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September 2020
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

THE DAILY HOME

Sylacauga Pediatrics encourages continued health care visits during pandemic

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Special to The Daily Home

Dr. Rekha Chadawada provides her patients and their parents with more than 20 years of experience and compassion when they receive care at Sylacauga Pediatrics.

The practice is dedicated to achieving good health and development at each stage of a child's life. It provides wellness visits, immunizations, physicals and the assessment and treatment of illness. However, the coronavirus has raised a lot of concern for parents, sometimes leading to reduced vaccinations and routine check-ups being canceled.

Chadawada encourages parents to keep routine check-up appointments and maintain their children's vaccination schedules. During the pandemic, Sylacauga Pediatrics has taken precautions to ensure safety at its offices, she said.

"Since March, plenty has changed for us. There is no longer a waiting room, only one parent is allowed with the child upon visits, there are separate areas for those that are sick and those who are well, and after every patient we are sanitizing the rooms and anything they could have come in contact with. I know here in the South, a lot of people are big on families

and want them at appointments and that can no longer be the case. Additional family members are asked to be left in the car, at home, or maybe utilize the option of telemedicine that is now offered."

In regard to COVID-19, Chadawada said that they had not received any cases at the start of the pandemic. It was not until July that coronavirus cases started to increase; however, a point has been reached where now cases are down to maybe one or two patients that may test positive for the coronavirus. "The reopening of schools is a big concern for me and how that will pan out for student's health, she added."

Sylacauga Pediatrics now offers Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing for the coronavirus. This form of testing is reliable and produces quicker results. According to Chadawada, there was a time when tests would have to be sent off for testing, but now test results can be received within the same day.

"There has been a decline in patients, and I understand because people are scared. Things are better now in comparison to the decline in March, but not the same as before the pandemic hit. I try to understand and respect the parent's choice, but I highly encourage every parent to continue routine vaccines and annual wellness check ups. I advise

parents and guardians to pay attention to problematic signs of when a child should come in, such as shortness of breath, loss of smell or taste, minor symptoms of fever, nausea, sore throat, or congestion.


It can be hard to sometimes distinguish allergies or present illnesses from covid, but testing helps to determine the results."

As a board member of Sylacauga City Schools, Chadawada is fully invested in the livelihood of her patients' education and health, as well as involved throughout the community in any way she can help. "The support from the community is very important. Especially in a time like this, we need to support each other as much as we can, which is why for us the goal is to treat every child like they are our own...that is our service motto. The investment into our youth's future includes a good support system and good health."




Dr. Chadawada





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Coosa Valley Medical Center remains dedicated to local communities

STAFF REPORT

Coosa Valley Medical Center (CVMC) continues to live up to its mission of providing quality health care and services to residents of Talladega, Coosa, Clay, Tallapoosa and Shelby counties.

In addition to its inpatient services, the center operates a 13-bed Level Two emergency department that cares for as many as 30,000 patients each year. It offers ambulatory/outpatient services that provide treatment to as many as 61,000 patients each year.

Through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, CVMC has worked this year to ensure safety for patients and visitors -- protective face masks must be worn by guests and patients prior to entering the

center -- while striving to provide new services and maintaining a high quality of patient care.

Procedures to treat chronic and acute pain are now available at the center's new outpatient pain clinic. A referral clinic for patients with acute or chronic low back and leg pain, neck pain, shingles, rib fractures, reflex sympathetic dystrophy, migraines and other pain syndromes, it provides solely interventional service, with blocks given for the conditions present in each patient. No narcotics are prescribed.

Pain care providers are Drs. Nitin Chhabra, Daniel Chang and Michael G. Gibson. For more information, call 256-267-0723.

Coosa Valley Medical Center and Nix Fam-

ily Medicine have welcomed Nancy Hill, FNP-BC, board certified family nurse practitioner, noted for her wealth of experience in healthcare and her long-standing relationship with CVMC. Nix Family Medicine is at 33733 Highway 280 in Childersburg. Appointments may be scheduled by calling 256-378-3301.

CVMC's annual Seafood Scramble Golf Tournament is scheduled for October 26, with a registration deadline of October 21. Available tee times are 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. A number of sponsorship levels are available for the benefit event. For more information, call 256-401-4070 or email jala.hayes@cvhealth.net.

