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Yes, time flies. It’s already 2016; a year that will inevitably bring many changes that could impact our health system. We’ve seen the turmoil in the stock market to start the year. Should that turn into another 2008 I would expect healthcare spending and utilization to slow significantly as it did then. There are numerous other events going on in the world and in our state that could have a profound impact on us locally.

In November we will elect a new President. Whether that is a republican or a democrat, they will make changes to the healthcare policies that exist today. Those could be minor tweaks to the system or recommendations for massive changes. If it’s the latter, we will once again be challenged with a new set of rules, regulations and payment changes. A majority of healthcare in our country today is paid for by the government. When they change how or what they pay, we must adapt to remain successful.

Closer to home, I am very concerned about our state budget. The Alabama Legislature is already in session for 2016 and it’s clear that the number one issue is the budget, particularly the General Fund Budget which supports all functions of state government except education. Included in the General Fund is Alabama’s Medicaid program which impacts the health care of one in four Alabamians. A key point that most Alabamians don’t realize is that the state of Alabama does not fund any of the money that is paid to hospitals for people covered by Medicaid. Those are all paid with federal dollars. The state dollars that are allocated through the general fund support Medicaid expenditures are for all non-hospital services. Historically the state has actually taken some of the federal dollars allocated to hospital payments and used those for non-hospital services. It’s no wonder so many hospitals in Alabama are struggling to survive. It is our hope that a sensible and sustainable budget for all aspects of state government can be approved with a process that will work in the years ahead as well.

It is our mission to improve the health of the people we serve. While we are challenged by many things, including those mentioned about, our goal remains the same—to deliver quality care and service to every patient and their family. Thanks to the great physicians and team members that work here we will adapt to whatever changes are made to insure we continue to serve our mission.

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When Nancy Salmon was diagnosed with breast cancer she quickly took action to learn about the different treatment options available. Although she acted quickly, she was careful to not rush a decision about treatment.

“My advice to a recently diagnosed woman is to become as educated as possible about her diagnosis and her options for treatment,” said Salmon.

For patients at Huntsville Hospital Breast Center, a dedicated team of nurses called breast patient navigators help women through this process.

“We can help wade through all the information out there and help them understand it better,” said Sandra Cross, RN. “Then they feel more confident that they are making the best decision possible.”

According to the National Consortium of Breast Centers, the organization that provides certification for breast patient navigators, nurses who undergo the certification process have an expanded knowledge of treatment options and can enhance patient safety and quality of care.

“I spend time on the phone with many patients each day who are anxious and have questions,” said Kathy Pack, RN. “My job is rewarding because I know what we do is helpful for patients.”

The role of the breast patient navigators is truly defined by what each individual patient needs – from providing information and education to just being available to listen and answer questions.

After careful consideration, Salmon’s treatment included a lumpectomy, six rounds of chemotherapy and 35 radiation treatments. Her treatment was coordinated between three physicians working collaboratively. Marshall Schreeder, MD, at Clearview Cancer Institute provided chemotherapy, Elizabeth Falkenberg, MD, at the Center for Cancer Care provided radiation treatments and George Harriman, MD, of North Alabama Surgical Associates performed the lumpectomy.

Today, Salmon is a five-year cancer survivor. “Surviving cancer changes everything,” she said. “It makes you realize that every day is a gift.”

The support provided by the breast patient navigators continues after even after treatment is complete. The Surviving and Thriving program is an 8-week, wellness-oriented program that helps women face the unique challenges that come after treatment including physical side effects and emotional issues. The program is funded by Huntsville Hospital Foundation’s Liz Hurley Breast Cancer Fund. For information on how to support this program contact the Foundation at (256) 265-8077 or visit huntsvillehospitalfoundation.org.
Larry Naylor, a 61-year-old Decatur Utilities employee, lived with agonizing neck pain for many years. To provide relief for his chronic and severe pain, Naylor asked his primary care physician for a referral to the same physician who had treated his sister’s back pain – Cyrus Ghavam, MD, at The Orthopaedic Center.

Naylor suffered from degenerative disc disease, a common condition that occurs when the discs in the spine break down. Degenerative disc disease is in part hereditary, and normal wear and tear as a person ages is also a major cause. People who repeatedly lift heavy objects without proper technique can also injure spinal discs.

“I was doing well after my second fusion (surgery) but then was involved in a car accident about four years ago, and the pain became unbearable,” Naylor said.

