

OCTOBER 2009



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## Community Partnership Brings Inpatient Podiatry to UC Health

Vascular specialists at UC Health have partnered with a group of 10 community foot specialists to offer patients inpatient podiatric care. Led by George Meier, MD, the initiative will give patients the type of coordinated, timely care necessary to manage and treat chronic vascular health and circulation problems.

The care team—made up of surgeons, physicians, podiatric medicine specialists, nurses and dietitians—has seen approximately 150 patients since launching the service in early 2009. Meier serves as chief of vascular surgery and podiatry, with podiatrist Cary Copeland, DPM, serving as the podiatry program director. Inpatient care takes place at UC Health University Hospital.

By combining the two specialties, Meier says UC Health is able to offer a caliber of comprehensive vascular and podiatric care that doesn't exist elsewhere in Greater Cincinnati. The goal is to help patients avoid preventable amputations as the result of delayed or mismanaged treatment.

"For the first time in this region a top-notch academic health center-based vascular team is working with a community podiatry practice to deliver high-quality, coordinated care to patients in a single place," explains Meier. "These patients need the benefit of vascular expertise to ensure that blood circulation is good, as well as podiatric expertise to reshape the foot and encourage chronic wound healing. Both are critical to limb salvage."

According to the American Podiatric Medicine Association, more than

23.6 million Americans have diabetes and an additional 8 to 12 million have peripheral arterial disease. The organization estimates that proper foot care would reduce amputations by 45 to 85 percent.

"We need to educate both patients and primary care physicians to recognize the early warning signs of vascular

disease. Unfortunately, right now many patients only seek our help once their limb is virtually unsalvageable," says Meier. ●



George Meier, MD

Cary Copeland, DPM

*"For the first time in this region a top-notch academic health center-based vascular team is working with a community podiatry practice to deliver high-quality, coordinated care to patients in a single place."*

**>> FOR MORE INFORMATION on podiatry and vascular surgery at UC Health, call (513) 558-3700.**

*Inpatient care takes place at UC Health University Hospital. Outpatient appointments are available in Clifton (Medical Arts Building) and West Chester (Medical Office Building).*

## Medical Campus Priorities Top of Mind for New UC President

COLLEAGUES,  
On Sept. 9, the University of Cincinnati (UC) Board of Trustees appointed Greg Williams, PhD, the 27th president of the university. I am delighted with the



*David M Stern*

board's selection and feel confident Williams will make the needs of the medical campus and UC Health an even higher priority for the university.

As president of the City College of New York (CCNY), Williams demonstrated great leadership and immediately impressed those on the UC search committee with his vision and

command of the issues for our university. I believe Williams will be a great partner in guiding our academic health center, and I truly look forward to working with him.

Williams holds five degrees—including a JD and PhD from George Washington University—as well as three honorary doctorates. He has been a university administrator for more than 30 years, previously serving in a variety of posts at George Washington University, the University of Iowa and Ohio State University. Immediately prior to becoming president of CCNY, he was dean of the Law School and Carter C. Kissell Professor of Law at Ohio State University. Early in his

career, Williams was a deputy sheriff, and he later worked as an aide to a United States senator.

When Williams officially assumes his post in November, he will bring with him a strong reputation for building enrollment while ensuring academic excellence and diversity and a substantial background in academic leadership, particularly in a public setting.

I hope you'll join me in welcoming President Williams to Cincinnati.

**DAVID STERN, MD**  
Chairman, University of Cincinnati Physicians Board of Directors  
Vice President for Health Affairs, UC Dean, UC College of Medicine

## We're all UC Health

As the diagnostic testing supervisor and chief nuclear medicine technologist for internal medicine's division of cardiovascular diseases, Sherri Noonan supervises a team of seven people at the West Chester Medical Office Building and the Medical Arts Building who perform the imaging tests that UC Health cardiologists—as well as outside physicians—use to diagnose and treat heart conditions. She joined University of Cincinnati Physicians to fill this role when the organization opened its West Chester facility in 2002.

Noonan says she loves interacting with patients and enjoys her job as much today as when she started her career in nuclear medicine 18 years ago. She says the best part of working with UC Health is the excellent team and their strong commitment to delivering patient-centered care.

