



VIDANT HEALTH™



## 2011 Community Benefit Report

**Vidant Health** is a system of care serving eastern North Carolina with 11,000 employees, hundreds of primary and specialty physicians, 10 hospitals, three wellness centers and more. This report covers the fiscal year period of October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011. During this time, the health system was operating as University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina. Our name changed to Vidant Health on January 25, 2012. Financial information uses system names that were in place during the reporting period.

The hospitals of Vidant Health are:

- Vidant Medical Center (formerly Pitt County Memorial Hospital)
- Vidant Beaufort Hospital
- Vidant Bertie Hospital
- Vidant Chowan Hospital
- Vidant Duplin Hospital
- Vidant Edgecombe Hospital (formerly Heritage Hospital)
- Vidant Pungo Hospital
- Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital
- The Outer Banks Hospital (joint ownership between Vidant Health and Chesapeake Regional Medical Center)
- Albemarle Health (managed by Vidant Health)



# Vidant Health touches lives across eastern North Carolina

At Vidant Health, formerly known as University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina, we strive to provide best-in-region access to health care, exceptional experiences and optimal outcomes. If we do our jobs well, then healthier communities will result.

Our role in eastern North Carolina encompasses much more than health care. Our mission — to enhance the quality of life for the communities and people we serve, touch and support — drives us to work beyond the walls of our facilities. We work with our communities to provide health education, help those in need access medical care and support nonprofit agencies in their community service, among other projects.

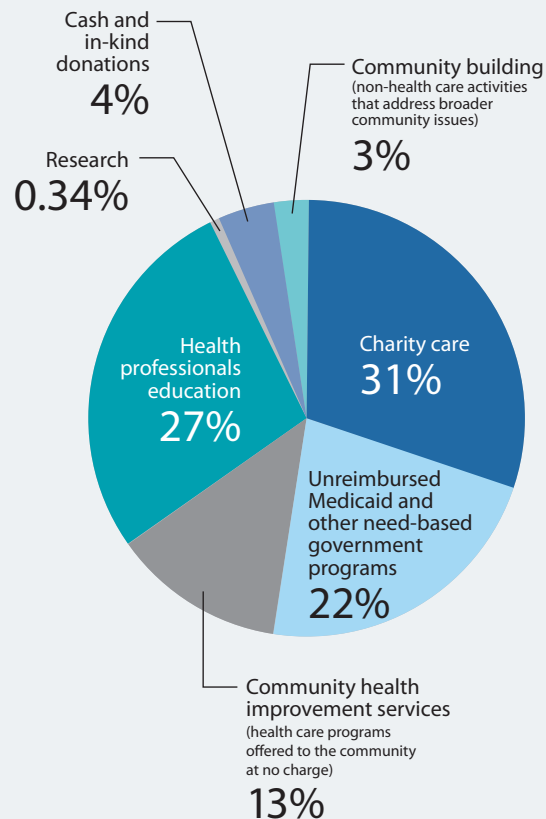
## Total Community Benefit\*

| Hospital                      | Unreimbursed Medicaid and Other Unreimbursed Need-based Government Programs | Charity Care        | Community Benefit Programs and Services | Total Community Benefit |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pitt County Memorial Hospital | \$22,929,444                                                                | \$29,024,672        | \$54,900,993                            | \$106,855,109           |
| Roanoke-Chowan Hospital       | 607,367                                                                     | 2,129,352           | 1,762,349                               | 4,499,068               |
| Bertie Memorial Hospital      | 664,343                                                                     | 856,624             | 823,209                                 | 2,344,176               |
| Heritage Hospital             | 59,814                                                                      | 2,958,175           | 1,362,640                               | 4,380,629               |
| Chowan Hospital               | 1,822,454                                                                   | 1,851,817           | 806,854                                 | 4,481,125               |
| Duplin General Hospital       | 2,466,197                                                                   | 305,720             | 664,248                                 | 3,436,165               |
| The Outer Banks Hospital      | 0                                                                           | 1,695,138           | 474,931                                 | 2,170,069               |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>\$28,549,619</b>                                                         | <b>\$38,821,498</b> | <b>\$60,795,224</b>                     | <b>\$128,166,341</b>    |

\*Does not include Albemarle Health and Beaufort Hospital.

