

# Emerson Hospital



## A Happy, Active Summer

AFTER PEDIATRIC SURGERY AT EMERSON

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Emergency care gets an upgrade

Falls are not part of normal aging – learn more

Emerson Hospital Home Care makes all the difference

Cancer care advances with community support

**PULLOUT  
HEALTH  
CALENDAR  
INSIDE**



## A Letter from Christine Schuster

Dear Friends:

I hope this issue of *HealthWorks* finds you enjoying the final weeks of summer. Our cover feature is about pediatric care at Emerson, a subject very close to my heart! I know that whenever your child is in the hospital, it can be frightening. As you will see, we work very hard to assure that our pediatric patients—infants, kids and teens—as well as their worried parents, receive all the care and attention they need.

At the other end of the spectrum, we are concentrating our efforts on preventing falls, which are the most common cause of injury among older folks. Our falls prevention work begins at the hospital and extends into the community. The impressive attendance at our Falls Prevention Conference last spring was an indication that many of you care about this issue.

If you have an active family, or have raised a family in this area, sooner or later you will likely seek care in the Emerson Emergency Department. We have enhanced our emergency services thanks to a new collaborative paramedic partnership and a series of facility upgrades in our Emergency Department, all aimed at increasing patient privacy, comfort and efficiency.

I am happy to announce that our popular *Girls' Night Out* series will be back this fall with a new group of topics focused on a healthy you, inside and out. Please see details in this issue.

Be well,

Christine C. Schuster  
President and CEO

## Emerson Hospital

Emerson Hospital is an acute care medical center located in Concord with health centers in Bedford, Groton, Sudbury and Westford. It is well known for its medical and surgical specialists, outstanding nursing care and patient-centered services, including the Birthing Center, the Bethke Cancer Center, the Polo Emergency Center, the Clough Surgical Center and the Center for Specialty Care.

[www.emersonhospital.org](http://www.emersonhospital.org)

Harold Miller, shown with his wife, Marcheta, was diagnosed with ventricular tachycardia in the Emerson Emergency Department.



## EMERGENCY CARE

### WHEN MINUTES COUNT: LINCOLN MAN RECEIVES CARE—FAST

*“It seemed to me the ambulance arrived right away, within a few minutes.... The next thing, there were seven or eight people working on him.”*

— MARCHETA MILLER

When her husband, Harold, collapsed in the kitchen of their Lincoln home, Marcheta Miller wasted no time. Unable to detect his pulse, Mrs. Miller dialed 911.

“It seemed to me the ambulance arrived right away, within a few minutes,” she recalls of that recent morning. “The next thing, there were seven or eight people working on him.”

Mr. Miller, who is 87, was semi-conscious but aware of what was going on. “I was very short of breath; it was almost a sensation of choking,” he says. “I realized I was in real trouble. They gave me an injection, put me on oxygen and took me to Emerson Hospital, where the Emergency Department staff were standing by and took over. It was orderly and efficient.”

After reviewing the results of Mr. Miller’s electrocardiogram (EKG), Marvin Kendrick, MD, an Emerson cardiologist and critical care specialist, diagnosed ventricular tachycardia, a potentially life-threatening arrhythmia. “His heartbeat was over 200 beats per minutes,” says Dr. Kendrick. “Mr. Miller’s situation was very serious. Had he not received emergency care, including medications that converted his dangerous heart rhythm, he was at risk for sudden death from cardiac arrest.

“Mr. Miller informed me that previously he’d been considered for a defibrillator,” says Dr. Kendrick, referring to an implantable device that maintains a safe heart rhythm. “I thought he’d be better off having that done.”

Once back home with his implantable defibrillator doing its job, Mr. Miller was cared for by Emerson Home Care. “I’m up and around, and I feel okay,” he reported.



# IS AN ONGOING FOCUS AT EMERSON

## NEW EMS COLLABORATIVE LEADS TO FAST RESPONSE TIMES

Many people consider Emerson's Emergency Department (ED) to be the hospital's true front door; about 70 percent of those who are hospitalized at Emerson start out as emergency patients. That is reason enough to improve the facility, which recently was upgraded to enhance comfort and privacy. Behind the scenes, ED staff have partnered with area towns and a professional ambulance service to improve the availability and response time of emergency vehicles.

"We continuously strive to make facility and clinical care improvements," notes Joseph Bergen, DO, chief of emergency medicine. "That is what we've done recently in the triage and patient registration areas, as well as in the waiting room, which is brighter and more comfortable. As a result, patients now have much more privacy. We have also created a separate room where electrocardiograms and lab work can be performed more quickly." Patient rooms now have high-definition, flat-screen TVs, as well as DVD players.

There is more to come, including two additional projects that will result in greater patient safety and care efficiency, according to Maureen Mancini, RN, CEN, director of emergency services. "We are creating a room where nurses can prepare all medications, including complex intravenous antibiotics, without interruption." The ED's main nursing station will be redesigned to accommodate a new computerized charting system that will allow providers to directly order medications and other treatments on the computer.

### Two paramedic teams now cover the region

Emerson recently formed a new paramedic partnership with the Central Middlesex EMS Collaborative and Professional Ambulance (Pro EMS) that has increased the number of paramedic vehicles—from one to two—serving a 13-town region. The Collaborative

Rachid Sbay, paramedic and director of operations at Pro EMS (left), and Ben Juhola, Lincoln firefighter and EMT, transmit test results from the 12-lead electrocardiogram unit to the Emerson Emergency Department, where the facility has been upgraded (see below).



continues to work in cooperation with all area fire departments.


"The two vehicles are always in the field and can be dynamically deployed," explains Bruce Trefry, Emerson's manager of medical control services, adding that vehicle

location is monitored through a GPS tracking system. "Now the staff is available for more emergency calls, with improved response time. They also have the time to connect with staff at the various fire stations in order to train on new equipment, review protocols or discuss a case with the EMTs [emergency medical technicians]. The goal is improving patient care. Of course, this is what we all want."

For example, all paramedics receive training in the use of 12-lead electrocardiograms—cardiac tests that can be conducted on emergency patients and transmitted to a cardiologist or other physician in the Emerson ED. The physician can then direct the ambulance to a hospital with a cardiac catheterization lab for an emergency procedure, such as primary angioplasty.

