

# Nearly 50 years of healthcare



Photo by Shelby McCormick

By Kathy McClellan

Almost 50 years ago Wilbarger General Hospital opened its doors with the vision of being THE place residents of Vernon, Wilbarger County and the surrounding area would turn to when they were in need of health care services. Since 1969, WGH has worked extremely hard to be that GO-TO health care facility for residents and, in the ever-changing world of health care that work continues today.

"In 2016 we began traveling down a road of change and improvement, and so far that has been a very positive journey," said hospital Chief Executive Officer Claudia A. Eisenmann. "The first and most important priority for everyone at WGH is service. We want our patients and their families to be comfortable when they come to us.

"We are gaining the trust and confidence of the residents of Vernon and the surrounding area as we help them deal with acute or chronic health issues, as well as help them with disease prevention and wellness."

Residents are also gaining confidence in the hospital because they know if there is a health care need in this area, Wilbarger General is going to do its very best to fill that need.

Prior to 2017 there was an urgent need in the Vernon area for health care providers. To help fill that need, the hospital formed the Wilbarger General Medical Group and brought a family practice physician, an internal medicine specialist, a general surgeon and four nurse practitioners on board to provide care for area residents.

"Recruiting health care providers was the top priority for us in 2016, and we were able to bring seven very knowledgeable and qualified health care professionals in to join us," Eisenmann said. "We are very happy and pleased to have them on board with us, but with the various health and wellness needs within our community continuing to grow, we are still working to recruit more healthcare professionals."

To provide the best health care possible, Wilbarger General also implemented

a Hospitalist program in 2016. Hospitalist programs provide patients who are hospitalized with attending physicians who work exclusively or primarily in the inpatient setting. In other words, hospitalists are doctors who are specialists in in-patient care. This means a doctor is in the hospital and ready to devote his, or her, time and energy to make sure patients have immediate and focused medical attention.

"If someone goes to an appointment with their primary care physician and the physician determines they need to be admitted to the hospital, the physician will send them to the hospital to be admitted. Once the patient is admitted the Hospitalist physician will oversee the care of the patient," Eisenmann explained. "The great thing about this model is that it gives patients and families immediate access to the attending physician to answer questions, explain the reason for certain tests and treatments, and to devote as much time as needed to address specific patient needs."

When residents do require a stay in the hospital, they will find themselves on the 3rd Floor Medical/Surgical Unit which features 20 large, private rooms all with new paint schemes, lighting, decor and flat screen TVs, along with the latest nurse's call system and computers in each room as the hospital now uses an electronic medical records system.

For patients who may need constant nursing supervision, the hospital also has a 4-bed monitored unit.

New observation deck/waiting room areas are also located on either end of the new floor and provide plenty of natural lighting.

"We are constantly working to make sure we can provide the best health care possible because it is important to provide medical care as close to a patient's home as possible. Studies clearly indicate that when patients are hospitalized in a place where it is convenient for frequent and supportive visits with friends and family, healing time is reduced, anxiety is minimized, and clinical outcomes are enhanced," Eisenmann stated.

The 3rd Floor also has a Hospice Room that is dedicated to Hospice patients.

Most of the hospital equipment has been removed and the room décor provides a homey, warm atmosphere. The room is also located away from the nurse's station and elevator to give families more privacy.

When faced with a medical emergency, residents can turn to Wilbarger General's Emergency Department, which is a Level IV Trauma Center. The Emergency Department is staffed 24 hours a day/seven days a week with qualified physicians along with nurses certified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support and specialized trauma care.

In an effort to provide residents with convenient, faster medical care for those with non-emergency matters, WGH has the Walk-In Clinic. Located in Suite 800 of the Doctors Clinic, the Walk-In Clinic is open from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 8 a.m. to Noon on Saturday.

"We offer many of the same core services that are offered at larger hospitals," Eisenmann explained. "In addition, we are constantly evaluating the addition or enhancement of services that make sense for our community and the population we serve. The residents of Vernon can expect to see expanded service offerings announced through print and social media during 2018."

The Laboratory and Radiology departments offer the latest in state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment. This includes a revolutionary new MRI machine designed to quickly perform high-quality MR scans with a high level of patient comfort. The machine can significantly reduce exam time and has a wide opening to accommodate patients of varying size, age and physical condition.

