Hallmark Health
at the pulse of heart health
Both Lawrence Memorial Hospital of Medford and Melrose-Wakefield Hospital were honored with A grades in the fall 2014 Hospital Safety Score, which rates how well hospitals protect patients from errors, injuries and infections. The grades are released every six months by Leapfrog, and this is the sixth consecutive time the Hallmark Health hospitals have received A scores. The Hospital Safety Score is compiled by The Leapfrog Group, an independent industry cooperative that advocates for increased transparency, quality and safety in hospitals. It uses 28 measures of publicly available hospital safety data to produce a single score representing a hospital’s overall capacity to keep patients safe from preventable harm. More than 2,500 United States hospitals were assigned scores in fall 2014 – only about a third received an A grade.

Fifty million visits. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), that’s how many people in the United States seek care each year for digestive system problems or gastrointestinal (GI) disease.

Hallmark Health’s team of 11 GI physicians “are trained and equipped to cover every area of subspecialty care and every procedure within our field, from hepatitis to irritable bowel syndrome,” said Michael Newman, MD, medical director of GI services at Hallmark Health.

One example is Martin Hahn, MD, who runs Hallmark Health’s endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) service (see sidebar). Another is Chintamani Gokhale, MD, who performs endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatogram (ERCP) studies of the bile and pancreatic ducts. ERCP is a procedure in which a special endoscope is inserted through the mouth of a sedated patient to examine the bile duct and pancreatic duct, for example, to remove a stone or open a blockage. Another diagnostic innovation is the “pill cam,” a tiny camera swallowed by the patient that takes pictures of the small bowel to look for polyps and bleeding sources.
Among the most common GI conditions seen by Hallmark Health gastroenterologists are esophageal disorders, including GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease); pancreas, gall bladder, and stomach conditions; small bowel and colon problems; and liver disease.

Procedures are performed at Melrose-Wakefield Hospital and Lawrence Memorial Hospital of Medford, “providing a very safe hospital setting with one of the best and most experienced groups of endoscopy nurses anywhere,” said Newman.

GI services also works with other Hallmark Health departments to care for patients. The pelvic floor program, which includes GI, physical therapy, psychology and gynecology, for example, helps patients with urinary incontinence and constipation.

“It’s unusual to find this level of collaborative care outside of Boston,” said Newman. “These issues are very common and, while not life-threatening, are extremely significant in terms of these patients’ comfort and quality of life.”

**Endoscopic ultrasound a valuable tool in GI, cancer care**

Endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) is an imaging technology that allows physicians to see the walls of the digestive tract and nearby organs in great detail. Usually only found at larger, tertiary medical centers, Hallmark Health is one of the few community providers that has the high-skilled training and state-of-the-art resources available to offer EUS locally.

EUS uses an endoscope (a thin, flexible tube) with a small ultrasound device inside, which produces sound waves that create very detailed images. As such, it offers a precise way to assess gastrointestinal and other diseases, particularly cancers, to determine the extent of current disease and evaluate findings from other tests such as CT scans or MRIs.

“EUS is especially important in the accurate staging of tumors,” said Martin Hahn, MD, a gastroenterologist at Hallmark Health who is specially trained in the use of the technology. “In esophageal cancers, for example, it’s very important to know how deep the cancer is – is it superficial or has it penetrated the wall of the esophagus? EUS studies provide crucial information for oncologists.”

The technology also has therapeutic uses, from performing fine-needle biopsy to injecting medications to alleviate intractable pain in some cancer patients.

Hallmark Health has more than 10 years of experience with this important technology.
Program helps patients live healthier lives after cardiac events

Three times a week, Saugus resident and former firefighter Jeff Moses meets up with friends to exercise. The group takes turns choosing music for their exercise session while they talk and bond with one another. Moses and the others aren’t members of a gym or fitness class; rather, they are patients in Hallmark Health’s Cardiac Rehabilitation program.

Cardiac Rehabilitation, offered at Lawrence Memorial Hospital of Medford and Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, is a comprehensive program designed for patients who have had a heart attack or other cardiac event such as cardiac surgery, balloon angioplasty, stent placement, stable angina pectoris or congestive heart failure. Hallmark Health’s program is certified by the Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation and includes a multidisciplinary team of cardiologists, cardiac rehab nursing specialists, pulmonary rehab nursing specialists, exercise physiologists, physical therapists and dietitians, who are all focused on getting patients back on track to a healthier lifestyle.

Cardiac Rehab begins while patients are in the hospital and continues on an outpatient basis once they are discharged. Patients exercise while supervised by cardiac nurses and exercise physiologists or physical therapists. Each session is tailored to the individual abilities of the patients. Patients also attend group classes that cover risk factors, exercise, stress management, diet and cardiac topics. The goal is to help patients make a permanent healthy-lifestyle change so that they can live a long, productive, meaningful life.

