Clyde Fleet, who underwent emergency heart surgery in April, is feeling back to normal again.

Swift action to perform lifesaving surgery pulled retiree through harrowing experience

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High Hopes for 2018

Happy New Year! I am so pleased to introduce myself as the new CEO of Inova Alexandria Hospital (IAH), your community hospital.

We have so much to be proud of here at IAH. Among our many strengths are an exceptionally skilled staff with doctors who truly care about and provide the best treatments for each individual; a nursing staff that works hard every hour in the interest of patient care; and facilities and technologies that are second to none. Who wouldn’t want to be in my shoes?

The stories in this issue of InHealth illustrate these positive attributes more clearly. Our cover story (pages 6–7) reveals how our incredible team worked together to save a patient in a dire situation. Meanwhile, two heartwarming patient stories (pages 4 and 5) show how a top-notch hospital can provide treatment and healing to people in so many different ways.

I feel privileged to lead your hospital going forward in providing exceptional patient care. (Learn more about me to the right of this column.) Please don’t hesitate to let us know your thoughts on how we can make IAH an even better community hospital.

Meet JENNIFER

New Inova Alexandria Hospital CEO’s door is open

In early October, Jennifer McCarthy, FACHE, MBA, took the reins of Inova Alexandria Hospital (IAH) as its new CEO. She comes to Inova with more than 20 years of healthcare experience. That includes her recent five-year stint at Orlando Health as Chief Operating Officer for Dr. P. Phillips Hospital, a full-service medical and surgical facility.

McCarthy succeeds Susan Carroll, who was promoted to Regional Executive Officer and now oversees both IAH and Inova Mount Vernon Hospital.

Coming to Inova was a bit of a no-brainer for this Florida transplant who relocated to the Northern Virginia area (her first time living outside the Sunshine State) a little more than a year ago. “I knew that Inova is a system that is well-recognized nationally,” McCarthy says. “Its purpose and mission are very similar to where I’ve held leadership roles before. I thought that I could create value at a place that I already highly respect.”

Her vision for IAH is to create a hospital that continues to provide superior care and foster a culture that values professional development and growth for employees. In short, she wants IAH to remain the best place to work.

Her strengths include her open and accessible leadership style, she says. “I pride myself on being transparent, accessible, direct and empowering,” she notes. “But I also understand the value of being fun and having a sense of humor. I love to be in a workplace where people enjoy what they do.”

McCarthy is not one to sit idly when she is not working. Outside of work, she is an avid reader, does Pilates and runs. “I’m really loving audio books for my commute, and I’ll always take suggestions on what I should listen to next,” she says.
The overall rate of cataracts is 17 percent for those in the United States age 40 and over. In Virginia, cataracts affect nearly 600,000 residents. That’s one of the reasons that cataract procedures have become commonplace — and why innovation matters.

At Inova Alexandria Hospital, a new device for treating cataracts, called the Centurion Vision System, is making procedures safer and faster, says Ellen Bushmiller, Service Line Leader for the Ophthalmology Department. The technology offers improved surgical control since it adjusts to changes in eye pressure in milliseconds. It also has advanced fluid dynamics, which is crucial for maintaining the shape of the eye as an ultrasound reduces each cataract to fine particles and removes it from the eye.

The system allows for a smoother procedure, Bushmiller says, and that tends to make the entire process go faster; some cataract removals can be done in as little as nine minutes. Because of the speed, patients tend to move less, and that also leads to better outcomes.

Inova has had the Centurion since August, and it’s won praise from both patients and doctors, says Bushmiller. “It’s very normal to feel anxious about a procedure that involves making an incision in your eye when you’re awake,” she notes. “But the way this technology is designed makes it all so efficient and fast, that many patients report feeling very comfortable throughout.”

