

RiverView Health

Surgical capacities expand

RiverView extends local services and community outreach through the addition of new specialists and support groups that foster community networking.

Dr. Alex Wong is glad he made the decision to work at RiverView Hospital and live in Crookston. RiverView's new surgeon, who joined the medical staff in October, enjoys the community, likes getting to know patients personally and says RiverView's work environment is positive and supportive. The community benefits because more surgeries can be done locally and having two surgeons expands surgical coverage.

Having a second surgeon also positively impacts care in other areas, such as the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit, said Dr. Idatonya Afonya, RiverView's longtime general surgeon who served on the committee to recruit a second surgeon. Additional surgeons are also required to meet Level 3 trauma accreditation requirements; RiverView is currently accredited as a Level 4 Trauma Center.

Having completed a fellowship in minimally invasive surgical procedures at Alta Bates Medical Center in Oakland, Calif., prior to his move to Crookston, Dr. Wong has a special interest in increasing the number of laparoscopic surgeries. They are termed minimally invasive because the surgeon uses miniature cameras with microscopes and high definition monitors to better "see" inside the patient's body, inserting the surgical instruments through tiny incisions. RiverView has invested in additional equipment and staff training to expand laparoscopic options.

"Patients like the idea that less is being done to their body," Dr. Wong said. "They have maybe three small one-inch scars compared to 10 inches of scar. Patients tell me they feel less pain, they recover faster, and they go back to work faster than they did with previous surgeries. So this increases their quality of life and decreases their time of recovery. From a surgeon's standpoint, it has proven as effective as the way we've been doing it for the past 10 to 15 years. It's become the trend throughout America."

Both surgeons said certain types of surgeries require support systems and staff training not typically found in hospitals of RiverView's size. "We are comfortable offering a broader range of procedures and knowing patients won't have to go elsewhere because the expertise is here," Dr. Wong said. "But we aren't going to do everything here. We will keep up to date and offer the latest and best treatments that we can successfully do here for our patients."

"Dr. Wong has a chance to see how we work here and to grow with that," Dr. Afonya added. "And we can expand what we're doing and rebuild some of our capacities."

Finding surgeons to fill needs in rural areas is becoming increasingly difficult, Dr. Afonya said. He wanted to be sure that RiverView had an experienced surgeon on staff when he is ready to retire — although he jokingly said he has no plans to retire in the near future unless he wins big at Mahanomen.



Dr. Alex Wong prepares for a surgery at RiverView Hospital. Dr. Wong specializes in laparoscopic procedures.

Dr. Wong, who had narrowed his options to five different locations, traveled to Crookston twice to check out RiverView. The first time, he was impressed with the administration's good relationship with physicians and the positive rapport among staff. On the second trip, "I saw more of the same and liked it."

He also liked the community and the community's appreciation and support for RiverView, which Dr. Wong termed "very valuable." During his fellowship, he said, he worked in three large hospitals in large cities. He also lived in Philadelphia, earning his degree in medicine from Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University at Philadelphia and then completing his internship and residency in general surgery at Graduate Hospital, Drexel University in Philadelphia. Those big city experiences convinced him that he was best suited for a medical practice in a medium-sized community with a progressive medical environment. He found that in RiverView Health.

He also found a lot of other advantages in Crookston. He says people greet him by name and are friendly. He grew up on a farm and likes the rural environment. He enjoys hiking and outdoor activities. Minnesota offers plenty of those opportunities. He's a man of many interests — he has scaled Mount Kinabalu, earned brown and green belts in karate, likes fine foods and electronics, and enjoys doing basically anything he can do with his hands.

He's also willing to give of himself, having volunteered in inner city programs that provided free medical care for poor people and addicts. Now that he's done with the grueling hours required during his fellowship, he looks forward to again having time for personal interests. More importantly, he looks forward to building his surgical practice as a member of the RiverView medical staff.



Longtime surgeon Dr. Idatonya Afonya appreciates having a second surgeon so services can be expanded.

Quality of life improves with chronic pain management diagnosis and treatment

About 80 percent of patients seeking relief from chronic pain experience an improved quality of life under the skilled treatment of Dr. Panjini Sivanna, a Fargo-based pain management specialist who began seeing patients at Crookston's RiverView Specialty Clinic in November.

