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## Medical institutions move ahead in 2017

Michael D. Bates Dec 28, 2017 Updated Dec 28, 2017



April Christopher, clinical territory associate for Intuitive Surgical, describes the precise workings of this da Vinci Si Surgical System robot used in surgery for the first time recently at Citrus Memorial Hospital. The high-tech robotic instrument is used by surgeons to perform intricate operations while inside a patient's body.

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Matthew Beck

Citrus Memorial Hospital introduced a new staffer this year and it wasn't even human.

It's a robot, and it debuted in November to much fanfare when local students got the chance to see it in action during a simulated exercise. The da Vinci Si Surgical System can be used for a variety of minimally invasive surgical procedures in the areas of urology, gynecology, thoracic, cardiac and general surgery.

"This is a big win for Citrus County," said Ralph Aleman, CEO of the Inverness-based hospital. "Robotic surgery gives our patients the potential for shorter hospital stays, fewer complications, less need for pain medication, smaller incisions and faster recovery time."

CMH started a contest for high school students to name the robot and the results will be in this April.

This was the year that CMH's \$45 million capital improvement project continued to move forward. Three years into it, the hospital has spent \$35.1 million on the project that introduces new higher-tech improvements to patient and operating rooms and the emergency department.

The project includes: renovation of the third- and fourth-floor nursing units and operating rooms; remodeling of a second cardiac catheterization lab; redesign of the emergency room and a new nurse call system in every room; a new in-house MRI machine; and an improved Orthopedic and Spine Center of Excellence.

In December, CMH welcomed Dr. Honey Milestone, a full-time gynecologist, to its team at Genesis Women's Center.

This year also marked the 60th anniversary of CMH, and the hospital held various events to celebrate.

### **Seven Rivers RMC**

Seven Rivers Regional Medical Center in Crystal River celebrated the first anniversary in November of the opening of its new Bone & Joint Center, a dedicated unit and program for patients undergoing total joint replacement.

In 2016, Seven Rivers converted its inpatient rehabilitation center on the third floor — which had low occupancy — into the center. The unit has 16 private beds.

Also in 2017, the hospital:

- Held its regional King's Bay 5K race in November at Hunter Springs Park in Crystal River. The annual race promotes health and wellness while benefiting a local nonprofit organization. This year's beneficiary was the Citrus County Education Foundation.
- Earned two national awards for clinical excellence in wound care and hyperbaric oxygen therapy.
- Invested in two low-dose computed tomography scanners — the only recommended screening test for lung cancer.
- Opened Seven Rivers Medical Group, welcoming doctors Johnnie DeGraw and Weichi Liao to the medical staff.
- Partnered with Citrus County Education Foundation to present \$8,192 for the Health Schools Rule mini-grants program, which benefits the health and wellness of 6,030 students.

### **Langley Health Services**

In April 2016, Ocala-based Langley Health Services received the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) grant for the area to provide primary medical care, mental health and dental services for county residents.

As of November 2017, patient count is 21,000 in the three counties it serves: Citrus, Marion and Sumter. For Citrus alone, that translates to about 5,800 patient encounters, according to Langley CEO Tom Chase. Langley's mobile medical unit, which comes to various locations in Citrus County, served 85 people in 2017 in three-county region.

Federally Qualified Health Centers are community-based health care providers that receive funds from the Health Resources & Services Administration to provide primary care services in underserved areas.

"(This year) was a transitional year for Langley as it worked to get established here," said Chase.

Langley ends the year with 15-20 health care providers to service Citrus County, according to Chase. That includes physicians, advanced practitioners and medical assistants.

"We're thrilled with the response we've gotten in Citrus County," said Langley CEO Tom Chase.

### **In other health care news**

- Citing a growing need for medical professionals who deal with pregnancy, childbirth and women's health care, Genesis Women's Center in Inverness partnered with Citrus Memorial Hospital in December to add the county's first certified nurse-midwife, Donna Forbes, to its team.
- Because of a reduction in cases, the state in December demobilized its Zika Incident Management Team (IMT). "Further response to Zika will be handled like any other disease," said Patrick Boyd, spokesman for the Citrus County Health Department.
- County commissioners in October signed off on a plan to house Florida State University medical students for free while they serve apprenticeships with Citrus County physicians. Up to six FSU medical students will live in a Citrus Springs home the county owns for a two-year program beginning in June 2018.

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