



# practice notes



**NORTH MISSISSIPPI  
MEDICAL CENTER**

February 2020

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

## **NMMC Retina Center Offers Innovative Treatment**

Retina surgeon Heather Hancock, M.D., recently gave North Mississippi Retina Center's first Beovu® (brolucizumab) injection to treat wet age-related macular degeneration.

Beovu received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in October 2019. This medication lasts longer than previous options and is the first to allow patients to go three months between injections.

Wet macular degeneration occurs when the macula becomes unhealthy – abnormal blood vessels form and cause bleeding and scar formation. Treatment varies by patient, with most requiring injections every four to six weeks on average.

“Because these abnormal vessels leak fluid and blood, the fluid makes your vision blurry and the blood causes you to have blind spots,” Dr. Hancock said. “Beovu dries the retinal fluid and makes the blood vessels less likely to leak. Your

vision can improve, possibly even to the point where you no longer need the injections.”

For patients who are good candidates for Beovu, the new injectable may mean fewer trips to the doctor – four times a year instead of every four to six weeks. “Many of these patients don't drive, which means a family member has to take off work to bring them in,” Dr. Hancock said. “Any injection can be accompanied by a little discomfort, so fewer injections mean less discomfort.”

Dr. Hancock explained that patients must have three monthly injections of Beovu before “graduating” to the

quarterly regimen. For more information about this and other innovative treatments at the North Mississippi Retina Center, visit [www.nmhs.net/retina](http://www.nmhs.net/retina) or call (662) 377-3340. Physician referral is not required.

## **NMMC Specialty Pharmacy Achieves Accreditation**

North Mississippi Medical Center recently achieved accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) for specialty pharmacy services.

“We are proud of our national accreditations because it shows our community that we are dedicated to providing the highest-quality care possible and demonstrates the level of specialty pharmacy services our patients can receive from an in-state provider,” said Patti Hawkins, Pharm.D., interim administrator for NMMC Cancer Care and Director of Infusion and Specialty Pharmacy. “Our model of care is unique and innovative in the health care industry. We have imbedded specialty pharmacy services with infusion services, which



*Dr. Heather Hancock recently gave the first Beovu injection at North Mississippi Retina Center. This new medication means fewer doctor visits for many patients with wet macular degeneration.*

To submit information, call (662) 377-2371 or email [gacausey@nmhs.net](mailto:gacausey@nmhs.net).  
Visit [www.nmhs.net/practice-notes](http://www.nmhs.net/practice-notes) to read this newsletter online.

allows flexibility in providing drugs at the facility or to the patient for self-administration if appropriate. Our medication management clinic, which is a component of our Specialty Pharmacy model, is garnering attention because the way we provide care is increasing medication adherence for patients, which is important to help people stay well and manage their diseases.”

Accreditation by ACHC reflects an organization’s dedication and commitment to meeting standards that facilitate a higher level of performance and patient care.

ACHC is a nonprofit organization that has stood as a symbol of quality and excellence since 1986.

The Specialty Pharmacy offers a patient management program to help ensure that patients are able to adhere to their medications as prescribed. Staff works closely with patients and providers to manage any problems or side effects that need to be addressed.

In addition, NMMC Specialty Pharmacy is the first hospital based program in Mississippi accredited by URAC, a national accrediting body that provides organizations with a standards framework that helps identify areas for improvement and promotes continuous quality improvement.

For more information, visit [www.nmhs.net/specialty-pharmacy](http://www.nmhs.net/specialty-pharmacy).



NMMC Specialty Pharmacy Staff (from left) Amanda Summers, Pharm.D., Specialty Pharmacy Manager; Kayla Hawkins; Reagan Criswell; Janice Meguire, CPhT; Taylor Parker; Hillary Morgan, CPhT; Ronnie Crosswhite, Pharm.D; Nikki Sanchez, CPhT; Patti Hawkins, Pharm.D., Director; and Ginger Sweeney, Pharm.D.

## OB-GYNs Join Women’s Group

The Women’s Group and North Mississippi Medical Center-West Point announce the addition of obstetrician-gynecologists Pranjali Desai, M.D., and Sneha Desai, M.D., to the medical staff.

