January – April 2006

Go **Red** in Your Own Fashion and **FIGHT BACK** against **HEART DISEASE**
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Write from the Top

Dear Friend of PPH,

The color red evokes passion and confidence—and it signals change. Last March, Palomar Pomerado Health made a commitment to making a change for the better when we joined forces with the American Heart Association (AHA) as the presenting hospital sponsor of the AHA’s 2005 San Diego Goes Red for Women campaign.

This exclusive local partnership has allowed us to be a voice in the AHA’s national call to women of all ages to become more aware of their risk for heart disease and to learn what they can do right now to reduce their risk. During the campaign, we have helped to spread this important health message throughout San Diego—educating, inspiring and empowering women with the knowledge they need to take action.

This February, I encourage you, your family and friends to go red in your own fashion—beginning with National Wear Red Day on February 3. Together, we can fight back against the number-one killer of women (and men) with the simple yet powerful statement of red. Wear a red tie, red dress, red socks or red lipstick. You can even wear red boxing gloves. Just wear red in your own way for the benefit of women everywhere.

As your local Go Red sponsor, Palomar Pomerado Health is offering a variety of heart-health classes and health screenings during the month of February. Look for more information about Go Red and our classes on pages 4–6 of this publication.

In Good Health,

Michael H. Covert, F.A.C.H.E.
President & Chief Executive Officer
Palomar Pomerado Health

Class Locations

Poway

Pomerado Hospital
15615 Pomerado Road
Poway, CA  92064
858.613.4000

Women’s Health Connection
Gateway Medical Building
15725 Pomerado Road
Suite 100
Poway, CA  92064
858.613.4894

San Marcos

The HealthSource
120 Craven Road
Suite 103
San Marcos, CA  92069

Escondido

Palomar Medical Center
555 East Valley Parkway
Escondido, CA  92025
760.739.3000

Redwood Town Court
500 East Valley Parkway
Escondido, CA  92025
760.737.2437

OASIS
Westfield Shoppingtown
Robinson’s May South*
280 East Via Rancho Parkway
Escondido, CA  92025
760.432.0635

To register for a class, call The HealthSource at 800.628.2880.

*Health Education classes offered at Robinson’s May South are provided by OASIS through sponsorship by Palomar Pomerado Health. To register for an OASIS class, call 760.432.0635.

Off-site classes are also available for groups, businesses and other organizations that would like instruction on a particular health topic. Call 858.675.5372 for more information.
Last November, Palomar Medical Center (PMC) was recognized by the American Heart Association (AHA) for providing outstanding care to cardiovascular patients as part of the AHA’s “Get With The Guidelines” program. PMC received its second Sustained Achievement Award for the care of heart attack patients and its first Initial Achievement Award for the care of congestive heart failure (CHF) patients. The awards are based on starting therapies in a timely manner and maintaining at least 85 percent compliance to core standard levels of care outlined by the AHA’s quality improvement initiative. PMC consistently scores above 95 percent in most categories and is the only participating hospital in San Diego County to earn a second consecutive sustained Performance Achievement Award.

One year after her life-threatening heart attack, Suzie Arnegger graduated from the Mayo Clinic WomenHeart Symposium. She is one of 63 women selected from across the United States to learn how to teach other women about the risks of heart disease and how the symptoms they experience are different from men.

On August 18, 2004, Arnegger made a decision that saved her life when she drove to the Pomerado Hospital Emergency Department. At Pomerado, she found physicians and staff trained in the Cardiac Alert program that quickly identifies and treats patients with heart attack symptoms.

“The doctors took immediate action by administering medications that saved my life,” Arnegger says. “I felt like everything was in harmony.”

She was life-flighted to Palomar Medical Center’s cardiac catheterization laboratory, where an angiogram showed nearly complete closure of the two main arteries. Emergency surgery placed two stents in those arteries to open passages.

Arnegger’s journey to finding the right physicians and care started eight months before her heart attack. With symptoms that included jaw and neck pain, headaches and blurred vision, she sought help from physicians within her health plan, which does not include Palomar Pomerado Health (PPH). The varied diagnoses suggested migraines, TMJ (disease of the lower jaw joints) or stress.

“The most important thing I’ve learned is that women’s heart attack symptoms are often vastly different from men’s,” Arnegger says.