Other Radiology Department services include x-rays, CT scanning, mammography, DEXA scanning, bone densitometry, ECHO cardiography, diagnostic sonography and much more. Laboratory Department services include blood banking, microbiology, drug screening and blood chemistries.

WGH also has the Alternatives Program, an intensive outpatient behavioral health program for senior citizens suffering from depression, anxiety and other disorders who could benefit from counseling services.

Wilbarger General also has an outstanding Rehabilitation Department, Home Health Department, Surgeon's Clinic, Surgery Department and Kidney Dialysis Center.

Wilbarger General and its 170 employees are very active in the community. The hospital has a Relay For Life team, delivers Meals on Wheels, takes part in the annual Santa Rosa Rodeo Parade, conducts several health fairs throughout the year, and has a "Santa For Seniors" project in December.

"As an employee of one of the community's most valuable resources, I believe that one of the most important things my colleagues and I can do to demonstrate our commitment to serve is to be fully present and engaged in activities and events that make Vernon better, particularly if those events have a health or wellness theme," Eisenmann stated. "A community hospital, by its very nature, touches every person and crosses every boundary. Thus, my colleagues and I must be willing to participate in events that do the same."

Wilbarger General Hospital is located at 920 Hillcrest Drive. Additional information on services is available at 940-552-9351 and at [www.wghospital.com](http://www.wghospital.com).



Claudia Eisenmann, CEO

Photo by Payton McCormick

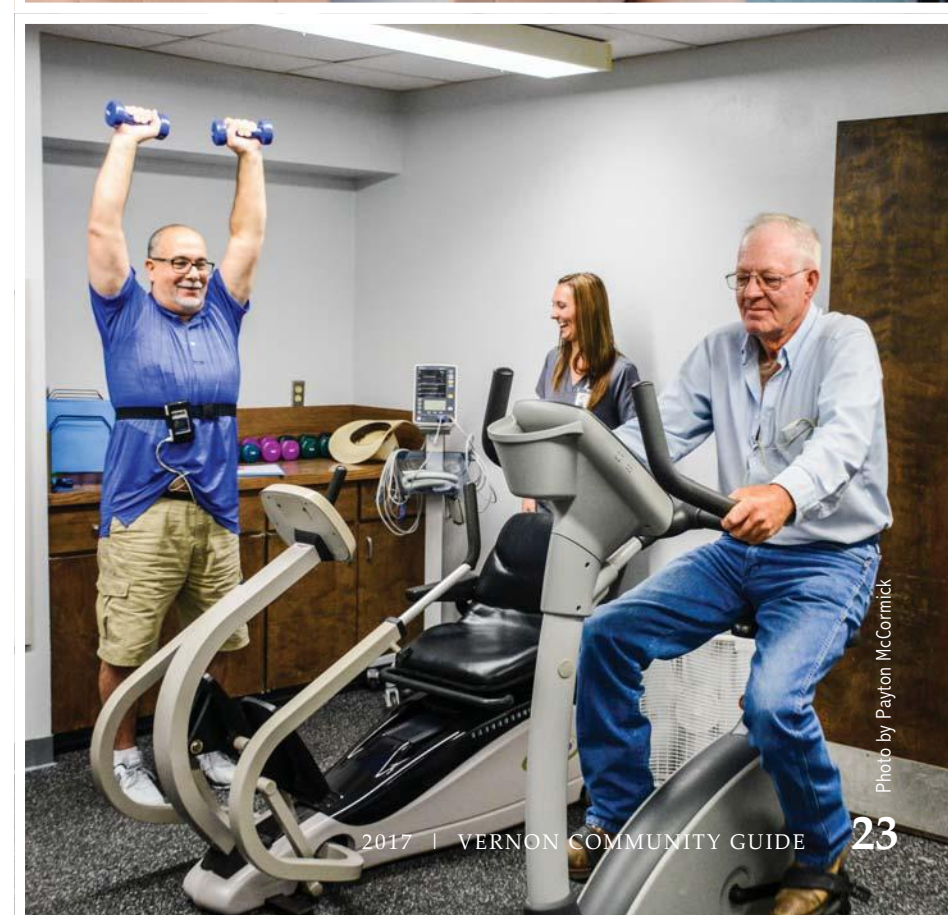


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