

More & More

Community Memorial Healthcare Looks to the Future



A Message from Mick Zdeblick President & CEO

Dear friends, colleagues, and fellow community members,

It's been an eventful year for Community Memorial Healthcare, and for Ventura. Our organization was challenged by the Change Healthcare cyberattack last spring and supply chain disruptions due to floods on the East Coast. More recently, the Mountain Fire directly affected people across our community. Despite these challenges we've had to overcome, there's still much to celebrate and a lot to look forward to in 2025.

Our system is growing rapidly as our financial situation stabilizes. Thanks to the efforts of the Community Memorial Foundation, the Ojai Valley Hospital Foundation, and generous community members, we're able to invest in our services and infrastructure. We've added new clinics in Ojai and Ventura. We have acquired a plot of land adjacent to our Ojai hospital and are working on plans for a future expansion and seismic retrofit. We're teaming up with local physicians in private practice to recruit bright young doctors to our community and working with local colleges to expand nurse career development programs. We're also adding to our capabilities in cancer, neurology, and behavioral health.

In keeping with our strategic plan, Community Memorial Healthcare is forming more collaborative partnerships. We have teamed up with Providence to roll out Epic, our new Electronic Health Record that will help streamline information and access for patients, doctors, and other clinical providers (learn more at right). We've also forged a collaboration with Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC) to handle their cardiology cases while they take over our inpatient pediatrics, capitalizing on our organizations' respective strengths.

Looking ahead, you can count on us to keep growing right alongside you — anticipating your needs and bringing the latest advances in medical science to our beloved community. You deserve more, and with Community Memorial Healthcare, that's just what you can expect.

Wishing you and yours health and happiness in the coming year.

In good health,

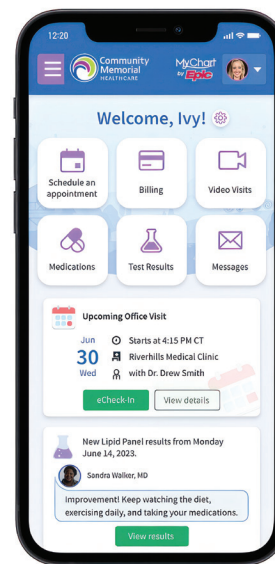


Mick Zdeblick
President & CEO
Community Memorial Healthcare



COMING SOON!

MyChart: An Easy, Secure Way to Manage Your Healthcare Needs



IN MARCH, WE'LL BE TRANSITIONING to a new online patient portal called MyChart that will help you access all of your healthcare records in one secure place. We've been working on this transition for months and are excited to soon share the benefits with you:

- Request and see upcoming appointments
- View your health summary
- Receive reminders about screenings and tests
- Get test results
- Send messages to your doctor's office
- Renew prescriptions
- Pay medical bills
- Manage healthcare for your loved ones as a caregiver

Welcome to Our New Physicians

We are delighted to welcome these caregivers to our **COMMUNITY MEMORIAL HEALTH CENTERS**

Ralph A. Akl, DO ~ Family Medicine/Hospitalist
Christopher R. Fernandez, DO ~ Family Medicine/
Addiction Medicine
Emma A. Haftevani Sogomonian, MD ~ Family Medicine
Jonathan E. Shirman, DO ~ Family Medicine/
Addiction Medicine
Sandeep Singh, DO ~ Neurology
Robert C. Streeter, IV, MD ~ Family Medicine



Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience Award

For the second year in a row, we earned the Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience Award, a designation **shared by only 15% of U.S. hospitals.**

Next Page



Community Memorial
HEALTHCARE

Life-Saving & Life-Changing

Proud to Be Ventura County's First Choice for Cardiovascular Care

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE COVERS THE FULL SPECTRUM of heart and vascular care, from prevention to rehabilitation. In fact, we provide MORE cardiovascular care to the people of Ventura County than any other area medical facility. Offering comprehensive heart and vascular care requires keeping up with the newest treatments and technologies. As early adopters of the latest procedures, our experts are always on the lookout for medical advances that could benefit our patients.