University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina reported its FY 2011 community benefit statistics to conform to standards established by the Internal Revenue Service. This report excludes \$49.4 million in unreimbursed Medicare and \$42.9 million in bad debt. The North Carolina Hospital Association recognizes these categories as community benefit spending. Community benefit, unreimbursed Medicare and bad debt totaled \$220 million for FY 2011.

|                                                                |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Charity care                                                   | \$38,821,498 |
| Unreimbursed Medicaid and other need-based government programs | 28,549,619   |
| Community health improvement services                          | 16,418,646   |
| Health professionals education                                 | 35,231,400   |
| Research                                                       | 437,998      |
| Cash and in-kind donations                                     | 5,498,400    |
| Community building                                             | 3,208,780    |



Due to rounding, numbers do not equal 100 percent.

During the 2011 fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30, 2011, University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina contributed more than \$128 million in community benefit activities and services. This includes charity and other uncompensated care. It also includes the many community-based programs and services that we provide, beyond the medical care that you expect from us. More than 267,000 individuals throughout eastern North Carolina have taken part in these outreach programs over the past year.

But numbers do not tell the full story. Therefore, we present our annual Community Benefit Report, a collection of just a few of the stories of the people who have been touched by our programs and outreach services. We thank you for allowing us to serve you and hope you enjoy reading about our community benefit programs.

# School nurse helps student contend with rare illness

Other than a large, yellow cast on her right arm, Madison Martin seems as healthy as any other 13-year-old Pitt County girl. Yet her outward appearance and upbeat attitude belie the fact that her body is fighting an internal battle with its autoimmune system.

It's called myasthenia gravis, a rare chronic illness. In the United States, only 20 out of 100,000 individuals are afflicted with it. Few physicians have ever treated it, especially in a teenager. The name myasthenia gravis means "grave muscle weakness." The symptoms are often debilitating, and treatments can require

complicated surgery and lengthy hospital stays. Exposure to routine childhood infections can have serious consequences. Even a minor fall can result in a broken bone, which in Madison's case, may have contributed to her broken elbow.

Despite such challenges, Madison's parents, Mike and Jamie Martin, bravely send her to school at A.G. Cox Middle School in Winterville. But they do so with the knowledge that Shelly Merrill, an experienced, sensitive and responsive school nurse, has

created an environment in which Madison can thrive despite her illness.

With the support of the A.G. Cox faculty, Madison pursues a wide variety of interests, especially music. She plays the cello, violin, piano and the electric guitar. She takes pride in performing with her school orchestra, constantly pushing herself to improve.

For Merrill, Madison is a wonder. She's bright, inquisitive, well-spoken and outgoing. She pores over medical textbooks and websites to research virtually every aspect of her disease. She even expresses her opinion to her physician, Dr. Christine Burch, on the most effective treatment regimen.

Yet Madison requires special care, and Merrill puts her considerable research and clinical skills to work to meet the eighth-grader's needs. She has educated the A.G. Cox faculty and prepared them to respond to virtually any emergency. She's developed a detailed plan to ensure that every day at school for Madison is a good day.

Madison is only one of the 1,500 students Merrill cares for in her role as the nurse for both A.G. Cox and Ayden Elementary schools. Most are contending with less complex issues, such as headaches, digestive problems and minor injuries. Many, however, require regular interventions and monitoring for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), asthma, diabetes, sickle cell disease and cancer.

Merrill is one of 18 school nurses throughout the Pitt County Schools. Since 1996, the program has benefited from financial support from Pitt County Memorial Hospital — now Vidant Medical Center — The Duke Endowment, Pitt County Schools and the state. In a typical year, these nurses handle about 5,800 referrals. And they work proactively to teach healthy lifestyles and a deeper sensitivity toward students with special needs. Additional funding from the state will soon enable two more nurses to be hired.

A by-product of the program is the strong bond the nurses form with their students and parents. Madison's mom has grown quite dependent on Merrill to keep her informed of changes in her condition during the school day. She knows she can count on her accurate assessment of every situation and her compassion.

"Nurse Shelly's been more than a nurse for Madison," said Martin. "She's been therapy for me, too."



Shelly Merrill, BSN, RN, NCSN



Madison Martin of Winterville, a cellist in the A.G. Cox Orchestra, finds that her school nurse helps her deal with the challenges of myasthenia gravis.

# Project Access helps Grandy resident return to work

Inspired by the growing needs around them, more than 65 physicians in northeastern North Carolina are broadening their commitment to serve uninsured patients at no charge. As a result, patients like Tammy Kelly of Grandy are receiving care they could not otherwise afford.

Kelly requires ongoing mammograms following a bout with breast cancer in 2006. She is also being evaluated for rheumatoid arthritis. A single mother, Kelly works as a server at Coinjock Marina Restaurant but finds it difficult to cover all the costs of the health care she needs.