The Desais have joined Drs. Barbrette Baldwin, Cherita Brown and John Shields, and nurse practitioner Becky Mitchener. For appointment information, call (662) 494-9466 or 1-800-THE DESK (1-800-843-3375).

The couple has moved to West Point from Ardmore, Oklahoma, where they have practiced with Mercy Clinic since 2017.

Dr. Pranjali Desai trained in medicine and surgery at Smt. NHL Municipal Medical College of Gujarat University in India, followed by a rotating internship. He completed residency training in general surgery there in 2004. In 2015, he completed residency training in obstetrics and gynecology at Morristown Medical Center in Morristown, New Jersey, an affiliate of the Atlantic Health System. He also holds a master’s degree in public health from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Dr. Sneha Desai also trained in medicine and surgery at Smt. NHL Municipal Medical College of Gujarat University in India, followed by a rotating internship. She completed residency training in obstetrics and gynecology there in 2004. She completed a residency in obstetrics and gynecology with Morristown Medical Center and Overlook Medical Center in Summit, New Jersey, in 2013, serving as chief resident from 2012-2013. She was honored for “Clinical Excellence in Obstetrics” in 2012 and 2013, and Best Research Award in 2013, by the obstetrics and gynecology department at Atlantic Health System.

Both physicians have a special interest in robotic surgery, which is now available at NMMC-West Point.



The Women’s Group and North Mississippi Medical Center-West Point recently welcomed obstetrician-gynecologists Pranjali Desai, M.D., and Sneha Desai, M.D.

## NMMC Cancer Care Welcomes New Provider

NMMC Cancer Care recently welcomed Felicia Daniel, FNP-BC.

Daniel sees patients at NMMC Hematology Oncology, 961 S. Gloster St., in Tupelo.



Daniel is board certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. She received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Mississippi in Oxford. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing with family nurse practitioner specialization from Belmont University in Nashville.

She has worked as a nurse practitioner in Nashville since 2015.

## Announcing High-Risk Screening Clinic at NMMC Cancer Care

NMMC Cancer Care now offers a high-risk screening clinic for patients at a high risk of developing breast cancer.

Who to consider referring:

- A patient that you identify as high-risk for cancer, based on personal or family history
  - Women who score 20% or greater on a Tyrer-Cuzick score listed on their mammogram report
- To refer a patient, send a referral

to hematology/oncology with the box checked for “High-Risk Breast Clinic” or “High-Risk Clinic- other” and specify. Your office will be contacted with an appointment time.

All patients will be assessed at first visit to tailor prevention strategies to their specific needs (genetic counseling/testing, education and prescribing of risk-reducing agents, ordering of high-risk imaging, etc.) Patients who need routine follow-up will continue to be monitored by our high-risk team of nurse practitioners and oncologists, who have certifications in genetics, women’s health and oncology.

## NMMC Named Among 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals Nationwide

NMMC has been included in the 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals™ annual study by IBM Watson Health™, which identifies top U.S. hospitals for inpatient cardiovascular services based on a balanced national scorecard of hospital performance metrics.

The 2020 study included 989 U.S. hospitals with cardiovascular service lines. Based on comparisons between the study winners and a peer group of similar hospitals in the study, the winners delivered better outcomes while operating more efficiently and at a lower cost.

Key performance benchmarks set by this year’s Watson Health 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals include:

- Significantly Higher Inpatient Survival: Winning hospitals had significantly higher inpatient survival rates (28.7% to 47.4% higher).
- Fewer Complications: The 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals achieved 6.3 to 27.7 percent fewer patients with complications.
- Lower Cost: \$1,485 to \$6,704 less in total costs per patient case (the smallest difference was for HF, and the largest was for CABG).
- Lower Average 30-day Episode of Care Payments for AMI and HF (\$1,323 and \$706 less per episode, respectively).

For more information about NMMC’s Heart and Vascular Institute, visit [www.nmhs.net/heart-vascular](http://www.nmhs.net/heart-vascular).

## NMMC, Lions Club Sponsor Eyewear Drive

NMMC and the Lions Club of Tupelo are teaming up to collect eyewear for the needy in February, National Low Vision Awareness Month.

