Urogyneocologist Zipper uses the da Vinci to treat pelvic prolapse patients

By Ken Datzman

Hospitals in Brevard County have stepped up their investments in robotic technology over the last year, with the center of attraction being the da Vinci system, a relatively new tool in the rapidly emerging field of minimally invasive surgery.

Both hospital operators Health First Inc. and Health Management Associates Inc. have purchased multimillion-dollar da Vinci machines, manufactured by Intuitive Surgical Inc., for their facilities.

They are providing physicians with the tools needed to improve clinical outcomes and patient recoveries, as technology continues to radically change the way surgeons practice medicine.

Health First installed the first da Vinci robotic-assisted surgical system in the county at Holmes Regional Medical Center in Melbourne. HMA made da Vinci investments for its two hospitals, in Rockledge and Melbourne.

Now, a select group of physicians in Brevard are using these machines to treat patients for various procedures. They say they are getting good surgical results and providing patients with another treatment option.

Robotic systems in medicine have been around since the early 1990s, when IBM Corp. introduced “Robodoc,” which was used to increase the precision of hip-implant surgeries.

“Robotic technology has gone through a slow and painful evolution, from what was at first a device ‘looking for surgery’ to a device that has become well-suited for surgery,” said Dr. Ralph Zipper, founder and operator of Zipper Urogynecology Associates in Melbourne, an innovative practice that continues to expand to meet the needs of patients who embrace new methods of treatment.

The da Vinci system is used in several surgical specialties, including urology, gynecology, and general surgery.

Dr. Zipper says his practice is the first and only urogynecology center in Brevard County offering patients robotic-assisted Sacrocolpopexy, a minimally invasive surgical procedure to correct pelvic prolapse.

Please see Zipper Urogynecology, page 19

Dr. Ralph Zipper of Zipper Urogynecology Associates is the first urogynecologist in Brevard to offer patients Sacrocolpopexy, a surgical procedure to correct pelvic prolapse, using the robotic-assisted da Vinci system. He says there is less scarring and a faster recovery for the patient. Dr. Zipper is at his office in Melbourne. Three hospital locations in the region have da Vinci units.

Parrish Medical Foundation reaches out to community, businesses

By Ken Datzman

TITUSVILLE — Hospital foundations have been working doubly hard the past few years to raise funds, and the effort is paying off.

Despite the economy, U.S. nonprofit hospitals and health-care systems managed an 8 percent increase in philanthropic donations last year over the previous fiscal year, to more than $8 billion, according to the 2010 “Report on Giving USA” issued by the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy.

Individual donors contributed almost 60 percent of that total, in one of the most challenging philanthropy environments in decades.

Last year’s success was largely due to the dedicated work of foundation volunteers in communities across America, the report said.

Locally, Randy Coleman and Judy Allender, who co-chair the Jess Parrish Medical Foundation Development Council, have been working with volunteers to organize small gatherings in homes or at area businesses in an effort to better communicate the foundation’s important mission in the community.

“We are more than happy to come into any setting — your home, civic organization or even churches — to share PMC’s vision of healing families and healing communities,” added Coleman.

“There is so much good going on in North Brevard and I am proud to be an

Please see Parrish Foundation, page 16
HF Health Plans promotes Slattery to vice president of quality, integrated care

ROCKLEDGE — Health First Health Plans has announced the promotion of Lisa Slattery to vice president of quality and integrated care.

In her new position, Slattery will be responsible for overseeing HFHP quality management and improvement programs, provider credentialing, member appeals and grievances, peer review, complex case management, and other areas.

In addition, she also will actively be involved in clinical and operational integration initiatives across the entire Health First organization.

Slattery joined Health First in 1994 as a physical therapist at Holmes Regional Medical Center in Melbourne, and later transferred to Palm Bay Hospital, where she managed the Rehabilitative Services Department for four years.

In 2007, Slattery accepted a newly created position at HFHP as the rehabilitative services coordinator, creating clinically based utilization processes and measures, as well as developing HFHP’s rehabilitation network.

Since then she has served as director of quality and accreditation, leading HFHP to an “Excellent” accreditation status and a 4.5-star national ranking by the National Center for Quality Assurance, as well as recognition as one of the top 20 Medicare Advantage Plans in the country.

Slattery chairs the systemwide Transitional Post-Acute Care Committee, whose focus is patient safety and satisfaction across the spectrum of care.

In addition to a physical–therapy degree from the University of Florida, Slattery holds bachelor’s degrees in chemistry and biochemistry from North Carolina State University. She also earned the Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality designation, in 2009.

Melbourne Beach firm honored with Addy

A Brevard County firm was honored at the American Advertising Federation’s 2010–2011 National Addy Awards for advertising creative excellence. The event, held in San Diego, Calif., was hosted at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel as part of the organization’s annual conference, ADmerica! Coalter Digital, of Melbourne Beach, was recognized with a Silver national Addy Award in “Sound Design” for its “EOD Haptic Robot” video created for Harris Corp. “It’s only me and my boss, Dave. Just the two of us made the video,” said Brad Czerkies, audio engineer for the winning video, adding, “This is actually the first year we’ve entered, which is why it really comes as such a surprise.” The Addy Awards is the industry’s largest and most representative competition for creative excellence. “We are so proud that Coalter Digital was recognized at the national level for their outstanding work,” said Lori L’Heureux, president of the American Advertising Federation’s Space Coast Chapter. “It’s wonderful to see our talented creative community again listed among the ranks of the advertising elite.” Entries were judged based on creativity, originality and creative strategy. Leo Burnett captured Best of Show for the Mayhem Television Campaign for Allstate Insurance.
Lt. Diana Blackledge among elite graduates of prestigious FBI Academy

The Palm Bay Police Department’s first female lieutenant to attend the prestigious FBI National Academy (FBINA) is now among the elite class of graduates to have completed the intensive training program in Quantico, Va.

Lt. Diana Blackledge completed the 10-week training program earlier this year as part of the 244th session of the academy. She is one of just roughly 2,000 females from around the world to have successfully completed the training.

“I am honored to have been selected and it was an excellent opportunity to learn from the among the best in the field,” said Blackledge, who currently oversees the department’s Crime Suppression Unit, General Crimes Detectives, and the five–man K–9 unit.

Blackledge joined the Palm Bay Police Department in 1987 and has worked mainly in road patrol and training for the department’s K–9 teams.

She is internationally recognized for her expertise in police K–9 tactics and deployment and was selected as the 1993 Team USA Coach to the Internationale Diensthund Meisterschaft in Augsburg, Germany, and as one of three canine teams representing the country at the World’s Fair Police Dog Competition in 2000.

