

# McLeod

Volume 39, Issue 2, 2024

## *Magazine*



WELL AHEAD

Nancy Holloman  
Sumter, SC

# Views



Donna Isgett

At McLeod Health, our passion runs deeper than medicine. It is proactive and centered on helping our communities achieve optimal health.

It extends to health education, deep community support, financial assistance and so much more.

As the healthcare environment changes, new treatments become available, and families embrace healthier lifestyles, we must seek better ways to deliver care. We never arrive, but must continuously evolve, in our pursuit of superlative care.

Every action and every innovation at McLeod Health is a testament to being well ahead in every way.

Love for our mission and each other, and respect for our core values of Caring, The Person, Integrity and Quality keep us grounded.

Each day, our teams across McLeod Health serve with humility, intention and skill. We strive to put the needs of our patients first and offer the quality medical care they want and deserve.

It is a privilege to show compassion and support for those who entrust McLeod with their care at what is often the most difficult or most wonderful time of their life.

There is no greater purpose or meaning as a healthcare provider than helping a mother deliver her child, celebrating a patient's negative test result, or holding the hand of a patient as they take their last breath.

This single focus drives our daily commitment to listen, learn and improve.

In the pages that follow, you will encounter personal stories of individuals who have endured adversity with resilience and hope. We pledge to continue our journey of excellence and remain a leader in transforming healthcare in our region by pushing beyond expectations. You, our patients, deserve our very best efforts.

Donna Isgett  
President and CEO, McLeod Health



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## ON THE COVER:

Nancy Holloman is pictured visiting Swan Lake Iris Gardens in Sumter, South Carolina. She underwent an Aortobifemoral Bypass, the most extensive surgery performed by McLeod Vascular Associates, to return blood flow to her legs. Nancy says, "I have joy back in my life again. Thanks to Vascular Surgeon Dr. William Jackson, I can walk without pain."

Read Nancy's story at [McLeodHealth.org/Nancy](https://www.mcleodhealth.org/Nancy) or scan the QR code.





Jimmy's daughters, Shalonda Cooper-Singletary and Tashauna Leggette, cherish time spent with their father.

# FAITH, FAMILY & HEALING

## A Father's Miraculous Recovery

by Leslie A. Mikell

Lake City native Jimmy Bizzle, Jr., has been a truck driver for more than 30 years. His two daughters, Shalonda Cooper-Singletary and Tashauna Leggette, often checked in with him by phone once he completed his routes. One day in June 2021, when he was expected home after a route from North Carolina, Jimmy did not answer the phone. His daughters began to worry, so they decided to check the truck terminal in Lake City where he usually parked.

When she arrived, his daughter Tashauna saw his truck parked at the terminal. She opened the door of the cab and found Jimmy slumped over, almost unresponsive.

Tashauna called Shalonda and knowing he needed care immediately, they rushed him to the Emergency Department at McLeod Regional Medical Center, where staff ran tests to determine if he had suffered a stroke.

"Thankfully, the tests revealed that he did not have a stroke, but there was fluid on the right side of his brain, which turned out to be a brain bleed," adds Shalonda.

The next morning, Dr. Andrew Rhea, a Neurosurgeon with Florence Neurosurgery and Spine at McLeod Health, performed emergency surgery to repair the brain bleed. Jimmy remained in the hospital to recover from the procedure, and after a few days, he experienced more swelling on the brain.

He would need an additional surgery from Dr. Rhea to reduce the swelling.

At this point, having underwent two major brain surgeries, doctors recommended Jimmy be sedated in a medically-induced coma to help his body recover.

Prolonged ventilation requires a tracheostomy (breathing tube) and gastrostomy (feeding tube). Dr. Johnson Walker, a Trauma Surgeon at McLeod Regional Medical Center, performed these procedures for Jimmy, who was then transferred to a long-term care facility where he remained intubated and ventilated while in the coma.

"Seeing him in a coma for so long was extremely difficult for our family. On Father's Day, I remember asking God for one thing only – that my father would wake from his coma," recalls Shalonda.

After nearly six weeks in a coma, his daughters' prayers were answered, and Jimmy opened his eyes.

Unfortunately, during this time, Jimmy had developed a severe bedsore wound, also known as a pressure ulcer. He was referred back to Dr. Walker for treatment.

"Jimmy's wound was so severe that it was life-threatening by the time I saw him again," recalls Dr. Walker.

He performed debridement of the wound to remove the infected and damaged tissue. As a result of the wound's size, Jimmy would need a colostomy bag to help keep it clean. Prior to his brain bleed, Jimmy walked two to three miles each day. After such an extended time in a coma, he became very weak and was essentially bedbound. Jimmy had to re-learn how to do everything again, from standing up, to caring for himself, to eating and walking.

Thanks to the support of his therapists, the dedication of his family, as well as his own strength and determination, Jimmy progressed from a wheelchair to a walker, to being able to walk unassisted again.

"Number one, I thank God, but I also thank the nurses, my daughters, and their mom, Ruby Cooper, for my recovery," says Jimmy.

"I truly believe Jimmy is alive today because of his daughters and their commitment to his healing," Dr. Walker adds.

"Despite the many obstacles in his recovery, we kept the faith because we are a praying family," says Shalonda.

"I told Jimmy's family all along that he would likely not survive – and each time, he proved me wrong. I told them he would never be healthy enough to have his colostomy reversed – and he kept getting stronger and healthier. He even returned to walking several miles per day."

Eventually, Jimmy made so much headway in his recovery that in April 2023, Dr. Walker agreed to reverse his colostomy.

After so much time spent at McLeod recovering from his different procedures, Jimmy and Dr. Walker formed a bond.

"McLeod is an excellent hospital, and Dr. Walker and I became good friends. He, the nurses, technicians, and everyone at McLeod treated me well and truly saved my life," Jimmy adds.

Now, Jimmy enjoys walking several miles each day around his neighborhood in Lake City.



**"McLeod is an excellent hospital, and Dr. Walker and I became good friends. He, the nurses, technicians, and everyone at McLeod treated me well and truly saved my life."**

-Jimmy Bizzle, Jr.

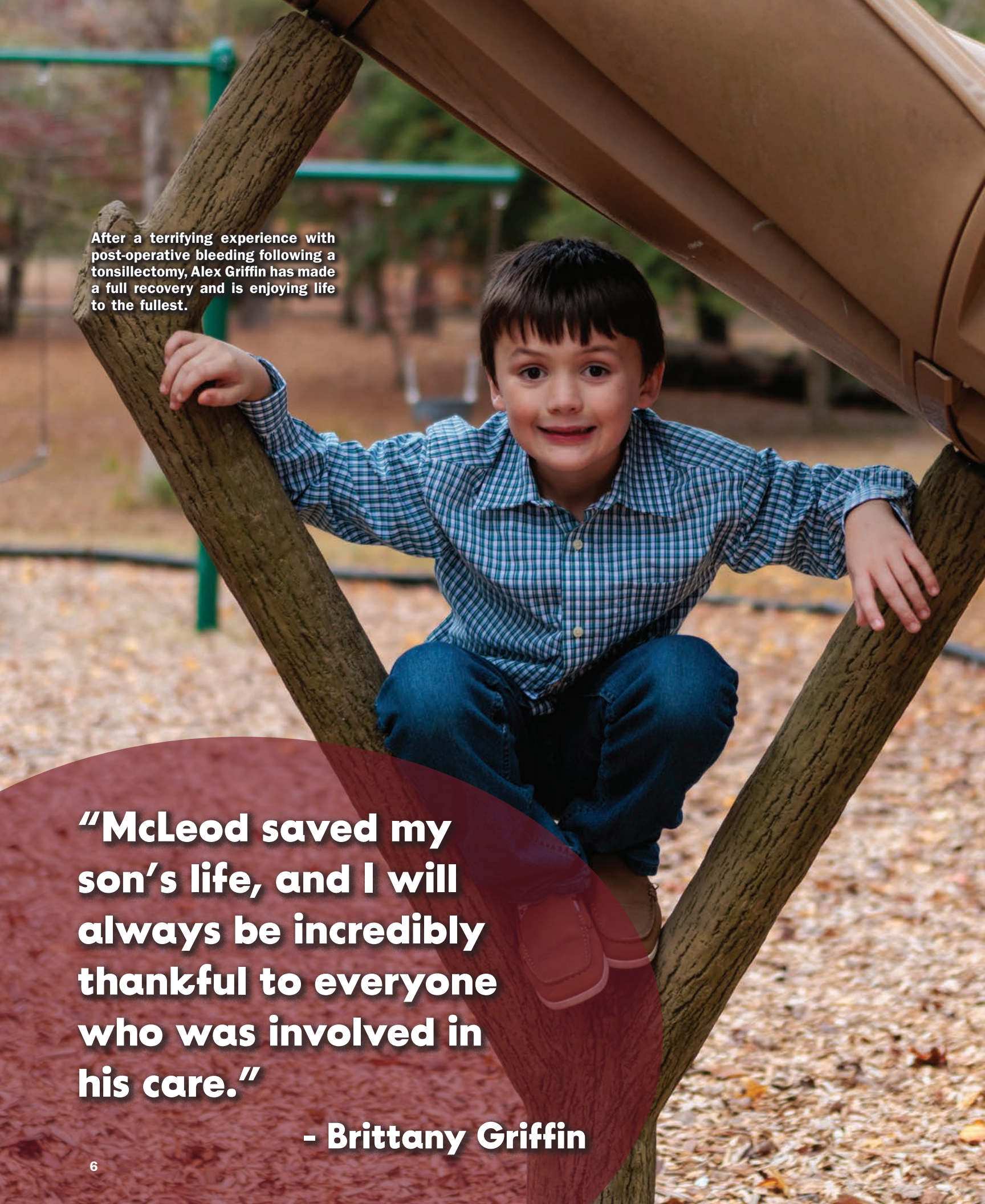


Dr. Johnson Walker

Dr. Johnson Walker became Director of Trauma Services at McLeod Regional Medical Center in 2022. In this role, he will continue

the leadership of his predecessor, Dr. Mark Reynolds. Dr. Walker and Dr. Reynolds continue to serve surgical trauma patients at McLeod Regional Medical Center and are in practice at Pee Dee Surgical Group.

As a state-designated Level II Trauma Center, the highest in the region, McLeod Regional Medical Center meets or exceeds requirements for staffing, specialist availability, response times, training and quality improvement. The team includes neurosurgeons, neurologists, general surgeons, trauma surgeons, orthopedic trauma surgeons, pediatric intensivists for the McLeod Children's Hospital, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, and plastic and reconstructive surgeons.



After a terrifying experience with post-operative bleeding following a tonsillectomy, Alex Griffin has made a full recovery and is enjoying life to the fullest.

**“McLeod saved my son’s life, and I will always be incredibly thankful to everyone who was involved in his care.”**

**- Brittany Griffin**

# Saving Alex Griffin

by Jessica Wall

On April 13, 2023, six days after a tonsillectomy at another hospital, seven-year-old Alex Griffin woke his mom Brittany in the early morning hours to tell her he was bleeding.

Turning on her phone’s flashlight, Brittany was alarmed by the amount of blood covering her son’s body. With her husband Jimmy working out of the country, she quickly arranged for family to watch Alex’s siblings so she could get him to the nearest Emergency Department (ED), which happened to be McLeod Health Cheraw.

Upon their arrival, the entire care team – including physicians, nurses and respiratory therapists – immediately stepped into action.

**Dr. Brian Snyder** explains that since Alex was bleeding from his tonsil surgery site, treatment was three-fold: sedate Alex to secure his airway, transfuse blood to replace what he lost and pack the bleeding area to prepare him for transport to McLeod Regional Medical Center (MRMC) in Florence.

**Alex recently reunited with the McLeod Health Cheraw Emergency Department staff members who helped save his life.**

“We also used medicine to control the bleeding, but the direct pressure of packing the area was our best option,” explains Dr. Snyder.

“Approximately 90 minutes after Alex’s arrival, we ventilated him to control his breathing.”

Brittany was beside herself. “This medical emergency was the most frightening experience of my life. My husband was frantically trying to get a flight home, and I felt completely helpless. Alex kept calling out, ‘Mama,’ and it broke my heart.

“The staff were phenomenal. They comforted me and kept me updated with every step of his care. I know without a doubt they saved Alex’s life.”

Time was of the essence, so McLeod Air Reach was contacted to transport Alex.

With a crew involving a pilot, paramedic and flight nurse, they loaded Alex onto the aircraft and transported him to MRMC.

“That was the longest drive of my life,” recalls Brittany. “Thankfully, our family friend, Ray Kelsey, a Nursing Supervisor at McLeod, drove my brother-in-law, a paramedic, to the hospital to meet the transport team and stay with Alex until I could get to Florence.”

