Emory eICU responds to current realities and future needs

The post-operative patient was turning blue. Heart rate 40, blood pressure 50, oxygen saturation 60. Lung dysfunction kicked in rapidly with a noticeable decline in vital signs. The ICU on-call physician was 15 minutes out. At a monitoring station miles away, an eICU RN detected the deterioration. She alerted the on-service eICU physician, who watched the patient's vital signs, ordered medications, reviewed lab data, and guided the critical care medicine nurse practitioner at the patient's bedside through advanced resuscitation techniques via high definition audiovisual tools. The patient stabilized.

This is the mechanism of the recently initiated Emory Electronic ICU in action. Located in the Doctor's Center Building on the campus of Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital (ESJH), the Emory eICU is linked to ICUs at ESJH, Emory University Hospital (EUH), EUH Midtown, and East Georgia Regional Medical Center by HIPAA-secure, bi-directional AV technology and digital connections that carry encrypted medical data. Emory Johns Creek Hospital will be joining soon.
Funded by a Health Care Innovations Award (HCIA) from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Emory's eICU was initiated by Dr. Timothy Buchman, Emory Critical Care Center (ECCC) director, as a way to expand access to critical care services, lower costs, and address the looming national shortage of critical care physicians.

Telemedicine provider Phillips Healthcare installed cameras, video monitors, microphones, and speakers in all of the participant ICUs as well as vital sign, patient monitoring, flowsheet, and lab interfaces and servers to handle data streams and storage. All hardware/software derived patient data from the participant ICUs routes to the eICU and its 24-7 monitoring personnel. The eICU's teams work closely with providers in the member ICUs in treating patients.

"This means all of our ICU nurses have a second pair of eyes watching their patients," says critical care nurse Cheryl Hiddleson, operations director of the eICU. "When other physicians have gone home for the day, we have an ICU physician available at the push of a button."

The HCIA grant also provides support for two residencies in the ECCC. A one-year critical care residency is recruiting, training, and deploying NPs and PAs throughout the Emory system. A six-month HCIA residency provides critical care training for providers in other fields from hospitals in Georgia's underserved communities. When certified, the PAs and NPs return to their hospitals, which will improve access to community ICU health care across the state and eventually serve thousands of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

"The partnership's next phase will be adding the emergency departments at EUH and Midtown," Dr. Buchman says. "Patients requiring critical care will then be tracked as soon as they enter the Emory system, further widening the range and scope of the data needed to make informed decisions."

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**Dr. Pettitt receives Olga Jonasson Award**

The Association of Women Surgeons Foundation has announced that Dr. Barbara Pettitt has been recognized with the 2014 Olga Jonasson Distinguished Member Award. The Jonasson Award is given to AWS members who exemplify the organization's mission to inspire, encourage, and enable women surgeons to realize their professional and personal goals. Dr. Pettitt has been a member since 1986. The foundation component of the organization was formed in 1996 to fund such AWS initiatives as a visiting professor program, research fellowships, and mentoring and networking opportunities.

Dr. Olga Jonasson was the first female chair of an academic department of surgery and a leader in the American College of Surgeons. After chairing the Department of Surgery at Chicago's Cook County Hospital for ten years, she was appointed chair of surgery and Robert M. Zollinger Professor of Surgery at Ohio State University in 1987. In 1993 she returned to Chicago and began serving as director of education and surgical services at the ACS, doing much to shape the organization's research portfolio. Dr. Jonasson died in 2006.

As the director of medical student education for the Department of Surgery, Dr. Pettitt has coordinated, managed, and presented a wide array of didactic courses and skills labs to medical students and surgical residents. She has enhanced the scope of Emory surgical trainees' learning experiences by spearheading the development of electronic teaching sites; devising learning
objectives, instructional guidelines, and assessment checklists for various simulation training modules of the American College of Surgeons/Association of Surgical Education's Medical Student Simulation-Based Surgical Skills Curriculum; and initiating educational scenarios in trauma evaluation and management using both full-body simulators and actors playing patients.

