What if you could turn an hour of your time into a holiday gift that’s definitely needed and could even save lives? What’s more, it won’t cost you a penny. That gift is a blood donation.

Every day, blood is needed for accident victims, cancer and surgery patients, and many others, including those whose lives depend on daily transfusions. But that blood can’t be made in a lab—it must be donated.

Donating blood is easy, and it takes very little time. And you’ll walk away knowing that the blood you gave was a welcome gift. Learn more at www.givelife.org and on page 3 of this issue.

Source: American Red Cross

Consider donating blood

WHAT IF YOU COULD TURN AN HOUR OF YOUR TIME INTO A HOLIDAY GIFT THAT’S DEFINITELY NEEDED AND COULD EVEN SAVE LIVES? WHAT’S MORE, IT WON’T COST YOU A PENNY. THAT GIFT IS A BLOOD DONATION.

Every day, blood is needed for accident victims, cancer and surgery patients, and many others, including those whose lives depend on daily transfusions. But that blood can’t be made in a lab—it must be donated.

Donating blood is easy, and it takes very little time. And you’ll walk away knowing that the blood you gave was a welcome gift. Learn more at www.givelife.org and on page 3 of this issue.

Source: American Red Cross

HEALTHFUL Gift Ideas

Racking your brain about what to give that special someone on your holiday gift list? First, scratch off that fruitcake you might have considered in a moment of desperation. Here’s a better idea: Give the gift of better health. We’re talking presents—from fitness gear to fun kitchen tools—that people can use to enjoy healthy, active lives.

The following gift suggestions are from the American Council on Exercise, the American Dietetic Association and AARP.

- Exercise equipment, such as resistance bands, stability balls or free weights.
- Pedometer. These step counters are a great way for people to track their progress and walk their way to better health.
- Jump rope, ice skates or a bicycle helmet. For kids (and adults) on your list, gifts like these promote active fun.
- Workout DVDs and videos. You can check out online consumer reviews that will help you pick a type of workout your gift recipient will enjoy.
- Workout apparel, such as running pants or athletic shoes.
- A gift certificate to a gym or fitness class or for a consultation with a personal trainer. One of these gifts might be the jump start someone needs for a more healthful lifestyle.
- Healthful cookbooks or nutrition, health or fitness guides.
- A vegetable steamer. Steaming is a delicious and especially healthful way to enjoy veggies without frying them in fat or boiling away their nutrients.
- A bountiful basket of healthful treats. Fill a gift basket with a medley of tasty fruits and veggies.
- A juicer so the juice fan in your life can enjoy a freshly squeezed vitamin burst anytime.
- A gift certificate for a massage. What better way to help someone relax and de-stress?

Honor a loved one with a Foundation gift. See page 3.
GOOD SLEEP IS MORE THAN JUST A DREAM

IF YOU HAVE sleep-related difficulties, you are not alone. Nearly seven out of 10 Americans say they experience frequent sleep problems, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

Sleep problems can take many forms and can involve too little sleep, too much sleep or inadequate quality of sleep. Untreated sleep disorders have been linked to hypertension, heart disease, stroke, depression, diabetes and other chronic diseases. The Institute of Medicine estimates that hundreds of billions of dollars a year are spent on direct medical costs related to sleep disorders, such as physician visits, hospital services, prescriptions and over-the-counter medications.

COMPREHENSIVE CARE The DCH Sleep Center helps people with a variety of sleep disorders. The behavioral sleep medicine (BSM) program and the associated BSM training program are components of a larger program, bringing together diverse aspects of sleep medicine, including the management of sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome, shift work sleep disorder, jet lag and narcolepsy, said Dr. James Geyer, FAASM (Fellow of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine).

The behavioral sleep medicine (BSM) program at the DCH Sleep Center is one of only nine accredited BSM programs in the U.S.

“Successful management of these sleep disorders requires a highly skilled team approach,” he said. “This is especially true since it is common for one patient to suffer from several different sleep disorders at once. Treating the whole patient and not just a single disorder, such as sleep apnea, is known as comprehensive sleep medicine.”

BSM helps people with sleeping disorders, such as insomnia and sleepwalking, and helps sleep apnea patients adjust to using continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) equipment. BSM practitioners use cognitive and behavioral techniques to help people change their behaviors or ways of thinking that can affect their ability to sleep.

DEALING WITH INSOMNIA Insomnia is the most common sleep complaint among Americans, the National Sleep Foundation reports. Insomnia is the inability to fall asleep or remain asleep. Insomnia also describes the condition of waking up not feeling restored or refreshed.

According to the National Center for Sleep Disorders Research at the National Institutes of Health, about 30 to 40 percent of adults say they have some symptoms of insomnia within a given year, and about 10 to 15 percent of adults say they have chronic, debilitating insomnia.

People with insomnia often associate certain sleep-related stimuli with being awake. For example, bedtime routines or the bedroom itself may become linked with anxiety for people experiencing insomnia, because they dread the thought of another sleepless night. Because of the connection between behavior and insomnia, behavioral therapy is often part of any treatment for insomnia.

