

Laredo Medical Update

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT
LAREDO MEDICAL CENTER

Become a new you!

Weight loss
changes lives

**Easing
pelvic pain**

**Caring for our
littlest patients**

New investments
in the NICU

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Health events
in your hometown

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serve you better**

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**Laredo
MEDICAL CENTER**

www.laredomedical.com



Upcoming events 2009

LAREDO MEDICAL CENTER

LMC monthly signature events

- Public Cancer Forum
 - Healthy Lifestyle seminar
 - Healthy Woman seminar
 - prenatal birthing classes
- Call: (956) 796-3223 for dates, times and location



LMC monthly hosted events

- LMC Weight-Loss (Bariatric) seminar
- Alzheimer's support group
- Webb County Domestic Violence

Call: (956) 796-3223 for dates, times and location

Stop stroke!

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States. Seek immediate help for your best chance of surviving stroke and suffering the least disability.

Visit www.laredomedical.com to learn your risks.



Dear neighbors,

My family and I are thrilled to now call Laredo home! I'm honored to join the healthcare community as chief executive officer of Laredo Medical Center (LMC). I join a team that prides itself on providing healthcare in a compassionate, caring manner. I look forward to continuing the tradition of quality care, right here.



Tim Schmidt
Chief Executive Officer

LMC NEWS

With spring upon us, we look forward to beautiful days and warm temperatures! If you've kept up with your New Year's resolutions, congratulations! In this issue, we introduce you to four individuals who made a brave decision to undergo weight-loss surgery through LMC's Weight-Loss Program at the end of 2008. Read their inspiring stories on pages 6 and 7.

At LMC, we're committed to caring for our premature babies by offering advanced technology. That's why we recently invested \$1 million in neonatal intensive care unit upgrades. Now, our little ones will have what they need to grow into big, healthy babies. See what we've done with our recent investment on page 10!

And while taking care of Laredo residents is important to us, so is the healthcare of residents in communities around us. That's why we're proud to announce our newest diagnostic and laboratory clinic in South Laredo. Along with our clinic in Zapata, LMC now offers residents comprehensive, quality healthcare—no matter where you live! Read more on page 12.

At LMC, we pride ourselves in providing you with Quality Care, Right Here and look forward to continuing the tradition of being an advanced healthcare facility in Laredo.

Regards,

TIM SCHMIDT
Chief Executive Officer
Laredo Medical Center

Making a life-changing decision

Patients better their health with weight-loss surgery



Michael C. Morris, M.D.
General Surgeon

In December 2008, four people made a lifelong commitment to be healthy. Earlier in the year, each person attended a free weight-loss seminar at Laredo Medical Center (LMC) to learn about bariatric surgery options. Six months later, after getting checked by local specialists—including a cardiologist, a nephrologist and a psychologist—our patients underwent surgery that changed their lives forever. Under the direction of Michael C. Morris, M.D., general surgeon and medical director of the LMC Weight-Loss Program, patients are required to attend the monthly seminars to become educated about their options.

Here are the stories of the four individuals and the decision that changed their lives.



PAT GALVAN

"I heard on the radio that they were offering a free seminar at Laredo Medical Center," says Pat Galvan, a 42-year-old gastric bypass patient. "I got excited and told my husband I had to go."

At that first seminar, Galvan joined other soon-to-be patients and realized that she needed surgery to improve her health and life. "I didn't want to start inheriting the diseases—diabetes, high blood pressure—that run in my family. I needed to do this for me, my husband and my kids."



FRANCISCO LOPEZ

As a Vietnam soldier and a band director, Francisco Lopez never had a problem with energy. The 59-year-old was used to rigorous workouts, but the toll of diabetes and excess weight were finally too much for him to handle. Lopez chose sleeve gastrectomy, in which the left side of the stomach is surgically removed. "Overweight people are the best dieters in the world," Lopez says. "But we still don't get anything done for a long-term effect. Bariatric surgery is for the long term. And now, almost overnight, my diabetes is gone. I don't have to take any more insulin, and that's a great feeling."



