

# Carroll County Times

## Hospital expands, improves treatment options

By Bryan Schutt, Times Staff Writer

Creating a healthier Carroll County couldn't be possible without quality local physicians, nurses, surgeons and therapists.

Retaining those health experts wouldn't be possible without a quality health-care center that has kept up with the population boom of Carroll County.

Officials at Carroll Hospital Center say they are proud to have positioned the hospital to do exactly that.

John Sernulka, president and CEO of Carroll Hospital Center, said the hospital has made adjustments to the kind of health services people seek.

Besides investing millions in new technology and making the hospital an 85 percent private-bed facility, the hospital now offers lifesaving procedures, such as emergency angioplasty, which were previously unavailable locally.



Dave Munch/Staff Photo  
Dr. Kristian Hochberg, center, performs an abdominal aortogram to evaluate for renal artery stenosis.

The advancements have given the hospital an increased market share, from 40 percent about 15 years ago to around 56.5 percent now, according to Sernulka.

"Market share growth is saying, of the people who [live] there, whether it's 50,000 or 100,000, what percent of them is coming to your hospital versus going to other hospitals," he said. "I believe that Carroll Hospital Center has grown in both stature and reputation ... to become a community hospital with a regional focus."

The annual reports available on the hospital's Web site back up Sernulka's sentiment.

In fiscal year 1998, the hospital admitted 9,360 patients, and by fiscal year 2008 that number nearly doubled as it reached 16,036. Outpatient surgeries increased from about 7,650 in fiscal year 1998 to more than 10,600 in fiscal year 2008.

Sernulka said numbers alone don't tell the entire story.

"The hospital has gone from traditional surgery, which we still do, to state-of-the-art, minimally invasive surgery, where we are helping patients recover a lot quicker with less need for blood loss," he said.

### Campus growth

The hospital has grown physically over the last decade. A drive past the hospital campus leaves passers-by with a picture of new development.

Those changes include an \$80 million expansion completed in 2003 that featured a new Emergency Department and main lobby, the opening of four new operating rooms in 2007 and the five-level parking garage that opened in 2009.

Hospital spokeswoman Teresa Fletcher said the hospital currently employs 1,790, making it the second-largest employer in the county behind the Carroll County government.

Fletcher said the hospital's physical expansion has enabled it to keep up with both the population growth and the health-care needs of Carroll County.

"It's not just bricks and mortar all the time," she said. "We want to be able to provide the services people need here, so they don't have to travel to get them."

## Looking ahead

Besides providing community needs such as maternity, behavioral health, imaging and cancer center services, Fletcher said the hospital center is focusing on what the community could use to keep them healthy.

“We want to be a hospital of choice, not just when you’re sick but to keep you healthy, too,” she said.

The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County, which formed in 1999, is tasked with taking up that cause.

The organization, which is a partnership of the hospital and the Carroll County Health Department, was formed to improve the health status and quality of life for all Carroll County residents.

During the next decade, Sernulka expects the hospital to continue its proactive approach toward health.

“We’re not just here when people are sick. We’re out there trying to be a responsible hospital to its community and keeping it as well as possible,” he said.