"Firefighters throughout the area are excited about our new system," says Chief Arthur Cotoni of Lincoln, who chairs the collaborative. "Now that we have two trucks, our response times have improved to between 8 and 12 minutes—sometimes as little as 4 minutes. It's a great model for providing emergency care."

Dr. Bergen says that many future ED improvements will be related to information technology. "We expect to be using the most advanced ED electronic health record within the year. The hospital is making a significant investment in order to electronically integrate the entire Emerson Hospital community."



Hallie Nelson was soon back to her normal activities after having an appendectomy at Emerson.

## PEDIATRIC CARE, HANDLED EFFICIENTLY AND WELL

Concord child benefits from Emerson expertise

**“On Wednesday night, I had a stomach ache. It kept getting worse and worse, so my Mom called the doctor’s office. . .”**

So begins Hallie Nelson’s essay about her emergency care at Emerson Hospital. When the Concord fourth-grader needed a topic for an end-of-the-year writing project, her late night adventure in the Emerson Emergency Department (ED) fit the bill.

In many ways, Hallie’s story is a textbook case of pediatric appendicitis—happily, one that was handled efficiently and well. But when your child is in pain and needs a diagnosis and treatment, nothing is “textbook.” Pam Nelson, her mother, can attest to her anxiety.

“I was a basket case,” she recalls of that evening in May, after Hallie came home from school feeling sick. She perked up and seemed fine, and even practiced her dance routine for the upcoming talent show, only to complain later of a worsening stomach ache.

“She got out of bed at 9:00 pm and kept pointing to her belly,” says Mrs. Nelson, who called Concord Hillside Medical Associates, where Hallie’s pediatrician, Jeffrey Ristaino, MD, practices. Mrs. Nelson was asked to have Hallie jump up and down—one way to determine if the appendix, the finger-shaped sac attached to the large intestine,

might be inflamed. Jumping produced intense pain, so Mrs. Nelson and Hallie packed Biscuit, a favorite stuffed animal, and Pinky, her small blanket, and drove to Emerson.

### **A diagnosis, surgery—and toys**

Hallie was soon being examined by Samuel Sockwell, MD, an ED physician who has seen plenty of acute appendicitis in both children and adults. There are three main components to a diagnosis, he explains. “There is the history-taking phase, the most important factor of which is the duration of symptoms,” says Dr. Sockwell. “Unlike a stomach bug or stomach ache, appendix patients have pain for hours that doesn’t go away.” Hallie had first complained about stomach pain ten hours earlier. She also vomited—another symptom of appendicitis—before they left for Emerson.

The second component is the examination. “In addition to observing how the child moves—they tend to stoop over—I tap on the abdomen,” says Dr. Sockwell. “If they groan, it’s likely to be their appendix.”

Finally, an imaging test typically is performed. For children, ultrasound is the test of choice because it avoids radiation exposure.

Mallory Harrison of the Pediatric Intervention Team helps kids cope with the hospital experience.



Edward Chung, MD, pediatric hospitalist, examines a little patient.



## PEDIATRIC HOSPITALISTS ARE ON-SITE AROUND THE CLOCK

While waiting for her ultrasound test, Hallie watched TV and played with toys that one of the ED nurses brought to her. They weren't just toys; rather, it was a coping kit—carefully selected items that make a hospital visit easier for children. The program was started by Emerson's Pediatric Intervention Team (PIT).

When the results of her ultrasound test were available, they didn't surprise Dr. Sockwell. Although some hunting was required to find Hallie's child-sized appendix, the image revealed inflammation.

Appendicitis is not always straightforward, Dr. Sockwell notes. "Some symptoms fool you. It's easy to miss appendicitis when something else is going on in the gastrointestinal tract. Also, some kids have a high pain tolerance, which can make diagnosing their appendicitis difficult."

Always, the goal is to make a definitive diagnosis and schedule surgery in order to remove the appendix before it perforates—the release of bacteria and fluid into the abdominal cavity. "Perforation is associated with a longer hospital stay and a higher risk of poor healing," says Dr. Sockwell.



"Everyone at Emerson treated Hallie like a queen," says her mother, Pam Nelson.

As Hallie headed toward the surgical suite where Susan Cahill, MD, a general surgeon, performed her appendectomy, she and her mother saw a familiar face that made them both relax. Mallory Harrison, a child life specialist and member of Emerson's PIT, had arrived at work and was informed that someone she knew was about to have surgery.

### Keeping kids happy in the hospital

Ms. Harrison remembered Hallie from a year ago, when she had a minor surgical procedure at Emerson. PIT staff help children cope with their hospital experience, whatever it entails, but surgery is a special concern for patients and their parents. Ms. Harrison remained with Hallie during the administration of anesthesia and checked on her frequently throughout her hospital stay.

*Article continued on page 15*

They are always there—available to small patients and their concerned parents, in the Emergency Department, special care nursery and on inpatient units. Emerson's pediatric hospitalists, a team of pediatricians who are on-site 24 hours a day, provide care wherever infants, children and adolescents happen to be.

*"We work hard to serve as an extension of the pediatrician's office," says Edward Chung, MD, who directs the pediatric hospitalists at Emerson.*


"Community pediatricians typically can't get away to check on

their hospitalized patients," says Edward Chung, MD, who directs the five pediatric hospitalists and additional pediatricians who often cover the hospital at night. "We work hard to serve as an extension of the pediatrician's office. We know the community pediatricians well, and they know the patient and family well. Working together benefits everyone."

According to Dr. Chung, hospitalized children need a good amount of individualized care and attention. "In this regard, we depend on Emerson's outstanding pediatric nursing staff and the Pediatric Intervention Team. They help us tailor the care we provide to children."

There isn't much that Emerson Hospital can't handle well, he notes. "We pride ourselves on the fact that we care for 98 percent of the pediatric cases that come to the hospital," Dr. Chung says. The remaining 2 percent are often referred to the MassGeneral Hospital for Children, but Dr. Chung and his colleagues work with all the pediatric hospitals in the area.

Families appreciate the role the pediatric hospitalists play, he says. "We're a pediatric resource for the whole hospital. We go everywhere and do everything our patients need."



“They helped me physically and emotionally,” says Jane Erekson, an Acton resident, of Emerson Hospital Home Care.

