

The Hospital of Choice FOR SENIORS

In order to address the unique needs of our region's growing senior population, Cabell Huntington Hospital, in collaboration with the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine and the Hanshaw Geriatric Center, has developed a comprehensive program geared toward the elderly.

By Katherine Reasons-Pyles • Photos by Rick Lee

Charlotte Carter, 76, of Chesapeake, Ohio, is a six-year cancer survivor. Year after year, she devotes every ounce of her spare time, energy and resources to the Relay for Life, an international fundraising movement for the American Cancer Society. Thanks to the love and support of her family, Charlotte can happily say she has returned – in full force – to doing the things she loves. However, when expressing her gratitude for the support that carried her through some of her roughest days, there is always one other person Charlotte credits – her physician and friend, Dr. Shirley Neitch.

Shirley M. Neitch, MD, FACP, is chief of geriatrics at the Department of Internal Medicine at the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine and director of the Hanshaw Geriatric Center, located one block from Cabell Huntington Hospital in the Erma Ora Byrd Clinical Center. Dr. Neitch has been at Marshall University since 1983 and has been caring for senior patients at the Hanshaw

Geriatric Center since it first opened. Today, Dr. Neitch is one of three geriatricians at the Hanshaw Geriatric Center whose main focus is to provide both general and specialized care for the Tri-State's senior population. When she is not coordinating care for seniors and directing the services and programs of the Hanshaw Geriatric Center, Dr. Neitch is seeing patients like Charlotte as their primary care physician.

"Dr. Neitch has cared for me for probably nine or 10 years," Charlotte said. "She's such a kind and caring person, and several members of my family are patients of hers, too. She is very thorough and takes time to visit with all of us, and I'm sure she does the same with all of her patients."

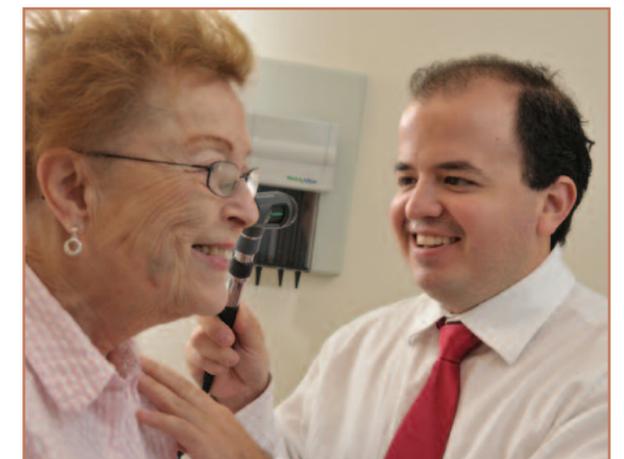
In fact, it's taking time to visit with patients that sets the entire Hanshaw Geriatric Center – and all other senior services affiliated with Cabell Huntington Hospital – apart from other medical centers.



The Erma Ora Byrd Clinical Center, located one block from Cabell Huntington's main campus, houses the Hanshaw Geriatric Center as well as Marshall's Diabetes Center. The four-story building, developed as part of Marshall University's Robert C. Byrd Center for Rural Health, contains three floors dedicated solely to patient care, providing space for 75,000 patient visits a year.

"At the Hanshaw Geriatric Center, we allot more time with each of our patients than at other facilities," said Lynne J. Goebel, MD, FACP, professor of internal medicine and geriatrics at Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine and geriatrician at the Hanshaw Geriatric Center. "Geriatric patients tend to be more complicated and have multiple problems, and I think the seniors appreciate that we are able to spend more time with them."