In 2007, Blackledge joined the department’s Accreditation Management Unit and led the agency through its “first successful accreditation” assessment through the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation.

The process brought the 200-plus–member department into compliance with nearly 300 of the strictest law enforcement professional standards in the field.

“I hope to contribute to this agency’s future success,” Blackledge said. “I want to work with other officers to enhance their tactical and administrative skills to help them achieve their goals while building a stronger and more professional agency.”

Hall wins Buena Vida’s ‘Green Jacket’

Resident Fred Hall of Buena Vida Estates in West Melbourne was recently presented with the senior–living community’s first “Green Jacket” at its inaugural “Wii Masters Golf Championship.” The tournament, which will be held annually during the first two weeks of April, encourages play from all levels and abilities. Participants were able to play “practice rounds” before the real competition began. Players had to complete four rounds of nine holes. Fourteen people entered the tournament.

Hall, a resident of Buena Vida Estates since 2003, is an “avid Wii enthusiast” and practices Wii on a regular basis. A former golfer, Hall said he enjoys the challenge and camaraderie of Wii golf. “It’s almost better than playing live,” he said. “I can play Wii when it is raining outside or at nighttime, which was something I couldn’t do with golf on the course.” As the winner of the Buena Vida Green Jacket, Hall said he plans to defend his Wii title. “I look forward to winning many more Green Jackets. I plan to win a jacket for every day of the week.” The second–place winner received a Green Beret which was awarded to Bobbie Grimes. “Fred better watch out,” said Grimes, “it is always harder to stay on top of the mountain than to climb it.”
Chemistry.

findings are published in the Journal of Biological for visualizing, diagnosing and treating cancer. The Shands Cancer Center, who led the research team.

“We don’t know why cancer cells can tolerate low pH — but they do, and we believe that carbonic anhydrase is a significant player in picking the specific pH at which the cells are happiest,” said biochemist Susan Frost, of the UF.

The enzyme may serve as a new and important target for visualizing, diagnosing and treating cancer. The findings are published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

Breast cancers are often characterized by oxygen—deprived regions that clinicians generally use as an indicator of poor prognosis in patients. Such oxygen—deprived — or hypoxic — regions occur when new blood vessels that form to feed a tumor become compressed, cutting off circulation and the supply of oxygen and nutrients. Lack of oxygen leads to metabolic processes that make the cells’ external environment more acidic. Those conditions favor cancer cell survival and resistance to chemotherapy agents.

The enzyme carbonic anhydrase IX is expressed in connection with these oxygen—deprived areas.

In a study of breast cancer cells, the researchers used a novel technique to track how oxygen is exchanged between carbon dioxide and water molecules via a chemical process spurred by the enzyme. That allowed measurement of the enzyme’s activity both inside and outside the cell.

The researchers were able to show, for the first time, a direct link between an increase in both the production and the activity of the enzyme and oxygen deprivation in tumor cell environments. Other researchers previously showed indirect connections between the processes, using pH decrease as a marker for carbonic anhydrase expression. Further, the UF scientists showed directly that the lowering of pH occurred as the activity of the enzyme increased.

“This is clearly a very important result confirming what we already suspected,” said Claudiu Supuran, a chemist who pioneered work on carbonic anhydrase as an antitumor target, and published his findings in the journal “Nature Reviews.”

“This is confirmation that carbonic anhydrase is a very important future target for anticancer drugs.” Supuran was not involved in the current study.

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Blocking the enzyme activity could help kill cancer cells by upsetting the pH balance. In addition, it could aid the effectiveness of chemotherapy agents, since many of those drugs depend on the pH gradient across cell membranes, which, if thrown off—balance, hinders proper uptake of the drug by cells.

“It would be a double punch — through inhibition of carbonic anhydrase you can perturb the pH environment, which will be deleterious to the cell, but also you can affect in a positive way how other anticancer drugs interact with cancer cells,” said study co—author David Silverman. “My prediction is that this work will have a very strong influence on the way people look at the survival of cancer cells.”

The UF team, including Chingkuang Tu, has already synthesized chemicals that can inhibit the enzyme carbonic anhydrase. They fitted those potential therapeutic compounds with a chemical structure that prevents it from getting inside cells, thus making sure that it targets only the enzyme that works on the outside of the cell to alter acidity levels. Supuran and other researchers were the first to show, through animal studies, that this approach greatly diminished tumor size and metastasis.

The good thing about this anti—enzyme agent is that when oxygen is re—introduced into the oxygen—deprived environment, it still targets the enzyme, and is therefore a flexible and potentially valuable therapeutic tool.

The researchers envision the nontoxic chemicals could be delivered intravenously, as are other chemotherapy agents, to alter the microenvironment to prevent or reverse tumor growth. They have embarked on a collaboration with colleagues at Moffitt Cancer Center to develop just such a strategy.

College of Business Administration names Dr. Foard Jones interim dean

Foord Jones has been named interim dean of the University of Central Florida’s College of Business Administration, effective June 25. Dr. Jones, an associate professor of management, joined UCF in 1989 and has served in several administrative capacities, including management department chairman, associate dean for graduate and external programs, and his current position of associate dean of administration and human resources.

Dr. Jones has won several academic awards, including the Teaching Incentive Program Award, the Carl H. Galloway Faculty Performance Incentive Award and the Faculty Leadership Award.

He received his doctorate degree in human—resource management from the University of Georgia.

Dr. Jones has vast experience working with staff, faculty members and students.

“I am pleased to continue my work within the college and am excited to expand my role externally as I meet with our graduates and supporters,” he said. “I look forward to this exciting opportunity.”

Dr. Jones replaces Thomas Keon, who has served as the college’s dean for the past 14 years. Keon accepted a position as chancellor of Purdue University Calumet.

UCF said it will conduct a national search to fill the position permanently.

Terry McFarland one of 50 nurses nationwide selected for course

Terry McFarland, of Space Coast Cancer Center, was one of 50 nurses selected from cancer centers across the nation to attend a course on the care needed of cancer survivors. Cancer—survivorship care is a new development in the complete care of the cancer patient. McFarland is the cancer—survivor care coordinator, quality—studies coordinator, and clinical—research nurse at Space Coast Cancer Center. Based on the Institute of Medicine’s 2008 report “From Cancer Care to Cancer Survivor: Lost in Transition,” there are specific needs for cancer survivors’ care that include surveillance, prevention, symptom management, health promotion, and coordination of care to see that information is shared between the oncology team, primary—care physician and patient. Additional questions or information about the survivorship program can be directed to McFarland at Space Coast Cancer Center. The telephone number is (855) 894—4673, extension 3168, or send an e—mail message to terrym@spacecoastcancer.com.
Tech College of Engineering to offer doctorate in human–centered design

Starting this fall, the Florida Institute of Technology College of Engineering and Human–Centered Design Institute will offer a new, multidisciplinary doctoral program.