# 50 years and counting

## EMERSON HOSPITAL HOME CARE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE TO PATIENTS

When Emerson Hospital Home Care was established in 1960, the world was a very different place. For example, most hospital patients were encouraged to remain in bed, and they had much longer stays. They received most of their care in the hospital, and there was little need for home-based care.

Medical practice has changed a great deal in the past 50 years. The need for individuals to receive high-quality care at home—after a hospital stay or a new diagnosis—has expanded. So it is not surprising that Emerson Hospital Home Care, which will celebrate an important anniversary this fall, has grown in size and scope. According to Brian Hailey, MSPT, director, last year the staff made more than 34,000 visits to individuals residing throughout the hospital’s 23-town service area. That represents a 10 percent increase during the past two years. Those individuals give Emerson Hospital Home Care high marks.

“In 2009 and into 2010, our patient satisfaction is consistently 96 percent,” says Mr. Hailey. “People appreciate that we’re part of a care continuum—the hospital, Transitional Care Unit, home care and, once they are discharged, ongoing outpatient care. Because we are a department of the hospital, we tap into a range of services. For example, we have speech and occupational therapists who work for the hospital, as well as with us. They see patients at Emerson and in their homes.” Similarly, home care staff work closely with the hospital’s Center for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine to care for patients with the most complex wounds.

Home care staff are vigilant about quality and patient safety, which is reflected in a patient re-hospitalization rate that is far below the national average. In fact, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health conducted a recertification survey in May and found Emerson Hospital Home Care to be compliant and deficiency-free. Two special programs are specifically designed to keep people out of the

hospital. The chronic lung disease program and the heart failure program each emphasize patient/family education and follow-up by nursing staff. “If patients know how to manage their care, many can live independently and avoid costly re-hospitalizations,” says Mr. Hailey, adding that nurses check in regularly by phone to see that the individual is taking their medications correctly and is symptom-free.

One doesn’t need to be an Emerson patient to access Emerson Hospital Home Care. Patients who have been hospitalized elsewhere, including in Boston, often prefer the convenience of having local providers once they are back home.

Emerson Hospital Home Care made a huge difference to Jane Erekson, an Acton resident who had hip replacement surgery in February. “When you come home after having major orthopedic surgery, you go to do something around the house and realize you can’t,” she says. “You think ‘when am I going to get my life back?’”

Ms. Erekson made good progress thanks to the team from Emerson Hospital Home Care, which included a nurse, physical therapist and occupational therapist. “Between their expertise, encouragement and sense of humor, they were phenomenal,” she says. “If I had a question or concern, I picked up the phone and always heard a caring voice. They helped me physically and emotionally.”

She was back to work seven weeks after her surgery. “I would not have recovered as well as I did without the support I received from Emerson Hospital Home Care,” says Ms. Erekson, noting that she wrote a letter praising the staff who cared for her.

As one of the first hospital-based home care organizations in Massachusetts, Emerson Hospital Home Care has a well-earned reputation for excellence, says Mr. Hailey. “We’re here, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to care for homebound patients with more than 44 field clinicians, including nurses, therapists and home health aides. We look forward to the next 50 years and to expanding our role in promoting health and wellness in an ever-changing healthcare system.”



# healthcalendar

## SEE YOU AT THE VERRILL FARM HARVEST FESTIVAL



The annual Verrill Farm Harvest Festival is scheduled for **Saturday, October 16, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm**. The popular event, which benefits pediatric care at Emerson, will feature pony rides, pick-your-own-pumpkins, refreshments, live music, games and prizes, a hay treasure hunt and more. Proceeds are used to purchase coping kits, colorful bags of toys distributed by the hospital's Pediatric Intervention Team to children who come to the Emerson Emergency Department or are admitted to the pediatric unit. Verrill Farm is located at 11 Wheeler Road in Concord. See you there!

## HEALTH & WELLNESS CLASSES

The following courses are held at Emerson Hospital in Concord. Some classes are ongoing—you can join in at any time. Call 978-287-3777 to register.

### PREPARE FOR SURGERY, HEAL FASTER WORKSHOP

Prepare for an upcoming surgical or medical procedure to feel calmer, have less pain and fewer complications and recover sooner. Please call to arrange a convenient, private workshop.

\$95 includes book/relaxation CD. One surgery companion may attend for free.

### PRENATAL EXERCISE for a healthier pregnancy



Specifically designed for mothers-to-be, this class teaches injury prevention, flexibility, postural strengthening and general conditioning. Led by Blithen Davis and Crystal Fontas, Emerson Hospital physical therapists.

\$85 for each six-week session

beginning: September 20 or November 15. All classes are Monday 7:00-8:30 pm.

### NEW! ZUMBA® FITNESS

Zumba fuses hypnotic musical rhythms and tantalizing moves to create a dynamic workout system designed to be fun and easy. The routines combine interval training sessions and resistance training to tone and sculpt your body while burning fat. Presented by Judy Quint, certified Zumba instructor. Classes are held in Sudbury.

\$80 for each seven-week session. Sessions begin: September 23 or November 11. Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 pm.

*Classes continued on next page*



## HEALTH & WELLNESS CLASSES CONTINUED

### PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE SELF-DEFENSE

#### for adults, teens, children and families

Learn physical and verbal techniques for self-defense in this ongoing Japanese martial arts class. Taught by Len and Johanna Glazer, third-degree black belt instructors from the Concord Self-Defense Academy. \$125 for an individual student; \$100 for each additional family member. 10-week session begins Sunday, September 19, 2:00-3:00 pm (kids class for ages 6-10) or 3:00-4:30 pm (for ages 11 to adult).

### YOGA & MEDITATION



Reduce stress and muscle tension, improve flexibility and strength and learn breathing techniques to manage your mood. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and bring an exercise mat. Not for expectant mothers. Please choose Monday

class taught by certified instructor, Natalie Engler, or Friday class taught by certified instructor, Nancy Dorenfeld.

\$98 for each seven-week session beginning:

Mondays 5:30-6:45 pm: September 20, November 15

Fridays 9:45-11:00 am: September 17, November 5

### TAI CHI

Tai chi, an ancient Chinese martial art, is practiced to achieve therapeutic benefits, as well as to promote balance and to improve flexibility and overall strength. The instructor is Ming Wu, PhD.