Dr. Ghavam concluded that Naylor was a good candidate for artificial cervical disc replacement. “The artificial disc allows treatment of the herniated disc without doing another fusion,” said Dr. Ghavam. “It preserves range of motion and may reduce the likelihood of an adjacent disc undergoing degeneration, which is especially useful for younger patients.”

The procedure begins with a small incision on the front of the neck. Under a surgical microscope, the surgeon removes the abnormal disc to take pressure off the spinal cord and nerve root. The correct size artificial disc is then implanted under live X-ray. Physical therapy after surgery involves range of motion exercises, and most patients return to light activities within three weeks.

Naylor said he experienced immediate relief after surgery. “I was up and walking within hours,” he said. “I returned to work with no restrictions, and I’m able to continue gardening. Having the artificial cervical disc replacement has made a huge difference.”

Dr. Ghavam said patient satisfaction with this type of procedure is very high. “This technology has been used in Europe for about 10 years and was FDA approved a few years ago in the U.S.,” said Dr. Ghavam. “My patients’ results in more than 30 cases have been excellent.”

Huntsville Hospital is the only hospital in Alabama to be named among America’s top 100 best hospitals for spine surgery in 2015. “North Alabama is fortunate to be home to high-quality services provided by TOC Spine Center and the Spine & Neuro Center,” said Jeff Samz, Chief Operating Officer for Huntsville Hospital Health System.
A Huntsville Hospital plan to open North Alabama’s first inpatient hospice unit has special meaning to Doris Bailey. Bailey, who lives in the Monrovia community, credits Huntsville Hospital’s Hospice Family Care with allowing her husband to die peacefully and with dignity in his own bedroom.

Charles Bailey, 76, a retired Army systems analyst, suffered from stomach cancer. “He was at the point of no return” when the family reached out to Hospice Family Care, Doris Bailey says. “They set up everything in the house for us and let us know they were at our disposal whenever we needed them, 24/7.”

Hospice employees arranged a hospital bed for Charles and put it at the foot of his wife’s bed, allowing him to spend his final days in a familiar setting surrounded by the people he loved most. His daughter Dodi Gaines was at his side when he died.

“I don’t know what I would have done without hospice,” says Doris Bailey. “They weren’t only our caregivers; they became like family to us.”

While Bailey says home-based hospice care was the right choice for her husband, she enthusiastically supports the idea of inpatient hospice care for terminally ill patients who no longer can be cared for at home and who require constant medical supervision.
Huntsville Hospital, Hospice Family Care and Redstone Village are teaming up to build the region’s first inpatient hospice facility on the campus of Redstone Village, a retirement community in south Huntsville. Scheduled to break ground this spring, the $10 million, 30,000-square-foot structure will offer 15 private rooms with all the comforts of home.

Each room will have sleeping accommodations for two family members. Plans also call for family living areas, work areas, a kitchen, patios with views of the nearby woods and mountain, and a non-denominational chapel.

Round the clock care and comfort will be provided by a specially-trained medical director, nurses, technicians and spiritual counselor.

“A community the size of Huntsville should have a facility dedicated to inpatient, end-of-life care,” says Jeff Samz, Huntsville Hospital’s chief operating officer. “Our goal is to create a world-class model where end-of-life care is delivered with privacy and dignity for the patients, and where their families can be present and involved in the care.”

Huntsville Hospital estimates more than 300 hospital patients a year would benefit from inpatient hospice care. Currently, there are only 40 inpatient hospice beds statewide – none within an hour of Huntsville.

The Huntsville Hospital Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising arm of Huntsville Hospital, recently launched a $7 million capital campaign to cover the bulk of the costs to build, furnish and equip the inpatient hospice facility.

Bailey says inpatient hospice care would be a godsend for many families in the Huntsville area. She has a close friend whose husband is battling stomach cancer. The couple does not have any family in Alabama, and the woman is “at a loss” how to care for her husband as his condition worsens.

“She’s been asking me about hospice,” Bailey says, “and she could really benefit from an inpatient hospice. I would even volunteer my time at a place like that.

“Hospice Family Care was so good to me,” she says, “and I’d love to give back.”

If you would like to donate to the inpatient hospice project, call Huntsville Hospital Foundation President Candy Burnett at (256) 265-8077 or email candy.burnett@hhsys.org. You can also make a contribution online at huntsvillehospitalfoundation.org. All donations to the foundation are tax deductible.
Huntsville Hospital’s Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU) has more than doubled in size following a year-long construction and remodeling project.