The Ph.D. program in Human–Centered Design of Life–Critical Systems is for students who wish to carry out advanced research, innovation and leadership in the academic world, industry or government.

Students working toward the degree may choose one of three major concentrations: aerospace engineering, computer science or operations research.

The program is open to graduate students with a strong interest in people and who are ready to learn about applied human and social sciences.

The program requires significant breadth and depth of understanding in engineering, mathematics and science; the mastery of several specialized subjects; and the creativity to extend the body of knowledge through significant original research.

A candidate should have completed a master’s degree in an engineering discipline, computer science, fundamental science or mathematics and demonstrate a strong interest in human and social science or the arts.

Candidates from human and social sciences or the arts who have a strong background in engineering or design may also be eligible.

For more information, contact Guy Boy, university professor and director of the Florida Tech Human–Centered Design Institute, at gboy@fit.edu, or visit www.fit.edu/programs/grad/phd_humancentered_design.

‘Star–Spangled Event’ part of Art Walk

The third annual “Star–Spangled Event” will be part of the Eau Gallie Arts District’s First Friday Art Walk, set for July 1 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. The event will feature patriotic activities and competitions taking place in the Eau Gallie Arts District of Melbourne. Planned events include an Apple Pie Bake–off, the Human Flag, and Bicycle Parade. Special guest judges for the Apple Pie Bake–off will be Suzy Leonard, “Florida Today’s” features editor; a representative from Sweetie Pie Baking Co.; and Terri Wright, WFTT general manager. The Eau Gallie Farmers Market will set up on a section of Highland Avenue and will feature fresh produce. Art studios, galleries, shops, and restaurants in the Eau Gallie Arts District will remain open late for a free art walk. Many other activities are planned, including “ghost tours” at the Historic Rossetter House Museum. Call in advance for reservations at 254–9855.

Haridopolos to address women’s group

The Melbourne Area Federated Republican Women will meet at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, July 6, at The Holiday Inn (formerly Imperial Hotel), 8298 N. Wickham Road, in Melbourne. The program speaker will be Senate President Mike Haridopolos, who will give an update on the legislative session in Tallahassee. Republican women and men are invited, with a special invitation to Republicans who are new to the area and those interested in learning more about the group’s activities and issues in the community. Call 727–1212 to make a reservation for the function.
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Congressman Posey conducts roundtable for the Brevard County Medical Society

ROCKLEDGE — Brevard County Medical Society members and board of directors recently met with Congressman Bill Posey for an informative Health Care Roundtable discussion at the Brevard County Government Complex in Viera.

Posey provided local members with an overview of health-care related issues, pending legislation and health-care reform legislation.

“This was a great opportunity for our members to discuss with Congressman Posey some of the challenges facing the medical profession and the impact that the new federal health-care law is having on patients, physicians and others in the medical field,” said Linda Paille, executive director of the Brevard County Medical Society.

Roundtable participants included Dr. Lance Grenevicki, president of the Brevard County Medical Society. He was joined by area physicians Jasen Kobobel, Rajiv Chandra, Eugene Wawrzyniak; Stephanie Haridopolos, John Potomski, William Knappenberger, Emran Imami and Brian Ziegler.

Posey invited the participants to share their comments and concerns about health-care related issues that were of particular importance to physicians and the patients they serve. “I appreciated the chance to listen and hear firsthand from local physicians who are trying to comprehend the new health-care law and cope with its overwhelming regulations,” said Posey.

“It’s valuable feedback as we work to address major health-care issues in Congress. I share many of their concerns that health-care reform has not brought down insurance premiums, and that the bill included provisions that will hamper the doctor-patient relationship. The new law has contributed to an increase in issuance premiums and more industry regulation, and failed to address medical liability reform,” he added.

The Brevard County Medical Society, established in 1904, is a professional organization of medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy. A physician-referral service is provided to the public by calling 632-8481.

Viera Storage expands with U-Haul rentals

Jerry Hart, owner of Viera Storage Co., 7300 Dolina Court, recently added U-Haul truck and trailer rentals to the residential and commercial storage business that he has been operating since 2007. Viera Storage Co. can now offer its customers a variety of moving equipment and supplies designed specifically for moving household furnishings, including moving vans, open trailers, closed trailers, furniture pads, appliance dollies, furniture dollies, tow dollies and auto transports. “I added U-Haul rentals for traffic control, simply to put the products and services in front of the customer,” Hart said. “U-Haul is proud to be partnering with a quality independent business such as Viera Storage Co.,” added Cal Conner, president of U-Haul of Eastern Florida. “Jerry is a great example of the type of successful business relationship U-Haul has established in order to build and maintain a strong network of more than 15,000 independent dealers across North America.” For more information, or to rent moving equipment, visit www.VieraStorageCompany.com or call 255-0984.
Renowned pianist Biegel to perform with Space Coast Symphony Orchestra

MERRITT ISLAND — Superstar pianist Jeffrey Biegel will be performing with the 70-piece Space Coast Symphony Orchestra at 6 p.m. on Saturday, June 25, at the First Baptist Church, 140 Magnolia Ave., in Merritt Island.

This program is part of the Space Coast Symphony Orchestra’s Summer Concert Series. The event is titled “Biegel Performs Emerson and Anderson.”

The renowned Biegel, along with award-winning composer Kenneth Fuchs, will join conductor Aaron Collins in a concert that opens with Fuchs’ joyous and ecstatic “United Artists,” a work written for the London Symphony Orchestra.

Biegel, whose technique and touch have been the source of critical acclaim worldwide, will be performing Keith Emerson’s (of Emerson, Lake and Palmer fame) Piano Concerto No. 1, as well as Leroy Anderson’s recently resurrected Piano Concerto in C.

A number of Leroy Anderson’s works will round out the concert, including “Promenade,” “Clarinet Candy,” “Serenata,” and several surprises.

Advance $25 tickets are available at one of two ticket outlets, Blue Sky Insurance in Cocoa Village and Tropical Realty of Suntree, or at www.SpaceCoastSymphony.org or by calling 536-8580. Tickets at the door the day of the event are an additional $5. Students 18 years of age and under will be admitted free of charge to the concert.

Collins said he is delighted to bring Biegel to Central Florida for a performance with the Space Coast Symphony.

“It will be a thrill to share the stage with Jeffrey Biegel,” said Collins.

