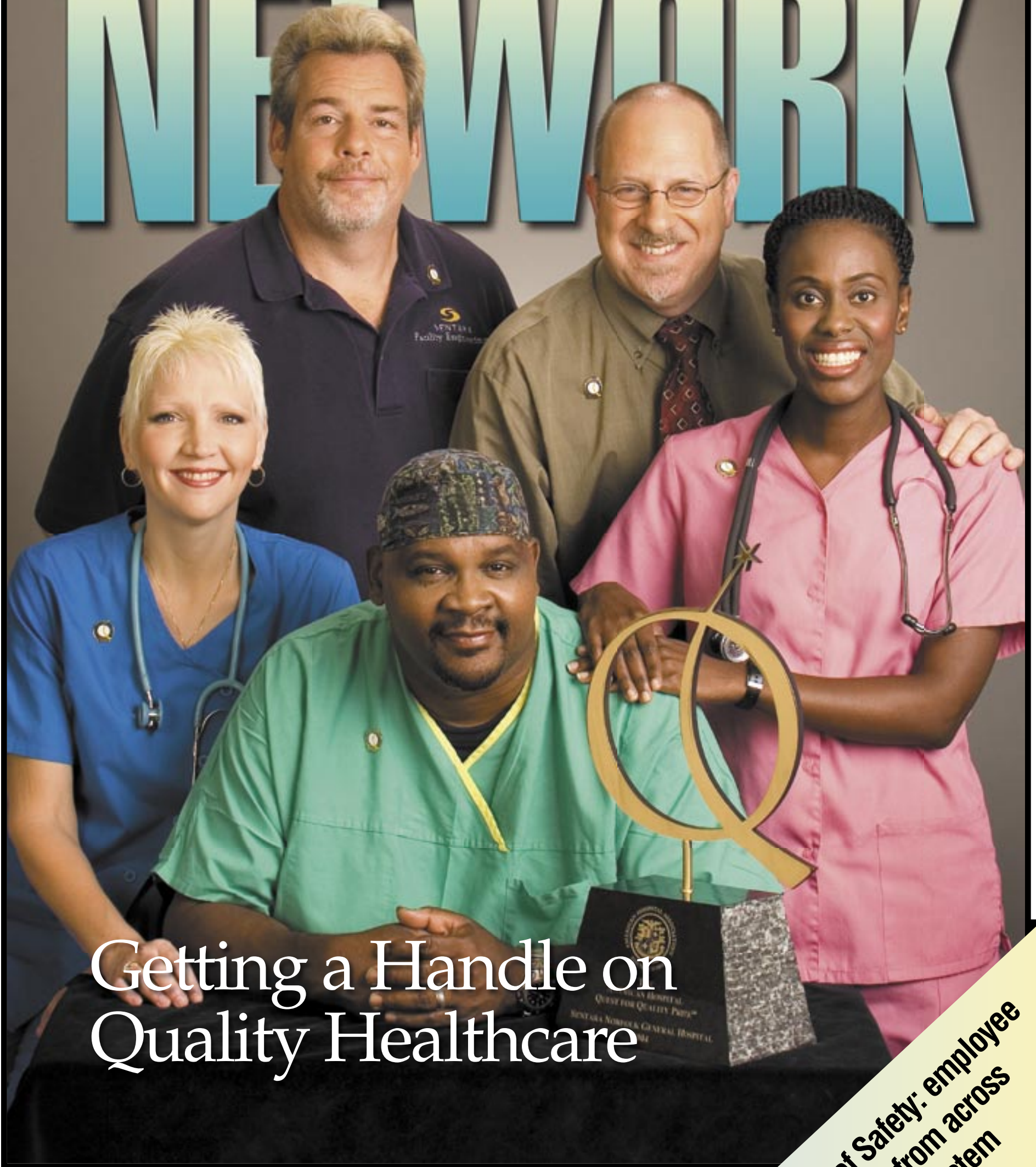


# NETWORK



## Getting a Handle on Quality Healthcare

**Culture of Safety: employee stories from across the system**

 **SENTARA**  
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# NETWORK

## CONTENTS

Getting a Handle <i>Quality Healthcare at Sentara</i>	3
Employee Safety Stories <i>Real Life in Real Time</i>	3
Quest for Quality <i>SNGH Wins Prestigious Award</i>	6
New Beginnings <i>Watching Our System Grow</i>	9
Sentara Briefs <i>News From Around the System</i>	10

Please read this edition of *Network* for greater detail on all of Sentara's many patient safety processes, programs and examples of innovative individual initiatives to provide our patients with the highest quality healthcare experience possible.

You can find many *Network* stories on the Web – at [www.sentara.com/network](http://www.sentara.com/network) – also look for links at the bottom of select stories.

### On the cover:

SNGH employees shown (clockwise from the bottom): Joel Hathaway, Tammy Gutierrez, Bart Landers, Courtney Godwin and Alan Dicamillo, with hospital's Quest for Quality Award.

DAVID L. BERND  
Chief Executive Officer

VICKY G. GRAY  
Vice President of  
System Development

LISA P. SCHULWOLF  
Executive Editor

## SpeakUp

NETWORK welcomes ideas from our employees and affiliates. Don't limit your suggestions to full-blown stories. Got a quote to share? Something going on in your division? Let us know by contacting:

Lisa Schulwolf  
c/o Corporate Communications  
6015 Poplar Hall Drive  
Suite 101  
Norfolk, VA 23502  
(757) 455-7579  
FAX (757) 455-7964  
Or e-mail [lpeschulw@sentara.com](mailto:lpeschulw@sentara.com)

All accepted submissions are subject to editing and space limitations.  
For mailing questions, call:  
(757) 455-7540.

*NETWORK is published quarterly by Sentara to recognize – and celebrate – our employees and affiliates, our patients, other customers and our system as we work together to create a healthier community.*

The Sentara Safety Initiative is all about changing our culture by promoting behaviors that will result in safe, reliable and productive performance. After an initial pilot conducted at SNGH (and for which we were recently recognized with the prestigious AHA Quest for Quality) we are now on a journey to create a culture of safety across



## A MESSAGE FROM DAVE BERND

the rest of Sentara's care delivery divisions including all hospitals, Life Care, Sentara Home Care, Sentara Enterprises and the Sentara Medical Group. Assessments of the current culture throughout the system are nearly complete, and implementation of behavior-based expectations for error prevention has already begun. At Sentara, we pride ourselves on our investments and innovations in technologies, processes and our people. We are convinced that delivering the safest care possible requires that we balance those things with individual and organizational behavior accountability.

Throughout the fall we have been training leaders, staff and phy-

sicians on behaviors for error-prevention. But the most important phase of the initiative is making it stick – reinforcing and holding each other accountable for practicing our behaviors each and every day. Our ultimate goal? Zero patient events and zero employee injuries. We want to be the safest place to receive care and work

in Hampton Roads.