The enlarged MICU means more beds are available for critically ill patients from across North Alabama who are sometimes held in the emergency department or sent temporarily to other nursing units of the hospital.

“We want to decrease patient hold times in the ER,” says Unit Director Regina Wilder, RN. “If someone is an ICU patient, we want to shorten the time they are held in the ER while we’re waiting on a bed.

“MICU staff is specially trained to treat critically ill patients for longer durations,” says Wilder, “and we have the specialized equipment.”

Huntsville Hospital converted some unfinished fourth floor space in the Madison Street Tower into a roomy and modern 16-bed MICU.

As the regional hub for critically ill patients, the hospital needed to significantly expand the unit to meet a growing demand.

The new patient rooms are more than double the size of the former MICU rooms – bigger than many people’s bedrooms. Nurses can circulate easily, even with family members in the room.

Most other hospitals don’t have critical care patient rooms “anywhere close” to the size of Huntsville Hospital’s, says Wilder. “This will be the wave of the future.”

For three decades, the MICU operated from a small section of the hospital with 10 beds.

“It was challenging to get in all the equipment that we needed, whether it was a ventilator or dialysis machine,” says Lee Hardison, RN, Director of the Medical Service Line.

The old MICU area – just a short walk away on the same floor—is undergoing an extensive remodeling. New floors. New nurses’ station. Even the ceiling tiles have been replaced.

When those 10 upgraded patient rooms are put back into service this spring, Huntsville Hospital will have a total of 26 MICU beds for people with critical health problems such as kidney failure, respiratory failure and pulmonary diseases.

The unit includes four airtight isolation rooms for patients with tuberculosis and other airborne contagious diseases.

Huntsville Hospital more than doubled the size of the MICU nursing staff to accommodate the 16-bed expansion. Total employment in the MICU unit has swelled from about 28 to 70 over the past year.

A SPACIOUS ‘WAVE OF THE FUTURE’

Huntsville Hospital employees act out a typical bedside scene in the new Medical Intensive Care Unit. The extra-large patient rooms can easily accommodate several visiting family members as well as specialized medical equipment.
CUDDLE TEAM SOOTHES BABIES

A new team of volunteers is providing babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Huntsville Hospital for Women & Children with therapeutic talk and touch.

The NICU Cuddler volunteers spend time rocking, holding, singing and reading to soothe babies and to help them rest, all of which can contribute to a baby’s growth and development while in the NICU.

“The additional interaction and human touch can lead to faster weight gain and shorter hospital stays,” said Neonatologist Meyer Dworksy, MD.

Babies are carefully evaluated by the health care team before being recommended to the Cuddler program, and volunteers receive extensive specialized classroom and bedside training to prepare for their duties.

In addition to the health benefits for babies, the Cuddler program can be a comfort to parents when they are unable to be at their baby’s bedside. For the volunteers, having the special privilege to nurture fragile, premature babies also has its rewards.

“I love doing this - there is just nothing better,” said NICU Cuddler Liz Smith.

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The history of cardiovascular care in the Tennessee Valley is intertwined with the history of Huntsville Hospital. From the first cardiac catheterization performed at Huntsville Hospital in 1979 to the first open heart surgery in 1981 and with continuing advancements made over the past four decades, the team at Huntsville Hospital has led the way in advanced heart care for our region.

Today, Huntsville Hospital’s cardiovascular program is recognized among the nation’s best, as evidenced by the hospital’s recent inclusion in the nation’s Top 50 Cardiovascular Hospitals for 2016 by both Truven Health Analytics and Healthgrades. Significant with both of these recognitions was that Huntsville Hospital was the only hospital in Alabama to receive these distinctions.
Healthgrades evaluated approximately 40 million Medicare patient records from nearly 4,500 hospitals across the nation in developing its 2016 Report to the Nation. Among the recognitions for Huntsville Hospital’s cardiovascular program in the Healthgrades report were:

- One of America’s 50 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Surgery in 2015 and 2016
- One of America’s 100 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Care in 2016
- Named among the Top 10 percent in the nation for Overall Cardiac Services for 2016
- Five-Star recipient for Coronary Bypass Surgery for 9 years in a row (2008-2016)
- Five-Star recipient for Valve Surgery for 2 years in a row (2015-2016)
- Five-Star recipient for Treatment of Heart Failure

Dr. Clay points to the training and dedication of his colleagues, as well as to Huntsville Hospital’s commitment to the program. “Huntsville Hospital has always provided the cutting-edge technology and the nursing and support team that we have needed to deliver such great cardiovascular care. It all works together,” he said.

