mind • body • spirit • health

Celebrating 100 Years

Washington Adventist Hospital
Since 1907, Washington Adventist Hospital has been dedicated to bringing health to the community and the community into health. As we begin our next century, we will continue this focus as we take care of our community in new ways in an expanded facility. We'll also be developing new relationships through our Vision for Expanded Access that will provide state-of-the-art services to more people and create partnerships that meet growing health and wellness needs.

We would like to share with you a few of the many stories about the people and events that have shaped our history as we follow our mission into our next century.

A hundred years of caring for the community.
Decades of innovative ideas and beyond.
A staff of health professionals committed to Whole Person Health.
It is our mission to demonstrate God’s care by improving the health of people and communities through a ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing.
Ellen G. White and her husband James were Seventh-day Adventist leaders far ahead of their time. Together, they wrote books that shared their new ideas on achieving balance and maintaining good health through nutrition, exercise and faith in God’s word. They first applied their principles at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan, introducing patients to new ideas of health and wellness.

When the Adventist Church moved its headquarters to Takoma Park in 1903, Ellen White’s dream for a new sanitarium would soon be a reality. In 1905, her book “The Ministry of Healing” was published and the proceeds were used to buy land in Takoma Park. After giving her blessing to the site, construction began.

On June 13, 1907 The Washington Sanitarium, or The San, as it was called, first opened its doors. The 14-acre property along Sligo Creek was isolated from busy city life and offered fresh air and pure water — an environment so ideal that word quickly spread about the health benefits of The San’s innovative approach. The Washington Post wrote, “A few devoted reformers propose to open an institution where the sick could be treated rationally by the employment of the simple agencies of nature — water, air, massage and pure food,” and “It would be difficult to find a better place for quiet and rest.”

It was here, at The San, that Whole Person Care became a reality with forty beds and a staff of twelve.

_when the Adventist Church moved its headquarters to Takoma Park in 1903, Ellen White’s dream for a new sanitarium would soon be a reality._
Construction of The San – 1906

Sligo Creek

The San's Patient Recovery Area

Construction of The San – 1906
The hospital’s first story of care belongs to the Kresses, who devoted their lives to the Adventist Church, caring and medicine. Dr. Daniel Kress was the hospital’s first medical superintendent and surgeon. His wife, Dr. Lauretta Kress was Montgomery County’s first female doctor and the first female surgeon registered in the state of Maryland.

The Kresses felt strongly that good health could be maintained through good habits, so they frequently gave public lectures on the detrimental effects of smoking and alcohol. In 1910, Dr. Daniel Kress addressed the Mother’s Club of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Washington, DC on “The Effects of Cigarettes and Tobacco.”

Dr. Lauretta Kress was also outspoken on the importance of proper prenatal care. In 1916, she opened a special maternity ward at the hospital — the Kress Maternity and Children’s Hospital. Before her retirement at 75, she would deliver over 5,000 babies at the hospital.

Together, the Kresses not only worked to lay our foundation of care, they also created, right on the grounds, a School of Nursing that graduated its first class in 1909. Our physician’s internship program, introduced in 1915, provided hands-on education and career opportunities for 60 years. Teaching a new generation about care and healing was as central to the idea of the hospital back then as it is today.
Recreation in front of The San – 1940
Our nurses embody our mission of Whole Person Care. They are the frontline of care, offering each patient their clinical expertise and heartfelt compassion and providing care that is as unique as each person who walks through our doors. Nursing has been transformed — from infirmary care to life-saving roles throughout the hospital.

After Doctors Daniel and Lauretta Kress, founders of the School of Nursing, retired in 1939, Metta Hudson, RN, became The San’s head of nursing and under her leadership the school grew, ultimately becoming part of Columbia Union College. From 1939, the school had graduated 676 new nurses.

As our nation faced a nursing shortage in the late 70s, the Nursing School responded with a nationwide recruitment program and shifted their curriculum to address the growing complexities of nursing and the increasing advances in technology that continue to be a central part of nursing today. The School experienced significant growth and within a few years, we had trained nurses who were ready for the boom in medical technology and health-care innovations.

There’s no single formula for Whole Person Care. Our nurses recognize that each patient is unique and delivers personalized care that meets the distinct needs of each person — physically, mentally and spiritually. Many times, the spirit of understanding and compassion is the best medicine.

In 2000, our Cardiac Surgery Intensive Care nursing team was acknowledged for being among the best by “Advance For Nurses” magazine.
Nursing class – 1950

New Graduates from School of Nursing – 1952

Materinity Ward nurse

Operating Room nurse

New Graduates from School of Nursing – 1952
Doctor Lauretta Kress was a powerful advocate for prenatal care and its importance to reduce the health risks for pregnant women and their developing babies. In 1934, Dr. Kress warned mothers about the dangers of alcohol and tobacco during pregnancy. She pioneered methods for mothers to take care of themselves during pregnancy as well as their newborns.

