

Lowell General Hospital
for your health

Winter 2007

Your Resource for Healthy Living

**The Heart Center at
Lowell General Hospital
Ahead of the Curve in Cardiac Care**

**Advanced CT Scan Technology
Gives a Whole New View**

**When Is an Emergency
Really an Emergency?**

**Don't Let New England Weather
Keep You from Being Fit**

**Lowell General Chelmsford
Introducing a New Regional Model
for Maternal and Pediatric Care**



Dear Friends,



There is something very special about embarking on a new year. Each new plan and resolution brings exciting challenges and opportunities to

our lives. At Lowell General Hospital, we are enthusiastic about the new possibilities and successes this year has to offer, and we look forward to making a resolution we know we can keep.

This year, as in years past, we resolve to continue improving the quality of health care for the people of Greater Lowell. Each year you entrust us with your health and the health of your family. Each year we are humbled by your trust and privileged to keep serving you, our brothers, our parents, our friends, and our neighbors.

We continue to work toward improving the health of our community by expanding our capabilities in vital health areas like cardiac care. The Heart Center, our new state-of-the-art cardiac facility, will give patients increased access to some of the most advanced cardiac procedures and technology available.

Meanwhile, the growth of our partnership with one of the country's most respected medical facilities, Tufts-New England Medical Center and the Floating Hospital for Children, is bringing world-class care to our own backyard through The Regional Center for Maternal and Pediatric Care.

Each year we look forward to renewing our commitment to improving the quality of health care in our community—and to the pleasure of making a resolution you know we will keep.

In good health,

NORMAND E. DESCHENE
PRESIDENT AND CEO

The Heart Center at Lowell General Hospital Ahead of the Curve in Cardiac Care

From diagnostics to treatment to rehabilitation,
Lowell General Hospital knows how to care for your heart.

In life, as in love, you trust your heart to those who will take care of it best. That is why The Heart Center at Lowell General Hospital offers the most complete cardiac care in the Merrimack Valley.

“We are committed to developing programs and services to fight cardiovascular disease and improve the overall health of the community,” says President and CEO, Normand E. Deschene.

With the addition of emergency and nonemergency angioplasty* at Lowell General Hospital, the community has another weapon in the battle against heart disease. Angioplasty, an invasive procedure that opens a blocked artery by inserting a balloon-tipped catheter with a metal mesh stent, is known to be one of the most effective ways to prevent and treat heart attacks. Recently, Lowell General Hospital became the first community hospital in Massachusetts to successfully perform nonemergency angioplasty, which uses this procedure to stop a heart attack before it can happen. In the event of a heart attack, when every second counts, Lowell General Hospital's lifesaving emergency angioplasty is just minutes from home.

“In the treatment of a heart attack, success relies on access to the best form of therapy in the shortest amount of time,” says Richard Birkhead, MD, Chief of Cardiology at Lowell General Hospital. “That is why it is so vital to have access to emergency angioplasty within the community.”

Lowell General Hospital's dedication to quality cardiac care was recently honored by the American Heart Association (AHA) during the Scientific Sessions 2006 in Chicago, where the hospital was among a select nationwide group recognized for successfully implementing AHA lifesaving guidelines.



Kelly Petti, of the AHA (center), presents awards to the cardiac team of Lowell General Hospital for implementing AHA guidelines. From left, Normand E. Deschene, President and CEO; Richard Birkhead, MD, Chief of Cardiology; Kelly Petti of AHA; Pat Morse, RN, Director of Cardiology Services; and Erin Donovan, Director of Performance Improvement.

The Heart Center features the area's first and most experienced cardiac catheterization team for the diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery disease. It includes the area's only electrophysiology (EP) program, used to determine the causes of irregular heartbeats and to implant cardiac defibrillators.

For the many cardiac patients for whom surgery is not an option, Lowell General Hospital offers new hope with the region's only Enhanced External Counterpulsation (EECP) program. Often referred to as a “natural bypass,” EECP provides a nonsurgical alternative for patients with angina and circulatory problems.

In addition, new 64-slice computed tomography (CT) scans will enable physicians to more effectively detect and treat heart disease and stroke, as well as many other life-threatening conditions. Producing high-quality 3-D images, this technology enables cardiologists and radiologists to evaluate the heart more quickly and in more detail. ■

* Nonemergency angioplasty is offered as part of the MASS COMM clinical trial.