\$98 for each eight-week session. Sessions begin: September 15 or November 10. Wednesdays 9:30-10:30 am.

### QI GONG

Qi gong is an integration of physical postures, breathing techniques and focused intentions. The gentle, rhythmic movements reduce stress, build stamina and increase vitality. The instructor is Ming Wu, PhD.

\$98 for each eight-week session. Sessions begin: September 15 or November 10. Wednesdays 10:30-11:30 am.

### HYPNOSIS FOR WEIGHT LOSS



The natural and safe process of hypnosis uncovers underlying emotions, feelings, thoughts and attitudes and guides you towards healthy eating patterns. Presented by Joseph Packard, board-certified hypnotherapist.

\$100 for 3 sessions. Choose a session: September 16, 23, 30 or November 4, 11, 18. 7:00-9:00 pm.

### QUIT SMOKING WITH HYPNOSIS

Hypnosis can be a solid tool to help you quit smoking by taking away cravings and withdrawal. Presented by Joseph Packard, board-certified hypnotherapist.

\$100 for 3 sessions. Choose a session: September 16, 23, 30 or November 4, 11, 18. 7:00-9:00 pm.

### BABYSITTING TRAINING

One-day class for ages 10-13 covers everything you need to know to be a great babysitter! Certificate of participation awarded upon completion. Taught by educator Becky Patterson. Pre-registration is required.

\$39 per person or 2/\$70 when registering together. Choose a Saturday: September 25, October 23, November 20 or December 11. 9:00 am-2:00 pm.

### NEW! BALANCED AND MOVING



Good balance is the foundation of a healthy, active lifestyle at any age. This program will provide an overview of the risk factors associated with falls, balance assessments and specific exercises to improve balance, mobility and confidence. Led by Linda May Sieck, certified personal trainer.

\$35. Saturday, October 2, 9:00-10:30 am.

### BUILDING BETTER BONES TOGETHER

Stand tall and take smart steps toward better bones, health, flexibility and balance. Learn the basics of osteoporosis and what exercise can do to help women and men be proactive. Led by Linda May Sieck, certified personal trainer.

\$35. Saturday, October 2, 10:45 am-12:30 pm.

### NEW! AFRICAN HAND DRUMMING



Drumming has been used for centuries to reduce stress to increase awareness, focus and memory. Join us as we learn to drum African style in a supportive, fun class that challenges the brain. Program taught by The DrumConnection Faculty. Drum use included in the course fee.

\$162 for each six-week session. Sessions begin: October 5 or November 16. Tuesdays 7:00-8:30 pm.

All Health & Wellness classes must be paid for in full 48 hours in advance of the class. Refunds for cancellations will not be issued after this time.



CALL 978-287-3777 TO REGISTER.

**NEW! MINDFULNESS - Taking Charge of your Health**

Learn how the practice of mindfulness can help improve quality of life, mood and stress-related symptoms in adults with chronic pain, cancer, cardiovascular disease, anxiety or sleep disorders. This program is based on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn at The Center for Mindfulness at University of Massachusetts. Presented by Patricia Howard.

Attend an orientation lecture on Sunday, October 3, 10:00 am-12:00 pm. \$45 (cost will be applied to the full program).

**Level I:** \$245 plus \$45 for required course materials/CD set. Four-week program begins Sunday, October 10, 10:00 am-12:00 pm.

**Level II:** \$295. Five-week continuation Sunday, November 14, 10:00 am-12:00 pm. Includes all-day session on Sunday, November 28, 9:00 am-3:00 pm.

**WOMEN'S PELVIC HEALTH**

The baby boomer generation is getting older, and an estimated 13.5 million women have stress urinary incontinence. Learn exercises all women should be doing, starting in their teens, through pregnancy and menopause that can help prevent stress and urge incontinence. Wear comfortable clothes. Presented by Judy Curless, chief PT at Emerson Hospital Health Center Westford.

\$35. Thursday, October 14, 7:00-9:00 pm.

**THE POWER OF "THE LAW OF ATTRACTION"**

Tap the hidden reservoir of positive energy. Learn to recognize self-sabotaging behaviors and implement skills for creating happiness, inner peace and personal success. Presented by Fran Spayne, MA, life coach, counselor, reiki master.

\$35. Saturday, October 16, 9:30 am-12:30 pm.

**NEW! THE GREEN PIES OF CRETE: Leafy Vegetables are Nutritional Powerhouses**



Learn the secret ingredients in the heart-healthy Mediterranean diet. There is substantial evidence that eating more of these foods can dramatically improve our health and lower the risk of coronary syndromes. A cooking demonstration, recipes and taste-testing are included. Program presented by Bill Bradley, registered dietitian, lecturer and writer.

\$45. Thursday, October 21, 7:00-9:00 pm. Totally organic food ingredients for this program have been generously donated by Debra's Natural Gourmet, Concord, Mass.

**FUNDAMENTALS OF ACUPRESSURE POINTS**

Learn how the Chinese meridian system works and then focus on the dynamic interaction between acupressure points. Presented by Loochie Brown, professor at New England School of Acupuncture and licensed acupuncturist.

**NEW! Acupressure massage for pregnancy and birth**

Learn how acupressure and acupuncture can enhance fertility, promote a healthy pregnancy for mom and baby and assist in a comfortable birth process. This class is open for both moms and support partners.

\$35. Tuesday, October 26, 7:00-9:00 pm.

**Acupressure points for hand, wrist, elbow and shoulder disorders**

Topics will include arthritis of the thumb and fingers, carpal tunnel syndrome, trigger finger and elbow tendonitis (tennis and golfer's elbow).

\$35. Tuesday, November 16, 7:00-9:00 pm.

**Acupressure points for foot, ankle and knee disorders**

Topics will range from plantar fasciitis (foot pain), sprained ankle and osteoarthritis of the knees to techniques for addressing pain problems associated with sciatic pain.

\$35. Thursday, November 18, 7:00-9:00 pm.

**NEW! Acupressure massage to release/manage back pain**

Learn about the typical causes of back pain, including the difference between muscular and structural problems and the dynamic interaction among acupressure points affecting the back.

\$35. Tuesday, December 2, 7:00-9:00 pm.