Fortunately for Kelly, her primary care physician, Dr. James Owens, and her cancer surgeon, Dr. Tony Ruiz, are members of Albemarle Project Access (APA), a program offered through Albemarle Health and the Albemarle Hospital Foundation. Through this program, physicians and the hospital provided more than \$1 million in charity care to 148 patients.

The medical staff at Albemarle has long been committed to providing care to patients who can't afford it, said Lyn Jenkins, the nurse who coordinates the program. However, APA provides a system through which each physician can make a personal pledge of how much charity care they wish to provide. The hospital and foundation cover the cost of ancillary services such as lab tests and physical therapy.

The concept began serendipitously with Ruiz, who is a general surgeon in Elizabeth City. He had attended an event in Roanoke, Va., where he learned of a similar program that was highly successful. Within a week, Ruiz was caring for a man diagnosed with skin cancer who couldn't afford medical care due to family obligations.

After several determined efforts, Ruiz convinced the patient to return for follow-up with the understanding his fee would be waived. Ruiz was shocked to see how large the skin cancer had since grown. He realized that this patient — a hard-working, responsible individual unable to afford health insurance — needed and deserved care. He was the inspiration for Ruiz to begin developing the concept for Project Access on a regional scale.

Ruiz sees numerous patients who postpone care due to financial issues. Kelly was another example. It took several phone calls



and a certified letter to get her to return for follow-up care.

"He is a very caring person," Kelly said of Ruiz, "and he is adamant about following up with his patients," even if they can't pay for his services. Before APA existed, Ruiz waived his fee several times. On one occasion when Kelly managed to scrape together the cost of a visit, he returned it to her. Kelly said he knew that she had a teenager to care for and was often too sick to work.

Neither physicians nor Albemarle Health receives financial incentives or advantages for participating in APA, Jenkins said. The program supports the ideals of the medical

profession, she said, by providing a coordinated system to care for indigent patients. It offers a means for patients to be pre-certified as having a documented financial need. For these reasons, the program has attracted physicians in virtually every specialty.

A major part of Jenkins' role is to help guide patients like Kelly through the maze of medical services they require when dealing with an illness. With the knowledge and upbeat attitude of Jenkins, Kelly says Albemarle Project Access has given her peace of mind.

"It has been a godsend to me," she said.

# Looking good and feeling better in Washington

For most of her life, Carol Ulrichs had no desire to use make-up, choosing instead the natural look. In spite of years of debilitating cancer treatment, she said her husband always complimented her on her appearance.

"But after looking in the mirror," she said, "I knew he must love me dearly because I looked awful."

She wanted to do something about the circles under her eyes and the dark spots on her complexion, but she knew that the cancer and chemotherapy made her skin vulnerable to many products.

So, after 11 years of fighting cancer of the bone marrow, she realized that it was time to try makeup.

"I knew nothing about cosmetics, so when I tried them at first, I looked like a clown," Ulrichs said.

On a visit to the Marion L. Shepard Cancer Center, affiliated with Vidant Beaufort Hospital in Washington, she learned about the Look Good ... Feel Better program. She discovered that the philosophy of the program is to help cancer patients manage the appearance-related side effects of their treatment.

Ulrichs' oncologist, Dr. Jennie Crews, recommended that she give it a try by registering for a small-group session with the volunteer facilitator, Audrey Turnage. Her first session was in March 2011.

At the two-hour session, Ulrichs and each of the other participants received a sealed tote bag filled with top-quality cosmetics designed for sensitive skin, all donated by manufacturers. Ulrichs hardly knew how to begin. However, with Turnage's guidance, she learned the proper techniques for cleansing and moisturizing her face in ways that enhanced her skin tone. She followed up with concealer cream, blush and other products that brightened her face.

Ulrichs was shocked at the difference.

"I looked absolutely stunning," she said. "It made me feel good that family and friends immediately noticed a vibrant and dynamic change in me."

She became an advocate for the program, as did her husband, Jack, who serves on the cancer center foundation board. They both realized that Turnage's gentle and tasteful

instruction made all the difference.

Turnage has a 37-year history of helping women achieve their best look as a means of making them feel better, especially when going through cancer. When the American Cancer Society began the Look Good ... Feel Better program, Turnage signed up for training to become a facilitator. She has since worked with hundreds of women suffering from cancer.

"It's my privilege to be a part of this program," Turnage said, "to be able to reach out to women in this capacity."

She's proud to be an extension of the care offered at the cancer center, on a volunteer basis. She's a vocal advocate for the quality of care provided there and has taken part in many of its outreach programs.

At about the same time she got to know

Ulrichs, Turnage herself was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was faced with surgery followed by chemotherapy and radiation.