Dr. Pettitt guiding medical students through a trauma care scenario at Grady Memorial Hospital.

Since joining the Department in 1985, Dr. Pettitt's tenures as chief of surgery at Hughes Spalding Children's Hospital (now Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Hughes Spalding), chief of pediatric surgical services of the Grady Health System, and director of education for the Emory Endosurgery Unit have allowed her to encourage and influence hundreds of surgical and pediatric residents and medical students during their rotations. She has also managed several of the surgery follow-up clinics that cap Emory Medishare's surgical trips to Haiti, which are staffed by attending, resident, and medical student teams.

"Dr. Pettitt influences and encourages every Emory medical student, particularly women," says Dr. Keith Delman, program director of the Emory general surgery residency, who nominated Dr. Pettitt for the award. "Her positive impact is reflected in the fact that our surgery and surgical specialties accrue the greatest number of applicants from our graduating medical student class. In addition, her enthusiasm for her work and her warmth and compassion earn her the affection and respect of her students and colleagues. The Jonasson Award is national recognition of Dr. Pettitt's commitment to high standards of performance and educational achievement and her passion for cultivating the next generation of surgeons."

Dr. Newell named president of the American Society of Transplantation

Emory kidney and pancreas transplant surgeon Dr. Kenneth Newell is now president of the American Society of Transplantation (AST), a post he will serve for one year. He was president-elect of the AST for one year prior and councillor-at-large for two years.

Dr. Newell joined the Emory faculty in 2001 from the University of Chicago,
where he was director of kidney and pancreas transplantation. He also earned a PhD in immunology and did a fellowship in abdominal transplantation at the institution. He received his medical degree from the University of Michigan and completed his general surgery residency at Loyola Medical Center in Illinois.

At Emory, Dr. Newell established the unrelated paired donor kidney exchange program in 2007 and served as director of the living donor kidney transplant program until stepping down in 2014 so he could spend more time tending to his national responsibilities.

Currently, Dr. Newell chairs the mechanistic assays subcommittee of the NIH Clinical Trials In Organ Transplantation consortium. He directs the Emory component of a multicenter trial in the Immune Tolerance Network of the NIAID that is studying kidney transplant recipients who were able to stop taking immunosuppressive drugs without serious effects, the results of which were published in 2010 in the Journal of Clinical Investigation. He and his colleagues identified a pattern of genes in the occasional kidney transplant recipient that switches on in their white blood cells. Since this pattern eventually may be used to help identify other transplant recipients who could reduce or completely taper their immunosuppressive therapy, Dr. Newell is conducting additional studies and compiling a patient registry.

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**ESJH Center for Advanced Heart Failure earns VAD recertification**

Emory Saint Joseph's Center for Advanced Heart Failure has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™ for its ventricular assist device (VAD) program. The VAD is an artificial heart pump that can be used as a bridge to transplant or as destination therapy for certain patients in which transplantation is not an option.

The Certificate of Distinction recognizes Emory Saint Joseph's dedication to continuous compliance with The Joint Commission's national standards for health care quality and safety in disease-specific care. This is the 3rd consecutive recertification the Center has received from The Joint Commission since the implantation of the first Heartmate II LVAD in 2009 by Dr. Jeffrey Miller, surgical director of the center and the implanting surgeon at Emory Saint Joseph's. Currently, Dr. Miller's team has implanted more than 100 devices.

Commission representatives reviewed all aspects of the Center's program, focusing on inpatient and outpatient care and Heart Failure University, the Center's patient education program. This six week course is taught by team experts and covers such topics as understanding and coping with heart failure, nutrition, exercise, and medications. Data indicates that patients who complete the class have a lower incidence of readmission to the hospital.