“He is one of the most requested performers in the world, and our audience will have an opportunity to see him perform two concertos, one by Leroy Anderson and the other by Rock-n’-Roll icon Keith Emerson.”

The Space Coast Symphony will continue performing through the summer with concerts in July and August.

For more information about the Summer Series or the “Biegel Performs Emerson and Anderson” concert, visit the symphony’s website.

Brevard County seeks recommendations

To provide a formal process for citizens to submit recommendation to Brevard County government, and as a result of Charter Amendment, Brevard County has implemented a web-based application called “Citizen Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendations.” The online form is available at http://web.brevardcounty.us/CitizenRecommendations. It allows people to submit ideas which would assist county government in conserving energy, reducing costs, eliminating duplication, generating revenue, increasing productivity, or preventing waste. A hard-copy version of the form may also be submitted, and is available through the County Manager’s office. The process requires submissions to meet a deadline of July 15, after which the County Manager’s office has 45 days to evaluate and comment on the recommendation, and then forward it to the Board of County Commissioners for their review. The filing deadline is July 15 of this year, but will be Jan. 1 for following years. For more information, call the County Manager’s office at 633-2001.
Palm Bay Chamber luncheon to host new city manager Sue Hann on July 6

PALM BAY — The Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce has invited Sue Hann, incoming city manager for Palm Bay, to speak at its monthly networking luncheon July 6 at Life Care Center of Palm Bay.

The announcement was made by Victoria Northrup, president and chief executive officer of the Chamber.

Hann will share her vision of the city at the meeting, including her goals and objectives as the city takes yet another step forward in its growth.

Hann has also invited her department heads to this luncheon to introduce them to the business community.

“The Palm Bay Chamber welcomes Ms. Hann to her new position and our membership ranks have expressed interest in what plans the city has moving forward,” said Northrup.

“Our members are looking forward to meeting her personally as well as her department leaders.”

Northrup said the meeting will present an opportunity for the public to personally meet Palm Bay’s city leaders, including the new management team, and “learn more about the direction of the city.”

The Chamber gathers on the first Wednesday of the month at Life Care Center of Palm Bay, 175 Villa Nueva Ave. NE, off Malabar Road, just west of Palm Bay Hospital.

Networking begins at 11:15 with the lunch and program starting at noon. The luncheon fee is $20 for members and $25 for non–members in advance, or at the door.

BSO’s free July 4 Concert at Riverfront Park

Brevard Symphony Orchestra’s annual 4th of July Pops Concert and Fireworks Show, offered to the community free of charge, begins at 8 p.m. at Riverfront Park in Cocoa Village. The program is titled “Symphony under the Stars.” The fireworks display is presented by the cities of Cocoa and Rockledge. Arts advocate Ann Davis will be the guest conductor for “Stars and Stripes Forever” by John Philip Sousa. Concert sponsors include Bright House Networks, Wells Fargo Bank, United Space Alliance, City of Cocoa, Historic Cocoa Village Association, City of Rockledge, Publix Supermarket Charities, Marilyn Shulman Kitchel, “Florida Today,” Late Rock 99.3, Kiss 95.1, AT&T/The Real Yellow Pages, Space Coast Business Media Group, and “Brevard Business News.” For more information, call 242–2024 or visit brevardsymphony.com.

Money camp for teens to be held in July

Brevard County Agriculture and Extension Service and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences will offer a summer camp called “Moola Venture: A Money Camp for Teens” at the Cocoa Extension office July 11 through 15, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. “Moola Venture” is designed for youth entering grades 10 through 12. Participants will learn money–management skills such as how to open a checking account, balance a checkbook, budget, buy a car, use credit wisely, invest money, and interview for a job. The cost to attend is $75, and includes lunch, snacks, and field trips. The registration deadline is July 1. For more information and a registration packet, call 952–4536, extension 21.
PMC’s new Center for Lifelong Health, under construction at Health Village, a unique community resource — the Diabetes Education Program is centerpiece; to showcase a diabetes teaching kitchen

By Ken Datzman

TITUSVILLE — Through its newly established Center for Lifelong Health, one area medical center is on the frontline of prevention and treatment battling a disease that is fast increasing and has reached a startling prevalence in Brevard County and around the nation.

Nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes, according to new estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition, an estimated 79 million U.S. adults have “prediabetes,” a condition in which blood–sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

The disease has been growing rapidly in the local market, said Kimberly Fischer, manager of the Diabetes Education Program at Parrish Medical Center.

“The CDC estimates that Brevard County has an alarming 11.1 percent prevalence of diabetes, so we have a very large problem on our hands,” she said.

The percentage could be even higher in the county, because Fischer said she was quoting 2008 CDC data.

Diabetes education is a main focus for the new Center for Lifelong Health, which is under construction at the Parrish Health Village at Main Street PMC, near the medical center, on U.S Highway 1.

Even though the roughly 5,500–square–foot Diabetes Education Center is being built, PMC’s programs, including Diabetes Education, have been serving the community. “Part of our mission is to provide education that helps diabetes patients self–manage their chronic disease so they are living healthier,” Fischer said.

“The Center for Lifelong Health’s keystone program will be Diabetes Education,” added PMC’s Lori Dueter, who heads up program development for the Parrish Health Village, the first health–care environment of its kind to combine evidence–based healing programs with historic preservation of homes in a village setting.

“The facility will be a destination location for people to receive a wide range of services, from prevention to education, referral and treatment, for specific chronic diseases,” Dueter said.

Edwin Loftin, vice president of nursing, said PMC has targeted seven chronic diseases in the community, of which diabetes is one.

“Diabetes interacts with the six other chronic diseases, including obesity. Our approach is that a chronic disease shouldn’t be a life–stopper and hold someone back from being active. To keep people active, that’s the goal of all the programs at the Center for Lifelong Health.”

The Center for Lifelong Health will feature a “diabetes–teaching kitchen” staffed by a registered dietician.

“We’ll be able to conduct hands–on cooking classes and give demonstrations in the center, as well as show patients who have a chronic disease, be it diabetes or another disease, the importance of diet and the kinds of foods that should be stocked in their kitchen,” Fischer said. Exercise and fitness components round out the program.

The diabetes–support effort will include an insulin–management program, nutritional counseling, and continuous glucose monitoring of patients.

In a study published last year, the CDC projected that as many as one in three U.S. adults could have diabetes by 2050 if current trends continue.

Type 2 diabetes, in which the body gradually loses its ability to use and produce insulin, accounts for 90 percent to 95 percent of diabetes cases. Risk factors of Type 2 diabetes include older age, obesity, family history, diabetes during pregnancy, and a sedentary lifestyle.