Although it was a difficult time for her, she maintained her commitment to the Look Good ... Feel Better program.

Turnage has finished her cancer treatment and is thankful for the support of her family, friends and church. Also, she's grateful for Crews and the expert staff at Vidant Beaufort Hospital, as well as the cancer center.

"It's a blessing to be here where there are so many people who can love you through this," she said. "They have empathy and compassion for every single person."

Ulrichs feels the same way about Turnage and the Look Good ... Feel Better concept.

"It's a program I completely believe in," she said. Her husband agrees.



Audrey Turnage



Carol Ulrichs of Washington has become a strong advocate for the Look Good ... Feel Better program.

## Car seat safety in Windsor

On the narrow, winding roads of Bertie and surrounding counties, a car seat can be the last line of defense against a serious childhood injury. However, a car seat that is not correctly installed or that doesn't meet federal safety standards often gives parents a false sense of security.

For this reason, Vidant Bertie Hospital and Albemarle Regional Health Services have created the Bertie Child Safety Council. This organization teaches parents how to restrain their child in a car seat that provides the ultimate degree of safety. For a \$20 co-pay, the council also provides the parents a new car seat that meets all safety standards and can be adapted to a growing child from birth to 40 pounds.

Jeanetta Morris of Windsor is typical of many young parents. She had a car seat that she thought was adequate to protect her 17-month-old daughter, Kiersten, except that she was outgrowing it. Through the council's efforts, she learned that at a nominal cost she could get a larger model that would provide the full measure of protection she wanted. She was grateful for the opportunity to acquire a safe new car seat and to get expert instructions on how to use it. It's one more way she can ensure that Kiersten is as safe as possible when the unexpected occurs, such as a car pulling out in front of them on the road. "It gives me peace of mind to know that I have a safe car seat for my daughter in situations like that," Morris said. Lisa Spry with the health department and Hunter Balltzglier with Vidant Bertie were instrumental in getting the child safety council started. They recognize that in Bertie County, the needs are great. The median household income is 34 percent below the state average, which means that a car seat is a luxury some families cannot afford. In addition, Bertie suffers from a 185 percent higher incidence of death by motor vehicle than the state average. All too often, young children are the victims.

Funding organizations recognized the importance of the Bertie group. Grants from the Bertie Memorial Hospital Development Council and the national Safe Kids USA



Hunter Balltzglier



Jeanetta Morris, buckles her daughter, Kiersten, into her safe, new car seat.

organization helped give the program instant credibility and momentum. The program's staff have since achieved certification as child passenger safety technicians, making them experts in the correct use of car seats. They hope to develop their program into a full-fledged chapter of Safe Kids USA. They believe this would further validate their efforts and spur other worthwhile safety efforts within the community. In recognition of their efforts, they have received their first Buckle Up grant, which helps to offset the cost of the program.

Getting the word out in the community is an ongoing challenge, Balltzglier said. He and Spry seek opportunities to promote

the program at community events, and they work together to broaden their reach. From the beginning, they have benefited from guidance and support from the Bertie County Sheriff's Department, Albemarle Smart Start and other local organizations.

The program is a good example of how Vidant Bertie Hospital and Albemarle Regional Health Services serve as catalysts for addressing a critical health issue, said Megan Booth-Mills, director of planning and marketing at Vidant Bertie. When fully developed, the efforts of the child safety council will be effective in reducing the incidence of automobile accidents involving youngsters in Bertie and surrounding counties, she said.

# Simple device makes a healthy connection

For Queen Moore of Roper, a piece of equipment small enough to fit in the palm of her hand provides a vital link to the resources available through Vidant Chowan Hospital in Edenton.

This telehealth device simply attaches to her home phone and instantly transmits her blood pressure, weight and blood sugar readings to specially trained experts at the hospital.

The device quickly became a familiar part of her daily routine. If any of the readings were outside the normal range, hospital staff phone Moore to discuss why. Together, they talk about ways she could change her

eating habits, get more exercise and adjust her medication to get her readings back to a healthier level.

At 73, Moore felt she needed to focus on her health. With a background in nursing, she understood the seriousness of the health issues she was dealing with — diabetes, asthma and severe pulmonary issues. The symptoms were preventing her from taking part in one of her most rewarding activities — Bible study and volunteering with her church friends. Her physician, Dr. Roman Dobransky, referred her to Beth Evans, a diabetes nurse at Vidant Chowan who specializes in setting up telehealth devices in the home and who could follow up with Moore.

"After I got to know Beth, I learned what I needed to do to take care of myself," said Moore. "She was always there for me."