While the focus of the program is to help patients achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle, Hallmark Health goes well beyond that.

“It’s a lot of fun,” Moses says of Cardiac Rehab. “It’s not like going to the gym - you talk, you joke. It’s like a little therapy session.”

“Patients do enjoy the exercise sessions, but it is important to remember that they are in a supervised program as they recover,” said Joan Keneally-Nies, RN, BSN, senior clinician. “Our patients are monitored as they workout to ensure that if there are any problems, we can respond immediately.”

Moses, 60, felt short of breath while working at a fire on Sept. 15, 2014. Paramedics on the scene examined and sent him to the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital Emergency Department. Within minutes of his arrival, ED staff were certain Moses was experiencing a cardiac event and ordered a stress test and within 24 hours a cardiac catheterization. It was determined that one of Moses’ coronary arteries was 95 percent blocked and a stent was placed in that artery.

Moses has taken the lifestyle changes he has learned through Cardiac Rehab and made them a part of his everyday life – a healthier diet and regular walks with his wife, Marianne. He is committed to maintaining these positive changes so he can keep up with their growing family, which already includes four grandchildren!

To learn more, visit www.hallmarkhealth.org and select Programs.

Regional leader in cardiac and endovascular care

The Hallmark Health Cardiac & Endovascular Center, located at Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, is the only one of its kind in the region. The state-of-the-art center brings together the expertise of cardiologists, vascular surgeons, interventional radiologists, emergency medicine physicians and other caregivers. The result is the ability to offer patients high-level care right in their own community. The center’s team of experts is supported by Hallmark Health’s emergency physicians. Experienced in the rapid diagnosis and treatment of heart attacks, vascular conditions and stroke, the emergency physicians work collaboratively with the cardiac and endovascular physicians to ensure patients receive the quickest, most appropriate treatment.
Heart attack symptoms different for women

It is important for people to know that heart attack signs and symptoms are often different for women. While most associate chest pain with a heart attack, it is not always the case for women. It is important to recognize the following signs and symptoms and seek treatment if they don’t go away after a few minutes.

- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of your chest that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back.
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- Other signs including cold sweats, nausea or lightheadedness

Heart disease by the numbers

- Cardiovascular disease is the leading global cause of death, accounting for 17.3 million deaths per year, a number that is expected to grow to more than 23.6 million by 2030.
- Cardiovascular diseases claim more lives than all forms of cancer combined.
- About 85.6 million Americans are living with some form of cardiovascular disease or the after-effects of stroke.
- Someone in the U.S. dies from heart disease about once every 90 seconds.
- Direct and indirect costs of cardiovascular diseases and stroke total more than $320.1 billion. That includes health expenditures and lost productivity.

These statistics were pulled from the American Heart Association’s 2015 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update, which is compiled annually by the American Heart Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health and other government sources.
What is the most interesting place you have ever visited?

My wife and I visited the ruins of Pompeii in Italy for our honeymoon. Pompeii was an ancient Roman city destroyed by the eruption of the volcano Mount Vesuvius in the first century AD. It was amazing to see a preserved time capsule of what life was like in ancient times.

What do you enjoy doing when you’re not working?

Any free time I have, I enjoy playing tennis and play in a few leagues. I really enjoy constantly challenging myself to improve as well as the social aspect of playing on a team, meeting new people with similar interests and also playing mixed doubles with my wife as my partner.

What is your favorite kind of music?

I really am into classic rock. I would probably be able to name any Beatles song and the album it was on.

What do you like most about being a physician?

I like the variety of medical challenges that are presented on a daily basis, meeting new people and working with staff to achieve the common goal of excellent patient care.

What is the best piece of advice you would give someone interested in pursuing medicine as a career?

Choosing a career in medicine is a long process with many years or training, sleepless nights and sacrifices. It is essential to enjoy and appreciate the entire process from start to finish and never lose sight of your goals and dreams.

Dr. Benetti is an internal medicine physician with Hallmark Health Medical Associates and his office is located in Stoneham.
If you could have lunch with anyone who would it be?
My dream lunch would be with my dad, who passed away eight years ago. I would love to catch up with him about my life and tell him all about the grandchildren that he never had the chance to meet.

What is the most interesting place you have ever visited?
My wife and I once did a night scuba dive off the coast of Kona, in the Big Island of Hawaii. Nine manta rays showed up and glided around our dive site for 45 minutes. It was breathtaking.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?
Photography and going to the movies, but with two small kids at home there's not a lot of opportunities right now!

What do you like most about being a physician?
There's more than one. I'm lucky that I found a profession that I am passionate about, that challenges me and at the same time offers so many rewards.

What is the best piece of advice you would give someone interested in pursuing medicine as a career?
Go into the profession for the right reasons. Follow your passion, work hard and don't give up.