“Type 2 diabetes usually develops later in life,” Fischer said, “but we are seeing more and more in the adolescent population. It is exploding in Brevard County and across the nation.”

Young people with diabetes face substantially higher medical costs than children and teens without the disease, according to a CDC study published in the May issue of the journal “Diabetes Care.”

The study found annual medical expenses for youth with diabetes are $9,061, compared to $1,468 for youth without the disease.

Much of the extra medical costs come from prescription drugs and outpatient care.

Some agencies, such as the CDC, attribute the increase of diabetes to the growing obesity rate.

“Regardless, we are going to have to get a handle on this disease. And Parrish has given the Diabetes Education Program the opportunity to be involved in the Center for Lifelong Health and expand our offerings and really be hands–on in the community. We are very excited about it,” Fischer said.

With its focus on preventive medicine and lifelong health, the center has begun offering a workshop series for the community.

Called “Living Healthy,” the six–week workshop “teaches people how to live healthier through diet and exercise,” said Dueter. “Workshop participants learn how to make weekly action plans and a lot more, all geared toward changing their behaviors and fostering a healthy lifestyle.”

Dueter said the health–education programs that PMC currently provides to the community “are all evidence–based.” PMC is working to develop a network in the community to expand its reach with these programs that focus on improving the health of residents, she said.

“To do this, we’re using a ‘coach’ model or ‘train–the–trainer’ model, where people who have completed the health–education classes go into the senior centers, area churches, and other venues to provide this education to their peers,” Dueter said.

“This method of passing on health–care knowledge in communities has proven to a very successful model,” added Loftin.

In addition to the Diabetes Education Program, Parrish Health Village will house Parrish Health Connections, a personalized referral and resource service, and Parrish Senior Solutions, which will offer information, resources, and support services to help bridge the gap between North Brevard medical and social–service organizations and programs.

Parrish Senior Consultation Center, specializing in geriatric medicine, will anchor the village.
Physicists are key part of comprehensive Cyberknife treatment-planning team at Cancer Care Centers of Brevard, bring unique perspective — team concept drives patient outcomes at the center

By Ken Datzman

The Cyberknife robotic–radiosurgery technology is clearly the star at hundreds of medical facilities in the U.S. and around the world.

The stereotactic radiosurgery system treats tumors anywhere in the body non–invasively, and continues to gain acceptance as more treatment data and studies are released in support of this space–age technology.

But the success of patient outcomes at a Cyberknife hub centers on the cohesiveness and the ability of a comprehensive team to work as a unit planning and executing the treatment strategy.

“It has to be a total team effort,” said Anand Prabhu, a physicist at Cancer Care Centers of Brevard.

“Radiation therapy is one of those specialties where each and every person on the team is vital to the overall outcome. Every member has to be equally thorough about his or her job, and that’s what we pride ourselves on at Cancer Care Centers of Brevard. The success is driven by a team concept,” he added.

Radiation therapy works by damaging the DNA in cancer cells so they cannot repair or reproduce, while simultaneously protecting healthy cells.

A patient’s medical team may use radiation oncology to destroy cancer, to control the growth of cancer, or to relieve pain and other cancer symptoms.

The physicist performs an important role working alongside the radiation oncologist to assure the accurate delivery for all aspects of a treatment prescription.

The local Cyberknife team includes medical physicists, dosimetrists, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, hematologists, and technicians, as well as radiation oncology nurses, and radiation oncology therapists.

Cyberknife is a radiation delivery and tracking system that can treat tumors of the body and brain with submillimeter accuracy. It uses state–of–the–art robotics and real–time movement tracking, said Prabhu. “The system tracts the tumor continuously during the treatment process.”

Imaging techniques have improved to the point that doctors can now define the edges of many tumors to within a fraction of an inch. During treatment, however, many tumors will move.

Tumors in the lungs, for instance, can move up to an inch or more as a person breathes.

Using continual image–guidance technology and computer–controlled robotic mobility, the Cyberknife system automatically tracks, detects, and corrects for tumor and patient movement in real–time throughout the treatment, he said.

“This enables the Cyberknife to deliver high–dose radiation with pinpoint precision, which minimizes damage to surrounding healthy issue.”

Created by Accuray Inc. of California, Cyberknife uses technology originally designed to track cruise missiles. It can deliver hundreds of beams of focused radiation from up to 200 different angles.

“It’s incredible, so many different beams and angles. These focused beams destroy a tumor with uncanny accuracy,” said physicist Bhavin Patadiya.

Prabhu and Patadiya are part of a six–person physicist and dosimetrists team at Cancer Care Centers of Brevard. They work under Daljit Saini, the chief radiation physicist at the center.

The team members include chief dosimetrist Sue Rose, and dosimetrist Devra Fain and Tod Garthwaite.

Dosimetrists are personnel specifically trained to perform patient–oriented “physics tasks,” such as computing treatment times and assembling patient data required for dose calculations.

Cyberknife is an option for inoperable or surgically complex tumors. Unlike some radiosurgery systems which can only treat tumors in the head, the Cyberknife technology has unlimited reach to treat a broad range of tumors throughout the body, including the prostate, lung, brain, spine, liver, pancreas, and kidney.

“The evolution of this technology has been nothing short of remarkable,” said Saini, who has worked in radiation therapy since 1969, starting in India.

“At that time, in 1969, I knew this was the career field for me. It has been an exciting journey.”

The journey took him to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, the largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School.

After working in India from 1970 to 1974 as a medical physicist, Saini said he was “offered a job at Harvard University.” When the offer came, he packed and headed to Boston. He worked in radiation therapy and medical physics at Massachusetts General. “That was an incredible experience for me,” he said.

Saini made other career stops along the way before coming to Brevard, including serving as the chief physicist for Tampa General Hospital.

In 1983, Saini joined Dr. Silas Charles at Holmes Regional Medical Center in Melbourne. Dr. Charles at the time was director of radiation therapy at HRMC. He later founded Cancer Care Centers of Brevard, and is its medical director today.

“Dr. Charles had this vision of building his own cancer center in the area,” said Saini, who is certified by the American Board of Radiology, the organization that credentials medical physicists.

Dr. Charles grew the Melbourne–based business and opened centers in Titusville, Merritt Island and Sebastian. A number of years ago, he expanded with the addition of Cyberknife at the Melbourne location of Cancer Care Centers of Brevard.

Last week, Accuray Inc. completed its previously announced acquisition of TomoTherapy Inc. With that transaction, Accuray’s installed base of Cyberknife units increases from 226 to more than 500 worldwide.

