

# Health & Fitness '98

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## MedCenter Air expands Kings Mountain Hospital services

MedCenter air is on the move, day or night. The aircraft and crews are in a constant state of readiness, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Its primary purpose is to transport, quickly and safely, those patients who require immediate or critical medical care.

Kings MOUNTAIN Hospital's alliance with Carolinas HealthCare System and MedCenter air has created a lot of community comfort, says Ken Flowe, M.D., medical director of the Emergency Department at Kings Mountain Hospital. "It's beneficial for two main reasons - the rapidity that it gets someone to tertiary care and the ease of referral. One phone call and everything happens."

MedCenter air is equipped to

transport all critically ill or injured patients, high risk infants, stabilized patients who need transfers for specialized treatment, and patients with serious medical problems who require specialists or technology not available in their own community. It has five aircraft (two jet helicopters, two turbo-prop airplanes and one jet plane) and five mobile intensive care ground transport units.

According to Dr. Flowe, the two most common patient diagnoses that require transport are unstable angina that needs cardiac catheterization and trauma. "We have seen an increase in trauma patients because this area is growing and our proximity to I-85."

Each member of the MedCenter

air medical team is uniquely qualified to serve in this highly specialized duty. Recruited specifically for the flight service, each registered nurse and respiratory therapist has years of experience in emergency or intensive care medicine, and each maintains the highest level of certification. And, if required, a crew of specialists such as a neonatal transport team can accompany the flight.

Dr. Flowe points out that access to MedCenter Air's ground units is as valuable as access to the air units. Some patients may not require short transit times, but still require tertiary care. "These ambulances from Charlotte reduce the demand on the county's limited transportation resources."

MedCenter Air's medical control is provided by a select group of board-certified emergency medicine physicians. It is their responsibility to accept a patient for air transport and to relay all important patient information and transport orders to the flight team. A state-of-the-art communications and dispatch center enables the crew to consult with physicians as needed, to prepare the receiving facility for the arriving patient and to coordinate ground transportation, if necessary.

"Sometimes the weather prohibits air transport, but we don't always know that," adds Dr. Flowe. "By having both ground and air units, MedCenter Air can cut down the number of phone calls

and confusion by determining flight appropriateness and sending a ground unit instead if necessary."

Members of the flight crew are also carefully selected for aeromedical transport. Gully certified and licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration, each pilot has extensive flight experience. All pilots receive additional training in-flight safety every six months and maintain all required ratings specific to the industry. All aircraft are serviced and inspected on a daily basis and operated under the most stringent regulations.

The interiors of all MedCenter Aircraft are custom designed exclusively for aeromedical transportation. The sophisticated medical systems on board are permanently

installed to ensure optimum patient care and the safe transport of patients. This allows the medical team to administer the most highly advanced medical treatment, as required.

In 1997, MedCenter Air received Accreditation with Commendation from the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Services (CAMTS). In making its findings known, the CAMTS Board of directors noted, "this accreditation recognizes MedCenter Air for Substantial compliance with the Accreditation Standards and also for outstanding and innovative areas of excellence at the time of this application and the site survey."

## Out patient procedures increasing at Kings Mountain Hospital

With preventive medicine on the rise, the Kings Mountain (KMH) outpatient staff is experiencing an increase in endoscopy procedures. Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD) and colonoscopy are low risk procedures performed by physicians who are specially trained.

While many factors contribute to physicians suggesting an endoscopy to their patients, an

EGD is helpful to both diagnosis the inflammation of the esophagus, stomach or duodenum, and to identify the site of upper gastrointestinal bleeding or infection. An EGD is more accurate than an x-ray in detecting gastric and duodenal ulcers, and may detect early cancers too small to be seen by x-ray. A colonoscopy is helpful in the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases of the large intestine. When x-rays are negative,

the cause of symptoms, such as rectal bleeding or change in bowel habits, may be found by colonoscopy.

Regina Gregg, R.N.M.S., KMH director of patient care services and chief nurse executive, said, "We have one endoscopy suite located within the operating room complex and four private internists referring patients. KMH averages 20-25 endoscopy procedures a week."

KMH uses a teamwork approach for preparing patients. Once a physician orders a procedure, the nursing and anesthesia staff of KMH meet with the patient to perform lab work and educate the patient regarding what to expect before, during and after the procedure.

