

Lab marks 13 years of excellence

Highly skilled staff delivers accurate results, patient-friendly service

The day that the WWMG Clinical Laboratory opened in 2004 was Vernetta Carlson's 25th wedding anniversary. After calling her several times, her husband opted for taking their children to dinner to celebrate. She stayed at work past midnight.

The lab has since grown, from its original three staff members to more than twenty, in four draw locations: Hoyt and Silver Lake in Everett, plus Bothell and Arlington. The dedication of its staff, however, has not changed.

"We have a great team of skilled, patient-friendly phlebotomists, and very low staff turnover," says Dalia Tomas-Kreft, Laboratory Manager. "Our first medical technologist still works an evening shift."



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Vernetta Carlson is now Client Service Coordinator/Lead Phlebotomist. The lab has gold-standard accreditation from the College of American Pathologists, as a high-complexity lab. Technical staff members are all either medical technologists or medical laboratory technicians.

"We offer great turnaround time," says Carlson. Tomas-Kreft adds that "we do the bulk of our testing in-house, at the Hoyt location, where the real magic happens."

The largest of the "solid work-horse instruments" is a chemistry analyzer, for renal, lipid and other chemistry panels. The smallest is a Triage meter that runs BNP tests, primarily for cardiology.

Monday-Friday hours vary by location.

Hoyt opens on Saturdays (8 am-noon.) Visit wwmedgroup.com.

Support for daily management of diabetes

Individual appointments and group classes in Bothell, Marysville, and Snohomish

Kathy Watson remembers the times when she would wake up surrounded by firefighters. Her husband, David, would have had to call them in the middle of the night. She would end up in the emergency room. That has not happened in a long while.

Kathy has lived with type 1 diabetes for 55 years. David has had type 2 diabetes for 30 years. They are both grateful for the improvements in their health since they joined the WWMG Diabetes and Nutrition Education program. They have been able to lose a lot of weight, and cut back considerably on their insulin use. They continue to make steady progress.



Call 425-791-3087 for information on referrals and programs

It has not been easy. "You have to decide that you're going to make it work. What is it going to take?" comments David Watson. He and Kathy keep a detailed food diary. They have also organized a recipe book with meal alternatives for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. "We spent hours in the library and online," Kathy recalls.

"It's difficult to change your lifestyle. For us, it helped that we were working on it together," David says. "The positive encouragement and support from Jennifer Okemah and her staff have really made a difference," concludes Kathy.

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Our Specialties

Arthritis Center, Audiology & Hearing Aids, Cardiology, Clinical Laboratory, Clinical Research, Critical Care, Diabetes & Nutrition Education Center, Ear, Nose & Throat/Allergy/Audiology, Endocrinology & Metabolism, Endoscopy, Facial Plastic & Aesthetic Services/Lumina, Family Practice, Gastroenterology, Gateway Surgery Center, Imaging Center, Nephrology, Neurology, Orthopedic Sports, Spine & Hand Center, Pathology, Podiatry, Psychology, Pulmonary/ Sleep Medicine, Rheumatology, Urology, Walk-In.

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We're experts in our field with over 90 providers in 17 specialties at 23 locations. All of our providers are board-certified or board-eligible.

HEALTHY YOU!

A Family of Providers Caring for a Family of Patients

Help for sun-damaged skin

Fall is a good time to begin treatment

Mirror, mirror, on the wall... where did this sun damage come from? Luckily, WWMG Facial Plastic & Aesthetic Services/Lumina can help. Autumn specials include photorejuvenation laser treatments, also known as IPL (Intense Pulsed Light.) These nonsurgical treatments are used for lightening and reducing sun damage and sunspots.

series of two to six treatments, usually one every three weeks, depending on skin damage or redness. "Laser skin revitalization causes little discomfort and minimal downtime. Fall is the best time of year to begin, because treated areas can become photosensitive." IPL also causes little discomfort and minimal downtime. Fall is the best time of year to begin, because treated areas can become photosensitive.

IPL treatments can be applied to the face, neck, chest and hands. Cari Damianidis, master aesthetician and laser specialist, recommends a

IPL can also be used to treat rosacea, a general inflammation of the cheeks and face, and spider veins. These are individual vessels that become dilated or appear "broken."

For more information on IPL and other treatments, visit luminaskin.us or call 425-259-9999

Imaging Center now offering fluoroscopy

An x-ray "movie" of a joint to aid in diagnosis

As it celebrates its first anniversary this fall, the WWMG Imaging Center has added fluoroscopy to its other services. This real-time x-ray is used to perform arthrography, which helps evaluate and diagnose conditions of the joints.



and ankle. Fluoroscopy is like an x-ray "movie." A continuous beam is passed through the body part being examined. The beam is transmitted to a monitor, where the body part and its motion can be seen in detail.

Arthrography can also be done using computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). All three methods of arthrography are effective at detecting disease within the ligaments, tendons and cartilage of the shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee

WWMG Imaging Center equipment for MRI, CT, x-ray and fluoroscopy is state-of-the-art. All medical imaging studies are performed by highly skilled, certified technologists. On-site radiologists provide precise and timely interpretations.

The Imaging Center is in Everett, 3822 Colby, 425-263-8980

Thumbs-up for central billing

Quicker patient service and easier online payment option

Since it launched in March, WWMG's central billing system has been getting rave reviews. Patients like how statements now show all charges for that billing cycle, from any WWMG department or service. All billing questions and phone payments are handled in one office. That means quicker service. Patients no longer have to make separate calls to different departments.