Knowing what she knows now, Arnegger says there was a warning sign that occurred while walking with her daughter. “I had to stop often to catch my breath,” she says. “For someone who is not overweight and who is very active and eats healthy, that should have been a red flag. But I didn’t know what to look for then.”

Arnegger is not alone in suffering from heart disease. Cardiovascular disease claims more women’s lives than the next six causes of death combined — nearly 500,000 women’s lives a year.

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For a physician referral, or to register for a class, call The HealthSource at 800.628.2880.
Heart Health

Good Fats, Bad Fats: Controlling Cholesterol

OASIS

Wednesday, February 1
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Fat and cholesterol are both good and bad, making it a complicated matter for anyone trying to stay healthy. Registered nurse Kathy Lunardi will explore the effects of “bad” (LDL), including Trans Fatty Acids, and the benefits of “good” cholesterol (HDL). Ideal cholesterol levels will be discussed as well as ways to improve your levels. To register, call OASIS at 760.432.0635.

Fee: $2 / participant

Brain Attack! Stroke Awareness

Education and Screening

Pomerado Hospital – 3rd Floor Conference Room

Monday, February 6
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Stroke is a medical emergency and the third leading cause of death in America. What do you do or say to someone who you suspect is having a stroke? Kathy Lunardi, R.N., will discuss the warning signs, risk factors and available treatment, as well as conduct an informative screening including blood pressure and listening to the carotid artery. Register today – stroke awareness may save your life or that of a loved one.

FEE: Free

What is Your Cardiac IQ?

Women’s Health Connection

Monday, February 13
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Do you have a family history of heart problems? Are you making healthy choices in the areas of diet and exercise? Palomar Pomerado Health is partnering with the American Heart Association for a campaign to bring more awareness to women about this serious health issue. Join cardiologist Robert Stein, M.D., and Barbara Buesch, R.N., as they discuss risk factors, warning signs and lifestyle options for a healthier you.

FEE: Free

Do You Know Your Cholesterol Level?

OASIS

Wednesday, February 15
10:30 a.m. – Noon

When did you last have your cholesterol tested? Screenings will be available to the first 30 people to register. The following results will be available within minutes: total cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL (good cholesterol), LDL (bad cholesterol) and glucose. Fasting is not necessary. To register, call OASIS at 760.432.0635.

FEE: $10 / participant

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Palomar Medical Center

Call 760.739.3566 for dates, times and fees.

Medically supervised program for those recovering from a cardiac event.

Finding the Right Doctor is Easy at PPH

Looking for a physician and don’t know where to start? At Palomar Pomerado Health, we make it easy to find the doctor that’s right for you. Just call The HealthSource at 800.628.2880, and one of our friendly representatives will help you to select the doctor who best fits your needs. Our more than 600 affiliated physicians are committed to providing you and your family with top-quality clinical care in a caring environment.
It's been more than a year since North County voters approved Proposition BB funding for the expansion of Palomar Pomerado Health facilities. Since then, planning and design activities have concentrated on assuring that the new health-care facilities enhance patient care through innovative design and technology.

“There is a wealth of scientific evidence that demonstrates how a building’s design can measurably impact healing, safety and satisfaction,” says Marcia Jackson, chief planning officer. “Examples include creating healing environments that promote stronger connections to nature and providing larger patient rooms to accommodate more bedside equipment and family involvement.”

One goal is to develop facility infrastructures that are flexible and can accommodate long-term changes to the delivery of safe, quality care. Other goals include expandability to meet future needs of a growing region and convenient access.

Soon there will be physical signs of progress. In January, the new Outpatient Services Pavilion at Pomerado Hospital will break ground. The 172,000 square-foot, five-story building will be home to advanced imaging, outpatient surgery, outpatient infusion services, physician offices, a comprehensive outpatient women’s center and more. The Outpatient Services Pavilion is expected to open in mid-2007.

“We want the design to keep the aesthetic value of Pomerado Hospital,” says Jackson. “We are grouping services in such a way that patients will be able to see their doctor and have requested tests completed under the same roof. It’s going to improve convenience tremendously.”

In Escondido, hospital officials have worked very closely with Escondido City Officials to identify the best location for the all-new Palomar Medical Center (PMC). At press time, negotiations continue for development at the Escondido Research and Technology Center (ERTC) site. A final decision is expected in early 2006. The campus is being planned to expand in phases to include up to 600 beds to meet growing community needs. At the same time, design teams have been working hard to assure that the new facility provides expanded trauma and emergency services, heart surgery, neurosurgery, vascular services and other essential care for North County residents.