Patients are the priority at ATI Physical Therapy

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Special to The Daily Home

ATI Physical Therapy continues to expand its expertise and physical therapy treatments across the state with their most recent location in Pell City.

With more than 20 years in practice and with locations across the country, ATI's focus to keep patients the priority has led to being well known for their home rehabilitation, addressing chronic pain, aiding recovery from an injury or surgery, evaluations, injury prevention. "You name it, we treat it," said Chris Baker, clinic director and physical therapist.

Opening the new location has made it convenient for those in the area as well as become a great help to doctors near and far. "When deciding to open this location we saw an opportunity to provide a good service that contributes to the community and will help to make the community healthier."

A vast part of physical therapy includes hands on instruction or guidance, and that continues to be the normal despite Covid. "Covid has not affected

any techniques or forms of treatments. We still practice the same, the only difference is a face mask and more sanitizing. ATI as a whole is a big company and we're following all guidelines of the CDC to ensure the safety of everyone as well as providing quality service and care. So I think we are doing quite well with adapting and have not missed a beat."

According to Baker, Covid has opened the door to provide another way to be treated to current and prospective patients. Free screenings were already offered, but the service of telehealth is now an option for patients. "Telehealth helps to provide the option of online physical therapy evaluations and treatment to those who might not want to or can not do in-clinic physical therapy. For patients who are still hesitant to be among people but want to do in-clinic physical therapy, we offer an isolated time when the facility isn't as busy. It has not been hard for us, it is just about adjusting and making the changes needed to adapt."

With individuals working from home more and virtual learning becoming normalized, and any job or activity that includes long periods of sitting, some

issues can occur down the road, said Baker. He recommends to try to stay as active as possible, develop a good diet, and physical therapy as preventative measures for possible injuries.

"Physical therapy is not just treating one single part of the body. Most injuries are linked to other things that could be the cause of the occurring pain, so we make it our goal to give every patient a detailed treatment catered to their recovery. We also try to make the environment as comfortable and fun as possible. We have people that have not done certain exercises in years, so it is only right to make sure they can have a good time as well."

Baker adds to not continue to put off getting checked out. If the pros and cons are weighed and the pain still has not gotten any better, it is most likely time to come in. The free screenings can deter-

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Feeling healthier and happier every day

Talladega friends and business partners embark on life-changing journey

BY MICHELLE LOVE

Special to The Daily Home



Alyson Carden Mitchell and Bliss Howard

Alyson Carden Mitchell and Bliss Hubbard have a rare friendship that is hard to rival. There is little to nothing they do not tackle together.

The two friends have owned and operated the Blush and Bashful fashion boutique in Talladega together since August 2019. In addition to sharing a business, both ladies made the decision to begin a healthier lifestyle together. And they did it in a big way.

Both Hubbard and Mitchell decided they would undergo weight loss surgery to assist them in their fight for a healthier lifestyle. After years of trying to lose weight solely through diet and exercise, the two friends realized they needed to make a change that would be permanent. For Mitchell, the decision came down to a moment in her front yard in October of 2018.

"I was out in the yard playing with my then- 14-month old and he took out running down the driveway and I couldn't keep up with him. At the time I weighed about 300 pounds and it bothered me that I couldn't keep up with my child," said Mitchell.

She immediately texted Hubbard and inquired about a coworker friend who had had a vertical sleeve gastrectomy. Mitchell and Hubbard went to a seminar to hear Dr. Cameron Askew, a bariatric surgeon, explain the details of weight loss surgery and what people can expect. Hubbard said she was not completely sold on the idea, but decided to make the commitment shortly after the seminar.

"It was Black Friday, and I had to park my car kind of far away from the store," said Hubbard. "By the time I reached the entrance I was so out of breath and I thought, 'This isn't right.'"

Hubbard had her surgery February 1, 2019 while Mitchell had to wait due to guidelines in her insurance policy. Originally opting for the vertical sleeve gastrectomy, Mitchell's doctor advised her to have a gastric bypass instead due to her medical history. Mitchell's surgery was June 7, 2019, and both women say their surgery was the best decision they could have ever made.

