

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Mercer University's Physician Assistant (PA) Program at Piedmont Hospital is an entry-level master's degree program that is part of the University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. The 28-month PA program includes 13 months of initial classroom instruction followed by 15 months of clinical rotations at Piedmont Hospital. The clinical rotations consist of nine core rotations, including family practice, pediatrics, women's health, emergency medicine, surgery, internal medicine-outpatient, internal medicine-inpatient, behavioral medicine and orthopedics. At Piedmont, students work with a physician assistant "mentor" and physician preceptor to gain real-world experience. +



Mercer student Nancy Tyler speaks with Piedmont Hospital patient Hazel Gallaway during a clinical rotation.

## Nursing Chair Establishes Nurse Education Ph.D. Program

The Piedmont Healthcare Chair in Nursing has been established to benefit students at Georgia Baptist College of Nursing of Mercer. Funded by Piedmont Healthcare with an endowment grant to the Center for Health and Learning, a partnership of Piedmont Healthcare and Mercer University, the Chair will support the establishment of a Ph.D. program in nursing education at Mercer.

"The changing and complex nature of healthcare requires us to find innovative solutions for the future delivery of care as well as patient outcomes," says R. Timothy Stack, president and chief executive officer of Piedmont Healthcare. "We want to continue to bolster interest in the nursing profession, and this Ph.D. program is a natural enhancement to nursing education in general and the Piedmont Nursing Scholars program in particular."

In June 2005, Piedmont Healthcare and Mercer University formed The Center for Health and Learning to create a number of joint initiatives, including nursing, pharmacy, research and other medical and allied health education programs. One of the first initiatives under the Center for Health and Learning was the



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care. Piedmont also seeks increased access to students and potential employees in nursing, pharmacy and other allied health fields. Long term, Piedmont hopes to establish unique hospital/university integrated programs. +

Piedmont Nursing Scholars program, a collaborative nursing partnership between Georgia Baptist College of Nursing and Piedmont designed to help recruit, educate and ultimately place more nurses at Piedmont and in the community at large.

Through The Center for Health and Learning, Piedmont Healthcare aims to enhance its teaching environment and expand on-campus research that is focused on outcomes and improved patient

# Piedmont Heart Institute Welcomes Prestigious Physicians



Two cardiology groups, the Atlanta Cardiology Group (ACG) and Cardiology of Georgia (COG), have joined the Piedmont Heart Institute (PHI), establishing the first non-academic integration between cardiovascular physicians and a healthcare system in Atlanta. In addition, PHI expects a third group, Cardiac Disease Specialists, to join in July. Combined, the physician groups form Piedmont Heart Institute Physicians.

"This is important because it allows providers – both physicians and the hospital – to focus on patient care instead of business and financial pressures," says William D. Knopf, M.D., PHI's chief operating officer. "Healthcare is changing. Hospitals and physicians face financial challenges to remain viable. In order to give patients the best care, they need to work together. The best way to do that is to become clinically integrated."

The Atlanta Cardiology Group joined the Piedmont Heart Institute in November 2007. The 25-member cardiovascular physician practice has a main office on the Piedmont Hospital campus while maintaining offices across Georgia. "This is an excellent affiliation for us," says William S. Knapp, M.D., managing partner of ACG. "Since ACG's beginning 40 years ago, we have added physicians and expanded to new communities to deliver the best quality care. The relationship with Piedmont continues this legacy." ACG has 15 offices in greater Atlanta and surrounding communities, from north Atlanta to Blairsville and from Douglasville to Greensboro. Atlanta Cardiology Group brings cardiologists who are experts in the field and internationally recognized for their clinical skills, teaching and research in areas such as treatment for heart attack.

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PIEDMONT HOSPITAL

**Cardiology of Georgia** joined PHI in April. The 20-member cardiovascular physician practice, with eight locations that include Buckhead, Canton, Fayetteville and North Fulton, is another important addition to PHI as it continues to propel new programs in cardiovascular research, education and excellence in prevention, arrhythmias, coronary and vascular intervention, stroke and cardiac imaging. “Cardiology of Georgia has been an integral part of the history and foundation of cardiovascular care at Piedmont for more than 30 years,” says Michele M. Molden, president and chief executive officer of the Piedmont Heart Institute. “COG will continue to serve our communities with clinical expertise and now will be involved in the leadership and direction of the Piedmont Heart Institute.”

“Piedmont has been home to us for more than 30 years,” says John W. Hurst Jr., M.D., managing partner of COG. “It is only natural that we pursue this affiliation under the Piedmont Heart Institute with its vision of advancing cardiovascular care for those we serve.”

PHI is the first of its kind affiliated with a community hospital system in greater Atlanta. It brings prominent cardiovascular physician groups together with one of the premier cardiac centers in the region, the Fuqua Heart Center of Atlanta at Piedmont Hospital. In fact, Piedmont Hospital was recently named *Best in Atlanta for Overall Cardiac Care and Cardiac Surgery (2008)* by HealthGrades®, the leading healthcare ratings organization.

PHI is implementing a new care delivery model in greater Atlanta that eliminates the barriers to working more closely together and creates a platform where leadership is shared with enhanced care and services for the community. This fully integrated clinical and financial model will ultimately improve the patient experience, care efficiencies, quality and outcomes.

“We now have the resources that

the physicians together with clinical staff at Piedmont Healthcare can develop such as clinical pathways, and we can then create metrics that are measurable to improve care,” says Dr. Knopf. “The physicians and the hospital together as providers are now aligned and pointing in the same direction to do what’s in the best interest of the patient.”