**REIKI Training Classes**

Discover this hands-on energy therapy that can be used to provide relaxation, manage pain and promote overall wellness. Presented by Libby Barnett, MSW, of the Reiki Healing Connection. Receive reiki practitioner certification. Approved for five contact hours for nursing for each full day of attendance.

**REIKI-Level I Training:** \$145. Saturday, October 23, 9:00 am-3:00 pm.

**REIKI-Level II Training:** \$160. Sunday, October 24, 9:00 am-3:00 pm.

**WHEN WILL I EVER FEEL GOOD ENOUGH: Part II, Relationships**

This workshop will explore how being raised by a narcissistic parent reinforces a deep sense of never being good enough, which can have lasting effects on relationships. Learn ways to overcome patterns, including enabling behaviors, having poor boundaries, losing one's voice and self-entitlement. Presented by Frances Bigda-Peyton, EdD, psychologist and certified psychoanalyst.

\$35. Monday, December 6, 7:00-9:00 pm.

*Emerson Hospital reserves the right to cancel any program due to insufficient enrollment or inclement weather. There is no tuition reduction if a student is unable to attend all classes.*

Sunita Hanjura, MD, internist and geriatrician, says a lot can be done to avoid falls from ever happening.



## EMERSON STAFF IS FOCUSED ON PREVENTING FALLS

Falls: not inevitable and not a normal part of aging

It is not uncommon, and it is always sad. When an injury caused by a fall forces an elderly individual to lose their independence and move to an assisted living facility or nursing home, family members are left to wonder: could the fall have been prevented?

That is the frustration with falls, which are the leading cause of injury to individuals over age 65. Often, it is only after the fall has occurred that the questions begin. Did Dad have osteoporosis? Did Mother's antidepressant play a role in her balance problem? Didn't we remove those scatter rugs?

### Addressing falls prevention in a range of settings

Emerson Hospital is focused on preventing falls in hospital rooms and in the homes of elders who live in the community. The hospital's Falls Prevention Committee works vigilantly to prevent falls among inpatients, Emerson Hospital Home Care assesses older individuals to determine their risk for falling at home, and the Better Balance Clinic evaluates and treats people with balance problems (see sidebar). Last spring, the hospital held a free Falls Prevention Conference at the Holiday Inn in Boxborough. More than 240 people attended the forum, which featured screenings and workshops on issues related to falls and their prevention.

Osteoporosis is part of the challenge. The porous, brittle bones caused by the condition make older men and women vulnerable; 87 percent of all fractures in this population are due to falls. "The statistics related to hip fractures are grim," says Sunita Hanjura, MD, an internist and geriatrician in Bedford who served as medical coordinator for the falls conference. "Some people can't re-learn to walk, which is what's required. Others get up, get moving and go home again."

There is a more global issue, she notes. "I believe the biggest problem is the sedentary lifestyle, which causes muscles to atrophy and people to become weaker and weaker. It can be a battle to maintain strength, especially when arthritis limits someone's ability to move around easily. But the fact remains: an exercise program or physical therapy will make a difference."

Exercise increases strength and preserves balance—the ability to keep one’s center of gravity over one’s base of support. Falls occur when the center of gravity, which is located just below the navel, moves past the point where one can recover by changing the base of support—the position of the feet.

Certain medications can interact and contribute to poor balance. “It is not uncommon for older patients to be on ten medications,” Dr. Hanjura explains. “Antipsychotics, antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication place them at greater risk for falling. So do poor vision, scatter rugs and wearing the wrong shoes.

“Regardless of what puts them at risk, my job is to support my elderly patients so that they are safe at home,” she says. “In some cases, that means bringing in a host of community services.”

### The goal: safety at home and in the hospital

Between 5 and 15 percent of elderly Americans live in a nursing facility, meaning that 85 to 95 percent are at home—often alone. Home is where falling happens, which is why Emerson Hospital Home Care staff are an important presence in the homes of community residents. Throughout the hospital, staff are quick to suggest that a patient receive an assessment by home care staff.

“Even if someone comes in for a blood test or a mammogram, if they seem to be unsteady on their feet, we can ask Emerson Hospital Home Care to screen that person at home to determine if they are at risk for falling,” explains Patti Shanteler, RN, MPH, director of nursing quality, who co-chairs the Falls Prevention Committee. “We have an active program in our Emergency Department [ED]. If an older individual comes to the ED because of a fall, we ask that home care staff do a safety evaluation.”

The Committee analyzes each fall that occurs at the hospital. “We look for contributing factors,” says Ms. Shanteler. “Do we need to make a system-wide change in how we provide care? Does the staff need additional education on the factors that contribute to falls? Our goal is to have zero falls at Emerson, so we’ve put several components in place.”

*“I believe the biggest problem is the sedentary lifestyle, which causes muscles to atrophy and people to become weaker and weaker....An exercise program or physical therapy will make a difference.” – SUNITA HANJURA, MD*

For example, patients who are at risk for falling have an orange sign at the entrance to their room that alerts staff. They wear orange “no-slip” socks. Their nurse anticipates and asks about their needs, such as a trip to the bathroom, rather than taking the chance the patient will get out of bed and fall. And they are not left in the bathroom, but are assisted back to their beds. At-risk patients who continue to get out of bed often have a “sitter” in the room—someone whose job is to keep the individual safely in bed.

Emerson’s track record of preventing falls is impressive, notes Ms. Shanteler. “We do particularly well at preventing falls that result in injury,” she says. “We keep careful statistics, so we know who tends to be the most vulnerable and when falls are most likely to occur. It is a man age 76 or older; they tend to fall in the late afternoon or evening.”

Emerson staff are focused on preventing falls, which includes raising awareness among family members. “Falls are not a normal part of aging,” says Dr. Hanjura. “There is a lot we can do together to avoid them from ever happening.”



Vivien Fiset, PT, clinical coordinator, works with clinic participants.

## BETTER BALANCE CLINIC combines exercise with learning the facts

They stretch, warm up, exercise and listen. For one hour each week, participants of Emerson’s Better Balance Clinic move strategically under the watchful eye of physical therapy staff who aim to build their confidence and make them more sure-footed. In the process, they also learn the facts about balance and how to maintain it.