Vidant Health introduced the telehealth program on a pilot basis at Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital in Ahoskie, said Bonnie Britton, program administrator. The goal is to teach patients to take better care of themselves so they can transition out of the hospital and remain at home.

The results have been impressive. In the three years since the program started at Vidant Roanoke-Chowan, no diabetes patient using a telehealth device has needed readmission, Britton said.

Vidant Chowan Hospital's experience has been strong as well. As a result, patients have greater independence and can avoid the expense of hospitalization.

Although it might seem that some patients would consider the device an interruption in an otherwise busy day, Britton says the concept has been extremely popular. So popular, in fact, that Vidant Health has purchased 500 units for patients suffering from chronic illnesses.

"People are clamoring for them," she said.

And most, like Moore, are compliant. She said, "You know the information is being transmitted back to the office." So she knows to expect a friendly phone call from Evans or one of her colleagues if her readings are out of synch. She's been amazed that such a tiny piece of equipment could provide a pleasant and simple way to help her achieve better health.



Beth Evans, RN



Through a telehealth link offered by Vidant Chowan Hospital, Queen Moore of Roper feels well enough to continue Bible study with her church family.

## On a mission to prevent strokes

It takes a lot to get Betty Rose to leave the comfortable setting of her rural Duplin County home, surrounded by open fields, adoring grandchildren and a lifetime of memories.

Now that she is retired, Rose could easily occupy herself at home, but she's consumed by a mission that lures her to neighboring communities. She feels a need to help people avoid the risk of stroke.

It all started with her career in Duplin County, where she served as a school nurse for 21 years.

For nine of those years she was the only school nurse serving 16 public schools. In the course of her work, she got to know Carolyn Ezzell, community services coordinator at Vidant Duplin Hospital in Kenansville. The two planned a stroke screening for teachers that became the foundation of a rewarding collaboration.

It was also where Rose was surprised to learn that she had significant risk factors for stroke.

"I'm a medical person but I'm not crazy about going to the doctor," she said. As a result of being screened, Rose committed herself to changing her lifestyle to improve her overall health. She's a perfect example of the type of person she and Ezzell hope to attract to their stroke screenings –those who are likely to participate if the screening is convenient, quick and doesn't require an appointment.

Duplin County is fertile ground for such efforts. The incidence of stroke there is higher than the state and national average, Ezzell said. Vidant Duplin Hospital's outreach programs have screened nearly 1,000 people in a two-year period. Many have been made possible by grant funding from the North Carolina Stroke Care Collaborative, a seal of approval for the hospital's efforts.

The process is based on a carefully tested protocol created by the North Carolina Stroke Association. It evaluates risk factors, such as elevated cholesterol, glucose and blood pressure, among others. It also includes individualized counseling on how to make lifestyle changes and take advantage of nearby health care resources.



Carolyn Ezzell, BSN, RN-BC



Volunteering in her community, Betty Rose is anxious to increase awareness of the risk factors of stroke.

These community-based screenings are a key focus of Vidant Duplin. They are available at churches, schools, health fairs and civic clubs. Schools are an especially effective location because once teachers learn about the risk of stroke, they are likely to influence their students.

Rose said many young people are shocked to learn that even they can be at risk for stroke. She helped a senior at North Duplin High School offering a stroke screening as

part of her senior project. In addition to the adults who participated, 16 students were screened, four of whom were found to have at least one risk factor.

Rose found the event to be rewarding for her personally. In retirement, she feels a need to influence the health of others in Duplin and neighboring Wayne counties, especially young people. They make it worth leaving the comforts of home.

# Grateful Princeville woman helps others navigate breast cancer

While still in the womb, Ja'Sean Sheppard proved to be a lifesaver.

His mom, Jackie Sheppard of Princeville, was expecting a normal, healthy pregnancy when suddenly she was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. She is convinced that without her prenatal visits, the two tiny lumps in her breasts would have been undetected. For this reason, she considers Ja'Sean, now four years old, to be her lifesaver.

She was only 37 years old when she was diagnosed. "It felt like the world just collapsed on top of my shoulders," she said. She wondered how she could continue to carry her unborn baby, care for her other child and maintain her marriage while fighting breast cancer. Instantly, however, she found support from her husband, family, friends and church members. They gave her strength.

In addition, she found that the best way to deal with her own illness was to focus on the needs of other women suffering from breast cancer. While undergoing a mastectomy followed by successive rounds of chemotherapy and radiation, Sheppard met other women who had similar needs for companionship, advice and inspiration. She found strength by listening to them and praying with them.