Since their surgeries, Mitchell and Hubbard have lost 116 and 70



Bliss Howard with her family (left) and Alyson Carden Mitchell with her family, before the friends and business partners began their journey toward a healthier lifestyle.



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Alyson Carden Mitchell with husband Tim and sons Grey and Rhett

pounds, respectively. Both women feel healthier and happier every day, but that happiness comes with hard work. "It is a lifestyle change. I'm on a diet for the rest of my life and that's the way you have to look at it," said Mitchell. "You have to get your protein in and by the time you get your protein in you're not really hungry anymore. I just tell people I'm on a low carb diet forever."

"I'm still hungry but I just know I can't eat [like I used to] or I'll be sick if I do," said Hubbard.

Mitchell and Hubbard both agree the worst part of the whole experience was the first four to seven weeks. "For the first month I didn't feel very great. I was so tired but I was glad to have that experience so I could prepare [Alyson] because I didn't have anyone prepare me for that. I was glad

I could be there to prepare her," said Hubbard.

"It was very hard. The first seven weeks were extremely hard for me," said Mitchell. "I'm not going to lie, I got depressed. You don't feel good, you don't have energy, you see everybody eating and you know you can't. It's very mental as well as physical. You don't understand the toll it takes on your mental health until you're actually in that situation."

Another challenge is encountering people who don't understand either woman's journey towards making the decision of surgery. According to Hubbard, people look at surgery as an "easy way out," and she is quick to remind them it is anything but easy.

"People who have never dealt with weight

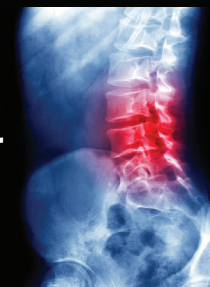
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issues don't understand," said Hubbard. "The goal was never to be skinny. The goal was to be healthy. If I didn't lose any more weight than I've lost already I would be just fine because I feel healthier."

"A lot of people think, 'Well, you have this and it's the easy way out. You cheated at weight loss,' and I always say, 'I didn't cheat at weight loss - I cheated death.' I was morbidly obese and I could not be the mother to my kids that they needed. I couldn't even chase a 14-month-old down a driveway. I took control and did something about it," said Mitchell.

Mitchell added that people shouldn't judge them for their decision because it was made with very personal intentions. "I did it to make myself feel better about myself, yes, but at the end of the day I did it to be a better mother to my children. It's not fair that their mom couldn't keep up with them. It's not fair that my seven-year-old wanted his

mama to go out to the park and play baseball with him and I couldn't do it," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said she and Hubbard have been walking together and trying to maintain physical activity. They call it their "girl time."

"We tried to pick up jogging, but it's just not for us," Mitchell laughs. They call each other their "accountability buddies," working together to keep each other on the right track to maintain their weight loss. They both feel like they've added years back to their lives.

Running their business has even proved easier under their lifestyle change. Their boutique, Blush and Bashful, sells unique fashion and jewelry and represents both Hubbard and Mitchell's style. The name may strike a chord to those familiar with the film "Steel Magnolias," however Hubbard said she picked the name on a whim.



Bliss Howard with son Easton, daughter Charlee Tayt and husband Lance



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"I found this swatch that said, 'Blush and Bashful' and I thought, 'Oh, that's so cute. I'm kind of quiet and shy so maybe that would work.' So, I sent it to Alyson and she loved it and she kept saying, 'I love that it's so great. It's just like the movie!' And I went, 'What movie?'"

It's a funny story they love to tell now and it's just one of the many stories that highlights the duo's chemistry and friendship strength.

Through everything, both women credit each other for being the supporting drive for the other during the journey. "If it weren't for Bliss I don't think I would have made it. I texted her every day and asked her, 'Did you go through this? Did you experience that?' She was my person through this. We were close before but we're even closer now because of it. I don't think I could have done it without her," said Mitchell.

"Having Alyson on this journey with me has been a true blessing. We keep each other motivated. We've laughed, we've cried. We've celebrated each other's accomplishments together and we've encouraged each other when we've fallen short. There is no one else I would have rather done this journey with," said Hubbard.