Some examples of behavioral treatments are:

- Stimulus control therapy—eliminating nonsleep activities from the sleep environment.
- Cognitive therapy—learning to develop positive thoughts and beliefs about sleep.
- Sleep restriction—following a program that limits time in bed in order to get to sleep and stay asleep.
- Relaxation techniques, such as yoga, meditation and guided imagery, may be especially helpful in preparing the body to sleep. Exercise, done early in the day, can also be helpful at reducing stress and promoting deeper sleep.

Take action
If you or someone you know has sleep problems, call 205-343-8628 to find out how the DCH Sleep Center can help.

For more information, go to www.dchsystem.com/sleep.

Make better sleep a reality
The DCH Sleep Center is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and offers several rooms for patients to stay overnight for sleep studies. All rooms are warm and inviting with hotel-like surroundings, traditional furnishings and a television. When you arrive for a sleep study, experienced sleep technicians attach sensors to your body so they can check for several activities while you sleep, including brain waves, heart rhythms, oxygen levels, leg movements and snoring. The process is completely painless.

Following your test, the sleep specialist will review your results for an accurate diagnosis and treatment recommendation. These findings will be reported to your primary physician.

Sleep smarts
Here are some useful tips to help you get better sleep:

- Sleep only as much as you need to feel refreshed during the following day.
- Get up at the same time each day, seven days a week. A regular wake time in the morning leads to regular times of sleep onset.
- A steady daily amount of exercise helps to deepen sleep. Don’t exercise too close to bedtime.
- Insulate your bedroom against sounds that disturb your sleep.
- Keep the room temperature moderate.
- Hunger may disturb sleep. A snack at bedtime may help.
- Avoid excessive liquids in the evening to minimize the need for nighttime trips to the bathroom.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages, alcohol and tobacco, especially in the evening.
- Don’t take your problems to bed.
- Train yourself to use the bedroom only for sleeping and sexual activity.
- If you find yourself waking up and looking at the clock, put the clock under the bed or turn it so that you can’t see it.

SLEEP TRAINING

DCH SLEEP CENTER Medical Director Dr. James Geyer, FAASM (Fellow of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine), and the DCH Sleep Center staff have partnered with Kenneth Lichstein, PhD, in the Department of Psychology at The University of Alabama, to train psychologists and other professionals, such as sleep medicine physicians, in behavioral sleep medicine (BSM).

The BSM program is conducted at the DCH Sleep Center on the campus of Northport Medical Center and at the offices of Alabama Neurology and Sleep Medicine. Dr. Geyer’s role as the Medical Director for each of these programs allows the BSM training program to have a vital role in the overall sleep program at the DCH Sleep Center.

This is a yearlong program dedicated to the advanced training of BSM practitioners.

“The BSM program at the DCH Sleep Center is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and is just the ninth accredited BSM training program in the United States, joining other centers such as University of Pennsylvania, University of Michigan, Rush Medical Center and Stanford University,” Dr. Lichstein said.
BLOOD DONATION
GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE

IF YOU WERE in an emergency situation requiring a blood transfusion, you would expect the hospital to have the blood you need. But where does that blood come from?

The American Red Cross is the primary supplier of blood and blood products for the DCH Health System hospitals. Every minute of every day, someone needs blood. That blood can only come from a volunteer donor, and there is no substitute for a blood donation. Just one donation could help save up to three lives, according to the Red Cross.

Having a supply of blood is important because medical emergencies happen without warning. Blood and blood products cannot be stored indefinitely, and the demand for blood frequently exceeds the supply. Giving blood is a very real, very personal way of helping victims and their families. People hospitalized because of traumatic injuries or accidents often need lifesaving blood transfusions. Additionally, those with chronic conditions or diseases may require regular transfusions of red blood cells or platelets to live.

Donating blood is safe. Donors are not at risk for infectious diseases because they give blood.

DCH Regional Medical Center and DCH Health System hospitals host Red Cross blood drives several times a year so that employees have a convenient way to donate blood. DCH invites anyone from the community to consider donating at a hospital blood drive. Go to www.dchsystem.com for information about upcoming blood drives at a DCH hospital.

You can also make an appointment to donate blood at the West Alabama Chapter of the Red Cross at 1100 Veterans Memorial Parkway in Tuscaloosa. Call 205-758-3608.

The DCH Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization. Donations to the DCH Foundation help strengthen the world-class medical care that benefits the thousands of people DCH hospitals treat each year. All donations to the DCH Foundation are handled with professionalism and efficiency to ensure the maximum impact of every dollar. The DCH Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization.

To make a gift, please go to the DCH Foundation Web site at www.supportDCH.org to learn more and to give online. Contributions can be mailed to DCH Foundation, 809 University Blvd. E., Tuscaloosa, AL 35401.

For more information, call Angela Fulmer, DCH Foundation Director of Development, at 205-343-8457, or e-mail afulmer@dchsystem.com.

When you need surgery, you want every possible advantage. Meet Dr. Howard Winfield, an internationally recognized pioneer and teacher of robotic surgery and minimally invasive techniques, who has been named Director of Robotic Surgery at DCH Regional Medical Center.

The da Vinci Surgical System is a minimally invasive approach that uses the latest in surgical and robotics technologies. With da Vinci, surgeons can perform even the most complex and delicate procedures through very small incisions with unmatched precision. The result is faster recovery time.

