

Summer  
2008

# MANAGED CARE CONTRACTING NEWSLETTER



Medicine that touches the world.



North Pavilion

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## UAB Marks 40 Years of Transplantation



Arnold Diethelm, MD

Forty years ago, on May 8, 1968, UAB surgeon Arnold Diethelm, MD, performed the first kidney transplant - and first transplant of any kind - in Alabama.

Today UAB has one of the top transplant programs in the nation; more than 10,000 organs have been transplanted, and UAB surgeons perform 100 more transplants per year than any other program in the South.

The program Diethelm began has a reputation for technical innovation and professional excellence. UAB's renal transplant program is the second larg-

est and the nation's busiest, performing more than 300 procedures each year. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, UAB has performed more kidney transplants than any other kidney program in the country since 1987.

Kidneys were only the first milestone for UAB's transplant program. The first heart transplant in the Southeastern region took place at UAB in 1981 and was followed by liver transplants in 1983, the first simultaneous pancreas/kidney transplant in 1988 and lung transplants in 1989.

## Alabama Organ Center Earns Accreditation

The Alabama Organ Center (AOC) has been awarded accreditation by the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB).

The accreditation means that the level of medical, technical and administrative performance within the AOC meets or exceeds the standards set by the AATB. The accreditation is the culmination of an intensive nine-month process, including an on-site visit by a specially trained AATB inspector.

"This is a voluntary accreditation," said Dem Lalisian, director of the Alabama Organ Center. "The AOC sought AATB accreditation to demonstrate our commitment to the highest stan-

dards and highest possible level of service, both to our patients and the transplant community."

Founded in 1976, the AATB sets standards, inspects facilities and accredits tissue banks in North America. It is dedicated to ensuring that human tissues intended for transplantation are safe and free of infectious diseases, are of high quality, and are available in sufficient quantities to meet national needs. Its members include more than 1100 individuals and 98 tissue banks.

Originally established in 1979 as the Alabama Organ Bank, the AOC is the only approved organ procurement organization in Alabama and serves all

hospitals in the state. The AOC's mission is to provide families an opportunity to donate organs and tissues, to support these families regardless of their decision, and to promote equitable utilization of these gifts to others. In Alabama, more than 3000 people are waiting for an organ transplant.



## Kirklín Clinic Receives Coveted Quality Award

The Kirklín Clinic® is the first ambulatory care center in Alabama to receive a Progress Towards Excellence Award from the Alabama Productivity Center. The Alabama Quality awards,

the state's top honors for quality performance and excellence, were presented during the annual conference and award ceremony Nov. 29.

More than 700 physicians in 35 specialties are located in The Kirklín Clinic, part of the UAB Health System.

## Heslin New Chief of Surgical Oncology Section



Martin J. Heslin, MD

Fay Fletcher Kerner Chair of Surgery Kirby I. Bland, MD, announces the appointment of Martin J. Heslin, MD, as chief of the Surgical Oncology Section.

Dr. Heslin, professor of surgery, completed his MD degree at State University of New York Health Science Center at Syracuse College of Medicine and his postgraduate training at New York University Medical Center, where he served as executive chief resident in surgery. During his residency he completed a research fellowship followed by a clinical fellowship in surgical oncology, both at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

He joined UAB in 1996. He recently

was named senior associate chief of staff at UAB Hospital. He also is a member of the Operating Room Executive Steering Committee and the Cancer Committee.

Dr. Heslin is associate program director for the Division of General Surgery Residency Program and administrator of the Multidisciplinary GI Oncology Center. His responsibilities include oversight of surgical area medical directors.

Dr. Heslin has received numerous teaching awards, including the UAB President's Award for Excellence in Teaching. His clinical and research interests include GI cancers and soft tissue sarcomas, on which he has published widely.

## UAB Compares Favorably in CMS Online Survey

*CMS hopes publicity will prompt hospitals to improve quality of care.*

In March, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) started posting results of surveys asking patients how well hospitals provided their care on the Web site [www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov). The government hopes public dissemination of this information will prompt hospitals to improve quality of care.