The vision of PHI is to create a destination center for cardiovascular care for Atlanta and the Southeast region. It offers the most advanced patient care, including genetic testing, advanced imaging techniques, minimally invasive surgeries and new therapeutic treatments for heart valve problems, congestive heart failure and arrhythmias. With this new model, PHI expects it is attracting the “best and brightest” physicians with national and international reputations. “There is a new way of taking care of patients that previously didn’t exist in the Atlanta market,” Dr. Knopf explains.

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According to Molden, this is the first time in Atlanta that physicians and a community hospital have become partners in patient care focusing on quality outcomes. “In many situations in our current healthcare system, hospitals and physicians have been at odds with each other because of decreasing reimbursement and competing financial incentives,” she says. “With this new model, we’re able to pool our intellectual capital and eliminate that inherent competition between physicians and hospitals. We’re supporting each other as partners, and we’re focusing on enhancing quality patient care. Our success will rely on the successful integration between hospital and physicians.”

Additionally, with new technology and equipment entering the market,

PHI hopes to streamline technology costs by having physicians and the hospital work together to use resources efficiently and effectively. PHI will integrate inpatient and outpatient care through information systems, coordinated care and an elimination of duplicate testing.

“This is an exciting time for Piedmont,” adds Molden. “Our affiliation with the Atlanta Cardiology Group and Cardiology of Georgia will enable us to more effectively provide our quality services to patients in the many communities we serve. ACG and COG will complement the existing cardiovascular expertise at Piedmont, a tradition that started over 50 years ago. We are proud that they’ve chosen Piedmont for their home. And we look forward to Cardiac Disease Specialists joining the Piedmont Heart Institute as well.”

Piedmont Hospital has continued to earn recognition as a leader in the prevention and treatment of heart disease since the mid-1960s. Piedmont

was one of Georgia’s first hospitals to establish a dedicated coronary care unit (CCU), the first to hire a full-time director of a community CCU, and one of the first in the United States to use telemetry monitors throughout the hospital. Piedmont has successfully developed cardiac catheterization, interventional cardiology, comprehensive electrophysiology and arrhythmia services, advanced heart failure management, open-heart surgery and peripheral vascular services. This expertise culminated in 1994 with the centralization of services at the Fuqua Heart Center of Atlanta at Piedmont Hospital. Exceptional cardiovascular services have also developed at other Piedmont hospitals, which will work with PHI in the delivery of world-class cardiac care. ✚

## Fuqua Heart Center Receives \$5 Million From J.B. Fuqua Trust

The Fuqua Heart Center of Atlanta at Piedmont Hospital received a \$5 million bequest from the J.B. Fuqua Revocable Trust. This is the largest estate gift to date in Piedmont’s 102-year-old history, and represents the Fuqua family’s ongoing commitment to the Fuqua Heart Center and heart care at Piedmont Hospital.

Piedmont will establish an endowment to continue funding priorities which Mr. Fuqua supported during his lifetime of philanthropy. Priorities are state-of-the-art equipment, including hardware and technology, programs and education, and staff. The gift will be used to equip the Fuqua Heart Center with the latest technology as advancements are made, support and enhance scientific and educational programs and activities associated with the Fuqua Heart Center, and support staff responsible for carrying out scientific and educational work at the Fuqua Heart Center.

“As you know, my father was a generous benefactor to many institutions, both large and small,” says J. Rex Fuqua. “He had a personal interest and affection for each one. He was especially dedicated to having a world-class heart center in his community and proud to have his name linked to the Fuqua Heart Center of Atlanta at Piedmont Hospital, as well as the impact it has on the lives of others.”

The Fuqua Heart Center was presented to the people of Atlanta by Mr. Fuqua in honor of his wife, Dottie, on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary in February 1995. Fuqua gave more than \$10 million to the Fuqua Heart Center and Piedmont Hospital over his lifetime and served on the Piedmont Hospital Foundation Board of Directors. He died on April 5, 2006, at Piedmont Hospital.

“Piedmont Hospital and the Fuqua Heart Center are honored to receive this generous bequest from the J.B. Fuqua Revocable Trust,” said Mark E. Silverman, M.D., chief of cardiology at Piedmont Hospital. “It is an honor and a privilege to be stewards of Mr. Fuqua’s legacy.”

“We are grateful to the J.B. Fuqua Revocable Trust as this comes at a strategic and important moment for Piedmont,” said Robert W. Maynard, Piedmont Hospital president and CEO. “Through his philanthropy, Mr. Fuqua enabled the Fuqua Heart Center to become a respected and successful resource for this community and region. We are elevating that reputation today, and this private gift serves as a solid foundation to assure our continued future success.”

The Fuqua Heart Center of Atlanta at Piedmont Hospital is part of the Piedmont Heart Institute, an integrated cardiovascular healthcare delivery system offering a continuum of patient care, including primary and secondary prevention, outpatient and inpatient cardiovascular care, and appropriate quality measures and metrics to demonstrate enhanced outcomes.

“Piedmont’s special relationship with the Fuqua Family is revered and unique,” said Charles W.

Wickliffe, M.D., former chair of the Piedmont Healthcare Board of Directors. “No single family or individual has been as philanthropically committed to Piedmont like J.B. Fuqua and his family. The J.B. Fuqua Legacy Endowment will support Mr. Fuqua’s priority initiatives, assuring that his legacy endures.” ✚

FUQUA HEART CENTER OF ATLANTA

