

# PRIME

Summer 2013



Level 1  
**Trauma Care**  
When every second counts



Conemaugh  
Health System

It's  
**PRIME**  
time!

There are still patients who are convinced that the very best healthcare is only available in a big city. At Conemaugh Health System, we are doing our best to change that perception. Our physicians are experienced and well trained with outcomes among the very best, many in the top 5% in the nation!

**Prime** [prahym] *adj.*- of first importance; demanding full consideration

**noun** - 1. most flourishing stage or state 2. the best choice or part of anything

In this edition of **PRIME**, we also showcase new technology. Millions of dollars have been invested to make sure that our technology is second to none! We want the very best for our patients because they are also our family, friends and neighbors. Learn more at [www.conemaugh.org](http://www.conemaugh.org)



**Dr. William Carney**  
Medical Director  
Conemaugh Physician Group

# Newest, Fastest, Safest, BEST.

When it comes to our healthcare concerns, we all want a safe environment, accurate test results and quick answers. Conemaugh Health System recently invested millions of dollars in the latest and best, state-of-the-art technology to meet these needs and wants of our patients.

## NEW "Pentero" Microscope

- **Most powerful microscope in the industry**
- **Razor sharp images**
- **Safer for patients**

The Pentero Microscope gives Conemaugh Physician Group Neurosurgeon **Dr. Alfred Bowles** and his colleagues a much better view for brain and spine surgery thanks to powerful magnification and high-speed autofocus which delivers razor-sharp images. "This is the most powerful microscope in the industry and it provides us with a crystal clear view," says Dr. Bowles who is now using the microscope routinely for brain aneurysm cases. "With this technology, I can see the aneurysm and all of the related arteries and vessels. And with video angiography we can see immediately if the vessels are clipped correctly. It saves us time and reduces the chance of a patient having a rupture or a stroke."

Future plans call for Conemaugh Memorial to be part of a research study to use the microscope in combination with a radioactive isotope to better pinpoint brain tumor tissue. "With this technology, the brain tumor tissue glows pink enabling us to completely remove cancerous tissue while preserving healthy brain," says Dr. Bowles. "This technology is a huge benefit to our patients."



**Alfred Bowles, MD**  
Conemaugh Physician Group - Neurosurgery



## NEW “Flash” CT

- Scans faster than a beating heart
- Cuts radiation dose by 50 percent
- Best technology available in the industry

“The Flash CT allows us to decrease testing time which is a great benefit to patients who have difficulty remaining still or holding their breath,” says **Dr. Gary Kramer**, Chairman, Radiology, Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. CT stands for Computed Tomography. It is a safe and painless test that uses x-rays to produce detailed pictures of organs, soft tissue, bones and blood vessels. With Flash CT, two x-ray tubes go around the patient’s body at the same time, providing a quicker scan for patients and greater detail for physicians.

**Gary Kramer, MD**  
Chairman, Radiology  
Conemaugh Memorial  
Medical Center



## NEW “Artis Zee” Bi-Plane Interventional Radiology Suite

- Outstanding image quality
- Quicker and more comfortable exam
- More detailed results

The Artis Zee biplane system allows doctors to get a 3-D view of the patient from all directions. “The biplane system creates a very detailed image that helps physicians make quick and accurate decisions,” says **Dr. Arthur Ciacchella**, Interventional Radiologist, Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. “The quality of the image is outstanding and it is a quicker and more comfortable exam for patients.” ♦

**Arthur Ciacchella, MD**  
Interventional Radiologist  
Conemaugh Memorial  
Medical Center





It was a typical Saturday afternoon for the Sorg family: yard work and playtime in the backyard. But when 3-year-old Sydnee accidentally got hit in the head by a plastic swing, things quickly took a scary turn. “Within minutes she was throwing up and she became sluggish,” says Sydnee’s dad Robert. “We knew that something was seriously wrong.” The Sorgs rushed Sydnee to Conemaugh Memorial’s Emergency Department where a CAT scan showed an epidural hematoma. “An epidural hematoma is a type of traumatic brain injury in which blood collects in the area between the brain and the skull,” says ER physician Dr. Clifford Neal. “The blood buildup causes pressure in the brain which can be fatal.” “We knew time was not on our side,” said Conemaugh Physician Group Neurosurgeon Dr. Kevin Zitnay. Sydnee was rushed into surgery and she is now doing remarkably well. “It was a miracle,” says Sydnee’s mom Kristi. “Dr. Zitnay and the Conemaugh team knew right away what to do. They took charge so quickly. We are so thankful.” To see more on Sydnee’s story, visit [www.conemaugh.org](http://www.conemaugh.org).



## LEVEL 1 TRAUMA CARE

Having 24/7 neurosurgery coverage is one of the requirements for Level 1 trauma centers like Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. Does trauma center designation make a difference?

“The answer is absolutely yes!” says **Dr. Russell Dumire**, Trauma Medical Director, Conemaugh Physician Group Critical - Care Surgeon.



**Aurelio Rodriguez, MD, FACS**  
Associate Medical Director of Trauma  
Conemaugh Physician Group - Critical Care Surgeon

“Trauma center designation means that the institution has committed significant time and resources in order that severely injured or acutely ill patients have ready access to potentially lifesaving care.” In fact, research shows that patients taken to a designated trauma center have a better overall survival rate, up to 25 percent improved survival over a non-trauma designated center.