Partnership Creates a New Regional Model for Maternal and Pediatric Care

Boston-Level Pediatric and Maternal Care Comes to Lowell General Hospital

It was a true celebration that ushered in the innovative partnership to expand services between Lowell General Hospital and Tufts-New England Medical Center (Tufts-NEMC) and Floating Hospital for Children to create The Regional Center for Maternal and Pediatric Care.

On November 9, Lowell General Hospital President and CEO, Normand E. Deschene, and Tufts-NEMC and Floating Hospital President and CEO, Ellen Zane, introduced the formal agreement at a ceremonial contract signing complete with balloons and a host of alumni from Lowell General Hospital's Special Care Nursery.

INNOVATIVE APPROACH EQUALS ADVANCED CARE

The new partnership is an innovative model that will offer on-site advanced level of care for mothers with high-risk pregnancies and deliveries and for newborns and children with special medical needs.

"We are proud to build upon the unparalleled success of the Level II neonatal care nursery and expand our services for specialty maternal and pediatric care," Mr. Deschene says. "This partnership further demonstrates our continued commitment to serve our communities as a comprehensive

regional medical center, offering easy access to Boston-level care while maintaining the personal touch of a community hospital."

A LONG-TIME FOUNDATION SUPPORTS PARTNERSHIP

The new partnership builds upon 13 years of successful affiliation between the hospitals. Since 1993, NEMC and Floating Hospital for Children have partnered with Lowell General Hospital to provide a Level II Special Care Neonatal Nursery at The Birthplace at Lowell General Hospital, providing the community's only specialty services for sick and premature newborns in need of a higher level of care.

At the ceremonial signing, Mr. Deschene and Ms. Zane were surrounded by 13 children—from infants to teens—who as graduates of the Special Care Nursery represent the successful relationship the hospitals have established over the past 13 years.

Specialists from Floating Hospital for Children will provide an advanced level of care 24 hours a day, seven days a

week at Lowell General Hospital. Lowell General Hospital patients will also have access to many specialty services, including tertiary-level maternity and neonatal care, and pediatric cardiology, gastroenterology, pulmonary, and neurology. Most outpatient specialty care services will be provided at the Lowell General Hospital's facilities at Chelmsford campus at Drum Hill Massachusetts, by specialists from Tufts-NEMC and Floating Hospital for Children.

"We are delighted to be able to share this great news," says Ms. Zane. "This affiliation enables Floating Hospital physicians to work in collaboration with Lowell General Hospital doctors to bring 'Boston-level' specialty health care to birthing mothers and children living in the Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire." ■



Lowell General Hospital President and CEO, Normand E. Deschene, and Tufts-NEMC and Floating Hospital President and CEO, Ellen Zane, are surrounded by children during the celebration of the creation of The Regional Center for Maternal and Pediatric Care.



Lowell General Hospital

Regional Center for Maternal and Pediatric Care

in partnership with Tufts-New England Medical Center and Floating Hospital for Children

For more information on The Regional Center for Maternal and Pediatric Care, specialty clinics, and community education seminars featuring specialists from Lowell General Hospital and Tufts-NEMC/Floating Hospital, visit our website at www.lowellgeneral.org.

Advanced CT Scan Technology Gives a Whole New View

The first of its kind in the Merrimack Valley, the Phillips Brilliance 64-Slice CT Scanner at Lowell General Hospital gives doctors and patients access to start-of-the-art diagnostic technology close to home.



Sophisticated computed-tomography (CT) scanning enables doctors to diagnose a variety of medical conditions more quickly and precisely than ever before. The problem is that area residents typically need to travel to Boston to receive these state-of-the-art radiology exams.

This is no longer the case. Lowell General Hospital recently purchased a 64-slice CT scanner, bringing the highest-caliber CT technology closer to home. The new equipment provides physicians with extremely clear 3-D images in seconds, advancing the level of care Lowell General Hospital provides for patients with conditions such as heart and lung disease, cancer, and stroke. The scanner is the first of its kind in the Merrimack Valley.

“This scanner can produce unrivaled image quality and detail with remarkable speed, enabling much more in-depth

analysis of very complex anatomy,” says Normand E. Deschene, President and CEO.

CT combines X-rays and computer technology. Patients lie on a table and are moved through a scanner while an X-ray beam is projected through cross-sections of their anatomy and the images are recorded on electronic detectors. Because the 64-slice scanner works so fast, patients benefit from shorter exams, less X-ray exposure, faster results, and a safe alternative to invasive diagnostic procedures.