Planning continues on how to best organize Palomar Medical Center’s women’s services including maternity services, neonatal intensive care and pediatrics to assure that cohesive and comprehensive inpatient and outpatient services are offered in the most convenient manner possible. At this time, plans call for remodeling the existing PMC as a site for inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services, acute rehabilitation, outpatient cancer center with radiation therapy and chemotherapy services, PPH corporate offices and an urgent care center. The downtown facility may potentially include employee housing, a skilled nursing facility, retail space and expanded parking.

“This is an evolving planning process that changes periodically as we strive to make the best decisions for our future patients,” says Jackson. “We have many goals – all of which serve to enhance patient services, improve safety and quality, avoid duplication, and ultimately transform our hospitals into true patient-friendly places of healing. We look forward to sharing our continued progress with the community.”
Cancer
Protecting Your Breast Health
Women’s Health Connection
Wednesday, February 22
6 – 7 p.m.

Join obstetrician and gynecologist Rosalyn Baxter-Jones, M.D., as she discusses the importance of breast health and answers your questions about the new HALO NAF screening for the early detection of breast cancer. See related story on page 9. Registration is required.

FEE: Free

I Can Cope
Pomerado Hospital
Tuesdays
January 31; February 7, 14, 21, 28; March 7
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Oncology nurse Kay Kimball leads this FREE series of educational classes for people confronting a cancer diagnosis. Open to patients and families through the collaborative efforts of the American Cancer Society and PPH Cancer Resource Centers. To register, call 858.613.4044.

FEE: Free

Look Good, Feel Better
Palomar Medical Center (Bilingual)
Monday, February 27
5 – 7:30 p.m.

Pomerado Hospital
Mondays, February 27 & April 24
1 – 3:30 p.m.

A class designed to help women cope with the appearance-related effects of cancer treatment. All cosmetics and skin care products are complimentary. Sponsored by the American Cancer Society and Palomar Pomerado Health. To register, call 619.682.7440.

FEE: Free

Cancer Conference
Pomerado Hospital
First & Third Thursdays
12:15 – 1:15 p.m.

Palomar Medical Center
Fridays
12:15 to 1:15 p.m.

For retired and employed health professionals. One CME. Lunch provided.

FEE: Free / PPH Employees
$5 / non-PPH Employees

To confirm your participation in a Cancer Conference, please call the Palomar Pomerado Health Cancer Registry at 760.739.3292.

Lung Health
Pulmonary Rehabilitation
Palomar Medical Center
Pomerado Hospital
Call 760.739.3685 for dates, times and fees.

Education and physical conditioning for those suffering from any form of pulmonary disease.

Kick the Habit: Smoking Cessation
Palomar Medical Center, Education Classroom
Eight-week series
Wednesdays
January 25 – March 15
5:30 – 7 p.m.

PPH’s smoking cessation class, led by oncology nurse Kay Kimball, RN, MSN, OCN, explores the challenges of “quitting” and provides the tools and support necessary to help you kick the habit. This eight-week series meets on Wednesday evenings and includes six sessions of information (with comprehensive workbook) followed by two weeks of support group meetings for those who quit.

FEE: $150 / participant

Wigs, Wig Products & Prostheses
Wigs, wig products and prostheses are available at discounted prices from the PPH Cancer Resource Centers and the Women’s Health Connection Boutique. Please call for more information.

PPH Cancer Resource Centers:
858.613.4044 (Poway)
760.739.3943 (Escondido)

Women’s Health Connection Boutique:
858.613.4894 (Poway)
For a physician referral, or to register for a class, call The HealthSource at 800.628.2880.

Inland North County women are the first in the nation to have access to a new screening test for breast health. The HALO NAF (nipple aspirate fluid) Collection System™ detects cellular changes in the milk ducts where most breast cancer begins. With NAF, these changes can be detected as much as eight years before they become visible on a mammogram.

The significance of the NAF test to early breast cancer detection is similar to that of the Pap test and detection of cervical cell changes that are indicative of cancer. In fact, Dr. George Papanicolaou, founder of the Pap smear test for cancer detection, first suggested the idea of testing breast fluid more than 50 years ago.