- **Emergency Heart Attack and Stroke Care** is available 24/7 at our Emergency Departments in both our Ventura and Ojai hospitals.
- **Electrophysiology (EP)** procedures are performed in our state-of-the-art Cath Lab, equipped with top-line imaging technology.

Learn more about our cardiovascular expertise and all of our programs at mycmh.org

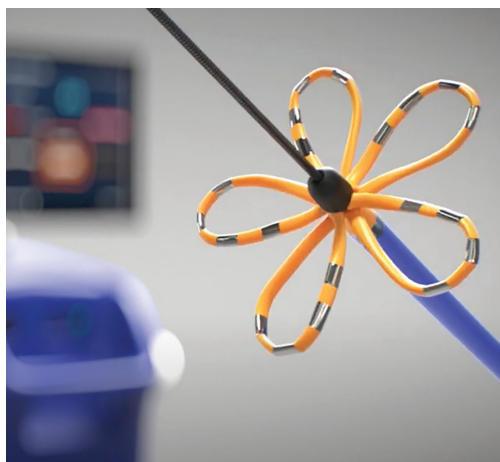
Amazing Advancement in AFib Treatment: Pulsed Field Ablation

WHEN A PERSON IS EXPERIENCING AFIB, or Atrial Fibrillation, the short-term goal is to get their heart back into its normal rhythm. In some cases, when symptoms are less severe, prescription drugs can be used to slow the heart rate. If the symptoms cannot be controlled through medication, the next option is cardioversion, which addresses the heart's rhythm pattern. This is done by delivering a controlled electric shock to the heart, a procedure performed in the hospital with continuous monitoring. Certain medications can also be used to induce cardioversion. However, because AFib can eventually lead to stroke or heart failure, the long-term goal is to prevent future episodes.

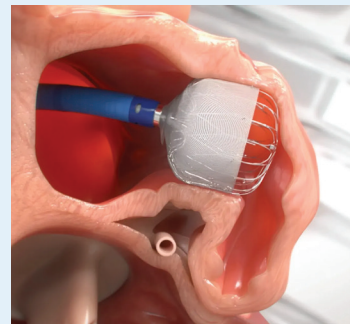
In appropriate patients, AFib can be treated minimally invasively by catheter ablation. A variety of tests are used to measure the heart's electrical signals and pinpoint the origin of the abnormal heartbeat. Performed in the Cath Lab, this minimally invasive procedure involves introducing a catheter via a small incision, usually in the groin, and threading it up to abnormal tissue in the heart. The tiny problem area is then destroyed, either through freezing (cryoablation) or cauterization (radiofrequency ablation).

Unfortunately, the extreme temperatures used in traditional ablation techniques can damage tissue surrounding the targeted area. Now, there is a safer, quicker ablation method that helps prevent surrounding tissue damage: Pulsed Field Ablation (PFA). Following FDA approval of this new technology in 2023, Community Memorial became one of the first hospitals in Ventura County to offer the procedure.

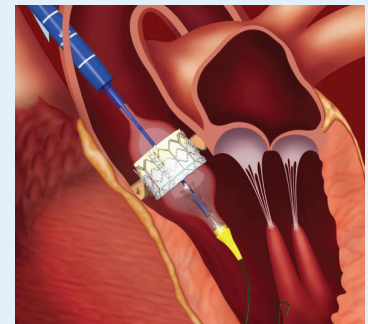
"In recent trials, Pulsed Field Ablation (PFA) has been shown to be equally as effective as traditional thermal ablation, but the procedure is quicker and has been shown to be safer for many patients," says Dr. Jonathan Dukes, Medical



Cardiac Procedure Milestones



600
WATCHMAN™



500
TAVR

Many cardiovascular conditions can be treated minimally invasively and our structural heart team excels in the latest advancements.

- Our **Structural Heart Program** brings together experts in interventional cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, electrophysiology, and advanced cardiac imaging to collaborate on advanced minimally invasive procedures to treat structural abnormalities of the heart and perform catheter-based procedures like TAVR, LEED, or left atrial appendage closure with the WATCHMAN™ device.
- We also offer **Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery, Diagnostics and Imaging** using the latest technologies, and **Cardiovascular Rehabilitation**.