To learn more about surgical services at Inova Alexandria Hospital, visit inova.org/IAHsurgery.
Positive Connections
Life with Cancer encourages patients with hope, support and community

When Rebecca Wetherly had a routine mammogram during the fall of 2016, the results were normal. Because of her family history — both her mother and maternal and paternal grandmothers had breast cancer — coupled with having dense breast tissue, she opted for additional screening offered by her imaging center. An ultrasound revealed a tiny 1-millimeter lump. When she returned three months later for a follow-up test, the tumor had grown to eight times its original size.

After the tumor was removed, Rebecca braced herself for 12 rounds of chemotherapy, 30 weeks of radiation and a lengthy regimen of targeted therapy infusions. Faced with a challenging journey ahead, the wife and mom of two teens knew she needed to reach out to others for support. So Rebecca decided to participate in Life with Cancer® at Inova Alexandria Hospital (IAH).

“Our Life with Cancer program provides free classes, counseling, support groups and complementary therapy services for anyone in the Alexandria area,” explains Carrie Friedman, RN, BS, OCN.

For Rebecca, the choice to participate in Life with Cancer helped her stay positive about her experience. “That first meeting was pretty powerful,” says Rebecca. “I just didn’t realize there were other women I could talk to with whom I could share and from whom I could learn.”

Rebecca enrolled in two support groups and took a multitude of classes ranging from nutrition and exercise to endocrine therapy education. “I have a very active lifestyle,” she says. “The exercise classes were awesome because I didn’t feel compelled to wear my wig when I lost my hair. I could go in and be myself and not have to worry, explain or answer questions.”

Now that Rebecca is preparing to finish her treatment, she signed up to get a mentor through the survivorship program. “I’m feeling really optimistic about the future,” Rebecca says. “I attribute my outlook and mental shift to what I’ve learned at Life with Cancer.”
Hurricane Irma evacuee arrives at Inova Alexandria Hospital in time to deliver her baby

It was 4 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 8, when Laura and her husband, Timothy, their two children, her mother and their dog loaded into the family car and drove out of Tampa, FL, to escape a pending hurricane. Hurricane Irma, already a category 5 storm, had been brewing over the Atlantic and was expected to hit Florida soon.

Laura happened to be 37 weeks pregnant. She also had been diagnosed with placenta previa, a potentially life-threatening condition that occurs when a baby’s placenta covers the mother’s cervix, placing the mother at risk for severe bleeding during pregnancy and delivery. Although she had scheduled a C-section at Tampa General Hospital, Laura was concerned that the hospital would not be operational after the storm arrived.

SEARCHING FOR A HOSPITAL
The family set out for Atlanta, where Laura hoped to schedule a C-section at Emory University Hospital. There was heavy traffic on the freeway, and military convoys were headed south toward the pending hurricane. “When I called the hospital, they told me that I would have to first be seen as a new patient and then I would have to be slotted for a C-section, and we weren’t anticipating to stay,” says Laura.

Not wanting to settle in Atlanta for a week or more and not knowing where to turn, Laura called her cousin, Catharine Paules, MD, who works for the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. Dr. Paules encouraged Laura to drive north and reassured her that she would find a hospital that would take care of her. On Sunday night, Dr. Paules contacted an OB-GYN at NIH named Cathy Spong, MD, who is affiliated with Inova Alexandria Hospital (IAH). Dr. Spong immediately called Sarah Poggi, MD, Medical Director of the Brock Family Antenatal Testing Center at IAH. Dr. Poggi scheduled Laura to be seen the next morning. “Laura was already at full-term with a placenta previa, so there was the potential for an obstetric hemorrhage if we didn’t take care of her,” explains Dr. Poggi. “I heard about it on a Sunday night. I saw her Monday morning. I confirmed the previa by ultrasound, and her baby was delivered that afternoon by Stacy Andrews, MD, an OB-GYN at Inova Alexandria Hospital.”

CALM AFTER THE STORM
Thankfully, Eloise Storm was born a happy, healthy baby girl. “After everything that happened that we hadn’t planned for, we got a beautiful, healthy baby, and she’s our little perfect storm,” says Laura.