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'I'm Just Al,' says Pell City dentist

Aultman Dental believes in building relationships with patients



Al

BY MICHELLE LOVE

Special to The Daily Home

Al Aultman loves helping his community through dentistry. "My favorite part of being a dentist is getting to meet people and work with people. Dentistry is only as fun as you make it and meeting people makes it fun."

His practice, Aultman Dental, has merged with Dr. Robert DeShazer's practice in Pell City, which will allow

Aultman to treat even more patients. Aultman is no stranger to the Pell City community. He started at Aultman Dental in 2015 when it was originally run by DeShazer. Aultman bought the practice from DeShazer in 2018 and since then he has spent his time treating and getting to know the people who walk through his door.

Personability is vital in times like this, according to Aultman. "Dentistry is in a weird situation right now where

a lot of people are shifting to corporate dentistry. We really strive to make sure our patients are happy and that they have a really great experience without having to worry about the treatment or the quality of care. We just want them to have a great experience and I feel I can accomplish that better in one location versus a person trying to have over 100 locations."

With dentistry moving more towards a corporate feel, patients



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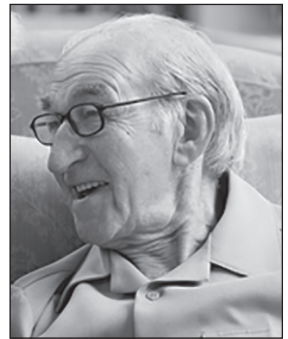


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need to feel that personal relationship now more than ever. "Dentistry is becoming a commodity. It's not health care anymore. That's why it's so important to build relationships with these people. I don't let people call me 'Dr. Aultman.' I'm just Al."

It seems Aultman Dental does not have to worry about competing with corporate dentistry as their average new patient intake per month continues to rise. "If you go to the American Dental Association and look at the average of new patients per month, it's around like 30. We're way above that number. The reason is because we care about the people who have never sought out dental care before. That's why

we accept all forms of insurance [except Medicaid]. It's not about the money for us. It's about giving access to dental care."

Aultman says the only reason he wants to increase the size of his practice is to be able to accommodate the number of patients they've been treating. Word of mouth about Aultman's personable nature within his practice has spread throughout the community and Aultman Dental has definitely been embraced by its patients and those who respect Aultman's work.

"Do we have a tight knit community? Yes. I feel as if the reason we have such a tight knit community

is because the team we have on at Aultman Dental are absolutely amazing at what they do. They create an environment in which the people that visit us feel and know they are important. There's a big difference in feeling that you're important and knowing that you're important."

Choosing to stay in Pell City was a decision Aultman attributes to a combination of faith and loyalty to his parents. His parents bought a house near the lake in 2007 and he felt it was the best choice to move closer to them so he could be there for them when they needed him. "I knew I wanted to be there for them and I knew when I started my own family they

Word of mouth about Aultman's personable nature within his practice has spread throughout the community and Aultman Dental has definitely been embraced by its patients and those who respect Aultman's work.

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Planning and "a lot of faith" helped bring everything together. "We looked into it and saw there was a huge population of people that were being untreated for dental care. We found out there is a Honda plant near Pell City, and it's super underserved with the huge number of people up there, and so we decided to model our hours around the Honda plant to help a lot of those people."

"There are the things you want to do and the things you know you should do," says Aultman. "Faith is in between those things. You can take a little bit of luck, a little bit of faith, and a lot of knowledge and then go out into the world and hopefully do something great with that."



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Don't ignore signs of heart problems because of fear of pandemic

Brookwood Baptist Health, Citizens Baptist Medical Center encourage seeking treatment

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Special to The Daily Home

The pandemic of the coronavirus is not a reason to ignore the warning signs of health complications or discontinue routine preventative care. According to a Harris Poll, the American Heart Association found that 1 in 4 adults that experience a heart attack or stroke would rather stay at home than risk getting infected with the coronavirus at the hospital. To stay at home is not always the best solution when health concerns are evident.

"In the beginning of the outbreak, we canceled all elective procedures and focused only on emergencies," said Dr. Saema Mirza, experienced gener-

al and preventative cardiologist with Cardiovascular Associates, an affiliated practice of Brookwood Baptist Health.

