

Summer 2016

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BEATING ALL THE ODDS!

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EMT Gets A Second Chance

Sam Welford never expected to develop heart problems at the age of just 38 years old but that is exactly what happened in June 2014. “My legs were swelling and I was having problems breathing,” Sam recalls. Sam currently lives in George County and is an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) for AAA Ambulance Service in the dispatch unit in Hattiesburg. “I sit for long periods—sometimes up to 12 hours—so I really wasn’t that concerned about my legs swelling because that happens a lot,” he explains. “But the shortness of breath was something new.”

He made an appointment with his primary caregiver, Jason Box, a nurse practitioner at Green County Family Medical Clinic in Leakesville. Jason referred him to Dr. Glenn Cochran with Cardiology Associates to receive an echo-cardiogram. Since January 2007, the physicians at Cardiology Associates have been partnered with George Regional Health System to provide heart care in Lucedale. They currently see patients on Mondays and Wednesdays at their George Regional Hospital campus. “I appreciate that our community hospital brings in specialists so we don’t have to travel far to see great doctors,” Sam adds.

An echo-cardiogram is a type of ultrasound that picks up echoes of sounds waves as they bounce off of the heart. This test determines if blood flow to the heart is at a decreased level. The blood flow is measured in percentages referred to as an “ejection fraction” or EF. Levels between 50 and 70 percent are considered normal. According to

Dr. Cochran, “the test showed that Mr. Welford had a dangerously low left ventricular EF of ten percent of his blood. Sam had severe heart damage and was in acute congestive heart failure.”

Due to the extensive damage to his heart, Sam was outfitted with a LifeVest and put on medical disability, which left him unable to work for several months. A LifeVest is a personal defibrillator which monitors the patient’s heart continuously. If the patient’s heart goes into a life threatening arrhythmia (an irregular heartbeat), the vest will deliver a shock treatment to restore the heart to normal rhythm. “I was also put on medication, a strict low salt diet, and had to watch my fluid content. I love to cook, so learning to eat without salt has been difficult, but well worth it,” Sam admits.

“We reevaluated Mr. Welford, and in late September, he received an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) which monitors heart rhythms and delivers a shock if it senses danger rhythms. His left ventricular EF is now up to 40 percent which is a big improvement,” explains Dr. Cochran. The ICD also records the electrical patterns of the heart when it detects an abnormal heartbeat, which helps Dr. Cochran to plan for future treatments. Sam was able to return to work just a few weeks after the procedure. Sam continues to see Dr. Cochran every six months for follow-up appointments and his future looks bright now that his heart is back on track.

Meet the Doctor



Glenn A. Cochran, M.D., FACC

Dr. Cochran has practiced cardiology in the area for over 10 years with Cardiology Associates. He is a native of New Orleans and was chief cardiology fellow at Louisiana State University Department of Medicine in New Orleans where he completed his medical degree, internship, residency, and cardiology fellowship programs. Dr. Cochran is board certified in internal medicine, sub-specialty board certified in cardiovascular disease and is a fellow member of the American College of Cardiology.

Meet the Nurse Practitioner



Jason S. Box, CRNP

Jason received his Bachelor of Science and Masters of Science in Nursing from the University of South Alabama School of Nursing. He is an instructor in advanced cardiac life support, pediatric advanced life support, and basic trauma life support. He and his wife, Julie, have four children.

Relief from Chronic Pain

IMPRESSIVE CARE FROM OUR DOCTORS

Heart Care Services at George Regional Hospital

Did you know that George Regional Hospital performs more than 400 heart care and respiratory procedures each week? With the expertise, experience and technology available right here at home—why choose anywhere else for your heart care?

- EKG (Electrocardiogram)
- EEG (Electroencephalogram)
- Cardiac Stress Test
- Non-Invasive Ventilation
- (Bipap and CPAP)
- Pulmonary Function Test
- Breathing Treatments
- 24-48 Hour Holter Monitors
- Arterial Blood Gases
- Ventilator Management
- Chest Physiotherapy
- Echo-cardiogram
- Carotid Duplex
- Ankle Brachial Index
- Upper and Lower Extremity
- Venous Duplex
- Upper and Lower Extremity
- Arterial Duplex
- Renal Artery & Vein Duplex
- Renal Artery Ultrasound

Andy Williamson, a longtime Lucedale resident, suffered from chronic knee pain for more than two years. Employed as a joiner at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Andy put a lot of wear and tear on his knees. “Joiners join bulkheads and finish living quarters on the naval vessels. I’m up and down all day, every day,” he explains. Finally, when the pain began to interfere with his work, Andy realized he had to do something about it. In 2012, Dr. Eric Washington performed a successful surgery on Andy’s shoulder, so he immediately decided to give him a call about his worsening pain.