Laura says she is grateful to have found an expert team that could help her through a scary experience. “Dr. Poggi was fantastic in getting us in and making sure everything went smoothly without any problem,” Laura says. “Everyone really put me at ease. We’re just so blessed to have gotten everyone up there and back home safely.”

Watch It
When Kristin was pregnant with her first child, Jakob, it was a difficult pregnancy. She learned that he was diagnosed with a blood-related disease called neonatal alloimmune thrombocytopenia, a rare condition. Learn about how Sarah Poggi, MD, Medical Director of the Inova Brock Family Antenatal Testing Center, helped Kristin on her motherhood journey at inova.org/Kristin.
One afternoon last April, Clyde Vogie Fleet was attending a friend’s retirement party at a restaurant in Fairfax when he suddenly felt slightly overheated. Knowing that the party was nearly over and not wanting to draw attention to himself, he went to the restroom to cool off. But the feeling didn’t go away, and he began to sweat profusely. Clyde, a retired senior computer programmer analyst and web content manager with the Department of Defense, had previously been treated for aortic valve dysfunction. However, after receiving a good prognosis, he was no longer being monitored by a physician for it.

The feeling didn’t go away, and Clyde continued to sweat. He ran into a co-worker who inquired, “Clyde, are you doing OK?” He responded that he was not feeling OK. Then another
Heart-Healthy Diet

To optimize the health and well-being of patients who have had a cardiac event, the Inova Alexandria Hospital Cardiac Rehabilitation Program now offers nutrition education. The program provides initial one-on-one counseling sessions and interactive group education classes featuring virtual grocery shopping and cooking demonstrations. “Oftentimes we see inpatients to provide heart-healthy diet education. Since we have included nutrition services on Wednesdays as part of the outpatient program, we can continue to follow their progress and provide continued support for success,” says Jamie Grandic, RDN, Clinical Nutrition Manager.

The nutrition program was founded on research that shows a heart-healthy diet improves outcomes, including reducing mortality rates, following a cardiac event, points out Srilekha Palle, Director of Rehabilitation Services. It recently added a dietitian to its team to maximize patient outcomes. The program also customizes services to the needs of each individual patient.

“Counseling can be tailored to what the client needs,” says registered dietitian nutritionist Olivia Phillips, RDN. “It’s very helpful because not only is exercise important to their overall lifestyle change, but diet plays a huge role if they’re in cardiac rehab.”

To find out more about the program, call 703.504.3398.

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Over the next five days, Cassandra and Clyde’s sister-in-law stayed with him as he recovered in the Intensive Care Unit. The surgery had been a success.

Dr. Singh and his team then performed a complex surgery, replacing Clyde’s aortic arch and aortic valve.

MENDING HIS HEART

Clyde was in surgery until midnight. During that time, Clyde’s wife, Cassandra, learned of her husband’s condition and rushed to the hospital. Other family and friends also came to the hospital to provide comfort and prayer.

In the operating room, the medical team lowered the temperature of Clyde’s heart to 15 degrees to reduce the demand of oxygen so the artificial heart-lung machine could take over blood flow to his brain and to preserve his tissues and spinal arteries. Dr. Singh and his team then performed a complex surgery, replacing Clyde’s aortic arch and aortic valve.

“When a sick patient comes in, our whole team comes together to focus on saving a person’s life.”

—Reagan Herrington, MD, FACEP

HEART RISK ASSESSMENT

To find out your heart age, take a free five-minute test at inovaheart.org/heart-risk-assessment.
Inova is a not-for-profit healthcare system located in Northern Virginia in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, serving over 2 million people with over 1,700 licensed beds. It consists of five hospitals including the area’s only Level 1 Trauma Center and Level 4 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Inova encompasses many health services including the internationally recognized Inova Heart and Vascular Institute (IHVI), Inova Translational Medicine Institute (ITMI), Inova Neuroscience Institute, Inova Schar Cancer Institute and Inova Children’s Hospital. Inova’s mission is to improve the health of the diverse community it serves through excellence in patient care, education and research. More information about Inova is at inova.org.