A graduate of the University of Cincinnati, Noonan resides in Milford with her husband, Jim, and daughter

## Sherri Noonan

Diagnostic Testing Supervisor  
Chief Nuclear Medicine Technologist

Ashley. She is also the proud mother of a son, James, who is a U.S. Marine. In her spare time, Noonan enjoys socializing with her extended family and participating in Girl Scouts

fundraising, community service and adventure camp activities with her daughter. The troop is currently preparing for a 12-day community service trip to Mexico in June 2010. ●



### Connected

Connected is a monthly publication for physicians and staff of University of Cincinnati Physicians. Send your comments and ideas to [ucpmarketing@ucphysicians.com](mailto:ucpmarketing@ucphysicians.com) or call (513) 475-8006.

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UC Academic Health Center Communications Services

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Volume 1, Issue 9

# UC Health Selected for Elite Health Care Pilot

## Primary care physicians will test new model for lowering medical costs

**M**anoj Singh, MD, a UC Health family medicine doctor, sees patients with chronic illnesses almost every day. But his time to discuss treatment options and to answer patient questions during standard visits is limited.

"We're constantly on a treadmill where we are pressured to see more and more patients," he says.

Now, UC Health's internal and family medicine practices are taking steps to create a cohesive plan for managing patient care more efficiently and at lower costs as part of the Patient-Centered Medical Home pilot model.

The pilot involves 11 primary care practices in the Greater Cincinnati area and is supported by Greater Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q), a Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati initiative.

"The hope is that this model will let us see more patients while providing better care," says Singh. "This should



Nita Walker, MD, pilot program participant

allow us to truly focus on the health of the patient and provide quality care."

"This model is an approach to providing comprehensive primary care while facilitating partnerships between patients, their families and physicians," adds Robert Graham, MD, a UC professor and chair of the Patient-

Centered Medical Home Work Group, a part of the AF4Q program. "U.S. medical care has become fragmented

*"This model is an approach to providing **COMPREHENSIVE PRIMARY CARE** while **facilitating partnerships** between patients, their families and physicians."*

and unresponsive to patients' needs for coordinated care. We hope this broad approach will allow better access to care, increase satisfaction and improve health as a whole."

Disease prevention and maintenance of good health through primary care physicians coordinating care with specialists to tailor care to a patient's specific needs are focal points for the pilot.

Patients will have access to a "medical home" team that that can help them navigate the health care system and work on proactive health measures to stop disease before it starts. ●

### *How the 'Medical Home' Model Works*

Physicians involved in the pilot will serve approximately 30,000 local patients and be paid an additional care management fee for about one-third of their patients. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Humana, UnitedHealthcare of Ohio and several employers are supporting the pilot.

The idea is that by paying doctors for the services patients value most, they will have the ability to give more time and attention to their patients, helping



Craig Brammer Robert Graham, MD

to avoid unnecessary and expensive tests, hospitalizations, emergency visits, and ultimately saving insurers, employers and patients money. Model effectiveness will be evaluated by the Harvard School of Public Health.

"This pilot is one of very few across the nation that is bringing multiple health

insurance companies, employers and providers together to focus reimbursement on prevention and health maintenance rather than responding to acute illness," says Craig Brammer, senior UC public health sciences research associate and director of Cincinnati AF4Q. "Innovative, locally driven efforts are often the basis for the kind of health care transformation that ultimately needs to happen."

# Psychiatry Driven By Patient-Centered Care

## Collaborative team addresses array of disorders at a single location

When you think of UC Health psychiatric services, think of the three C's: **C**omprehensive services, a **C**ollaborative philosophy and a **C**entralized location.

"I consider us to be a multidisciplinary practice," says Charles Collins, MD, the UC psychiatry department's vice

**"WHEN A PATIENT** *has a certain need, we have the ability to access a **broad range of experts** and bring that knowledge into the therapy."*

chair for clinical services. "We have physicians, psychologists and social workers available.

"What is nice about that," he adds, "is it leads to a great deal of collaboration. When a patient has a certain need, we have the ability to access a broad range of experts and bring that knowledge into the therapy."

Adding to the collaborative spirit, outpatient services are centralized at

### Psychiatry at a Glance

- 55 full-time, 54 affiliated, 7 adjunct, 46 volunteer faculty
- 1,600 outpatients seen annually
- Single, centralized outpatient care location
- Specialized teams for treatment-resistant depression, cognitive disorders and mood/physical disorders specific to women
- Dedicated forensic services team to address crime and mental illness



Charles Collins, MD

the Stetson Building, 260 Stetson St., across Martin Luther King Drive from the UC Health Medical Arts Building in Clifton.

