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60 Years of Memories

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Hopkins County Memorial Hospital
open its doors—and its 65 beds—on
Sept. 5, 1949. Back then, the doctors and
nurses welcomed people to a hospital that cost
$250,000 to build—less than the price of many
homes today.

The hospital, the Sulphur Springs community
and the world have seen many changes in those
60 years. And, more changes are to come,
with a $36 million expansion under way that
includes a new emergency department, front
lobby and gift shop, as well as a changeover
to all private rooms.

The switch to private rooms is just one
element of the transitions over the years. In
the 1950s, back when those Americans who
owned television sets were watching Ozzie
and Harriet raise their boys, Dragnet’s
Sgt. Joe Friday fight crime, and the
Lone Ranger and Tonto help tame the
Wild West, private hospital rooms were
rare. Most rooms were semiprivate,
though you could pay $3 to trade up to a
“deluxe” room. And separate male and
female wards held five beds each.
SKYROCKETING STAFF  In the early days, Memorial Hospital had about 30 employees: four to six graduate nurses, about 14 to 16 nurse aides, two attendants, three kitchen employees, one maintenance man and several technicians. The staff also included a surgeon, a pediatrician, a radiologist, five or six medical staff doctors, and four dentists.

Today there are 40 doctors on active staff and another 80 consultants, plus 500 employees.

EXPANSION CONTINUES  By the 1960s, when John and Jackie Kennedy were bringing the era and aura of Camelot to the White House and Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were walking on the moon, the hospital was relocating to a new 100-bed building in its present-day location. Along with the modern new medical equipment, the building boasted the first elevator in the county.

GROWING FAMILIES  Although moms and dads have been welcoming newborns into their families forever, the typical American experience has changed a lot in the past 60 years. Women used to labor and deliver in large rooms that held several moms-to-be. Dads were relegated to waiting areas, and babies were whisked away to the nursery shortly after birth. The belief at the time was that the nursery was safer for babies, with fewer germs, and moms should spend three to five days in the hospital resting.

Now, women labor, deliver and recover in the private rooms of the Women’s Pavilion, with their partners and, if they choose, other family members by their sides. Newborns can stay with their families for nearly all of their hospital stays, which are normally one to two days.

CARE CLOSE TO HOME  In 1981, when 52 hostages who had been held by Iranian students for 444 days were freed on Ronald Reagan’s inauguration day, people in Hopkins and surrounding counties still had to travel for a lot of their emergency care. In 1983, Memorial Hospital added emergency medical services, utilizing primarily paramedics. The current hospital expansion is increasing the emergency department’s services and size, growing from 10 beds to 20 beds. There is a separate entrance for ambulance patients as well.
Memories from Memorial Hospital
Myra Mikeska knew at age 14 she wanted to be a nurse, and she began a lifelong career at Memorial Hospital after graduating from Sulphur Springs High School in 1952. Here, she shares a few memories from the years:

- “It was quite different back then. There was no air conditioning. People could rent a small fan—my, did it feel good to walk into a room that had one.”
- “We did it all. We gave enemas, carried bedpans down the hall, gave shots and medications, filled out charts on each patient, and answered lights.”
- “Supper was served around 4:30 p.m. By bedtime some were hungry again. Most of the time we gave them a bowl of ice cream. If things were quiet, they might get one of my good backrubs.”
- “Since my mother worked when I had my first baby, I talked Dr. Hodges into letting me stay for 10 days until the navel cord fell off. Haven’t times changed?”

HOSPICE  Locals may remember the ’90s as the reign of the Dallas Cowboys. They rode to victory in three Super Bowls: 1993, 1994 and 1996. In the same decade, Memorial Hospital launched a hospice program, extending much-needed care and support to people with terminal illnesses.

TODAY AND TOMORROW  Now, Memorial Hospital brings a range of health care offerings to the Sulphur Springs community, including:
- **Cardiac care** through an advanced heart care program that brings tests and treatments—including stents, pacemakers and defibrillators—to the community.
- **HealthPlex**, a rehab and therapy clinic offering physical, occupational, hand, speech and aquatic therapies.
- **Wound care** and **hyperbaric oxygen therapy** for leg wounds in people with diabetes, wounds related to blood vessel disease, traumatic ulcers, work-related injuries and complicated surgical incisions.
- **CARE Unit**, an inpatient rehab program designed to help people get home as quickly as possible.
- An **EMS team** that stands ready to provide quality care if you need it and offers a host of injury-prevention programs to help you avoid the need for their care.
- **The Foundation**, which supports Memorial Hospital’s services by encouraging philanthropic donations.
- **The Gardens**, a peaceful place where patients, their families and friends, hospital staff and the community can walk or sit outdoors.
- **The Children’s Therapy Playground**, where children who need therapy can work in a fun environment.  ●  By Stephanie Thurrott
Between 2 and 5 million Americans experience atrial fibrillation, the most common type of heart rhythm problem, which can lead to stroke, serious heart issues and even death.

Baylor evaluates options for regulating heart rhythm problems

Between 2 and 5 million Americans experience atrial fibrillation, the most common type of heart rhythm problem. The small upper chambers of the heart quiver instead of beating effectively, which can lead to stroke, serious heart issues and even death.

Treatments for atrial fibrillation already exist, and Baylor Health Care System is participating in a study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to determine whether one approach might be better than another.

THE HEART HOSPITAL Baylor Plano is Baylor’s lead site for the multi-center CABANA trial, which will randomly assign 3,000 participants to one of two groups to compare established treatments. One is medications that can regulate the heartbeat and the other is catheter ablation, a minimally invasive procedure. Catheter ablation uses a tiny tube to send energy to the heart and destroy small areas of tissue where abnormal heartbeats may cause an irregular rhythm, also known as an arrhythmia.