Quicker exams are especially helpful for older people, children, and those with breathing problems. “We’ll have them in and out much faster, and their doctors will be able to access detailed, definitive results within minutes,” says Jonas Berman, MD, Director of Radiology at Lowell General Hospital. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ADVANCED RADIOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY AT LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL, VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG.

STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY MEETS “STATE-OF-THE-HEART” CARE

Lowell General Hospital combines advanced technology with personalized care that goes beyond treatment. At LGH, you’ll find technology of a busy city hospital just minutes from home:

■ **Navigational surgery:** Making complex surgical procedures safer and more effective. Computer-aided, image-guided navigational surgery works like the global positioning system (GPS) in a car. A car’s GPS can tell you exactly where you are and exactly where you want to be. This surgical system does the same thing—telling surgeons exactly where they are in a patient’s anatomy and giving

them the ability to “see” on a computer where they need to go—with no surprises. That precision allows surgeons to avoid critical structures in and around the ear, nose, throat, eye, brain, and spinal cord.

■ **Intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT):** Offering a stronger, more individualized attack against hard-to-reach cancers. The latest advancement in radiation treatment, IMRT enables a more precise radiation dose to the tumor by varying the intensity and shape of the radiation beam. This technology allows higher and more effective radiation doses with fewer side

effects and less damage to surrounding normal tissue.

■ **Positron emission tomography (PET):** Allowing cancer to be detected more quickly and accurately. The PET imaging system is the most advanced diagnostic system available. PET imaging reveals diseases that may be undetected by other methods, such as MRI or CT scan. Because diseased cells process substances in the body differently than healthy cells, PET scanning detects these cells long before they have grown into tumors. It also is used to detect lesions and heart and neurological disorders.



Certified nurse practitioner and Breast Health Navigator, Rachel Richards, MS, APRN, BC

Breast Health Navigator: Someone to Show You the Way

Finding out that you have breast cancer can be a life-changing experience. There's so much to learn and many decisions to make. At Lowell General Hospital, we understand what you need is not limited to expert medical care—what you also need is someone to show you the way.

HELPING YOU CROSS UNFAMILIAR WATERS

Our new Breast Health Navigator can help. A certified nurse practitioner, Rachel Richards, MS, APRN, BC, has the specialized training and experience to lead you through the network of cancer care. From the time of an abnormal mammogram, our Breast Health Navigator is there to support you—explaining test results, obtaining records, scheduling tests, and discussing treatment options and support programs.

“For many patients, the scariest part of a breast cancer diagnosis is not knowing what to expect,” says Richards. “And there are so many professionals involved in a patient’s care. We want to streamline the process and provide a seamless continuum of services.”

A woman learning that her biopsy is positive for breast cancer meets quickly

with a multidisciplinary team, which includes a medical oncologist, a pathologist, radiation oncologist, surgeon, social worker, and Richards. The group develops a comprehensive treatment plan that same day, minimizing the anxiety and stress that come with waiting.

MORE THAN A NURSE

Certified Breast Health Navigators are nurses specially trained in oncology and breast health, who educate women about their disease while addressing their physical and emotional needs. But because she also is a certified nurse practitioner who provides primary care, Richards is able to “go one step further.”

“For example, if a woman has an abnormal mammogram, I can take her health history and do a physical exam, order a biopsy, and refer her to a surgeon,” Richards says. “She doesn’t need to wait while we call a doctor. All this enhances our efficiency—and the level of care we can offer our patients.” ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BREAST HEALTH NAVIGATOR PROGRAM, VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG, OR CALL 978-937-6258.

Five Factors that Affect Breast Cancer Risk

Take this self-assessment test to see if you are at risk for breast cancer. If you check “Yes” next to any of these risk factors, talk to your doctor about screenings.

1 Are you older than age 50?

Yes No

Most cases of breast cancer occur in women older than age 50.

2 Did you begin menstruating before age 12?

Yes No

If you had your first period at a young age, you have been exposed to the hormone estrogen for a long time. This can raise your breast cancer risk.

3 Have you ever had a breast biopsy with a diagnosis of atypical hyperplasia?

Yes No

Your breast cancer risk may be four to five times higher than average.

4 Have you never had children, or did you have your first child after age 30?

Yes No

You are at greater risk if you have never given birth or if you gave birth to your first child after age 30.