GABY RAMIREZ

Gaby Ramirez, 36, says getting gastric bypass has helped her become a better teacher. "I teach special education students and spend a lot of time on the floor with autistic children," says Ramirez. "It was difficult getting on the floor, then back up again quickly to keep up with my active students. Now that I've had surgery, I have more energy and can keep up with them."

For Ramirez, avoiding inevitable health problems was also a goal. "I didn't have any health problems yet," she says, "but each time I went to see my physician, he said I was borderline for high blood pressure and diabetes because of my weight. I chose to undergo the surgery before I was struck with the inevitable."



LETICIA GUTIERREZ

For Leticia Gutierrez, 43, making the commitment to weight-loss surgery was all about one thing: eliminating her diabetes, a disease she's lived with for 25 years. "My body was having difficulties with the diabetes," says Gutierrez. "I had been hospitalized twice in the past year, and my physicians decided to double my insulin intake. I knew if I wanted to live a longer life and see my son grow up, I needed to do something drastic and permanent."

Gastric bypass surgery has been proven to eliminate diabetes by changing hormone levels in patients. "My 7-year-old son no longer has to run to the refrigerator each morning to get my insulin," says Gutierrez. "Without any medications, my blood sugar levels are 100 percent in the normal range. I have energy now, and I got my life back!"

! Lose weight, feel great!

To take charge of your health through LMC's Weight-Loss Program or attend one of the bimonthly weight-loss seminars in the Community Center of Tower B, call (956) 729-STAR (7827). You can also visit www.lonestarsurgical.com.

Could it be Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection often transferred by brushing against immature deer ticks in high grasses or heavily wooded areas. While most cases respond successfully to antibiotics, Lyme disease can cause serious complications—including heart and neurological problems—if undetected and untreated.

Know the two most common symptoms of early Lyme disease: a bull's-eye rash and flu symptoms, including headache, fever and nausea. If you experience symptoms after possible exposure, see a physician.

AVOID TICKS

The best way to deal with Lyme disease is to avoid tick bites. After you've spent time outdoors, check your body, including your scalp, for ticks. If you find an attached tick, remove it with tweezers, grabbing close to your skin and slowly lifting straight up. Save the tick and take it to your physician, who can check to see if the insect is infected.

Whenever you're in wooded areas or tall grasses, wear a light-colored hat, shoes, socks and long pants tucked into your socks. Put clothes worn outdoors into a hot dryer for 20 minutes before washing to kill any ticks attached to fabrics. Ticks can also land on pets and then transfer to you. Also consider using repellents and insecticides formulated against ticks.



! Find more resources!

To find more ways to stay healthy, visit

www.laredomedical.com

THE LMC DIFFERENCE

These patients are committed to making the lifestyle changes needed to get back on the right track with their health. "I'm feeling a lot better with myself, about my body and my future," says Galvan. "I'm going through changes that I love, so I'm excited for the future." And each patient has immeasurable feelings of gratitude for the physician who changed their lives.

"Dr. Morris and his staff truly care about the patient," says Lopez. "It's amazing; he calls you often to make sure you're OK, and there are no off hours for him—he's always available!"

"It's the beginning of a new life for me, bringing up my self-esteem and feeling better for my husband and my family."

—Pat Galvan

"I'm one of the lucky people whose diabetes went away after the surgery, and now we're working on gradually eliminating my high blood pressure medications."

—Francisco Lopez

"Before I had surgery, I got checked out by the pulmonologist and found out that I had sleep apnea. Hopefully when I lose more weight, that will go away."

—Gaby Ramirez

"I didn't have a goal as far as weight. What I wanted was to be non-insulin dependent and whatever it was that got me there, that was my goal. My blood sugar is now at normal levels—anything after that is just extra."