Dr. Goebel sees patients at the Hanshaw Geriatric Center on a regular basis and has been caring for seniors for more than 20 years. She has been at Marshall University's Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine since 1993, treating elderly patients throughout the entire Tri-State region. Dr. Goebel said one common misconception is that the geriatric center is for the frail elderly and other patients in need of extensive, highly specialized treatment and care. "We see all elderly patients, from the healthy who come once a year for a checkup to the patients who are having a lot of problems and need more care," she said. "During our well checkups, we make sure our patients are up-to-date on all of their vaccines



Guillermo Madero, MD, examines a patient at the Hanshaw Geriatric Center. Dr. Madero and the Hanshaw Center's other geriatricians provide both general and specialized care to the Tri-State's growing elderly population. Dr. Madero said the center's support staff, which includes a social worker and psychologist, helps patients feel at ease.

and other health maintenance issues like mammograms and colonoscopies.”

In addition to caring for their own patients, the Hanshaw geriatricians also work with doctors and patients throughout the region who request a one-time consultation. One-time consultations are especially helpful for patients who live outside of the Huntington area or who do not feel ready to receive care from a geriatrician on a regular basis. Many patients also take advantage of the Hanshaw Geriatric Center’s social services.

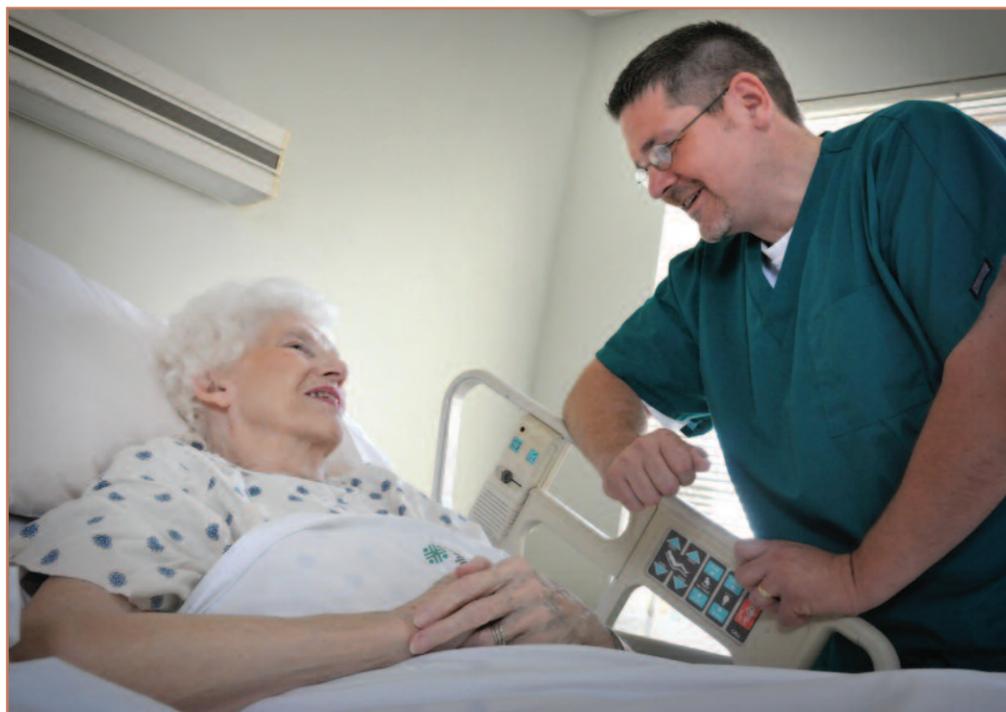
“Julia Morgan, our social worker, works with our patients who need some help in their homes,” Dr. Goebel said. “She speaks to both our patients and their families and can assist with a multitude of things, including finding ways for patients to get medications that they may not be able to afford and finding home health aides or someone to help with cleaning, cooking and meal preparation. She is a great resource for seniors in the area.”

Dr. Neitch said she remembers when senior care was something offered very rarely.

“We received our first grant for the Hanshaw Geriatric Center in 1988 from the Huntington Foundation,” she said. “At that point in time, we had two physicians – myself and Dr. Joye Martin. But over the years I’ve seen geriatrics come to a certain level of prominence. Geriatrics has become a board specialty, and a lot more people have the opportunity to become specially trained. There is a considerable difference in the level of care provided to seniors today.”