It will not be an overnight transformation. It took SNGH two years to pilot the principles by which we will all live and work in the future. But, we all owe a debt of gratitude – not only to the hospital leadership for launching and nurturing the initiative, but to the department leaders, safety coaches, physicians, nurses and line staff in every department who embrace these principles and apply them in their work each day.

All of you are pioneers in -- and are becoming stellar champions of -- patient safety, and I thank you all for living by our motto, "Patient Safety Starts with Me!"

## Calculating the Cost of Care for the Uninsured

It's been called Indigent Care, Charity Care, and more recently, Uncompensated Care. Providing quality medical care to uninsured patients who cannot afford it is something hospitals like ours do as part of our mission to our communities. We're proud of it, and we have carried this message to the community in numerous ways, including the last edition of *Network*.

However, all around the country, the dollar value of uncompensated care that hospitals quote is being called into question. Consumer groups allege that hospitals inflate the value of this care. In more extreme cases, hospitals are being sued over allegations that they overcharge uninsured patients and engage in aggressive collection practices. Being big makes Sentara a potential target for these complaints, and we are taking steps early to

avoid any misconceptions about our service to the community.

Last year we valued our uncompensated care, community health programs and direct support of medical education at \$99 million. However, we have elected a more conservative method of calculation that is based on the actual cost to Sentara of providing medical care. That figure has now been adjusted to \$75 million, still a significant sum. Sometimes it's a total write-off, usually for patients whose incomes are within 200% of the federal poverty level. For patients within 200-500% of poverty, Sentara offers a generous graduated discount program. However, the dollar value of this care is less important than the lives of the thousands of indigent and uninsured patients we serve, and the peace of mind we provide to people who need to get well.

# Getting a Handle on... Quality Healthcare

**QUALITY, QUALITY, QUALITY.** As consumers, we are bombarded by the claim all the time, regarding every possible product or service. But there are few areas where true quality is more important than in the selection of our healthcare providers – our very lives, and those of our loved ones – are riding on it.

At the same time, “quality,” as it applies to any product or service, is traditionally difficult to specifically define. On some level it is instinctive – but that doesn’t mean judging quality is necessarily subjective. In fact, when it comes to the all-important arena of healthcare, it should be objective, and there are several criteria to help you assess it, and make the healthiest decision possible.

As a nationally recognized industry leader serving more than 2 million residents in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina, Sentara is committed to providing high quality healthcare through innovation and the use of the latest technology available. Sentara has always been a firm believer in empowering healthcare consumers so they can make informed decisions and take an active role in their own care.

## How do we define quality?

Quality can be defined as the degree or grade of excellence or worth. Through our life experiences, many of us feel confident in our ability to recognize a high degree of quality when we see it, such as quality craftsmanship or quality customer service.

In order to recognize quality, consumers must be well informed. They must ask the right questions so they can make better decisions about healthcare, such as:

- What is the experience level of my doctor?
- Is he/she board-certified?
- How many times has the facility

done the procedure?

- What are the outcomes and success rates of the procedure?
- What are the chances for complications?

## Other ways to define quality include:

### Credentials

Hospitals should be accredited. All Sentara hospitals have accreditation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

This independent, not-for-profit organization evaluates and accredits more than 16,000 healthcare organizations and programs in the U.S., including an on-site survey at least every three years.

Physicians should have board certification, or the international equivalent. Physicians on staff at all Sentara hospitals are board certified, which means they have completed the amount of training that a specialty board requires. Physicians on our medical staffs have practiced for a specified period of time and passed rigorous written and oral exams.

### Experience

When it comes to treating a particular disease, nothing can equal experience. In fact, studies show that physicians/hospitals that treat a high number of patients for a particular disease and perform large numbers of procedures/surgeries to combat it, have better results. A number of independent organizations in the country assess and rate quality in healthcare.



## Employee Safety Stories

### Real Life in “Real Time”

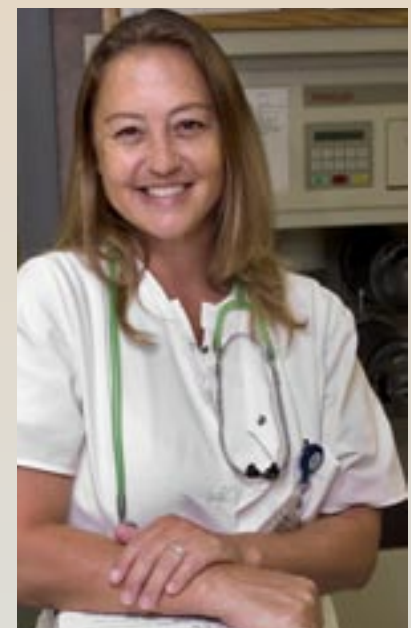
Throughout this issue are just a few of the many examples of the “Culture of Safety” being practiced throughout the system, resulting in a safer environment for all and better outcomes for our patients. We are proud of these and the other examples of our employees being conscientious, creative, and, most of all, concerned about the safety and welfare of each and every patient, every day.



#### Sentara Bayside Hospital

Shu Roy, anesthesia associate, was recognized on July 8, when one of the orthopedic doctors called out from an OR room to the desk and said he had an “add-on case.” He gave the patient’s name. The OR staff pulled the patient up on the TDS and found out what room the patient was in, then wrote the patient’s name on the OR schedule. Later that afternoon Shu Roy was given a slip by the charge nurse to go get the patient. Shu entered the patient’s room, checked the name and Social Security number with the patient’s ID bracelet. All were correct. She then introduced herself and told the patient she would take her to surgery. The patient said “I just had surgery yesterday.” Shu thought it was odd and stopped. She called the charge nurse in the OR and asked her to check with the orthopedic doctor. A patient with

the same name was at SVBGH awaiting surgery. By having a questioning attitude, Shu prevented a major event that could have led to a sentinel event.



#### Sentara Leigh Hospital

Jacqui Fromen, RN, was recognized as the Sentara Leigh Safety Champion for saving a patient’s life with her questioning attitude. She was assigned to care for a woman who had been seen early in the morning by her surgeon, and had received clearance for discharge. It became evident to Fromen that the patient was having a change in her mental and respiratory status. She made several phone calls to the surgeon, a medical consult was ordered, and further testing was done that revealed the patient was having a pulmonary embolus. The patient was not discharged until later in the week.