What is the last book you read?
*Bunker Hill – A City, A Siege, A Revolution* by Nathaniel Philbrick

Dr. Leung is a gastroenterologist with Hallmark Health Medical Associates with offices in Stoneham and Medford.
Incontinence, though embarrassing, is a very common health problem. It is estimated that one in four women is affected by incontinence and related conditions that together are called pelvic floor disorders. These conditions also affect men, but are less common.

Hallmark Health’s pelvic health program’s multidisciplinary team includes a gynecologist, gastroenterologist, and physical and behavioral health therapists to provide expert, state-of-the-art care in an environment of compassion and dignity.

Medications or surgery may be recommended for some patients, but the majority also receive physical therapy. Hallmark Health offers a specialized physical therapy rehabilitation program for people with pelvic floor and continence disorders.

“Not every pelvic floor condition requires medications or surgery, and many patients prefer to avoid them if possible,” said gynecologist Roy Epstein, MD. “Our program is fortunate to have an expert and wide-ranging physical therapy component that is convenient for patients and very effective.”

Amanda Holmes, PT, MS, a certified continence and pelvic floor rehabilitation physical therapist, heads the Hallmark Health Pelvic Floor and Continence Rehabilitation Program. Patients referred by their physician “most often come to us for strengthening and relaxation of the pelvic floor muscles and accessory muscles,” she said. “But each patient’s treatment is individualized to his or her goals and needs.” Holmes employs both high- and low-tech techniques to help patients regain both function and confidence – everything from biofeedback and electrical stimulation to therapeutic exercises.

“Sometimes patients believe that pelvic floor problems are just a part of aging and there isn’t anything that can be done to help them,” said gastroenterologist Wanda Blanton, MD. “What sets our program apart is that by bringing together all these disciplines, with clinicians who have a passionate clinical interest in these issues, we can better coordinate care. And we do help patients. When they work with our team, particularly with physical therapy, they are so grateful.”

To learn more, visit www.hallmarkhealth.org and select Programs.
Meet the women of the newly opened Hallmark Health Cancer Center Gift Shop. They’ve donated their time, energy and money to fill this beautiful shop with the things that patients and visitors may need – crafts, cards, toys, gifts, head scarves and turbans, and access to healing massage and wigs – all at discounted prices. They also volunteer their time to staff the shop, and all proceeds go right back to the Cancer Center. Funds to build the Gift Shop were raised, in part, by Hallmark Health’s annual Golf for Women’s Health, a golf and tennis outing. The shop is located on the 5th floor of the Cancer Center at 41 Montvale Ave. in Stoneham.

The Marie B. McCarthy Faculty and Student Enrichment Fund was established in honor of McCarthy’s 30 years of service to the Lawrence Memorial /Regis College School of Nursing.

**Upcoming fundraising events**

- **Taste of Spring**
  Friday, March 20, 2015
  Flagship Motorcars of Lynnfield, Mercedes-Benz, 6 p.m.

- **Luau and auction to benefit VNA and Hospice**
  Friday, May 8, 2015, 6 p.m.
  Anthony’s Restaurant, Malden

- **Golf and Tennis Outing for Women’s Health**
  Monday, May 11, 2015
  Bellevue Golf Club, Melrose

- **Stride for Healthy Communities**
  Saturday, June 6, 2015
  Lake Quannapowitt, Wakefield
  9 a.m. 5k run begins
  9:30 a.m. 5k walk begins

- **Melrose-Wakefield Hospital Golf Tournament**
  Monday, June 22, 2015
  Kernwood Country Club, Salem, 12 p.m.

- **Lawrence Memorial Hospital Golf Tournament**
  Monday, October 5, 2015
  Winchester Country Club, Winchester, 12 p.m.
Managing diabetes during winter months

Managing your diabetes during New England winters can be full of challenges such as the frigid weather, holiday stress, and the cold and flu season. Taking certain precautions at this time of year can help individuals with diabetes stay safe and healthy.

Mike Cheney, NP, a nurse practitioner at the Joslin Diabetes Affiliate and Endocrine Center at Hallmark Health, offers the following tips.

**Increased risks for those with diabetes**

Winter-time weight gain and inactivity can be added risk factors for patients with diabetes. “There are parties and festivities with all kinds of tempting treats, and sometimes we may not pay as much attention to what we are eating and drinking as we normally do,” said Cheney. “Coming off of the winter holidays, we sometimes see our patients struggling with their weight.”

Cheney points out that talking with your physician and working with your dietitian can help keep you on track and offers the following suggestions to keep your body moving.

- Skip the elevator and take the stairs.
- Find a walking program at a local mall or shopping center.
- Try activities you can do at home, such as stretching.
- This might be the right time to use that gym membership or even work with a personal trainer (programs such as the Hallmark Health System Center for Weight Management and Weight Loss Surgery offer discounted rates to personal trainers).