She stresses that patients are constantly supervised from the time of admission until going back to their room or released from out-

patient care. The staff also calls patients the next day to follow-up on their progress. Most patients are in recovery for 30 minutes and then go back to their rooms. A recovery time of 2-4 hours is recommended for patients having the procedure performed as outpatient. Family members are encouraged to stay with a patient while in recovery.

"Our first concern is for the patient," Gregg said. "We individu-

alize the care given to patients and their families and want them to be comfortable throughout their stay."

Area physicians who perform endoscopy procedures at KMH include: Dr. Austin Osemeka (Gastroenterologist), Dr. Abdul Gangoo (Internal Medicine), Dr. Syed Thiwan (Internal Medicine), and Dr. Elizabeth Cunningham (General Surgery).

## Kings Mountain Hospital delivers EST practice

Kings Mountain Hospital (KH) was recently selected to present the results of a project designed to improve the care delivered to patients experiencing a heart attack. The symposium entitled Improving the Care Delivered to Patients with Acute Myocardial Infarction was sponsored jointly by Medical Review of North Carolina (MRNC), The School of Medi-

cine of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Greensboro AHEC. Eighteen hospitals attended to learn practical ways to improve the healthcare delivered to patients diagnosed with acute myocardial infarction (heart attack).

KMH formed a quality improvement group in 1997 to identify how to improve healthcare

delivered to patients experiencing a heart attack. The group included physicians, nurses, laboratory technologists, radiology technologists and administrators. The goals of the project were to:

- Improve patient education about managing heart disease and coping with a heart attack.
- Improve timing and effectiveness of initial medical treatment

patients receive when they arrive at the hospital.

- Improve patient recovery and life-style after a heart attack.

Marie Graham, R.N., KMH nurse manager, was notified by MRNC that changes made by KMH's quality improvement group gave KMH the distinction of Best Practice in treating myocardial infarctions. "The fact that we were asked to present our

findings during the symposium is a compliment to our hospital and our staff."

As a result of the KMH project, hospital staff made several important changes. New educational materials were developed to assure that patients and their families learn about taking aspirin and managing diet for maximum recovery. The administration of medications which dissolve the

clots causing a heart attack were accelerated by 45 minutes or more in some cases. Finally, KMH began the Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, a 12-week course on managing stress, diet, exercise and medication. For more information regarding the Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, call 739-3601.

## Kings Mountain Hospital And These Plans Unlock The Power Of The System For You

### PPO PLANS

Aetna US Healthcare  
Alliance Preferred Network  
BlueCross BlueShield of NC  
CAPP CARE  
CIGNA  
CNA Health Partners  
Ethix Southeast  
Health Care Savings  
HealthStar  
Healthsource  
Jefferson Pilot  
Joan Fabrics  
Mecklenburg Medical Society  
MedCost  
NC Teachers/State Employees  
PHP of SC  
Premier  
Primary Physician Care  
Prudential  
SC State Employees  
United Healthcare  
Wal-Mart  
WellPath

### POINT-OF-SERVICE PLANS

Aetna US Healthcare  
Atlantic Health Plans  
BlueCross BlueShield of NC  
CAPP CARE  
CIGNA Flexcare

### Companion Health Care

Doctors Health Plan  
Ethix Southeast  
Health Care Savings  
HealthStar  
HealthSource  
Jefferson Pilot  
Kanawha HealthCare  
MedCost  
PHP of SC  
Premier  
Prudential  
The Wellness Plan  
United Healthcare  
WellPath

### HMO PLANS

Aetna US Healthcare  
Atlantic Health Plans  
BlueCross BlueShield of NC  
Companion Health Care  
Doctors Health Plan  
Healthsource  
HMO Blue  
Kanawha HealthCare  
PHP of SC  
Prudential  
The Wellness Plan  
United Healthcare  
WellPath



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## Be flu smart! Advice from experts

(NAPS)—Influenza is not "just the flu." Because the disease can be extremely virulent and deadly, the American Lung Association and ZymeTx, Inc., with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have joined forces to kick off National Flu Awareness Month™ this November, a nationwide awareness campaign to educate Americans about the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of influenza. ZymeTx is the developer of ZstatFlu™, the first and only rapid point-of-care test to diagnose all strains of both influenza A and B.

