What did the hospital do to prepare for Hurricane Florence? The short answer is, a lot. Administration and senior physician leaders decided the hospital would provide mission-essential services because they knew the building and emergency systems could safely protect employees and patients.

Some of the tasks the team faced: Coordinating the closure of several hospital services and all the physician clinics, running emergency operations during the storm, dealing with the inevitable contingencies, and then bringing all the services back on line after the storm. Talk about complex.

While the building sustained some water damage, the hospital was back in full service quickly thanks to 39 staff members who remained on duty and treated more than 150 patients during the hurricane.

Community support was tremendous. Leading the way were State Senator Bill Fant and many others who worked tirelessly during the storm to ensure the hospital remained open.

90-year-old Elmer Safrit of Shallotte is enjoying a 100 percent improvement to his quality of life thanks to 40 hyperbaric oxygen (HBO) treatments at Dosher’s national-award-winning Wound Care Center.

“I feel alive again,” Elmer says, after suffering a near collapse of his jaw as a result of radiation treatments while battling cancer.

“I like corn on the cob, it’s a miracle I can even eat that again. I’m surprised and quite happy. I can eat just about anything I want now,” he says.

The condition Elmer had—fairly common among cancer patients—is called osteoradionecrosis, or bone damage due to radiation. Elmer’s osteoradionecrosis became so badly infected it ruptured his eardrum. He was in constant pain and couldn’t chew or swallow food.

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Dosher receives results from community health survey

The hospital conducted its triennial community health needs assessment last spring as required by IRS Section 501(r), which was added to the Code by section 9007(a) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“Affordable Care Act”), Pub. L. No. 111-148, 124 Stat. 119, enacted March 23, 2010. The results are in the full report available at www.Dosher.org.

Of 843 survey participants, 47.7 percent indicated chronic disease is the “biggest” health concern for our community, down from 67.5 percent reported in 2015. An alarming increase in another major health concern is drug/alcohol abuse which was reported by 29.5 percent of participants compared to 13.1 percent in 2015. Mental health also saw a dramatic increase from 1.5 percent three years ago to 5.4 percent this year.

This analysis was presented to the hospital Board of Trustees and members of the Brunswick Wellness Coalition in September. The Coalition is scheduled to present an implementation strategy of these results to the hospital board in early 2019.
HBO treatments a life saver

By Robert Howard

“HBO treatments ‘hyperoxygenate’ the body to speed healing. The treatments work on all types of wounds, including crush wounds needing blood to flow through the bone again or diabetic wounds and ulcers. The most common HBO candidates are osteoradionecrosis patients like Elmer.”

“It’s like flipping a switch. All of a sudden the body can start to heal, growing new blood vessels, bone cells and actually growing new bone. We can restore the blood flow to that site to about 85 percent of what it was before radiation,” Stone says. “It’s pretty amazing what hyperoxics can do for this type of condition.”

HBO has successfully treated former breast cancer patients who had their chest radiated to rid the cancer, but were left with unhealed chest wounds. HBO also works well for stomach cancer patients whose bladders were affected by radiation treatments, causing them terrible pain and blood in their urine.

“‘There aren’t then many scenarios in health care where people come in with chronic pain and HBO treatments later they are all better and out the door. It’s the best part of my job,’ Stone says.

Dosher’s Wound Care Center was named a “Center of Excellence” by leading U.S. wound care authority Healogics for delivering a “heal rate” of 95 percent or higher three years running, due in large part to its two HBO chambers.

Dr. Alex Newsom (center) poses with colleagues at Dosher Medical-North Howe Street primary care physician practice.

Barbee Bridge closure prompts Dosher service changes

Dosher Memorial Hospital opened for business in 1907. The hospital’s name comes from the Barbee Bridge, a low-lying bridge over the Cape Fear River, which forced evacuations during storms and floods. The bridge was closed to traffic in 2014, when the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge opened.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Design, Production and Printing
Erin Pike, StarNews Media

Calendar

Wednesday, November 14
6 p.m. – Cooking demonstration by Chef Lucas Smith from Oliver’s on the Cape Fear. “Healthy seasonal foods.” 2nd floor conference room at the hospital. Free, but reservations are required to receive a seat, 910-454-4731. Read about all Dosher programs at Dosher.org/Calendar.

Friday, Nov. 30 – Foundation Golf Classic at Oak Island Golf Club, rescheduled due to Hurricane Michael. For player or sponsorship information, call 910-457-3850.

Articles and ads welcoming Dr. Alex Newsom (center) poses with colleagues at Dosher Medical-North Howe Street primary care physician practice.

Letters to the Editor

Reba B.
Susan D.S.
—
Dorothy Q.
—
Stephanie J.
—
Tammy M.
Donna P.M.
Judith B.
—Beth P.
My favorite Dr. Andre’ Minor. And my nurses and (other staff) are the best.
—Stephanie J.

This is the best group of caregivers ever.
—Billie B.

Awesome hospital — Tammy M.

Dear Doctor: I received excellent care at Dosher and truly believe the greatness.
—Robert Howard, Dosher Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees

White socks for National Diabetes Month

Dosher Wound Care Center staffers are participating in the Save a Leg, Save a Life Foundation’s “White sock campaign.” The goal is to raise awareness of the connection between peripheral arterial disease (PAD) in the legs and diabetes.

For more information on PAD, diabetic foot ulcers, and related health issues, call 910-454-1192.

More than 300 households participate at the Dosher drop off on October 4.
Thank you!

A huge heartfelt thank you to all of the physicians, staff, volunteers, and community members who helped to keep Dosher Memorial Hospital operational before, during, and after Hurricane Florence. We were able to provide medical services to more than 150 patients during those trying times and we couldn’t have provided such excellent levels of care without each and every one of you!

—Tom Siemers, President & CEO

Employees who made this happen:

Joan Alsbury  Brittney Hannah  Bev Osborne
Faith Aquino  Dr. Zia Hashemi  Dan Porter
Ed Baldiga  Dr. Joe Pat Hatem  Mark Rollins
Luann Barwick  Tim Hill  Vicki Rose
Cathy Blackburn  Kaitlin Johnson  Dr. Ray Schmoke
Lisa Botnick  Alison Juneau  Kim Sees
Jessica Brower  Dale Kelley  Tom Siemers
Dr. John Burdette  Bryan Kerr  Joann Turzer-Commesso
Donna Combs  Annie Lancaster  John Watkins
Courtney  Carl Mauney  Mendy Williams
Connolly  Lisa Narron  Nathaniel Wilson
Steve Durant  Hugh Nobles  Ken Worley
Leslie Furr  Lisa Narron
Tandria Gore  Hugh Nobles

Dosher is an equal opportunity provider and employer.