The groups are seeking donations of used eyeglasses, sunglasses and reading glasses, as well as cases. The groups can also use magnification devices or any low vision equipment such as closed-circuit televisions or large lighted magnifiers to donate to those in need. Collection boxes are available at the North Mississippi Retina Center, 606 Brunson Dr.; NMMC Wellness Center, 1030 S. Madison St.; and the NMMC Education Center, 830 S. Gloster St.

The Lions Club will distribute the eyewear in the United States and third world countries worldwide. For more information or to arrange pick up of large items being donated, contact occupational therapist Cheri Nipp at North Mississippi Retina Center, (662) 377-3340 or 1-800-THE DESK (1-800-843-3375). NMMC’s collection drive ends April 1.

## IRB Approves, Renews Studies

The NMHS Institutional Review Board (IRB) currently oversees more than 80 biomedical and behavioral studies. The IRB meets monthly and the following studies were approved and renewed at the December meeting.

### New Study:

**Study: DyeMINISH Registry - DyeVert™ System Use for Contrast Monitoring and Minimization in At-Risk Patients Undergoing Angiography Procedures: A Real-World Registry (TP6647)**

**Investigators:** Barry Bertolet, M.D. (PI); Joseph Adams, M.D.; Dane Ballard, M.D.; Benjamin Blossom, M.D.; Michael Boler, M.D.; William

Calhoun, M.D.; Steve Carroll, M.D.; Murray Estess, M.D.; Amit Gupta, M.D.; Douglas Hill, M.D.; James Johnson, M.D.; Nelson Little, M.D.; Francisco Sierra, M.D.; Roger Williams, M.D.

**Summary:** The purpose of this registry is to compare health outcomes for subjects undergoing angiography procedures in which the DyeVert System was used versus similar subjects in which the DyeVert system was not used.

### Study Renewals:

**Study: DIAMOND-AF II – A Prospective Clinical Evaluation of the DiamondTemp™ Ablation System for the Treatment of Persistent Atrial Fibrillation (TP01071)**

**Investigators:** Jim Stone, M.D. (PI); Karl Crossen, M.D.; Karthik Prasad, M.D.

**Summary:** The purpose of this study is to determine if the Diamond Temp™ Ablation Catheter can restore the heart to a normal rhythm in subjects with atrial fibrillation. Enrollment is open.

**Study: A Randomized Controlled, Open label, Adaptive Phase-3 Trial to Evaluate Safety and Efficacy of EndoTAG-1 Plus Gemcitabine versus Gemcitabine Alone in Patients with Measurable Locally Advanced and/or Metastatic Adenocarcinoma of the Pancreas Failed on FOLFIRINOX Treatment (CT 4006)**

**Investigators:** Andrew Kellum, M.D. (PI); Charles Montgomery, M.D.; Jiahuai Tan, M.D.; Paschal Wilson, M.D.; Ashley Gilliland, ANP; Jessica Glidewell, ANP; Tammy Pelegrin, ANP

**Summary:** The purpose of this study is to determine the safety and efficacy of EndoTAG-1 when used in combination with gemcitabine for the treatment of advanced adenocarcinoma of the pancreas. Enrollment is open.



# NORTH MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL CENTER

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## Continuing Medical Education

*The CME Program is based in the NMMC Education Department and works to provide quality educational programming that will meet general as well as specific professional needs. Please call (662) 377-3826 or the Consult Line at 1-800-952-8101 if you have CME comments and/or suggestions. Select CME programs are by invitation only and are also subject to change.*

**Please RSVP upon receipt of invitation.** Visit [www.nmhs.net/cme](http://www.nmhs.net/cme) for more information.

### **February 14**

#### **Neuro/Radiology Case Studies**

Noon-1 p.m.  
NMMC North Education Center Room 7/8

### **February 21**

#### **Mental Health Conference**

7:30 a.m.  
NMMC North Education Center Auditorium

### **February 28-29**

#### **Spring Cardiology Symposium**

Elvis Presley Birthplace Conference Center

### **March 13**

#### **Neuro/Radiology Case Studies**

Noon-1 p.m.  
NMMC North Education Center Room 7/8