Andy was very impressed with the level of patient care that he and his loved ones received from Dr. Washington in the past. “When my wife’s grandfather fell and was in the hospital, [he] stopped by his room on a Sunday night to check on him. It made quite an impression—says a lot about a person.” Dr. Washington and his partners, Dr. Daniel Wittersheim and Dr. Matthew Lewis, see patients at Bienville Orthopaedic Specialists three days a week, which is conveniently located at The George Regional Specialty Center on Winter Street in Lucedale.

After contacting Dr. Washington about his ongoing pain, Andy underwent an MRI which identified arthritis and a cyst on his knee as the cause of the problem. As a result, Dr. Washington scheduled arthroscopic surgery to relieve his symptoms. He and his associates at Bienville Orthopaedic Specialists have offices across the Gulf Coast, but Andy chose to undergo surgery at George Regional Hospital. “I won’t go anywhere else,” he explains. “It’s where I live. It’s close, convenient, and a good hospital.”

An arthroscopic surgery is a minimally invasive outpatient procedure which involves inserting an arthroscope into the effected joint through a small incision. Typically, arthroscopic surgery lasts about 45 minutes. Due to complications, however, Andy’s surgery lasted nearly two hours. “Once I got in there and could see his knee, we found that Mr. Williamson also had a tear in his meniscus,” Dr. Washington explains. “The meniscus is a piece of cartilage that cushions and stabilizes the knee. These tears are actually quite common and can be very painful.”

For the first two weeks, Andy was healing normally with the expected amount of fluid build up. At about 10 weeks, however, his knees continued to swell, so Dr. Washington decided to perform a viscosupplementation series. During this process, fluid was drained from the joint and artificial joint fluid (which comes from rooster combs) was injected to lubricate and cushion the knee. The injections were given once a week for three weeks. “And I’ll tell you, it was not a fun experience,” Andy recalls, “but I also appreciate Dr. Washington not wanting to immediately go back in for another surgery. After that month, my knee was doing so much better.”

Today, Andy and his wife, Mandy, a teacher at Lucedale Elementary School, raise livestock together on their small farm. “Eventually, I know that I will need a knee replacement. But I’m only 43, so I’m trying to hold out until I’m at least 50,” he laughs. When the time comes, Andy plans for Dr. Washington to do that surgery as well.

To make an appointment with an Orthopaedic Specialist in Lucedale, call 228-230-2663 or 1-800-588-0365.

Meet the Doctor



Eric D. Washington, M.D.

Dr. Washington completed his undergraduate studies at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Jersey. He attended medical school at the University of Illinois in Chicago where he also completed his general surgery internship and orthopedic residency. After completing his residency, Dr. Washington returned to his hometown of St. Louis where he developed a private orthopedic practice

and worked as a part-time assistant professor with the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at St. Louis University. In January 2003, Dr. Washington moved to Pascagoula, MS, and he currently practices general orthopedics with a special interest in hip and knee replacement, arthroscopic surgery, and sports medicine at Bienville Orthopaedic Specialists. Dr. Washington and his wife have four children.

George Regional Hospital Receives 5 Star Rating

*Ranked in the top 2% out of
over 4,400+ hospitals in the US*

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), George Regional Hospital is one of only 168 acute-care hospitals across the United States (out of over 4,000 hospitals) to achieve a 5 star rating. Meaning that George Regional Hospital outperformed 98% of all hospitals nationwide. The ratings are founded on 11 publicly reported measures in the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS). The intent of the HCAHPS initiative is to provide a standardized survey instrument and data collection methodology for measuring patients' perspectives on hospital care.

The HCAHPS survey contains 21 of these patient perspectives on care and patient ratings on nine key topics: communication with doctors, communication with nurses, responsiveness of hospital staff, pain management, communication about medication, discharge information, cleanliness of the hospital environment, quietness of the hospital environment, and transition of care.

"It's a reflection of what people experience when they receive care at George Regional Health System," Greg Havard, CEO, proudly acknowledges. Havard took the role of CEO of the health system in January 2015. "Our goals are to ensure we excel in three key areas: Compliance, Quality Care and Patient Satisfaction. I know we've made tremendous strides in meeting each of those goals since I've been here."