Every month CMS's Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey is sent to about 10% of UAB Hospital's randomly selected adult patients discharged after an overnight stay. Rehabilitation and psychiatric patients are excluded.

The HCAHPS Web site is updated quarterly and includes data from the most recent 4 quarters. The survey asks patients 27 questions about the frequency of events during their care and asks a variety of questions pertaining to communication with doctors and nurses, pain management, cleanliness, quiet, likelihood of recommending the hospital, and courtesy and respect. The survey is included in quality measures required by CMS.

### UAB Hospital Fares Well

When comparative data were posted publicly in March, UAB Hospital compared favorably with major competitors in the Birmingham area in a number of categories. UAB was highest in percent of patients who:

- Reported they would definitely recommend the hospital;
- Gave the hospital a rating of 9 or 10 on a scale of 0 to 10; and
- Reported the area around their room was quiet at night.

UAB scored among the top two in nurse communication, education about medication, and cleanliness of the room and bathroom.

"We were one of the first hospitals to start working with these survey tools in June 2006, so early on we identified opportunities for improvement in some areas, and we are thrilled with how we compare with other hospitals," Manager Alice Bracknell, MT(ASCP), CPHQ, Department of Quality Resources, says.

### Cleanliness, Pain Control Teams

"We continually analyze data and work with interdisciplinary teams to improve quality of care. The HCAHPS survey helps narrow our focus to priority areas. For example, we have formed interdisciplinary teams to work on issues of hospital cleanliness and pain control," she says.

Press Ganey Associates, Inc, administers the HCAHPS survey to UAB inpatients. "A sampling of our patients receive that survey plus a few questions of our choosing, while a majority of inpatients receive our standard survey," Bracknell says. Results of the standard survey are distributed monthly to hospital departments.

"We have always been concerned about our patients' perception and satisfaction, and we will continue to monitor both standard and HCAHPS surveys to identify our strengths and our opportunities for improvement," she says.

## UAB Study Shows Modified Technique Further Reduces Lung Surgery Pain



Robert J. Cerfolio, MD

- Patients used less pain meds
- Reported quicker return to activity

A simple variation in a surgical technique developed at UAB to reduce acute and chronic pain following lung surgery further reduces pain and helps return patients to normal activity more quickly than the previous technique, according to a study published in the June issue of the *Annals of Thoracic Surgery*.

Instead of crushing the intercostal muscle and nerve that lies between the ribs during rib spreading when performing a lung resection, UAB Chief of Thoracic Surgery Robert J. Cerfolio, MD, teases the muscle and

nerve away from the rib and then moves it out of the way before spreading the ribs. This leads to less trauma to the muscle and intercostal nerve and dramatically reduces post-operative pain.

This new technique is a further modification of a concept that Dr. Cerfolio and colleagues reported in 2005. As reported in that paper, the technique divided, then moved, the intercostal muscle and the nerve away from the rib spreader so it was not crushed. In this new modification, the muscle is no longer divided but is allowed to dangle under the rib spreader, further avoiding trauma to the nerve and muscle.

For the 160 patients participating in this study, those who received the modified muscle flap technique reported that pain was reduced both in the hospital and after surgery at weeks 3, 4, 8, and 12. Those who received the modified muscle flap procedure had lower pain scores and required less pain medications than those who did not. They also were more likely to return to normal activities within 8 to 12 weeks after the surgery.

The study used sophisticated, objective measurements of pain, including multiple pain score surveys, and

measurements of patients' pain medication usage.

The original idea for the Cerfolio technique was generated from an earlier study Dr. Cerfolio published in the *Annals of Thoracic Surgery* in 2004. "In the first study, we found a way to avoid injury to the intercostal nerve that lies below the sixth rib during closure by drilling holes in the ribs so the closure stitches would not entrap that nerve," Dr. Cerfolio said. "Then, I got the idea that maybe we could further reduce the pain by avoiding the intercostal nerve and muscle that lie above the sixth rib during opening and came up with the idea of harvesting the intercostal muscle flap prior to chest retraction. As surgeons, we are constantly looking for ways to improve techniques and reduce pain."

