



A monthly newsletter for physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants & other health care professionals



NORTH MISSISSIPPI
MEDICAL CENTER

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Women's Hospital Upgrades da Vinci Robots

The North Mississippi Medical Center Women's Hospital recently upgraded from the third generation technology (da Vinci Si) to the fourth



Drs. Brandi McGehee, Bennett McGehee, Kristen Turner and Johnny Miles



Drs. Ronald Young, Eric Webb and Mark Kellum

generation of da Vinci technology, the X system, which launched in January. OB-GYNs have performed 4,800 cases using da Vinci technology at Women's Hospital since 2012.

The da Vinci vision system delivers 3D high-definition views, giving the surgeon a crystal clear view of the surgical area that is magnified 10 times to what the human eye sees. The surgeon uses tiny instruments that move like a human hand but with a far greater range of motion. Built-in tremor-filtration technology helps the surgeon move each instrument with smooth precision.

NMMC surgeons use da Vinci technology for procedures in various specialties, including gynecology, general surgery, urology and colorectal surgery.

In addition to NMMC Women's Hospital, NMHS offers robotic surgery at NMMC's

main hospital in Tupelo, NMMC Gilmore-Amory and NMMC-West Point. Surgeons throughout NMHS have performed more than 10,500 cases using da Vinci technology since acquiring the first robotic surgical platform at NMMC-Tupelo 14 years ago.

NMHS Names Ungo VP for Business Development

NMHS has named Beth Ungo vice president for business development. In the new role, Ungo supports the health system's growth as NMHS seeks new ways to better connect with people outside the hospital.

A native of Iuka, Ungo's health care career began at NMMC-Iuka as a medical-surgical nurse. During her nursing career, she served as a clinical management analyst, nurse manager, breast health navigator and nursing instructor. She worked as an attorney from 2008 to 2010 before returning to health care. She stepped into health



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leadership roles with NMHS in oncology and radiology. She also served as the senior leader for Urologic, a large urology practice headquartered in Tupelo. Before returning to NMHS, she led Blue Cross Blue Shield's efforts to create an innovative care and payment model and coordinated a new business start-up for a primary care center for the insurer's members.

Ungo holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of North Alabama and a master's degree in nursing administration from University of Alabama in Huntsville. She earned her law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law. She is married to Jaime Ungo, M.D.

Starkville Medical Clinic Opens

Family physician Cliff Story, M.D., and NMMC-West Point have teamed up to open Starkville Medical Clinic.



Open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8 a.m.-noon Friday, the clinic offers services for adults and children age 5 and up, including sick care, well visits, chronic condition management and same-day appointments. Starkville Medical Clinic is located in the same building as North Mississippi Urology at 100 Wilburn Way. For more information, call (662) 465-2050.

Dr. Story, who took care of patients at West Point Medical Clinic from 2005-2008, spent more than a decade caring for the Mississippi State University family through University Health Services. He joined the Mississippi State University health team in 2008, serving as a Longest Student Health Center staff physician, head team physician for MSU athletics and an adjunct faculty member. From 2013 to 2021, he served as executive director for University Health Services.

Before opening the new clinic, Dr. Story served in an interim capacity at West Point Internal Medicine after the retirement of Andrzej Wartak, M.D., and the death of Ed Miller, M.D.

A native of Slidell, Louisiana, Dr. Story is a graduate of Mississippi State University and University of Mississippi School of Medicine. He completed his family medicine residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson and is board certified by the American Board of Family Physicians.

West Point Clinic Changes Name, Expands Team

Family physician Cole Wilkerson, D.O., and nurse practitioner Lori Conn, FNP-BC, have joined West Point Primary Care, the new name for West Point Internal Medicine.



Along with nurse practitioners Rebecca Stanford, CFNP, and Sara Cox, AGNP, they will continue the legacy built by the recently retired Dr. Andrzej Wartak and the late Dr. Ed Miller.

For the past three years, Dr. Wilkerson has worked with Relias Healthcare, completing an emergency medicine fellowship and caring for emergency department patients in north Mississippi and west Alabama, including NMHS hospitals in West Point, Tupelo, Amory and Hamilton, Alabama.

Dr. Wilkerson, who is board-certified in family medicine, grew up in Myrtle and is a lifelong resident of north Mississippi. He graduated from the University of Mississippi, where he was a member of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. He completed his medical degree at William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Hattiesburg and trained at the NMMC Family Medicine Residency Center in Tupelo.

Conn started her health care career in 1993 as a nursing assistant at NMMC-Tupelo. Throughout her nursing career she worked in cardiology, behavioral health and school nursing. She became a nurse practitioner in December 2020 and trained with the NMMC Advanced Practice Clinician Fellowship.



Conn earned her associate degree in nursing from Northeast Mississippi Community College in Booneville, and her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from the University of North Alabama.