To learn how Sentara measures up for experience and quality, visit the following sites:

[www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org) – The American Hospital Association

[www.jcaho.com](http://www.jcaho.com)– The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations

[www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com) – Health Grades, an independent quality ratings service

[www.dhp.state.va.us/medicine/default.htm](http://www.dhp.state.va.us/medicine/default.htm)– The Virginia Board of Medicine

In addition, OptimaHealth members can visit us at [www.optimahealth.com](http://www.optimahealth.com)

### Reputation, Awards and Recognition

Sentara regularly celebrates significant milestones and accolades within the healthcare industry. A few of the more recent ones include:

## 2004

- **Sentara Norfolk General Hospital is named as region's most preferred.** In October, 2004, SNGH is named Hampton Roads Consumer Choice Award Winner for the ninth straight year in a study conducted by the National Research Corporation (NRC).

- **Sentara Earns 2004 American Hospital Association Quest for Quality Award.** In July, 2004, an award recognizes a systemwide quality initiative piloted at SNGH. (See article page 6)

- **Sentara Heart Care is nationally ranked.** In July, 2004, SNGH's heart program achieved a new level of national recognition in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual survey of America's Best Hospitals, ranking 40 out of 50 U.S. hospitals named for cardiac care excellence. This is the fifth year SNGH has been named among the top 50 heart programs.

- **Sentara Ranks Among the Top Healthcare Systems in the Nation.** *Modern Healthcare* magazine annually publishes a fact-based study highlighting the top 100 integrated healthcare networks in the nation. Consistently ranked among the best, Sentara garnered the No. 1 position in the nation in 2001 and is the only healthcare system on the East Coast to be ranked in the top 10 all seven years the survey has been conducted.

- **Sentara Home Care is nationally ranked.** In April, 2004, Sen-



Eva Sauls teleconferences with a patient.

## SENTARA HOME CARE SERVICES WINS 'QUALITY ASSOCIATE' AWARD

Sentara Home Care Services in Chesapeake and Williamsburg recently received 'Quality Associate' awards from the Virginia Health Quality Center, the non-profit agency that monitors healthcare quality for Medicare recipients.

"It was an honor to recognize your leadership in promoting quality improvement in Virginia," said VHQC Project Manager Terri Lindsey in a congratulatory message to Sentara. "We appreciate your continued commitment to the Quality Improvement Initiative."

Praise was given to Sentara's efforts to pioneer the use of telehealth technology to manage the care of patients with congestive heart failure, wound care, asthma and other diseases.

Sentara Home Care Services was a voluntary pilot agency

three years ago when the outcomes-based program began. Agencies assess home care patients at admission and discharge and submit their clinical data to VHQC. Quarterly reports help track improvements in key areas including pain, walking, breathing and healing of surgical wounds.

Sentara Home Care employs advanced TeleHealth technology to closely monitor wounds and congestive heart failure and provide rapid intervention when needed. "We are state-of-the-art in technology," says Ray Darcey, Vice President of Sentara Enterprises, "but quality of care remains our No. 1 focus, and we are glad to be recognized for it."

This award program is new for the agency, and Sentara Home Care Services is among the first recipients.

tara Home Care was named No. 4 among privately owned home care agencies in the U.S. by *HomeCare* magazine. (See article above)

- **Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital is named among nation's most improved.** In March, 2004, SVBGH was recognized with Solucient's 100 Top Hospitals: Performance Improvement Leaders Award. It is the first-ever award by Solucient, that recognizes 100 top U.S. hospitals with the highest rates of improved patient outcomes and financial performance over a five-year period.

- Sentara was again named in the **Top 100 Most Wired Hospitals and Health Systems** in the nation in 2004 by *Hospitals and Health Network* magazine. This is Sentara's 5th such ranking in the six years the survey has been released. Sentara won for its efforts to remain a technology leader by emphasizing

clinical quality and patient safety, investing in many key technologies such as radiology and picture archiving communications systems (PACS) and the use of the Internet for customer service, public health and safety, business processes and workforce issues.

## 2003

- **Sentara Leigh Hospital is nationally ranked.** In December, 2003, SLH was recognized in an elite listing of the top 100 healthcare providers in the U.S. by *Modern Healthcare*. The award was given in the teaching hospital category by a survey given by Solucient and published in *Modern Healthcare* magazine.

## 2002

- **Sentara's eICU technology saves lives.** Sentara's eICU<sup>®</sup> has re-

ceived many accolades. It was chosen as one of the VHA Leadership Awards in the category of Clinical Effectiveness honoring clinical costs and quality initiatives.

In 2002, Sentara was the first in the nation to deploy the eICU technology, a highly advanced intensive care lifesaving monitoring system developed by VISICU. eICU provides remote intensive care patient management and uses telemedicine combined with videoconferencing, smart alerts, and integrated information technologies to allow intensive care and critical-care nurses to provide constant surveillance and care to patients.

The technology is available at SLH, SNGH, SBH and SCH. It will be available at SWCH by the end of 2004. In addition, SVBGH offers on-site intensivists 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

As a result of this technology, hospital ICU mortality rates have dropped 25 percent and length of stay of ICU patients has been reduced by 17 percent.

### Services and Facilities

Hospitals like Sentara's, with a broad range of services, can treat more complex medical conditions and offer patients an expanded range of procedures, therapies, surgical and non-surgical options to help insure each patient gets the best possible solution for the best possible outcome. Sentara offers six hospitals, more than 70 sites of care, several specialties, health coverage, home care and hospice, urgent care, physical therapy and rehabilitation services, mobile diagnostic vans, and air and ground medical transport, including the region's only air ambulance service.

### Research and Clinical Trials

At Sentara, conducting clinical trials and staying at the forefront of leading-edge research is critical to developing and maintaining a reputation as a leader in medicine and healthcare and in furthering our mission to the community. We regularly partner with Eastern Virginia Medical School and other colleagues to conduct clinical trials and present findings to the FDA and at national and international conferences. Research and clinical trials are being done in cardiology, vascular and cancer as well as through Sentara Medical Group.

Some of these include: studies to treat patients with foot ulcers due to arterial disease; a trial using an experimental technique to open



clogged arteries in a way that is gentler on the artery wall and lowers the incidence of re-clogging; tissue studies to determine if a blood test can be developed to detect early stage breast cancers; studies in new, more efficacious therapies for patients with advanced head and neck cancers; trials to see if vitamin E supplements can help prevent prostate cancer, and a vaccine that may help prevent breast cancer, among others. For more information on specific clinical trials and research, visit [www.sentara.com/quality](http://www.sentara.com/quality) for more information.

Choice Award winner for the seventh straight year. In addition, our facilities feature comment cards that encourage the opinions and commentary of our patients and families, and we act on helpful suggestions to create the ultimately satisfying experience.

### Patient Safety

There is no greater responsibility than the one we accept every day, with thousands of patients entrusted to our care. In keeping with major national initiatives, Sentara has many effective programs in place, and more are coming on line every day. Many are the result of creative ideas from our employees, the front line clinicians and caregivers who saw what was working – and what wasn't – and took the initiative to fix it, and make suggestions for programs and policies to better safeguard patients.

