

Cooper Cape Regional

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it with the evolution in health care through its more than seven decades of operation. It started as Burdette Tomlin Memorial Hospital, which opened in 1950 with 65 beds, then transitioned into Cape Regional Medical Center (2006) and now Cooper University Health Care Cape Regional.

“Cape Regional has been a stalwart in the community for over 70 years and what Cooper has been able to do is enhance the things that are there,” Winn said. “We felt like we wanted to come together to build a healthier community.”

The 242-bed hospital is the largest employer in Cape May County and includes Cape Regional Physicians Associates and an extensive ambulatory network.

Part of the evolution included opening Cape Regional Physicians Associates in 2010, after which the medical center began to focus on developing outpatient care, opening urgent care centers, a cancer center and ambulatory surgery center, along with expanding women’s health care.

“This was pretty groundbreaking back in 2010; now it’s pretty common for physicians to be employed by a health system, but back in the day that was a whole new advancement of physicians becoming part of a health network,” Winn said, noting it aligned the way that the system provides care and its philosophies.

From 2010 to 2020, she said, the focus became outpatient care.

COVID-19 pandemic changed health care

The most drastic change, however, took place in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic, claiming the lives of more than 1 million Americans and generating fear of hospitals as centers for disease.

Winn said the public depended on health care in a unique way, so health care facilities nationwide ramped up tele services quickly to treat people remotely. Community programming took a different focus.

“People didn’t really want to come to a hospital or doctor’s office. There were a lot of falsehoods about what was happening, we had to shut down a lot of preventative services for a while,” Winn said, noting many people put off care such as screenings and procedures. “It was a pivotal time for us to really reevaluate how we deliver services, who we deliver services to and how we can become a better partner in people’s long-term health.”

Winn said traditional numbers of surgeries and other care did not recover quickly and the medical field needed to innovate again to meet the needs of the community.

“Hospitals like Cape Regional looked for opportunities,” she said.

She said Gov. Phil Murphy named three hospitals to coordinate care, one of the being Cooper, which oversaw the seven southern counties.

“We would get together with all of the hospitals and talk about the best practices for how to treat COVID patients,” Winn said.

During that process, she said, Joanne Carroci-no, CEO of Cape Regional, got to know administrators from Cooper and “formed a bond.”

“When Cape Regional was looking for a partner, it was kind of a natural for Joanne to reach out. When Joanne called, they listened and it was one of those times when that magic happens,” Winn said. “We’re better together.”

In 2022, Cape Regional determined the need for

Capital campaign

Cooper Foundation Cape Regional has committed to undertaking a \$10 million capital campaign to support the expansion of the emergency and radiology departments. The campaign is meant to offset the \$19.9 million project investment.

The Larry L. Luig Family Foundation has pledged a lead gift of \$3 million for the naming rights of the emergency department.

“The emergency department is committed to providing the most advanced emergency medical care possible to every patient who comes through our doors,” said Dr. Christine Winn, senior vice president and chief regional officer with Cooper University Health Care.

It now has 33 patient bays and treats more than 3,600 patients per year. A five-bed behavioral health unit is part of the department.

The department includes board-certified emergency medical physicians, assistants, nurse practitioners and specially trained nurses and technicians.

“Once complete, the expansion will include nine additional patient bays with state-of-the-art technology, providing improved privacy and efficiency that will enhance the emergency experience of our patients,” Winn said.

The emergency department will have dedicated radiology equipment, including CT scan, X-ray and ultrasound, reducing wait time for testing and diagnosis.

“These enhancements are designed to deliver high-quality care, improve patient satisfaction and accommodate the increased volume of acute patients, especially during our high-volume summer months,” Winn said.

a partner and Cooper answered the call, she said.

Winn said Cooper University Health Care has \$2.5 billion in annual revenue, more than 13,000 team members, 900 plus licensed beds, more than 1,000 physicians in three groups, 450 plus advanced providers, more than 130 ambulatory locations across seven southern New Jersey counties and six urgent care centers. There now are 13 facilities in Cape May County, including Marmora, Seaville, Cape May Court House, Stone Harbor, Rio Grande and North Cape May.

“We have depth, we have breadth that we can bring to Cape May County,” she said, noting that specialists from Camden now come to the county to treat patients.

Winn said Cooper’s mission is to serve, to heal and to educate and vision is to be the best place to be a patients, work, learn and practice medicine.

Services available at Cape Regional include the Brodesser outpatient surgery and endoscopy

center, cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, outpatient physical therapy, a wound healing center, concussion center, sleep center, Cape Addiction Recovery Services (CARE), pain management, primary stroke care and 24-hour access to intensive care specialists.

One of the facilities, Miracle Fitness in Rio Grande, offers personal and group training programs, group exercise classes, personal fitness plans including goal setting and nutritional advice, strength training equip and hydrotherapy.

The medical center also formed a partnership with Atlantic Medical Imaging, providing three free-standing facilities offering CT scan, digital X-ray, MRI, PET/CT, ultrasound, 3D mammography and stereotactic biopsies.

Guiding principles

Winn said the health care network’s guiding principles include its commitment to people — patients, team, families and community.

“The first thing we learned from Joanne and the team was that we needed to put our people first, and that’s so in line with what Cooper wants to do as well,” she said. “We put people first because we are people caring for people.”

Another is prioritizing value-added initiatives.

“We don’t want to do things that are going to be just like Camden. We’re not in Camden, we are in a beautiful setting and we need to do things that are supportive of the county,” Winn said.

The network also values providing enhanced specialists and access to clinical programs. She said some specialists have long waits.

“Our job is to figure out how do we bring more specialists down, how do we make sure that we can treat people, so we continue to open those access points,” Winn said.

Finally, the network strives toward academic health, with plans to create a residency program.

“One of the things we talked about the other day is bringing education, medical education to Cape Regional. Thinking about training the next generation,” Winn said.

Maternity services

Winn discussed the state of maternity services, which ended in September 2022.

“That was a wrenching decision,” she said, noting that maternity not only involves delivering babies but also all of the care that comes before and after, which was not readily available in the area.

She said the medical center has amplified maternity education in the emergency department over the past two years and collaborated with Shore Medical Center and AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center to ensure patients receive the care they need.

She said they would continue to review the local situation.

Winn said the emergency department nurses

took on the responsibility of developing an education program and the facility has delivered seven newborns, setting the standard for what all ERs have in place for hospitals that do not have obstetricians.

Digital records create continuity

Winn was excited to talk about EPIC, its system for digitizing medical records that went live Oct. 1. She

said through more than 200 training classes and the efforts of 130 team members, they were able to digitize all medical records so that they can be reviewed across the network — inpatient, outpatient, physician office and lab systems — expanding knowledge, providing continuity and improving care.

“It felt like we had everyone in Camden down here in Cape May County,” Winn said of the first day with EPIC.

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28	5:45	5:58	11:53	11:46
29	6:23	6:39		12:36
30	7:02	7:20	12:22	1:17
1	7:40	8:00	12:58	1:56
2	8:17	8:39	1:34	2:35
3	8:55	9:20	2:11	3:15
4	9:36	10:05	2:50	4:00

MOON PHASES

New moon, Dec. 1 • first quarter, Dec. 8

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