The da Vinci Surgical System is ideal for delicate urologic surgery, especially prostate surgery, as well as other specialties. The da Vinci Surgical System.

The technology is ours. The advantages are yours.

With the da Vinci Surgical System, the surgeon views a magnified, 3D image of the surgical site while robotic and computer technologies translate hand movements into precise movements of the da Vinci instruments.

Dr. Howard Winfield, internationally recognized pioneer and teacher of robotic surgery and minimally invasive techniques, has been named Director of Robotic Surgery at DCH Regional Medical Center.

Caring for the Community

This holiday season
HONOR THOSE SPECIAL TO YOU

ARE THERE PEOPLE on your holiday gift list who make a difference in your life or the lives of others? Consider a charitable donation to the DCH Foundation, Inc., in their honor. This is a long-lasting gift that honors people special to you.

The DCH Foundation supports the DCH Health System and receives donations from a variety of sources, including individuals, foundations and corporations. Some people give in memory of a friend or family member or to express gratitude for care received. The DCH Foundation suggests these charitable donations as gifts for the holidays—or any time of the year.

Tribute gifts. A tribute gift can be given for a cause that is close to someone’s heart or to recognize the special times in his or her life—a birthday, an anniversary, a new baby, retirement or holidays. A tribute gift, which is similar to a memorial gift, can also recognize and thank others who are special in your life.

Memorial gifts. Memorial gifts are often made in lieu of flowers. When memorials are made through the DCH Foundation, an acknowledgment of your gift is mailed to the family members you designate.

Whatever the occasion or reason, your gift assists in supporting DCH’s services and programs that benefit your friends and neighbors in the community. The DCH Foundation depends on the generosity of individuals, families and corporations to make a difference in the lives of others.

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HEALTHY, QUICK FOODS FOR BUSY FAMILIES

CHILDHOOD OBESITY IS a tremendous health concern facing families today—one that many parents find hard to manage. Children are considered obese if they are more than 20 percent over their ideal weight.

WHAT’S A PARENT TO DO? “The dynamics in the family unit have changed over the years,” said Cherie Simpson, a DCH Registered Dietitian and Assistant Clinical Nutrition Manager. “The majority of families have parents who both work, and many have more than one job. This can make meal planning a hectic chore, with parents often resorting to fast food, take-out food, pizza delivery or grab-and-go items at the supermarket.”

Kim Chism, Registered and Licensed Dietitian and Culinary Specialist in the DCH Nutritional Services Department, offered some healthy eating tips for busy, on-the-go families to start using now.

“An electric slow cooker is a great way to prepare that’s full of flavor and nutrients. “To save additional time, prepare recipe ingredients in the slow cooker’s ceramic pot and store it in the refrigerator overnight,” she said. “In the morning, simply remove the pot from the refrigerator and follow the how-to-use instructions for your slow cooker.”

SOMETHING TASTY FROM THE SLOW COOKER “Slow Cooker Chicken Tortilla Soup is a hearty weeknight meal paired with a simple slaw or salad,” Ms. Chism said. “It’s also a great weekend tailgate meal. Don’t let the number of ingredients scare you. Almost everything comes in a can, bag or box, so all you have to do is open it and put it into the slow cooker the night before.” (See the recipe below.)

Prepare a colorful, crispy slaw from bagged cabbage mix, and add your favorite vinaigrette dressing.

For dessert, toss sliced apples (squeeze lemon or orange juice on apples to keep them from turning brown), raisins, chopped celery and grapes together; add light sour cream or yogurt to coat, and you’re ready for a meal that’s full of flavor and nutrients.

Yield: 8 servings

**Ingredients**

| 1 lb. shredded cooked chicken | 2 cloves minced garlic (Timesaver tip: Purchase canned minced garlic at the grocery store.) |
| 1 15-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes, mashed | 2 cups water |
| 1 14.5-ounce can chicken broth | 1 teaspoon each of chili powder, cumin and salt (Timesaver tip: Purchase a Mexican spice blend or taco seasoning mix, which usually includes these spices, and add 1 to 2 teaspoons to start, then adjust to taste if needed.) |
| 1 4-ounce can chopped green chili peppers | 1 bay leaf |
| 1 10-ounce package frozen corn | 10-ounce package frozen corn baked corn tortilla chips

**Directions**

Place all ingredients except corn tortilla chips into the slow cooker in the order listed and stir to combine. Cover and cook on low setting for six to eight hours or on high setting for three to four hours.

To serve, ladle soup into bowl and sprinkle with baked corn tortilla chips.

ENCOURAGING KIDS TO BE HEALTHY

OBESO OR OVERWEIGHT children are at risk for serious health problems. And childhood obesity is a growing problem. The rate of childhood obesity has more than tripled since 1980. Alabama has the unfortunate distinction of having the 11th highest rate of childhood obesity. At least 340,000 children weigh too much, and 172,000 of them are obese (excess body fat that negatively affects a child’s health or well-being).

The DCH Nutritional Services Department is offering Way To Go Kids!, a program for children ages 9 to 14 to help them and their parents learn how kids can maintain an appropriate weight through healthy eating and physical activity.