5 Do you have a personal or family history of breast cancer?

Yes No

Your risk increases if you have had breast cancer, or if your mother, sister, or daughter had breast cancer.

Many women who get breast cancer do not have any of the above risk factors.

Screening is important. Women between ages 20 and 39 should have a regular breast exam every three years. Beginning at age 40, the American Cancer Society recommends annual exams and mammograms.



AT LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL

To get **FULL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS** and register for the classes listed below, as well as other programs, visit www.lowellgeneral.org or call 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355).

FAMILY HEALTH & WELLNESS

Babysitting Basics

January 13, February 17, March 10, or April 14, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., \$30.

CPR, AED, and First Aid Combo Class

February 3 and April 7, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., \$30.

Every Child Deserves a Safe Seat

January 18, 6 to 7 p.m. or March 8, 7 to 8 p.m., FREE.

Friends and Family CPR

January 13 or March 10, 10 a.m. to noon, or February 15, 7 to 9 p.m., \$12.

Keeping Your Child Safe in Public

March 7, 7 to 8 p.m., FREE.

Postnatal Yoga

January 15 to February 26, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., FREE.

Self-Defense Class

Wednesdays, February 7 to 28, 1 to 2 p.m., \$55.

Your Child and Asthma

March 12, 6 to 8 p.m.

Your Child's Heart

April 11, 6 to 8 p.m.

LOVE YOUR HEART

The power of your life lies in your hands. What are the risk factors for heart disease that you can control?

Presented by cardiologist, Omar Ali, MD

February 27, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Clark Auditorium, Lowell General Hospital



CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

Birthplace Tour

January 18 or February 15, 7 to 8 p.m., or February 3 or March 3, 11 a.m. to noon.

Breastfeeding Class

February 1 or March 1, 7 to 9 p.m., \$40.

Hypnobirthing Class

February 1 or April 19, 7 to 9:30 p.m., \$225.

One-Day Prepared Childbirth Class

January 27, February 24, March 10, or March 25, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., \$165.

Prenatal Yoga

January 15 to February 26, 5:45 to 7 p.m., \$70.

Prepared Childbirth Education

February 27 to April 3 or February 28 to April 4, 7 p.m., \$150.

Refresher Childbirth Class

February 3, 9 to 11:30 a.m., \$40.

Sibling Class

February 13 or March 13, 3:45 to 4:45 p.m., \$20.

HEALTHY AGING SERIES

Low Vision and Aging

January 16, 10 to 11:30 a.m., FREE.

Alzheimer's 101:

Understanding the Basics

March 29, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

NUTRITION & WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Center for Weight Management Free Information Night

Sessions are held each month. For more information, call 978-788-7200.

Adult Create Your Weight

Join us for a FREE Introductory Session on February 13 regarding this nine-week program. March 6 to May 1, 6:30 to 8 p.m., or March 8 to May 3, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Pediatric Create Your Weight

Join us for a FREE Introductory Session on February 22 regarding this 10-week program. March 5 to May 10, time to be determined.

Diabetes Series

■ Heart Health and Diabetes

March 7, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

■ Carbohydrate Counting

March 14, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

■ Diabetic Foot Care

March 21, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

Eight-week class. March 13, 20, 27, April 2, 10, 17, 24, and 30, 6:30 to 9 p.m. with an all-day retreat April 21, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Graduate Mindfulness Program

Five-week class. January 24, February 7, 21, March 28, and April 25, 6:30 to 9 p.m.

Reiki Level I Training

Two-day class. January 19, 6:30 to 9 p.m. and January 20, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Reiki Level II Training

Two-day class. March 10, 1 to 6 p.m. and March 11, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Yoga of the Heart

■ First Session, six weeks

February 22, March 1, 8, 13, 27, and April 5, 4 to 6 p.m.

■ Second Session, six weeks

April 26, May 3, 17, 24, 31, and June 6, 4 to 6 p.m.

Registration required for all classes. Unless noted, you may register by calling 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355). Online registration with credit card payment available at www.lowellgeneral.org.

Q & A: When Is an Emergency Really an Emergency?

with Nathan MacDonald, MD,
Chief of Emergency Medicine

Deciding to go to the Emergency Department (ED) at a hospital is not always easy. You want to make sure you are getting the treatment you need, but nobody likes to go to the ED unless absolutely necessary. Lowell General Hospital's Chief of Emergency Medicine, Nathan MacDonald, MD, gives you some tips to help decide when an emergency is really an emergency.