This year, Accuray released the first published five–year outcomes favorably to results obtained with other treatment modalities, including surgery and conventional radiation therapy.

BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth
HFHP set to conduct new series of educational forums in community

ROCKLEDGE — To help unravel the web of confusion of original Medicare, Health First Health Plans is launching a new “Ask a Local Expert” public forum in the community.

Health First Health Plans experts will answer questions and explain the “alphabet soup” of Medicare, Parts A, B and C, for example.

“As the only local health plan in Brevard County, we understand that we have a responsibility to the community for those who have questions about original Medicare,” said Margaret Haney, president and chief executive officer of Health First Health Plans.

“We are proud to offer these educational seminars to enhance their understanding.”

These lectures are not sales pitches, she said. No specific information on Health First Health Plans details, benefits, or programs will be provided.

This program is intended to meet the increasing demand among area residents for locally based information from the people who know Brevard best.

“Ask a Local Expert” sessions are planned for these dates over the next three months:

- Thursday, July 14, 1 p.m., One Senior Place, Conference Room. 8085 Spyglass Hill Road, Viera.
- Thursday, Aug. 11, 10 a.m., Palm Bay Hospital, Private Dining Room, 1425 Malabar Road NE, Palm Bay.
- Thursday, Sept. 8, 1 p.m., One Senior Place, Conference Room.

To reserve your space to attend one of the forums, call 434–5665 or 1–800–716–7737 (TTY 1–800–955–8771).

Palm Bay Chamber launches campaign

The Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce showed off its new logo and branding campaign at a recent board meeting, according to Stuart Borton, chairman of the board. In February 2010, a severe windstorm damaged the exterior sign at the Chamber on U.S. Highway 1 in Palm Bay, prompting the Chamber staff and board of directors to review the current logo that had been in existence for 23 years. “We wanted to remove the name from the circle,” said Borton, “yet keep the overall look and feel of the original logo. After reviewing about a dozen ideas from Chamber members and local artists, the board voted on the new logo.” Chamber member 360 Communications began working on the project last summer and submitted 10 versions to the executive committee, which narrowed the field to two, he said. Those two were then presented to the full board of directors who voted on a final version.

“Our new logo represents the colorful community we live in that is so rich in diversity,” said Vicki Northrup, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Palm Bay Chamber. “While keeping the sun, waves and palm trees so the community will be able to recognize and identify who we are, the artist was able to capture a more innovative and modern version of the original logo.” The Chamber meets the first Wednesday of the month at Life Care Center of Palm Bay, 175 Villa Nueva Ave. NE, off Malabar Road, just west of Palm Bay Hospital. Networking begins at 11:15, with lunch and the program starting at noon. The fee is $20 for members and $25 for non–members in advance or at the door.
UCF College of Medicine receives provisional accreditation from LCME

ORLANDO — The University of Central Florida College of Medicine is one step closer to full accreditation after being granted provisional accreditation.

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) awarded the College of Medicine provisional status, the second of three approvals necessary for the college to be fully accredited and able to grant degrees to its students.

The LCME is the nationally recognized accrediting authority for medical degree education programs in the U.S. and Canada.

An LCME survey team visited UCF’s College of Medicine in February and evaluated its progress in meeting 132 standards. Those standards include requirements for classroom and clinical training, educational resources, faculty and budgeting.

Full accreditation will not be determined until 2013, when the school’s charter class is in the fourth year of the program.

“I am delighted with the LCME’s decision and am especially proud of the College of Medicine team — our faculty, students, staff and community partners — who are responsible for our extraordinary success,” said Dr. Deborah German, vice president for medical affairs and founding dean of the college.

While we are still very young, we are on track to becoming the nation’s premier 21st century college of medicine.”

The college has 100 students and will enroll its third class of 80 students in August. The charter class recently began its clerkships at area hospitals and clinics.

The medical school, which admitted its first class in 2009, has already gained a reputation for innovation. The school’s new medical education building houses a state-of-the-art anatomy laboratory and digitally enhanced classrooms.

It has “drawn visitors from around the world” looking for ways to integrate technology into their educational and health facilities back home.

BCC Planetarium, BCA to present exhibit

The Brevard Community College Planetarium Gallery in Cocoa and the Brevard Cultural Alliance are teaming up to present a “Black and White Photography Exhibit.” The Planetarium is one of the largest of its kind in the nation. It features a 70-foot dome and a 207-seat theatre. The hours of operation to view the photography exhibit and attend one of the Planetarium’s shows are Friday and Saturday from 6:30 to 10 p.m. and Wednesday from 1:30 to 4 p.m. The photographers participating in this exhibit include: John Andreozzi, Fred Benavidez, Terri Wells, Rebecca Chupka, Stan Candell, Patricia Corapi, Kevin Curl, Dawn Currie, Anthony Guidone and Tony Strong. The exhibit represents various styles and themes of black-and-white photography. It includes four images of the 2010 “Art of Sand” event, which was held in Cape Canaveral last year. The 20-foot sculptures were created by artists from all over the world. The 2011 “Art of Sand” show will be held Oct. 14–23 in Space Coast Stadium, in Viera. If you are an aspiring photographer and would like information on the exhibit program, call the Brevard Cultural Alliance at 690–6817.

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**United Way of Brevard allocates its annual Community Care funds for area programs**

United Way of Brevard’s Board of Directors recently approved grant–award recommendations for area health and human–service programs.

Grants made from United Way of Brevard’s Community Care Fund, as well as donor designated gifts for partner agencies during the 2010 Campaign, totaled nearly $4 million.

Sixty–six local health and human–service programs benefited from the funding, a range that included everything from hot nutritious meals for shut–in seniors through the Meals on Wheels Program to subsidized child care through the Early Learning Coalition.

Additionally, another 128 nonprofits, both in Brevard and outside of the community, will receive more than $1.1 million in the coming fiscal year through donor–designated gifts, thanks to the successful 2010 United Way Community Campaign.

The majority of dollars granted to United Way partner agencies will be leveraged as “local matches,” enabling the agencies to draw–down additional state and federal dollars to help the meet needs in Brevard County in the coming year.

This fact, along with the grants that United Way of Brevard manages for the community, increases its total financial impact on the county to more than $18 million, said Rob Rains, the president of United Way of Brevard.

“We are extremely grateful to all of those who came forward in support of our Community Campaign last fall, as well as the volunteers who helped us with this year’s Community–Impact Process,” he said.

“We’re pleased to be able to make this critical funding available at a time when it’s needed most.”

This year’s effort to distribute United Way dollars incorporated enhancements designed to ensure that these dollars are spent more wisely, he said.