As soon as the aircraft landed, a second team stepped in to continue Alex’s care.



Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist **Dr. David Rosi** met Alex in the operating room to cauterize the scabs in the back of his throat to alleviate further bleeding and allow the wound to heal.

Alex was then admitted to the McLeod Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), where he remained on the ventilator for the next 48 hours while under the supervision of Pediatric Intensivist **Dr. Carl Chelen** and Registered Nurse **Ryanne Hall**.

At the end of the second day, Dr. Chelen and **Ryanne** extubated Alex. She recalls the first thing Alex did was ask for his grandmother.

After giving Alex a bath, **Ryanne** put him in a wheelchair and took him to the Child Life Activity Center, which features interactive, therapeutic activities for children of all ages.

With all the events that happened earlier that evening, Alex tired very easily, so he only looked around. However, the next day, he and **Ryanne** spent nearly the entire day in the fun space.

"I liked it a lot," says Alex. "I found cool stuff in there I had never seen before."

On the third day of Alex's hospitalization, Dr. Rosi dropped by to evaluate Alex and determined he was ready to be discharged and return home.

During Alex's hospital stay, he asked his mom several times about "his baby," referring to his youngest sister. He hoped she had not forgotten her big brother in the few days they were apart.

Once Alex was at home, however, the script changed and he began to

ask instead when he could see Ms. **Ryanne**, as he affectionately called her.

"**Ryanne** was the most amazing nurse we have ever encountered," says **Brittany**. "They had a special bond, and she treated Alex like he was her own family member. We could not have asked for a better nurse."

"This entire experience was wonderful, despite the traumatic events happening. From the medical teams at both **Cheraw** and **Florence**, the care we received was nothing less than impeccable."

Today, Alex has made a full recovery and enjoys playing soccer and T-ball as well as being with his sisters and friends at school.

"McLeod saved my son's life, and I will always be incredibly thankful to everyone who was involved in his care."

Thanks to an intricately coordinated effort, the McLeod Air Reach crew members transported Alex to McLeod Regional Medical Center, where a specialized pediatric medical team continued Alex's care.



# A JOINT EFFORT

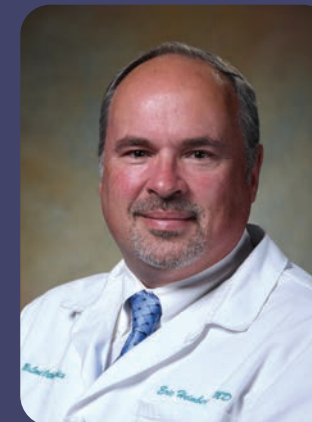
by Jennifer Beverly

Joint replacement surgeries, one of the most common procedures performed at McLeod Health, have experienced significant improvements. Years ago, patients spent several days recovering in the hospital following joint replacement surgery, which is now being performed as an outpatient procedure. **McLeod Health Seacoast** offers same day discharge for total joint replacement surgeries, allowing patients to recover in the comfort of their home.

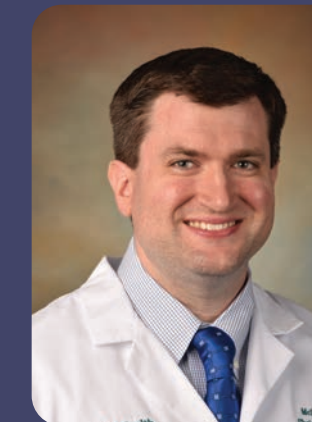
Advancements in medical research and technology have made it possible to offer outpatient total joint replacements. Quality and safety are priorities at McLeod Health and by offering same day joint replacement surgery in a hospital setting, patients have peace of mind knowing there is an extra level of care.

Other benefits for outpatient joint replacement surgery include more effective anesthetics and pain control, lower infection rates, earlier mobility, faster recovery and higher patient satisfaction rates.

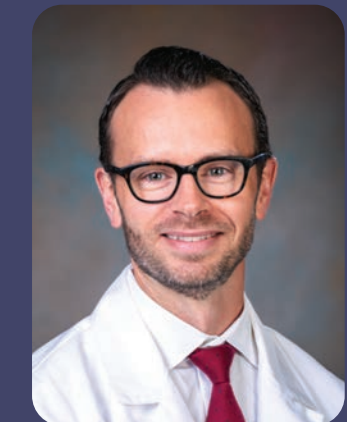
Orthopedic Surgeons **Dr. Eric Heimberger**, **Dr. Christopher Walsh**, and **Dr. Colin Canham** of McLeod Orthopaedics Seacoast are the hip and knee joint replacement experts along the coast. These three providers rank in the 99th percentile, the highest possible ranking, for patient satisfaction in outpatient total joint replacement surgeries, according to NRC Health. This rating is compared to 39 other outpatient surgery locations across Horry County, making this team the best in the area.



Dr. Eric Heimberger



Dr. Christopher Walsh



Dr. Colin Canham

## Sherrill Nielson, Total Knee Replacements

Sherrill Nielson, 64, began her nursing career at McLeod Regional Medical Center in 1984 as a new graduate working in the surgical intensive care unit. She quickly advanced, taking on many roles from house supervisor to Associate Vice President of Surgical Services to her current position as Chief Nursing Officer of McLeod Health Seacoast.

“My role as Chief Nursing Officer is different every day,” said Sherrill. “Most of my work revolves around helping our nursing directors and staff remove any barriers preventing them from caring for our patients.”

For years, Sherrill suffered from excruciating pain in both knees. After two meniscus tears, multiple injections and exhausting all conservative efforts, Dr. Eric Heimberger recommended knee replacement surgery to alleviate the pain.

“My quality of life had become severely impeded, and I knew surgery was the best option,” said Sherrill.

Both knee joints were rubbing bone on bone from arthritis, so Dr. Heimberger suggested surgery on the right knee first.

“Sherrill’s motivation for pain relief and willingness to remain active made her a great candidate for outpatient knee replacement surgery,” said Dr. Heimberger. “I encouraged her to attend the McLeod Total Joint Class for additional preparation prior to the procedure.”

On the day of surgery, Sherrill entrusted her own surgical team with her care as Dr. Heimberger performed surgery. She spent the next few hours in extended recovery before receiving a visit from rehabilitation. Sherrill’s physical therapist had her standing and walking before being discharged that afternoon. She continued outpatient physical therapy for ten weeks and returned to work only three weeks after surgery.

“I feel great,” said Sherrill. “I’ve now had both knees replaced, and I cannot thank the entire McLeod team enough for the encouragement and support they provided me during this process.”

Dr. McCallum referred Keith to his partner, Dr. Colin Canham. Dr. Canham reviewed the images and agreed that Keith needed two total hip replacements but wanted to schedule the surgeries at separate times.

“I told Dr. Canham I wanted to have both hips replaced at the same time,” said Keith. Given Keith’s age and good health, Dr. Canham allowed him to have simultaneous bilateral hip replacement surgery.

“Most bilateral total hip patients are younger, active and motivated to participate in more rigorous physical therapy,” said Dr. Canham.



Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Eric Heimberger and Physician Assistant Chris Lewis of McLeod Orthopaedics Seacoast are pictured alongside the surgical team that cared for McLeod Health Seacoast Chief Nursing Officer Sherrill Nielson during her total knee replacement.

## Keith Hemingway, Bilateral Hip Replacement

Born and raised in Loris, Keith Hemingway, 54, suffered from extreme hip pain for many years. When the pain became too overwhelming and interfered with his favorite hobbies - hunting, fishing and basketball- Keith decided to seek help from McLeod Orthopaedics Seacoast.

“I originally saw Sports Medicine Physician Dr. Jeremy McCallum of McLeod Orthopaedics Seacoast, who sent me to McLeod Health Seacoast for a MRI scan,” said Keith. “The images showed that all the cartilage in both hips had worn away.”



Keith Hemingway can now enjoy one of his favorite hobbies, fishing, after receiving a bilateral hip replacement with Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Colin Canham.

“Keith had all the right characteristics and a great attitude to proceed with this procedure.”

Dr. Canham decided the anterior approach would be the best hip replacement option for Keith.

“This muscle-sparing surgery reduces pain and improves mobility,” said Dr. Canham.

“The incision is made on the front of the hip, instead of the side or back, without detaching the muscles from the hipbone.”

Because the hip muscles are not cut during an anterior approach, recovery restrictions are limited or nonexistent in terms of range of motion, making it easier to replace both hips at the same time.

Keith spent one night in the hospital as an extra precaution since surgery was performed on both hips. “I felt so good just days after my procedure that I went shopping with my family,” said Keith.

Keith completed six weeks of physical therapy and went back to work after four weeks.

“I cannot believe how much better I feel after my bilateral hip replacement,” said Keith. “I am back to enjoying life with my family and hunting and fishing in my spare time. I am so thankful for Dr. Canham and the team at McLeod Health Seacoast.”

## Liza Long, Total Knee Replacements

Kindergarten Aide Liza Long has been working with children for nearly 25 years. Knee pain began to consume her life, and simple movements like walking and bending became harder each day.

“I enjoy working with kindergarteners because the children are so sweet at that age,” said Liza. “However, my knee pain made interacting with my class incredibly difficult.”

Liza’s Primary Care Physician Dr. Darron Molter of McLeod Primary Care Seacoast referred her to Dr. Christopher Walsh. Dr. Walsh reviewed Liza’s scans of both knees and knew immediately she would need surgery.

“Dr. Walsh tried to treat my knee pain conservatively with injections, but that quickly failed,” said Liza. “We decided to proceed with surgery on my right knee first.”

Dr. Walsh performed a robotic-assisted knee replacement on Liza. “Robots have been at the forefront of revolutionizing surgery for decades,” said Dr. Walsh. “The use of robotic-assisted surgical systems help orthopedic surgeons operate more accurately and precisely in determining prosthetic alignment.”

Liza’s right total knee replacement was such a success that she scheduled surgery for her left knee just a few months later.

“I went home the same day of my surgery and spent ten weeks in physical therapy regaining strength,” said Liza. “I cannot thank the staff at McLeod Health Seacoast and Dr. Walsh enough. I received exceptional care, from the nurse who prayed with me before my procedure to my physical therapist who helped me walk down the hall.”

Today, Liza is back in her kindergarten class doing what she loves. “This school year I have Dr. Walsh’s daughter in my room. What a small world!”



After undergoing two total knee replacements from Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Christopher Walsh, Kindergarten Aid Liza Long now teaches his daughter Nova.

# RUNNING THE EXTRA MILE

by Leslie A. Mikell

Rich Wideman's passion for running led to his quick comeback to teaching and coaching at West Florence High School.



In the world of sports, resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment are the hallmarks of a true athlete. For Ohio native and Florence resident Rich Wideman, West Florence High School Cross Country and Track & Field Coach, these qualities are integral to his role in shaping young athletes.

In his earlier years, Rich played and coached both soccer and wrestling, in addition to running and coaching track and cross country athletes. However, the years of running and athletics had taken its toll on his knees.

Rich suffered meniscus tears more than 20 years ago, which required arthroscopic repair surgeries on both of his knees.

Over time, he maintained a very active lifestyle, yet his knees continued to deteriorate, causing increased pain. This affected his quality of life and eventually impacted his coaching, too.

"I like to participate and train with my athletes as much as possible while they are at practice, but my knees were holding me back. I was in a lot of pain," recalls Rich.

Rich knew that knee replacement was on the horizon. He sought advice first from Alex Holbrooks, McLeod Sports Medicine Athletic Trainer at West Florence High School. Alex suggested he meet with Dr. Chad Thurman at McLeod Orthopaedics, who had begun performing robotic-assisted knee replacements.

"During my first appointment, the staff took X-rays of my knees before I saw Dr. Thurman," says Rich. "The results showed that my knees were 'bone-on-bone,' which meant I had very little cartilage left," he adds.

"When Dr. Thurman came into the room, he sat down and said, 'Look, before we start talking about anything else, I'm going to be honest with you. You are a candidate for total knee replacement.' I appreciated that he did not beat around the bush and was very transparent with me," Rich adds.

Then, Rich asked Dr. Thurman if he'd be willing to replace both of his knees during the same surgery, also called a bilateral total knee replacement.

"A close friend and fellow cross country coach who lives in the upstate and underwent this procedure inspired me to go for it," says Rich.

"Bilateral knee replacement can be appropriate for a very specific type of patient. For someone in their early 50s like Rich, who is extremely active, lives a healthy lifestyle and has a strong support system at home, I was confident that his recovery and rehabilitation would be a success," explains Dr. Thurman.