Paul Tabereaux, MD, cardiologist and electro-physiologist for the Heart Center, echoed Clay’s assessment of Huntsville’s program. “We are extremely honored and excited to be recognized by Healthgrades and by Truven Analytics as a Top 50 Cardiovascular Hospital. These awards compare us nationally to other highly competitive hospitals and demonstrate that Huntsville Hospital is providing the very best to our community and region.”

Larry Johnston, President of the Heart Center and Vice President of Cardiovascular Services at Huntsville Hospital, summed up the strength of the program, saying, “It’s the team—cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, and cardiac anesthesia with strong support of advance practice professionals, nurses, technologists, technicians, and management working together. Our patients and our communities are the beneficiaries.”

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Whether you live in north Alabama, or anywhere else in the U.S. or even the world, heart disease is public health enemy number one. According to the World Health Organization, there were approximately 56 million worldwide deaths in 2012, of which 30 percent or nearly 17 million were from cardiovascular diseases.
A fun, family day at the baseball park took a frightening turn when Zack James walked off the field and told his wife Alicia, “I don’t feel so good. I think I hurt my arms when I was up to bat.”

She noticed he was pale and sweating excessively, and then he heaved as if to vomit. Although her experience as a registered nurse helped her recognize the symptoms as a possible heart attack, it was a reality she struggled to accept.

“It makes no sense,” Alicia said in a blog article she wrote. “He had no cardiac history and had never had any chest pain or other cardiac symptoms.”

Someone called 9-1-1, and Zack was rushed to Huntsville Hospital Emergency Department where the cardiac team performed an emergent cardiac catheterization to clear a 100 percent blockage of his LAD (a major coronary artery known as the widow maker) and some less severe blockages on the front side of the heart.

After routine cardiac testing and an overnight stay in the ICU, Zack was discharged from the hospital with a physician order to start Cardiac Rehab. The 12-week rehab program includes a medically-supervised diet and exercise plan and helps patients develop and maintain healthier lifestyles.

Today, Zack is a proud graduate of Cardiac Rehab and according to Alicia, he is better than ever. They attribute his recovery to the many hands that helped him that day and to the fact that everyone reacted quickly to his symptoms.

“You don’t have to have chest pain or even intense pain to be having a heart attack,” said Zack. “My pain level was 4 out of 10. When in doubt, have it checked out. It could save your life.”

— Chest discomfort
Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

— Discomfort in other areas of the upper body
Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

— Shortness of breath
with or without chest discomfort.

— Other signs
may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

If you or someone you are with experiences any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1.

ARE YOU AT RISK?
By simply answering a few questions, the risk assessment tool uses health information to predict a person’s chance of having a heart attack in the next 10 years.

Find your risk score, visit huntsvillehospital.org/services/heart-care.
RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING DIRECTORS
Huntsville Hospital recently honored six directors for their outstanding leadership over the past year. Honored for excellence in service, quality, human resource management, and finance were Ryan Murray, RN, Emergency Department Director at Madison Hospital; Jamie Fortenberry, RN, Director of 6N/6MST nursing units; Brian Buchmann, Director of 7North/NE-NW nursing units; Elise Taylor, Director of Corporate University; Susie Auchter, Director of Revenue Integrity; and Rick Metzger, RN, Director of Surgery, who was named Department Head of the Year at the hospital.

HEART NAVIGATORS
A new Huntsville Hospital program aims to reduce the number of heart patients with complications that require a return hospital visit. The Patient Navigator Program helps people diagnosed with acute coronary syndrome, coordinating their care while they are in the hospital and after they return home. This team-based continuum of health management approach is considered a best practice by the American College of Cardiology. The program is an outgrowth of the hospital’s voluntary participation in national quality benchmarking studies.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION SHINES ON TEAM MEMBER
The National Diversity Council has named Kelli Powers as one of the Thirteen Most Influential Women in Alabama. Kelli serves as the Chief Financial Officer for Huntsville Hospital Health System.