"Safety is our core value," says Gary Yates, MD, Sentara's Chief Medical Officer. "We are committed to this, not only as an institution, but on a deeply felt personal level



(L-R): Rod Hochman, MD, Gary Yates, MD, and Dave Bernd with the eICU technology.

### Patient Satisfaction

At Sentara, assessing patient satisfaction is paramount to what we do. We conduct regular surveys of our patients to help assess our strengths and to identify areas in need of improvement. In addition to our survey efforts, we get feedback from surveys conducted by independent consultants. For example, in 2002 the National Research Corporation (NRC) named SNGH Hampton Roads' Consumer

among all our employees. It's very gratifying that this is becoming, not just a system-wide discipline, but a personal code of professional conduct."

Carole Stockmeier and Shannon Sayles, directors of the Sentara Safety Initiative, agree. "Every day, we receive safety success stories from across the system about employees who practice our behaviors for error prevention to ensure

Quality Article continued on page 8

## Employee Safety Stories



### Sentara Williamsburg Community Hospital

Frances Cowles, environmental services associate, was working on South One, a Med/Surg floor, one Saturday morning and as she walked past a patient room, she noticed an elderly lady with a bed sheet wrapped/tangled around her legs. The patient was getting ready to stand up and get out of bed. Cowles quickly got the attention of a nurse to come help her. They entered the room just as the patient was slipping out of bed. Their quick actions prevented the lady from falling and possibly hurting herself. The elderly lady was confused as she thought the bed sheet was a pair of pants and she was ready to leave the hospital! The prevention of falls is part of Support Operations Performance Plus goals this year.

### Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital

Sandy Maloney, team coordinator, Michelle McCormick, MRI technologist, Jeff Radford, MRI technologist and the staff in Radiology paid attention to detail that recently helped avoid a po-

tential medical error. A patient who did not speak English very well was having difficulty com-



pleting a pre-test questionnaire for an MRI. After researching the patient's medical records, the staff in Radiology discovered that the patient had a CT scan in the past. In reviewing the x-ray, they learned the patient had a pacemaker, which is one of the contraindications for MRI scanning. Thanks to the quick thinking of the staff, the MRI was cancelled and the patient avoided a potentially serious medical event.



### Sentara Life Care

Two nurses at the Sentara Nursing Center-Norfolk, Maxine Chambers and Lavonne Pinkney, paid attention to detail and noticed that there were three residents with the same last name and two with the same first initial on the same unit. To prevent an error in identification for these residents, in addition to the use of photographs, they flagged the medication records with stickers and colored transparencies to alert staff. Thanks to these special nurses for practicing the behavior-based expectations.



# Sentara Norfolk General Hospital Wins Prestigious Quest for Quality Award

There are few peer awards more prestigious for a hospital to win than the Quest for Quality prize by the American Hospital Association. This year, that national recognition goes to SNGH for its Culture of Safety initiative. Runners-up include Johns Hopkins and Advocate Health of Chicago.

## Culture of Safety is both process, mindset

SNGH has always employed a three-pronged approach to patient safety including Technology, Processes and People. Technology includes innovations like eICU, SUNRISE pharmacy software and



(L-R): George Lynn, AHA chair elect, Shannon Sayles, Gary Yates, MD, Carole Stockmeier, Rodney Hochman, MD, Jennifer Chiusano, Dawn Bosdell, Cindy Parker and Mark Szalwinski, pictured at the Quest for Quality awards reception held in July in California.

"This prize culminates two years of hard work by leadership and staff to create a culture of safety," said Rodney Hochman, MD, Executive Vice President for Sentara Healthcare and Administrator of SNGH. "Sentara's Culture of Safety is about making best practices our common practice every day."

Gary Yates, MD, Sentara's Chief Medical Officer, adds that the "Culture of Safety," piloted at SNGH, will soon be employed systemwide. "It's about every employee learning our systems to prevent errors, patient injuries and workplace accidents, and actively applying that knowledge in their work," Yates says.

"The committee was impressed by your culture of safety and strong leadership and staff commitment," said Gail Lovinger, director of the Quest for Quality Prize in a congratulatory letter to Sentara. "Congratulations... on this achievement."

"No system is perfect," says Yates. "We are not error-free. But this award recognizes Sentara's commitment to patient safety as a systematic discipline."

PACS digital image archiving with TALK voice transcription. Our Culture of Safety initiative adds a new foundation of Behavior-Based Expectations (BBEs) for error prevention, Red Rules that cannot be ignored without consequence and enhanced Root Cause Analysis that brings timely systematic improvements.

## BBEs and Red Rules come from nuclear power industry

SNGH began its Culture of Safety initiative by retaining industrial safety consultants Performance Improvement International. PII has a reputation for safety improvements in the nuclear power and airline industries. With their guidance, SNGH accelerated the pace of change in a collaborative process with physicians and hospital staff.

There are five Behavior Based Expectations:

- Pay Attention to Detail
- Communicate Clearly
- Have a Questioning Attitude
- Hand off Effectively
- Never Leave Your Wingman



On July 28, SNGH employees celebrated the hospital's Quest for Quality award at an ice cream social.

Red Rules are safety fundamentals enforced in every hospital department. In a clinical setting, Red Rules include positive identification prior to any action with a patient and site verification before surgery. For housekeeping staff, it's never mixing chemicals. In dietary, it's maintaining safe food temperatures. Failure to observe these rules brings consequences.

## Hospital staff makes Culture of Safety a reality

People are the linchpin in the Culture of Safety at SNGH. Lead-

ership is tasked with keeping the culture front-and-center. There are "safety coaches" in every department. Staff at every level have been educated and trained in technologies and processes, assigned to oversight committees, and are regularly reminded that "Patient Safety Starts with Me." Staff are recognized and rewarded for practicing BBEs and catching potential errors before they reach the bedside. Sentara promotes a philosophy of fairness that encourages systematic improvements based on learning from errors, yet demands accountability for job performance.



SNGH staff attended a recognition ceremony after winning the hospital-wide award.

# SNGH Employee Safety Stories



**Tammy Gutierrez, RN**, Special Care Nursery, was working in the Special Care Nursery when two social workers were assisting the mother of a premature baby. The mother has a bipolar disorder and had been under treatment for many years. At high risk of developing post-partum depression, she was taking a new medication – Ambilify (Aripiprazole) – and was having difficulty affording the cost of the medication. Knowing that the mother was breast-feeding her baby, Gutierrez questioned if this new medication was safe for nursing mothers and their babies. Through research and consultation with the Pharmacy, the social workers discovered that the medication indeed should NOT be taken by nursing mothers. The social workers contacted the mother who then decided to discontinue breast-feeding as her bipolar symptoms were too severe and debilitating to discontinue the medication. Tammy's questioning attitude led to the identification of a situation that potentially could have resulted in harm to the baby.

