A Message from Our CEO

Dear Friends:

As your community hospital, we at Methodist North place improving healthcare for you and your family at the forefront of everything we do. We recently completed major renovations to our entire Emergency Department to reduce the time you spend in our ER. This nearly $3 million renovation and equipment investment allowed us to put into practice innovative new processes and offer you a guarantee that you will be seen by a physician, nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant within 30 minutes of arrival. We are proud to be the only hospital in our community to offer this guarantee.

We also recently received certification for AMI (Acute Myocardial Infarction or heart attack). After a rigorous review from an independent hospital review team, we were given this certification for meeting and exceeding their stringent guidelines for patient care. This certification is further evidence that Methodist North is continuing to raise standards and improve levels of care for patients and their families.

All of these improvements are due to your support and the increased number of community members who are now making Methodist North their primary hospital. I thank you for the trust that you have placed in us, your continued support of our initiatives and for making us your preferred hospital of choice.

Sincerely,

Michael Ugwueke
DHA, FACHE
CEO/Administrator

Electronic Medical Records Improve Care and Safety

Hospitals are well-known for acronyms and abbreviations – from A&W to Z-plasty.* One that you may be noticing more often at Methodist North Hospital is EMR.

Methodist North Hospital is one of the few hospitals in the U.S. that has upgraded to an electronic medical record (EMR) system to improve patient care, safety and convenience. President Barack Obama wants all medical records computerized by 2014. However, fewer than 1% of hospitals nationwide are paperless or nearly paperless.**

What Is an EMR?
An EMR is an electronic version of the old paper chart that contained your medical history. EMRs offer many patient benefits, such as:

• **Less baggage:** When you have X-rays or scans done, the images are electronically saved in your EMR. There is no need to get copies and bring them back to your doctor yourself.

• **Convenience:** You can see your doctor as soon as possible, without waiting for your paper file to be located and brought to the right office before your visit. You can also get lab work done sooner because your doctor can send test orders electronically to the lab.

• **Security:** Only authorized medical providers in our system can view your EMR with your consent, and there is clear documentation of every person who opens your record. Paper files can be lost in case of fire or flood, but EMRs are stored securely in our new EMR system with backup file protection.

*continued on page 3
Don’t Dismiss Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation (AF), the most common type of abnormal heart rhythm, is not usually life-threatening on its own. If untreated, however, AF can cause serious complications. AF increases the risk of stroke five-fold, according to the American Heart Association, and it can also lead to congestive heart failure and chronic fatigue.

AF happens when the heart’s upper chambers quiver instead of beat effectively. This can cause blood to pool and clot, potentially leading to a stroke. Normally the heart contracts and relaxes in a coordinated rhythm. AF interferes with the heart’s normal electrical signals, causing an irregular, rapid heartbeat.

Are You at Risk?
About 3 million Americans suffer from AF, and that number is likely to double by 2035.* The following factors increase your risk for AF:

• Age (risk increases with age).
• History of heart disease, heart attack, heart surgery or valve problems.
• High blood pressure.
• Chronic conditions such as thyroid problems, sleep apnea and other medical problems.
• Alcohol consumption (for some people drinking alcohol can trigger AF).
• Family history of AF.

Episodes of AF may come and go in a matter of hours, or symptoms may persist for longer periods until treated. Palpitations (the sensation of a racing, fluttering or irregular heartbeat) are the most recognizable symptom of AF. Other symptoms include weakness, fatigue, lightheadedness, confusion, shortness of breath and chest pain. Call for emergency medical help if you experience chest pain, which may be a sign of a heart attack.

If you think you are experiencing AF, seek urgent medical care. A doctor can assess your condition and refer you to an electrophysiologist who specializes in diagnosing and treating heart arrhythmias. An electrophysiology study may be done to record electrical activity of your heart and determine the cause of heart rhythm disturbance.

Restoring the Right Rhythm
Treatments for AF restore or reset the heart’s rhythm so your heart can pump blood effectively. A doctor can determine the best course of treatment for you, which may include one or more of the following options:

• Lifestyle modifications to reduce risk factors – a heart-healthy, low-sodium diet; exercise; smoking cessation; avoiding alcohol.
• Medications may be used to slow down the rapid heart rate associated with AF and/or prevent clotting.
• Electrical cardioversion may be performed by a physician to restore normal heart rhythm using a precise electric shock defibrillator.
• Radiofrequency ablation is a procedure that delivers a burst of radiofrequency energy through a thin, flexible tube inserted in a blood vessel. The treatment destroys tissue that triggers abnormal electrical signals.
• Surgery can be performed to disrupt electrical pathways that cause AF.
• Atrial pacemakers may be implanted to regulate the heart’s rhythm.