“...the procedure is quicker and has been shown to be safer for many patients.”

Director of Electrophysiology at Community Memorial. Instead of freezing or burning tissue, PFA uses pulsed field technology. The catheter used for ablation has multiple electrodes that deliver high-energy, tissue-selective electrical pulses to ablate the precise spot causing the arrhythmia, sparing surrounding tissues. The dysfunctional cells are destroyed through a process called electroporation, which kills cells by creating tiny pores in their membranes. Research increasingly points to greater precision, fewer complications, and a faster procedure time as key benefits of PFA.

In some patients, AFib may recur even after ablation, so many choose to remain on blood thinners preventively. For those who don't tolerate blood thinners well or have medical conditions that preclude their use, Community Memorial Healthcare offers left atrial appendage closure with the WATCHMAN FLX™ implant. This device closes off the heart's left atrial appendage, where dangerous clots can form. The minimally invasive procedure is performed in our Cath Lab by an interventional cardiologist or electrophysiologist, and many patients go home the same day.

For expert cardiovascular care using the latest treatments and technologies, Ventura can count on Community Memorial Healthcare. In the words of our President and CEO Mick Zdeblick, "Our heart specialists are some of the best and the brightest in the region... We are proud to bring advancements in heart care to Community Memorial as part of our commitment to delivering more to our patients."

Robotic Surgery & Remarkable Surgeons



2025 MARKS A VERY SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY FOR COMMUNITY MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE. We'll be celebrating 20 years of robotic-assisted surgery at our Ventura hospital. In 2005, Community Memorial became the first hospital between Los Angeles and San Francisco to acquire the da Vinci™ surgical system, and we've never looked back. In fact, we can't stop looking ahead to the latest technological enhancements and surgical techniques, with our brilliant surgeons leading the way.

The original physician champion of our Robotics Program was Marc Beagler, MD, who also served for many years as Community Memorial's Medical Director of Robotic Surgery. Dr. Beagler, along with Cedric Emery, MD, and General Surgeons Constanze Rayhrer, MD, and Gus Iwasiuk, MD, were the original pioneers of Robotic Surgery at Community Memorial Hospital – Ventura. Dr. Beagler recalls widespread initial support for acquiring the da Vinci™ robot. However, there were detractors. One particular naysayer predicted that "The robot will sit in the back of the operating room and serve as a coat hanger." As Dr. Beagler puts

it, "I knew he was wrong and spent many years proving him wrong!" At the time (2004), only large academic institutions had robots, but Dr. Beagler and his colleagues believed robotic surgery could revolutionize the treatment of prostate cancer as well as minimally invasive surgery. Today, more than 90% of radical prostatectomies in the U.S. are performed robotically. What's more, the robotics revolution has impacted the entire field of surgery, enhancing safety and accuracy for gastrointestinal, urological, gynecological, prostate, spine, knee, lung, and cardiovascular procedures.

Thanks to refinements in robotic platforms and GPS technology, surgeons can now perform complex procedures, many of them minimally invasively, with greater control and precision than ever before. Robotic surgery has been hugely beneficial for both surgeons and, most importantly, patients. Patients experience less blood loss and post-operative pain and their risk of infection is reduced. Hospital stays are shorter and people can recover and return to their normal activities sooner. Scarring at the small incision sites is minimal once healing is complete.

Thanks to the collaboration between our surgeons and the hospital administration, our Robotics Program has gotten more robust and more diverse. Our experts currently work with three different robotic surgical platforms:

- The Intuitive da Vinci™ system, used for a variety of general and gynecological procedures
- The ROSA® Robotic Total Knee & Hip Replacement System, created for total and partial knee and hip replacement surgeries
- The Globus ExcelsiusGPS™, specifically designed to operate on the spine

As amazing as these technologies are, they are only sophisticated tools without a seasoned surgeon at the helm. There's no substitute for experience — our doctors have spent countless hours mastering a wide range of robotic procedures. As of this writing, we have more than 25 surgeons with robotic training and expertise, and perform more than 1,400 robotic procedures a year.