Way To Go Kids! is an eight-week program run by a DCH registered dietitian who will help participants learn the skills needed to develop healthy lifestyle habits, said Kim Chism, Registered and Licensed Dietitian and Culinary Specialist in the DCH Nutritional Services Department.

A GROWING PROBLEM Right now, 15 percent of all children in the United States are overweight. At the rate those numbers are increasing, it will soon be one-third of all children. If overweight children then become overweight adults, nearly 50 million Americans could have diabetes by 2050.

Young people who are overweight can be at risk for serious health problems, such as: Heart disease. Type 2 diabetes. Asthma. High blood pressure. Liver problems. Obstructive sleep apnea. Gallstones. Orthopedic complications.

Children come in all shapes and sizes, as do adults. A child’s shape is determined by his or her parents, but size is determined by the amount and kinds of food that children consume each day. The goal of Way To Go Kids! is to stop the weight gain while maintaining normal growth and development.

Growing children should not diet. However, they often consume more calories than their bodies need. When necessary, weight loss in children should occur slowly. Way To Go Kids! takes a balanced approach to eating. The focus is balancing calories for growth while reducing fat and sugar and increasing physical activity each day.

Each Way To Go Kids! class includes three segments: “Focus on Food and Nutrition,” “Exercise for Fitness and Fun,” and “Kids in the Kitchen.” Three classes for parents include “Parents Need Help, Too,” “Kid’s Emotions—Yours, Too,” and “What Parents Can Do.”

For information about upcoming sessions of Way To Go Kids!, call 205-759-7514.

Source: National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
For more than 86 years, the West Alabama community has looked to the DCH Health System to provide the latest health services.

The DCH Health System strives to meet those expectations by continually improving existing services and replacing aging equipment at its hospitals: DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa, Northport Medical Center, Fayette Medical Center and Pickens County Medical Center. We also have highly skilled, dedicated staff, volunteers and physicians to provide the high quality care that’s expected.

As a health-care system owned and operated by the citizens of Tuscaloosa County, the DCH Health System has made it its mission to care for all people of West Alabama, regardless of their ability to pay. This is true at all of the DCH hospitals. DCH is committed to being a good steward of all of its resources for the good health of our patients and the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community benefit report for 2008*</th>
<th>Total community benefit expense</th>
<th>Direct offsetting revenue</th>
<th>Net community benefit expense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity care cost</td>
<td>$13,861,287</td>
<td>$4,809,600</td>
<td>$9,051,687</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unreimbursed Medicaid expense</td>
<td>$55,024,805</td>
<td>$42,970,427</td>
<td>$12,054,378</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>$68,886,092</td>
<td>$47,780,027</td>
<td>$21,106,065</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BENEFITS FOR BROADER COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community health improvement services</td>
<td>$27,403</td>
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<td>$27,403</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subsidized health services</td>
<td>$576,042</td>
<td>$13,075</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial and in-kind contributions to other community groups</td>
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<td>$88,309</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community-building activities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ADDITIONAL EXPENSES ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prisoner care (at cost)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bad debt (at cost)</td>
<td>$25,329,325</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$95,251,213</td>
<td>$47,793,102</td>
<td>$47,458,111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 2008 community benefit is 12 percent of the DCH Health System net patient revenue. For every dollar of tax support, DCH returns approximately $9.87 in community benefits. The 2008 level of community benefit increased $3.8 million—nearly 9 percent—over the 2007 level because of increases in charity care and bad debt.

*Based on guidelines established by Voluntary Hospitals of America, Catholic Hospital Association and American Hospital Association.
COMMUNITY BENEFITS

MISSION
DCH Health System provides high quality, compassionate, community-based health services to the communities we serve through our employees, physicians and volunteers in a financially responsible manner.

VISION
The DCH Health System will be the best health system in the nation for patients to receive care, employees and volunteers to work, and physicians to practice medicine.

Community benefit provided by DCH
Total community benefit
$47.46 million
Free care
$39.19 million
Free care is cost for charity care plus bad debt (does not include contractual discounts for Blue Cross, Medicare, Medicaid, etc.).
Sales tax received
$4.81 million

2008 financial highlights
Operating revenue (in thousands)
Charges for patient services $1,553,187
Sales tax for charity care $4,810
Nonpatient revenue $11,566
Total revenue $1,569,563
Charges written off to Medicare $491,046
Charges written off to Medicaid $129,303
Charges written off to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama $279,451
Charges written off to other insurance companies $113,037
Total charges written off to insurance companies* $1,012,837
Collectible revenue $556,725

Operating expenses (in thousands)
Salaries and benefits $2,265,401
Supplies, utilities and other costs $155,451
Interest $4,570
Charity care** $51,112
Bad debts** $93,400
Depreciation $26,789
Future operations -$8,998
Funds used for patient care $556,725
Margin for 2008*** -2.18 percent

Note:
The financial highlights above are presented in thousands. The actual numbers represent millions.

