

Cape Fear Valley Health system is partnering with a regional leader in home health care to provide improved home health and hospice services to its patients.

Effective Oct. 1, Cape Fear Valley is forming a new company with LHC Group of Lafayette, La., to provide home health and hospice care. LHC Group is a national leader in home care, with nearly 200 home health agencies in 13 states located throughout the Southeastern United States. Cape Fear Valley has operated its home health agency since 1985. The joint venture will bring LHC's expertise in home care to daily operations, allowing Cape Fear Valley to focus on its core competencies in providing hospital-based acute care.

"We are excited about this new partnership with LHC Group," said Joyce Korzen, Chief Operating Officer for Cape Fear Valley. "LHC is an acknowledged leader in home care services, and our patients will benefit from the expertise they bring to our daily operations."

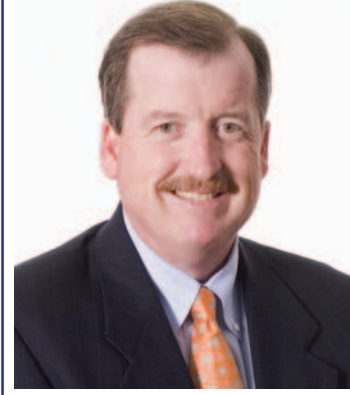
"There will be no interruption in service to our patients served by our agency," she said. "This will be a seamless transition for our patients, but one which results in improved focus and expertise for our home health services."

Under the arrangement, the two companies will form a new company. The agency will operate under the name of Cape Fear Valley Home Care and Hospice. As a partner in the joint venture, Cape Fear Valley will maintain a strong voice in the company's daily operations to assure that hospitalized patients' needs for home care continue to be met.

The new company will retain most current employees of Cape Fear Valley's home health agency. Sixty-five of the current 69 staff members have been offered jobs with the new company. Employees not accepting those offers will go on priority placement with Cape Fear Valley for other potential employment opportunities. Any employees not retained will receive severance benefits.

"We are proud to be partnering with a provider with such an outstanding reputation and tradition of excellence as Cape Fear Valley Medical Center," said Keith G. Myers, Chief Executive Officer for LHC Group. "We look forward to working with the hospital to further expand services and to demonstrate LHC Group commitment to helping people in its communities by providing the highest quality home nursing services available."

Fayetteville Native Named Interim BCH President



Kevin Jackson has been named interim President of Bladen County Hospital in Elizabethtown effective Monday, Sept. 29.

Jackson, 47, of Fayetteville, previously served as Vice President of Surgical & Emergency Services with Cape Fear Valley Health System. He has also served as Vice President of Support Services and Director of Management Engineering. He joined Cape Fear Valley in 1988.

Jackson received his master's degree in Business Administration from Campbell University in 1992. He received his bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from North Carolina State University in 1983.

Bladen County Hospital is a public, not-for-profit 58-bed Critical Access Hospital (CAH) that includes a 24-hour Emergency Department, 40-bed Medical/Surgical Unit, an Intensive Care Unit and an up-to-date Birthing Center.

As of June 1, Cape Fear Valley is managing Bladen County Hospital under a five-year lease agreement with Bladen County.

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CHOOSING A NEW PHYSICIAN

Finding the right doctor for your primary healthcare needs can go a long way toward maintaining a long and healthy life



Willie Jones is a pretty laid-back soul most of the time, but he was anything but when it came to finding a new doctor.

The 56-year-old Civil Service retiree spent five months actively researching Cumberland County physicians before deciding on a doctor with Hope Mills Family Care.

Five months may seem like a long time to decide on anything, let alone a doctor, but Jones had certain criteria his next physician had to meet. The doctor had to be male, have an office close by, accept Jones' Tricare military insurance and, most importantly, make Jones feel comfortable as a patient.

So Jones spent weeks researching doctor bios on Cape Fear Valley's website. He then spent the rest of the time asking friends and family about his pared-down choices.

"I don't play around," Jones says, with a chuckle. "It was a pretty fair amount of research."

Experts say choosing a good doctor is one of the most important steps toward achieving good health. A personal physician can provide regular checkups that can catch serious health problems early. Having your own physician also gives you one less thing to worry about if you suddenly become ill. But many never get around to choosing one and then have to make a rushed choice after an emergency occurs.

Jones chose Johnnie Moultrie, M.D., a relatively young doctor, but a lifelong Fayetteville resident and Douglas Byrd High School graduate - facts that caught Jones' attention. Moultrie's East Carolina University medical school degree, relatively close office and excellent bedside manner helped clinch the deal.

Dr. Moultrie says Jones did the right thing by doing his homework before deciding, because of the sheer number of doctors typically in a community.

"It's kind of like buying a house," Dr. Moultrie says. "There's no one perfect fit for everyone."

Dr. Moultrie says a advice from family and friends can be helpful, but there are plenty of other things to consider.

Here are some other questions that can help you decide if a doctor is right for you:

- Where is the doctor's office? How easy is it to get there? Can you get there by public transportation?
- What are the office hours? Is it open evenings or weekends?
- How easy is it to get an appointment? Can you be seen the same day you call in?
- Which hospital does the doctor use?
- Is the office staff courteous and prompt?
- Who covers for your primary physician if he or she is on vacation?
- Is the physician's age a concern? Is the physician in good standing?
- Does the doctor's office take your insurance? Does the office process insurance claims, or do you file the claim yourself?

If you are seeking a new doctor and aren't sure where to start, you can start your search with Cape Fear Valley's Find A Physician webpage just like Jones did. The page is located at <http://www.capefearvalley.com>. Click on Find A Physician. If you don't have internet access, you may call Carelink at 366-LINK.

If you do find a physician you are interested in, you can often make an interview appointment to speak with the physician directly. There may be a small fee for the office visit, but the peace of mind in choosing a good personal physician is more than worth it.

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