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AWARDS

ACTION-Oriented
Inova Alexandria Hospital receives special recognition for heart attack care

Inova Alexandria Hospital (IAH) has received the American College of Cardiology’s NCDR ACTION Registry Platinum Performance Achievement Award for 2017. IAH is one of only 193 hospitals nationwide to receive the honor.

The award recognizes IAH’s commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients. It also signifies that IAH has reached an aggressive goal of treating these patients to standard levels of care as outlined by the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association clinical guidelines and recommendations.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 700,000 Americans suffer heart attacks each year. A heart attack occurs when a blood clot in a coronary artery partially or completely blocks blood flow to the heart muscle. Treatment guidelines include administering aspirin upon arrival and discharge, timely restoration of blood flow to the blocked artery, smoking cessation counseling and cardiac rehabilitation, among others.

“When a patient suffers from a heart attack, the sooner we open the blocked artery, the more heart muscle we can save,” explains M. Rafiq Zaheer, MD, cardiologist and IAH Section Chief, Cardiology. “That means the patient must participate in the process and call 911 right away so he or she can arrive at the hospital as soon as possible. This will allow for the most effective treatment and outcome.”

We value your feedback. Visit inhealth-survey.questionpro.com to fill out a brief survey about InHealth and enter yourself into a $50 gift card drawing.

EDITOR’S NOTE:
A credit for the photos of Brooke in the cover story from the fall 2017 issue of InHealth was inadvertently omitted. The photographer was Bumby Grimm of Bumby Photography, located in Lake Helen, FL.
WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE
Causes and symptoms of heart disease can be strikingly different between the sexes. As a result, women are more vulnerable to slower diagnosis and inadequate treatment. The Inova Center for Women’s Cardiovascular Health focuses on assessing and managing the unique cardiovascular needs of women.

Recent data from the American Heart Association show heart attacks strike more women than men in this country, and death rates from cardiovascular disease remain higher among women than men. Women who suffer heart attacks also tend to have longer hospital stays and more complications than the average male patient.

“Dedicated women’s heart programs consisting of heart health counseling and treatment can have a dramatic and lasting impact,” says interventional cardiologist Kelly Epps, MD, FACC, who directs the Inova Center for Women’s Cardiovascular Health. “At Inova, we have created a multidisciplinary team focused on personalized cardiovascular risk assessment, education and disease management throughout the lifespan of a woman.”

CAMPAIGN PROMOTES SMART HEALTH CHOICES
Making healthy choices and managing health conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure, can prevent heart disease. Controlling and preventing risk factors is especially important for people who already have heart disease.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT
Inova Heart and Vascular Institute (IHVI), a leader in treating heart disease, would like to encourage people to make a commitment to their heart health. The American Heart Association’s (AHA’s) Healthy for Good™ campaign offers tips, tools and other user-friendly information to help people make lasting changes to their health and well-being.

The campaign is based on over 90 years of knowledge cultivated by the AHA. Its four core ideas (shown at left) are: Eat smart. Add color. Move more. Be well. Find out more about the movement and how you can benefit from it at inovaheart.org/H4G.

SPECIALTY HEART-CARE SERVICES AT IHVI
For those who need assistance in managing risk factors or who need treatment, Inova offers the area’s largest network of heart care specialists in the following areas:
- Arrhythmia
- Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery
- Cardiology
- Vascular Medicine and Surgery

FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH
WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE

More than 1 in 3 female adults have some form of cardiovascular disease.

EAT SMART. ADD COLOR. MOVE MORE. BE WELL.
Get ideas for better hacking and delicious recipes, and learn meal planning tips. Add color to every meal and snack, because adding even one more serving of color each day contributes to building a healthier body. Our bodies were built to move, and they need regular activity to be healthy. For whole-body health, you need to rest, reset and recharge.

Learn more about the Healthy for Good Movement at inovaheart.org/H4G.

Find delicious and heart-healthy recipes at inovaheart.org/recipes.