After World War II, when the baby boom started, Washington Adventist Hospital was there and teamed with the Red Cross to introduce Mother and Baby classes. And in 1975, we began a parent education program that, for the first time, invited fathers into the delivery room. It was an important step for the hospital and for the whole family – mothers, babies and fathers.

Today, our Women’s and Infant Center leads the way in creating a warm and supportive atmosphere for new babies and their whole families. Our Maternity staff works to provide the best care and service. Our advances in Maternity care continues as we look ahead to the expanded Women’s and Infant Center, with its new capabilities and advances, from delivery to neonatal intensive care.

Our Obstetrics and Maternity Service had a 41 percent increase in deliveries the year after we first invited anxious fathers-to-be into the delivery room.
Taking care of the community — it’s the core of our mission and it doesn’t end at five in the evening. For everyone in our Emergency Department, our mission comes to life minute-by-minute, around the clock. As an important part of our community’s safety net, the emergency department team — emergency physicians, physician assistants, nurses and technicians — work together to provide the right care in the right place, at the right time.

Caring for people comes first, no matter who they are or how they get to our Emergency Department — on foot, by ambulance or helicopter. No one is turned away and everyone is cared for with urgency, professionalism and compassion.

Our Emergency Department continues to lead the way in meeting the changing needs of our growing community. The physicians and staff are true specialists in caring for everyone – from newborns to centenarians — handling all kinds of illnesses and injuries, including neonatal emergencies, heart problems, strokes, and gastrointestinal, gynecological and neurological problems.

Emergency care is a vital part of the service that we provide our community and has been a core service since The San opened Montgomery County’s first dedicated emergency services department in 1918.

To ensure that the medical requirements of the community would be met in any situation, the hospital participated in the area’s first disaster preparedness alert in 1965. To provide proper training, we started the area’s first residency program in emergency room medicine in 1976. Dr. Gail Anderson, a former intern here, adapted the program from a similar one she started in Los Angeles in 1970.

To give cardiac patients the best of care quickly, we opened the first Chest Pain Center in Montgomery County in 1980. And, our commitment to 21st century care continues as we work to build a state-of-the-art hospital near White Oak, while retaining health-care services in Takoma Park.

The Hospital’s relocation will allow us to expand and establish the department at the front door of the hospital. We look forward to that time — as we strive to fulfill our mission of Whole Person Care in new ways for the community.

In just 15 years, the department has doubled. In 2007, we’ll see an estimated 46,000 patients.
Since 1971, we have performed more than 16,000 open heart surgeries and over 100,000 cardiovascular procedures.

New advancements are helping us meet increasingly large challenges in cardiac and vascular medicine. New diagnostics technology, as well as methods in surgery, prevention and rehabilitation are being developed constantly to help our cardiologists give their patients more hope. Many of these advancements are not just found at Washington Adventist Hospital, they originated here.

In 1962, a new surgeon, Dr. Kenneth Cruze joined our staff as Director of Medical Education and performed the first heart surgery on November 28, 1962. In addition to advanced surgery skills, he brought with him a bold vision that would give the hospital a top quality open heart surgery program. His foresight and leadership helped create the foundation of our current cardiovascular program. A program that is second to none in the region.

Dr. Cruze’s plan was approved and before the decade was over the hospital would add everything needed to excel at open heart care:
- Radiology and Cobalt Therapy — for imaging inside the chest and for radiation therapy
- Special Procedures Room — heart patients receive specialized care and monitoring
- Coronary Care Unit — specializing in heart attacks and the serious cardiac conditions
- Pulmonary Care — to handle all vital lung and respiratory issues
- Gastronintestinal Lab — for specialized diagnosis and treatment of intestinal disorders
- Renal Dialysis capability — to quickly replace kidney function, if needed
- Vascular Station — specializing in diagnosis and treatment of arteries and veins

And of course, Open Heart Surgery with state-of-the-art cardiopulmonary bypass equipment to take over heart and lung functions during surgery, plus a team of nationally renowned perfusionists who work with our surgeons.

These advancements, and more which followed, depended on a remarkable team of experts… Cardiologists like Doctors Keith Lindgren, James Ronan and Gene Aaby; Perfusionist George Shearer, Pathologist John Washburn; Head of Pulmonary Care Joseph Mizgerd; and Anesthesiologist Delbert Dick, to name a few.

On December 29, 1971, our expertise and technology was again demonstrated when Dr. Aaby and Dr. Cruze performed the first Cardiopulmonary Bypass Surgery with an aortic valve replacement. In 1983, we first established Coronary Care Unit 5300. Then in 1988, the world’s first percutaneous cardiopulmonary bypass support procedure was performed here. With such momentum and recognition built up, Washington Adventist Hospital surpassed every other hospital in Maryland in adult cardiac surgeries.