The process took place from March through May and included the involvement of 82 volunteers, they themselves donors.

More than 2,500 hours of service was provided this year by groups of volunteers who reviewed agency financials, took part in onsite agency tours and business presentations, and provided funding recommendations.

“We’re proud of our process and the changes we’ve introduced as part of our redesign efforts,” said Rains.

“Our volunteers are dedicated and have played a key role in our efforts to link funding to the areas of priority in order to make a greater impact on needs. They take this responsibility to heart each and every year, representing more than 32,000 individual contributors throughout Brevard County. We can’t thank them enough.”

For more information on United Way of Brevard, partner agencies and direct service programs, visit www.uwbrevard.org.

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**Debi Pettigrew to teach ‘Painting with Pastels’**

Artist Debi Pettigrew will conduct classes on “Painting with Pastels” beginning July 19 at The Art Gallery of View, in The Avenue Viera. The classes will be held from 5:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays. The class fee is $75 for four weeks of instruction. The Avenue is off Lake Andrew Drive. Class registration is available by contacting Pettigrew at 749–1153 or send an e–mail message to dpettigrew@cfl.rr.com, or call The Art Gallery of Viera at 504–4343. The classes will be held in the Art Education Center.

**Florida Tech to present online courses as part of workshop series**

As part of the Distinguished Behavior Analysts Series, the Florida Institute of Technology Behavioral Science and Technology Program will present an online workshop, “Arranging Reinforcement Systems in Applied Settings: Lessons from Basic and Applied Research.” The program will be presented in three parts. Board–certified behavior analyst Iser DeLeon will lead the course. He is the director of research development in the Department of Behavioral Psychology at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, and an assistant professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Participants will have two weeks to complete the workshop from the time of purchase. They will view videos online and submit a survey by the workshop–end date. Videos are broken down into small sections to allow students the opportunity to start and stop as needed. The courses, BEHP 1044–1046, earn participants from 4.5 to 5.5 Type II Behavior Analyst Certification Board Continuing Education Units, and can be taken individually or in sequence. To register, visit http://www.fit.edu/bst/ceu/distinguished. The cost is $59 for each course.
YMCA of Central Florida recognizes Cocoa’s Fettrow, Darden’s Otis with leadership awards

ORLANDO — The YMCA of Central Florida recently held its 2010 Annual Meeting, recognizing area community leaders Brenda Fettrow and Clarence Otis for their support and leadership of the organization.

In addition, the 2011 Metropolitan YMCA Board of Directors was announced.

Dr. Fettrow received the Ronnie H. Walker Unsung Hero Award — Volunteer of the Year for her demonstration of the organization’s positive character values: caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith. “Dr. Fettrow is a longtime supporter, volunteer and donor for the YMCA of Central Florida,” said Lou Carrion, outgoing chairman for the Metropolitan YMCA Board of Directors.

“She played a key role in the development of the Cocoa YMCA Family Center. It was through her vision of connecting a YMCA with a community college. As a result, the YMCA of Central Florida was able to partner with Brevard Community College and make use of an old physical-education facility with a 50-meter pool that sat unused on the Cocoa campus,” he added.

Dr. Fettrow is the deputy city manager for Cocoa and previously served as president of the Brevard Community College campus in Cocoa.

She continues to lead the YMCA in its mission to strengthen the community as board chairwoman of the Cocoa YMCA Family Center.

The John W. Sterchi Award for lifetime support of the YMCA of Central Florida was presented to Otis, the chief executive officer of the Orlando-based Darden Restaurant Group.

“Clarence Otis has been involved with the YMCA for more than 40 years, starting with his participation in YMCA teen-leadership programs in Los Angeles, progressing to serving on the boards of New York and Central Florida Ys,” said YMCA President and CEO James Ferber. “Through his involvement with the YMCA of Central Florida, Clarence has played a key role in the organization’s fund-raising efforts and financial operations. Under his leadership, the organization was able to raise funds for renovations of the Wayne Densch and South Orlando YMCA Family Centers.”

Otis is a former board chairman and continues to serve on the YMCA of Central Florida’s Executive Committee as a trustee.

In addition, the association announced that Sandy Hostetter, president of CNLBank, was appointed as the Metropolitan YMCA Board Chairperson. She has been a YMCA volunteer and contributor for more than 25 years, and will continue to provide leadership and direction in furthering the mission and goals of the YMCA of Central Florida.

Hostetter has previously served in leadership roles for various boards and committees within the association.

Newly elected members of the Metropolitan YMCA Board of Directors were announced at the annual meeting, including:

- Dee Carpenter, former newspaper publisher, Newport News, Va.
- Tom Chandler, president and chief operating officer, SchenkelShultz.
- Steve Conner, senior vice president, Siemens Energy Inc.
- Steve Davis, president, Welbro Building Corp.
- Pat Engler, general manager, Hyatt Regional Orlando Airport.
- Dan Ford, executive vice president, Mears Transportation Group.
- Mike Grego, immediate past superintendent, Osceola County Public Schools.
- John Hillenmeyer, immediate past president and CEO, Orlando Health.
- Mike Jackson, former president and CEO, Supervalu Inc.
- Barbara Jenkins, deputy superintendent, Orange County Public Schools.
- Rob Mellen, president and CEO, Dr. Phillips Charities.
- Steve Miller, principal, VHB Miller–Sellen.
- John Varley, vice president, Lockheed Martin.

Kids Fest set for Kiwanis Island Park

Brevard County Parks and Recreation will host the seventh annual Kids Fest from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, July 2, at Kiwanis Island Park in Merritt Island. Kids Fest is a fun-filled day at the park for $5 per child. Admission will include face-painting and water games. There will be a vendor onsite with food and beverages for sale. Children should wear their swimsuits and bring a towel. For additional information, call Kiwanis Island Park at 455–1380.
Melbourne Police Department seeks candidates for chief of police position

Candidates for the position of chief of police for the City of Melbourne are being sought by way of a nationwide awareness campaign.

The effort is to conclude on July 29, followed by a candidate–review process.

The person to be selected by City Manager Jack Schluckebier later this year will serve as chief to lead a law–enforcement agency with 239 employees, 168 of them sworn officers.

The city’s police department annual budget is $23.6 million.

The level of crime in Melbourne as measured by reported “index crimes” involving serious offenses has been on the “decrease for the last three years.”

The department is currently under the direction of Chief Steve Mimbs, a 30–year veteran of the department. He was named as acting chief in April of 2010 to replace Don Carey, who was on medical leave prior to retirement.

Mimbs was subsequently named as chief in a time–limited capacity, and is expected to become a candidate for the permanent job in this process.