"Before the move here, we had people at multiple sites," says Collins. "This is the first time that we've been able to practice in one area, which really improves the environment for our staff and our ability to collaborate."

Collins and department chair Stephen Strakowski, MD, cite bipolar disorder and other mood disorders as the department's strengths, with treatments tied into internationally known research programs. Addictive disorders treatment is a growing segment of the practice, with experts in nicotine, alcohol and drug abuse available.

Psychiatry services also include:

- **The Cincinnati Center for Treatment-Resistant Depression**, a team of neurophysiologists, neurosurgeons, endocrinologists, primary care physicians and social workers in addition to psychiatric care

for patients who have not responded to standard treatment for depression.

- **The Cognitive Disorders Center**, offering treatment for a wide range of conditions including learning and attentional problems in children, adolescents and adults.
- **The Women's Health Research Program**, covering a wide range of mood and physical disorders of particular concern to women.
- **The University Institute for Psychiatry & Law**, providing comprehensive forensic services related to criminal activity that can be associated with mental illness.

UC Health is also a leader in cognitive behavioral therapy, a pragmatic interactive therapy with the goal of changing specific behaviors. ●

**>> PATIENT APPOINTMENTS**  
**For an appointment with a UC Health psychiatry specialist, call (513) 558-7700.**

# New-Onset Seizure Clinic Improves Access

## Specialists work to start care earlier for patients with epilepsy

Epilepsy physicians often find themselves wishing that they could see patients earlier in the course of their disease—in fact, many of the patients they see have been struggling with epilepsy for 20 years or longer.

Thanks to the new-onset seizure clinic of the Epilepsy Center at the

UC Neuroscience Institute, more patients are being seen within a short time of their disease presentation and benefiting from early subspecialty care that can dramatically improve their quality of life.

“The earlier we see patients, the more successful we can be at making decisions about what type of treatment

is best for them and, if they need to be on medicine, determine the best medicine for their seizure type,” says David Ficker, MD, director of the clinic and assistant director of the Epilepsy Center.

Begun in November 2005, the new-onset seizure clinic is held two half days per week and staffed by two epilepsy specialists and a nurse practitioner. Dedicated time slots are set aside for new-onset patients, with the goal of providing an appointment within two to five business days of the referral.

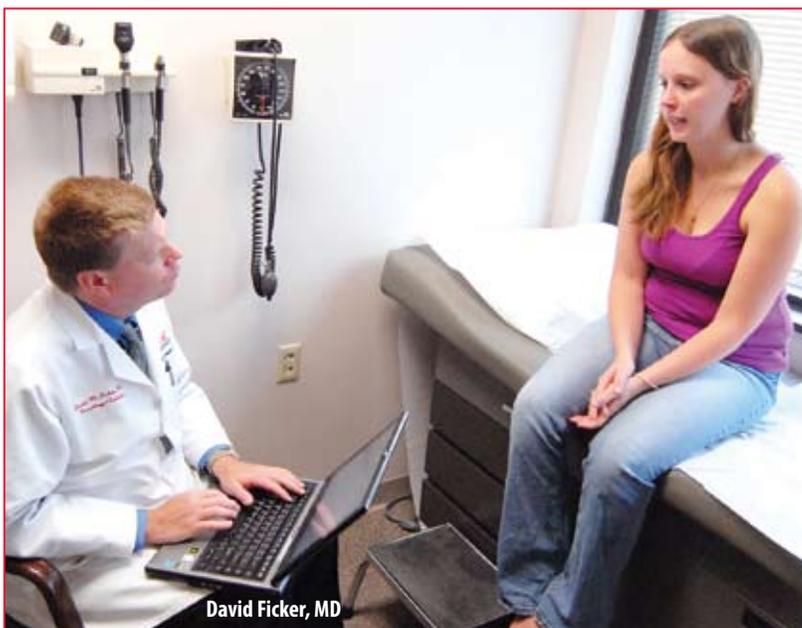
The best candidates for the clinic are patients who have been diagnosed with epilepsy or seizures within the past two months or are not currently on a seizure medication. Primary care providers are the largest source of referrals, with emergency rooms second.

In 2007, 121 patients were seen at the new-onset seizure clinic at the Medical Arts Building in Clifton and Medical Office Building in West Chester. That figure grew to 143 in 2008.