"It means so much for my patients that we can perform these life-changing procedures here in Florence, without them having to travel to a larger city away from home," he continues.

Having bilateral knee replacement also meant Rich was only slowed down for one coaching season instead of two.

On June 29, 2022, Dr. Thurman performed bilateral robotic-assisted total knee replacement on Rich at McLeod Regional Medical Center in Florence. Three and a half weeks later, on July 25, he was back to work at West Florence.

"My students, Principal Matt Dowdell, the administration, Athletic Director Greg Johnson and my fellow teachers were incredibly supportive during my recovery," says Rich.

For people considering a total knee replacement, Rich says commitment is key to a successful recovery.

"The first few days and weeks can be tough, but you have to do your physical therapy and rehabilitation work to help your body heal and adjust. Just like I tell my athletes: as with anything in life, whether it's a workout, academic pursuits, sports, and even in marriage, you have to be committed to the process."

"If you're dealing with that bone-on-bone pain, don't wait. Don't hesitate. The sooner you get it done, the sooner your quality of life is restored, and it will all be worth it."

Throughout his rehabilitation, Rich set a goal to run a 5K race by Thanksgiving.

On Thanksgiving Day 2022, less than five months after his surgery, and with two brand new knees, Rich completed a Turkey Trot 5K road race with his family, running the entire distance.

Rich continues to run at least every other day, both on his own time and with his athletes at school.

"I'm very grateful for both Dr. Thurman and his Physician Assistant Whitney Suggs for how they helped me get my life back and keep moving forward," says Rich.



Dr. Chad Thurman was the first orthopedic surgeon in Florence to perform robotic-assisted total knee replacement surgery. He completed more than 700 robotic-assisted knee replacements during his fellowship training, and since January 2022, has performed more than 400 at McLeod Regional Medical Center.

Robotic-assisted knee replacement surgery utilizes real-time information and assists surgeons with precise placement of the knee implants based on a patient's unique anatomy. These advancements enhance a patient's surgical experience by offering less pain, shorter hospital stays, faster recoveries and a quicker return to normal activities.



After his bilateral knee replacement surgery, Coach Rich Wideman is back to running on the tracks and trails.

# Dr. Caetie Rabon: Champion for Rural Health Care

by Leah Fleming

Living in a rural South Carolina community holds all the charm and beauty one may imagine in a serene landscape painting. Fortunately for residents living in these rural towns, the choice to live in a quieter setting doesn't equal a sacrifice to access state-of-the-art medical care.

**Dr. Caetie Rabon** serves as the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for McLeod Health Inland Rural Hospitals. Appointed in 2021, the purpose of her role is to ensure McLeod Health patients living in Cheraw, Clarendon, Dillon and their surrounding areas receive safe, quality and compassionate care close to home.

"As a physician with a passion for rural health, I believe patients living in rural areas deserve first-class health care locally. At these hospitals, patients are cared for by their own community members without the burden of travel."

A native of Sumter, South Carolina, Dr. Rabon understands firsthand the impact of local people caring for local people.

"In smaller hospitals, we have an opportunity to know our patients, staff and community on a personal level," she explained. "I want to make sure we provide the same care I would expect for my own family."

Rural healthcare also shines a light on many unique challenges. For instance, in the age of ridesharing services, it may seem straightforward to get to one's destination. However, it can be problematic for some rural patients trying to get to a doctor's appointment or medical test because they may not have a car, may not drive or may not have money for gas.

Coupled with transportation challenges are things many take for granted, such as internet access or strong cell service.

As a result, one focus for rural hospitals is overcoming these barriers to ensure patients receive the appropriate care in a timely manner.

Part of the work for McLeod Health inland rural hospitals emphasizes improvements in telehealth services so patients can access specialists locally. There are also ongoing efforts to strengthen primary care services to provide a medical home for patients and manage their preventive care.

"Encouraging screening colonoscopies and mammograms, for example, can reduce the occurrence of diagnosing cancer at advanced stages," explained Dr. Rabon. "Helping patients control their blood pressure and diabetes can hopefully prevent strokes and heart attacks, which requires hospital care."

"Our priority is effecting change and being proactive in fulfilling the McLeod Health mission of improving the health of the people in our care."

This proactive approach serves Dr. Rabon well in her role as a CMO.

"On a local level, I travel to our three rural hospitals and help oversee clinical operations, quality and safety programs and improvement projects. I also inform our medical staff of new healthcare regulations. As we identify the opportunities, challenges and successes specific to each area, I can identify the most effective solutions and support for my colleagues."

Dr. Rabon also cares for patients at the bedside as a Hospitalist for McLeod Health Clarendon. She believes caring for patients strengthens her role as an administrator because she can see firsthand what patients need while in the hospital.

On a global level, Dr. Rabon is a part of a team of other CMOs at McLeod Health who meet regularly to make sure all physicians and staff at every McLeod Health entity are providing safe and low-cost care to patients across North and South Carolina. The team is led by Corporate Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President of Quality and Safety for McLeod Health **Dr. Dale Lusk**.

"Being part of a large healthcare system gives us direct access to critical resources such as staff, equipment, and facility improvements," added Dr. Rabon.

The goal is to not only bring three rural hospitals together, but as a system, establish a culture of collaboration and cohesiveness.

"Our mission as a hospital system extends beyond the facility. We are intentional about being present both in the hospital and in the community."

"Our patients are at the center of everything we do. We see patients at their best and worst. When they recover and go home, we celebrate. When they receive a difficult, life-altering diagnosis, we comfort them."

"I never want to forget my purpose as a physician and CMO. I've always been told 'joy is in the journey,' and it has been an exciting journey to get this far."

Whether in a board room or a patient room, Dr. Caetie Rabon, Chief Medical Officer for McLeod Health Inland Rural Hospitals, champions quality health care for every individual, regardless of where they live.





# TRANSFORMATION AT THE COAST

by Kelly Hughes

**“Together with our other campuses in Horry County, we are creating a healthcare continuum to ensure convenient access and quality care.”**

**– Scott Montgomery, CEO of McLeod Health Loris and McLeod Health Carolina Forest**

McLeod Health has been committed to improving the health and well-being of the residents in Horry, Brunswick and Columbus counties since 2012. That dedication remains and is evident in the transformative plans McLeod Health has for the coastal region.

Horry County grew by more than 29 percent from 2020 to 2022, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Myrtle Beach/Conway/North Myrtle Beach area was also identified as the third fastest-growing metropolitan area in the country during that same time.

By 2030, Horry County is expected to surpass Charleston County and top more than 500,000 residents, making it the second most populated and largest county in South Carolina. This explosive growth is attributed to the quality of life, low taxes and mild climate found along the Grand Strand.

In addition to houses and roads comes an increased demand for quality healthcare services. Retirees need primary care physicians and specialists to help manage their health during the golden years.

Additional inpatient beds and services will be needed to provide treatment to patients experiencing illness or injury.

“The complexity and cost of healthcare requires our team to be strategic in determining which services to offer at each of our campuses,” said Donna Isgett, President and CEO of McLeod Health. “We will never be able to do open-heart procedures at every McLeod Health campus because it would not provide the best outcomes for our patients. However, being part of a system means our patients have greater access to the care they need.”

## MCLEOD HEALTH CAROLINA FOREST

In five short years, an undeveloped 42-acre tract of land has become a burgeoning medical campus in the heart of the Carolina Forest community. Anchoring the campus is a freestanding emergency department that treats almost 17,000 patients a year.

Outpatient diagnostic testing offers lab tests and radiology exams such as X-rays, CT scans or MRI. Physical, occupational and speech therapy services are available for both pediatric and adult patients.

More than 12 primary care providers see patients ages two and older, treating a wide range of illnesses while offering screenings and general wellness. Specialty care has expanded, and new physicians continue to be recruited to meet the increasing needs.

More than 11 medical specialties including Cardiology, Orthopedics, Vascular Care and Gastroenterology have clinics on the Carolina Forest campus.

In October, McLeod Health broke ground on the newest addition to the campus – an Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC). This ASC will extend the reach of our surgical services for scheduled, same-day procedures. Patients needing a colonoscopy or hip replacement will undergo their procedures in an outpatient setting and go home the same day.

McLeod Health plans to break ground on a new hospital at the McLeod Health Carolina Forest Campus in April 2024.

“We have received a Certificate of Need from the State, as required, demonstrating the need for a hospital in this location,” said Monica Vehige, CEO of McLeod Health Seacoast.

“Pending permitting, the construction of this investment in the community’s health will take approximately 24 months,” said Vehige.

“Over the past year, more than 110,000 patient visits have occurred at our Carolina Forest Campus.

These are patients who have chosen McLeod Health for their healthcare, and we owe it to them to have a convenient choice for inpatient care.”

The hospital will be a four-story building with 48 beds and four operating suites. This \$56 million investment in the community will be 82,613 square feet.

“McLeod Health has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to our mission of improving the overall health and well-being of people living in the communities we serve,” said Scott Montgomery, CEO of McLeod Health Carolina Forest. “We were the first to build a major medical campus in Carolina Forest, the first to bring a free-standing emergency department to Carolina Forest, and we will be the first to build a hospital in response to our residents.”



# MCLEOD HEALTH SEACOAST



performed the first interventional cardiology procedures at the coast. Patients no longer have to be transferred to receive immediate treatment for acute heart attacks.

“The rapid growth of our heart program in just nine short months is a testament to the need for additional healthcare

What was once the outpatient campus of McLeod Health Loris has become a major acute care hospital just 20 miles east on Highway 9 in Little River. Over the past five years, McLeod Health Seacoast has experienced 183% growth of its average daily census. With the rapid growth on the north end of the county, it has expanded from a 50-bed inpatient hospital to 155 beds and the need for more continues.

Orthopedics has been a main service since the opening of the hospital. From high school athletes to active seniors looking to maintain their healthy lifestyle, the team of specialists at McLeod Orthopaedics Seacoast treat patients at their outpatient clinics in Little River and Carolina Forest. After conservative treatment options are no longer an option, the skilled team of orthopedic surgeons perform surgeries such as joint replacement, arthroscopy, carpal tunnel and spine surgeries at McLeod Health Seacoast.

In 2022, the joint surgeons were the first in Horry County to begin performing robotically-assisted surgeries on the hip and knees. In 2023, **Dr. Eric Nabors** joined the team as their first orthopedic spine surgeon with more than 20 years of experience.

“Less than 10 years ago, Dr. Lukowski and I were the orthopedics team at the coast,” said Orthopedic Surgeon **Dr. Eric Heimberger**. “Today, we have more than 15 physicians and advanced practice providers delivering world-class orthopedic care here in Horry County. And together with our inland partners we have more than 40 providers, making us the largest orthopedic provider in our region.”

Cardiology is another main service of McLeod Health Seacoast since its opening in 2011. Prior to 2023, diagnostic heart catheterizations were performed. However, in April 2023 **Dr. Joseph Marmora** and **Dr. Peter Duffy** joined McLeod Cardiology Associates and

services in this part of Horry County,” said Dr. Joseph Marmora. “We are saving lives of those who would have had to travel further or gone without care previously. This is just the beginning for heart care along the Grand Strand.”

On July 17, 2023, McLeod Health broke ground on the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research at Seacoast. This center is being designed to prioritize convenience for patients and their families by consolidating the major cancer treatments under one roof. Medical oncology, infusion and chemotherapy services along with radiation oncology will be in one location making this center the first comprehensive treatment center in Horry County.

“Cancer has affected everyone either directly or indirectly at some point,” said Monica Vehige, CEO of McLeod Health Seacoast. “We want to make the burden of a cancer diagnosis easier for patients.”

# MCLEOD HEALTH LORIS

McLeod Health Loris has been the cornerstone of healthcare for McLeod Health in Horry County. When the doors opened in 1950, no one could have envisioned the rich future that would lie ahead. Nearly 75 years later, McLeod Health Loris treats more than 27,000 patients annually in the Emergency Department.

In October 2022, the doors opened on a new medical office building to meet the growing demand for urology services.

Within seven months, a new operating room was unveiled in response to the growth of the Dialysis Access Center (DAC) led by Vascular Surgeon **Dr. David Bjerken**.

“McLeod Health Loris is centrally located and convenient for my kidney patients who need lifesaving care in order to continue their dialysis treatments,” said Dr. Bjerken.