**Bart Landers**, team leader, HVAC Shop, responded to a phone call to the HVAC shop from a nursing unit requesting a negative pressure smoke test in a patient room to be used for a transplant patient. Based on Landers' knowledge of the indications for positive and negative



pressure rooms, he found the request for a negative pressure room for a transplant patient very unusual. He suspected that they really needed a positive pressure room. The HVAC shop called the nursing unit to question the request. The patient's physician and Infection Control agreed that the patient needed to be placed in a positive pressure room. Follow-up education about the indications for the use of positive and negative pressure rooms was conducted on the nursing unit. Clear communications, questioning attitudes and never leaving your wingman were at work in this Safety Success Story. "The process worked, and we kept a patient safe," said Landers.

**Joel Hathaway**, service associate, Cardiac Non-Invasive services, arrived to transport a patient who was scheduled for a nuclear stress test to clear the patient for surgery. The nurse informed Hathaway that the patient was in the OR. Hathaway then called the stress lab to relay the information to the charge nurse. The charge nurse called the cardiologist and the OR. The information was relayed to the surgeon and OR staff,



and the surgery was postponed until the nuclear stress test could be completed later in the day. What a great demonstration of attention to detail and questioning attitude! This case story was shared with inpatient and surgery team members to focus on how the oversight of the preoperative clearance check could have been prevented or identified earlier in the process.

**Courtney Godwin, RN, 7A, Alan Dicamillo**, pharmacist, Pharmacy, illustrated an excellent example of the clinical scenario of "two ships passing in the night."

A patient on 7A was enrolled in a research study that involved giving the patient a prophylactic dose of Lovenox 40mg. One of the patient's diagnostic tests, however, came back positive, and the patient could not continue in the study. The physician wrote an order to switch the patient to a therapeutic dose of Lovenox 90mg. While this order was being processed, Pharmacy already had sent the next dose of study drug Lovenox 40mg to the unit.



Courtney Godwin, RN, the nurse taking care of the patient, discovered this and followed up with Pharmacist Alan Dicamillo, who in turn contacted the research coordinator. As a result of the attention to detail and questioning of Godwin and Deicamillo, the patient received the therapeutic dose of Lovenox instead of the study dose. This example shows how the stage for error can be set in the short time between the point when a clinical decision is made and the time when all parties know about that decision.

## Culture of Safety is expanding

The above are just a few examples of how the Culture of Safety brought the Quest for Quality prize to SNGH. These principles are now being implemented systemwide in Sentara's six hospitals, seven nursing centers, three assisted living centers and other sites of care. They

were shared nationwide through a cover article in the *AHA's Hospitals and Health Networks* magazine and the *Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Safety in Health Care*.

## Committed Staff

Having a staff committed to the Culture of Safety is very impor-

tant. To that end, the Sentara Promise, is a pledge our employees make to uphold Sentara's organizational values (quality, service, people, stewardship and integrity). The Sentara School of Health Professions provides educational programs to train the healthcare personnel of tomorrow and to ensure that Sen-

tara hospitals are well staffed. And our Division of Community Health and Prevention demonstrates Sentara's commitment to keeping our communities well through community programs, screenings and health initiatives. Visit our website at [www.sentara.com/quality](http://www.sentara.com/quality) for more information.



**Steven Furhman, MD, at the eICU command center.**

**Quality Article continued from page 5**

the safety of patients, visitors and co-workers. It works. We are all creating a safer, more secure environment for us all."

Patients can view our patient safety video, and can, on request, be mailed to a patient's home in advance of a hospital stay. The video is regularly updated to encourage patients to be safety advocates.

**Safety at Sentara**

While safety has been a strategic initiative at Sentara for years, recent efforts have been accelerated by enlisting the help of Performance Improvement International, a company with nationally recognized expertise in improving human per-

formance in complex systems such as nuclear power, transportation and manufacturing.

Although it is impossible to eliminate all risks of medical complications or death, especially for seriously ill patients, risks can be reduced by choosing a hospital with a lower mortality rate and/or higher long-term survival or success rate. Patients should ask the physician or the hospital for mortality rates.

Sentara is the regional leader in cardiac care, the largest program in Virginia, and one of the largest in the country, with success rates that exceed national standards. For detailed cardiac outcomes information, visit our website at [www.sentara.com/quality](http://www.sentara.com/quality).

**Technological Advances**

At Sentara, we continually invest in state-of-the-art technology and consistently bring the latest in medical breakthroughs to the region. Sentara is proud to offer many innovative treatment options that continue to provide our patients with improved outcomes and better quality of life. From robotic-assisted surgery to electronic ICU monitoring to the latest minimally invasive techniques, Sentara is at the forefront, and, in fact, ranked 20th among the top 100 technically innovative organizations in the nation.

Some of the notable technological advances we offer include the eICU technology, which provides remote intensive care patient monitoring. It is available in ICUs at SNGH, SLH, SBH, SCH and will be at SWCH by the end of 2004. SVBGH offers on-site intensivists 24 hours a day, seven days a week. eICU has reduced ICU mortality rates by 25 percent and length of stay by 17 percent.

Other related advances include the Sunrise Clinical



**CT Angiography Basilar Tip Aneurysm Images such as this can be transmitted via PACS. PACS offers digital image archiving with TALK voice transcription.**

Manager software system which automatically helps prevent pharmacy/ medication errors by screening for critical drug-related problems in real time, increasing effectiveness and efficiency in caring for patients; PACS, which offers digital image archiving with TALK voice transcription to expedite the reading and recording of film results, which initiates treatment sooner for potentially life saving illnesses.

To find out more, visit our website at [www.sentara.com/quality](http://www.sentara.com/quality)

**MEDICAL BEAT**

**2004 Planetree Spirit of Caring Goes to SWCH**

Congratulations to Clarice Mousalli, MD, who was awarded the Planetree Spirit of Caring Caregivers Award and to the SWCH Palliative Care Program, which won the Planetree Spirit of Caring Award for Human Interaction.

SVBGH now joins SWCH by offering a similar patient-centered model of care.

The Palliative Care Response Team (PCRT) is a consulting service that provides education and support to patients with life-limiting illness and their families, as well as physicians and clinical staff.

Since the end of 2002, SWCH has served over 200 patients, and over 20 physicians are now making referrals.

The need to humanize the healthcare experience is particularly compelling for those who will not be cured of their illness. Special attention to emotional and spiritual needs, and support for families is

provided through palliative care consultations, sparking a new definition of healing.

Almost daily, the team is able to demonstrate guided imagery, aromatherapy and music therapy to relieve pain, anxiety, shortness of breath and other end-of-life symptoms. Occasionally we recommend changes to the plan of care to comply with patient wishes and facilitate physician-patient conferences, as well as educate staff on symptom control.