“We explain about one’s center of gravity, base of support and why the exercises are important,” says Terrie Enis, PT, MS, director of rehabilitation services. Individuals need a physician’s referral. “Some people have been diagnosed with imbalance, while others have conditions known to produce difficult walking. That includes Parkinson’s disease and other neurological disorders, having had total hip or knee replacement surgery or being de-conditioned due to a long hospital stay.”

The six-week class begins with an in-depth balance assessment. Participants must have adequate cognitive skills—i.e., can follow instruction—must be able to stand for 30 seconds independently, with or without an assistive device, and should be interested in participating in a group.

“Patients have a great time,” says Vivien Fiset, PT, clinical coordinator, “and they appreciate the opportunity to learn strategies to reduce their chance of falling.” That includes using the WiiFit, a computer fitness game aimed at improving balance. “We make it fun and interactive.”

*The Better Balance Clinic currently is held at Emerson’s Center for Sports Rehabilitation and Specialty Services in Concord on Fridays from 12:00 to 1:00 pm. For more information, please call 978-287-8200.*

## ADVISOR

For more information on care at Emerson Hospital, call the toll-free Physician Referral Line: 1-877-9-EMERSON (1-877-936-3776) or visit the hospital's web site at [www.emersonhospital.org](http://www.emersonhospital.org).



Seema Gupta, MD  
INTERNAL MEDICINE

### **Why does my doctor tell me to exercise to strengthen my bones but says I don't need a bone-density test?**

You may be too young. Osteoporosis, the loss of bone density, is typically a problem of older women, which is why they are vulnerable for breaking their hips when they fall. Osteoporosis, which is much more common in women, develops when calcium is inadequately absorbed.

Our bones build up and then lose mass throughout our lives, with bone mass increasing most rapidly up to age 20. After that, the rate of loss exceeds the rate of increase. Young women should build up as much bone mass as possible and then slow its loss as they age by eating calcium-rich foods, taking calcium supplements, exercising and avoiding smoking and alcohol.

Unless someone has a problem that interferes with calcium absorption, bone-density tests generally become appropriate for women at age 65—younger if someone has risk factors—and for men at age 70. There are many effective medications for treating osteoporosis. What's important to remember is that you can minimize the likelihood of developing osteoporosis and identify it in time to treat it.

*To schedule a bone-density test at Emerson's Concord, Westford or Sudbury facilities, call 978-287-3003.*



Emily Pollakowski, MD  
PEDIATRICS

### **My son is playing football this fall. What should I know about the risk of concussion?**

The most important thing is to make sure that he's protected with a properly fitted and padded helmet. His coaches should emphasize safe play that avoids head-butting. You should make your child aware that a mild bump on the head—even when there is no loss of consciousness—can cause a concussion.

And you both should be aware of the signs of concussion. These include a headache, dizziness, trouble concentrating in school, vomiting, vision changes and sluggishness. A child with these symptoms should be evaluated by a physician.

Keep in mind that, when someone has suffered a concussion, the risk for re-injury is very high. Fortunately, the rules for returning to play are increasingly well-defined. While it may be hard for a competitive athlete to sit on the sidelines while recovering, no child should return to play until cleared by a physician.

*More information for coaches, athletes and parents can be found at [www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion).*



Malissa Wood, MD  
WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH

### **What role do stress and depression play in heart attacks?**

While hypertension and cholesterol have long been acknowledged as heart disease factors, emotional factors like stress, anxiety and depression have only recently been recognized for their role in cardiovascular disease.

Stress or depression can lead to risk factors such as overeating, poor sleep and over-indulgence in smoking and drinking alcohol. Anxiety over financial issues may lead people to skip taking essential medications. Moreover, stress is an inherent risk factor in itself. Hormones released during periods of stress are shown to raise blood pressure and increase the heart rate.

Many people don't realize that these issues have an impact on their cardiac health. Women, especially, tend to shoulder responsibility for their families' health but often ignore their own needs.

Just as there are cardiac rehabilitation programs for individuals who have had a heart attack, there are educational programs available at Emerson Hospital for people whose stress may be affecting their health. These include classes in yoga, tai chi and other forms of stress reduction.

*Learn about them by visiting [www.emersonhospital.org](http://www.emersonhospital.org).*

John and Victoria Rizzi's gift has named the Family Consultation Room.



## Recent gifts support Bethke Cancer Center initiative

The hospital's Bethke Cancer Center continues to receive enthusiastic philanthropic support, thanks to several generous donations from the community. The current fundraising initiative aims to raise \$4 million for the highly regarded center. In addition to the upgrade of patient care areas and creation of the new Naka Infusion Center, the initiative includes a new, state-of-the-art linear accelerator to be purchased by the Massachusetts General Hospital Department of Radiation Oncology. Emerson Hospital will fund the construction of new housing for the linear accelerator.

John and Victoria Rizzi of Carlisle recently made a \$50,000 gift that will name the center's Family Consultation Room. "When a loved one has cancer, support of the family is a critical piece of the overall care," says Mr. Rizzi. The couple has lost several relatives and close friends to cancer and are involved in various cancer fundraising efforts. "We've always been treated well at Emerson. We've come to appreciate that the cancer center is a special place."

Joseph and Margaret DiGeronimo are long-time, generous Emerson donors. Their \$100,000 gift to the Bethke Cancer Center was motivated by the outstanding care that they and family members have received. "I believe in taking care of hospitals," says Mr. DiGeronimo, a Leominster resident. "Emerson has kept me going. I'm 82 and feel like a million bucks." He has been cared for by Marvin Kendrick, MD, an Emerson cardiologist, since suffering a heart attack many years ago. Mr. and Mrs. DiGeronimo's son-in-law was treated at the Bethke Cancer Center and is doing well.

Ginny Bethke again demonstrated the generosity that helped establish the center in 1997. Mrs. Bethke, who with her late husband, Art, provided the initial funding for the Bethke Cancer Center, recently made another significant commitment to the center. She is impressed to see what an important community resource it has become.

"I run into people all the time who tell me about the wonderful care they've received there and how helpful it is to have a cancer center close to home," she says, "especially one with a connection to Mass General."