"Our hospital is one of the finest community owned and rural hospitals in the state and the entire southeast," George County Supervisor Larry McDonald explains. "This 5-star award affirms what the George County Board of Supervisors has known and has worked toward for years. Our Board is extremely proud of George Regional Health System, and congratulates every staff member for their contributions made to this honor," he adds.

Beating All



“I’ve followed-up with Dr. Pinkerton every year after he removed the tumor. He was a life-saver for me when no one else could help me.”

the Odds



Sydney Keel's health problems began when she was just thirteen years old. Having suffered from dizziness, nausea, and severe pain in her side for months, she was finally rushed to the Emergency Room at George Regional Hospital. After evaluating Sydney, ER doctors called in Jay Pinkerton, M.D. with Obstetrics & Gynecology Associates, to consult on her case. Dr. Pinkerton ordered an MRI and CT scan which showed a large ovarian mass. "There was a 20 centimeter tumor growing on Sydney's left Fallopian tube and ovary, cutting off circulation and causing those organs to die," explains Dr. Pinkerton. Sydney was immediately taken to emergency surgery during which Dr. Pinkerton removed the football-sized mass, damaged Fallopian tube, and ovary. "I was so grateful to be out of pain," Sydney recalls.

Pathology reports determined the tumor to be benign or non-cancerous. The tumor grew from a cyst, a fluid filled sac that had formed on the ovary. "While cysts are very common for women in their child-bearing years, it is unusual for one to grow that large before being found," adds Pinkerton. "Sydney's other Fallopian tube and ovary were normal, so after surgery, I put her on a birth control to help prevent more cysts from forming. Birth control prevents ovulation, which reduces the odds that new cysts will develop."

"I've followed-up with Dr. Pinkerton every year after he removed the tumor. He was a life-saver for me when no one else could help me," Sydney acknowledged.

Fast forward four years later and Sydney was expecting a baby. Unfortunately, however, Sydney was then diagnosed with Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). "Having had DVT in the past, she is at even higher risk of forming new blood clots in pregnancy. A life threatening condition, a pulmonary embolism, can develop when blood clots block the pulmonary vessels. Because of this higher risk, she was placed on medication to prevent those as well," Dr. Pinkerton explains. Having served as the Chief of the Division of General Obstetrics and Gynecology at Case Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. Pinkerton has extensive experience with high-risk pregnancies.

Though she was at an increased risk for pregnancy complications and infertility, Sydney has beaten all the odds. Under Dr. Pinkerton's expert care, Sydney recently gave birth to a healthy baby boy named Chance Leighton Perkins on January 6, 2016 at George Regional Hospital. Sydney is enjoying being a stay-at-home mom to her little miracle baby.

Meet the Doctor



Jay Pinkerton, M.D.

In 2011, Dr. Jay Pinkerton, along with his wife and practice partner, Emily, a Woman's Health Nurse Practitioner, opened Obstetrics & Gynecology Associates at George Regional Hospital. Prior to moving to George County, Dr. Pinkerton was the Chief of the Division of General Obstetrics & Gynecology at Case Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio. He specializes in minimally invasive surgery, high risk pregnancies, and hysterectomy alternatives. Obstetrics & Gynecology Associates provides the following services:

- Well-woman care
- Gynecological exams for adolescent and adult women
- Obstetrical care
- Chronic pelvic pain
- Infertility
- Ultrasound
- Menopausal disorders
- Incontinence evaluation and treatment

To make an appointment, please call 601-947-6000.

Personal Care and Close Proximity

Joe Fairley is a life long resident of the McLain community, a veteran of the United States Air Force, and a member of the Leaf Baptist Church, but, above all, he is a dedicated family man. Joe was married to Geraldene Fairley for 34 years until her passing in 2011. Together they have two sons, Michael and Neal, and three grandsons. After suffering a stroke last November, George Regional Health & Rehab became Joe's new home.

"After Joe had his stroke, our family came together to talk about the best plan for his care. We chose George Regional Health & Rehab not just because of its close proximity, but because of the personal care we knew he would get," Joe's daughter-in-law, Kelly, explains. She helps Joe tell his story because the stroke has made speaking difficult. "The nursing home services at George Regional came highly recommended by both friends and family who have had short term rehab." Joe's family has made his new home feel as close to his real home as possible. He has a wall of family photos that he looks at daily. Although Joe has a long way to go, his health is progressing significantly thanks to the help of the rehabilitation staff at the nursing home.

Joe's treatment plan includes extensive speech and physical therapies. "You can tell

Joe was a hard worker all his life," explains Johnny Smith, physical therapist and Director of Southeast Rehab. "And he's putting that same hard work into recovering from his stroke. There are many things we can do to help Joe make progress with his recovery. He's definitely in the right place." Kelly and her family agree. "We just can't say enough about the therapy staff here. We are over the moon about them. They are so attentive."