*Medicare pays the DCH Health System for care of its patients on a rate for diagnosis, regardless of the length of hospital stay or services provided. Medicaid pays the DCH Health System a fixed amount per day for each of its patients up to 16 days per year, regardless of services performed. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama pays the DCH Health System a fixed amount per day for each of its patients, regardless of services performed. The hospital is not allowed to collect the difference from the patient.
**Includes charity care and bad debt (charges) for DCH Regional Medical Center, Northport Medical Center and Fayette Medical Center. The complete audited financial report is conducted in accordance with the hospital audit guide produced by the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts and is a public document available for inspection in the office of the Tuscaloosa County Circuit Clerk.
***As a public, not-for-profit organization, the DCH Health System maintains any excess revenue in a reserve for future use, including the addition of new technology and services, and ensuring competitive wages and benefits for employees.

2008 financial highlights

Statistics
DCH Regional Medical Center
Patients admitted 27,886
Patient days 130,402
Average length of stay (in days) 4.67
Emergency visits 68,710
Outpatient visits 299,416
Babies born 1,883
Surgeries (procedures) 30,585
Licensed beds 583
Employees 3,610
Physicians on staff 263

Fayette Medical Center
Patients admitted 1,637
Patient days 7,182
Average length of stay (in days) 4.39
Emergency visits 14,382
Outpatient visits 37,181
Surgeries (procedures) 2,738
Licensed beds, hospital 61
Licensed beds, nursing home 122
Employees 354
Physicians on staff 7

Pickens County Medical Center
Patients admitted 1,677
Patient days 7,823
Average length of stay (in days) 4.66
Emergency visits 11,182
Outpatient visits 26,771
Surgeries 1,082
Licensed beds 56
Employees 302
Physicians on staff 15

Northport Medical Center
Patients admitted 8,945
Patient days 52,641
Average length of stay (in days) 5.88
Emergency visits 39,856
Outpatient visits 68,761
Babies born 1,806
Surgeries (procedures) 8,977
Licensed beds 204
Employees 995
Physicians on staff 155

Medicare: 45%
Medicaid: 12%
Blue Cross: 27.8%
Self-pay: 8.4%
Commercial: 6.7%
EVERYDAY HEROES
Celebrating the work of DCH volunteers

Every year, members of the Volunteer Auxiliaries at the DCH Health System hospitals make a tremendous contribution to our community.

Volunteers donate thousands of hours and purchase treatment and therapy equipment. They raise funds for services and projects at the hospitals; work with hospital employees; assist patients, their families and visitors; and award educational scholarships for careers in health care.

In 2008, volunteers at DCH Regional Medical Center, Northport Medical Center, Fayette Medical Center and Pickens County Medical Center donated more than 75,000 volunteer hours to serve patients at DCH.

JOIN OUR TEAM Volunteer opportunities are open to adults, college students and teenagers. If you’re interested in joining this valuable team at a DCH hospital, please contact of the following:

DCH Regional Medical Center and Northport Medical Center: Pam Kirkley, Regional Medical Center Volunteer Coordinator, at 205-759-7174 or pkirkley@dchsystem.com.

Fayette Medical Center Volunteer Coordinator Susan Hood at 205-932-1265 or shood@dchsystem.com.

Pickens County Medical Center Volunteer Services Coordinator Ann Gilliam at 205-367-8111, ext. 171, or agilliam@pcmc.dchsystem.com.

DCH REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER: Glenn Milligan and Mary Hunter are two of the many members of the Volunteer Auxiliary who provide a variety of services at the DCH Cancer Center. They assist visitors and patients when they arrive, provide curbside wheelchair service when needed and give directions. Others assist in offices and The Boutique, and provide support for the Cancer Center staff as well as patients and their families.

NORTHPORT MEDICAL CENTER: Northport Medical Center Administrator Luke Standeffer congratulates Volunteer Auxiliary members Sabra Nelson (left) and Jeanne Reeder, who were recognized for more than 10,000 hours of volunteer service in 2008.

FAYETTE MEDICAL CENTER: Volunteers (back, left to right) Mary Smith, Goldie Wright, Mattie Johnston, Cat Cannon, Edie Beanblossom, Louise Pendergrass and Betty Coons; and (front, left to right) Jane Cotton, Susan Hood and Odessa Moore show off the arm ergometer the volunteers purchased for the Cardiac Rehab Department with proceeds from their fundraisers.

PICKENS COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER: Volunteers (left to right) Doris Gilliam, Mildred Hanson, Chaney Washington, Martha Stokes, Lois Bruce and Margaret Acker serve at a picnic for employees during Hospital Week.

DCH hospitals’ volunteers make a tremendous contribution to the community.
What does Hope look like?

Hope is the DCH Cancer Center

When someone is told they have cancer, more than anything else, they are looking for hope. At the new DCH Cancer Center, hope looks like the most advanced technology in the world. Our linear accelerators, the machines that deliver radiation treatments, are simply the best you will find anywhere. And our diagnostic capabilities are top notch.

Hope looks like the latest cancer-fighting medicines delivered by cancer specialists who have trained at some of the top centers in the country. Our medical oncology patients are served in a new area that is spacious and open, yet private and comfortable.