In the past, palliative care was not commonly taught in medical and nursing schools, so interested staff educated themselves and then applied for a grant to spread this knowledge and skill. In January 2002, we received funding but it took an additional 10 months to be ready for our first consultations.

The PCRT consists of a physician, two nurse practitioners, administrative coordinator, nurse case coordinator, physician pain management specialist, dietitians,

social worker and chaplain. Only the palliative care nurse coordinator position is grant-funded. Other team members have even volunteered in their off-hours to ensure the program's success.

This team faces two primary challenges that are familiar to Planetree hospitals: resistance to change and demonstrating financial effectiveness. Sometimes recommendations of the palliative care team relate to anticipated symptoms, or treatments to prevent common side effects. Occasionally, the team recommends more aggressive interventions for anxiety or depression. The purpose of these interventions is to ensure comfort and manage events that might result in repeat hospitalizations.

Numerous studies show that tending to an informed patient's wishes results in a reduction in the cost of care, as well as an increase in patient, family and staff satisfaction. In order to demonstrate these effects, this team must collect data

that is not gathered in the normal course of business.

**Pilot Program for Palliative Care at SLH**

There are times when comfort is more important than cure, when a touch helps more than technology. Sentara Leigh Hospital is piloting a new program in Palliative Care that aims to broaden services for patients and families coping with serious or life-threatening illness. Emphasis will include psychosocial support, symptom management, and quality of life throughout the course of illness, and hopefully, recovery. If recovery is unlikely, helping families decide when hospice is a better choice than the hospital is part of the challenge. SLH will build a multi-disciplinary team to address these matters in the months ahead.



**Greenbrier HealthPlex**

**Greenbrier HealthPlex Opens**

On June 29 a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at Greenbrier HealthPlex. It is the first facility to open on Sentara's 14-acre comprehensive medical campus. Located in the retail and residential hub of Greenbrier, the new 44,000-square-foot facility houses Sentara services and independent physician offices for obstetrics and gynecology, family medicine, and treatment of varicose veins. Sentara Women's Health Source, Sentara's Reference Laboratory, physical therapy, imaging and diagnostic services are also located in the complex.



*A community open house was held July 17 for Greenbrier HealthPlex. The event featured free health screenings, cooking demonstrations, tours and children's activities.*

**SBH Opens Heart Diagnostic Center**

Sentara Heart at SBH opened in mid-July. Relocated just steps away from the main entrance, cardiac patients at SBH now find all heart services—including diagnostics, rehabilitation, education materials, a Cyber Café providing Internet access, and registration in one location.

The expanded cardiac area offers the full spectrum of testing including electrocardiogram (EKG), Holter/event monitoring to detect irregular heart rhythms, exercise and nuclear stress tests, as well as echocardiogram, stress echocardiogram, and transesophageal echocardiogram to detect heart pumping function. Appointments will be available sooner to an increased number of patients requiring heart diagnostic testing with the addition of two new procedure rooms for diagnostic testing.

**In other expansion news...** SBH has received approval by the State Health Commission to build a new cardiac catheterization labora-

tory. The laboratory, which will be used for diagnostic and emergent interventional catheters as well as peripheral vascular procedures, is expected to see its first patients in the New Year.

**Port Warwick ASC**

Sentara won final state approval for the ambulatory surgery center on the Port Warwick campus in Newport News. The Port Warwick ASC will open in 2005 with two ORs as an extension of SCH. It is located in one of the fastest-growing residential and commercial areas on the Peninsula.

**SWCH Goes Live**

In July, SWCH went "live" with some of Sentara's primary information systems that brought about immediate improvements in patient care and safety, and laid the groundwork for further IT integration later this year.

Hospital and IT staff have been preparing SWCH for TDS, the backbone of the information sys-

**Employee Safety Stories**



**Sentara Home Care**

Amanda Machamer, medical social worker for Sentara Home Care Services Infusion Therapy, and the overall Sentara Promise Winner in 2003, has been working with Alltel on a grant from the phone company for patients with a medical need who are without phone service. Since Amanda has been working closely with sickle cell patients

as part of the Home-Based Sickle Cell Program, she quickly discovered that these patients are in dire need of daily communications with both their physician and their home care agency. Being without phone service creates a huge patient safety issue. However, many of these patients don't have the funds for the monthly phone service. Amanda contacted Alltel, which recognizes that many residents in our community with a medical need must have phone service. They are working on establishing a grant to give these patients a certain number of minutes each month to be used for medical emergencies. Amanda has already gotten a phone donated for this patient. Sentara Health Foundation has agreed to provide Sentara Home Infusion Services with phone cards for those patients enrolled in the Home-Based Sickle Cell Program who cannot afford a phone but need one for medical reasons.

tem. They've also installed Sunrise Clinical Manager for pharmacy and CareVision for physician access to patient records. In addition, nurses have begun using wireless carts on their rounds for computerized bedside charting that will keep patient records much more up to date with less duplication of effort. RadNet for radiology laid the groundwork for the August/September integration of PACS and TALK technologies that allow physicians almost immediate access to digital images, and instant voice transcription of radiology notes. Later this year, SWCH will become part of Sentara's eICU network.

**Foundation for the Future of the Peninsula**

The land has been cleared and the concrete is flowing for the foundation of the new Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center in York County. You can now watch the building go up from its foundation to completion on Sentara's webcam. Go to WaveNet and click on Sentara Building Projects. The five-story, approximately 339,000-square-foot facility will open in the summer of 2006.



**SVBGH Administrator Les Donahue.**

**You're the Top!**

Construction crews at SVBGH reached a milestone on the new West Wing. A topping-out ceremony held in September celebrated the steel frame being placed. As the construction moves along, renovations, expansions and technology upgrades are being planned in the existing part of the building now referred to as the East Wing. Refurbishments to the Mother/Baby Unit are changing the entire look of the unit and should be completed in November.

### Pet Project Goes to the Dogs

SVBGH recently launched a pet therapy program, similar to the one at SWCH and consistent with the Planetree philosophy.

Cathleen Codling, RN, 2 East/West, researched and developed the program at SVBGH. In March she gained approval to test the program with patients on the second floor. The trial was a success, and in July the program was made available to all patients who meet the protocol for a visit. Since the program's inception, more than a dozen patients have worked with the therapy dogs.



### SWCH Heroes in Healthcare

In July 2002, the K-9 Connection Certified Pet Therapy Program was piloted at SWCH's Outpatient Rehabilitation Center. This innovative volunteer service program enhances the emotional well-being of patients, staff, visitors, and physicians and brightens their lives with the love of the therapy dogs.

