

3-D printing technology creates customized knee implants with better results



It didn't take long for 3-D printing to enter the world of surgery. With the help of 3-D printing technology, Dr. Brad Wright can now insert a completely customized knee implant in a patient undergoing knee-replacement surgery.

The result is a knee that gives the patient better range of motion and much better results, said Dr. Wright, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon with Sports Orthopedics and Spine.

This new technology is one of many developments that have bettered the outcomes of partial and total knee-replacement surgeries as the procedure has evolved over the years, he said.

Today's surgeons can use new techniques and insert knee implants that come in many different sizes, are gender-specific and made of better materials. Surgical instruments now tell the orthopedic surgeon where to precisely make the incision to place the implant in the joint with the least damage to surrounding tissue.

"The newer technology respects the forces in the knee more appropriately and gives the patient a more natural knee," said Dr. Wright.



Dr. Brad Wright

Doctors can also be more aggressive with physical therapy to get the post-operative patient in therapy as soon as possible and back to an active lifestyle quicker. "New medications can give us three to four days of excellent pain relief to get the patient going," he said.

An implant created by 3-D printing technology takes these advancements a step further. The implant is custom created for a specific patient, and this makes a more perfect fit for the patient, Dr. Wright said.

The 3-D printed implants he uses are made by ConforMIS. By combining advanced 3-D imaging technology with the latest manufactur-

ing capabilities, ConforMIS customizes each implant to the patient's unique size and shape.

The process for a 3-D printed knee implant starts with a CT scan of the patient's knee. Dr. Wright sends the scan to a ConforMIS laboratory in Boston, Mass., which then converts the CT scan to a 3-D model by mapping the knee's articular cartilage (the smooth, white tissue that covers the ends of bones where they come together to form joints) and defines the area of the disease. Each implant is unique for that patient, which increases the potential for a natural-feeling knee.

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Clinic memorializes Dr. James Barker

A memorial in the West Tennessee ENT Clinic lobby remembers Dr. James Harris Barker, who died in February 2015 after 33 years of practicing medicine. Hardly a day passes when the staff and patients don't share a story about his warm personality, his kindness and his mischievous antics, said Marcie Smith, ENT Clinic office manager.

"He always made it fun to be at work, and he made us feel like we were his own children. For many of us, he was a wonderful father figure."

Smith reminisced about Dr. Barker's antics and pranks as she looked at his memorial and picture, which had his familiar teasing grin.

"Dr. Barker's desk was always covered with a conglomerate of papers, files and books, all covered in coffee spills," said Smith. "Once, he found a Christmas present in his office that he had bought for his wife three years ago."

While he was known for his humor and carefree attitude, Dr. Barker took the care of his patients seriously, she said. He was board certified in otolaryngology and treated issues related to the ear, nose and throat.

His saddest day was the day that he decided to retire from practicing medicine after he had his first stroke, said his wife, Anne. "He loved practicing medicine more than anything."

The Barkers met on a blind date at a football game in Memphis, and were married in 1963.



The Dr. James Barker memorial

They moved to Jackson in 1969 to be close to family and to be a part of a growing city that had a large pool of patients for Dr. Barker's practice. Dr. Barker joined Dr. Charles Cox at the West Tennessee ENT Clinic.

"Jimmy was ahead of his time when we first came to Jackson because he also specialized in facial plastic and reconstructive surgery, which was uncommon in those days," said Mrs. Barker.

Dr. Barker grew up in Trenton and attended the University of Tennessee at Martin and Knoxville. He graduated from medical school at the University of Tennessee in Memphis and completed his residency at Tulane University in New Orleans. He also served as a physician in the army for two years.

"He loved being with people and he was happiest when he was in the middle of a crowd," said Mrs. Barker. "Jimmy was always embarrassing our kids when they were teenagers, but he was a devoted family man, and he loved being with his family."

Dr. Barker's memorial in the lobby of the ENT Clinic showcases his monogrammed doctor coat, several physician tools and a picture of the man that many people miss.

"This memorial was just the nicest gesture," said Mrs. Barker. "He was a kind-hearted man and I know that he will be very missed."