First in North America!

Breakthrough Bariatric Procedure at Community Memorial Hospital

INNOVATION IS NOTHING NEW for Community Memorial Healthcare. As early adopters of robotic surgery and life-saving interventional cardiology procedures, staying on the leading edge of medicine is a big part of our commitment to this community. So, when internationally renowned surgeon Helmuth Billy, MD, approached us about performing a groundbreaking bariatric procedure, we were immediately intrigued. Not only would Community Memorial be one of the first 10 hospitals in the country to perform this surgery, but we could actually be first in the nation. Dr. Billy had already identified two patients who would benefit from the surgery.

Bariatric or weight-loss surgery can be life-changing. In addition to substantial weight loss, these operations help treat conditions related to obesity and metabolic syndrome, such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, and even sleep apnea. Though highly effective, bariatric procedures have their drawbacks.

Some bariatric procedures promote weight loss by bypassing a section of intestine to reduce how much food the body can absorb. The remaining upper and lower sections of intestine are attached together via a surgical connection called an anastomosis. This delicate procedure can result in bleeding or leakage. For the past four years, Dr. Billy has been educating surgeons about a simpler, safer, less invasive way to create an anastomosis: magnetic compression.

Recently approved by the FDA, the MagDI™ System from GT Metabolic™ Solutions, Inc. is a linear magnetic technology that has been widely used in Europe for several years. The MagDI™ System enables anastomosis via the body's natural healing process, without any interior incisions, staples, or sutures.



Thierry Thaire, CEO and co-founder, GT Metabolic; Helmuth Billy, MD, and Michel Gagner, CMO and co-founder, GT Metabolic

“This procedure is a gamechanger like laparoscopy was.”

— Dr. Billy

When a patient comes in for their procedure, they are given a small magnet to swallow. An hour and a half later, the magnet should have made its way down to the middle of the intestine. The patient is x-rayed to pinpoint its precise location and taken to the OR.

Two surgeons collaborate during the procedure. Using an endoscope, the assistant surgeon positions a second magnet at the base of the stomach, where the intestine begins. Then, the lead surgeon manipulates the first magnet through three small laparoscopic incisions until the two magnets come together, creating the anastomosis. The patient can go home the same day. They are able to eat normally at night and even go to work the next morning. Rehospitalizations or complications are exceedingly rare. In just 30 days, the new connection is fully healed and the patient starts losing weight. The magnets leave the body naturally and painlessly through a bowel movement.

On November 15, 2024, Dr. Billy and his surgical team performed the first magnetic compression anastomosis procedure in the United States at Community Memorial Hospital in Ventura. Dr. Billy has since performed a second procedure at our hospital, with several more on the schedule.

Magnetic compression anastomosis is an effective surgical weight loss tool — patients lose between 65% and 80% of their excess weight. However, Dr. Billy believes that the group that stands to benefit the most is people with type 2 diabetes for whom the procedure is nothing short of life-altering. Magnetic Compression Anastomosis is already part of the standard treatment for diabetes in Europe. Thanks to early adopters like Dr. Billy and our leadership team at Community Memorial Healthcare, magnetic compression anastomosis brings new hope to the 3.2 million Californians currently living with type 2 diabetes.



What a Difference Our Foundations Make!

In many important ways, Community Memorial Foundation, Ojai Valley Hospital Foundation, and our generous community are bolstering our commitment to keep doing MORE for the people we serve. For our Ventura hospital, this means new, much needed equipment and technologies, from a Zeiss Kinevo 900[®] microscope for neurosurgery to the latest orthopedic surgical equipment. In Ojai, Foundation efforts have resulted in a critical land acquisition next to the hospital and a healing sculpture garden at our Continuing Care Center.