Our leadership in cardiac care was demonstrated again in 1997, when Dr. Fayaz Shawl performed the nation’s first transmyocardial revascularization at the hospital. Today, our Center for Cardiac and Vascular Research takes part in dozens of clinical research studies in such vital areas as arrhythmia, angina and heart failure.

Our cardiac and vascular program established a level of innovation that inspires us today to strive for more breakthroughs in whole person care in every department.
From the very beginning, our founders spoke about the dangers of tobacco. Ellen White spoke of the dangers of smoking as early as 1864. As smoking grew in popularity during the last century, our doctors persistently held their ground and led the charge to fight back. Our history of fighting lung disease goes to the core of what makes the hospital a leader in Whole Person Care.

In 1954, Doctors J.W. McFarland and H.W. Vollmer introduced a ground-breaking program to help smokers “kick the habit” in just five days. This successful program was introduced years ahead of the United States Surgeon General’s landmark report linking cigarettes and lung disease.

In 1974, Dr. Alfred Munzer joined the hospital where he continued his work to fight second-hand smoke. As President of the American Lung Association, he was driven to change public policy — testifying before Congress in the successful campaign to ban smoking on commercial airlines. In 1988, he was interviewed on ABC’s Nightline, stating that the tobacco industry should bear some of the responsibility for the 350,000 annual smoking-related deaths. Today, Dr. Munzer’s efforts continue with involvement in an international treaty controlling tobacco use worldwide — the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control that’s setting the stage for a global fight against smoking.

We are on the leading edge of care of Adult and Infant Respiratory Distress Syndrome and establishing a new comprehensive pulmonary rehabilitation program. This state-of-the-art approach echoes our founders’ emphasis on the importance of proper nutrition, exercise and lifestyle, and how people can improve and maintain their own pulmonary health.

In 2007, our hospital campus will become one hundred percent tobacco-free, creating a healthier environment for patients, doctors, staff, volunteers and visitors. In our new facilities, we’ll see greater integration with respiratory care right alongside intensive care. All rooms will accommodate respirators making them mini intensive care units, when needed.

Our Pulmonary Care services will continue working to change public policy and attitudes to help the community breathe in good health. We never forget the importance of a simple breath of fresh air.

Dr. Alfred Munzer served as the President of the American Lung Association from 1993-1994.
Dr. J.W. McFarland and Dr. H.W. Vollmer explain their five-day program that helps smokers “kick the habit.”

Lung biopsy
Whole Person Care is essential in the fight with cancer and it takes a coordinated effort by the staff, doctors, patients and families. To help in this fight, the significance of technology in cancer treatment continues to grow.

Radiation therapy began at The San in 1957 and Dr. Kirk Brace introduced and led the Cobalt Radiation Therapy Department in 1970. The first patient was treated that year on March 23, using a thimble-sized piece of cobalt imbedded in two tons of lead shielding. It was an incredible program that exceeded its promise and opened the door to further innovations. Dr. Brace and Dr. Stanley Leibowitz developed nuclear medicine into a diagnostic tool that currently lets us study cancer without surgery.

In 1985, we became the first hospital in the Washington area to treat cancer patients with a Linear Accelerator. In 2004, the Cancer Care Program was enhanced by a new, state-of-the-art linear accelerator for faster and more accurate treatment.

Cobalt therapy, CAT scans and PET have all been key breakthroughs for our cancer services. Most recently, our ultra-fast, 64-slice CT scanner provides faster, more precise views for diagnosis and treatment — and we are one of the first in the area to make this technology available for patients.

Our success in the battle with cancer is a balance of physical, mental, and spiritual healing.

Sharon Petronio is our first Cancer Care Navigator — a program we started in 2006 to be a source of information and hope. She answers a vast array of questions and, often provides that vital emotional support that comes from just listening.
Preparation for PET scan

Laboratory work – 1950

Analyzing PET scan results
In the first part of the last century, people who were severely depressed or psychotic had very limited choices. Frequently, treatment was limited to confinement, with many patients ending up in state hospitals, sometimes for years.

In 1949, Psychiatrist Dr. Henry Andren, joined Washington Adventist Hospital and created a new type of Behavioral Health program that focused on offering the best treatment available at the time with a focus on getting people back to life as soon as possible. At the time, Washington Adventist Hospital was the only general hospital in the region with a Behavioral Health Unit. Once doctors and families learned about this novel approach, patients began traveling from great distances to obtain care at the hospital in Takoma Park.