EXPANDING WELLNESS THROUGH NORTH ALABAMA
For more than 25 years, companies of all sizes in Huntsville, Madison, and Decatur have trusted HH Corporate Wellness Services for health and wellness programs. Going forward, our services are expanding to other communities in North Alabama. Known as WellnessWorks, the same excellent services will be delivered through our affiliates at Athens-Limestone Hospital, Decatur Morgan Hospital, Madison Hospital, Helen Keller Hospital, Red Bay Hospital and Lawrence Medical Center. For more info, call (888) 567-3144.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

There are many ways to support your hospital! Whether you make a donation, volunteer at an event, or serve on a committee, you are helping to save lives and change lives, and it just doesn’t get any better than that. When you support Huntsville Hospital Foundation, you are helping to provide equipment and programs that wouldn’t be possible otherwise.

Our patients appreciate you, and so do we!

For more information, please call the Foundation at (256)265-8077.
Each December, the Foundation hosts a party for current and former patients of the hospital’s St. Jude Affiliate Clinic. Patients who completed their treatment in 2015 unveiled their portraits on the clinic’s “Wall of Heroes,” and each patient, and their siblings, received gifts from Santa. Pictured are cancer survivors: future NFL football player Daimon and Princess Laney.

The Performers League of Huntsville made a generous donation to Huntsville Hospital’s Pediatric Oncology clinic. This talented group of high school students performed “You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown: The Musical” in November, solely for the purpose of supporting our patients.

The Civitan Clubs of Huntsville, Lakewood and South Huntsville joined some of our Pediatric Therapy and Audiology patients and families at a Holiday Appreciation Reception in December. As long time supporters of these departments, club members celebrate the holidays with patients and their families at a festive party each year.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey made a $10,000 donation to the Foundation in support of the Pediatric Oncology program. Ringling Bros. performers visited Huntsville Hospital for Women & Children prior to their VBC performance in December to entertain pediatric patients and their families.

FACES OF HUNTSVILLE

“What I do is kind of like filling your car up with gas. Pouring training, education and encouragement into the lives of others helps THEM drive to where they need to go in life,” said Lydia K. Cole, RN, Professional Development Coach at Huntsville Hospital’s Corporate University. “I love encouraging and equipping others to reach their full potential. It’s rewarding to invest into their lives and see THEM reach their goals. I’m grateful for opportunities the hospital gives me to support patients, employees, the community and women who have had breast cancer and are transitioning to surviving and thriving.” #FacesofHuntsvilleHospital

Each week, the Foundation features a special member of the hospital family. Please like Huntsville Hospital Foundation’s Facebook page so that you can get to know the people who work at our hospital, and those who support it so generously.
Society Dinner

The Huntsville Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees hosted the Societies of 1895 & 2012 Recognition Dinner in November. Named for the years in which Huntsville Hospital and Madison Hospital were founded, the Societies recognize and honor those who set a standard in generosity through annual, cumulative and planned gifts to the Foundation.

Honored at the event were (left to right): Liz Smith; Chris and Amy George; Cynthia and Rey Almodóvar; Tricia Cash; Suzanne Westenhofer (Huntsville Hospital Auxiliary); Dr. Dick Finch; and Dave King (Dynetics, Inc.)

Chris and Amy George were honored as Doctors of Philanthropy, the highest award bestowed upon Foundation donors. The Georges were recognized for their extraordinary work with the Melissa George Neonatal Memorial Fund, established in 2005 to honor their daughter.

One of the highlights of the evening was the introduction of Neonatal ICU “graduates” whose births represented each of the 10 years since the Melissa George Fund was established. As patients, all of these children benefited from the generosity of Foundation donors who helped to provide lifesaving equipment for the NICU.

Dee and Marcia Fowler, Dr. Jeanmarie Chappell, Julia Schmidt and Traci Breland.

Tony and Kathy Chan with Marc Bendickson

Wesley and Meggan Crunkleton with Dr. Aruna Arora.
Supporters of Huntsville Hospital Foundation always enjoy celebrating the start of the holiday season with the Foundation’s “oldest,” most traditional event, the BMW Brunch. The 2015 event marked the 30th Anniversary of the Brunch, which was held on November 22 in the BMW showroom at Century Automotive. Patsy and John Shields, and Tracy and George Jones host the event each year, and many of the guests attending have made it a fall tradition.

Huntsville Hospital gynecologic oncologists Joe Kelly, MD, David Engle, MD, and Tyler Kirby, MD, spoke to guests about the advances being made in the diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer. Proceeds from the Brunch provided a digital colposcope, used to diagnose gynecologic cancers; three chemotherapy chairs; and a specialized exam table.