Additional criteria for achieving VAD recertification are sufficient staffing and facility to support ventricular assist device placements and participation in the Interagency Registry for Mechanically Assisted Circulatory Support (INTERMACS), a registry for patients who have received device therapy to treat advanced heart failure. The Center for Advanced Heart Failure is one of only 23 institutions nationally with an accredited Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology training program, including certified heart failure experts.
**Dr. Vega recognized with named community program**

**Dr. David Vega**, surgical director of the heart transplant program, was recently honored at the opening of the Dr. David Vega Activity Center at the Wood Terrace Apartments in Doraville, GA. The Lite House, a nonprofit organization that runs no-cost after-school programs for children, operates the activity center.

Melvin Morris, a heart transplant recipient and one of Dr. Vega’s patients, is the founder and director of the Lite House. "I have grown to know the passion Dr. Vega has for education and perseverance and his love for kids," Mr. Morris says. "We have spent countless hours discussing youth issues and how we can make a difference. For Lite House it was a no brainer to dedicate a center in his name to honor his compassion for youth and his medical accomplishments."

The activity center, which is open year around and serves about 40 children, provides physical education, self-esteem enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, and standardized test preparation. It has a computer lab to help with homework, and there are camps for resident children in the summer. Ranging in age from five to 18, the children are bilingual and have passed the necessary requirements to be promoted to the next grade or graduate from high school.

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**Welcome our new faculty**

**Matthew E. Hiro, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**

Dr. Hiro received his MD from Loyola University Chicago in 2007. He then completed his plastic surgery residency at the University of South Florida and a hand surgery fellowship at Loyola University.

His clinical interests are adult and pediatric hand and wrist surgery, extremity reconstruction, reconstructive microsurgery, peripheral nerve surgery, and cutaneous oncology. His research interests include biomechanics of the hand and wrist and postoperative pain management after surgery.

**Juvonda S. Hodge, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Trauma/Surgical Critical Care at Grady Memorial Hospital**

After receiving her MD from New Jersey Medical School, Dr. Hodge did her general surgery residency at Howard University Hospital in Washington, DC, from 1996-2001. Prior to coming to Emory, she served on the faculty of the College of Allied Health Professions of the University of South Alabama and was associate director of the burn unit at the University of South Alabama Medical Center.

Dr. Hodge will be working with Dr. Walter Ingram, long-time director of the burn unit at Grady Memorial Hospital, as the unit’s assistant medical director.
Steven K. Macheers, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Dr. Macheers is a former member of Emory Specialty Associates based at Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital. His primary practice will remain at Saint Joseph's. He received his MD from Tulane in 1985, did his general surgery residency at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, and completed his CT surgery residency and fellowship at Emory.

His research portfolio includes studies of new valve systems for high risk patients with aortic stenosis, the use of wearable cardioverter defibrillators to decrease arrhythmic death for patients with a left-ventricular ejection fraction following coronary artery bypass graft surgery, and evaluation of new stents for patients with unprotected left main coronary artery disease.

Jonathan A. Meisel, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Pediatric Surgery

Dr. Meisel joined Emory after completing his pediatric surgery fellowship at Cohen Children’s Medical Center, New Hyde Park, NY. He received his MD at the University of Buffalo, completed his general surgery residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and did his pediatric surgery research fellowship in Dr. Judah Folkman and Dr. Mark Puder’s lab at Boston Children’s Hospital.

Dr. Meisel is an up-and-coming surgical scientist with a growing bibliography. During his research fellowship he studied parenteral nutrition-associated liver disease, the benefits of omega-3 fatty acids, and murine models of tissue regeneration.

Ronald F. Parsons, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Transplantation

Dr. Parsons’ clinical focus is kidney and pancreas transplantation. He received his MD and graduated magna cum laude from the University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences in 2005, completed his general surgery residency at the University of Pennsylvania in 2012, and did an abdominal transplant surgery fellowship at Columbia University Medical Center in 2014.