The position is being advertised in print and online publications, and notes that candidates should have at least 10 years of law–enforcement experience, including seven years of upper–level police management.

A bachelor's degree is required, and a master's degree as well as specialized police–management training is preferred. The annual salary range is anticipated to be $106,000 to $116,000.

A city employment application form must be submitted by each candidate, along with a resume. Candidates may obtain application forms at www.melbourneflorida.org/employ and by request to the personnel division at 608–7801, or via e–mail to personnel@melbourneflorida.org.

Benson earns award at Florida Tech’s Honors Convocation

At Florida Institute of Technology’s annual Honors Convocation held recently, Bryant Benson, who earned a Florida Tech bachelor's degree in astrophysics in 2008 and a master’s degree in space sciences in May 2011, received the John E. Miller Award. The award is for excellence in graduate student teaching and outstanding academic excellence.

A graduate student assistant since 2008, Benson taught physics and the senior physics laboratory. He also conducted laboratory research, 2010–2011, doing work related to particle physics. He was a co–author on a paper published in the “IEEE 2010 Proceedings” regarding the detection of nuclear materials with muon tomography. Muons are naturally produced by cosmic rays, which arrive from deep space and constantly bombard the Earth’s atmosphere. High–energy elementary particles, they are much heavier versions of electrons and are difficult to block by concrete or lead. Benson is a 2004 graduate of King City High School and was a resident of King City, Calif. This fall he will begin studies for a doctoral degree in physics at the University of California, Davis. He will also be a teaching assistant there. The Miller Award was established in 1995 in memory of the university's longtime vice president for academic affairs. Dr. Miller also briefly was university president between the terms of Jerome Keuper, founding president, and Dr. Lynn Weaver.

Jess Parrish Medical Foundation

Continued from page 1

ambassador to help carry the message and invite others to join us.”

Donors typically support a cause for the impact it has in a community.

In 2010, as in previous years, health–care organizations directed the largest single share of their donated dollars to fund construction and renovation projects, though that portion has declined by 7 percent since 2007.

The Jess Parrish Medical Foundation’s signature project is the construction of The Health Village at Main Street PMC, a one–of–a–kind health village for older adults.

There are many ways to get involved in the project, and be recognized, said Coleman.

There are naming opportunities in the Village, volunteer opportunities within the programs, and special events, such as the foundation’s annual gala, set for Oct. 28 at La Cita Country Club in Titusville.

The theme is “Hollywood Nights and Bollywood Dreams . . . An Evening of Fantasy.”

For more information about these opportunities, or any of the foundation’s projects, call 269–4066 or visit ParrishMedFoundation.com.
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physicians who have been trained to use this type of technology.

“I hope that over the next year or two, I will have the opportunity to teach more urogynecologists and gynecologists in the region how to perform a robotic-assisted Sacrocolpopexy,” said Dr. Zipper, president of the American Board of Aesthetic Gynecology.

An awareness study found that virtually all women expect their OB/GYN to inform them about minimally invasive treatments for common pelvic-health disorder, yet comparatively few doctors are aware of the newer treatments designed to cause less pain and provide quicker recoveries. Russell Research conducted the study for AAGL, the leading organization of gynecologic endoscopic surgeons.

Zipper Urogynecology Associates, headquartered in a cutting-edge facility designed and set up for teaching urogynecologists around the nation new procedures, has rounded itself into a full-service center with the addition of new investments in technology.

The new machines include transanal ultrasound, which has become the test of choice for the diagnosis of anal sphincter injury.

“The technology has become more affordable and this year Zipper Urogynecology invested in a transanal ultrasound machine for the practice. Now, within two minutes, we can perform an ultrasound with a very small probe and evaluate the anal sphincter for injury,” he said, adding that the surgical repair of the anal sphincter is not a “challenging surgery.”

Sphincteroplasty is the only surgical remedy for fecal incontinence. Dr. Zipper said this type of surgery is an option for people with bowel incontinence for whom dietary changes, biofeedback therapy, and exercise do not help.

“The majority of patients who have fecal incontinence do not suffer from a significant injury to the sphincter and surgery is not the answer. Somewhere between 5 and 20 percent of patients generally fit that category,” Dr. Zipper said.

With the ultrasound machine, “we can now identify patients who have a sphincter injury and offer them surgery. For those who do not have a major injury to the sphincter or who have only a small injury to the sphincter, they may respond to more conservative measures.”

Innovations by medical-device maker Medtronic Inc. are giving patients more options for fecal incontinence. Recently, a Medtronic device gained U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval for the treatment of fecal incontinence.

Medtronic’s InterStim Therapy, previously available to treat the symptoms of overactive bladder and non-obstructive urination retention, is now also approved for the treatment of chronic fecal incontinence in patients who have failed or are not candidates for more conservative treatments.

“The InterStim device,” Dr. Zipper said, “has just received FDA indication for the treatment of fecal incontinence, following a very large multi-center study where 80 percent of patients saw a reduction of episodes and an increase in quality of life.”

The 120-patient study, the largest trial of its kind in the world, examined the efficacy of InterStim Therapy in patients with chronic fecal incontinence who had failed or were not candidates for more conservative treatments. The results were published in the March 2010 issue of the “Annals of Surgery.”

At 12 months of follow-up, 83 percent of patients experiencing “therapeutic success,” defined as a greater than 50 percent reduction in the number of fecal incontinent episodes per week.

Furthermore, Dr. Zipper said, citing the study, complete continence (no incontinent episodes) was achieved in more than “40 percent of the patients.” In addition, patients in the study showed significant improvement in quality of life.

The implantable InterStim system uses mild electrical stimulation of the sacral nerves to influence the behavior of the pelvic-floor muscles and bowel, he said.

The system consists of a thin wire lead and a neurostimulator, or pacemaker-like device, as well as external clinician and patient programmers.

In the study, the most common device or therapy-related adverse events that occurred during the implant phase included site pain and a sensation of tingling, pricking, or numbness of the skin.

Since the device has proven to be an effective remedy for fecal incontinence, “insurance companies one-by-one are beginning to pay for the procedure,” Dr. Zipper said.

According to a National Institutes of Health-funded study, more than 18 million Americans have fecal incontinence. It is more common in adults, predominately women, but it is not a normal part of aging.

Zipper Urogynecology Associates also has introduced its practice Secca Therapy, an effective and minimally invasive option for treating bowel incontinence. Secca is an outpatient procedure.

“We now have the full spectrum of therapies, including radiofrequency treatment for bowel incontinence, injections to tighten the sphincter, and sphincter repair following ultrasound diagnosis,” Dr. Zipper said.
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