One in four Americans — 75 million people — live in chronic, debilitating pain, according to the National Pain Foundation. Chronic pain accounts for more than 80 percent of physician visits and an estimated \$70 billion a year in medical claims, disability payments and lost productivity. Chronic pain can result from a variety of causes, including illnesses, injuries, and incurable conditions such as arthritis.

Six million Americans are disabled by chronic back pain alone; it's the number one reason for disabilities, Dr.



Dr. Panjini Sivanna, a specialist in pain management, points to a chart of the spine as he explains the effects of chronic pain on the lower back.

Dr. Sivanna sees patients at RiverView Specialty Clinic in Crookston.

Sivanna said. “I work with a lot of patients who have had failed back surgeries,” Dr. Sivanna noted. “Back and neck pain, shingles pain, pain from fibromyalgia, post surgical pain, injuries from vehicle accidents or work-related injuries are the majority of patients I see. Some pain is curable and some pain we can diminish but generally we can help almost everyone we see.”

While chronic pain is persistent, it doesn't always result in total disability, Dr. Sivanna said. More than one-half the patients he sees work fulltime.

“But they are looking for relief, they want to improve

their quality of life and their comfort. We teach them how to cope with pain and modify their lifestyle instead of just reaching for medications,” he said.

Proper use of medications and advanced pain management treatments are critical to successful treatment, he added. Nerve blocks, implants and other interventional techniques require the skill and training of a physician with training in pain management. For instance, Dr. Sivanna may use radiofrequency ablation to reduce pain. With this technique, an electrical current produced by a radio wave heats the affected nerve tissue, which in turn decreases pain signals from that area of the body.

“The first step is evaluation and making a plan of treatment,” Dr. Sivanna said. “I will be able to do 80 to 90 percent of my treatments at Crookston. There may be a small percentage of patients who would have to drive to Fargo for certain treatments. Smaller towns are grossly underserved in pain management and I've seen a lot of patients from the Crookston area at Thief River Falls where I also go. So by coming to Crookston, these patients won't have to drive as far.”

RiverView orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Colin Fennell and Alexandria-based orthopaedic spine surgeon Dr. Sunny Kim, who sees patients monthly in Crookston, influenced Dr. Sivanna's decision to provide services in Crookston. Dr. Sivanna said he respects the work of these physicians and they encouraged him to bring his expertise to Crookston. The three physicians may collaborate in the future on additional pain management options for patients.

People who have chronic pain can request a referral to Dr. Sivanna from their primary care provider or call Valley Medical Clinic toll-free at 866-297-0817.

Dr. Sivanna has extensive experience

Listed for the last six years in a row in the nationally publicized Best Doctors in America, Dr. Panjini Sivanna has headed Valley Medical Clinic at Fargo for the last eight years and has practiced medicine in Fargo for 26 years.

Dr. Sivanna focuses his medical practice on the diagnosis and treatment of chronic pain. He is board certified in anesthesiology and critical care medicine and board eligible in internal medicine. He is an associate professor of medicine at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, where he teaches classes to students enrolled in medical school, residencies and fellowships. He has been named UND Professor of the Year.

His educational background includes a medical degree from Bangalore (India) Medical College and internships and residencies in anesthesiology, critical care and internal medicine at South Chicago Community Hospital, University of Illinois Hospital, University of Pittsburgh (Penn.) Hospitals, and Montgomery (Ala.) Internal Medicine Program. In Fargo, he previously worked as a medical director at Heartland Hospital and at SCCI Hospital in Fargo as well as being an anesthesiologist and critical care specialist at Meritcare Medical Center. He also worked as a medical director at the VA Medical Center at the University of Pittsburgh Hospitals.

Autism treatment covers spectrum of care

Swinging, playing and talking may seem like average fare for a 4-year-old child but for Faery Owens, it's treatment. As a patient with autism, Faery receives speech language therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy through the RiverView for Kids Program.

Children with autism learn better when corresponding actions reinforce the learning process, said RiverView Speech-Language Pathologist Andrea Reynolds. As Reynolds plays with Faery on the swing in RiverView's Rehab gymnasium, she keeps up a running patter with Faery, encouraging the child to communicate her desires as she interacts with Reynolds.

Faery has "come an awful long ways since we started," said her father, Jared, who works nights so he can attend Faery's therapy. "She had no real way of communicating with us before. I want to be here for all her sessions. The more I learn, the more I can help her at home."