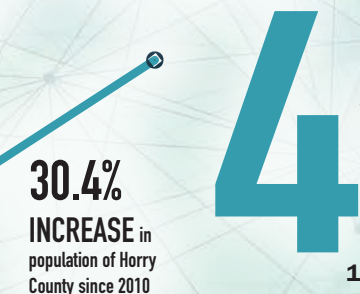
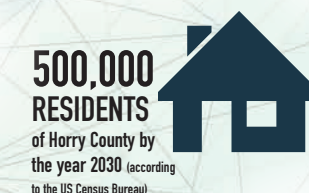
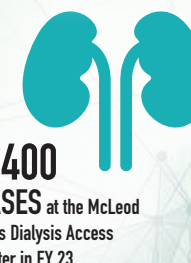
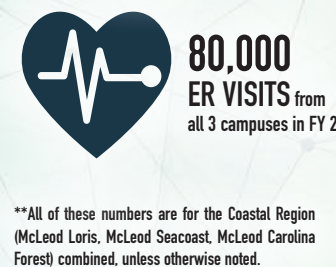
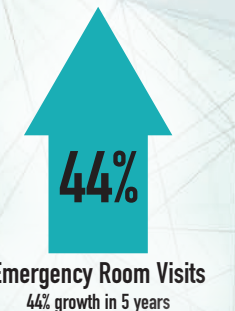
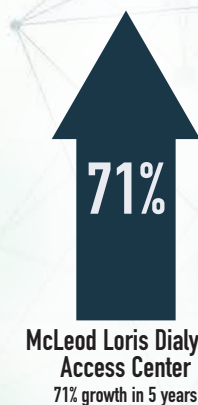
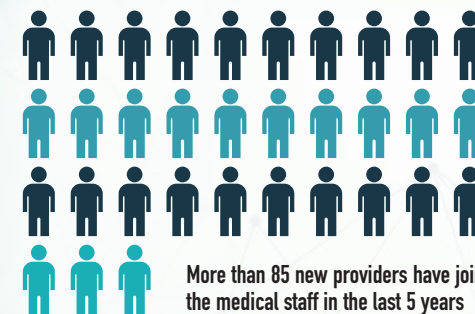
“We see patients from Lumberton, North Carolina to Georgetown, South Carolina who make the drive to Loris for treatment.”

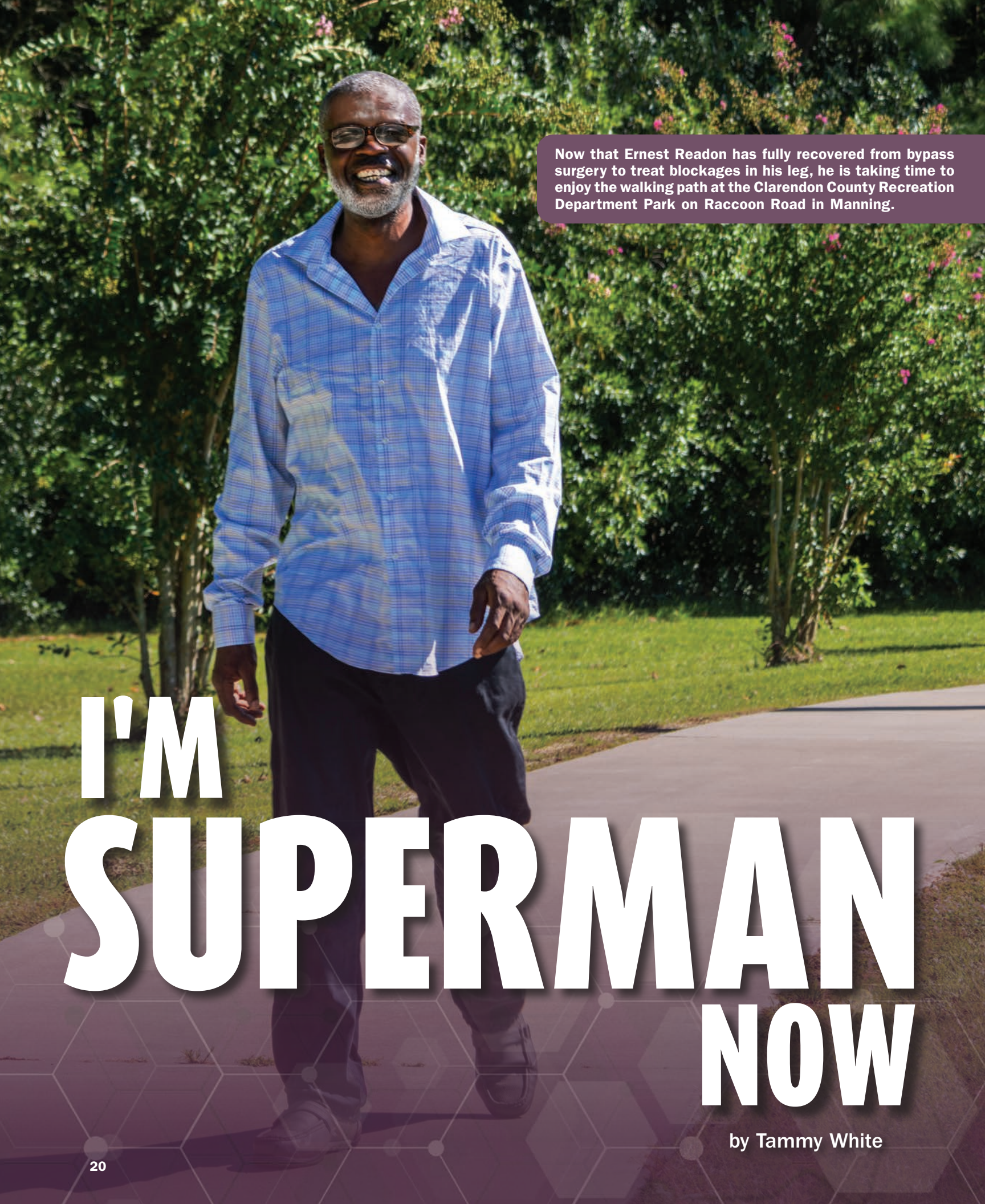
This fall, the DAC team welcomed a new surgeon, **Dr. Michael Mitchell**, to the team. The addition of this outstanding physician will continue to advance the work of the DAC and solidify McLeod Health as a leader in Dialysis Access throughout the nation.

“We remain committed to delivering the acute care services our patients need,” said Scott Montgomery, CEO of McLeod Health Loris. “Together with our other campuses in Horry County, we are creating a healthcare continuum to ensure convenient access and quality care.”



## TRANSFORMATION AT THE COAST





Now that Ernest Readon has fully recovered from bypass surgery to treat blockages in his leg, he is taking time to enjoy the walking path at the Clarendon County Recreation Department Park on Raccoon Road in Manning.

# I'M SUPERMAN NOW

by Tammy White

## “Eighty percent of patients with Peripheral Arterial Disease are current or former smokers.”

- Dr. William Jackson

It may have taken tremendous strength to recuperate from the lifesaving surgery Ernest Readon underwent with McLeod Vascular Surgeons **Dr. Carmen Piccolo** and **Dr. William Jackson**, but now that he is fully recovered Ernest claims to feel like Superman.

In January 2023, Ernest sought medical attention at the McLeod Health Clarendon Emergency Department for pain in his legs, especially his left leg. He thought this could be from his left knee popping out of the socket. During his medical exam, it was discovered Ernest had no pulse in either of his legs.

Ernest was transferred to McLeod Regional Medical Center where he met Dr. Piccolo, who explained the lack of circulation in his legs was an indication of Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD), an unfamiliar term to Ernest.

Peripheral Arterial Disease is the reduced circulation of blood to a body part due to a narrowed or blocked blood vessel. Shaped like hollow tubes, healthy arteries have a smooth lining that prevents blood from clotting and allows blood to flow smoothly.

When Peripheral Arterial Disease is present, a fatty plaque has gradually formed inside the artery walls, reducing blood flow. Blood clots can then form around the plaque, making the artery even narrower.

A classic symptom of Peripheral Arterial Disease is pain in the legs with physical activity such as walking that gets better with rest.

“Four out of ten people diagnosed with Peripheral Arterial Disease experience no leg pain,” according to Dr. Piccolo. “Some patients who experience symptoms believe it’s a natural part of aging, so they fail to report it to their physician. If PAD worsens it can eventually lead to amputation.”

Ernest’s blockages were quite significant.

His scan revealed they extended from his aorta, the main artery of the body that supplies oxygenated blood to the circulatory system, all the way to the iliac artery, which provides blood to the legs.

Ernest required bypass surgery to create an alternate route for the blood to flow around the obstructed or damaged vessels.

During the five-hour surgery Dr. Piccolo and Dr. Jackson used man-made grafts,

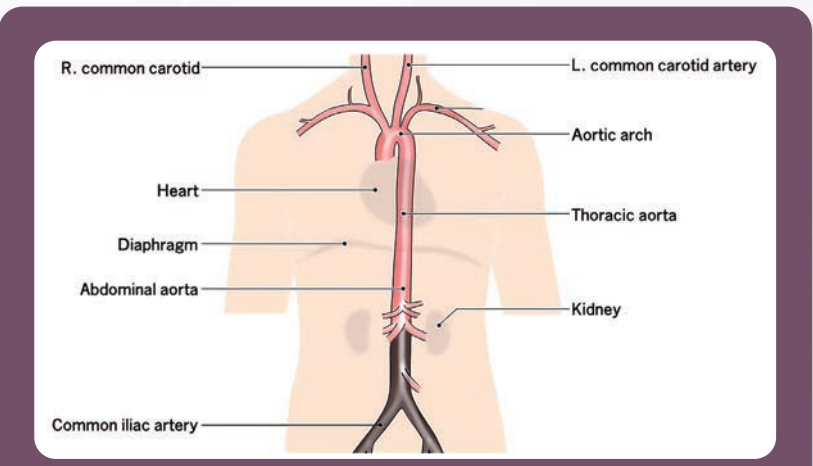
a thin fabric tube sewn into place, to replace the diseased section of arteries.

Today, Ernest says he is a changed man. Ernest is now fully educated on Peripheral Arterial Disease and the lifestyle changes necessary to remain healthy.

He immediately quit smoking, eliminated fried foods and red meat from his diet, and now walks several miles a day. “I learned how to respect my body.”

“Cigarette smoking is one of the most important risk factors for Peripheral Arterial Disease,” explains Dr. Jackson. “Eighty percent of patients with this disease are current or former smokers. Peripheral Arterial Disease is also more common in African Americans than in any other racial or ethnic group.”

“Thanks to Dr. Piccolo and Dr. Jackson and their surgical skills, I am alive today and still able to walk,” says Ernest. “There are many people in my family, my church and my community who need to be aware of this disease and the dangers it can bring to their health. Pain in their legs, cold or numb feet, skin discoloration, those are all signs they should discuss with their doctor.”



Ernest’s blockages extended from his aorta, the main artery of the body that supplies oxygenated blood to the circulatory system, to the iliac artery, which provides blood to the legs and organs in the pelvis.

# Above & Beyond for Every Child

by Jessica Wall



On the morning of Tuesday, July 18, Jessica Larrimore noticed her four-year-old daughter Liza walking differently but did not think much of it at first. They went about their normal routine – Jessica to work and Liza to school.

After school, Liza was still walking differently. When Jessica helped her to the bathroom, she saw what appeared to be an insect bite. It was red and warm to the touch.

The next morning, Jessica took Liza to the pediatrician's office for an evaluation. Her regular pediatrician happened to be on vacation, so Liza saw Advanced Practitioner **Theresa Garris, PNP**, with McLeod Pediatric Associates.

The area around the bite had become infected. Theresa prescribed oral and topical antibiotics and recommended a warm compress.

**Theresa Garris, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, played an instrumental role in Liza Larrimore's care when she developed a skin infection.**



**The McLeod Child Life Activity Center, designed to help children feel like they are in nature rather than a hospital, plays a critical role in enhancing a child's hospital experience.**

The infection seemed to be improving that night and the next morning, but by Thursday evening, Liza was in pain and could not sleep or walk. On Friday morning, Jessica noticed the infection started draining.

"It was intense," Jessica recalls. "My husband nearly fainted. We knew Theresa needed to lay eyes on this wound again."

Theresa evaluated Liza and because the infection failed to respond to the antibiotics determined she would need a minor surgical procedure to cut and drain the infection. This procedure would allow the wound to heal and respond better to treatment.

"Liza was a trooper," says Theresa. "She was very cooperative and let me examine her even though it was uncomfortable. Her optimistic and bubbly personality shone throughout this experience. She even thanked us after we finished our evaluation. Given her young age, she was very much a hero in my opinion."

"Theresa's compassion toward us was above and beyond what I could ever expect from a provider," recalls Jessica. "She assured me and Liza both that everything would be fine."

Theresa sent Liza to the Emergency Department since she would likely need to be sedated for the procedure because of her age and location of the wound.