JoAnne and Ed McCormick (center) were the lucky winners of a BMW 328i for one year. The McCormicks are pictured with John and Patsy Shields (left) and Tracy and George Jones (right), owners of Century BMW.

The BMW Brunch host committee helped plan an outstanding event. Pictured (left to right) are: Charlotte and John Wessel; Kristi and Dr. Joe Kelly; Ginney and Foster McDonald; Belle and Sean Kelly; Sara Ahearn; and Cathy and Dr. Brian Scholl (not pictured: Michael Ahearn).
David Hand had a healthier diet than most and exercised occasionally. Previous medical checkups hadn't raised any red flags about heart trouble. That changed dramatically on a Friday in July 2014. Hand felt pain radiating down his left arm all the way to his fingertips. His family physician, Kirk Holdsambeck, MD, sent him to Huntsville Hospital for tests. A cardiac catheterization revealed a 90 percent blockage in an artery on the underside of his heart. The artery was too narrow to accommodate a stent. “When the doctors came in and broke the news to me, it was alarming and tearful,” says Hand, 59. “I knew I wasn’t on death’s doorstep, but my quality of life was pretty active. I didn’t want that to change.”

After talking the situation over with his wife, his pastor and several others, Hand decided it was time to make some “radical” lifestyle changes. He eliminated meat, oils, dairy and eggs from his diet and poured his energy into Cardiac Rehab. The 12-week program, based at the Heart Center on Huntsville Hospital’s main campus, includes a medically-supervised diet and exercise plan. Hand also changed his daily routine, waking up earlier to squeeze in a morning workout before heading to his job at Adtran.

Impressed by his dedication to becoming heart healthy, Cardiac Rehab staffers nominated hand as the program’s 2015 Cardiac Rehab Patient of the Year. Along with his physicians, Hand says a book given to him by his pastor, the New York Times bestseller “Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease,” helped put him on the path to a healthier lifestyle.

“For many, many months, my wife Susan and I went to a completely plant-based diet,” he says. “Luckily, we were already both vegetable lovers.”

Not surprisingly, the weight began to melt away. Over a period of about seven months, Hand dropped from 201 pounds to 161. His cholesterol numbers also improved. Even so, Hand knew something wasn’t quite right. “I was a little on the fatigued side,” he says, “and realized I might not be getting enough protein.”

So Hand adjusted his diet yet again, incorporating sensible portions of chicken and fish into a few meals each week. He and his wife eat vegetarian the rest of the time. “I haven’t had beef or pork in more than a year, and I can honestly say that I don’t miss it,” says Hand. “I think my diet is enjoyable; it’s not a burden.

“My stamina is also significant. I can keep up with people much younger.”

Best of all, Hand says he has had “zero” symptoms of heart trouble since the July 2014 scare and has been able to stop taking medication for angina.
CEO David Spillers makes no secret of his desire to see Huntsville Hospital rank among the top 10 percent of U.S. hospitals for overall quality.

As a part of that effort, the hospital in 2012 began issuing an annual Quality Report highlighting its performance in several key areas including: preventing infections associated with catheters and central lines; following nationally recognized best practices for treating heart failure, strokes and pneumonia; and starting angioplasty on heart attack victims within 90 minutes.

Chief Medical Officer Robert Chappell Jr., MD, says the recently-released Quality Report 2015 shows the hospital’s great strides at reducing catheter-associated urinary tract infections.

“Foley catheters are very convenient for the patients, but we found they were causing urinary tract infections that sometimes led to sepsis,” says Chappell. “By removing the catheter as soon as possible or, better yet, not using them in the first place, you can really reduce those infections.”

Sepsis is a life-threatening illness that can occur when infection triggers a person’s immune system to go into overdrive, leading to widespread inflammation, blood clots and other problems.

The report also highlights Huntsville Hospital for Women & Children’s ongoing efforts to help new mothers safely and properly hold their infants.

Chappell says the hospital continues to work hard on reducing infections associated with central lines and preventing patients from developing blood clots.

“You want to be 100 percent on everything, but it’s difficult,” he says. “With people living longer and so many chronic diseases, the care is so much more complicated than it used to be.

“But we feel that if we use the right processes, we’ll get the right outcome.”

All U.S. hospitals are required to report patient care data to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, but the Quality Report is a voluntary publication intended to help the public better understand Huntsville Hospital’s focus on quality care and patient safety.