“Early detection of breast cancer greatly improves the treatment options, the chances for successful treatment and survival,” says Rosalyn Baxter-Jones, M.D., M.B.A., a board-certified obstetrician gynecologist and a member of Palomar Pomerado Health’s medical staff. She is the first physician in the country to use this FDA-approved test.

The five-minute test is completed in the doctor’s office. Suction cups, much like breast pumps used during breastfeeding, are attached to each breast. The automated system gently compresses the breasts and applies light suction to bring nipple aspirate to the surface. It is collected and sent to the laboratory for analysis.

Like the Pap test, HALO NAF enables screening for early cellular changes before a cancer forms.

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<th>Pre-invasive Stages</th>
<th>Invasive Stages</th>
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“The test determines if the cells are normal, pre-malignant or cancerous,” says Dr. Baxter-Jones. “Depending on the results and the woman’s family history and risk factors, we can determine the best treatment plan in collaboration with surgeons, oncologists and other specialists throughout Palomar Pomerado Health. If no fluid is collected, this is also clinically significant because it has been shown that the absence of breast fluid indicates reduced relative risk for breast disease.”

Dr. Baxter-Jones recommends that women have the NAF screening test as a baseline starting at age 25.

“This test is beneficial to all women because it provides a way to routinely evaluate and manage breast health which can lead to an early diagnosis of breast cancer,” says Dr. Baxter-Jones. “It is especially helpful for younger women who are not recommended for mammography and for those with dense breasts, where mammography may not provide a clear image.”

Dr. Baxter-Jones will host an informational session about breast health and the HALO NAF procedure on Wednesday, February 22, from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Women’s Health Connection in Poway.

To register, call The HealthSource at 800.628.2880. For more information, visit www.neomatrix.com.

Breast Self-Exam

Ladies, it is very important to perform a self-breast exam every month. Try to do it at the same time each month, a few days after your period, when your breasts are least likely to be tender or swollen. If you no longer menstruate, pick a day that you can remember easily, like the first of the month. Remember, the best protection is early detection. Report any changes or irregularities to your physician immediately. For more information on how to perform a breast self-exam, visit www.pph.org and click on Women’s Services.
Diabetes

Diabetes Education

Palomar Medical Center
Pomerado Hospital
Classes offered weekly
Call 858.613.4164 for dates, times and fees.

Diabetes classes are designed to help individuals with diabetes and their families improve their health status and quality of life. Classes range from a core education series to specific needs that focus on self-blood glucose monitoring, meal planning, carbohydrate counting, oral medications and gestational diabetes. Diabetes classes are certified by the American Diabetes Association and accredited by California’s “Sweet Success” program for gestational diabetes.

General Health

Restless Leg Syndrome

OASIS
Wednesday, January 18
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Do your legs feel like doing the jitterbug while your body feels like sleeping? Restless leg syndrome is a very common sleep-related problem. Learn how to live with this annoying disorder and discover available treatment options. See page 11 for related story. To register, call OASIS at 760.432.0635.

FEE: $2 / participant

One Hundred Hints for Health

Redwood Town Court
Monday, January 30
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Don’t wait until your health is at risk, start making healthy lifestyle changes now. Join Kay Kimball, R.N., MSN, OCN, as she shares ways to be proactive about taking care of your body. Learn tips for maintaining good nutrition, increasing physical activity, changing bad habits, developing a mental edge and enhancing emotional health.

FEE: Free

Talk Time

CHAT WITH AN EXPERT FOR FREE!

Talk Time with Cynthia Robertson, M.D.

Women’s Health Connection
Thursday, February 9
2 – 3:30 p.m.

Integrative Medicine is the practice of bringing together the best of conventional and natural medicine to promote health, prevent illness and treat disease. Join Dr. Cynthia Robertson as she explores all the factors that influence your health – including mind, body, spirit and community.

FEE: Free

Talk Time with Tammy Holferty, PAC

Women’s Health Connection
Friday, April 28
10:30 a.m. – Noon

From microdermabrasion and chemical peels to Retin A and alpha hydroxy acid – the wide variety of skin care procedures and products can be mind boggling. Join certified physician’s assistant Tammy Holferty as she explores effective non-surgical procedures for skin rejuvenation and helps you make sense of the cosmetic craze.