To date, a number of surgeons and other clinical staff from all over the world, including, Denmark, The Netherlands, Germany, France, and Spain have recently come to UAB to observe Dr. Cerfolio perform lung surgery and learn this new technique. Dr. Cerfolio is recognized as one of the busiest thoracic surgeons in the world and performs more than 1200 surgeries each year.

## UAB Earns Hospital of Choice Award

UAB Hospital has been selected as one of America's most customer-friendly hospitals by the American Alliance of Healthcare Providers.

UAB earned the Hospital of Choice Awards for the first quarter of 2008 from the alliance for its "unparalleled commitment to good citizenship and

community service." The selection process involved reviewing public information such as Web sites, news releases, and announcements, as well as phone surveys of hospital staff and applications submitted for review. UAB Hospital was invited to apply for the award by the alliance.

The American Alliance of Healthcare Providers designed the Hospital of Choice Awards to recognize hospitals that go beyond their campus to provide excellence and quality care. UAB is one of three hospitals in the state to earn the award in 2008.

## NIH Grant Funds New Diabetes Research, Training Program

UAB moves to the fore of the national effort to develop new methods to prevent, treat, and cure diabetes and its complications with its designation as one of six Diabetes Research and Training Centers (DRTC) in the country.

The UAB DRTC will receive \$6.3 million from the National Institutes of Health during the next 5 years to expand its diabetes initiatives to decrease morbidity and mortality and increase the quality of life for diabetes patients. This also will enable UAB to promote faculty career development

and student training in diabetes research.

Nutrition Sciences Professor and Chair Timothy Garvey, MD, is principal investigator of the DRTC, which is part of the UAB Comprehensive Diabetes Center, directed by John Corbett, PhD.



**Barbara Key**

**Workers Comp Services**

UAB Health System is committed to providing a continuum of health care services of the highest quality to citizens, visitors and employees in our community. Part of that commitment is our goal to provide the employers, carriers, and case managers with the necessary information, tools, and guidance needed to:

- Navigate our health system.
- Communicate with the injured worker's treatment team, obtain updates, coordinate discharge needs etc.
- Locate physicians.
- Schedule appointments.
- Access Workers Comp (WC) medical records.
- Provide accurate WC contact, claim and billing info to our health system.

**Workers comp website:**  
[www.health.uab.edu/38688/](http://www.health.uab.edu/38688/)

**Contact Barbara Key, UAB's WC Liaison, with questions or for assistance at 205-975-COMP (2667) or [bgkey@uabmc.edu](mailto:bgkey@uabmc.edu)**

**Check it Out**

\*Managed Care Contracting does not contract on behalf of all UAB affiliates. Contact department for details.

UAB Health System  
[www.health.uab.edu](http://www.health.uab.edu)  
 UAB Magazine  
[www.uab.edu/uabmagazine/](http://www.uab.edu/uabmagazine/)

**UAB Highlands Emergency Department:  
 For Life's Little Emergencies**

UAB Highlands Emergency Department (ED) offers efficient, high-quality care for minor emergencies. The department is staffed by UAB Department of Emergency Medicine faculty.

**UAB Highlands ED can treat:**

- Minor illnesses.
- Closed Fractures.
- Lacerations.
- General orthopaedic and sports injuries.

The UAB Orthopaedic Clinic relocated to UAB Highlands in October 2006, making it the ideal location for treatment of sports-related and general minor injuries.

**UAB Highlands ED does not treat:**

- Major trauma, acute cardiac emergencies, stroke, critical illnesses, or obstetrical cases. These services are best delivered through UAB Hospital ED.

**UAB Highlands ED offers:**

- Immediate adjacent access to UAB Highlands campus.
- 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week service.

- Eight treatment rooms.
- Prompt and efficient service.
- Convenient, free parking located immediately across the street from the ED and in front of the hospital.

"We now have the ability to offer community medicine practiced by UAB faculty physicians," says Kathleen P. Bowen, MD, MBA, medical director, UAB Highlands ED. "We're very excited to offer outstanding, efficient, and quality care to this community, as well as to UAB students, faculty, employees, and their families."



*UAB Synopsis, Vol. 27,  
 No. 18, May 12, 2008*

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