There, Liza was under the care of **Dr. Jamie Kenney-Kalbuneh**. She examined the wound and confirmed Liza would in fact need to be sedated. During the minor procedure, Dr. Kenney-Kalbuneh drained and packed the wound to help it heal. Liza remained on antibiotics to treat the infection.

Jessica was immediately impressed with the team's efficiency and kindness.

Liza was then admitted to McLeod Children's Hospital for observation. Shortly after arriving, she visited the toy library. The next day, Liza felt strong enough to visit the Child Life Activity Center, which features interactive, therapeutic activities for children of all ages.

"I appreciate how Liza could truly enjoy playing with everything, all while attached to an IV pole," says Jessica. "While in the playroom, I noticed a box where families could suggest improvements, and there is nothing about our experience I would change."

"I had no idea how wonderful McLeod Children's Hospital was until we had to be there. Liza felt loved, and as a parent, I saw firsthand how they treat children like their very own. As we were leaving, her nurses and technicians brought her a coloring book and blanket to take home. For a child, that is everything. Liza will now look back on her hospital experience with a smile instead of fear."

One more bright spot to their hospital stay was when Theresa called to check on both Liza and Jessica.

"It meant the world to us that she would be concerned and take the time to follow up even on a weekend," recalls Jessica.

For Theresa, this is how she strives to take care of all her patients.

"Thinking back to my experiences of going with my parents or my children to a doctor's office or visiting loved ones in the hospital, I know how much it means to encounter compassionate care teams. While we are human, I try to treat every child and their parents as I would want my family to be treated. This is how we make the ultimate difference."



Patrick Priore takes time to unwind by playing his piano.

# MATTERS OF THE HEART

by Jennifer Hulon

Michael Roper is back to one of his favorite places, thanks to Dr. Marmora and his entire care team.

During a heart emergency, every second counts. The mission of McLeod Health is to improve the health and well-being of people living in the communities we serve. McLeod Health Seacoast made a promise to the community that critical heart care would be available.

McLeod Health Seacoast began an interventional cardiology program in May 2023. Interventional Cardiology means our cardiologists can immediately treat blocked arteries and restore blood flow. Prior to May 2023, the residents in northern Horry County and southern Brunswick County had limited options of hospitals with the ability to care for a patient experiencing a heart attack. Depending on the location, the commute could take an hour, which is critical travel time.

With this care now available at McLeod Health Seacoast, patients no longer have to worry about receiving timely heart care.

### Patrick Priore

A retired Police Chief from Pennsylvania, Patrick Priore was familiar with North Myrtle Beach from years of vacationing with his family. His in-laws lived in the area and upon retirement, decided to move south. One afternoon, while working in the yard with his wife Jeanine, Patrick felt discomfort in his chest and nausea.

"I've had many health concerns over the years and experienced different levels of pain," said Patrick. "This was unlike any other pain. It was an extreme pressure, pulling my shoulders down to my chest."

These symptoms prompted a trip to the McLeod Health Seacoast Emergency Department. Patrick's electrocardiogram (EKG) test was normal; however, his bloodwork reflected concerning troponin levels. Troponins are proteins released into the bloodstream during a heart attack. Dr. Joseph Marmora, Interventional Cardiologist with McLeod Cardiology Associates, assessed Patrick's test results and deemed it necessary

to perform a cardiac catheterization. The procedure showed an 80% arterial blockage.

"Mr. Priore's diagnosis proved he was in need of intervention to regain blood flow," said Dr. Marmora.

Patrick would be the first patient to undergo a percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) at McLeod Health Seacoast. During the procedure, Dr. Marmora inserted a stent into the artery to restore blood flow. Immediately, Patrick felt the relief of chest discomfort. He then stayed overnight for observation and went home the next day.

"After my procedure, I regained more stamina, exercised more intensely, slept more soundly and readjusted my body and life," said Patrick.

"Since moving to this area, I have visited McLeod Health Seacoast several times. At this critical and frightening moment, my wife and I knew we could go to the emergency department and get the help I needed. Their staff is exceptional and always professional," said Patrick.

Patrick now fills his time working in transportation logistics at North Myrtle Beach High School. He enjoys playing the piano, which offers him a way to unwind. When traveling, Patrick always enjoys playing a vacant piano in a mall, airport or venue.

### Michael Roper

Originally from China Grove, North Carolina, Michael Roper was on vacation with his family for the Fourth of July holiday at his vacation home in Ocean Isle Beach. Michael frequently took walks around his home and on the beach as a daily form of exercise.

One morning, Michael headed out for a walk in his neighborhood. He began to feel lightheaded and experienced consistent belching and chest pain. Michael collapsed around the corner from his home. A passerby stopped to help him and called 911. EMS teams arrived and assessed his condition.

Michael was having a heart attack and immediately transported to the McLeod Health Seacoast Emergency Department.

Dr. Joseph Marmora was contacted prior to Michael's arrival with details about his condition. Dr. Marmora prepared the cardiac catheterization room to expedite Michael's treatment.

Upon Michael's arrival, Dr. Marmora confirmed the EMS heart attack assessment with an EKG and bloodwork.

"Mr. Roper needed emergent intervention, as he was actively experiencing a heart attack," said Dr. Marmora.

Dr. Marmora implanted a stent into Michael's artery to reinstating blood flow.

The next day, Dr. Marmora discussed with Michael another medical concern. Dr. Marmora identified an area of his heart which showed calcified lesions.

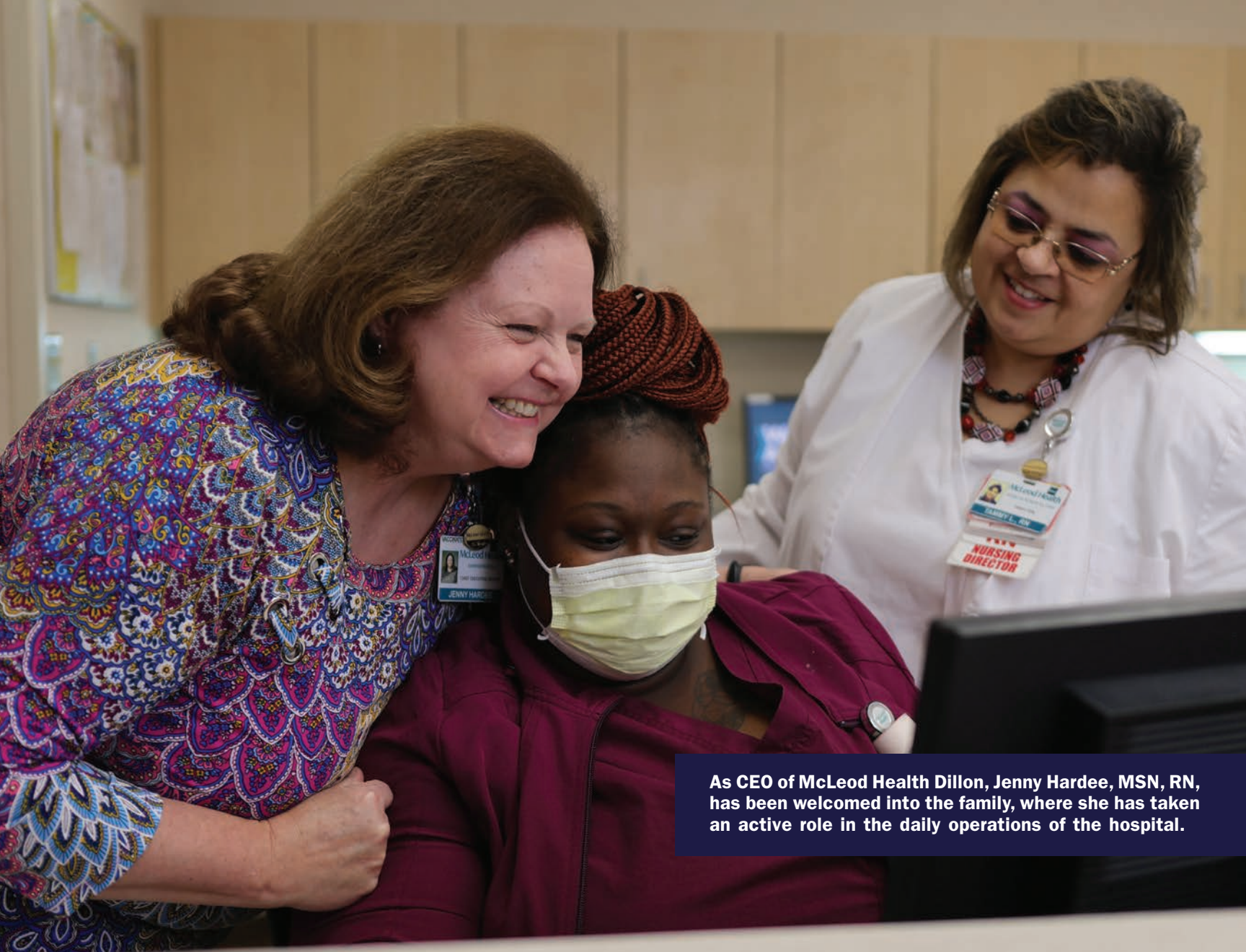
"Upon further testing, I determined Mr. Roper required extensive heart repair," said Dr. Marmora. "I advised him to schedule an appointment with a cardiothoracic surgeon near his home within the next 2 weeks."

Shortly after his heart attack, Michael underwent triple-bypass surgery. His health is now restored, and he can walk around his neighborhood with more energy and stamina.

"My family and I cannot say enough kind words about our experience with McLeod Health Seacoast," said Michael. "We have a large healthcare system in our hometown but quickly realized how the intimate hospital environment at McLeod Health Seacoast offered more comfort."

"I am so very thankful to Dr. Marmora for not only addressing my urgent heart issue, but also diagnosing my other heart concern that required a lifesaving procedure. He saved me twice."

Patrick and Michael share similar life experiences and thank McLeod Seacoast for saving their lives.



As CEO of McLeod Health Dillon, Jenny Hardee, MSN, RN, has been welcomed into the family, where she has taken an active role in the daily operations of the hospital.

# A Heart for Nursing

by Jaime Vance Hayes

## "We are local people caring for local people."

- Jenny Hardee, CEO of McLeod Health Dillon

As a child, Jenny Hardee tended to sick animals and helped care for her aging grandparents. Her compassionate spirit and caring heart led her to the nursing profession.

Jenny's career as a nurse spans 40 years, from staff nurse to charge nurse to director and beyond. She has also served as a school nurse and a clinical instructor at Florence-Darlington Technical College.

She joined McLeod Health in 2005 as Chief Nursing Officer for McLeod Health Darlington. Throughout the years, her roles would change and she would gain experience in other service lines within the hospital.

Jenny's diverse background in nursing leadership prepared her for the next step in her career - Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Jenny stepped into the role of CEO at McLeod Health Darlington in 2016, where she served for five years. As McLeod Health Cheraw searched for a new CEO in 2020, Jenny served as Interim CEO, while maintaining Darlington.

In January 2023, Jenny became the CEO of McLeod Health Dillon, a 79-bed hospital located right in the heart of the rural community. As CEO, Jenny focuses on the mission and vision of McLeod Health and alignment with the local community.

"For a rural area like Dillon, the hospital makes a tremendous impact and is vital to the health of residents," said Jenny. "While we do not offer all services in Dillon, we are able to treat, stabilize and transfer patients in a very convenient location."

Jenny believes the people at McLeod Health Dillon are its biggest asset.

"I love our people the most," she continued. "They are helpful, welcoming, thankful and gracious to work alongside."

"There is an incredible hometown feeling within this hospital," Jenny added. "We are local people caring for local people - taking care of those we see at the grocery store or at church."

"I love the fact that a small rural hospital feels like family. In any circumstance, we all come together to get things done."

Dillon's proximity to Interstate 95 results in increased trauma cases treated at the hospital.

"Our Emergency Department stays quite busy," explained Jenny. "That department and others around the hospital - such as Respiratory, Surgery and Laboratory - work together seamlessly to take the best care of the patient."

For Jenny, her family is her biggest treasure. She and her husband Todd have two sons: Templin and his wife Jennifer, and Sandy and his wife Talon. Templin and Jennifer have blessed Jenny and Todd with their two beloved grandchildren, Jayce and Kistler.

"We are fortunate to have both our boys nearby, and we cherish being able to spend time with our grandchildren."

Jenny has passed her love of bicycling to her grandchildren. "They are both becoming very confident riders," she said. "We can ride six to ten miles."

Jenny is also an avid reader. She enjoys time at the beach and spending time in her yard. "Working in the yard is a hobby and I love it, but it's also special time on my knees spent with God."