At the DCH Cancer Center, hope feels like the embrace of caring professionals who give comfort and support. Our staff sees the whole person, not just the cancer. Our terrace garden, wellness room, chapel, art room, and patient boutique address the emotional as well as the medical needs of our patients. We call it “environment of care.” Our patients call it compassion.

Thanks to the generous support of the community, hope looks like the new DCH Cancer Center. It’s an astonishing place, a place where compassion, technology and design come together to meet the needs of body and spirit.

TUMOR-TARGETING TECHNOLOGY CLOSE TO HOME

CANCER TREATMENT HAS taken another step forward in West Alabama.

Stereotactic radiation surgery (SRS), also known as stereotactic radiosurgery, is now available at the DCH Cancer Center.

The Cancer Center opened in April 2009 in a new building at DCH Regional Medical Center. Cancer services and treatments have been one of the DCH Health System’s centers of excellence since 1986.

ZEROING IN ON CANCER SRS is a significant addition to the treatments available at the Cancer Center. It precisely gives a single large dose of radiation to treat brain tumors and other brain disorders that cannot be treated by regular surgery.

The treatment is done with a linear accelerator. The Cancer Center has two of the most advanced linear accelerators in the world.

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD Before the arrival of SRS...
DCH HOME HEALTH CARE AGENCY has been named one of the top 500 home health agencies in the United States in the 2009 HomeCare Elite report, which is compiled by a national health-care information company.

The report ranked DCH Home Health Care Agency in the top 500 of the nation’s 8,500 Medicare-certified home health agencies, placing it in the top 6 percent. Winners are ranked by an analysis of performance measures in quality outcomes, quality improvement and financial performance.

DCH Home Health Care Agency was one of only five Alabama agencies in the top 500. There are 142 home health agencies in Alabama.

“We’ve ranked in the top 25 percent in the nation since the study began in 2006, and we were among the top 100 in 2007,” said Marcia Bailey, Director of DCH Home Health Care Agency. “Our patient satisfaction scores have also been among the highest in the country for several years.”

Ms. Bailey credited the staff’s experience and their kind, compassionate care for landing the agency in the HomeCare Elite.

“It really comes down to the people,” Ms. Bailey said. “DCH Home Health Care Agency is fortunate to have a staff with such a high degree of clinical expertise as well as a kind heart.”

OCS, Inc. the leading provider of home care information, reviews publicly available information to identify the HomeCare Elite, the only performance recognition of its kind in the home health industry. The entire list of the 2009 HomeCare Elite agencies is available at www.ochomecare.com.

HIGH QUALITY HOME CARE DCH Home Health Care Agency is accredited by The Joint Commission, licensed by the state of Alabama and certified as a Medicare provider. DCH Home Health offers skilled nursing care, physical therapy, speech therapy, nutritional services, medical social services and personal care. The licensed, professional staff at DCH Home Health Care can provide many services in the home, including cardiac monitoring and teaching, diabetes education and management, pain management, medication education and administration, and IV therapy. In addition, DCH Home Health provides several programs such as Safe at Home, disease management and telemonitoring.

THE STAFF AT the North Harbor Pavilion has brought some of the sights and sounds of the ocean, mountains, forests and jungles into the lives of their patients.

“The setting and the music help patients learn how to use relaxation techniques to reduce stress and anxiety,” said Clinical Services Coordinator Terrie Hinton, who said her role was to offer design suggestions and buy the supplies. “We now call these rooms our ‘safe rooms.’”

Staff members used their artistic talents to create a look, feel and even sound in the group rooms of each of the four units at North Harbor. Each room has one glass wall facing the nursing station and each of the other three walls are now covered with very colorful, detailed murals.

“Each room has a different look, and all art was done by the North Harbor staff,” Ms. Hinton said.

A DAY AT THE BEACH North Harbor Director Nancy Sandy kicked off the project when she and other talented staff members painted a beach mural in the group room of the Geriatric Unit. Beach chairs were added to the room. A sandbox built waist-high against one wall includes sea shells. Patients can dig in the sand for a tactile sensation experience. Beach towels are in the room for patients to fold and unfold as an activity.

Another room, painted primarily by Heather Boothe, a North Harbor counselor, has a forest theme. A sign with the phrase “the road less traveled” points out a road leading into the forest.

Karen Gresham, a Registered Nurse, tried her hand at painting jungle scenes, as well as helping with the other rooms. Details in the colorful room include monkeys hanging from limbs and colorful tropical birds perched in trees.

Another group room now has walls depicting mountain scenes. A patient contributed to this room’s mural by drawing a black and white picture of a cabin, which was replicated on the mountain mural.

Each area is also set up with a CD player that plays nature, beach or relaxation music.

ABOUT NORTH HARBOR PAVILION North Harbor Pavilion is West Alabama’s premier psychiatric treatment facility, offering patient privacy, compassion and the latest treatment techniques. North Harbor Pavilion is on the campus of Northport Medical Center. It offers comprehensive services and fully accredited care for adult and geriatric patients. For more information about North Harbor Pavilion, call 205-330-3000 or go to www.dchsystem.com.