Q What should be considered an emergency?

A A serious medical situation where treatment is required immediately would be considered an emergency.

Some examples of conditions that would warrant urgent medical attention include: signs of a heart attack—such as chest pain or pain radiating down your arm lasting more than two minutes; signs of a stroke, including confusion or numbness in the face or extremities; respiratory distress; bleeding that will not stop, even after direct pressure has been applied; poisoning; fractured bones; head injuries resulting in memory loss or nausea; coughing up or vomiting of blood; and suicidal feelings.

Any of these conditions can be very dangerous and require immediate medical attention. If you have these symptoms or other symptoms of a life-threatening medical condition, call **911**.

"A serious medical situation where treatment is required immediately would be considered an emergency."

Nathan MacDonald, MD



Q When should I just wait and go see my doctor?

A Coughs, colds, sore throats and earaches, minor sprains, rashes, and most fevers can usually be treated by your primary care physician (PCP) or an urgent care facility.

However, there is more gray area when it comes to children

with a persistent high fever. Fevers accompanied by lethargy, dehydration, or respiratory distress could signify a serious problem that requires immediate medical attention.

Fevers in infants can be serious. Regardless of other symptoms, an infant 3 months old or younger, with a fever of 100.7° F or higher, should be seen by a doctor immediately.

Q Should I drive to the ED, or call an ambulance?

A If you or a loved one experience symptoms of a heart attack, stroke, respiratory distress, or a severe allergic reaction, call **911**. Critical treatment can be obtained in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. ED personnel can be alerted to your needs before you arrive, making the difference between life and death.

Q What should I bring to the ED with me?

A Bringing the following items/information with you to the ED will make things go more smoothly. Try to keep the following items together in an area easily accessible to you and others:

- A list of any medications or herbal supplements you're taking
- A list of medication allergies
- Your family medical history
- The name and phone number of your PCP
- Personal identification and any insurance cards
- A consent form for children, if parents are not available



Jonathan Drake, MD, and Kim Schwab, PA, check symptoms of a patient admitted to the Emergency Department at Lowell General Hospital.

Bad Weather Doesn't Have to Keep You from **Getting Fit**

Do your exercise plans get put on hold during cold or dreary months? Randy Bomba, an exercise physiologist in Lowell General Hospital's Cardiac Rehabilitation Department, has some tips to beat the bad-weather blahs and tone up for spring.

- Think of your home as a gym. Consider investing in a piece of exercise equipment—but remember, you don't need to break the bank. "A stationary bike is relatively low cost, and will be gentler on your bones and joints than a treadmill," Bomba says. You also can climb stairs, jog in place, jump rope, or perform any other activity that requires continuous movement over a long period of time.

- Swim laps or take water aerobics in an indoor pool.
- Walk briskly around an indoor mall.
- Rent or buy some workout videos.
- Experiment with different exercise classes at a local fitness center. Taking a variety of classes is important, as a mix of flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular exercises will lead to better overall conditioning, according to Bomba.
- Team up with an exercise partner. If someone is waiting for you, it's a lot harder to blow off your workout.

If you've been inactive for a while, start gradually and add a few minutes of



Randy Bomba checks a patient's blood pressure at LGH's Cardiac Rehabilitation Department.

physical activity each day. "You could start with just walking two minutes away from your house, and two minutes back," Bomba suggests. Eventually, try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise on five or more days of the week. And don't forget to warm up and cool down with two to three minutes of low-intensity exercise before and after your workout. ■

FOR MORE TIPS ON KEEPING FIT DURING THE WINTER FREEZE, VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG.

INTRODUCING THE **BABY SIGNS®** PROGRAM AT **LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL**

The Baby Signs Institute offers classes and workshops to teach parents how to use the Baby Signs Program at home. Join us for a **FREE** Information Session to find out more!

February 5, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Workshops include:

- **Baby Signs Parents Workshop**

Designed for parents with children ages birth to 3 years.

February 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., \$60.

- **Sign, Say, & Play Class**

Designed for parents and children ages 6 months to 3 years.

March 17 to April 21, 10 to 11 a.m., \$135.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG OR CALL 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355).



NEED A DOCTOR? CALL OUR PHYSICIAN REFERRAL LINE AT 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355) OR VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG.



LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL

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