50th Benefactors' Ball

Red carpet, black tie, golden anniversary. The glitz and glam-our were on display at Community Memorial Foundation's 50th Benefactors' Ball, *A Red Carpet Affair*. Held at the Commemorative Air Force Museum on October 19, the event was as elegant as its title implies. Much of the credit goes to our 75 generous sponsors, including presenting sponsor, Hammer-Hewson Associates. This was the best-attended and highest-grossing annual ball to date, with 465 seated guests. The event honored original members of the Community Memorial Hospital fundraising committee, Dr. Mel Cheatham and philanthropist Tony Fowkes. Also recognized were Retired Physician of the Year Dr. Henry Oster, Active



The Ojai Sculpture Garden

Through Operation Picasso, Ojai Valley Hospital Foundation received a donation of 8 fine art sculptures for the garden at the Continuing Care Center on the campus of Community Memorial Hospital – Ojai. Gifted by Foundation supporter and art lover Libbie Agran, the collection includes works in steel, onyx, bronze, and ceramic, all by 20th and 21st century artists. In collaboration with Barbara Hirsch, Ojai Valley Hospital Foundation arranged for and funded the transport and installation of the collection.



(top) **Vernal**, by Troy Pillow, 2014, *Kinetic metal sculpture with colored patinas* (bottom, L–R); **I Am Presence**, by Brian Berman, 2015, *Onyx stone on steel base*; **Love Lost II**, by Ivan Mclean, 2013, *Steel*; **Sphere**, by Ivan Mclean, 2012, *Steel*

We're Doing More for Mental & Behavioral Health

WE'RE WORKING HARD TO SHED LIGHT ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES and make treatment accessible to all. Last year's opening of Community Memorial Integrated Behavioral Health — one of our newest Health Centers — was just the beginning. The Center offers psychiatry as well as wraparound services with our psychologist, social workers, and caregiver navigator, all under one roof. We also have psychiatry at our Fillmore and Santa Paula Health Centers, and we offer psychiatric internships to promising young physicians through our Graduate Medical Education Program. In addition, we have MSWs (Master's Level Social Workers) on staff at our Health Center on 5th Street in Oxnard, and pediatric psychiatry at our Health Center on Ashwood Drive in Ventura.

Identifying people who need help is an essential first step. Our primary care physicians (PCPs) ask screening questions around depression and anxiety. Where appropriate, they refer patients to a psychiatrist to confirm their diagnosis and provide medication management. In the case of depression, PCPs often start patients on medication and monitor their progress. If the individual does not improve after trying different medications, the PCP will make a referral to a psychologist or social worker. Sometimes, a patient who is hospitalized with a physical issue is also experiencing depression, paranoia, delusions, or suicidal ideation. We provide inpatient psychiatric care and ensure follow-up appointments with doctors, psychologists, and social workers are scheduled as needed.

Support for Caregivers & Families

When we launched our Caregiver Navigator Program, we assumed most of our clients would be caring for an elderly spouse or relative. As it turns out, many of the families we help are caring for a mentally ill adult. Our caregiver navigator offers support services and runs weekly groups for family members to help them manage complex, ongoing issues. Our navigator also does a lot of individual counseling and therapy and maintains an extensive referral network.



Substance Use Navigators

Substance use is on the rise nationwide, and our community is not immune. Through our partnership with Conejo Health, we are able to provide Substance Use Navigators (SUNs) at our hospitals in Ojai and Ventura. On call 24/7, they meet with and counsel patients in our Emergency Departments.

The emerging specialty of Addiction Medicine focuses on the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and management of substance use disorders (SUDs) such as drug or alcohol abuse, and behavioral addictions like gambling, eating disorders, or internet addiction. Community Memorial Healthcare has two board-certified addiction specialists, Dr. Christopher Fernandez and Dr. Jonathan Shirman.

Working With the Justice System

A significant portion of the incarcerated mentally ill are "dual diagnosis," meaning they are struggling with both psychological issues and problems with substance use. Our social workers forge a relationship with dual diagnosis inmates before their release from prison. The social worker makes certain an inmate's insurance is squared away and refers them to one of our addiction specialists after they leave jail. We've helped 111 patients complete this program since it started.

Signs of Good Things to Come

You'll be seeing a lot more of our wave logo and signage as we continue to grow and roll out new branding across Ventura County.



New signage at our Oak View Health Center