Listen to Your Body
Don’t ignore a racing, fluttering heartbeat or other signs of AF. Treatment for AF helps you feel better now and prevents more serious complications down the road. To learn more about treatment options and our team of cardiologists and electrophysiologists at Methodist North Hospital, please call 901.516.5200.


Welcome to Our New Physicians
Methodist North Hospital is proud to announce the following new physicians who practice with us:

Emergency Medicine
Martin Kosciuk, M.D.
3960 New Covington Pike
Memphis, TN 38128
901.516.5211

Otolaryngology
Glenn Blake Williams, M.D.
Ear, Nose and Throat Group
3980 New Covington Pike, Ste. 310
Memphis, TN 38128
901.372.4643

Plastic Surgery
James Mark Sledge, M.D.
Clinic of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
1000 Brookfield, Ste. 100
Memphis, TN 38119
901.765.4700

Urology
William V. Shappley Jr., M.D.
Shappley Clinic
7705 Poplar Ave., Ste. 310B
Germantown, TN 38138
901.759.0101

Congratulations to Dr. David McMillan, who is now a Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Methodist North Launches ED 30-minute Guarantee
And Celebrates Renovated Emergency Department

Methodist North Hospital is dedicated to reducing Emergency Room wait times and improving the ER experience for you and your family. We recently celebrated the completion of an extensive renovation of our entire Emergency Department and launched a new program to make sure you’re seen faster when you visit our ER. We now offer a guarantee that you will be seen by a physician, nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant within 30 minutes of the time you register. Critical cases, as always, will receive immediate attention.

“Our patients deserve the best care in emergency service, because every minute is important,” says Michael Ugwueke, DHA, FACHE, CEO of Methodist North. “Our goal is for every single patient to be seen by a physician within 30 minutes. If there is an instance when we do not meet our standard, patients will receive a letter of apology from me and a complimentary gift.”

Over the past several months, approximately $3 million in renovations were completed, including flooring, lighting, a state-of-the-art resuscitation area, nursing stations, security areas, and computers in each room giving caregivers access to patient electronic medical records. “These changes will produce a more efficient environment for our ER patients,” said Korene Christianson, RN, BSN, CEN, Director of Emergency Services at Methodist North. “Our staff is excited about the enhanced care we’ll be providing patients.”

Methodist North had 47,792 Emergency Department visits in 2009 and expects an increase in 2010. “This has been a team effort,” says Ugwueke. “The true beneficiary of all this work is the patient who comes through our emergency door and is treated quickly and with dignity and respect. We are pleased to provide this service to patients and families at Methodist North.”

These improvements, along with Methodist North’s recent recognition as a Certified AMI (heart attack) program and an accredited Chest Pain Center, allow us to lead the way in providing exceptional care to you and our community.

Electronic Medical Records Improve Care and Safety

Coordinated care: EMRs improve communication between all your providers at Methodist North Hospital. Instant messaging allows quick responses and electronic tasking automatically notifies specific providers about tests, labs and other services that each patient needs.

24/7 availability: EMRs are available to any Methodist North provider, including providers staffed on-call during evenings, weekends and holidays.

Patient-Centered Visits
At your next visit, you may notice your doctor using a laptop. This allows him or her to reference your EMR quickly, record necessary information and spend more time focused on you.

We’re pleased to offer our patients this improved service. Providing patient-centered, quality care is our priority, and we are proud to be one of the first health systems in Tennessee to implement this advanced technology.

Methodist North Receives Certification in AMI

We are proud to announce that we recently earned the distinction of Certified AMI Program. AMI stands for Acute Myocardial Infarction and is more commonly known as heart attack. This certification means that we have demonstrated commitment to quality patient care by meeting or exceeding a wide set of strict criteria and completing on-site evaluations by an outside review team. Along with our Certified Chest Pain Center, these national recognitions allow Methodist North to show our community that we are continuously improving healthcare for our patients by following national standards and guidelines.

Upcoming Events

Free Lunch & Learn Series
Methodist North invites you to attend our free lunch and learn series this summer. The series begins in June and continues through July and August. Each presentation will focus on an important health topic and will include free blood pressure and cholesterol screenings. Advance registration is required and seating is limited. Events are from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and are free and open to the public with a light lunch provided. To register and to hear a complete listing of dates and topics, call 888.777.5959.

Hip and Knee Replacement Classes
The Total Joint Center offers free Hip and Knee Replacement classes on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. If you are considering joint replacement surgery, this is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the procedure and what to expect during recovery. Space is limited, so please call to reserve your seat at 901.516.5639.