The Epilepsy Center, directed by Michael Privitera, MD, has a Level IV rating from the National Association of Epilepsy Centers—the highest rating for epilepsy care. In addition to Privitera and Ficker, the center’s epilepsy specialists are Jerzy Szaflarski, MD, PhD, Jennifer Cavitt, MD, Sheetal Malik, MD, and Michele Turner, an epilepsy nurse-practitioner. (Szaflarski does not see patients at the new-onset seizure clinic.) ●

**>> PATIENT APPOINTMENTS**  
**For an appointment with a UC Health epilepsy specialist, call (513) 475-8730.**

**More patients are being seen within a short time of their disease presentation and benefiting from early subspecialty care that can dramatically improve their quality of life.**



David Ficker, MD

### *Neurology Responds to Urgent Patient Needs*

Brett Kissela, MD, the neurology department’s vice chair for education and clinical services, says that while the clinical practice is busy, there is still room for growth—particularly in the areas of epilepsy, movement disorders and neuromuscular diseases.

Heavy demand for UC Health neurology services—and unacceptably long wait times for appointments—led the department to establish an urgent clinic in 2008 to ensure same-week access for some patients.

“While we’re currently very busy we’ll always try and help our colleagues,” says Kissela. “We want to be able to serve UC Health and the larger region for all neurology services.”

As the patient population ages, UC Health neurology services are adapting to meet new demands.

Brendan Kelley, MD, joined UC Health in November 2008 with a subspecialty in dementia. He continues to accept new patients, primarily at the Medical Office Building (West Chester). He also sees patients at the Medical Arts Building (Clifton).

For neurology referrals, call (513) 475-8730.

# in brief

## Benefits Open Enrollment Ends Nov. 13

Medical, dental, vision and flexible spending account benefits open enrollment is currently underway. The Humana Web site is available to enter your selection for health care coverage, and open enrollment ends Nov. 13, 2009.

Benefits for 2010 are the same as those offered in 2009, including Humana SmartSuite. University of Cincinnati Physicians is also offering a new benefit called Disability Income Advantage. This is a voluntary benefit offered through Humana that is designed to supplement employees' long-term sick bank and existing Hartford long-term disability coverage.

Employees should have received an open enrollment kit from their human resources (HR) consultant. The benefits election form included in the enrollment kit must be returned to HR by Nov. 13, 2009. Each employee is also required to elect medical coverage via the Humana Web site. Failure to submit your benefit elections form or enroll for medical coverage via the Humana Web site will result in no coverage for 2010. HR will host online enrollment help sessions for those unfamiliar with the Internet. Please contact your HR consultant with any questions.

## Transplant Surgeons Named to LifeCenter Leadership

Steven Rudich, MD, PhD, a UC Health transplant surgeon and director of the UC Department of Surgery's liver transplantation program, became organ medical director at LifeCenter Organ Donor Network. Amit Tevar, MD, also of UC's transplant division, became LifeCenter's assistant organ medical director. Both also serve on LifeCenter's medical advisory board.

As the primary organ procurement organization in the Tristate, LifeCenter Organ Donation Network encourages and coordinates the donation of human organs and tissues for transplantation. LifeCenter is an institutional member of the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS).

## Humana Behavioral Care Coverage Update

Until recently, University of Cincinnati Physicians behavioral health benefits associated with the Humana medical plans were administered by Alliance Behavioral Care. Effective Oct. 1, 2009, Alliance Behavioral Care will no longer be providing behavioral health management services. Humana Life Synch now provides behavioral health services for University of Cincinnati Physicians employees.

In order to receive behavioral health benefits, you or your provider may begin calling

Humana Life Synch for authorization at (800) 777-6330.

If you have any questions about your behavioral health benefits, a behavioral health provider or this process, please call your department's human resources (HR) consultant. A benefits comparison sheet is available on the University of Cincinnati Physicians Intranet or from your HR consultant.

## Flu Preparedness Update

University of Cincinnati Physicians is preparing strategies for our private clinics and support service locations to prevent the spread of this year's flu virus. Vaccination is an important component of our plan and we are encouraging all staff to get both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine. Staff covered under the Humana Plan offered through University of Cincinnati Physicians, may also go to their in-network provider, Kroger Pharmacy, Walgreens Take Care Clinics or CVS Pharmacy Minute Clinic. In these instances, the vaccine itself is covered but a co-pay for the visit may be charged. If you have the Humana Plan

through University of Cincinnati Physicians, the Kroger Pharmacy on the first floor of the Medical Arts Building is providing the vaccine without a co-pay. The H1N1 vaccine is not currently in general distribution but is expected to be available to health care professionals beginning this fall.