## McLeod Cancer Center Announces New Physicians

McLeod Health offers residents from the Midlands to the Coast expanded access to preventive medicine, individualized cancer treatment focusing on each patient's diagnosis, care and recovery, as well as state-of-the-art technology.

Physicians specializing in medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgery, pathology and radiology collaborate each day in recommending treatment plans for patients facing cancer.

Driven by a commitment to make this specialized care more widely available for patients, the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research has announced the addition of two new physicians, **Dr. Arrvind Raghunath** and **Dr. Jordan Gainey**.



Dr. Arrvind Raghunath

A Medical Oncologist, Dr. Raghunath cares for patients with Dr. Rajesh Bajaj, Dr. Michael Pavy, Dr. Sreenivas Rao, Dr. Jamie Smith, Dr. Ravneet Bajwa and Dr. Viji Motilal Nehru at McLeod Oncology and Hematology Associates, a Department of McLeod Regional Medical Center.

Dr. Raghunath joined McLeod in September 2023 following the completion of his Fellowships in Hematology and Medical Oncology and Leukemia at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock, Texas. He received his medical degree in 2015 from SRM Medical College and Research Center in Chennai, India, and completed his Internal Medicine Residency in 2019 at Cleveland Clinic Akron General Medical Center in Akron, Ohio.

Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology and Hematology, Dr. Raghunath said,

"I want to be part of a progressive and impactful group providing cancer care to a community. As the newest member of the McLeod Oncology team, I can help serve patients with a broad variety of conditions and provide the care they require when it is needed most."

Dr. Raghunath welcomes new patients by referral. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (843) 777-7951. The McLeod Oncology and Hematology Associates office is located on the second floor of the McLeod Cancer Center, 401 E. Cheves Street, Suite 201 in Florence, South Carolina.



Dr. Jordan Gainey

A Radiation Oncologist, Dr. Gainey joins Dr. Virginia Clyburn-Ipock in caring for patients at the McLeod Cancer Center. Dr. Gainey received his medical degree from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine in Greenville, South Carolina. He completed a residency in Radiation Oncology at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City, Iowa. Dr. Gainey joined the McLeod Radiation Oncology team in 2023.

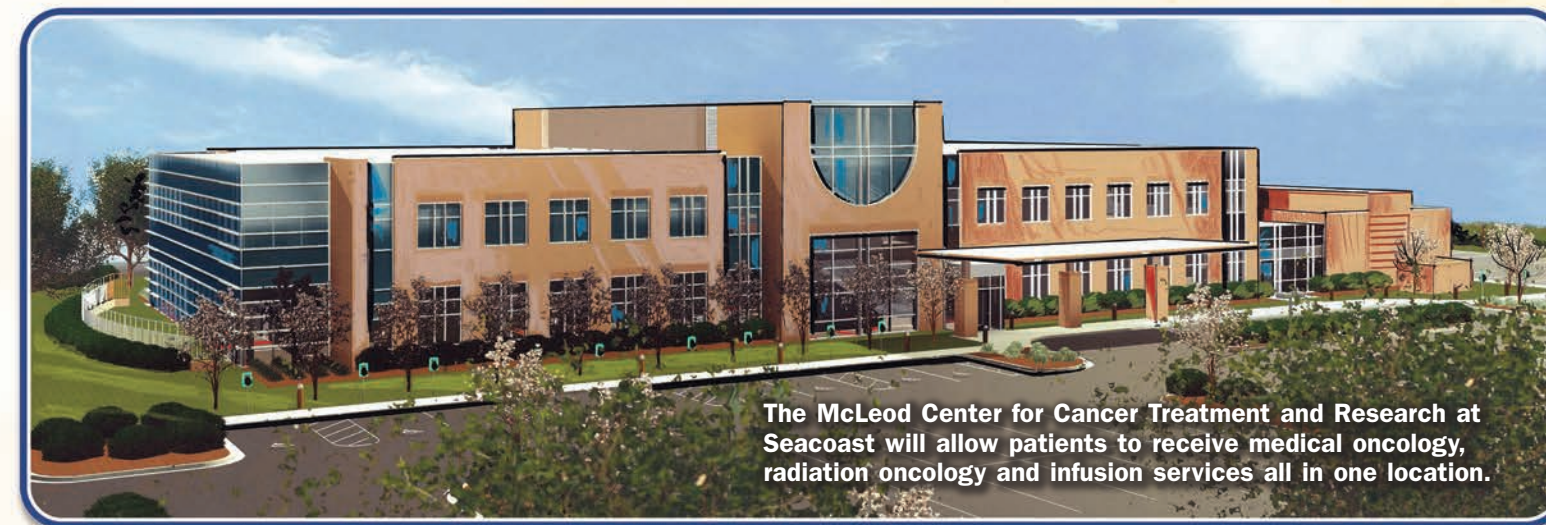
Dr. Gainey brought a new technique to McLeod from his residency training. "An innovation in the world of radiation oncology has been dubbed 'ultra-hypofractionation.' For some patients with low-risk, early-stage breast cancer, their radiation can be delivered as quickly as one week. Eligibility for this regimen requires careful consideration of multiple risk factors including patient age, tumor size, hormone receptor status and tumor grade. My conversation with each patient takes these specific circumstances into account.

"In my residency training I also obtained extensive experience with another technique called Accelerated Partial Breast Irradiation (APBI).

"This technique involves radiating a smaller volume of nearby breast tissue in the vicinity of the original tumor rather than treating the entire breast. APBI can be delivered in as few as five treatments over the course of one week. This technique is currently being evaluated by our team in the Radiation Oncology department, and APBI will be offered at McLeod in the near future," explained Dr. Gainey.

For information about scheduling appointments with Dr. Gainey, please call (843) 777-2014. McLeod Radiation Oncology is located on the first floor of the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research, 401 E. Cheves Street, Florence, South Carolina.

## Groundbreaking Held for McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research at Seacoast



The McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research at Seacoast will allow patients to receive medical oncology, radiation oncology and infusion services all in one location.

McLeod Health held a groundbreaking ceremony for the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research at Seacoast in July.

A significant milestone in cancer care was announced during the ceremony as attendees learned that this would be the first Comprehensive Cancer Center in Horry County where all cancer treatment services are under one roof. The state-of-the-art facility is being designed to prioritize convenience for patients and their families while providing the advanced cancer care they need. Services in the new Cancer Center will include medical oncology, infusion (chemotherapy/immunotherapy) services and radiation oncology.

"This groundbreaking for the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research at Seacoast is a culmination of our vision to provide the highest quality cancer care to patients in our region," said **Dr. Donny Huynh**, an oncologist with McLeod Oncology and Hematology Associates Seacoast.

"We look forward to expanding the medical oncology and infusion services we have been offering in Horry County for the past eight years and introducing radiation oncology treatment to better serve our patients."

"As the Grand Strand continues to be one of the fastest-growing areas in the country, it is imperative that, for the first time, the people of Horry County have access to a comprehensive cancer center," added Monica Vehige, CEO of McLeod Loris Seacoast.

Costing more than \$32 million, the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research at Seacoast will offer innovative multi-disciplinary care, improved access to preventive medicine and superior technology such as the new Stereotactic Radiosurgery Unit, a Large Bore CT Scanner and a Digital PET/CT Scanner -- all tools that will be used to improve the health and well-being for patients in this region.

This will all be possible in an environment dedicated to the physical and emotional health of cancer patients and their families.

The Cancer Center staff understand that it takes a team approach to diagnose and treat this disease. At McLeod, physicians representing various specialties, nurses, navigators, radiation therapists and pharmacists, all collaborate in recommending treatment plans for cancer patients, especially in challenging cases. Accredited by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons, the cancer program also demonstrates excellence in a number of key elements which are crucial to the treatment of cancer. This includes offering state-of-the-art diagnostic technology and treatment facilities, a cancer conference board and quality improvement initiatives.

The McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research at Seacoast is scheduled to open in 2025.

# An Evening of Hope and Inspiration

24th Annual Cancer Benefit Raises \$160,000 for the McLeod HOPE Fund

Providing thousands of cancer patients in the region with assistance related to transportation, medications, nutrition and personal financial challenges, the McLeod HOPE (Helping Oncology Patients Everyday) Fund benefits oncology patient support services and provides oncology staff with improved access for immediate needs for their patients.

This is made possible annually through gifts directed to the HOPE Fund.

Most recently, the 24th Annual *An Evening of Hope* raised \$160,000 to further assist patients through the HOPE Fund.

During the finale of *An Evening of Hope*, the celebrity guest performers, Leigh Anna Driggers, Emily Ellerbe, Charity Gerald and Robby Roberson, joined the band on stage for the song, "Don't Stop Believing."

Held in September 2023 at the Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center, the event included inspirational video testimonials featuring Cancer Survivors Leigh Anna Driggers, Sarah Duby, Sharmeika McDuffie, Stuart Snow and Rebekka Taylor.

Attendees were also entertained by Fran Coleman and the Emerald Empire Band with celebrity guest performances by Robby Roberson, Charity Gerald, Leigh Anna Driggers and Emily Ellerbe.



## Clinical Trials to Detect Cancer Earlier Being Offered at McLeod

Discovering new ways to treat and prevent diseases is at the center of medical research. For more than 40 years, McLeod has been dedicated to providing area residents the opportunity to participate in clinical trials that best suit their unique needs.

A trial currently open at McLeod is the Adela CAMPERR Study. The goal of the CAMPERR Study is to support the development of a blood test to detect cancer at early stages when treatment may be more effective.

The study is open to patients newly diagnosed with lung (stages I, II, III), breast (stages III and IV) and pancreatic cancer who have not had any other cancer in the last five years. It involves a simple blood draw and a medical history questionnaire.

In 2024, McLeod will offer a trial through its association with the Guardian Research Network (GRN) to enroll first time low-dose CT (LDCT) lung screening participants. The goal is to evaluate a blood test to assess its potential for use in lung cancer screening.

While LDCT is the standard of care, a blood test would serve as an alternative and more accessible screening tool which could foster a wider adoption for screening.

Involvement in cancer research at McLeod is supported by multiple research partners, including GRN, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the Southeast Clinical Oncology Research Consortium (SCOR).

To learn more about participating in research at McLeod, please call the McLeod Cancer Research team at (843) 777-0770.

### Five Leading Cancer Sites

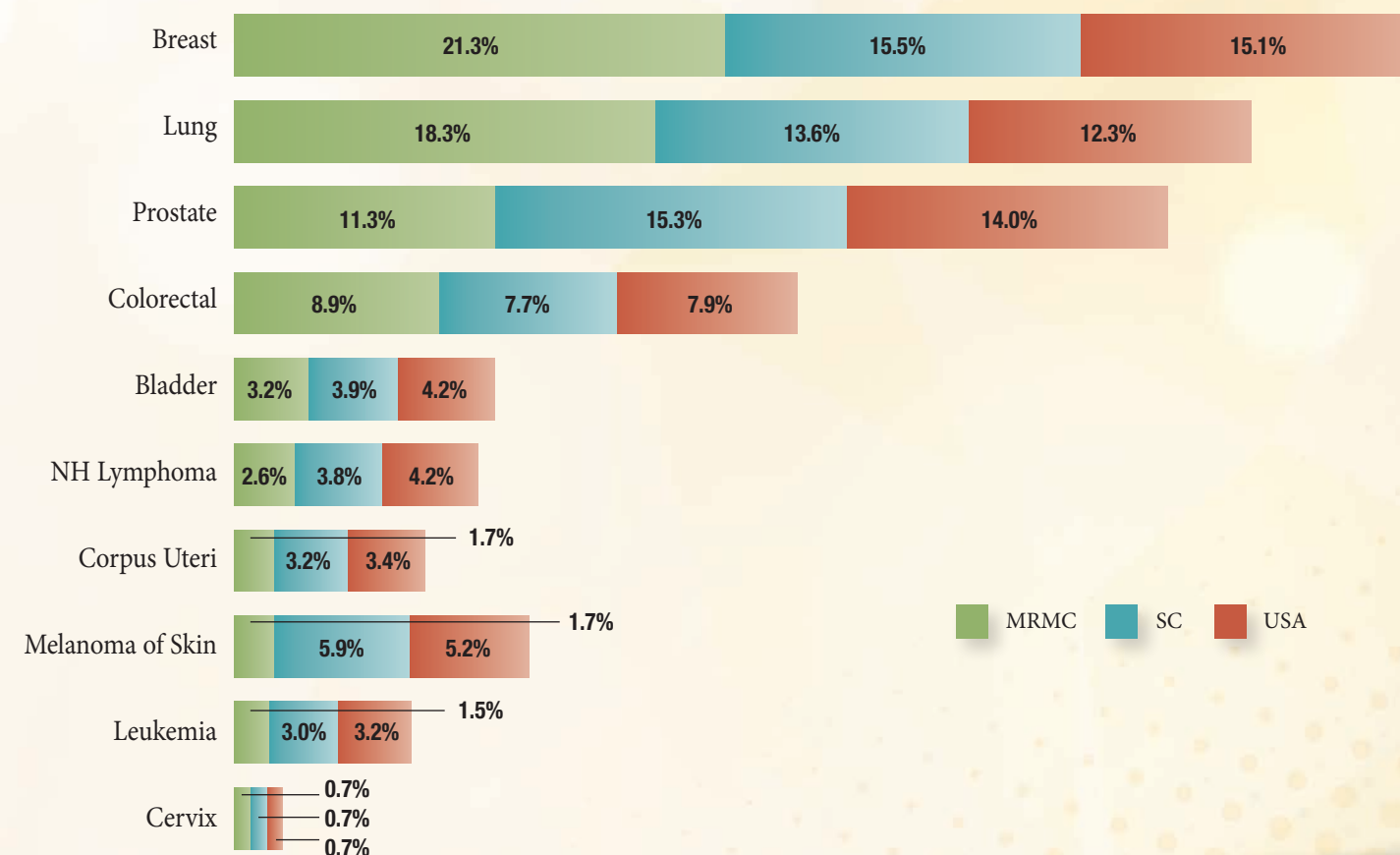
Diagnosed at McLeod in 2022	Cases
Breast	354
Lung	304
Prostate	187
Colorectal	147
Urinary System	88