# NEWS

FROM EMERSON

### Anticoagulation Clinic has a new location and new name



Emerson's Anticoagulation Clinic recently moved to expanded space at the hospital's Center for Specialty Care, 54 Baker Avenue Extension in Concord. This outpatient service closely monitors individuals who must take anticoagulants (blood-thinning medication, often Coumadin) in

order to prevent blood clots. Thanks to a generous gift from Neil Rasmussen and Anna Winter Rasmussen, the clinic is now called The Betty Winter Anticoagulation Management Center in memory of Mrs. Rasmussen's mother, Mary Winter, and in recognition of the expanded scope of clinical activities. The new center has the latest equipment, enhanced patient privacy, a comfortable waiting room and free parking.

### New service for patients with swallowing difficulties



The hospital's speech pathology department is now using new technology, VitalStim, to treat individuals with dysphagia—swallowing difficulties that can result from a stroke, certain neurological diseases and head and neck cancer. Speech pathology staff are specially trained and certified

in the use of the VitalStim, which uses external electrical stimulation to coax the contraction of throat muscles. The speech pathology department is located in Emerson's Center for Sports Rehabilitation and Specialty Services, 57 Old Road to Nine Acre Corner, Concord. Please call 978-287-8200.

### Blood donations are appreciated

**Donate for Life**

EMERSON HOSPITAL

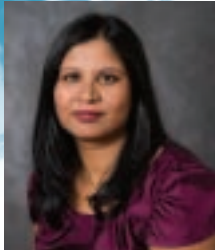
Emerson does a good job of collecting blood to meet the needs of our patients.

Close to 1,200 units are donated each year by 1,000 active and generous donors. This represents approximately 50 percent of the hospital's annual requirement. Please consider a donation at any time of the year. Walk-ins are welcome, but please call 978-287-3390 for information on donation hours or to schedule an appointment. Parking is free, and all donors receive a gift.

# ON CALL

EMERSON HOSPITAL IS PLEASED TO  
INTRODUCE THE FOLLOWING NEW PHYSICIANS.

## CHILD, ADOLESCENT AND ADULT PSYCHIATRY



**Madhavi Kamireddi, MD**  
New England Center for Mental Health  
119 Russell Street, Littleton, 978-679-1200  
Dr. Kamireddi earned her medical degree from Lady Hardinge Medical College in India. She completed her residency in general psychiatry and a fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire. She is board-certified in psychiatry and neurology with subspecialty certification in child and adolescent psychiatry. Her clinical interests include pediatric psychopharmacology.

## GENERAL SURGERY



**Atif Khan, MD, FACS**  
Walden Surgical Associates  
131 ORNAC, Suite 500, Concord, 978-287-3547  
Dr. Khan earned his medical degree from McGill University School of Medicine in Montreal, where he also completed his residency in general surgery. He is board-certified in surgery and was previously president of the medical staff at Alleghany Regional Hospital in Virginia. Dr. Khan is joining Brian Callahan, MD, in practice. His clinical interests include minimally invasive (laparoscopic) surgery of the abdomen, as well as diseases of the breast and gastrointestinal tract.

## INTERNAL MEDICINE



**Seema Gupta, MD**  
Bedford Health Associates  
55 North Road, Bedford, 781-538-6437  
Dr. Gupta earned her medical degree in India and completed her residency in internal medicine at Bridgeport Hospital in Connecticut. She is board-certified in internal medicine and will see patients at a new facility, Emerson Medical at Bedford. Her clinical interests include women's health and preventive health.



**Sid Pani, MD**  
Emerson Medical at Sudbury  
490 Boston Post Road, Sudbury, 978-443-8810  
Dr. Pani earned his medical degree in India and completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at Maimonides Medical Center and a fellowship in nephrology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, both in Brooklyn, New York. He is board-certified in internal medicine and board-eligible in nephrology. His clinical interests include kidney diseases, hypertension, diabetes and cholesterol problems.



**Ilia Shlimak, MD**  
Acton Medical Associates  
321 Main Street, Acton, 978-263-1131  
Dr. Shlimak received his medical degree from University of Massachusetts Medical School, where he is now a clinical associate professor of medicine. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge. He has practiced and taught primary care medicine for the last 15 years and is board-certified in internal medicine.

## PEDIATRICS



**Carolyn O'Donnell, MD**  
Acton Medical Associates  
321 Main Street, Acton, 978-263-0680  
Dr. O'Donnell earned her medical degree from University of Massachusetts Medical School, and she completed her residency and internship in pediatrics at University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center. Her clinical interests include preventive medicine and adolescent medicine.



**Emily Pollakowski, MD**  
Acton Medical Associates  
321 Main Street, Acton, 978-263-0680  
Dr. Pollakowski earned her medical degree from University of Massachusetts Medical School. She completed her residency in pediatrics at University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center. Her clinical interests include developmental behavioral pediatrics, adolescent medicine and international health.

## SLEEP MEDICINE



**Ramesh Donepudi, MD**  
Emerson Hospital Sleep Disorders Program  
133 ORNAC, Concord 978-287-3735  
Dr. Donepudi earned his medical degree in India and completed his residency in internal medicine, as well as a fellowship in pulmonary and critical care medicine, at Lahey Clinic in Burlington and a fellowship in sleep disorders at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. He also trained in the United Kingdom in internal medicine and pulmonary medicine. Dr. Donepudi is board-certified in internal medicine and sleep medicine and is a clinical instructor at Tufts University Medical School.

Article continued from page 5

## GIRLS' NIGHT OUT!

Join us for three free evenings of fun and information about health topics that matter to you. Bring a friend and enjoy appetizers, cocktails and pampering while you listen to our medical experts. Space is limited and preregistration is required. Call 1-877-936-3776 to reserve your spot. The last Girls' Night Out series sold out. Register early!

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Nashawtuc Country Club, 1861 Sudbury Road  
Concord, Mass.



Wednesday, October 6

### High heels and heart disease

Anjum Butte, MD, cardiologist, Concord Cardiology

Stephanie Moore, MD, cardiologist and heart failure specialist,  
Massachusetts General Hospital

Ever wonder how a pacemaker works, what a fast heartbeat really is and what is a cardiac stent? Come learn about testing, treatments and the outcomes of common cardiac conditions in women. Demystify the language of medicine and understand how heart conditions and their treatments affect you and your family.