"Anything that could wait was postponed because we wanted to be sure there was enough room for Covid patients. With things opening back, we have resumed more procedures to help patients, but are still adhering to CDC guidelines. Cardiac patients have a higher risk of severe illness and complications if they contract covid-19. However, that does not mean that patients experiencing cardiac symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of

breath, swelling and heart racing should be afraid to seek medical attention. Symptoms should not be ignored, especially patients who have cardiac problems."



Dr. Saema Mirza

Mirza offers the services of general and preventive cardiology, echocardiography, women's cardiology, ischemic heart disease, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, and a list of other cardiac specialties. Practicing cardiology since 2004, Mirza has seen her fair share of heart problems, but does not know everything when it comes to the coronavirus.

"From the data that we have so far, it appears that the virus makes certain changes in the blood that increases the chances of blood clots. These clots can occur in different blood vessels in the body and can lead to serious complications. A blood clot in the heart or lungs can present symptoms such as chest pains, shortness of breath, and could represent a heart attack or clot in the lung, known as

pulmonary embolism. The virus can also infect the heart and cause inflammation of the heart muscle leading to congestive heart failure and inflammation of the lining of the heart, known as pericarditis. These mentioned conditions can also result in shortness of breath and sharp chest pains."

According to Mirza, she has had patients who

admitted that they were experiencing cardiac symptoms, but remained at home and waited until a scheduled visit which is dangerous. Mirza believes that despite the pandemic, there are still other prominent diseases and conditions that need to be addressed. Staying at home instead of going to the emergency room could make a situation worse.

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having a healthy heart is an essential that is overlooked by many even before the pandemic. Every complication or abnormal sign is not an indication of the virus, a great bit of society is experiencing the pandemic of poor eating habits and dieting.

"We live in a world full of marketing strategies that make us believe that certain things are healthy for us when they are not. Added sugar has become a big culprit and it is so easily disguised that it is overlooked, but that is hurting us as a society and has led to obesity and related issues. To not exercise regularly, eating processed foods, consuming greasy fried foods, big portion sizes, not taking prescribed medicines as instructed, smoking, being exposed to secondhand smoke, added sugars and salt, heavy alcohol consumption are some of the factors that contribute to increased risk of heart disease and could lead to a

heart attack or stroke."

Mirza believes in the phrase of you are what you eat as being true. To eat less red meat and more greens and less sugary beverages is a start to a better diet that could prevent clogged arteries, obesity, heart attack, stroke, and more. Often, there are cardiac patients that are seen repeatedly in the emergency room and have multiple procedures because they did not make the appropriate lifestyle changes recommended by their cardiologist, or because they were not compliant to their medications. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to open arteries back up every time, Mirza added.

The best way to stay ahead of preventing complications is to continue routine check ups and evaluations, and if anything new that arises, it should be brought to the attention of your physician. In certain

situations, if patients think they are having a heart attack or symptoms of a stroke, it is advisable to call 911 and go to the emergency room. Mirza suggests that it is always better to be safe than sorry.

"Not everyone makes it to the emergency room, so do not ignore symptoms regardless of Covid-19, do not ignore your heart. Proper dieting and exercising is extremely important, and if hesitant to go to an emergency room or doctor's office, try telemedicine where an evaluation can be done online or over the phone. As doctors and nurses, we are trying to make a difference and offer awareness of services and the reminder that we are here."

Do not let the pandemic cloud your judgment to get the care that is needed.

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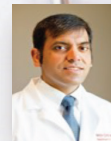
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According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 8.8 million young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 report having a mental illness.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 8.8 million young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 report having a mental illness. Among those who reported such illnesses, 42 percent indicated their illness went untreated. Substance abuse disorders also are more common among 18- to 25-year-olds than many people may think. SAMHSA notes that 5.1 million young adults report having a substance abuse disorder, and 87 percent of those with disorders are not treated. More information about mental health and substance abuse, including how to find treatment, is available at www.samhsa.gov.



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Presbyterian Oaks helps seniors maintain independent lifestyle

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Special to The Daily Home

Presbyterian Oaks provides seniors in Talladega the opportunity to fulfill the desire to live independently. Most seniors want to maintain the status of independence for as long as possible, and Presbyterian Oaks makes that possible.