“Just remember to consult with your physician before you begin any exercise program,” reminded Cheney.

**Illness impacts blood sugar levels**

When you are sick with flu, cold, respiratory infection and other common winter illnesses, your blood sugar levels can be affected. You will need to monitor your levels more frequently, and let your provider know of any changes. Cheney suggests the following.

- Prevention is the best medicine.
- Get an annual flu shot – it’s not too late!
- Practice good hand hygiene.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your elbow when sneezing and coughing.

**The cold’s effect on circulation**

One of the complications of diabetes is that temperature sensation in your legs and feet can be affected. “We see people trying to warm up with hot water bottles or electric blankets. This can result in burns. Also, if you are stepping into a hot bath to warm up, be sure to test the water with your hands first to get a true gauge of the water temperature.”

“When you’re going outside, the best way to stay warm is to dress in layers and to make sure that your head, hands and feet are well protected,” said Cheney. “But individuals with diabetes need to think about other important items being kept warm as well. Your insulin, glucose meter and test strips are sensitive to the cold. Be sure not to leave them in your car or exposed to the cold for long periods of time as their effectiveness can be diminished.”

**Hydrate and moisturize**

Dry winter air can lead to dehydration, which can raise blood glucose levels and dry out skin. “During the cold weather months many people don’t realize just how much water they lose over the course of a day,” said Cheney. “Remember to drink fluids and to use a thick moisturizer regularly on your skin (thin ones tend to evaporate quickly). Take good care of your feet, but don’t use moisturizer between your toes, as it could lead to fungal growth.”

**Final thought**

“The most important thing anyone, with or without diabetes, can do to improve their health is to quit smoking if you still smoke,” added Cheney. “Beyond that, individuals with diabetes should work closely with their doctors and health team, be conscious of their food choices, and try to lead an active lifestyle.”

The Joslin Diabetes Affiliate and Endocrine Program at Hallmark Health offers the latest advances for treating diabetes and its complications as well as patient education and support services. Hallmark Health is one of 47 national and two international Affiliate locations and the only Joslin Affiliate in Boston’s northern suburbs.
When a breast cancer diagnosis took Elaine Carlson by surprise, she found support and expert care in the coordinated team at the Hallmark Health Comprehensive Breast Center.

Carlson of Everett had high hopes of going back to work when she and her husband moved back to Massachusetts from Florida in 2009. After finding a lump shortly thereafter, her primary care physician referred her to Mathew Brown, MD, a surgical oncologist at Hallmark Health’s Comprehensive Breast Center. Instead of starting fresh at a new job, Carlson learned she would be working to survive breast cancer.

Hallmark Heath’s center, located on Montvale Avenue in Stoneham, integrates a full range of services in one location. A multidisciplinary team of surgical oncologists, radiologists, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, nurses, social workers and others collaborate to make each patient’s experience smooth and effective. In addition to Dr. Brown, Carlson’s core team included Rebecca Eisenberg, MD, Hematology/Oncology; Karen Graham, senior medical secretary; and Kathi Whittier, MSW, LICSW, oncology social worker.

“A lot of people get scared, but they made me feel at ease,” Carlson said of her care team.

Day in and day out, the quality and continuity of care Carlson received gave her confidence and trust. “They are so good here,” she said. “They steered me on the right track.”

Each person she interacted with took the sting out of an already difficult process. Early in her treatment, Dr. Brown planned to be out of town when the results of a test would be available on a Saturday. “Guess who showed up?” said Carlson. Dr. Brown.

When Carlson was hesitant about some of the recommended procedures, Dr. Eisenberg walked her through them. “When I first met with her, you could see it in her face – compassion,” said Carlson of her radiation oncologist. “She explained everything and never rushed me out.”

Carlson’s emotional and mental health were further supported by Graham at the front desk and Whittier when she was having a tough time coping with the illness.

“I am just in awe of them,” she said of the entire team. “They made me strong.”

Carlson has been cancer free for four years. At a recent follow up appointment, she caught up with her team like old friends. “He’s got to give me my hugs,” Carlson said of Dr. Brown shortly before they embraced. She was nearly speechless.

“I have a lot to smile about.”

To learn more, visit www.hallmarkhealth.org and select Programs.
New Physicians

Richard Benetti, MD
Internal Medicine
Stoneham
781-665-7557

William Faust, MD
Urology
Stoneham
781-979-0661

Christopher Leung, MD
Gastroenterology
Stoneham and Medford
781-213-5200

Michael Pinnolis, MD
Ophthalmology
Stoneham
781-662-5520

Ana Sanchez, MD, F.A.A.P.
Pediatrics
Peabody and Lynn
978-535-1110