Wednesday, October 20

### Breast cancer: this Girls' Night Out could save your life

Susan Sajer, MD, hematologist-oncologist  
Commonwealth Hematology-Oncology

Robin Schoenthaler, MD, radiation oncologist  
Massachusetts General Hospital  
Department of Radiation Oncology at Emerson

Am I at risk for developing breast cancer? What can I do to take charge of my breast health? What's new in detection and treatment? You've got questions...we've got answers. Let's talk about the things you need to know in a sensitive and supportive environment with the experts from the Bethke Cancer Center.

Wednesday, November 3

### Weighty matters

Joan Eagan, MD, pediatrician, Pediatrics West

Marguerite Roach, MD, internal medicine, Lincoln Physicians

Obesity may be a national health crisis, but what about our own families? Are we doing all that we can to help maintain a healthy weight for ourselves, our partners, our spouses and our children? Before the rush and pressure of the holiday season, take time to listen to some important advice on getting ourselves and our loved ones into better shape.



“When it comes to surgery, we describe things in a sensory way—that is, what the child will see and be conscious of, like the way their heartbeat looks on a computer screen,” says Ms. Harrison. “We try to translate the medical environment into a manageable, non-scary place. In referring to anesthesia, we never say ‘you’ll be put to sleep.’ Rather, we refer to ‘medicine sleep,’ which is different from ‘nighttime sleep.’ Prior to the child being anesthetized, we assure them that we’ll see them in the wake-up room.”

Once a child is settled upstairs, PIT staff focus on keeping them entertained and happy with an inventory that includes a DVD library, computer games, an arts and crafts closet and a playroom. As Hallie discovered during her stay, she didn’t need to bring Biscuit and Pinky to the hospital.

“Mallory was really nice to me,” says Hallie. “After my surgery, she brought me computer games and other things to play with. I had fun watching movies, going to the playroom and staying up as late as I wanted. I didn’t want to go home.” Her parents took turns staying overnight with her.

“We think the world of Mallory,” adds Mrs. Nelson. “The Pediatric Intervention Team makes a big difference. But everyone at Emerson treated Hallie like a queen.”

“Appendectomy is the most commonly performed pediatric surgery, but it is still an emergency,” Dr. Cahill notes. “When things go smoothly, as was true in Hallie’s case, it is because everyone, including the community pediatrician’s office, the ED, Pediatric Intervention Team and nurses on the pediatric unit, provided the patient with high-quality care.”

Hallie headed home, healed nicely and, other than missing some soccer games and avoiding horseback-riding, she enjoyed an active, busy summer. Her advice to other kids: “If your belly hurts on the right side, and it’s hard to walk, tell your parents, because it might be your appendix.”

### Looking for a pediatrician?

#### Acton Medical Associates, with offices in:

Acton	978-263-0680
Harvard	978-772-1213
Littleton	978-486-9255

#### Concord Hillside Medical Associates, with offices in:

Concord	978-287-9400
Harvard	978-772-6161

#### Aisling Gaughan, MD

Concord	978-369-9401
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#### Nana Girgis McMahon, MD

Concord	978-369-5050
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#### Millbrook Pediatrics

Sudbury	978-443-0707
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#### Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine

Bedford	781-275-2080
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#### Pediatrics West, with offices in:

Groton	978-448-8282
Westford	978-577-0437

Visit [www.emersonhospital.org](http://www.emersonhospital.org) or call our toll-free Physician Referral Service, 24/7 at 1-877-9-Emerson (1-877-936-3776).

Emerson Hospital is an acute care medical center located in Concord with health centers in Bedford, Groton, Sudbury and Westford. It is well known for its medical and surgical specialists, outstanding nursing care and patient-centered services, including the Birthing Center, the Bethke Cancer Center, the Polo Emergency Center, the Clough Surgical Center and the Center for Specialty Care.

[www.emersonhospital.org](http://www.emersonhospital.org)

*HealthWorks*, published by Emerson Hospital, is mailed to residents in the hospital's service area and is distributed to the employees and physicians' offices affiliated with Emerson Hospital.

If you would prefer not to receive such mailings in the future, please let us know by calling 978-287-3408 or send an email to [pr@emersonhosp.org](mailto:pr@emersonhosp.org).

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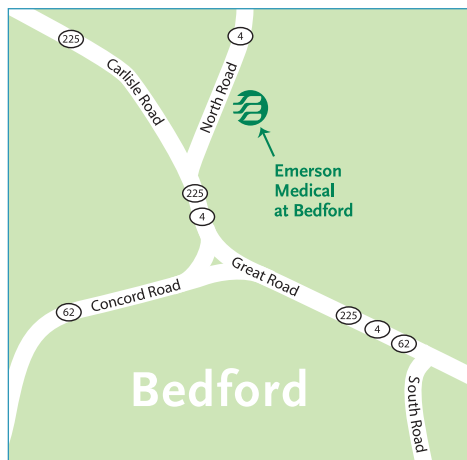
The information included here is intended to educate readers about health issues, but it is not a substitute for consultation with a personal physician.

*The mission of Emerson Hospital is to deliver high-quality care to our community that is safe, compassionate, accessible, appropriate, efficient and coordinated.*



## Emerson Medical at Bedford to open

New practice will be located just outside Bedford center



The brand-new sign at the familiar building on North Road reads "Emerson Medical at Bedford." It will be home for Bedford Health Associates, the new adult internal medicine practice of Seema Gupta, MD, on the first floor. Dr. Gupta is a board-certified internist whose clinical interests include women's health and preventive health.

Emerson Medical at Bedford is slated to expand with the future addition of a lab and x-ray suite. Lori Andersen, MD, and Toby Nathan, MD, share an Emerson-affiliated pediatric practice—Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine—in the same building.

New and expanded medical services are always welcome in Bedford, says Michael Rosenberg, chair of the Bedford selectmen and an Emerson corporator. "We welcome enhanced primary care in Bedford and feel fortunate that this town's long relationship with our community hospital continues to flourish."

*Emerson Medical at Bedford will be located at 41-55 North Road, just outside Bedford Center. To reach Dr. Gupta's practice, please call 781-538-6437.*

**Emerson Medical**  
at Bedford

Premium Care. Personal Touch.

Front cover: Hallie Nelson of Concord enjoys summertime at her family's farm, Cucurbit Farm, in Acton.