"In our communities we give seniors the chance to live on their own and be independent, but offer linked services that assists in the pursuit of being independent. The low cost of housing and utilities is very attractive for most seniors when it comes to our properties. Instead of trying to survive with the income they have or living alone, this environment helps them to be sociable and is affordable, said Jennifer Dobson, community manager of Presbyterian Oaks I.

With three communities and 83 apartments, this independent living community provides the services of meals, assistance with residents' utility payments, phones, home care services, assistance with medical prescriptions, flu shots and more. Unlike a nursing home, there are no

"It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver."

Mahatma Gandhi

Cindy Pennington



skilled care services, but there is a service coordinator that helps all residents with transportation, health insurance and other essentials.

"Aside from everyday needs, our service coordinator also provides educational programs, cooking classes, and different activities to keep residents socializing. However, with Covid it has been very challenging for both the residents and management. There have been specific protocols enforced to ensure safety for everyone. We make sure residents are wearing a mask when in the common area, and only one person at a time is allowed in the laundry facility. It is bad enough that a lot of residents are not visited so we make it our goal to try to continue to interact with them and provide them things to keep busy and to not feel alone."

COVID-19 has changed the way residents socialize, but business is still good and the waitlist remains open as prospective residents continue to apply. To be considered for a unit when one comes available, prospects must be at least 62 years of age and meet the HUD approved tenant selection cri-

teria. However, if income exceeds the income limit, failure to pass the background check, poor landlord, or credit could impact being approved.

"The communities are a great asset to Talla-

dega, families, and seniors seeking a place to call home. We have some residents that have been here for twenty plus years so it is highly encouraged for interested seniors to tour the communities. I

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believe once they see the beautiful apartments with fully equipped kitchens, raised vegetable garden for the residents' use, beautiful gazebos and patios, they will be convinced it will be a great place to live."

Dobson believes that Presbyterian Oaks provides affordable housing to the senior population of Talladega and the surrounding areas, as well as creates an environment where seniors can make friends and enjoy a sense of family, but while remaining independent.

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Curing sleep disorders in a bed-and-breakfast setting

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Special To The Daily Home

Are you getting enough sleep? Do you still feel tired even after a reasonable amount of sleep? Do you feel you have become more irritable than usual? Are you tired of being tired?

Southern Sleep Diagnostics is here to help. An accredited full service sleep disorder center in Anniston that specializes in all sleep disorders from insomnia, sleep apnea, snoring, restless legs syndrome, narcolepsy, to parasomnias, the private sleep center is located in the historic Summerlin House, which has been remodeled to provide patients their own rooms, and a great alternative to hospital based outpatient testing.

"The decision to open the sleep center was

a much needed opportunity. There is only one hospital that offers a sleep lab in the county that is set to cover the entire county. This has led to long waits, and patients not possibly being seen. This facility allows more patients to be seen, offers additional services in a convenient location, provides affordable payment options and it is a great help to the doctors in the area," said Jerry Crocker, Technical Director.

Crocker believes that those who have a sleep-

ing partner can voice when their mate is snoring, constantly tossing and turning, and waking up in the middle of the night is becoming a problem, but for those that sleep alone it is different. However, there are still signs that indicate sleep diagnosis may be needed. For example, fatigue, insomnia, frequent headaches, abnormal blood pressure, and dry mouth are indications that your health might be at risk.

"There are longer lists of telltell signs for either the person that sleeps alone and the one that does not, but sleep apnea is very common. In a lot of cases, it comes with age or maybe even poor dieting, but for me sleep apnea is like high blood pressure. High blood pressure is not seen nor hurts, but it puts a strain on your organs just the same as sleep apnea. Just because you do not see it or it is not hurting does not mean it is not taking place. Every time someone stops breathing

in their sleep, their heart has to work twice as hard when it is supposed to be resting. This pause in breathing increases risk of heart attack or stroke."

According to Crocker, though sleep duration is individual, it is not about the length of sleep a person gets, but the quality of sleep. One should feel rested and if a good night's sleep has been had, opposed to sleeping for eight hours, but still feeling exhausted.

"Sleep hygiene is very important. This is based on the environment and could possibly impact abnormal sleep patterns. A lot of people live in their beds, and that can throw a lot off. If you are having trouble sleeping, get out of bed instead of staying in bed and trying to force it, try turning the lights off, and reduce caffeine intake to improve better sleep hygiene."