She is now cancer-free and seeking meaningful ways to be a lifesaver herself. She's on a mission to convince women to get regular mammograms and perform monthly self-breast exams. She started a Pink Sunday observance at her church to raise awareness. She's become a tireless advocate among her friends, even the most reluctant. One of her most rewarding achievements came when, after two years of pleading, she convinced a close friend to get a mammogram. She's been known to stop strangers on the street and talk to them about breast cancer prevention.

Sheppard found a willing ally in Scott Phillips, the patient navigator at Vidant Edgecombe Hospital in Tarboro. Phillips is waging his own battle — to make the journey more bearable for breast cancer patients and to convince women to get their mammograms and check their breasts regularly. He faces a daunting task. Edgecombe County holds the dubious distinction of having the 16th highest mortality rate from breast cancer of any county in the United States. It's Phillips' job — and his passion — to guide patients to resources in the community and to encourage them to follow through with

every step of their treatment regimen.

Phillips cares for roughly 120 cancer patients a year. Many have breast cancer and some require multiple services. His program is fully funded by Vidant Edgecombe, so neither patients nor their insurance companies is charged for his services. Quite often, he helps link patients with resources in their community. He also helps patients get the medical documentation they must provide their insurance companies. Many are too sick or lack the clinical background to tackle such tedious tasks.

His role transcends helping patients receiving care in the hospital. And, although he's the only patient navigator in Edgecombe, he works closely with social workers at Vidant Edgecombe Hospital and the Edgecombe

County Health Department who share his mission of providing access to care that is personalized and seamless.

Phillips, Sheppard and other Edgecombe women were selected in May to take part in a week-long breast cancer retreat in Florida, funded by the Lotus Survival Foundation of Raleigh. It was a life-changing experience. It motivated them to redouble their work to increase awareness of how breast cancer can be detected and prevented.

It's been a challenging time for Sheppard since she was diagnosed on June 24, 2007, a day she'll never forget. But she's since developed inner strength she didn't know she had and she's formed a bond with Phillips and other advocates that has extended her reach far beyond her own circle of friends. By raising awareness of breast cancer, Sheppard intends to be the lifesaver for other women that Ja'Sean was for her.



Scott Phillips, LCSW, OSW-C



Jackie Sheppard of Princeville considers her young son, Ja'Sean, to be her lifesaver.



Landscapers Rafi Gonzalez (foreground) and his dad, Ralph Gonzalez-Kasper learn the value of sun protection while working outside.

Demetri Poulis, MD

## Education, prevention keep Kitty Hawk landscapers on the job

The Outer Banks sun is a welcome sign to weeklong visitors. These same sought-after rays can be unforgiving for people who make a living working outdoors, like Kitty Hawk residents Ralph Gonzalez-Kasper and his son, Rafi Gonzalez, who are in the landscaping business.

"When you're in the sun every day, it makes you think about skin cancer," said Kasper. With encouragement from their family, the two

took a few minutes out of their busy schedule to take advantage of free skin cancer screenings being offered by physicians affiliated with The Outer Banks Hospital (OBH).

It was all part of the 3rd Annual Sandsculpture Festival at Kitty Hawk Sports in June.

Gonzalez' wife had read about it in the newspaper and said, "You two need to get over there." She had noticed that both men

had suspicious spots that she thought could be skin cancer.

They joined dozens of other local residents and island visitors under a tent at the festival, where physicians, nurses and others offered expert advice. Kasper had skin lesions on the back of his neck, but fortunately, they did not appear to be cancerous. His son was not so fortunate, however, as a

lesion near the bridge of his nose was found to require a biopsy.

The lesion was surgically removed and further analyzed. Gonzalez and his family were relieved to find that it was not malignant. The scare alone was enough to convince them to do more to protect their skin. Since the screening, they lather up with sunscreen, cover their skin and wear wide-brimmed hats when working outdoors.

Screenings such as this are one reason Kasper said he is grateful to have OBH nearby. It encouraged him and his son to seek help.

"Many people don't realize that there are a lot of people on the Outer Banks who can't afford health care," Kasper said, due to the seasonal nature of the coastal economy. Some won't take time from work for a visit to the doctor, especially if it means going out of town.

The skin checks, which included samples of sun block lotion and tips on preventing skin cancer, were so much appreciated that OBH offered an additional skin cancer screening at the end of September. Amy Montgomery, who is OBH's director of outreach services, called on experts such as Dr. Demetri Poulis, an Outer Banks surgeon, and other clinicians to offer their services.