FEE: Free

Safe Vitamin & Supplement Use

OASIS
Wednesday, March 8
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Vitamins and supplements are a $1 billion industry. Which ones are beneficial and safe? What dose do you need and will it interact with other medicines? Join Cynthia Robertson, M.D., as she reveals answers to these questions and more. To register, call OASIS at 760.432.0635.

FEE: $2 / participant

Twinges in Your Hinges

OASIS
Wednesday, March 29
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Has the pain in your hips and knees got you down? Are you ready for a life-changing experience? Join orthopedic nurse Linda Brown, R.N., as she discusses the latest “real implants” for total hips and knees, and answers your questions about surgery and recovery. To register, call OASIS at 760.432.0635.

FEE: $2 / participant

Memory Dynamics (Health Stages)

OASIS
Wednesdays, April 12 and 19
10:30 a.m. – Noon

During this two-part program, Community Health Instructor Mary Coalson will explore memory processes, describe what happens to memory as you age, and reveal new techniques for memory improvement. To register, call OASIS at 760.432.0635.

FEE: $8 / participant for two sessions

Light refreshments will be served. To register, call The HealthSource at 800.628.2880
Airway pressure (CPAP), using a bedside machine about the size of a 12-inch pack of sodas. It gently blows air into the patient's custom-fitted nasal mask to relieve the obstruction.

“Patients often experience dramatic improvement with even one night’s treatment,” says Dr. Kanter. “They tell me they feel more alert and in general are less irritable, happier and more social. Over time, they perform better at work or during daily activities and lower their blood pressure.”

Restless Leg Syndrome

Up to 10 percent of the U.S. population experiences Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS), which is an overwhelming urge to move your legs as you try to fall asleep. Sometimes, these tingling, creeping, cramping or painful sensations and jerking movements in your calves can even wake you up.

RLS is considered a neurological condition and is often made worse by stress, pregnancy, anemia, kidney problems, diabetes, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder or rheumatoid arthritis. Typically, RLS affects older adults and women.

To determine if you have RLS, your doctor should do a full physical and neurological exam and ask questions regarding your family history and sleep patterns. RLS is often misdiagnosed since there is no specific lab test to diagnose it. While there is no known cure for RLS, it is generally treated with prescription medications or pain relievers.

Stretching, walking, rubbing or exercising your leg muscles may help to reduce the nighttime sensations. Limiting alcohol and caffeine may also help. Learn more about RLS during a special class on Wednesday, January 18 at OASIS. See page 10 for details.

Sleep Problems from Menopause

For approximately 40 percent of menopausal women, hot flashes and night sweats keep them from sleeping soundly. These sleep problems are thought to be associated with hormonal function and also with psychological factors.

More women are opting out of using hormone replacement therapy (HRT) since a 2002 landmark study from the Women’s Health Initiative Study showed HRT actually increases women’s risk of heart attacks, breast cancer, stroke and blood clots, rather than offering protection as was previously thought. Most physicians believe that low dose HRT is safe for short periods of time – four to five years – depending on your personal health, family history and risk factors.

Consult with your physician about alternatives to HRT. Some women find that herbs, such as black cohosh, and soy help with hot flashes. Others find that wearing loose clothing to bed, keeping their bedroom cool and well ventilated and avoiding spicy foods may also help.

If you have trouble sleeping for more than a few weeks, or if sleep problems interfere with daily functioning, speak with your doctor. For more information, call the Palomar Medical Center Sleep Disorders Laboratory at 760.739.3685.

Common Causes of Sleep Disorders

- Physical or medical conditions (ulcers, heartburn, chronic pain)
- Depression, anxiety disorders
- Light, noise, extreme temperatures
- Alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, some medications
- Life stresses
- Family history
- Aging
- Night shift work
Exercise and Weight Loss

Get Fit and Stay Strong
OASIS
Stop osteoporosis! Certified Exercise Instructor Ann Jaburg leads this fitness class using bands and weights to increase your bone density, strength and endurance – all while you’re having fun.

Tuesdays & Thursdays
12:30 – 1:30 p.m. or 1:45 – 2:45 p.m.
January 10 – 31 FEE: $28 for 7 classes
February 2 – 28 FEE: $32 for 8 classes
March 2 – 30 FEE: $36 for 9 classes

To register, call OASIS at 760.432.0635.