Total Cases: 1080 (65.2%)



### 10 Most Prevalent Cancer Sites

Source: America Cancer Society "Cancer Facts and Figures 2022"





“I WAS NEVER JUST A NUMBER IN THE SYSTEM. I WAS ALWAYS LESLIE DENTON.” -Leslie Denton

The Dentons' personal support of the HOPE Fund stems from Leslie's own battle with cancer.

# PERSONAL CANCER CARE CLOSE TO HOME

by Lauren Snipes

Dr. Pat Denton moved to Florence in 2001 as the first physician leader charged with growing Sports Medicine into a more comprehensive program throughout the regions served by McLeod Health. He had no idea his own family would soon need the excellent care provided by McLeod Health.

Following Medical School at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, Dr. Denton and his wife Leslie knew they wanted to eventually settle down in the Southeast. After completing his Residency in Indiana and his Fellowship in Wisconsin, Dr. Denton chose to begin his practice at what was then Pee Dee Orthopaedic Associates.

With their 8-week-old newborn son in tow, the couple packed their belongings and set off to begin their new chapter in South Carolina.

Four years later, Leslie went in for a routine visit with her primary care physician. Prior to her appointment, she'd felt a lump in her breast and decided to ask him about it.

After examining her, he sent her for a mammogram and suggested speaking with a surgeon. When Leslie walked into the room for this test, her husband was already there. She knew then this may be very serious.

Leslie soon received her results, which confirmed an aggressive form of breast cancer. At just 33 years old, Leslie was shocked by this news.

With a four-year-old little boy at home, they were determined to fight and keep a positive attitude as they faced this tremendous battle.

Leslie immediately began chemotherapy treatments, followed by radiation. It was a relief to Leslie and her family for her to have access to the best oncology care and treatment so close to home. “Pat had so much faith and trust in the doctors here at McLeod,” recalls Leslie.

Her care team consisted of a surgeon, oncologist, radiation oncologist and plastic surgeon who developed a comprehensive plan to aggressively treat Leslie's cancer.

“At McLeod, I really got to know my physicians, nurses and the other staff. Having the same people take care of me for each treatment was comforting. I was never just a number in the system. I was always Leslie Denton.”

Looking back, Leslie vividly remembers waiting for her radiation treatment one day and noticing a basket of snacks that had been set out for patients to enjoy. She distinctly recalls feeling a pang of guilt, realizing so many patients didn't have her same support system of family, friends and community.

“I couldn't take a snack, knowing so many patients who came in to wait may be truly hungry,” Leslie recalls. “It was in that moment I understood that many patients faced realities far different from my own.”

Years later, Leslie was invited to join the McLeod Foundation's HOPE (Helping Oncology Patients Everyday) Fund Advisory Committee by Committee Chair Robin Aiken.

This group exists to steward funds given by donors to support and assist oncology patients being treated at McLeod Regional Medical Center.

As Leslie attended meetings and learned more about the HOPE Fund, she realized a profound truth. “The HOPE Fund exists to be a support system for those with no one,” she shares. “Not all cancer diagnoses are fatal, but they could be without the non-medical support one needs to make it through.”

The HOPE Fund serves to bridge this gap for oncology patients who are going through active treatment.

Patients may receive help with urgent, critical needs such as purchasing necessary medications and nutritional supplements, covering the cost of various bills and other financial crises as well as transportation.

“While the treatment is key for survival, it's important to care for the whole person, which includes their emotional, spiritual and financial needs as well,” Leslie adds.

Dr. Denton and Leslie choose to personally support the HOPE Fund, as they want to be able to offer this crucial support to others going through the same battle Leslie fought.

They hope their giving, and the sacrificial giving of all HOPE donors, will remind patients of supporters who are cheering them on and helping them through the battle of a lifetime.



Judy Bibbo, Vice President of Patient Services, donates blood at a McLeod Regional Medical Center blood drive.

# One Pint At A Time

by Tracie Foster

An ambulance pulls up to an Emergency Room (ER) entrance, two paramedics jump out running to the back of the vehicle and fling open the doors. Both hurriedly remove the patient who has clearly been in an accident and has serious injuries. As the paramedics begin to roll the patient through the sliding glass doors, a scene of chaos unfolds. Physicians and nurses gather around the patient lying on the gurney, assessing the injuries, hanging bags of fluid, and determining if the patient needs to be rushed into surgery. Someone yells out, "This patient needs units of blood, STAT!"

For Brian Brown, Lab Director at McLeod Regional Medical Center, this was a real-life experience. Brian's sister sustained serious injuries during a motorcycle accident and required multiple blood transfusions. "Without those donated blood products, it is very likely my sister would not be here today. For every unit of blood donated up to three lives are saved. I am extremely thankful my sister was one of those lives, all because blood products were available when she needed them," said Brian.

There are countless stories like Brian's of those who were impacted by one person's decision to donate blood.

While blood donations are often associated with emergencies, they are also used in a multitude of ways within the hospital walls. From cancer and kidney patients to the tiniest baby in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), blood products are given to many in need.

"Donating blood is simple, yet incredibly impactful," said Kayla Tucker, Francis Marion University Nursing Student. "I may not know who receives my donation, but I am making a tangible difference in someone's life, one pint at a time."

"Blood donation is very important, particularly in the trauma population," said Dr. Johnson Walker, Medical Director of Trauma Services at McLeod Regional Medical Center. "Trauma patients are at risk of infection and possible organ failure due to the loss of blood. Blood transfusions help reduce these risks. Some patients could need as much as 100 units of blood during their initial 24 to 48 hours in the hospital. Had it not been for the blood transfusions they received, those individuals would not have survived."

The Blood Connection is an independent, non-profit community blood center that has collected and supplied blood products in South Carolina for more than 60 years.

In 2019, McLeod Health partnered with The Blood Connection to provide lifesaving blood products to patients. In addition to providing patients with blood while they are in the hospital, McLeod Health, in partnership with The Blood Connection, hosts blood drives at nine McLeod campuses throughout the year. The need for blood is constant, and every blood drive plays a vital role in helping sustain the blood supply for McLeod hospitals and communities we serve.

"We are appreciative of McLeod Health employees for supporting patients not only professionally, but by further giving of themselves through the selfless act of donating blood," said Delisa English, President and CEO of The Blood Connection. "Without McLeod employees and community members donating, we could not ensure our communities have the blood products they need."

For more information on donating blood or to find a blood drive near you, visit [www.thebloodconnection.org](http://www.thebloodconnection.org).

Francis Marion University Nursing Student Kayla Tucker and McLeod Medical Lab Science Student Kiersten Cain raise awareness on the importance of donating blood.



There are four ways to donate blood: whole blood, platelets, plasma, and double red blood cells.

During whole blood donation, the most common method, one pint of blood is drawn. This pint contains red and white blood cells, platelets, and plasma. Medical teams primarily use whole blood donations during a trauma or surgery.

Platelets are small cell fragments found in the blood that help stop or prevent bleeding. Platelets are made in the bone marrow and used during surgeries and transplants. Cancer patients benefit from platelet donations because they are often not able to produce their own.

Plasma is the liquid portion of the blood that transports water and nutrients to the body tissues. Plasma is most used in individuals who have experienced a severe trauma, burn or shock, and those suffering from liver disease.

Double red cells is the donation process that separates the red blood cells from other blood components. Red blood cells are typically given to people with sickle cell disease, trauma patients, newborns and anyone suffering blood loss.

# ROCK STEADY

by Tammy White

Thanks to Deep Brain Stimulation surgery, Marion Broach's hands are steady enough to feed his horses.



A special brain mapping program is represented by the yellow strands surrounding the leads shown in Marion's MRI brain scan.

Living with Parkinson's disease can be challenging, especially when one becomes dependent on others to perform everyday tasks.

When Florence resident Marion Broach began experiencing tremors in his right hand, he went to see his primary care physician **Dr. John Mattheis** with McLeod Family Medicine Center. Suspecting Parkinson's disease, Dr. Mattheis referred Marion to **Dr. Deborah Kirby** with McLeod Neurological Associates.

"Parkinson's disease can occur when the brain cells responsible for making dopamine, a chemical that helps coordinate movement, stops working or dies," explains Dr. Kirby. "Parkinson's is classified as a 'movement disorder' because it can cause tremors, slowness, and stiffness, as well as walking and balance issues."

Dr. Kirby initially treated Marion's symptoms with medication. However, Parkinson's is a lifelong progressive disease, meaning symptoms slowly worsen over time.

Marion's disease advanced, and he began to develop other symptoms. His voice became softer, and he also experienced dizzy spells. He struggled with balance, and it was not uncommon for Marion to receive scrapes and bruises from his falls. Dr. Kirby increased Marion's medications in an attempt to control his symptoms.

"I had to use both hands to get up from a chair," recalls Marion. "When I would walk, sometimes my feet would suddenly feel as if they were stuck to the floor."

Medications make it possible for people to lead fulfilling and productive lives, but when they are no longer effective, surgical intervention may be an option.

McLeod Health offers a procedure called Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), performed by Neurosurgeon **Dr. Tripp Hines**. There is an ideal "window" for DBS, and the timing will differ for each person. Dr. Kirby believed Marion could benefit from this surgery and referred him to Dr. Hines.

"DBS works by regulating abnormal signals in the brain," explains Dr. Hines. "Through electrical stimulation, DBS aids in the treatment of movement disorders and can even be used to help control the symptoms of epilepsy and obsessive-compulsive disorder."

After meeting with Dr. Hines, Marion understood that DBS would not be a cure for his Parkinson's disease. Patients are carefully evaluated by the McLeod Neurosurgery team to determine if they are a candidate for DBS.

"I went through a series of testing, including an MRI and a psychological evaluation to determine how much the disease had affected my brain," recalls Marion.



"These tests are an important part of the evaluation process," explains Dr. Hines. "Disease progression determines whether or not a patient is a good candidate for DBS."

A very active man, Marion struggled with the limitations this disease had brought on him. In his younger days he rode motorcycles and went hunting for hogs on horseback. In his golden years, he and his wife Betty took road trips through the mountains of Ohio to pick up hay for their horses and mules. When Marion received the good news that he was a candidate for DBS his response was, "Let's get it done."

During the medical procedure thin wires called electrodes are placed in the brain. A pulse generator, a programmable device similar to a heart pacemaker, is inserted in the chest area just under the skin.

The pulse generator sends mild electrical impulses to the electrodes in the brain. The electrical impulses stimulate the areas of the brain that control movement.

“Dr. Hines said I could pick which side of my chest he would place the pulse generator. I chose the left side because I like to hunt. This way I would not have to worry about the gun recoil interfering with the device,” says Marion.

At McLeod, DBS is performed in two stages. The first stage is an outpatient surgical procedure to place the pulse generator device in the chest and the lead extensions under the scalp. The second stage, which takes place a few days to one week later, is placement of the electrodes within the brain and connecting them to the lead extensions. The electrodes are placed in designated areas of the brain according to the patient’s diagnosis, symptoms and other factors.

“During follow-up appointments in the office, I can adjust the intensity of electrical stimulation to control symptoms,” explains Dr. Hines. “Most generators are rechargeable and last for approximately 15 years.”