Clinics Welcome Nurse Practitioners

Linda Garrett, FNP-C, has joined Hamilton Medical Clinic. Garrett earned her associate degree in nursing from Beville State Community College in Fayette, Alabama, in 2008. She earned a bachelor's degree in nursing in 2013 from Mississippi University for Women in Columbus and master's degree in 2016 from University of Alabama in Birmingham.



JodiLyn Allred Ferguson, PNP-C, sees patients at Children's Clinic in Tupelo each Wednesday. Ferguson also sees patients at Eupora Pediatric Clinic, where she worked since August 2021. She joined the NMHS team six years ago, working at NMMC-Tupelo in Pediatrics and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Ferguson holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from MUW and a master's degree in nursing from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.



NMMC-Tupelo Adds FEES Technology

NMMC-Tupelo speech-language pathologists recently began using new technology to assess patients' swallow and voice.

The test helps determine problems and possible solutions for safe swallowing to help prevent aspiration pneumonia. It also allows visualization of the vocal structures to increase information about voice deficits.

With the new fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES) equipment, speech-language pathologists with NMMC's Acute Care Rehabilitation team can perform instrumental swallow studies in some patients' hospital rooms. Before, all patients who required instrumental studies had to be taken to the Radiology Department for a modified barium swallow test, which was not an option for patients unable to transfer or sit up for the test.

During the test, the SLP passes an endoscope with a light and camera through the person's nose and then views parts of his throat as he voices and swallows. The FEES test has three parts. During the first phase, the SLP observes the patient's velopharyngeal and laryngeal physiology. During the second phase, the SLP watches how well the person swallows saliva before any food is introduced.



Speech-language pathologist Jamie Elliot of NMMC's Acute Rehabilitation Services performs a FEES study on volunteer Brandon Bath during training.

During the third phase, swallowing is assessed with different textures and amounts of food and liquid.

FEES testing is also offered at NMMC's Outpatient Rehabilitation Center at Longtown Medical Park and at NMMC-Pontotoc.

Dr. Harrington Retires from Neurology Consultants

Neurologist Donna Harrington, M.D., of Neurology Consultants has retired after 33 years of practice in Tupelo.

Dr. Harrington received her medical degree in 1982 from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in Jackson and completed residency training at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock. While her husband, Andrew Kellum, M.D., was completing an oncology fellowship in Oklahoma City, Dr. Harrington served three years on the faculty at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Drs. Harrington and Kellum moved to Tupelo in 1989. She joined Dr. Sam Newell and Dr. Thomas Oakes at Tupelo Neurology, which affiliated with NMHS 10 years ago and became Neurology Consultants.

Retirement will allow Dr. Harrington more time to pursue some of her other favorite activities, like swimming at the NMMC Wellness Center, and riding bicycles or cross-country skiing with her husband. They also enjoy backpacking, backcountry camping and bicycle touring, which she describes as "backpacking on your bike."

"I'll do what I've always done, but I'll just have more time now to do it," Dr. Harrington said.



Dr. Robertson Retires from Children's Clinic

Tupelo pediatrician Charles "Skip" Robertson, M.D., recently retired after 35 years of practice in Tupelo.

Dr. Robertson says the best part of his career was the relationships with patients and their families. "Watching my patients grow up and do well has been a lot of fun," he said.

After practicing in Jackson for nine years, Dr. Robertson joined Children's Clinic of Tupelo in 1987. In 1993, Children's Clinic of Tupelo merged with North Mississippi Pediatrics. In 2017, North Mississippi Pediatrics forged a partnership with North Mississippi Health Services and Children's of Mississippi, and the practice became (once again) Children's Clinic of Tupelo and Saitillo. In 2021, the two clinics moved into a centralized location in Fairpark in downtown Tupelo.

Dr. Robertson graduated from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in Jackson in 1975 and completed residency training in pediatrics at UMMC in 1978.

He served almost 20 years as a pediatrics preceptor for NMMC's Family Medicine Residency Program and was chosen Preceptor of the Year in 2007. He chaired NMMC's OB-GYN/Pediatrics section from 1996-1998 and received the Golden Tongue Blade Award in 2009. He served on the School Nurse Project Steering Committee and Child Protection Taskforce, and he taught Pediatric Advanced Life Support courses.

He was appointed to the state's Caring for Mississippi Individuals with Autism Taskforce and served on the editorial board for Mississippi Healthy Babies Update.





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IRB Update

The NMHS Institutional Review Board (IRB) currently oversees more than 80 biomedical and behavioral studies. The IRB meets monthly and the following study was renewed on March 17, 2022.

Study Renewal:

Study: *PHDEV – Repository of Phase Signals for Pulmonary Hypertension Algorithm Development*

Investigators: Steve Carroll, M.D. (PI); Joseph Adams, M.D.; Dane Ballard, M.D.; Barry Bertolet, M.D.; Benjamin Blossom, M.D.; Michael Boler, D.O.; Roger Williams, M.D.

Summary: The primary objective of this study is to build a repository of resting cardiac phase signals and subject meta data from eligible subjects using the Phase Signal Recorder prior to right heart catheterization. Enrollment is open.

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