## Forty Under 40 Awards

A total of six people associated with UC Health and the UC College of Medicine were named as part of the 2009 *Cincinnati Business Courier's* Forty Under 40 class, which recognizes the "community's next generation of leaders and innovators." The honorees include: **Jason Blackard**, PhD, digestive diseases research; **Gyasi Chisley**, University Hospital organizational effectiveness; **Kevin Joseph**, MD, emergency medicine; **Alex Lentsch**, PhD, trauma and critical care research; **Gail Pyne-Geithman**, DPhil, neurology research; and **Jeff Schlaudecker**, MD, family medicine. A ceremony was held to honor their outstanding work on Sept. 24, 2009. ●

## Thanks to everyone who participated in the first University of Cincinnati Physicians summer blood drive for Hoxworth Blood Center.

About 27 units of blood were collected from the 32 employees who participated at the Medical Arts Building, Medical Office Building and Victory Parkway locations. Save the date for the University of Cincinnati Physicians winter blood drive: Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2009. Details will be available soon. ●

## Welcome New Clinicians



**Keith Casper, MD**  
Otolaryngology



**Thomas Husted, MD**  
General Surgery



**Minh-Doan Nguyen, MD, PhD**  
Plastic Surgery



**Jack Rubinstein, MD**  
Internal Medicine  
(Cardiology)



**Alexander Topala, MD**  
Anesthesiology



**Lena Jefferson Wilson, MD**  
Psychiatry

## New Cardiac Surgery Partnership Enhances Patient Care

UC Health has partnered with Cardiac, Vascular and Thoracic Surgeons, Inc. (CVTS)—the Tristate’s leading community-based cardiac surgical practice—as an integral step to advancing the care of patients with heart disease in the Greater Cincinnati area.

Michael Edwards, MD, a UC Health oncologic surgeon and chair of UC’s department of surgery, and Russ Vester, MD, UC College of Medicine alumnus, senior cardiac surgeon and chairman of the board with CVTS, crafted the partnership as a way to enhance heart care locally.

“This adds expertise and innovation to our community,” Edwards says, noting that the partnership became official on Sept. 8. “With CVTS on board with UC Health, we aim to redefine the standard for cardiac care in the region and take advantage of the quality clinical services and training programs already in place at the UC College of Medicine.”

David Stern, MD, vice president for health affairs and dean of the College

of Medicine, says this partnership will enhance UC’s already stellar reputation of being regional leaders of health care.

“I am truly pleased with this collaboration; it just seems like a natural fit,” Stern says. “This will take heart care at UC and Cincinnati as a whole to a new level. This collaboration is very much part of the model we have in mind for UC Health, in which community and university physicians work side by side to bring ‘added value’ care to the Greater Cincinnati area.”

CVTS surgeon J. Michael Smith, MD, a pioneer of robotic assisted cardiac surgery, has been named chief of the UC College of Medicine’s cardiac surgery division.

“Our group is extremely excited to have this opportunity to work with the quality cardiac physicians at the University of Cincinnati,” says Smith.

CVTS and UC Health will work to create an economically efficient prototype for cardiac surgery in

addition to helping train the next generation of surgeons and delving into research initiatives at the College of Medicine. This unique collaboration is expected to standardize care and best practice, optimize service



Michael Edwards, MD



J. Michael Smith, MD

Courtesy of CVTS

**“WITH CVTS ON BOARD with UC Health, we aim to *redefine the standard* for cardiac care in the region...”**

delivery and redefine performance to create quality outcomes.

“Neither group wanted to compete in this market alone,” adds Edwards. “This is truly a benefit to patients who may have gone to Cleveland or Chicago to receive cardiac surgery services in the past. This opportunity will aid in the creation of a new, standardized model for cardiac care—from clinical visits to the operating table.” ●

## Sleep Center Becomes Hospital Based

The UC Sleep Center in West Chester has recently become a hospital-based program. Now operating under the name UC Health Surgical Hospital Sleep Center, Victoria Surdulescu, MD, and her colleagues will continue to offer the quality care they’ve always provided for patients.