The hospital also participates voluntarily in quality care databases maintained by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons and other medical groups.

“I hope people who read this Quality Report will understand that we take quality seriously and want to be one of the highest-quality, safest hospitals in America,” says Chappell.

Read the full Quality Report 2015 online at huntsvillehospital.org/community-events/publications.
Why did you decide to become a physician? My dad was diagnosed with liver cancer during my senior year in high school and passed away about six months later. During that short period of time, we encountered a vast array of health care team members, most of whom were great. I remember the feelings of admiration and being awe-inspired by some of the physicians. Just a few weeks before I moved away from mom’s house for college, my goals and aspirations started to take form.

Why did you decide to practice in Huntsville? In 1987, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend Space Camp as a 5th grader. Fourteen years later, I performed my medical school clinical rotations in Huntsville Hospital. Another 14 years passed, and when the opportunity became available to come back to Huntsville, it was the perfect fit.

What do you like best about Huntsville/north Alabama/the South? Huntsville appears to be a modern, progressive city with a well-educated population — similar to, albeit smaller than Denver, where my wife and I had lived and worked for 5 years. The unbeatable advantage that Huntsville has over Denver is that my wife’s family, as well as my mom, all live in Alabama, within driving distance — not to mention the proximity to the beach.

What do you do for fun? I enjoy traveling, ping-pong, music, as well as regular exercise. I also enjoy spending time with my wife and daughter, including outdoor sports and activities.

What is the best advice you have ever received and from whom? James 1:19, “Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.”

During football season who do you cheer for? Alabama Crimson Tide and Denver Broncos

What is the best thing about being a doctor? The honor and privilege that comes with providing care for patients, often times when they are most vulnerable. It’s hard to beat the feeling you have when the ultimate outcome is a significant improvement in a patient’s quality of life.

If you were not a physician, what would you want to be? A high school football coach and/or teacher.
FOR MEMBERS OF SENIOR

TASTY TUESDAY

Tuesday, March 15, 11:30 a.m.
Location: Trinity United Methodist Church, Wesley Hall
Cost: $5

11 a.m. – Blood Pressure Checks
11:30 a.m. – Catered box lunches by Honey Baked Ham

Kristina Johnson, Director of Operations for Hospice Family Care, will share the progress and collaboration with Huntsville Hospital in developing an inpatient facility to bring around-the-clock, medically supervised hospice care and comfort to patients in the last stages of life.

LOCAL OUTINGS

Guided Bird Walk · Thursday, April 21, 9–11 a.m.
Cost: Senior rate $10.90, Garden members – Free
Location: Huntsville Botanical Garden, 4747 Bob Wallace Avenue

Considered a birding “hotspot” by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Lewis Birding Trail at the Huntsville Botanical Garden will be our location for an enjoyable nature experience. Senior Horizons members will join the trail’s namesake, Herb Lewis, for a 1.5 mile walking tour of the trail devoted to the conservation, education and enjoyment of birdlife.

Trolley tour of five historical downtown Huntsville churches
Thursday, May 19, 9 a.m. – noon
Cost: $10
Reservation Limit: 25
Location: Park at Ashley Furniture to meet the Trolley

Historical churches influence the character of any community and are often some of the most architecturally important structures one is likely to see. Take a trolley ride and tour five downtown Huntsville churches to include St. Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church, First United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, Temple B’nai Shalom, and the Episcopal Church of the Nativity. Guides will be present at each church to share a brief history.
**HORIZONS**

**EXCURSIONS & DAY TRIPS**

**Natchez & Biloxi, Mississippi, and Theodore, Alabama, with Excursions Unlimited**

**Dates:** Thursday–Monday, March 31–April 4, 2016  
**Deadline for full payment:** March 1  
**Cost:** $790 double (add $250 for single supplement)  
**Trip Cancellation Insurance:** $75  
**Deposit:** $100

Join us for a four-day trip as we celebrate Natchez, Mississippi’s Tricentennial and Spring Pilgrimage of historic homes and plantations. We will explore the spring Festival of Flowers at Bellingrath Gardens and Home outside of Mobile, followed by dining and an overnight stay at the elegant Beau Rivage Resort & Casino in Biloxi. This trip includes transportation, lodging, tickets to the Pilgrimage, shows, events, activities and eight meals. Full itinerary is available through the Senior Horizons office. This tour requires average physical activity. Travelers should be in good health, able to climb stairs and walk reasonable distances, possibly over uneven ground.

