Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

“It’s like something from a futuristic movie!”
Meet Conemaugh Health System’s new Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Susan Williams

Thank you to all who have made me feel so welcome in my new role as Chief Medical Officer of Conemaugh Health System! I chose to come to Conemaugh, in part, because of the organization’s long standing reputation for consistently providing high quality care.

Conemaugh is a strong organization, and now with the resources of Duke LifePoint, we can accelerate the transformation needed to be successful in the ever-changing world of healthcare.

Our priorities will continue to be helping our population become healthy, stay healthy and providing an outstanding patient experience at all of our facilities.

Dr. Susan Williams is board certified in Internal Medicine and Nephrology with a bachelor’s degree from Cornell University and a doctorate degree from the State University of New York. She was an Internal Medicine resident at University Hospitals of Cleveland and a fellow at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. She is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine with special qualification in critical care, and the American Board of Nephrology.

Changing Healthcare
How will it impact you and your family?

Population Health is a relatively new term but something you will likely be hearing more frequently. “As caregivers we are working hard to be proactive, to keep people healthy and to prevent them from becoming sick in the first place,” says Dr. Christine Rohanna, a Family Medicine physician at Conemaugh Physician Group – St Benedict.

The goals of Population Health include:

- Improve the patient care experience
- Improve the health of our community
- Reduce healthcare costs

“Access to healthcare is critical to success,” says Conemaugh Health System Chief Medical Officer Dr. Susan Williams. “If we want our communities to get or stay healthy, we must reach out to those in need and help them to get care for themselves and their families.”

The inability to pay for healthcare may have prevented some individuals from seeking help in the past. To assist, Conemaugh has Certified Application Counselors available to help patients sign up for affordable health insurance. The Health Insurance Marketplace open enrollment period began on November 1, 2015, and will close on January 31, 2016. To discuss your options with one of our Certified Counselors, call 1-888-982-9144 or email us at conemaugh.CAC@conemaugh.org.

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Another change healthcare consumers will notice in coming months and years is a shift from inpatient to outpatient care. Inpatient hospital stays are dropping while outpatient visits are climbing. The trend is due, in part, to new technologies that allow many tests and procedures to now be done on an outpatient basis. "It is good for patients," says Steve Tucker, CEO of Conemaugh’s Hospital Division. "Most patients would rather recover at home where they are comfortable and at ease." With the focus on outpatient care comes the need for new, convenient facilities.

Conemaugh Meyersdale Outpatient Center...

In August 2015, a ribbon cutting was held to open the Conemaugh Meyersdale Outpatient Center. "This Center is a great focal point for the community and will allow Conemaugh Meyersdale Medical Center to better serve patients in an efficient, one-stop, location for primary care services," says Heather Smith, President, Conemaugh Meyersdale Medical Center. This new Center is the first of several new outpatient centers that will be built over the next few years to improve patient access.

quality healthcare for the entire family.

Jennifer Mill, PA-C; Dr. Ashley Berkley; Dr. Dwayne Platt; Dr. Gretchen Platt; Dr. Nathan Thomas; Elizabeth Simpkins, PA-C; Dr. David Glusko; Lindsay Menhorn, CRNP

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At 86-years-old, Cora Levadnuk is not afraid to try new things. She was the first patient to be treated with Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBO) at Conemaugh’s Advanced Wound Center.

“It is remarkable technology that I am glad we have available to us.”

“There’s really nothing to it. It’s actually quite relaxing,” says Cora. “You can watch a movie or television. I was not nervous at all because the staff was so nice, and they know what they are doing.”

Cora had been battling an open wound on her leg for nearly three years, the result of radiation damage caused by treatment of a skin cancer lesion on her leg. “It was very troublesome,” says Cora. “I had to change the dressing daily. It was inconvenient and traditional treatments just were not working.”
“Radiation can damage normal tissue as well as cancerous tissue,” says Dr. Paul Rollins, Conemaugh Physician Group – Plastic Surgery and Medical Director of the Advanced Wound Center. “This can damage the blood vessels in the irradiated area making it more difficult for wounds to heal in that area. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy may reduce wound breakdown and help with healing.”

“It’s like something from a futuristic movie,” says Cora. “You go in with a wound and leave healed. It is remarkable technology that I am glad we have available to us.” The staff at the Center were glad to see Cora’s leg heal but sad to see their first patient leave. “She is the sweetest lady,” says HBO Technologist Courtney Smith, LPN. “We had a little going away party for her to let her know how much we will miss seeing her.”

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**HyperBaric Oxygen therapy facts**

- A trained staff member remains in the room with you at all times
- You can communicate with staff during your treatment
- Treatments last about two hours
- Most patients receive between 30 and 40 treatments
- HBO is not painful
- You may feel pressure in your ears, like when you fly in a plane

Cora with HBO technologist Courtney Smith

Dr. Kamran Shayesteh, Patricia Eagleson, CRNP, Dr. Paul Rollins, and Dr. Stanley Zagorski are all trained in Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and work with patients at Conemaugh’s Advanced Wound Center.
Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center’s Environmental staff has an extra set of hands ... well technically beams of light to help make sure operating rooms and other patient care areas are as clean as possible.

The TRU-D robot emits ultraviolet-C light through eight sensors that measure the size of the room and its contents. The UV-C light bounces around the room and disinfects underneath and between surfaces making the rooms 99.99% disinfected – clean beyond what is humanly possible! Environmental Services personnel clean the rooms using established best practices and then use the robot as an additional measure to ensure patient safety.

“The technology is great,” says Dr. D’Arcy Duke, Conemaugh Physician Group – Surgery. “As surgeons, patient safety is at the heart of what we do. Knowing our ORs have been given this extra cleaning offers peace of mind for the staff and the patients.”

The clean environment is one of the reasons Conemaugh Memorial is proud to be below the National average for hospital infections including MRSA, C-diff, Catheter Associated Urinary Tract, and Central Line-Associated Infections. Learn more about Conemaugh’s safety indicators at conemaugh.org.
Dennis Berkebile remembers his grandmother having diabetes, but other than that, he had never given the disease much thought. “I was told at one point that I was ‘borderline’ for diabetes,” says Dennis. “I figured that was okay because it meant I did not have diabetes.” But then Dennis began having problems with his feet. “The podiatrist asked me if I was diabetic,” says Dennis. “He asked me what my A1C was. I had no idea!” Dennis had blood work done, and learned not only what an A1C was, but surprisingly that his was too high. “My A1C was at 8% and it should be below 6%,” says Dennis. “I knew something had to change.”

Through his Primary Care physician, Dennis learned about a diabetes self management class offered by the Conemaugh Diabetes Institute.

The four session group class is taught by certified diabetes educators and it is covered by most insurances. Patients can be referred by their physician. For Dennis, a big part of the class was learning about portion size. “They taught me that I can still eat the things I love, I just don’t need to eat as much,” says Dennis, who has lost about 75 pounds.

“I’ve been able to lower my blood pressure and cholesterol. I feel great. I have energy to do things that I would have never thought of before,” says Dennis. “I love the way I feel.”

What is an A1C Test?
The A1C test is a blood test that checks the average levels of glucose in the blood.
- A1C is reported as a percentage
- The higher the percentage, the higher the level of glucose in the blood
- A normal level an A1C should be below 5.7%

Want to check your risk of diabetes?
Visit conemaugh.org to take a Diabetes Risk Assessment. This simple seven question assessment can help determine if you are at low or increased risk of diabetes, or if you have pre-diabetes which means your blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

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