—Leticia Gutierrez

Our tiniest patients are in good hands

NICU gets \$1 million investment

Diana Saenz wished for one thing in 2009: to take her newborn home in the best health possible. But after daughter Jazzmyn Rose—weighing only 1.9 pounds—was born at just 24 weeks on October 5, 2008, those hopes seemed far away.

Three months after her baby's birth, Saenz celebrated the New Year with a deep appreciation for Satbir Chhina, M.D., neonatologist at Laredo Medical Center (LMC), and the staff of the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), for caring for her little baby who had almost gained enough weight to go home.

It's happy endings like this one that gratify the team. "You grow with these families—they're not just babies who come and go," says Dr. Chhina. "You watch them go through the weeks and sometimes months, and in the process, we develop close bonds with them."

INVESTING IN BABIES' HEALTH

But Dr. Chhina couldn't do it alone. With the recent \$1 million NICU investment, his tiniest patients are in good hands. "Because premature babies are fragile, any stimulation can cause them to be stressed out," Dr. Chhina says. "We do all we can to keep our babies comfortable and warm without having to move them. Our new equipment allows us to do this."

The NICU has 20 new unit beds, eight of which are Radiant Warmers that limit a premature baby's movement after being born. Features include built-in oxygen, a scale and a swivel mattress so the baby remains in one location for evaluations.

Join March for Babies

The March of Dimes spends 77 cents of every dollar raised in March for Babies to help prevent birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. To join the cause, call Laredo's chapter at (956) 791-6510 or visit www.marchforbabies.org.



▲ Diana Saenz visits her baby, Jazzmyn Rose, at LMC's NICU. She's grateful to the staff for their care and support in helping her baby grow.

LMC has also added four Omni Beds, which include all the features of Radiant Warmers but are also incubators. Designed for premature babies born under 30 weeks, these beds block unnecessary stimulation like bright lights and include built-in phototherapy lights.

Each new bed also has mounted monitors that track vital signs. These monitors are connected to a centralized monitoring station that's viewed around the clock by NICU-trained nurses and physicians.

For Dr. Chhina, the investment, a great staff and support from hospital administration are what make working here a lifetime commitment. "It's so gratifying seeing these babies get better and better," says Dr. Chhina. "Working here gives me great pleasure because you see how sick babies are when they're first born, and with the right staff and equipment, they soon get to go home."

! Give your baby a healthy start!

For more information about LMC's NICU, call (956) 796-3223 or visit www.laredomedical.com.

Laredo Medical Update is published as a community service of Laredo Medical Center. There is no fee to subscribe.

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SPRING 2009



www.laredomedical.com

70LMC

Taking healthcare one step further

New clinic in South Laredo

Providing quality healthcare to residents in communities around us is just as important to us as the healthcare in our own backyard. That's why we're happy to announce our newest diagnostic and laboratory clinic in South Laredo. Along with our clinic in Zapata, Laredo Medical Center now offers comprehensive, quality healthcare to residents in our neighboring communities, eliminating the need to travel long distances. When you're sick, good healthcare should be available close to home.

So whether you're in South Laredo or Zapata, stop by one of our clinics and visit our trained healthcare professionals. They'll quickly get you back on your feet and back home!



Stay healthy!

Zapata Medical Center

1201 N. Highway 83
Zapata

(956) 765-5847

Hours: Monday–Friday,
8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Services available:

- primary care for the entire family
- Department of Transportation physicals
- pregnancy testing
- lab services
- X-rays

LMC South

4151 Bob Bullock,
Suite 101 and 204
Laredo

(956) 796-3100

Hours: Monday–Thursday,
7 a.m.–5 p.m.
Friday, 7 a.m.–3 p.m.
Saturday, 7–11 a.m.

Services available:

- bone density testing
- Department of Transportation physicals and drug testing
- pregnancy testing
- lab services
- X-rays
- computed tomography scanning
- mammograms