In Rehabilitation Services, certified pet therapy has motivated patients, especially 11-year-old Tyler, who battles the daily challenges of cerebral palsy. His treatment sessions had been frustrating for him and his therapist, until the day Nugget, a certified pet therapy dog, and his owner visited the Physical Therapy Department. Nugget's presence has created an environment where physical therapy is a treat rather than a dreaded chore. Tyler is one example of how certified therapy dogs brighten the day for many of our patients.

### Health Assessment

In September, Sentara released a community health assessment to area leaders which estimates there are 176,000 individuals in the Hampton Roads region without

health coverage, including 97,000 whose incomes are below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

The Sentara Healthcare Foundation helped establish the Access Partnership, a coalition of health and social service providers which is developing a five-year strategic plan to address the region's health priorities. Sentara has committed \$50,000 a year for five years to fund the Access Partnership.

The issue most frequently identified was access to dental care. An estimated 128,700 people in the region have lost six or more teeth to dental disease and Sentara emergency departments saw more than 1,500 uninsured patients for dental problems during 2003-2004. The Access Partnership is already addressing that problem through the Oral Health Coalition it established. The coalition held its first "Day of Dental Health" last year, when 68 volunteer dentists and 82 other volunteers served about 300 patients from the region in a single day.

The survey respondents ranked access to prescription drugs as the next greatest challenge for the uninsured. The Sentara Healthcare Foundation was instrumental in establishing and winning a \$700,000 grant to set up a regional pharmacy that provides low-income persons unprecedented access to prescription drugs. The Sentara

Williamsburg Community Health Foundation did its own regional assessment, and its findings are being included in the planning work of the Access Partnership.

### 12th Round of Grants

Sentara Health Foundation recently awarded more than \$177,000 in grants to support community programs and services in Hampton Roads. With the recent \$30,000 grant from Sentara Health Foundation, Catholic Charities of Hampton Roads will help 300 in-need seniors on the Peninsula. For the past five years, Sentara Health Foundation has touched many Virginia residents from the Eastern Shore to the upper Peninsula with grants to support community programs. During this time, more than \$1.5 million has been distributed.

### SWCH Foundation Update

A new substance abuse program, Silver Service: Sentara Williamsburg Community Hospital's Program of Substance Abuse Screening, Education and Treatment for Seniors is under way. Made possible through a grant from the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation to the SWCH Counseling Services Department, the program will help any Williamsburg area resident 60 years or older who is coping with

an untreated substance abuse problem. This includes prescription and over-the-counter drugs and drug-alcohol interactions.

### Optima Health

In July all Sentara Health Management products were re-branded as Optima Health. While branding our products under the Optima Health umbrella, SHM's name also changed to Sentara Health Plans Inc. to designate that this division is affiliated with Sentara.

#### In other Optima Health news...

Targeting e-business is an important part of Optima Health's new strategy. We have redesigned our website, [www.Optimahealth.com](http://www.Optimahealth.com). Using the revamped site is easier and faster due to improvements in usability and navigation. Added functionality for members will include an interactive decision support tool called Healthcare Advisor, and a health information library.

### Pilot Walking Program

The results of the WalkAbout with Healthy Edge pilot program (held July-December 2003) are in! The program is a great way to improve the health of anyone who is not exercising three or more times per week or who has a high body mass index. So far, more than 3,000 employees have signed up.

Of the 59 participants who completed the post-program survey: 36 percent reported decrease in blood pressure; 34 percent reported increase in number of times they exercise per week; 23 percent reported decrease in weight (group lost 132 pounds collectively); and 21 percent reported a change in their health status from "fair" or "poor" to "good" or "excellent."

### Kids Walk in Williamsburg

Sentara promotes healthy families with its Williamsburg Walk-About for Kids, which launched in May to complement the already established Williamsburg Walk-about (for adults). Children living in and around the Williamsburg/James City County area have been invited to participate. Children can earn pedometers and T-shirts. Lifestyle changes are also a part of Walkabout programs—monthly healthy eating sessions are also offered. Call (757) 259-8745 for more information.

### Lillian Vernon and Sentara Launch Relationship

Beginning in 2005, Lillian Vernon is launching a unique relationship with Sentara. The Sentara to Business initiative, known as S2B, will give Lillian Vernon associates access to healthcare screenings, lectures, and programs about the very health issues concerning Hampton Roads residents. Through this effort, Sentara will offer associates "sneak previews" of happenings to improve the health of the region.

One of the most exciting and necessary projects being unveiled right now is Sentara's Princess Anne health campus planned for southern Virginia Beach near Princess Anne Park. With few health services in this area of the city, residents are concerned about the 30-45 minute drive time to the nearest hospital. Within four years, the population within a five-mile radius of Princess Anne Park will

be greater than 200,000 people.

Sentara wants to continue building strong families, and the comprehensive health campus—unfolding in the next seven to 10 years—will do just that. The vision is for this health campus to be convenient for patients and families while meeting the growing health needs of an entire family. Multiple buildings will emerge, housing pediatric, internal medicine, family practice and specialty physician offices. The first phase will include a comprehensive cancer center, outpatient imaging and laboratory services, and physical therapy services. We are also planning a freestanding emergency department. Other phases will include a family wellness and recreation center through Sentara's partnership with the YMCA, an outpatient surgery center for adults and children, and other services.

# Congratulations



**William Atchley Jr., MD, FACP**, was elected to a second term as the secretary for Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM), the premier national medical society representing hospitalists. He is currently the director of the hospitalist service at SCH.



**Rod Hochman, MD**, has expanded his role as Executive Vice President, Sentara Healthcare, to assume responsibility for all Southside Hospitals, Sentara Medical Group, Sentara Enterprises and Imaging. Hochman has provided clinical leadership as Sentara's chief medical officer, a position he has held for more than six years. In 2002 he was named SNGH administrator.



**Linda Stones, RNC, BSN, MSB** and CEO of the Hospital for Extended Recovery, a facility owned by Sentara Healthcare, was named to the National Association of Long Term Care Hospital's (NALTH) board of directors. NALTH has a membership of 94 long-term care hospitals, which serve about one-third of the Medicare beneficiaries admitted to long-term care hospitals.



**Gary Yates, MD**, has been promoted to Chief Medical Officer for Sentara. Yates joined Sentara in 1996 and has been instrumental in providing leadership for clinical effectiveness initiatives including clinical quality improvement, clinical pathway and protocol development, and patient safety.

**Sentara** was selected as one of the "Top 25 Employers in Hampton Roads" by *Inside Business*. This is the first year Sentara participated in the survey which is only in its second year. Rankings were determined by a group of five local business leaders and human resources professionals. The judges assessed each organization's culture, family-friendly environment, compensation, and employee development.