Dr. Charles Cox, founder of West Tennessee ENT Clinic, was joined by Dr. Jim Barker. Practicing at the clinic today are Dr. Keith Wainscott and Dr. Karl Studtmann. For an appointment, call 731.424.3682.

Board members retiring

Three doctors are retiring from the West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance Board of Directors. They will be replaced by new members in a subsequent board meeting.

The outgoing doctors are David Yakin, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon at Sports Orthopedics and Spine; Jason Hutchison, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon at West Tennessee Bone & Joint Clinic; and Dr. Todd Seabrook, M.D., an anesthesiologist at Professional Anesthesia Associates.

"The members of the WTPA are some of Jackson's and West Tennessee's most respected and established physicians," said Dr. Yakin.

"Since its creation, the WTPA has sought to include doctors who provide the highest quality of care while maintaining a focus on the individual patient."

As members of the organization, he added, physicians are able to maintain and manage their individual practices while being aligned with independent providers throughout the region.

"Members can reap the benefits of collabo-



Dr. David Yakin



Dr. Jason Hutchison



Dr. Todd Seabrook

orative efforts while also retaining their individual identities," he said. "The WTPA also provides continuing education opportunities, marketing capabilities and public engagement efforts that strengthen the relationship between the physician, the patient and the community."

Pelvic medicine subspecialty helps to keep patients active



Dr. J. Paul Gray recently became the first doctor in Jackson to become board certified in a new subspecialty of gynecology called female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery.

"I've been doing this kind of work for years, but I wanted to take the time to become board certified to give my patients peace of mind and know that they are receiving the best care," said Dr. Gray, a physician at the Woman's Clinic, who is also board certified in obstetrics and gynecology and has been practicing medicine since 1988.

To qualify for the board certification, Dr. Gray had to submit a case list that showed a significant number of patients he has treated for issues related to pelvic medicine. He also took an exam that required additional education and studying in order to understand the best practices for this particular subspecialty.

Female pelvic medicine refers to issues dealing with the surgical and non-surgical treatment of pelvic floor disorders and medical conditions related to the uterus, bladder and vagina. Many times the primary symptom of these problems is urinary incontinence.

For many, urinary incontinence has become a shameful topic that is difficult to talk about, said Dr. Gray. Those who do talk to their doctors about the problem, however, have sev-



Dr. J. Paul Gray

eral types of treatment, he said, adding that the answer isn't always surgical.

"Sometimes women just need reassurance, but it can be difficult for them to admit there is a problem. There is a huge under-treatment of urinary incontinence because women are embarrassed to talk about it." The greatest medical advancement for women in the last few years has been a sling procedure, said Dr. Gray. The surgery creates support for the urethra and only takes minutes to perform. The recovery time is no longer than a week.

However, sometimes there is a need for more serious reconstructive surgery for conditions such as prolapse. Prolapse occurs when the pelvic organs slip forward, which is most often caused by a vaginal delivery. When the pelvic floor becomes damaged, women may experience urinary incontinence.

The surgery for prolapse is more complicated with a longer surgery time and month-long recovery.

Dr. Gray prefers to use a biological graft during reconstructive surgery, rather than using a mesh, which can sometimes cause additional pain. The biological graft is used to support a woman's natural healing process by giving her body a template for healing. The graft dissolves over time and the woman's tissue slowly replaces the graft.

Dr. Gray recently treated an elderly woman who longed to travel with a group of friends, but was afraid to go on a trip because of her urinary incontinence. After her surgery, she came back to Dr. Gray, with tears of gratitude for giving her the ability to have a better quality of life and opening the door to new opportunities.

"My whole life I have wanted to fix things and improve quality of life," said Dr. Gray. "Now I get to do that every day."

Dr. Paul Gray earned his medical degree from Louisiana State University and completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. He practices at the Woman's Clinic with Dr. Michael Epps, Dr. Brad Adkins, Dr. Molly Rheney, Dr. Madhav Boyapati, Dr. David Soll, Dr. Ryan Roy and Dr. Andrea Harper. For an appointment call 731.422.4642.



Dr. Warren surveys his land, which gives him freedom and plenty of room to roam.

Dr. Warren retires after 46 years in medicine

Dr. Ken Warren is looking forward to life on his 50 acres of land in Gibson County, halfway between Milan and Medina. He's got horses, a stocked fishing pond and room to roam.

