

“The Doctor Will See You Now”

By: Kathy Woodham

It's a new day in Polk County! Two new primary care physicians, extended hours, increased throughput, an oncologist and pain management specialists have helped alleviate the pain of getting in to see a doctor when one is needed. Here's a quick recap of improved access to medical care in the Carolina Foothills:

Say AHH! Dr. Vinit Agrawal, MD, is seeing new patients at Foothills Medical Associates, located at 801 W. Mills St., Columbus. Dr. “Ahh”grawal is Ahhmazing—at least that is what his patients are saying! A native of India, Dr. Agrawal is easy to get to know and quick to express his patient care philosophy. He prefers to share the importance of prevention, nutrition, education and moderation. And he shares that with a good dose of bedside manners.

Board eligible in Internal Medicine, Dr. Agrawal is a primary care provider for adults. His interest and experience in treating conditions like arthritis, osteoporosis or high blood pressure make for a comforting—and convenient—doctor's visit. With three other providers (Jeff Viar, DO, Janet Howell, PA-C and Mike Bradey, PA-C), patients can be seen within 24-48 hours. To schedule an appointment convenient for you, call 828-894-5697. Foothills Medical Associates, located at 801 W. Mills Street, Columbus.

Saluda's hometown physician Lisa Broyles, MD, is also accepting new patients at the brand new Saluda Family Medicine, located at 1347 Ozone Dr., Suite 2, Saluda. Dr. Broyles is a family physician who loves to care for babies, their grandparents and all ages in between. Currently seeing patients on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Dr. Broyles and the small staff are providing a delightful patient experience . . . that's what her patients are saying.

Dr. Broyles has received certification in functional medicine and deeply believes in the holistic approach to wellness. This practice will soon grow so that patients are able to make appointments on Mondays and Wednesdays as well. Call 828-749-0149 for an appointment.

With a panel of providers who provide integrative care (access to physical and mental health), Blue Ridge-Polk Health Center is offering extended hours! Conveniently located at 155 W. Mills St., Columbus, Polk Health Center now offers extended hours each Tuesday until 8:00 p.m. to help working people who need primary care. The centers normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thanks to Amy Marietta, MD, Susannah Francis, family nurse practitioner, Juana Diaz-Prez, PA-C, and several therapists, patients can be seen on a sliding fee scale or the staff will file private insurance. Call 828-894-2222 for an appointment.

St. Luke's Hospital and our local surgeons are also making a few changes to accommodate an increase in the number of patients needing surgery. With improvements in the surgical process (pre-op visits, joint camp and creative scheduling), St. Luke's and surgeons are finding more options for patient care and "throughput." This is alleviating backlogs (and pain) for those ready and waiting for a general or orthopedic surgical procedure.

It's impressive that a county the size of Polk County can provide specialized cancer care and infusion services that eliminate the need to travel up or down the busy interstate for treatment. Thanks to oncologist Dr. Matt Rees and St. Luke's Hospital Infusion Center, patients undergoing often lengthy treatments can stay close to home for their care. Chemotherapy is often physically and emotionally draining, and traveling to an unfamiliar city can exacerbate discomfort. A member of the Levine Cancer Institute, the Infusion Center enables patients to receive infusion treatments locally even if they are established patients of other specialists like oncologists or rheumatologists in other areas of the state or country! The center is located on the campus of St. Luke's Hospital at 56 Hospital Drive, Columbus. For more information, call 828-859-5600.

And for those suffering with acute or chronic pain issues, St. Luke's Hospital Pain Center once again provides treatment alternatives to addictive, mind-altering pain medications. Partnering with Southeast Pain and Spine Care (SEPSC) of Charlotte, St. Luke's Hospital provides pain management and treatment alternatives with highly respected physicians are fellowship trained and double board certified or board eligible in Anesthesiology or Neurology as well as Pain Management. Currently appointments are available Mondays and Wednesdays. For more information or an appointment, call 828-894-0978.

In Saluda, residents have another option to help with their social and physical needs facing an older generation. Saluda Living in Place (SLIP) is a dynamic and responsive organization that helps equip older adults (60 plus) in the greater Saluda community to live independent, vibrant, healthy, and active lives. Now a 501 © 3 organization, SLIP is simple-- good neighbors working together to help each other age independently in their own homes and community. With social events, health screenings and presentations, and the belief that “it takes a village,” SLIP meets what many doctors might prescribe: stay active, stay involved and look out for your friends and neighbors.

Of course, Polk Fit Fresh Friendly (PF3) also provides opportunities for health and wellness, by organizing, sponsoring, volunteering and advocating for the health and wellness of the community. From the Polk Fit Challenge to the Bike Skills Rodeo to Hear2Help, PF3 is working for the health and wellness of the Carolina Foothills.

From Landrum to Saluda, Columbus to Tryon, the Carolina Foothills is a wonderful area with countless opportunities to help you stay active, stay involved and look out for your friends and neighbors. Adding to our quality of life here is access to quality medical care and the commitment of our physicians and our community’s St. Luke’s Hospital.

Kathy Woodham is marketing/public relations director for St. Luke’s Hospital. A longtime member of the PF3 board of directors, she stays active and involved in the health and wellness of a great community!

PF3 is a group of 120+ community members, leaders and health professionals working together to plan and implement effective strategies to promote wellness in our community. PF3 welcomes any individual who is interested in joining us to make our community a healthier place for all. For more information and a complete list of 2018 meeting dates, please visit our website at <http://www.polkfitfreshandfriendly.org>.