**StrawberryFest, Cullman**

**Date:** Friday, May 6, 2016  
**Reservation/Cancellation Deadline:** April 6  
**Cost:** $80  
**Reservation Limit:** 55

The StrawberryFest in Cullman spotlights what is reputed to be the one of the best strawberry growing regions in North Alabama. At the festival venue, travelers will enjoy live music, a classic car show and local artisans. Following a sumptuous buffet lunch at All Steak, whose orange rolls have been rated as one of “Alabama’s top 100 dishes to eat before you die,” guests will spend the remainder of the day shopping in unique stores in the quaint downtown or visiting historic districts with guided tours provided by the Cullman County Museum.

**DESTINATION TRAVEL with Collette Vacations**

**Important Note:** Prices include round trip air fare from Huntsville, air taxes and fees/surcharges and transfers. A $250 deposit is required to initiate the reservation process. Travelers have seven days to withdraw their reservation to receive a full refund. Prices are subject to increase prior to the time travelers make full payment. Cancellation insurance is available.

**Best of Eastern Canada – Tour # 694213**

**Dates:** Sept. 18 – Oct. 2, 2016 (14 days)  
**Deadline for deposit:** March 18, 2016  
**Cost:** Double: $3,119/person; Single: $3,719  
**Highlights:** Boston, Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, Ontario, Niagra Falls, New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C.

**Spotlight on New York City – Tour # 694219**

**Dates:** Oct. 20 – 24, 2016 (5 days)  
**Deadline for deposit:** April 1, 2016  
**Cost:** Double: $3,129/person; Single: $4,129  
**Highlights:** Two Broadway shows, ferry to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, Empire State Building, United Nations, Metropolitan Museum of Art and fabulous shopping.

**France Magnifique – Tour # 718442**

**Dates:** Oct. 27 – Nov. 7, 2016 (12 days)  
**Deadline for Deposit:** April 12, 2016  
**Cost:** Double: $4,749/person; Single $5,699  
**Highlights:** Paris, Seine Dinner Cruise, Normandy, Omaha Beach, Le Mont St. Michel, Loire Valley, Château Fontainebleau, TGV Train, Avignon, Winery tour and a cooking demonstration

**California New Year’s Getaway featuring the Tournament of Roses Parade – Tour 718483**

**Dates:** Dec. 29, 2016 – Jan. 2, 2017 (5 days)  
**Deadline for Deposit:** June 20 | Final payment: June 29  
**Cost:** Double $2,779/person, Single $3,279  
**Highlights:** View floats in the final stages of decorating, Bandfest, New Year’s Eve Party, VIP seating for Tournament of Roses Parade.

All Senior Horizons trips and local outings are open only to its members. For information on becoming a member, or to learn more about trips and outings, call the Senior Horizons office at (256) 265-7950. Trips and activities fill quickly. Please make reservations early!
OUT AND ABOUT WITH SENIOR HORIZONS

Middle Tennessee Day Trip to Sewanee, Lynchburg and Estill Springs

Claudette Tibbs and Merrill Moore

Sharon Turner and Dianne Cochran at Holiday Card workshop

Dawn Shurden, Sondra Davis and Ina Jenkins at Opryland Dinner & Show. Jean Simon, Santa Johnny and Ina Jenkins at Christmas Luncheon. Joyce and Bill Clark at Christmas Luncheon

Nathalie Hurford and Ann Livingston on hayride at Grandaddy’s Farm

December Lunch Bunch at Carrabba’s Italian Grill
Start your New Year healthier with FirstCommunity Medicare Supplement.

First&Fit is our premier fitness program available to all FirstCommunity Medicare Supplement members. A First&Fit membership is good at any Huntsville Hospital System Wellness Center in Huntsville, Madison or Athens at the special rate of only $19.99* per month.

- Increase your strength with **weight training**
- Boost your energy with **group land or aquatic classes**
- Enhance flexibility & relieve stress with **yoga**
- Improve heart health with **cardio machines & treadmills**
- Your choice from **Pilates to Zumba**
- Or just **walk with friends**

**First&Fit**

First&Fit membership is available at any Huntsville Hospital System Wellness Center in Huntsville, Madison or Athens at the special rate of $19.99* per month.
Alabama’s ONLY TOP 50 Heart Hospital

Exceptional care. Exceptionally close.