"I like the space and freedom that is afforded by being able to live in the country," he said.

Dr. Warren retired in August after 46 years of practicing family medicine, caring for a countless number of patients along the way. He enjoyed working with his patients, as well as the other medical professionals he encountered.

The medical profession changed throughout his career, sometimes for the good, but sometimes for the bad, he said. Regulations, for example, increased over time, creating busy work that stole time from treating patients.

"It tended to separate you from patient contact," Dr. Warren said. "You were spending more time dotting 'i's and crossing 't's."

But technology also improved, which improved the quality of care. "A great number of diagnostic tests and procedures became much more available and very helpful."

One of his top concerns during his career was prescription painkillers, which are highly addictive, and he took special care to protect his patients from addiction when prescribing medication.

"I was always very concerned about my patients and their well being," he said.

Dr. Warren launched a program in his clinic with the goal of weaning patients off all addictive

drugs. He used Suboxone, a medication that was initially only allowed in institutions and through programs much like the methadone clinics.

Dr. Warren prescribed just enough of a dosage to curb the desire because he wanted his patients to be aware of the desire so they could learn how to cope with it. After 11 months, he wanted his patients to be weaned off of Suboxone completely.

To be able to prescribe Suboxone, a physician must acquire a specific Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) number and additional certification from the DEA, which monitors and inspects the Suboxone programs regularly.

Addiction remains an important issue, he said. And the results of his program were mixed due to the nature of the disease.

Dr. Warren began his career in Canada in 1969 where he practiced for nine years. Then he

moved to Picayune, Miss., for a year before opening a clinic in Milan.

In 1993, he needed more space. He moved to Jackson and opened his own clinic. "It gave me an opportunity to get more room and access a larger client market."

Being a member of the West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance was important to the success of his clinic, he said. The organization strengthened independent clinics, and there is no way he could have started a solo practice in today's medical environment without it.

Looking to the future, Dr. Warren plans to keep busy. He plans to travel with his wife to see their children in Houston and Charlottesville, Va.

He plans to take up cycling again – a sport he enjoyed until he was sidelined by a car accident years ago. "I've always had an interest in fitness."

He is also an avid musician, having performed in the local band, OK Chorale. He plays guitar, banjo, bass guitar and double bass, and he plans to play more music in his retirement. He also plays piano, and he is learning the violin.

"I've also decided I want to improve my golf game from embarrassing to semi-confident," Dr. Warren said.

And then there is his farm with its open space and room to roam. He said he is looking forward to the freedom of doing whatever he wants.

But he'll always miss his patients. "You miss the contact with the patient. "You don't get that from fishing in the pond or golfing or riding your bicycle. I'll certainly miss that."



Dr. Warren with his horses on his farm.

Clinical research improves kidney disease treatment

Dr. Shyamal Sarkar, one of the newest members of West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance, has participated in clinical research that has helped to improve the treatment of patients with kidney disease.

Because of his interest in clinical research, Dr. Sarkar, who is board certified in internal medicine, cardiology and nephrology, has participated in multiple worldwide studies to formulate the practice of using different drugs to treat his patients.

In one clinical study, called the TREAT study, Dr. Sarkar enrolled the highest number of patients in the United States. Worldwide, about 5,000 patients enrolled. The information from this study has significantly helped how ESA (Erythrocyte Stimulating Agent) is used worldwide and formulated new rules by insurance companies and Medicare, he said.

In another study, EVOLVE, Dr. Sarkar enrolled the highest number of patients in the whole world. This involved using Cinacalcet (Sensipar) for dialysis patients who have secondary hyperparathyroidism from kidney disease. He has done multiple studies involving Cinacalcet.

At present, he is doing research with the START study, which is using Aranesp (Darbapoietin) in patients with chronic kidney diseases and anemia. Aranesp is an erythropoietic agent – a man-made form of a protein that helps the body produce red blood cells. Again, he has enrolled the highest number of patients in this study.

"I have a very good research team who have worked with me for many years at Advanced Kidney Specialists," said Dr. Sarkar.