Reynolds said parental involvement is very important because parents reinforce at home what the child learns in therapy. Reynolds has taught Faery to use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), an alternative form of communication that uses pictures instead of words to help children communicate. PECS was designed for children with autism because their speech development is typically poor or delayed. Faery has also learned sign language, and has even begun using words.

"She started signing and then using words with her signs, and I can tell that she understands a lot more when I talk to her," Jared said. "I have learned to read her body language and know when she's going into her own little world and if I should get her to engage with us."

Autism is on the rise, Reynolds said, but children with autism can learn and become successful with appropriate resources. In addition to hospital-based services, parents of children with autism may also be working with day care providers, school systems, social service programs, case managers and other providers involved in the child's development. So Reynolds began an autism support group to help families make their way through the unfamiliar maze that becomes part of their daily lives when their child is diagnosed with autism.

Children with this developmental disability are typically affected in the first three years of life. Children with autism have major communication and interaction problems and may even withdraw from the world around them into their own private world. Autism is a life-long disorder with no cure.

Support groups connect community

Through sponsorship of support groups, RiverView Health brings together a network of professionals, patients and families that have a common interest in a particular health care topic. RiverView's community outreach varies, from women's membership programs like My New View to monthly support groups open to anyone who wants to attend. In addition to the newly formed Autism Support Group, RiverView offers these groups on an ongoing basis.

- Celiac Support Group: third Monday of each month at 5:30 pm, September through April, RiverView Health meeting room #1; facilitated by Dr. Basit Baig,

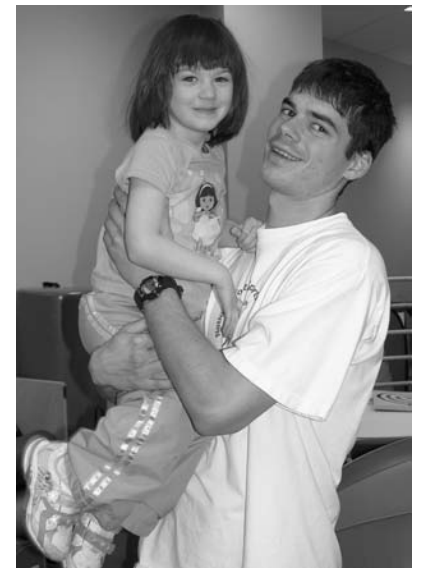


Jared Owens observes Speech-Language Pathologist Andrea Reynolds working with his daughter, Faery, who has autism. Reynolds has also begun an autism support group that meets monthly.

"It can be pretty overwhelming for parents," Reynolds said. "With treatment, we're implementing techniques that are research-based and we're working as a team with other community-based resources to help these children learn and develop. The support group helps parents learn about resources they may not even know are available. They also learn from other parents who have gone through similar experiences with their child."

As Faery learns, so does Jared. "I don't want to be in the dark, I want to know as much as I can so I can help Faery live normally," Jared said. "There's a lot of give and take in the support group. We all share our experiences. The support group is one more way we can all help each other."

The Autism Support Group meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., September through November and January through April in RiverView Health meeting room #1. It is open to families and caregivers of an individual with autism, as well as area professionals who work with autism. For more information, call 218-281-9438 or 1-800-743-6551, extension 438.



Jared Owens is involved in his daughter's therapy and the autism support group at RiverView Health.

- gastroenterologist, and Mary Bratrud, licensed practical nurse (218-281-9371)

- Diabetes Support Group: third Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m, September through June, RiverView Health meeting room #1; facilitated by DeeDee Wiersma, registered nurse (218-281-9492 or 1-800-743-6551, extension 492)
- Stroke Support Group: second Wednesday of each month at 1:30 p.m., October through April, facilitated by Marie Johnstad, speech-language pathologist (218-281-9438 or 1-800-743-6551, extension 438).