One such doctor who has received special training in senior care is Guillermo Madero, MD, who joined the Hanshaw Geriatric Center in August. Dr. Madero is fellowship-trained in geriatrics and is an assistant professor of geriatric medicine at the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine. He, like Drs. Neitch and Goebel, also sees patients on a regular basis.

“What I find so exciting is that it’s a growing science,” Dr. Madero said. “There is an urgent need in the United States for geriatricians because of the growing population of seniors; and I think within the next couple of decades,



Top: The staff of the Hanshaw Geriatric Center includes (from left) Guillermo Madero, MD, Shirley Neitch, MD, Mary Thompson, LPN, geriatric nurse, Angela Brammel, PA-C, physician assistant, and Lynne Goebel, MD. Bottom: Cabell Huntington Hospital nurse Mike Fraley, RN, spends time with an elderly patient. Senior patients at Cabell Huntington Hospital have access to an array of services geared toward the elderly, including the hospital’s Balance Center, Pain Management Center, Joint Replacement Center, Dialysis Center and Diabetes Center.

we’ll be able to offer even more treatments and therapies to our patients. It’s exciting because we are able to make a big difference in their lives.”

Dr. Madero said the support staff of the Hanshaw Geriatric Center, which includes geriatric psychiatrist Steven Cody, Ph.D., as well as the plethora of specialized services and treatments available just one block from the center at Cabell Huntington Hospital, is what makes senior care at the Hanshaw Geriatric Center so special.

“There is a great team environment at the Hanshaw Center, which you can feel,” he said. “We have a lot of

support from our staff, and we can work with many specialists at Cabell Huntington Hospital for our patients who need special care. We have it all just a couple of steps from our clinic. Sometimes transportation is difficult for seniors, so the proximity to Cabell Huntington’s other services is a great advantage for them.”

“Patients can have blood work and bone density tests done right here, thanks to our connection with Cabell Huntington Hospital,” Dr. Goebel added, “and Cabell Huntington Hospital does a great job at communicating test results back to us. The results appear on our electronic record system in a timely manner, allowing us to communicate those results to our patients efficiently and easily.”

In addition to having access to the wide range of experienced specialists at Cabell Huntington Hospital and to clinics with services specially geared toward the elderly – like the Cabell Huntington Hospital Balance Center, Urinary Incontinence Clinic, Pain Management Center, Joint Replacement Center, Dialysis Center and Diabetes Center – the Seniors Services Department at Cabell Huntington Hospital offers countless other benefits to the elderly. A little-known fact is that many of the programs are free, either through Medicare or through initiatives funded by the hospital.

One such program is SeniorWise, a free membership program for seniors with benefits that include free or reduced-rate health screenings, discounts in the Cabell Huntington Hospital cafeteria and gift shop and free educational seminars about senior-sensitive health concerns.

Charles McCormick, MD, is director of the Senior Services program at Cabell Huntington Hospital. He often visits patients in nursing homes around the area, but he also works to improve the quality of life for the healthy, active seniors who participate in Cabell Huntington’s extensive Senior Services program.

The Senior Services Department at Cabell Huntington Hospital, the Hanshaw Geriatric Center and the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine have brought Cabell Huntington Hospital to the forefront of



Above: Shirley Neitch, MD, has been caring for the elderly of the Tri-State since the Hanshaw Geriatric Center opened in 1988. Dr. Neitch has made it her special focus to care for patients suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias; she conducts seminars throughout the year to educate Alzheimer’s patients and their caregivers.

senior care. Cabell Huntington Hospital has proven itself to be the hospital of choice for seniors in the Tri-State – the healthy, the frail, those in need of extensive medical care and those who just want a little friendly advice from someone who understands the special needs of the elderly.

“I wouldn’t think of changing physicians unless Dr. Neitch left the practice,” said Charlotte, when asked about her strong connection to the services provided by the Hanshaw Geriatric Center. “We all just think a lot of her, as a person and as a physician.”

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