. Bongard leads Carolinas Medical Center-NorthEast’s integrative medicine program.

Thompson’s agony from lupus, an autoimmune disease that affects the skin and organs, opened her mind to acupuncture, hypnosis, hands-on healing and other non-traditional medical services. Dr. Bongard says patients are increasingly requesting a broader view of their health. More than a prescription, they want suggestions for changes in exercise and daily routines, vitamins and supplements and ancient healing techniques that can improve their overall health.

Dr. Bongard is often consulted in cases where there is no cure for a patient’s ailment and where nontraditional approaches have been shown to help.

Dr. Bongard says integrative medicine helps patients suffering from anxiety, chronic nausea, severe pain, irritable bowel syndrome and the side effects of chemotherapy, insomnia, fibromyalgia and migraine headaches. Medical massage, acupuncture, Reiki hands-on healing, yoga and meditation, vitamins and dietary supplements might be used to help patients dealing with chronic diseases.

“Symptom relief can improve quality of life,” Dr. Bongard said. “If we can help someone to sleep better, they may not need as much medication. We apply these complimentary therapies in addition to the standard excellent medical care patients are receiving.”

Thompson believes the approach has helped to limit the number of prescription medications she takes.

CMC-NorthEast launched the region’s first integrative medicine service line in 2007. The growing acceptance of complementary medical services has prompted CMC-NorthEast to develop programs to expand integrative medicine for specialty practice areas including neurology, oncology, orthopedics, gastroenterology and rheumatology to better serve patients receiving traditional medical services.

“Dr. Bongard can come into the room and she won’t even have her hand off the door knob and will say, ‘I can tell by your eyes that you are not well,’” Thompson said. “After all these years, she still really cares.”

FIBROMYALGIA CLINIC

If you are experiencing side effects due to fibromyalgia, our comprehensive packages are designed to provide you with relief through custom massage and acupuncture treatments. Visit www.northeastintegrativemedicine.org to view our packages or call 704-403-7050 to schedule an appointment.
When Minutes Matter Most

On a crisp Saturday morning in October 2007, Tony Thornton took his position on Bethel Fields in Midland to coach his young son and daughter in a soccer game. But before the whistle blew, Thornton collapsed. “I didn’t feel anything,” Thornton, 44, remembers now three years later. “It was just like I had no power in my leg and arm.” What happened next was critical to Thornton’s survival.

Onlookers rushed to Thornton and within minutes he was at Carolinas Medical Center-NorthEast, where he received a life-saving drug called TPA, which dislodged a blood clot in his brain that caused his stroke.

“Strokes occur without warning and usually without pain,” said Russ Bodner, MD, a neurologist with NorthEast Neurology and Thornton’s doctor that day. “Acting fast is the best way to lessen the damage that’s occurring in the brain. That’s why it’s critical that people know the symptoms of a stroke and do not hesitate to take action.”

A stroke occurs when vital blood flow and oxygen are cut off from the brain. Symptoms can include sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, sudden confusion or trouble speaking, trouble seeing in one or both eyes, trouble walking or loss of balance and severe headache. In the United States, stroke is the third leading cause of death, but the good news is that stroke deaths are falling, dropping 18 percent from 1996 to 2006.

Since his stroke, Thornton has received physical and exercise therapy at the West Cabarrus YMCA through CMC-NorthEast’s Medical Referral Program. Water exercise and fitness training help release muscle tightness and gain a wider range of motion for Thornton in his arms and legs.

“The brain is an amazing organ,” said Susan Yaguda, RN, MSN, the health promotions nurse with the Medical Referral Program who works with Thornton at the YMCA. “Through therapy and learning different ways to perform daily tasks, Tony’s making continued progress.”

Russ Bodner, MD, is a neurologist with NorthEast Neurology.

Take a stroke risk assessment at www.cmc-northeast.org/strokeactfast.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to learn more about Carolinas Stroke Network at CMC-NorthEast.

Orthopedic Breakthroughs

People of all ages who suffer from painful joints, either from injury or arthritis, are finding new options for treatment at Piedmont Orthopedic Specialists.

“Increasingly, we have new solutions for all of our patients,” said Andrew Ferris, DO, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon with Piedmont Orthopedic Specialists and a second-generation orthopedic surgeon. Piedmont Orthopedic Specialists now offers partial knee replacement, the latest developments in shoulder replacement and cutting edge cartilage growth therapies.

“With a partial knee replacement doctors are able to make a smaller incision and remove only the most damaged areas of cartilage. A partial knee replacement can last just as long or longer than a total knee replacement with a faster recovery,” Dr. Ferris said.

Sherry Steen, 61, and a retired first grade teaching assistant in Landis, received a total knee replacement in 2010 after a decade of enduring joint pain. Steen said the pain of her knee prevented her from walking and day-to-day activities.

“Dr. Ferris is the absolute kindest, sweetest doctor anyone could have. I would love to go to him for everything that is wrong with me,” Steen said. “He’s interested in me as a person, not just as a knee replacement.”

From knees to shoulders, Dr. Ferris and the physicians at Piedmont Orthopedics Specialists perform reverse shoulder replacements. In the past, patients with severe shoulder tears that could not be repaired were left without the strength to raise their arms and had few treatment options. By reversing the position of the shoulder’s ball and cup, patients can regain elevation of their arms.

Dr. Ferris and his colleagues are also using DeNovo Cartilage Graphing to grow new cartilage for their injured patients. This cell-based treatment calls for transplanting cartilage cells into the damaged, weight-bearing portion of a patient’s knee and allowing new cartilage to grow. “It’s a new way to treat damaged cartilage,” Dr. Ferris said, “and initial studies are promising.”

Our providers treat a wide range of orthopedic injuries and through our partnership with the Sports Medicine and Injury Center, we get you back in the game faster. Schedule an appointment with our orthopedic physicians by calling 704-403-7020.

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The Cabarrus Family Medicine Residency Program is accredited by the American Council of Graduate Medical Education, a designation it has had since starting in 1996. The program recently received recognition from the National Center for Quality Assurance at all four clinics for excellence in diabetes care. All four residency offices are also recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Homes.

Dr. Robinson says the four-clinic approach to residency has been successful because doctors-in-training have the opportunity to work in an authentic clinical setting, much like the environment they will work in once their residency has finished.

“When you have a resident as your doctor you have two physicians caring for you because a faculty physician reviews all resident visits,” Dr. Robinson said. “A faculty physician is always on-site to teach and supervise the resident. Residents also have more time to spend with patients.”

Dr. Robinson says he believes primary care physicians are the foundation of a better healthcare system in which patients receive crucial preventive care and ongoing management and treatment for chronic problems.

“When access to quality primary care goes up, costs go down,” Dr. Robinson said. “That’s been proven over and over. Getting access to primary care can solve the problem.”

As healthcare reform persists, Dr. Robinson expects the need for primary care physicians to increase.

“I tell my residents that your goal in medicine should be to cure sometimes, help often and comfort always,” Dr. Robinson said. “That’s what family physicians do and we do it over a person’s lifetime.”

Mark Robinson, MD
Residency Program Director
Kara Gallagher, MD
Chief Resident