Keep On Exercisin’
The HealthSource, San Marcos
Tuesdays and Thursdays
9 and 10 a.m. sessions
Certified Exercise Instructor Ann Jaburg teaches low-impact aerobics, stretching exercises and how to use lightweights for building strength and endurance. To register, call The HealthSource at 800.628.2880.

FEE: $24 per month / participant

Adult Fitness
Palomar Medical Center
Call 760.739.3566 for dates, times and fees.
A medically supervised exercise program for anyone.

Westfield Walkers
Westfield Shoppingtown North County
Tuesdays and Thursdays
8:30 a.m.
A free walking program co-sponsored by PPH. Meets near the concierge kiosk on the lower level. Registration is not required.

Lifestyle Changes and Weight Loss
OASIS
Wednesday, March 1
10:30 a.m. – Noon
Dr. Nick Yphantides, a PPH physician and author of “My Big Fat Greek Diet,” is a weight loss success story. Join “Dr. Nick” as he shares his discoveries about true and permanent weight loss. To register, call OASIS at 760.432.0635.

FEE: $2 / participant

Weight Loss Surgery Seminar
Office of Dr. Charles Callery and Dr. Kyle Potts
Tuesdays
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Considering weight loss surgery? Explore your options through the Surgical Weight Loss Program at Pomerado Hospital. Join us at one of our general education seminars held at the physicians’ office located at 15725 Pomerado Road, Suite 203A in Poway. Reservations are required. To register, please call 858.675.0883.

CPR/First Aid

American Heart Association Basic/Advanced Life Support and HeartSaver First Aid Courses
Courses are offered through the Palomar Pomerado Health/American Heart Association (AHA) Training Center. Onsite group training is available with a minimum of six participants. The AHA strongly promotes knowledge and proficiency in BLS, ACLS, and PALS and has developed instructional materials for this purpose. Use of these materials in an educational course does not represent course sponsorship by the AHA, and any fees charged for such a course do not represent income to the AHA.

Basic Life Support Courses
Call 800.628.2880 for dates, times, locations and registration information on the following classes.

CPR for Family and Friends
This course teaches basic life saving techniques including how to relieve an obstructed airway. It is suggested for the lay rescuer such as new parents, babysitters, caregivers or anyone who is preparing to help others in distress but does not need certification.

FEE: $25 / participant

HeartSaver CPR
This class provides CPR certification and is designed for the layperson who may serve as a rescuer in the workplace such as flight attendants, teachers, daycare providers and security personnel.

FEE: $40 / participant

BLS for the Healthcare Provider
This class provides CPR certification for the health-care professional, paramedic, lifeguard or nursing student and includes instruction on one- and two-man adult, child and infant CPR; relief of an obstructed airway; and use of an AED and ambu bag.

FEE: $40 / participant

HeartSaver First Aid
This four-hour class includes instruction on the general principles of first aid, as well as medical, injury and environmental emergencies. Topics covered include choking, chest pain, fainting, seizures, bleeding, burns, bites, stings, poisoning and more.

FEE: $40 / participant
(Note: Participants who enroll in both HeartSaver CPR and HeartSaver First Aid are eligible for a combined discounted fee of $65.)

HeartSaver AED
This class provides certification in Adult CPR and the use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator). Classes are offered to groups who either have or would like to purchase an AED.

FEE: $50 / participant

Advanced Life Support Courses
Palomar Pomerado Health also offers Advanced Life Support Courses for health-care professionals including Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), Neonatal Resuscitation (NRP) and Pediatric Education for Prehospital Professionals (PEPP). Call 858.613.4444 for more information.
Palomar Medical Center (PMC) continues to upgrade its technologies while planning for the construction of expanded facilities in Escondido. The latest addition is the installation of advanced MRI and CT scanners in mobile trailers at the downtown hospital site.

Now, patients and physicians have convenient, prompt access to these advanced imaging systems.

“Our imaging services have become more efficient because we are now able to expedite the time for exams,” says John McHargue, manager of imaging services at PMC.

The new high-field 1.5 Tesla MRI by Philips is a sophisticated system that produces images of the body without radiation exposure as in X-rays. Instead, MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) utilizes the physical properties of magnetic fields, radio waves and computers to generate images of the body in any plane. This noninvasive procedure provides an accurate diagnosis that, in some situations, may reduce the need for exploratory surgery or other diagnostic procedures.