“There is also a non-rechargeable generator that lasts on average from three to six years.”

Marion experienced a significant improvement in quality of life after his surgery. His hands are now rock steady, he has great balance and requires less medication.

He and Betty have been busy camping at the beach and spending time with their four grandchildren. Every day, Marion visits the family farm to feed his Marsh Tacky Horses, the South Carolina state horse as well as his mules.

“It is amazing what this procedure has done for Marion,” says Betty. “Before DBS, Marion was unable to do something as simple as button and tuck in his shirt. We are so thankful for Dr. Kirby bringing us to Dr. Hines.”

“I feel better about myself both mentally and physically,” says Marion. “We are so fortunate to have Dr. Hines here at McLeod. I would recommend him and the DBS procedure to anyone.”

Dr. Hines uses neuroimaging from a brain scan and a special frame to help pinpoint with precise accuracy the proper areas in the brain to place the leads.

**“It is amazing what this procedure has done for Marion. Before Deep Brain Stimulation, he was unable to do something as simple as button and tuck in his shirt.”** - Betty Broach

# McLeod News

## McLeod Health Expands Presence in Lake City and Lower Florence County

### Prime Parcel Location Will House Primary Care and Targeted Services

In continued commitment to providing excellence in care for residents of Lake City and lower Florence County, McLeod Health has purchased eight acres of land on US Hwy 52 near the US 378 Bypass. Plans for this property include a new office building for McLeod Primary Care Lake City and space for mobile imaging and diagnostic services. Following acquisition of permits, construction is scheduled to begin later this year with a targeted opening of summer 2024.

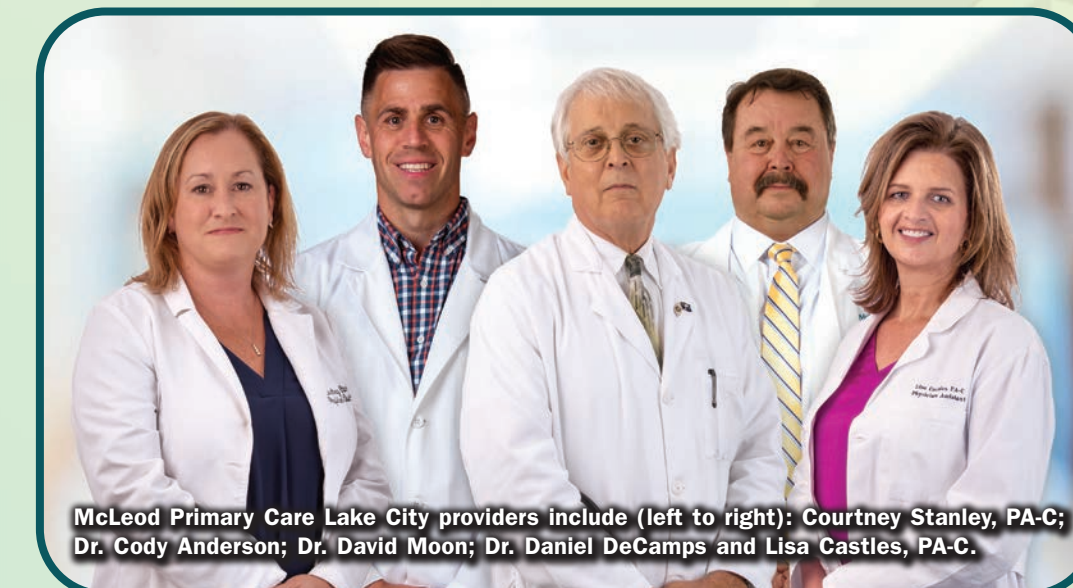
McLeod Primary Care Lake City was established in October 2022 with physicians **Dr. David Moon**, **Dr. Daniel DeCamps** and **Dr. Cody Anderson**, as well as advanced practitioners **Lisa Castles, PA-C** and **Courtney Stanley, PA-C** joining McLeod Physician Associates.



These exceptional medical professionals have continued to deliver the highest-level care to patients and the Lake City community with access to the extensive services of McLeod Health.

“With this investment, McLeod renews our commitment to care for the residents of this community now and in the future, beginning with a new home for this excellent team of providers and staff,” said Ken Beasley, Senior Vice President of McLeod Physician Associates.

The new office of McLeod Primary Care Lake City will provide greater convenience and access for patients and staff. The approximately 5,000-square-foot facility will house space for 16 exam rooms, lab and X-ray on-site, a large waiting area and ample parking. Planning is underway for additional services to be located on the property in future phases of development.



McLeod Primary Care Lake City providers include (left to right): Courtney Stanley, PA-C; Dr. Cody Anderson; Dr. David Moon; Dr. Daniel DeCamps and Lisa Castles, PA-C.

# McLeod News

## McLeod Health Hosts Attorney General Alan Wilson

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson and The Department of Crime Victim Compensation held a press conference at McLeod Regional Medical Center on November 8, 2023, to announce the expansion of HIV nPEP (non-Occupational Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) Program, which provides treatment and follow-up care to victims of sexual assault when they are found to be at risk for contracting HIV.

Speakers included Senator Mike Reichenbach as well as representatives from each of the partnering organizations – McLeod Regional Medical Center, HopeHealth and Pee Dee Coalition.

“Imagine the horror of already being a victim of sexual assault and then having to worry about whether you might have contracted a deadly disease because of that assault,” said Attorney General Wilson. “This program provides life-saving treatment to prevent that, which keeps survivors from being further victimized.”

Florence County is the 5th HIV nPEP and follow-up treatment program for crime victims of sexual assault in the state. South Carolina was the first state in the country to offer this level of service to victims of sexual assault who are found to be at risk for contracting HIV.

### non-Occupational Post-Exposure Prophylaxis - nPEP Program

What is nPEP? It is medication (2 types of pills) that can prevent HIV transmission after a sexual assault victim has been exposed to HIV. It means the victim must take antiretroviral medicines after being potentially exposed to HIV to prevent becoming infected. This medication must be started within 72 hours (3 days) of the exposure and must be taken for 28 days.

The 28-day medication regimen can cost as much as \$3,000 per victim, and the expense increases with follow-up treatment; but this new program is FREE to sexual assault victims who meet the criteria below.

Individuals qualify if:

- They are a victim of sexual assault and meet the CDC criteria for exposure to HIV
- The sexual assault happened in South Carolina
- The sexual assault occurred within 72 hours of the initial visit to the Emergency Department or HopeHealth, Inc.

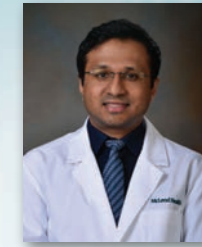


Attorney General Alan Wilson visited McLeod Regional Medical Center on November 8, 2023, to announce the expansion of the HIV nPEP Program.

# McLeod Welcomes New Physicians



**Akida Green, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Loris Seacoast



**Arrvind Raghunath, MD**  
Medical Oncology  
McLeod Oncology and Hematology Associates



**Asad Shaikh, MD**  
General Surgery  
McLeod Loris Seacoast Surgery



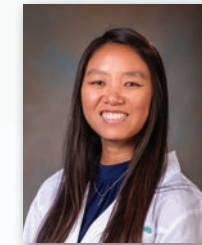
**Aubrey M. Moyer, DO**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Regional Medical Center



**B. Palmer Freshley, MD**  
Sports Medicine  
McLeod Orthopaedics Seacoast



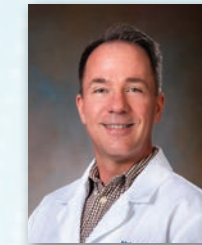
**Bruce Kowalski, MD**  
Cardiology  
McLeod Cardiology Associates-Carolina Forest



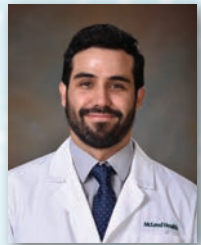
**Catherine Tannahill, MD**  
Neurosurgery  
Florence Neurosurgery & Spine at McLeod Health



**Charlee Pittman, DO**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Health Clarendon



**David Krusling, MD**  
Emergency Medicine  
McLeod Regional Medical Center



**Eliud Pabon Borgos, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Loris Seacoast



**Eric Nabors, MD**  
Spine Surgery  
McLeod Orthopaedics Seacoast



**Faisal Majeed, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Loris Seacoast



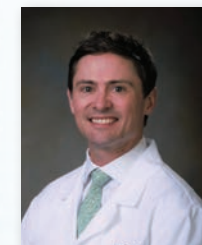
**Felix Kuuseg, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Loris Seacoast



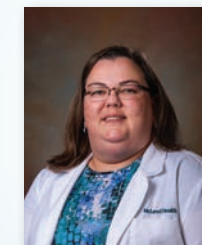
**Frederick Bellamy, MD**  
Anesthesiology  
McLeod Loris Seacoast



**Hugh L. Willcox, III, MD**  
General Surgery  
Pee Dee Surgical Group



**Joseph Marmora, MD**  
Interventional Cardiology  
McLeod Cardiology Associates Seacoast



**Lisa M. Ryder, MD**  
Emergency Medicine  
McLeod Regional Medical Center



**Luke Stewart, MD**  
Vascular Surgery  
McLeod Vascular Associates

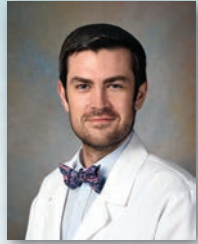


**Maria Baens, MD**  
Primary Care-Family Medicine  
McLeod Primary Care Carolina Forest



Scan this QR code to learn more about each physician.

# McLeod Welcomes New Physicians



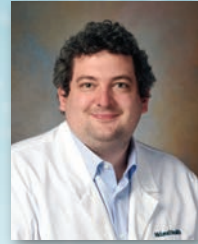
**Mark Jones, DO**  
Primary Care-Family Medicine  
McLeod Family Medicine  
Center-Florence



**Meenakshi Pande, MD**  
Endocrinology  
McLeod Pediatric and  
Adult Endocrinology



**Michael C. Corso, MD**  
Primary Care-Family Medicine  
Jeter-Skinner Family Practice



**Michael J. Shea, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Loris Seacoast



**Michael Mitchell, MD**  
Vascular Access  
McLeod Dialysis Access Center



**Michael Warden, MD**  
Pain Management  
Florence Neurosurgery & Spine at  
McLeod Health



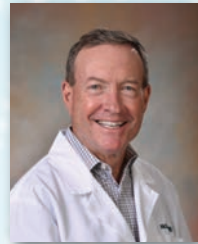
**Nicholas Koroneos, DO**  
Neurology  
McLeod Neurology Seacoast



**Niyanta Patel, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Loris Seacoast



**Noman Ghiasi, MD**  
Primary Care-Family Medicine  
McLeod Primary Care Carolina  
Forest



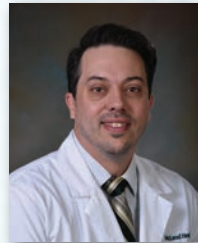
**Peter Duffy, MD**  
Interventional Cardiology  
McLeod Cardiology Associates  
Seacoast



**Robert O'Connor, MD**  
Anesthesiology  
McLeod Loris Seacoast



**Rupa Chalasani, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Regional Medical Center



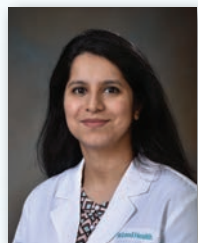
**Ryan Gilbert, MD**  
Primary Care-Family Medicine  
McLeod Dillon Family Medicine



**Sam Meshkinfam, MD**  
Otolaryngology  
McLeod ENT Associates/Florence  
Ears, Nose, & Throat



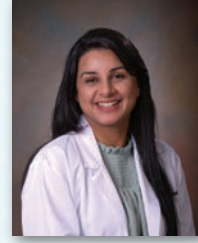
**Scott M. Berry, MD**  
Breast Surgery  
McLeod Breast Surgery Seacoast



**Sonika Malik, MD**  
Endocrinology  
McLeod Pediatric and Adult  
Endocrinology



**Symbiat Olayiwola, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Regional Medical Center



**Tarandeep Kaur, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Regional Medical Center



**Valery Batimba Bessi, MD**  
Inpatient Medicine-Hospitalist  
McLeod Regional Medical Center



Scan this QR code to  
learn more about each  
physician.

New Physicians as of December 31, 2023



**Well  
Ahead**  
Patient Experience

Every single action, every innovation, every treatment and every act of compassion within McLeod Health is a testament to our relentless dedication to provide our patients with an experience that outshines the bounds of ordinary care.

**McLeod Health**

# McLeod Health

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