“Traditionally, the primary treatment has been medication to suppress the arrhythmia, but some of the side effects are significant,” says J. Brian DeVille, M.D., FACC, a cardiac electrophysiologist and medical director for electrophysiology for the Heart Rhythm Institute at THE HEART HOSPITAL Baylor Plano.

Catheter ablation is typically only used in patients who don’t respond well to medication, which works well in about 50 percent of patients to control atrial fibrillation. However, the success rate with catheter ablation is about 70 percent to 80 percent, Dr. DeVille explains, although, up to one-third of patients need to have the procedure performed twice.

Participants will be followed for a minimum of two years over the course of the five-year study, which also will be conducted at the Baylor Jack and Jane Hamilton Heart and Vascular Hospital. Other Baylor sites are likely to participate in the CABANA trial, too.

Ultimately, the study is designed to determine which of the two treatments provides the best standard of care. Or, according to Dr. DeVille, perhaps the results will show that there are applications for both approaches to addressing atrial fibrillation.

“This has been a highly anticipated trial,” he says, “and I think this study really has the potential to shape how we treat atrial fibrillation in the years to come.”

By Amy Lynn Smith
Stay a Step Ahead of Stroke
Answers about the causes, symptoms and prevention of stroke

Stroke is the number three cause of death and the top cause of disability for Americans, according to the American Stroke Association (ASA). Knowing what to watch for—and getting treatment quickly—can make the difference in surviving a stroke with minimal long-term effects.

Stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain gets interrupted. In about 85 percent of cases, it’s caused by a blockage—a blood clot either develops in the brain, or develops somewhere else in the body and travels through the bloodstream to the brain, then gets lodged there. These blockages are similar to the blockages that cause heart attacks. Depending on where within the brain the stroke occurs, it might cause vision problems, paralysis, memory loss or behavior changes.

Reginald Cole, M.D., a neurologist on the medical staff at Hopkins County Memorial Hospital, explains that new stroke treatment protocols at Memorial Hospital, following the ASA standards, aim to improve outcomes for people who experience stroke.

Because speed is so important in stroke treatment, the protocol starts with community education efforts. Dr. Cole notes that it’s important for people to recognize the signs of stroke in themselves or others, and to call 911. (See “Signs of Stroke.”)

The EMS team is trained to contact the hospital if stroke is suspected, so the stroke readiness team can be in place when a patient arrives. At the hospital, a patient can quickly get the necessary MRI, CT and/or blood work and, if appropriate, start on antiplatelet drugs or anticoagulants. Clot-busting drugs can help reverse the stroke’s effects if they’re given within three hours of the stroke’s onset.

Similar protocols are in place for treatments after a patient is admitted to the hospital, whether to a floor or to the ICU, and for rehab. There’s also a patient education component in place that addresses smoking cessation, alcohol consumption and other factors within a patient’s control that can influence recovery from stroke.

The protocol helps ensure that, from onset of symptoms through recovery, stroke patients get the recommended care.

By Stephanie Thurrott

Signs of Stroke
The Stroke Awareness Foundation stresses that if you are concerned about someone possibly having a stroke, you should think FAST:

- Facial weakness
- Arm and leg weakness
- Speech problems
- Time is critical

If you suspect stroke, call 911.
For the fourth year in a row, the Hopkins County Health Care Foundation is sponsoring a Lights of Life Campaign and Gala, aiming to raise $110,000 for a new digital mammography machine.

This year, Jennifer and Craig Roberts are chairing the event. Many people in the Sulphur Springs community are familiar with Jennifer and Craig and their 9-year-old twin boys, Matthew and Mark.

Matthew and Mark were born three months prematurely, and both of them have battled health problems stemming from their early birth. Matthew suffered brain damage at birth and as a result uses a wheelchair. He also sometimes battles seizures.

Mark, who weighed just 1 pound at birth, needed a ventilator to help him breathe for his first year of life. He slowly built up his strength and by age 3 he could walk.

The boys still require a lot of therapy, but both are doing well in their regular classes at school and busy with activities any 9-year-old would envy, from camp to Boy Scouts to karate.

Some of the funds raised in last year’s Lights of Life campaign helped pay for a children’s therapy playground at the hospital. “The boys just love it. When they get to play on it, they get really excited,” Jennifer says.

Craig, who was the chair of the hospital foundation last year, says he was honored when he and Jennifer were asked to chair the Lights of Life campaign this year.

Jennifer is also enthusiastic about her role as co-chair. “I am an educator and I have a lot of responsibilities with the boys and their special needs. I haven’t had the opportunity to do something like this before. It’s great for us to be able to come together as a couple and do something together for the community,” she says. • By Stephanie Thurrott

You Can Help

To donate to the Hopkins County Health Care Foundation, please call 903-438-4799. Funds are accepted year-round and may be designated for the Lights of Life campaign, to provide improvements to the Gardens at Memorial, to make additions to the Children’s Therapy Playground, or to purchase brick pavers in honor or memory of someone special.
Began in 1949 with a dream of building a great community hospital that would serve the citizens of Sulphur Springs and Hopkins County.

From a humble beginning, Memorial Hospital has grown to become one of the county’s largest employers. We thank the community for their continued support for 60 years and we will continue to provide you and your family healthcare with care and compassion.

ADVANCED HEART CARE • C.A.R.E. UNIT • HEALTHPLEX
WOUND CARE • MEMORIAL PHYSICIAN SERVICES

“60 YEARS OF CARING”