**Sentara Medical Group** welcomes the following physicians: Dr. Bogdan Neughebauer, NDC, Infectious Disease; Dr. Ravindra Kahatapitiya, NDC, Internal Medicine; Dr. Marc Munzo, NDC, Internal Medicine; Dr. Raja Bakhshi, Oceanfront Family Practice; Dr. Robert Solomon, Department of Hospital Medicine, SWCH; Dr. Shirley Chai, Virginia Beach Family Practice; Dr. Gail Steckler, Chimney Hill Medical Associates & Urgent Care, Family Practice and Dr. Catherine Brisland, NDC, Pulmonary & Critical Care.

## Employee Safety Stories



(L-R): Tracy Hudson, RN, Tisa Price, surgical tech (patient) Jonathan Romero, surgical tech and Pam Mains, RN

### Sentara CarePlex Hospital

In designing the new SCH, patient safety was a priority for all the teams. A key area where safety was incorporated into the design is the **Surgical Operating Room**. All the latest technology has been installed into the rooms, including voice-activated technology, PACS and laminar flow, to the standardization of all 10 rooms. The one component of safety that could not be designed or built in is establishing a culture of safety. The surgical department culture has changed over the past two years and has embraced the Universal Wrong Site Surgery Protocol. The **staff and physicians** have partnered to change the culture by following the protocol for each and

every surgical case. The team has developed a check and balance system that safeguards all patients from ever having an incorrect/wrong site surgery. The patient is an active participant in the process and customer satisfaction has increased. The surgeon is marking the sites when laterality is involved with the word "yes." The team then completes the site verification process in the operating room with the "active" time-out. Many of the physicians take the lead in initiating the time out. The rooms have a white erasable board, listing the patient, procedure, physician, surgical technicians, scrub assistants, and circulators. Anesthesia is actively involved in the time out by participating in the patient identification process.

## AUXILIARY UPDATE

**SBH-** In 2003-2004 the Auxiliary has given a total of \$121,100 to the Rescue Squad, Angel Flight and the Joy Fund, among others. The Auxiliary awarded four scholarships totalling \$10,000 (\$2,500 each) to graduating seniors from Virginia Beach public high schools with plans to enter the medical field. The gift shop offers new merchandise weekly. Volunteers and employees receive a 10 percent discount on each item of \$10 or more.

**SCH-** The Auxiliary planned 17 fund-raising events for the year including: Sept. 24 "Red Hat" tea; Oct. 6-9 book sale; Oct. 9 "Red Hat" tea for grandmothers and granddaughters; Nov. 18-19 jewelry sale; and Dec. 3 annual Holiday Festival.

The Auxiliary board of directors voted to provide complimentary newspapers to patients and voted to donate the proceeds from their book sale to the United Way.

This year, in lieu of the Loving Tree, the Auxiliary will hold an all-day Holiday Festival for patients, visitors and employees.

The Auxiliary's Junior Program was successful this summer with more than 60 Juniors participating. Through mid-August, these Juniors donated over 3,000 hours of service to the hospital. The Auxiliary celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a celebration on Sept. 7 in the hospital.

**SLH/SNGH-** The Scholarship Committee awarded 23 nursing and three medical school scholar-

ships totaling \$86,506. The awards were: two Rainbow RN Scholarships (full tuition of \$11,253 each); eight Registered Nurse Scholarships (\$3,500 each); four Registered Nurse Scholarships (\$2,000 each); two LPN Scholarships (\$2,000 each); five Cardiovascular Tech Scholarships (\$2,500 each); two Surgical Tech Scholarships (\$1,500 each); two EVMS Scholarships (\$3,500 each) and one EVMS Scholarship (\$1,500). The Cancer Committee also gave \$10,000 for additional scholarships. Parents are now receiving books that we donated to the preemie nursery library.

**SVBGH-** Many efforts have enabled the Auxiliary to make donations including \$20,000 for cardiology and the Heart Center, \$10,000

to the Coastal Cancer Resource Center and another \$10,000 to the Beach Health Clinic. In all, more than \$70,000 was donated. Scholarships for the 2004-2005 school year were awarded to the following students furthering a nursing career: Crystal Platt (\$2,000); Jennifer Ellison (\$2,000); Josef Noga (\$2,000); Rosario Capil (\$1,000); Jennifer Jefferies (\$1,000); Melissa Fenger (\$1,000) and Colleen Zobel (\$1,000).

**SWCH-** The Mistletoe Market fund-raiser is scheduled for Nov. 20. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Festival of Lights celebration will be held Dec. 9. The Pineapple Knitters have been making caps for patients in chemotherapy through the Chemo Cap Project.



**Sentara runners take their marks at the Day of Caring race. Over 200 Sentara employees supported all the United Ways with their Day of Caring this year.**

The 2004 Sentara United Way Campaign, led by Bob Graves (2004 United Way Chair) and Mike Taylor (2004 Leadership Chair), was a huge success, nearly reaching Sentara's goal of \$662,000. Sentara supports four area United Ways: the United Way of South Hampton Roads, the Albemarle Area United Way, the United Way of the Virginia Peninsula, and the United Way of Greater Williamsburg.



**Larry DePriest, administrator of SLH, shown shortly after he kissed a pig, to fulfill a promise he made when the hospital made its United Way goal.**



**In July, Sentara participated in Determined Promise, a national disaster drill. Pictured are SNGH staff practicing drill procedures.**



**Nightingale has a whole new look, keeping the familiar red, gray and white colors, and new medical equipment onboard. A broader range of medical services can now be provided to cardiac and trauma patients, using a ventilator for patients who need assistance breathing, a balloon pump for cardiac by-pass patients, and an upgraded cardiac monitor that gives flight nurses better heart data to pass on to the hospital in-flight.**



**(L-R): Kurt Hofelich, Cynthia Smith and Linda Austin pictured in front of the car that Smith donated to SNGH Rehab Services to be used to re-teach patients driving skills and car transfers. On Sept. 19, Sentara's Rehabilitation Network celebrated its 20th anniversary with an open house for patients, staff and physicians.**



**Robert Williams (center), SNGH environmental service associate, retired in July after 42 years of service, making him the most tenured employee in the system.**



**Sentara Careplex Auxiliary members shown celebrating the Auxiliary's 50th anniversary in September.**



**Members of Sentara's API Time and Implementation Team (L-R) Front Row: Terri Oglethorpe, Shawn Maynor, Sherry Schumacher and Anita Gregory. (L-R) Back Row: Barbara Arnold, Sherry Peterson, Linda Horton, Tom Baigis, Windy Dongarra, Karen Gale and Sharon Freeman. The team won first place for the Best Practice Award given by API technology, the vendor for Sentara's payroll and attendance. The award was given to organizations that have faced a specific problem or challenge, implemented an innovative solution using API products and then achieved measurable results. The first place award of a \$5,000 donation went to the Sentara Health Foundation.**