Lifeguards, fishermen, police officers and others lined up at the hospital's second event, held in the Cancer Resource Center. The majority of participants walked away with peace of mind about spots that concerned them. Others, roughly 30 percent, were advised to follow up with a physician for further evaluation.

"Skin cancer screenings and education are much-needed services that we are proud to offer," Montgomery said.

# Cancer screening leads to clean bill of health for Eure resident

For William Brown, better health began at Walmart in Ahoskie.

That's where Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital was hosting an outreach clinic last summer to inform the public about colon cancer.

Andrea Blackburn, one of the nurses there, struck up a conversation with Brown, a resident of Eure in rural Gates County. She learned that he had not had a colonoscopy in many years.

In spite of her encouragement, Brown was reluctant at first. After all, he wasn't experiencing any symptoms, and at age 84 he felt great.

Finally convinced of the need, Brown decided to take charge of his health by scheduling a colonoscopy at Vidant Roanoke-Chowan, although he had never been a patient there before. The study went smoothly, but unfortunately, it identified colon cancer. At first, he was concerned that it might be a death sentence.

Brown was determined to seek treatment immediately. With support from Blackburn, he was able to quickly schedule surgery with Dr. Edouard Misse.

Brown spent 21 days as a patient at Vidant Roanoke-Chowan, recovering from the procedure. Fortunately, the surgery was successful and eliminated all incidence of cancer. Brown required no radiation or chemotherapy. Even better, he made friends with Dr. Misse and the hospital staff, who have continued to be a resource for him since returning home.

"They took real good care of me," Brown said. "Couldn't have done any better."

Within three months of his surgery, he returned to full strength. On a given day, he might be found cleaning out gutters, tinkering with his vehicles or working in his yard.

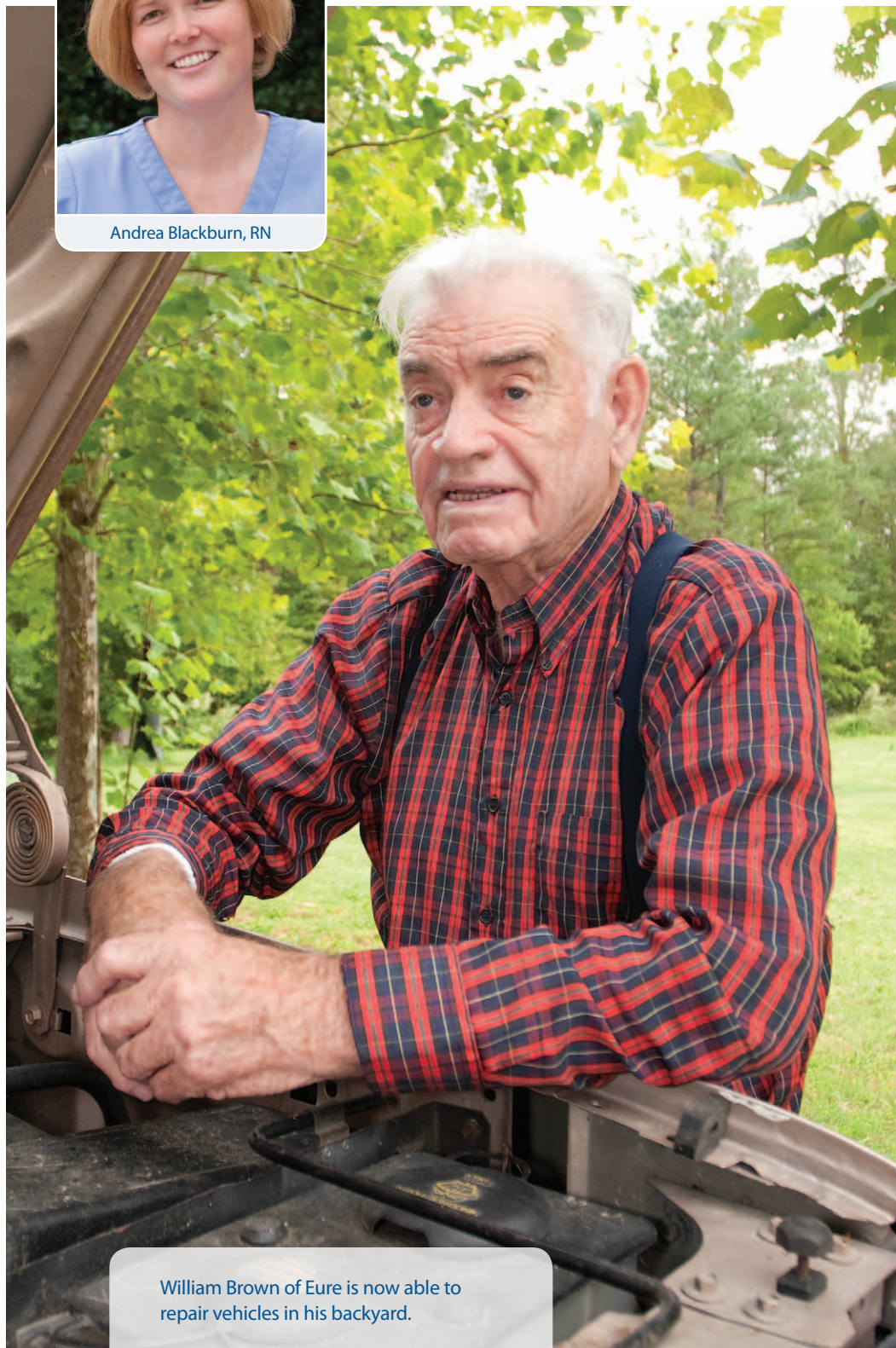
"I'm as healthy as anyone has ever been," he said.