Meet our RiverView babies

Visit our web site:

www.riverviewhealth.org



KEVIN LEE
Date of Birth: 8/27/2008
Time of Birth: 7:13 p.m.
Parents: Sandra & Brandon
Delivered by: Drs. Hanson & Afonya



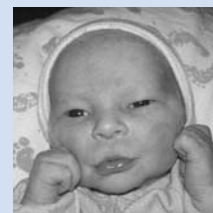
HUDSON MATHIEU
Date of Birth: 8/29/2008
Time of Birth: 7:39 a.m.
Parents: Jennifer & Mathieu
Delivered by: Drs. Hanson & Afonya



MARISAVEL MIA
Date of Birth: 8/31/2008
Time of Birth: 2:57 p.m.
Parents: Adriana & Miguel
Delivered by: Dr. Hanson



LUCY MARIE
Date of Birth: 9/3/2008
Time of Birth: 7:50 a.m.
Parents: Molly & Dana
Delivered by: Drs. Afonya & Kanten



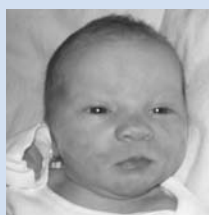
BRADY CHRISTOPHER
Date of Birth: 9/4/2008
Time of Birth: 7:50 a.m.
Parents: Kristin & Christopher
Delivered by: Drs. Afonya & Kanten



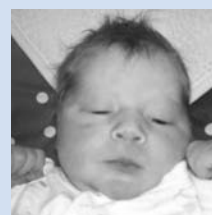
MADILYN ELIZABETH
Date of Birth: 9/11/2008
Time of Birth: 10:03 a.m.
Parents: Stacey & Chris
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



NICHOLAS BRYON
Date of Birth: 9/27/2008
Time of Birth: 7:10 p.m.
Parents: Melissa & Bryon
Delivered by: Drs. Afonya & Kanten



LAYLA LYNN
Date of Birth: 9/29/2008
Time of Birth: 9:07 p.m.
Parents: Crystal & Dale
Delivered by: Dr. Shamsi



EVERY KAY
Date of Birth: 9/30/2008
Time of Birth: 6:26 a.m.
Parents: Jami & James
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



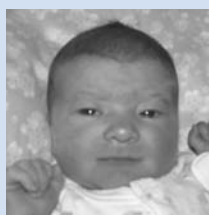
KENNEDY ANN
Date of Birth: 10/5/2008
Time of Birth: 3:45 p.m.
Parents: Kristi & Mark
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



BOE MICHAEL
Date of Birth: 10/7/2008
Time of Birth: 7:48 p.m.
Parents: Michelle & Brandon
Delivered by: Dr. Shamsi



GUNNER LEE
Date of Birth: 10/7/2008
Time of Birth: 1:03 a.m.
Parents: Megan & Jeff
Delivered by: Dr. Shamsi



HAILEY LEA
Date of Birth: 10/21/2008
Time of Birth: 6:23 a.m.
Parents: Tiffany & Matthew
Delivered by: Dr. Shamsi



FELIPE
Date of Birth: 10/22/2008
Time of Birth: 7:55 a.m.
Parents: Jessica & Felipe
Delivered by: Drs. Afonya, Kanten & Wong



ALEX GREGORY
Date of Birth: 10/26/2008
Time of Birth: 5:17 p.m.
Parents: April & Chad
Delivered by: Drs. Bell & Bray



CHARLEE ANNE
Date of Birth: 11/3/2008
Time of Birth: 7:34 a.m.
Parents: Andrea & Tyrel
Delivered by: Dr. Kanten



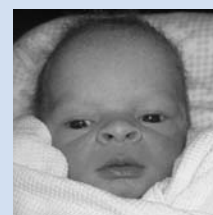
JADELYN MARIE
Date of Birth: 11/4/2008
Time of Birth: 5:46 p.m.
Parents: Carrie & James
Delivered by: Dr. Shamsi



JACOB ISREAL
Date of Birth: 11/6/2008
Time of Birth: 12:54pm
Parents: Jennifer
Delivered by: Dr. Bell



SAMANTHA MARY
Date of Birth: 11/7/2008
Time of Birth: 1:20 p.m.
Parents: Ardelle
Delivered by: Dr. Hanson



DEMARIO DALE
Date of Birth: 11/8/2008
Time of Birth: 10:31 p.m.
Parents: Tiffany & Dustin
Delivered by: Dr. Shamsi

RiverView Health
323 South Minnesota
Crookston, MN 56716-1600
218-281-9200
1-800-743-6551
www.riverviewhealth.org

**RiverView Health
encompasses:**
Glenmore Recovery Center
RiverView Hospital
RiverView Care Center
RiverView Home Care
RiverView Rehab
RiverView Clinics