According to Linda B. Ford, MD, President of the American Lung Association, along with Robert J. Hudson, MD, Medical Director of ZymeTx, Inc. and his flu-fighting sidekick, Dr. Flubug™, flu season needn't catch us off guard. Their advice follows:

### Facts about flu

- Influenza is an acute, upper respiratory infection caused by the Type A and Type B influenza viruses.
- Every year, there are more than 90 million cases of influenza in the U.S.
- During past epidemics in the U.S., the flu has caused between 20,000 and 40,000 deaths.
- People at highest risk for serious, life-threatening complications

include the elderly, young children, individuals with chronic illnesses and compromised immune systems, and pregnant women.

- Flu is most contagious in its early stages, before infected people are even aware they are carrying the virus. The incubation period is 1 to 4 days.

### Flu symptoms

- Sudden onset of high fever, 102°-104°, lasting up to 5 days.
- Dry cough for up to 3 days, then wet cough for up to 7 days. Cough may persist for as long as two weeks.
- Headache and muscle pain, lasting up to 4 days.
- Sore throat in older children and adults, lasting up to 3 days.
- Fatigue lasting up to 3 weeks.

### Preventing flu

- An annual flu shot is the best flu insurance.
- You cannot get the flu from the flu shot.
- September through mid-November is the ideal time to be vaccinated.
- Vaccination can reduce the severity and complications of flu if you do get the virus.
- The flu shot is especially important for the chronically ill and those over 65.

### How to tell if it's the flu

- Influenza is very difficult to diagnose without a test...even for

the experts.

- Go see your doctor at the first sign of symptoms.

- Ask your doctor about the new rapid flu test that lets you know within 30 minutes if you have the flu.

- A positive flu diagnosis eliminates the need to prescribe antibiotics "just in case" something other than flu is present.

### Treatment and relief from symptoms

- Effective treatment can only be started if a definitive diagnosis is made within the first 48 hours from the onset of symptoms.

- Antiviral medications are a safe and effective treatment for influenza A viruses, shortening the duration of flu and preventing complications.

- Remember, don't demand antibiotics for the flu; they do not help viral infections.

- If you do catch the flu, get plenty of bed rest and drink lots of fluids. Medications with acetaminophen can help to relieve pain and discomfort associated with fever, muscle aches and headaches.

For more information about influenza, visit the American Lung Association web site at [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org), the ZymeTx, Inc. web site at [www.flu101.com](http://www.flu101.com), or the CDC web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## Comfort from the common cold

(NAPS)—As much as we love the winter's first snowfall, we hate the first ACHOO! And since a winter cold is nothing to sneeze at, it's best not to wait until the next ice age for a cure. The following are a few suggestions to make recovery more comfortable.

**Rest!** Most importantly, remain in bed. Everyone knows that rest is essential when you have a fever, but not everyone knows that it is important to stay horizontal for up to two days after the fever is gone. Doing so will give your body time to heal and minimize the risk of spreading your cold to others.

**Drink!** Two commonly used cold and flu cocktails are hot apple cider garnished with a cinnamon stick and chamomile tea with a slice of lemon. For pure protein power in a liquid, try clear

chicken broth.

**Comfort!** Since there is no cure for the common cold, look for "natural" alternative products to help chase away the chills and clear the way to a good night's sleep.

For example, The Healing Garden Cold Comforteraphy line of holistic fragrance products—created with essential oils of eucalyptus and menthol and natural extracts of echinacea, golden seal

and zinc—provides cold season comfort for the entire family.

To warm up, just add Chills Chaser Bath Crystals to a hot water bath and immerse yourself in the penetrating warmth of soothing eucalyptus waters. The Rest Easy Soothing Cold Candle can help you set the mood. For a restful and recuperative sleep, clear the air of stale, sickroom odors with Breathe Deeply Pillow & Room Spray—the last thing you want when you have a cold is a stuffy room to go with your stuffy head. The Cold Comforteraphy line also includes an Un-Stuff Vaporizing Balm and Tender Lasting Care Lip Balm.

Of course, once you have your cold symptoms under control, all the above suggestions can be used to simply rest and unwind after a long workday!