As treatment techniques advance, so do our programs. We keep up with medical advancements, offering treatments that not just alleviate pain and depression, but can get a person back into life. Our approach to behavioral health treatment — returning patients back to their lives — was a breakthrough in the beginning and is still fundamental to our compassionate care today.

With the Hospital’s relocation, we will be able to provide an enhanced healing environment of mind, body and spirit where patients, physicians, staff, and visitors can enjoy a peaceful lake and open spaces in a relaxing setting.

We’re one of the few hospitals in the region capable of accepting acute psychiatric patients, so that whenever possible, we can help them return to their lives.
Today, everybody’s talking about taking charge of their mental, spiritual and physical health. Making changes to diet and fitness, as well as finding balance in our lives, has taken center stage. The Seventh-day Adventist philosophy has always been about wellness and preventive care by understanding the importance and impact of maintaining one’s own health.

The “new” ideas we hear now are the same ones that we were practicing one hundred years ago. Dr. Henry Miller joined the hospital in 1913 and introduced his ideas on nutrition and his work on the benefits of a vegetarian diet. During World War II, his soybean research led to the development of soy milk and vegetarian protein products, both years ahead of their time. Today, we still advocate the benefits of a vegetarian diet.

Diet, exercise and kicking bad habits all play vital roles in maintaining good health. Since the very beginning, we’ve been offering health education, fitness classes and nutritional education. We help people discover and value harmony in their lives so that nature can be in balance with medicine — and modern life can be in balance with nutrition and fitness. That’s our vision of a community living in wellness for the 21st century.

From the beginning, we were ahead of our time, teaching people that diet and exercise affect their wellness.
Dietitians – 1945 Wellness class – 1991 Nutrition specialist

Myrta Cornor, RN, teaches a dietary class – 1930
Good health should belong to everyone, not just those who can afford it. For one hundred years, this has been the foundation of care at Washington Adventist Hospital. We’ve made it a point to take care of the entire community and will continue to do so in the future.

Our Vision For Expanded Access is taking the idea even further by broadening relationships with the community, providing new services to more people, and creating partnerships that meet health and care needs in new ways.

We’ve created a Center on Health Disparities to address and eliminate barriers to health care and to provide education, research, and culturally sensitive health-care services to the community. With a broadened emphasis on prevention, we help people enjoy good health, instead of just treating health problems when they arise.

Partnerships with community organizations is another way we’re reaching out and providing the highest level of health care for everyone, where it’s needed.

The Board of Directors is changing as well, to reflect the diversity of the larger community served by the hospital.
Throughout the hospital, it’s easy to see how technology makes a difference for our patients and staff. Along with our experience and training, technology advancements have been — and remain — a critical underpinning to excellent health care. As a Seventh-day Adventist institution, we also believe there is another critical element — the power of faith and spirit. This has been at the heart of what we do since the hospital first opened in 1907. Whether for its power to heal, give comfort, educate or bless our outcomes, our faith has always been integral to our approach to care.

This belief expanded to our Bereavement Services program. First introduced in 2003, this important support and healing program helps families and hospital staff cope with the loss of someone cared for at the Hospital.

In clinical studies, the power of prayer has been shown to contribute to improved outcomes, as we have known from the beginning. So, with joy and anticipation, we’re discovering, more and more, that faith and science are working in tandem in new forms of therapy and recovery. Specific treatments are using spirituality and prayer to aid in healing. A patient’s own spirituality and faith are now included in their treatment, with results that are close to miraculous. For one hundred years, we’ve been practicing what the National Institutes of Health today call “frontier medicine.” We will continue to couple science and medicine with the power of faith. It’s Whole Person Care and it’s not frontier medicine at Washington Adventist Hospital — it’s frontline medicine. Mind, body and spirit.

Our Bereavement Services allow families, loved ones and even hospital staff to get emotional and spiritual support following the loss of someone close.
Main lobby stained glass

A place for comfort and meditation

Prayer chapel altar

Finding support in the word of God
This is the story of Washington Adventist Hospital at one hundred years. It’s a story of a century of compassion and a century of the best of care, at a hospital ahead of its time.

As we did a hundred years ago, we continue to strive to remain ahead. For this reason, we will build a hospital for the next century. The vision of 21st century facilities is becoming a reality on a 48-acre parcel of land near White Oak, about six miles from our current location — in the heart of our primary service area. The new hospital, along with services retained in Takoma Park, will strengthen health care in our region and expand access to health care for the communities we serve in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties and our surrounding areas. We know what it takes to create such a place — passion and commitment to our mission — a mission as meaningful today as it was in the beginning —

It is our mission to demonstrate God’s care by improving the health of people and communities through a ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing.

This is Washington Adventist Hospital at 100 years and beyond

Mind · Body · Spirit · Health
48-acre site for new hospital
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