George Regional Health & Rehab opened its doors in 2011 with the goal of providing long term care for George County residents. "Families feel comfortable knowing they can place their loved ones needing long term care in a facility directly connected to a hospital with easy access to their physician," explains Andrew Allison, administrator. George Regional Health & Rehab not only provides long-term nursing services, but also offers specialized short stay rehabilitation with the goal of returning patients to their own homes.

"It's a very difficult decision to leave a family member totally in someone else's care," admits Kelly. "But we have complete trust. The people here truly make him feel as if they are his family and that means so much. The comfort of knowing you don't have to worry about if he's being taken care of is just priceless."

Do you have a loved one who would benefit from long term care? The staff at George Regional Health & Rehab welcomes community members to tour the facility and talk to our caregivers. The center offers:

- 24/7 Nursing Care
- Activities Program
- Spacious Recreational Area
- Laundry Services
- Beautician Services
- Registered Dietitian to plan and monitor meals
- Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy
- Respiratory Therapy
- FREE Wi-Fi

For more information about George Regional Health & Rehab, please call 601-947-9101 or visit www.georgeregional.com/George-Regional-Health-and-Rehab.





“It’s our mission to offer advanced procedures locally, not only for the health of our patients but for the health of our community.”

Comprehensive Surgeries Right Here at Home

There are all types of surgeries; whether major, minor, planned, or unexpected, our community deserves a medical team that embraces the latest surgical technologies. Undergoing any type of surgery is stressful, but having to travel out of your community puts undue strain on you and your family members. The surgeons at George Regional Hospital represent a vast array of specialties including orthopedics, internal medicine, urology, gynecology, and more, meaning that most medical conditions can be treated locally with faster recovery times and reduced risks of complications.

Staffed by experienced surgical nurses, the surgical area includes three well-equipped surgical suites. The facility also includes an

endoscopy suite where health care professionals can examine the digestive tract and adjacent organs. Surgical suites are designed to provide a convenient and comfortable setting for our patients before, during, and after procedures. Surgeries are scheduled Monday through Friday, and the surgery call team is readily available for emergencies after hours and weekends.

It’s our mission to continue to develop and offer these advanced procedures locally, not only for the health of our patients but for the health of our community. The next time you or someone you love needs surgery—whether scheduled or emergency—rest assured that the board certified physicians at George Regional Hospital are fully equipped to take care of you and your family.



George County is fortunate to have many surgeons providing services at our hospital including:

David Crump, M.D.
Community Surgical Center

Edward Dvorak, M.D.
South Mississippi Surgeons

Jay Pinkerton, M.D.
Obstetrics & Gynecology Associates

Paul Scott, M.D.
Urology Associates

James M. Hodges, M.D.
Ear, Nose, and Throat Associates

Matthew Lewis, M.D.
Eric D. Washington, M.D.
Daniel Wittersheim, M.D.
Bienville Orthopaedic Specialists

Christopher Hogan, M.D.
Ophthalmology

William Neely, III, D.M.D.
Dental

Click "like" on the George Regional Health System page on Facebook and check out our upcoming classes, news coverage, and future events.



**LUNG CANCER
SCREENINGS**

George Regional Radiology Offers Lung Cancer Screenings

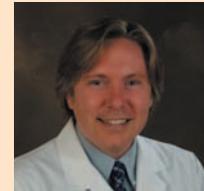


Did you know that a 10 minute lung cancer screening can save your life? According to the Mississippi State Department of Health, almost 25% of Mississippians smoke cigarettes and over 5,000 die annually due to complications from smoking. George Regional Hospital is a designated lung cancer screening center and offers screenings for those who meet the following criteria:

- Smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years.
- Are between 55 and 77 years old.
- If caught early, lung cancer is highly curable.

A physician order is required. For those with Medicare, the screening is FREE. For more information, call George Regional Radiology, 601-673-6100.

Community Medical Center Welcomes New Doctors



Christopher Lansdown, M.D.
Board Certified in Family Medicine



Dionne Jackson, M.D.
Board Certified in Family Medicine

Both doctors are welcoming pediatric and adult patients. Please call 601-947-8181 for appointments.



George Regional Hospital Receives 5 Star Rating

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ranked **George Regional Hospital** as the ONLY 5 Star-rated hospital in South Mississippi & Alabama (within 100 miles).

And the TOP 2% out of over 4,000 hospitals in the US!



Thank you for putting your trust in us!