Paying online is also easier. The "Pay My Bill" link on the home page of the WWMG website connects directly to a secure site. Sending a check through the mail is still an option for patients who prefer that.

As an independent medical group, WWMG has full control over its billing systems and all patient services. "Our goal in this case was to make all payment options easier and quicker for our patients. We are pleased that the new system is doing that well," says Kim Holstein, Director of Patient Financial Services.

Central Billing Office: 425-740-5398
Send your payments to:
PO Box 28170
Portland, Oregon 97228
<http://www.wwmedgroup.com/bill-pay/>

A proud history of caring for the sickest patients

Critical Care is largest WWMG hospital program

Within a hospital, an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) can feel like a world apart. To the providers of Western Washington Medical Group, however, the ICU at Providence Regional Medical Center Everett is familiar ground. That is because the eight Critical Care specialists who provide 24-hour coverage in that ICU are all WWMG physicians.

In fact, some of those same specialists helped to design the 48-bed unit, which opened in 2011 with the rest of the Cymbaluk Medical Tower. The WWMG Critical Care hospital program itself is much older. It was more than 10 years ago that WWMG Pulmonary specialists began to work with Providence administrators in Everett to set up an Intensivist service, as Critical Care programs are also known.

Since then, the Critical Care program has continued to grow alongside the rest of WWMG. "Having a strong Critical Care program allows us to ensure continuity of care for our patients if they suffer severe illness," notes Dr. Vipul Shah, a WWMG Critical Care specialist.

"We have a very good relationship

with our other specialists. It is easy for us to communicate with each other, and to access medical records quickly, because we are all colleagues. We know each other well, and we work well with each other."

WWMG Critical Care specialists have different areas of expertise that complement each other: pulmonology, anesthesiology and internal medicine.



A growing focus of patient care today is improving the transition from inpatient hospital care to outpatient care. The goal is to coordinate care carefully, in order

to maximize chances for successful outcomes. This is especially important for ICU patients, whose care is highly complex. "When our patients leave the hospital, we make sure that their providers receive complete information about their stay in the ICU, and the care they received," says Dr. Shah.

As Everett and Snohomish County continue to grow, WWMG Critical Care remains committed to the highest quality care for the sickest members of our community.

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At the bottom of the page, you can add your name to our mailing list. We send quarterly e-newsletters to let patients know that our seasonal newsletter is online. WWW.WWMEDGROUP.COM

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy available in Arlington

Treatments aim to help healing of chronic wounds

Where would you think your doctor was if you were told that he or she was supervising a dive? At the beach? Not so for WWMG doctors James Fletcher, Karen Myren and David Janeway, of Whitehorse Family Medicine. They would be at the Cascade Valley Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine Center, in the same building as their office, at 875 Wesley Street in Arlington.

All three doctors have received special training and are certified to supervise hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Treatments are known as dives because oxygen is delivered in a pressurized chamber.

The goal is to help improve healing of chronic ulcers or infections, by sup-

plying extra oxygen for the blood to carry to injured areas.

When wounds such as diabetic ulcers fail to respond to other treatments, the patient may receive a prescription for hyperbaric oxygen therapy.



The patient rests on a stretcher inside a clear chamber, and can watch television or a movie. Treatment lasts for about two hours. A trained staff member is always in the

room during that time. Most patients receive one treatment a day, Monday through Friday, for six to eight weeks. For this reason, "it is a service to the community to offer access to this facility close to home," concludes Dr. Fletcher.

Structural Heart program launches

Long-term benefits with shorter recoveries

Until recently, patients with structural heart disease needed surgery for certain conditions. Now, WWMG Cardiology offers other choices. Dr. Ravilla Mahidhar, a Structural Heart specialist, treats problems of heart valve and inner wall of heart with non-surgical procedures.

Aortic stenosis, for example, is a narrowing of the aortic valve. It is the most common valve problem for patients over 70. This valve can now be replaced using a keyhole procedure through the groin. "Patients can go home the next 1-2 days."

Patients who have atrial fibrillation, an irregular heart rhythm, can be at risk for stroke. "The only option they

had until three or four years ago was to take blood thinners, which can cause bleeding problems. Now we can do a one-time procedure called Left Atrial Appendage Occlusion with WATCHMAN. Following that, after six weeks, patients do not have to take any more blood thinners."

A third procedure that Dr. Mahidhar offers is PFO (Patent Foramen Ovale) Closure. "PFO is present in about 25% of the adult population. It is usually benign, but can rarely be associated with stroke. If a neurologist determines that risk for a patient, we are able to close the PFO, which is a communication in the upper chambers of the heart."

Dr. Mahidhar is at
Silver Lake 425-225-2700

Don't delete that survey!

Patient feedback important for continued quality of care

Most of us get our share of email surveys, and maybe do not even open them. However, some are actually valuable. The new WWMG patient survey is one example. Why? Because your answers will matter, explains Debra Ingersol, who is a member of both the WWMG Quality and Compliance departments.

"Our goal is to gather honest feedback. How do our patients feel about the care and services they



received? Did their interaction with our medical professionals meet their expectations?

When we identify something we are doing well, we can provide positive feedback to staff and also continue to work on improvements. We can better address problems if we can target specific concerns."

The email survey takes a couple of minutes to complete. It has 10 very short questions that ask for a rating of 1 to 5. If patients want to add comments, they can, but it is not required.

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