TRAVELING FAR THROUGH ART

A. IMPORTANT PATH: A forest sign points the way.
B. PERSONAL TOUCH: The cabin was originally drawn by a North Harbor patient.
C. TALENTED ARTISTS: Terrie Hinton, Karen Gresham, Nancy Sandy and Heather Boothe enjoy a moment together in the forest room.
D. MESSAGE OF LOVE: Karen Gresham points out a name of a loved one she hid among the jungle leaves in the jungle room.

A DAY AT THE BEACH

WINTER 2010  9  healthy community
New sunroom for Long Term Care at Fayette Medical Center

The new sunroom built for the enjoyment of residents of Long Term Care (LTC) at Fayette Medical Center was decorated for the season in October. The sunroom was funded by an anonymous donor whose long-term relationship with the LTC facility began with a relative, and the donor has continued to be active through the years with other residents.

Protect yourself this flu season

What can you do to stay healthy and avoid 2009 H1N1 flu? Stay informed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Web site is updated regularly as information about 2009 H1N1 influenza becomes available. To learn the latest about 2009 H1N1, go to www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu.

Everyday health actions

Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through the coughs or sneezes of infected people. Follow these steps to protect yourself and others:

1. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Better yet, sneeze into your sleeve and wash your hands.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
4. Stay home if you get sick. The CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
5. Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
6. Find healthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety.

For more information, call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).

Lollapalooza fun

Linda McElroy (left) and Pickens County Medical Center (PCMC) Operations Analyst Angela Huffman enjoyed browsing and bidding on items during the silent auction at the 2009 Lollapalooza on Oct. 3 at PCMC. The PCMC Foundation sponsors Lollapalooza annually as a fundraiser to benefit the Emergency Room. This year’s theme was Bistro de Barbeque. Barbecue was prepared by Little Dooey, and entertainment was presented by the musical duo Keith and Margie.

Rehabilitation

A strong partnership

Fayette Medical Center has partnered with Champion, Partners in Rehab to provide enhanced, specialized rehabilitation services. Champion, Partners in Rehab offers rehabilitation support with physical, occupational and speech therapy. The professional team includes physical, speech and occupational therapists and licensed assistants. Rehabilitation services are available at Fayette Medical Center in acute care, short-term (20-day) rehab program, Long Term Care and outpatient settings.


“We welcome Champion, Partners in Rehab as an experienced partner to provide enhanced therapy services to help our patients achieve their goals,” said Fayette Medical Center Administrator Barry Cochran.

For more information about rehabilitation services at Fayette Medical Center, call 205-932-1283 or go to www.dchsystem.com.
EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, the DCH Health System recognizes employees from its hospitals in Tuscaloosa, Northport, and Fayette and Pickens counties for excellence on the job.

These employees are role models for each of us in the outstanding way that they go about their jobs caring for patients and working with other employees,” said Bryan Kindred, President/CEO of the Health System.

The employees were nominated by their peers to receive recognition awards based on various criteria, including outstanding job performance, attitude, dependability and dedication to the mission of the Health System and its patients and employees.

DCH REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER Bernadine Dellapenna, social worker at the DCH Cancer Treatment Center, received the Excellence Award for the second quarter of 2009.

PICKENS COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER Mary Bonner, Patient Registration Unit Leader, was named the Employee of Excellence for the second quarter of 2009.

YOUR HEART IS IN GOOD HANDS

Newly renovated Cardiology Department offers top-notch care

THERE’S NO DENYING that it’s very frightening when you’re told there may be something wrong with your heart.

For West Alabama residents, the good news is that a very experienced team of professionals can determine a problem with your heart and how to treat it in a newly renovated and expanded Cardiology Department at DCH Regional Medical Center.

MATERIALS OF THE HEART Cardiology is a medical specialty that deals with the structure, function and disorders of the heart.

The Cardiology Department at the Regional Medical Center now has an 18-bed pre- and postprocedure area—an increase of 10 rooms. This is the area where patients are prepared for a diagnostic procedure and where they return after the procedure to rest and recover before going home or being admitted to the hospital.

The Cardiology Department includes a cardiac catheterization laboratory. Cardiac catheterization is a procedure in which a thin, flexible tube—or catheter—is passed into the right or left side of the heart in order to obtain diagnostic information about the heart or its blood vessels. Certain types of heart conditions can be treated in the cath lab.

A new, spacious waiting room for the catheterization lab offers convenience and privacy for families. The new waiting room was funded with proceeds from the 2007 Lucy Jordan Ball.

This area also includes a new check-in and registration desk and a consult room for physicians to meet with patients and their families.

Don’t take a holiday from heart health

The holidays can certainly make it challenging to maintain heart-friendly habits, such as eating well and exercising.

You don’t have to skip every treat if you practice moderation. At gatherings, limit yourself to one or two modest portions of your favorite indulgences. Also, try to find ways to cut fat and calories from holiday recipes.

Do your best to keep to your normal exercise schedule. Write it on a calendar so it will be a priority along with your holiday plans. Too cold to exercise outside? Then walk briskly around the mall while you wrap up your gift shopping.

Write it on a calendar so it will be a priority along with your holiday plans. Too cold to exercise outside? Then walk briskly around the mall while you wrap up your gift shopping.