UC Health Surgical Hospital Sleep Center uses the most advanced technology to perform diagnostic medical tests and sleep evaluations. It is the only sleep center in the Tristate with board-certified physicians who fully review every page of sleep test data. Physicians of the UC Health Surgical Hospital Sleep Center work closely with referring physicians and specialists in the fields of pulmonary, cardiology, psychology, neurology, ENT and bariatric surgery to ensure patients receive a comprehensive evaluation and personalized treatment plan.

**For more information, call (513) 475-7500. ●**



Victoria Surdulescu, MD

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

# Two Months After Traumatic Accident, Young Patient Dances Off to Prom

When Lee Ann Curtis entered the UC Health University Hospital trauma bay in late February, the odds were not in her favor.

The 17-year-old had been in a severe car accident riding home from work with a friend. She was flown to the hospital via Air Care with multiple internal injuries and very low blood pressure.

Physicians found large amounts of blood in her chest that couldn't be alleviated with a chest tube.

"When you don't find what you're expecting, that's when you start doing your checklist," says UC Health trauma surgeon Bryce Robinson, MD. "We determined that we needed to open her chest right away."

What they found was a lacerated vena cava, an injury that left blood pouring out of Curtis' body as physicians worked to

find the tear. At one point, she arrested on the table.

"Most people die of this type of injury," says trauma nurse Shelley Akin.

But Robinson's team overcame the odds for Curtis: "We had a lot of help and good people in the room. We found the hole and closed it," he says.

That started Curtis' long recovery process. She had seven surgeries after her accident for injuries to her heart, chest, liver, spleen and diaphragm. Robinson estimates Curtis lost her entire blood volume at one point.

"When she was in the ICU and they didn't know if she was going to live or die, my nurses said, 'We're going to discharge her,'" recalls Akin.

When Curtis awoke, she had the same goal. With her mother's help, Curtis started work. When nurses told her to walk twice a day, she walked three times.

"She really is just teeny tiny," says Akin. "You would see this pole with all these pumps and behind it you would know she'd be back there. She kept getting up and made those loops."

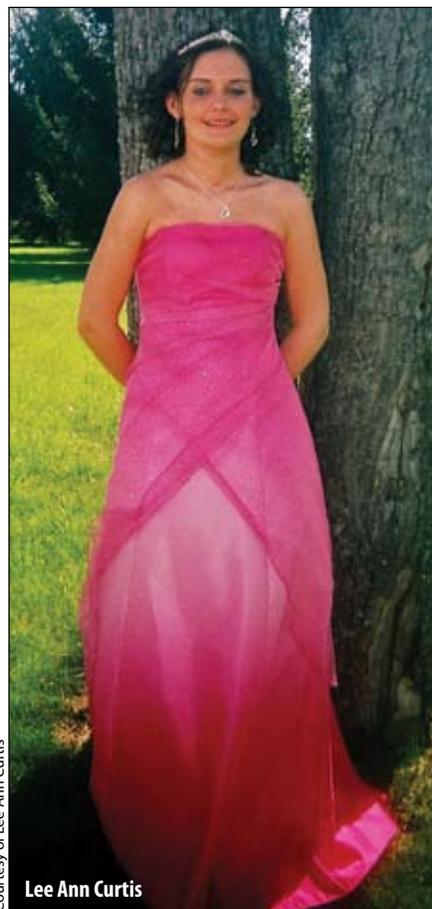
One month after her accident, Curtis was discharged from the hospital—not to a rehab center, but back home. One month after that, she went to her high school prom.

"I still don't realize everything that I went through because I was unconscious for so long," she says. "From everything my mom has told me, it's amazing what I went through and what I'm doing now."

Curtis started nursing school this fall and still makes regular visits to University Hospital. She is still working with doctors to guard against blood clots and heal her incisions. ●



Courtesy of Lee Ann Curtis



Courtesy of Lee Ann Curtis

Lee Ann Curtis

### Trauma at a Glance

- Only Level I trauma center in the region
- More than 2,500 patient admissions in 2008
- Nine full-time trauma surgeons, six trauma nurse clinicians and four ortho-trauma nurse clinicians
- In 2008, 79 percent of patients were seen for blunt trauma, with 15 percent for penetrating injuries, 3 percent for burns and 3 percent for other or unspecified conditions

upcoming

**GI Oncology Symposium**  
**Saturday, Nov. 14**  
 8 a.m.–12:45 p.m.  
 Kingsgate Marriott

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