Southern Sleep Diagnostics has a dedicated and professional staff of Dr. McLeod,



Technical Director Jerry Crocker



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board certified in sleep medicine, and registered sleep technologists ready to help patients reach their goals, whether it is losing weight, reducing the amount of medicines consumed, or getting enough sleep to feel rested. Crocker said that patients have expressed feeling like a different person after treatments, and treatments have even been said to have saved marriages.

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Did you know?

Many people plan to retire by a certain age, but few may actually still be working at their targeted retirement age.

Many people plan to retire by a certain age, but few may actually still be working at their targeted retirement age. In the United States, the age at which working Americans expect to retire has risen to 66. But a Gallup poll showed that most don't stay on the job that long, instead retiring when they're about 60 or 61. In addition, according to a 2018 Employee Benefit Research Institute survey, 48 percent of workers wanted to retire after age 65, but only 19 percent of retirees stayed on the job that long. The reasons vary, but one positive outcome is having enough money to live comfortably during retirement. Still, early retirement largely involves unexpected scenarios. These may include poor health, having to care for an aging parent, downsizing, new skills required for the job, or other work-related reasons.

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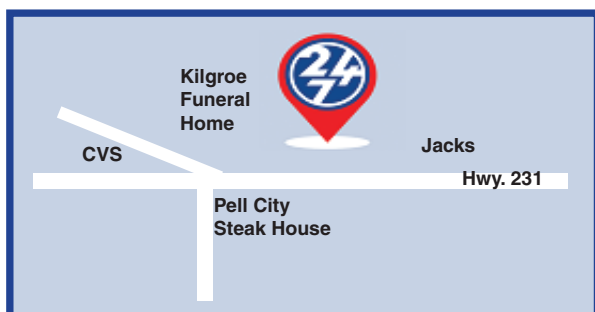
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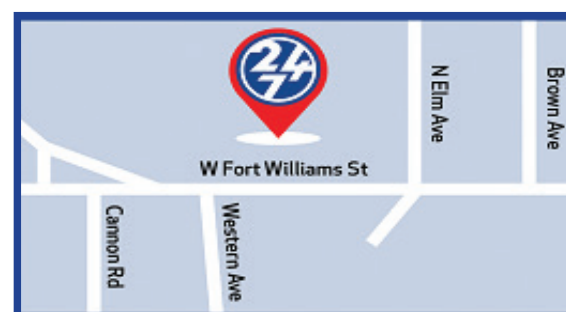
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St. Vincent's St. Clair uses telemedicine to promote patient safety during pandemic

BY TAYLOR MITCHELL

tmitchell@dailyhome.com

In a year plagued with concerns about COVID-19, St. Vincent's St. Clair has been working to address those concerns by expanding its telehealth services.

"We've been working on expanding telemedicine for awhile," hospital administrator Lisa Nichols said.

Nichols added that the efforts to expand the hospital's remote service options were a priority even before the pandemic, but the ensuing need to socially distance and stay at home has made it a greater necessity. With that in mind, the Pell City

hospital has been expanding the programs that have telehealth options.

Nichols said one part of this has been allowing doctors to work remotely as well, instead of just having the patient be the one at home.

She gives the example of a situation in which a patient has come to the hospital, but the doctor who would normally see that patient is not physically at the hospital at that time. The telehealth service the hospital provides will allow that doctor to meet with the patient virtually and make the determination if the patient needs to be admitted to the hospital or can return home and be treated by outpatient

means.

Nichols said this allows for a cut in wait times in such situations.

On top of these efforts to expand telehealth, St. Vincent's St. Clair has also made several other changes to deal with the pandemic, as much of the rest of the world has.

According to the administrator, one big part of that is screening patients before they enter the hospital. This added step involves having employees posted at each entrance to take a person's temperature and ask a few questions before allowing them to enter the premises.

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Nichols said the hospital is also not allowing visitors at this time, to reduce the number of people in the hospital. Children or elderly patients are allowed to have one caregiver with them, but beyond that it is limited to special cases.

"We are working to make sure everyone is as safe as possible," Nichols said, adding that through all of their precautions, safety remains the goal.