“Data also clearly shows that patients initially taken to the most appropriate level center have a better overall survival and outcome compared to those taken to another center and then transferred. That is why we are committed to being at the highest Level 1 designation.”

Conemaugh Memorial is the **only Regional Resource Trauma Level 1 Center between Pittsburgh and Hershey**, and one of only 11 such centers across the state of Pennsylvania. Most trauma patients that come to Conemaugh Memorial are a bit older than Sydnee. **In fact, Conemaugh Memorial is among the top 10 centers nationwide for the number of geriatric trauma patients treated annually.**

Statistics like this are behind the launch of Conemaugh Memorial’s **Geriatric Trauma Institute**, established in May 2013. “The experience of an elderly trauma patient can be very different than that of a younger trauma patient and special care needs to be provided,” says **Dr. Aurelio Rodriguez**, Associate Medical Director of Trauma and Conemaugh Physician Group - Critical Care Surgeon. “This program involves special protocols which have been created and trialed at Conemaugh Memorial to contribute to superior outcomes.”

Research shows that trauma patients over the age of 60 sustain more serious injuries than younger patients even in similar causes of trauma.

**The number of seniors in our country will double within the next 25 years.**

For instance, women who break a hip at age 65 or older double the risk of dying within the coming year even if they are in otherwise excellent health.

“We need to recognize the special needs of our trauma patients from the triage process through the return home, covering everything from pre-hospital

care to rehabilitation to reviewing dietary and nutritional needs,” adds Dr. Rodriguez. “Working together through the Geriatric Trauma Institute, our patients have a better chance of surviving and returning to an independent and active senior lifestyle.” ♦



**Three most common causes of geriatric trauma include:**

- Falls
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Pedestrian related collisions

# GERIATRIC TRAUMA INSTITUTE PRESS CONFERENCE



# QUIZ

## What is the most common spot for skin cancer?

For men it is the back, for women the lower leg. It's important for all of us to examine our skin closely, particularly the areas that get the most sun – arms, hands, chest and even your head! See your family physician if moles hurt, bleed, itch or change.



**Paul Rollins, MD, FACS**  
Conemaugh Physician Group - Plastic Surgery

### Remember “**ABCDE**”

- A**symmetry: the shape of one half does not match the other half
- B**order: the edges are ragged, notched, or blurred
- C**olor: the color within the mole is uneven
- D**iameter: anything larger than a pencil eraser
- E**volving: the mole is getting larger or changing color or shape

Skin cancer cases are on the rise but the good news is that skin cancer is curable if found early and treated right away.

**Mark Pajeau, MD**  
Conemaugh Physician Group - Oncology

## Need help finding a physician?



Call 814-534-1630 for a **FREE** Conemaugh Physician Group Physician Directory today.

**Kevin Murtha, MD**

**Christine Lesosky, DO**

**Amy Reynolds, DO**



SCARLESS

SURGERY

LESS PAIN • QUICKER RECOVERY • LESS SCARRING

One tiny incision through the belly button and no visible scar – **single incision robotic gallbladder surgery** at Conemaugh Memorial is helping reduce pain and speed up recovery time. “Single site gallbladder surgery allows us to reduce the traditional number of incisions from four, down to one incision through the belly button with an incision that is less than an inch in length,” says **Dr. Russell Dumire**, Conemaugh Physician Group – General Surgery.

“Nationwide about 44 percent of gallbladder surgeries are women between the ages of 18 and 44 so having the incision hidden in the belly button is a welcome advancement for these patients,” says **Dr. William Carney**, Conemaugh Physician Group - General Surgery. Other types of single incision surgery will be coming as well, including single incision gynecology surgery.

## ROBOTIC ASSISTED SURGERY

# EXPANDS

**Dr. Patrick Gatmaitan**, Conemaugh Physician Group - General Surgery, is now using Robotic Assisted Surgery to help patients with Gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD). “The procedure is called Nissen Fundoplication. We wrap the upper part of the stomach around the lower esophagus to create an anti-reflux valve. This allows food to go down into the stomach but prevents stomach contents from flowing back up into the esophagus. We are also now using Robotic Assisted Surgery for hiatal hernia repair and some weight loss surgery. Patients have been very pleased with their results.”

**Dr. Savas Mavridis**, Conemaugh Physician Group - Cardiothoracic Surgery, is now using Robotic Assisted Surgery for some lung and chest cavity surgery cases. “Because Robotic Assisted Surgery is performed through a few tiny incisions between the ribs, patients avoid both a large incision and the possibility of having their ribs spread. As a result, patients are able to get back to normal activities faster without the usual recovery following major surgery.” ♦



**Savas Mavridis, MD**  
Conemaugh Physician Group -  
Cardiothoracic Surgery

**Patrick Gatmaitan, MD**  
Conemaugh Physician Group -  
General Surgery

inside this issue...

State-of-the-Art Technology

making exams quicker and safer

**GERIATRIC TRAUMA**

*Special care for senior patients*

**ABCs**<sup>of</sup>  
Safe Skin

SCARLESS  
SURGERY

TIME IS  
BRAIN



The **Advanced Stroke Center** certification signals to our community that stroke care at Conemaugh Memorial ...

- is efficient.
- has fewer complications.
- has improved long-term outcomes.
- has reduced costs.
- has increased patient satisfaction.

For a **FREE Stroke Magnet**, call 814-534-3121. ♦

EXCELLENCE. EVERY PATIENT. EVERY TIME.