He gives the credit to Vidant Roanoke-Chowan's community outreach efforts, one of many the hospital offers in Hertford and surrounding counties. And he's especially grateful for Blackburn's gentle prodding that convinced him to get a colonoscopy.

"She saved my life," he said. "She's a remarkable person."



Andrea Blackburn, RN



William Brown of Eure is now able to repair vehicles in his backyard.

# Vidant Health invests in health workers of the future

There's no shortage of children who dream of becoming physicians or nurses. But between childhood dreams and adult achievement are years of study and hard work.

For the better part of a decade, University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina, now Vidant Health, has partnered with educators at every level to build bridges to health careers across the region.

The most visible of these partnerships binds Vidant Health with East Carolina University. Vidant Medical Center, formerly known as Pitt County Memorial Hospital, is the teaching hospital for the Brody School of Medicine and a leading clinical site for ECU's nursing and allied health programs.

Students from Brody and ECU's colleges of nursing and allied health make up a sizable share of the more than 2,000 students who do clinical work at Vidant Medical Center and other Vidant Health facilities every year.

"Our partnership with Vidant Health offers invaluable opportunities for our students to get real-world experience in the health sciences," said Dr. Phyllis Horns, vice chancellor for health sciences at ECU. "It also provides a pipeline into the work force for the future physicians, nurses and allied health professionals we are developing at ECU."

Students from area community colleges hone their skills in Vidant Health facilities, too. At Vidant Medical Center, Pitt Community College students do clinical

work in respiratory therapy, X-ray technology, nursing and a range of allied health fields. They shadow active professionals in their fields, with nursing students spending 100 hours with a practicing nurse during their last year, according to Donna Moses, director of the Center for Learning and Performance at Vidant Medical Center.

Vidant Edgecombe Hospital in Tarboro enjoys a strong connection with Edgecombe Community College (ECC). The two institutions share a mobile simulation lab, with ECC students practicing clinical skills in it and Vidant Edgecombe staff using it for continuing education.

The Vidant Health investment in education goes beyond colleges and universities. Vidant Health has also been a leader in cultivating interest in health sciences careers at the high school level. Launched in 2003, the Health Science Academy (HSA) in Pitt County is a model program that gives high school students four years of increasingly intensive exposure to health care. From their freshman year, when they take advanced science courses, to their senior year, when they study medical research at Brody and spend time in health care facilities, Academy students are immersed in health care fields.

Historically geared toward nursing and allied health fields, the Health Sciences Academy has overhauled its curriculum to draw more students interested in careers as physicians, according to program coordinator Tara

Parker. The shift gives students access to advanced courses that will improve their college applications and addresses the growing physician shortage.

More than 700 students are enrolled in the Academy in Pitt County. The 76 seniors who graduated from it in 2011 earned more than \$670,000 in college scholarships, an 86 percent increase over the previous year. Vidant Health is making plans to launch similar programs in other communities it serves, including Duplin and Edgecombe counties.

Albemarle Health has operated its own Health Care Careers Academy for several years, giving Perquimans High School students the opportunity to interact with and shadow health care professionals.

"This experience helped students to realize the magnitude of working in health care outside the hospital environment and the importance of teamwork and utilization of resources," said Pam Etheridge, Albemarle Health Community Care nurse.

These partnerships offer equal benefits for hospitals and schools involved, as well as for the people of eastern North Carolina, who can expect a competent, compassionate health care workforce in the future.

"Students are the investment that we make in our future workforce," Moses said. "We are delighted to have the opportunity to get to know them a little bit. We love to see those students come to us."





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