She added that one special case would be that of a patient being at the end of their life. She said in these

situations the family is, of course, allowed the visit, but long gone are the rooms packed with people. "We allow two visitors at a time for end-of-life," Nichols said. Even these visitors need to be screened, however, and if a visitor screened positively, they would not be allowed to enter the hospital.

Nichols said St. Vincent's St. Clair has also increased sanitation, beyond even the already sterile landscape of a hospital. Commonly touched surfaces, such as doors, are being cleaned more frequently.

She said the hospital has even acquired a sprayer to sanitize chairs around the facility.

In non-pandemic related matters, Nichols said the hospital continues to expand the programs it offers, which has been a priority over the last couple years. She said the hospital has added a pulmonologist and a urologist working one day a week at the outpatient clinic, and these doctors also have credentials at the hospital.

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It can be easy to forget to apply sunscreen when a sunny summer day beckons you to get outside and enjoy the great outdoors. But forgetting to apply sunscreen before spending time in the sun is a potentially deadly mistake. According to the World Health Organization, one in every three cancers diagnosed is a skin cancer. In addition, the Skin Cancer Foundation notes that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70. The discomfort of a sunburn might seem relatively harmless, but the relationship between sunburns and cancer risk is significant. The SCF notes that having five or more sunburns doubles your risk for melanoma, a type of skin cancer that often and quickly spreads to nearby lymph nodes. Perhaps that's one reason why the American Cancer Society reports that the number of new invasive melanoma cases diagnosed annually increased by 47 percent between 2010 and 2020. Avoiding sunburn by applying and reapplying a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 should be a priority for anyone spending time outdoors.

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Dr. Anthony Tropeano of Tropeano Orthopedics & Sports Medicine. The practice is at 209 W Spring Street #301 in Sylacauga.

Tropeano Orthopedics helps Sylacauga stay active

BY VALLEAN JACKSON

Special To The Daily Home

Tropeano Orthopedics & Sports Medicine has been an advocate to the community for almost 10 years, specializing in arthroscopy, reconstruction of the hip, shoulder, knee, elbow, fractures, and all orthopaedic related procedures and treatments excluding anything back or neck affiliated.

Dr. Anthony Tropeano, board certified orthopaedic surgeon, and wife Danielle Tropeano, board certified nurse practitioner, have been in the Sylacauga location since 2011. "My husband has been an orthopaedic surgeon for 20-plus years," Danielle said, "and we work well together to achieve better health for our

patients. The choice of having the practice in a small community was a great fit because he aspired to create relationships that could be more personable than just a standard doctor's visit in a large city. As well as be able to know patients and their families, and not just their chart."

Tropeano Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine is a private practice that provides quality orthopaedic coverage to Talladega County that is convenient, offers minimal wait times and accepts all forms of insurance, including tricore and worker's compensation. "It is not common you come across a practice that accepts so many forms of insurance, but we believe that in order to effectively take care of the community you have to support what is in the community."

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As a business, Covid has made it challenging with orthopaedics. "One of the biggest encounters is having to restrict visits to where only the patient can come. We are adhering to CDC guidelines, being strict on cleaning and requiring patients to wear a mask throughout visits. Though we offer telemedicine, where appointments can be done by phone or online, it is challenging to give proper assessments without being able to physically evaluate those who cannot come into the office," said Tropeano.

COVID-19 has created a slight decline in business when it comes to elective surgeries according to Tropeano because patients fear being alone or possible risk of catching Covid, but feels decrease in elective surgeries nor the changes in sports will

not affect the business.

"Things are different now, but we do not base our practice off of sports or even injuries honestly. We do not want anyone to injure themselves, but injuries do happen and they are not always preventative. Therefore we are here to reconstruct and provide quality and prompt treatments."

Tropeano advises residents who might want to come in but feel they can handle the issues themselves or fear coming in to take advantage of the telemedicine option, as well to keep the joint moving, maintain a good weight, keep exercising and take a good multivitamin and vitamin D.

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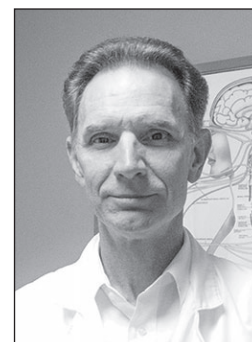
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