While at Penn, he did a research fellowship in the Harrison Department of Surgical Research and investigated mechanisms of B cell tolerance after islet transplantation, humoral tolerance after donor lymphocyte infusion, and plasma cell development after murine cardiac transplantation.

Call for abstracts: 14th Annual Surgery Research Symposium

The 14th Annual Surgery Research Symposium of the Department of Surgery will be held on April 30, 2015. The symposium showcases the basic and clinical science work of our students, postdocs, residents, and fellows. The symposium will begin at 7:00 a.m. with a lecture by John Alverdy, MD, at surgical grand rounds. Dr. Alverdy is the Sara and Harold Lincoln Thompson Professor of Surgery and director of surgical treatment of obesity, University of Chicago. The oral and poster presentations will be held from 8:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.
All trainees are expected to attend, whether they make a presentation or not. Emory OR will begin at 11:00 AM. Outpatient clinics will be closed.

While trainees in a dedicated laboratory rotation should submit their research, the call for abstracts in both basic and clinical science categories is open to all trainees. All submissions will be considered for both oral and poster presentation. The submission deadline is midnight, December 11, 2014. Notifications will be sent on or before February 13, 2015.

Since the symposium is not a national or regional meeting, previously presented talks are admissible. However, previously published work must fall within the past two years.

The highest scoring abstracts in each category will be selected for a seven minute oral presentation. Additional highly ranked abstracts will be allotted slots for poster presentation. Cash awards for first and second place in oral presentations in both clinical and basic science categories will be given, as well as awards for the top poster in each category. All winners will be invited to lunch with faculty immediately following the symposium.

Download the official symposium announcement for abstract and submission requirements. Questions or concerns should be addressed to Griselda McCorquodale at gmccorg@emory.edu.

Upcoming events

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<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>DATE/TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>SURGICAL GRAND ROUNDS&lt;br&gt;Blurring the Margins in Pancreatic Cancer Surgery&lt;br&gt;Presented by David A. Kooby, MD&lt;br&gt;– Professor of Surgery, Division of Surgical Oncology, Department of Surgery, Emory</td>
<td>7:00 a.m.–8:00 a.m., Oct. 2, 2014</td>
<td>EUH auditorium</td>
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<td>Event Description</td>
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<td><strong>SURGICAL GRAND ROUNDS</strong></td>
<td>7:00 a.m.–8:00 a.m., Oct. 9, 2014</td>
<td>EUH auditorium</td>
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<td>Extending the Life of Your Engine: Mechanical Circulatory Support</td>
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<td>Presented by Richard Lee, MD</td>
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<td>– Chief Resident, Department of Surgery, Emory University School of Medicine</td>
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<td><strong>SURGICAL GRAND ROUNDS</strong></td>
<td>7:00 a.m.–8:00 a.m., Oct. 16, 2014</td>
<td>EUH auditorium</td>
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<td>20th Annual W. Dean Warren Lecture</td>
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<td>Achieving High Quality Surgery: Observations from the ACS NSQIP</td>
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<td>Presented by Clifford Ko, MD, MS, MSHA</td>
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<td>– Director, Division of Research and Optimal Patient Care, American College of Surgeons</td>
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<td>– Professor of Surgery, Surgical Vice Chair of Clinical Research, Robert and Kelly Day Endowed Chair of Clinical Outcomes, UCLA School of Medicine</td>
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<td><strong>Department of Surgery Faculty Meeting</strong></td>
<td>5:30 p.m.–7:00 p.m., Oct. 21, 2014</td>
<td>TEC B6300</td>
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<td>School of Medicine Dean Christian Larsen will be presenting.</td>
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<td><strong>Emory Medicine 2015</strong></td>
<td>4:30 p.m., Oct. 29, 2014</td>
<td>WHSCAB Auditorium</td>
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<td>Address by Dean Christian Larsen.</td>
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<td><strong>2014 EHC Quality Conference</strong></td>
<td>8:00 a.m.–noon, Oct. 31, 2014</td>
<td>Cox Hall</td>
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