SPECIAL ART: A picture painted by a member of the Cardiology Department staff is featured in each of the patient rooms in the newly expanded and renovated Cardiology Department. Candy McElroy, Debra Tackett, Angela Harris and Dana Murphy show off Ms. Harris’ painting of an angel. Over a period of weeks, the staff painted pictures of angels, hearts and crosses at Sips and Strokes, a Tuscaloosa business that donated the supplies for the art project. The staff wanted to add a personal touch in the rooms to show the special care they offer their patients.

FULL-SERVICE CARE “With the expansion and renovation, the Cardiology Department has progressed to offer full cardiac services for area residents,” said Dr. William A. Hill Jr., Cardiologist.

Procedure rooms for cardiac tests, such as stress tests and echocardiograms, were also renovated. Space was also included in the renovation plans for two additional catheterization rooms in the future.

“The practice of cardiology requires special equipment and expertise, and we have these in the Cardiology Department at DCH Regional Medical Center,” said Dr. Warren H. Holley, Cardiologist.

For information about Cardiac Services at the Regional Medical Center, go to www.dchsystem.com and, under DCH Regional Medical Center, open “Cardiac Services” in the “Directory of Services.”
This program helps women undergoing breast cancer treatment deal with the physical side effects of treatment. Free.

Man-to-Man Prostate Cancer Support Group

Second Wednesdays, bimonthly, noon to 1 p.m.

DCH Cancer Center Wellness Room

Open to prostate cancer patients and their families. Lunch will be served. Free. Reservations are required.

Staying Strong—Nutrition Can Make a Difference

Third Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

DCH Cancer Center Wellness Room

Open to patients, family, caregivers and community members.

STRETCH

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m.

University of Alabama (UA) Student Recreation Center

STRETCH is an exercise class for women who have or have had breast cancer. Sponsored by the DCH Cancer Treatment Center and the UA Student Recreation Center. Free.

HEALTH AND FITNESS PROGRAMS

HealthPlex at the Pickens County Medical Center is a community-based wellness and fitness center complete with equipment and programs to meet the needs of many different people. Call 205-367-8111.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

DCH Regional Medical Center

Childbirth Education Classes

For information, call the Department of Organizational Development and Education at 205-759-7745.

● Beginning Breastfeeding

For expectant parents who are interested in learning about breastfeeding.

● Caring for Your Infant

Focuses on the first days after bringing your newborn home.

● Early Pregnancy

Answers commonly asked questions and offers expectant parents information about having a healthy baby.

● Helping Siblings Adjust

This one-hour class acquaints big brothers and sisters with their new roles.

● Preparing for Childbirth

For expectant mothers and fathers.

● Refresher to Childbirth

A review of childbirth for expectant parents who have already experienced childbirth.

DCH Diabetes Center

At this education and resource facility for people with diabetes, nurses and nutritionists teach self-management skills, including how to control blood sugar, prevent diabetes complications and improve self-care skills. A physician referral is required. Call 205-750-5260.

Marvelous Multiples

This class is for expectant parents of twins or more. Call 205-333-4600.

Slender U

DCH SpineCare Center

This weight-loss and nutritional counseling program is in two four-week sessions—join us for one or both. Call 205-343-8864.

Northport Medical Center

Childbirth Education Classes

Classes are taught by registered nurses. You should sign up for classes when you’re 20 weeks pregnant. To learn about complimentary classes or to register, call 205-331-4600.

● All About Infant Care

Teaches first-time parents how to prepare for the arrival of their newborn. You will also learn what to expect after delivery and when you get home.

● Beyond Your First Baby

Learn about aspects of childbirth that might have changed since your most recent birth.

● Big Brother/Big Sister Class

For children ages 3 through 8 years. The class discusses what life will be like with a new baby.

● Breastfeeding Class

For expectant parents planning to breastfeed.

● Breathing and Relaxation

For couples at least 34 weeks pregnant who want to learn natural labor and birth techniques.

● Comprehensive Childbirth Class

First-time parents learn about labor, delivery and postpartum.

● Healthy Pregnancy

Entering the third trimester. This class, helpful specifically for first-time parents, is taken during the second trimester, at 22 to 28 weeks, to go over what’s normal and what can happen during the third trimester.

● Infant/Child CPR and Safety

Learn how to perform CPR, rescue a choking infant or child, and prevent childhood injuries.

West Alabama Aphasia

and Stroke Support Group

Third Mondays every other month 5:30 p.m., DCH Rehabilitation Pavilion Call 205-345-5488.

Fayette Medical Center

CPR and First Aid Classes

These classes are offered to community groups on request. Call 205-932-1279.

RENEW

Second Tuesdays, noon

Large Conference Room

Rediscovering and Exploring New Emphasizing Wellness (RENEW) is a breast cancer support group. Call 205-932-1279.

Touch Cancer Support Group

Fourth Tuesdays, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Fayette Medical Center

Call 205-932-1279 or 205-932-9966.

Pickens County Medical Center

Narcotics Anonymous

Mondays, 6 p.m.

Pickens County Medical Center Education Room

Call 205-367-1855.

Pickens County

Cancer Support Group

Second Tuesdays, 6 p.m.

Pickens County Medical Center Education Room

Open to cancer survivors and their families. Free. Call the American Cancer Society at 205-758-0700.