The new Philips Brilliance CT Scanner is the second CT unit at PMC and was acquired to better accommodate high volume demands. As the only designated trauma center in North County, PMC treats critically ill and injured patients who require prompt diagnosis and treatment.

“The new CT delivers clear, detailed images of the human body in seconds,” says McHargue. “This means that physicians are getting the information they need to make an accurate diagnosis more quickly.”

At Pomerado Hospital, physicians and patients are benefiting from the addition of a state-of-the-art diagnostic imaging and interventional suite. The advanced digital imaging system optimizes images by utilizing flat detector technology, which provides superior spatial resolution to deliver crisper, more detailed images. Vascular surgeons, cardiologists, radiologists and general surgeons are using the system to diagnose and treat a wide range of diseases. Many procedures can be performed on an outpatient basis.

“These new technologies expand our capabilities and enable us to provide services that were not previously available,” says Thomas Offerman, manager of imaging services at Pomerado Hospital.

Enhanced treatment options include:

- Vascular stent placement to open and strengthen narrowed blood vessels
- Permanent pacemaker and AICD placement
- Angiography to diagnose blockages and other blood vessel problems
- Angioplasty to repair narrowed blood vessels
- Embolization to stop unwanted bleeding in vessels
- Chemoembolization that delivers cancer-fighting agents directly to the cancerous tumor
- Uterine fibroid embolization
- Thrombolysis to break up blood clots
- Carotid artery stenting
- Dialysis and central venous catheter placement
- Vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty to treat acute compression fractures of the lumbar and thoracic spine

For more information about PPH’s newest imaging services, contact John McHargue at 760.739.3977.

Palomar Pomerado’s Lifeline Personal Emergency Response Service is designed to summon help when a subscriber has a sudden illness or injury and is unable to get to a telephone to call for help. Simply press the waterproof personal help button worn as a pendant or on a wristband and within seconds you’ll be connected to a highly trained Lifeline operator who can quickly summon the appropriate help.

For more information about Lifeline call 858.675.5371.

Save the Date! Community Health Fair
Ner Tamid Synagogue
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Sunday, April 30, 2006
Co-sponsored by Palomar Pomerado Health. For more information call 858.675.5599 or visit www.pph.org

For a physician referral, or to register for a class, call The HealthSource at 800.628.2880.
Gentle Giant
NBA Star Dikembe Mutombo Partners with PPH

He’s 7’ 2” tall, but it isn’t his physical stature alone that makes Dikembe Mutombo a giant among men. Nurses, doctors, civic leaders, health-care advocates and people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are applauding Mutombo’s heroic efforts to see the completion of a state-of-the-art medical center in his homeland.

Mutombo launched the drive to build a $29-million, high-tech, 300-bed facility on 52 acres in the DRC after his mother died when she was unable to get the medical attention she needed. He has given $15-million of his own money and has worked for the past seven years to see his dream become a reality. When finished next spring, the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital (named for his mother) will be fully equipped with an emergency room, surgery suites, a women’s center and a teaching hospital.

Mutombo spoke to PPH staff and members of the community last year, explaining his passion to see the hospital built and the need for continued medical and financial support. He cited the dire conditions in the DRC which claim the lives of thousands of people who could be saved with access to proper medical care. He then signed an agreement with Chief Administrative Officer Jim Flinn, designating Pomerado as a sister hospital to Mutombo’s new facility.

The Houston Rockets center left Poway with more than good wishes and a new bond with PPH. He was given a truckload of surplus medical supplies and a used van for his new hospital.

Providing Calm After the Storm

It’s not uncommon for those at Palomar Pomerado Health (PPH) to deal with tragedy – it’s almost a daily occurrence for some health-care workers. But last fall, PPH physicians, nurses and staff showed their compassion in extraordinary ways when they responded to the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina.

Volunteers went to New Orleans as part of the federal Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) and treated Katrina victims for maladies ranging from heart attacks, gunshot wounds and strokes, to lacerations and even an alligator bite. “The conditions were horrible,” states Mona Dieffenbacher, R.N. “We weren’t prepared for the kinds of things we saw, but we endured to try and make a difference.”

Volunteers also traveled to Natchez County and Gulf Port, Mississippi with the International Relief Team (IRT), while others made donations to various relief funds or assisted at evacuee shelters in San Diego. Palomar Pomerado Health salutes the volunteer spirit of its physicians, nurses and staff for putting the PPH mission into action far from home.

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