Dr. Sarkar graduated from medical school in India in 1980 with silver medal honors. He finished his fellowship in nephrology from University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

He practiced nephrology in India, Bhutan and the United Kingdom before moving to the Jackson area in 1998. In 2003, he opened his own practice, Advanced Kidney Specialists.

He has generated a busy solo practice with special interests in teaching and clinical research. He is in the process expanding his practice with more providers. A faculty member of the University of Tennessee Family Practice Residency program, he is actively involved in teaching the residents and nursing programs.

He sees patients at both Jackson-Madison County General Hospital and Tennova Healthcare – Regional Jackson. With his main office in Jackson, he also has clinics in Bolivar and Lexington to take care of non-dialysis patients.

He treats both hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis patients in Jackson, Lexington, Gibson County, Henry County, Hardin County, Bolivar and Brownsville. He is the medical director of several dialysis units.

He chose West Tennessee because of its potential, he said. "I saw Jackson had two good hospitals and was growing."

This past summer he joined the West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance at the urging of Dustin Summers, its executive director. Said Dr. Sarkar, "The West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance is the strongest voice in this area for the independent physicians."

Advanced Kidney Specialists P.C. is at 170 Murray Guard Drive in Jackson. For more information, call 731.984.8390 or visit www.AdvancedKidney.com.

3-D printing technology creates knee implants

... Continued from front page

The company also provides pre-programmed and disposable instrumentation that is based on the patient's CT scan. Disposable instruments reduce the risk of infection, Dr. Wright said.

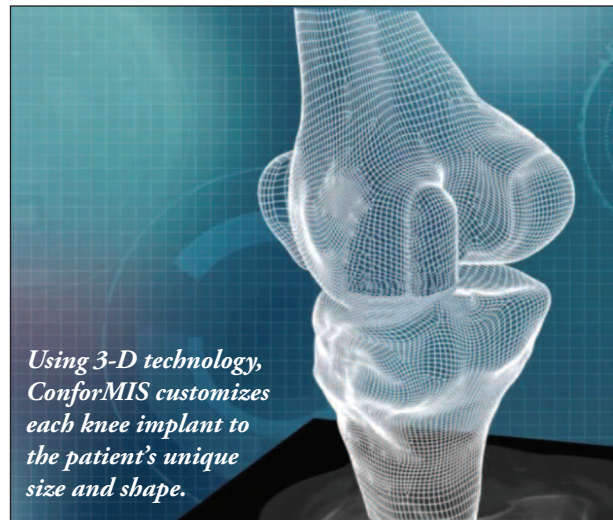
In any discussion of knee replacement surgery, it's important for the patient to understand that the knee is a complex joint that supports most of the body's weight, Dr. Wright said. The knee does far more than act like a hinge to move your leg up and down. The joint in your knee can make twisting and turning actions, and it allows your body to hold up your weight. The bones in your knee are protected by cartilage, which provides a cushion and allows those bones to glide easily.

As we get older, the cartilage in our knee joints starts thinning, and arthritis can set in. Extra weight compounds the problem, Dr. Wright said. "An extra 50 pounds of weight can

feel like four to six times more weight placed across your knees."

He finds himself talking to many patients about losing weight as one of the steps they can take to alleviate knee pain.

Knee-replacement surgery is considered only after all other non-surgical options have been exhausted, and the pain is too great for the patient. "We want



Using 3-D technology, ConforMIS customizes each knee implant to the patient's unique size and shape.

to put it off as long as possible," he said. "Once you replace a joint, there's no turning back."

Dr. Wright also helps the patient have realistic expectations after knee replacement surgery.

The goal of the surgery is to help the patient return to an active lifestyle without pain, he said. "When a patient tells you, 'I don't even know it's there,'

you know you've achieved the gold standard."

Dr. G. Bradford Wright is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon at Sports, Orthopedics and Spine, 569 Skyline Drive. He practices with Dr. Keith Nord, who founded the clinic, Dr. John Masterson, Dr. David Yakin, Dr. Timothy Sweo and Dr. Scott Johnson.

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Changes looming for health insurance marketplace

“Remember, Obamacare really kicks in in 2016. Obama’s gonna be out playing golf. He might even be on one of my courses.”

– Donald Trump, presidential announcement speech, June 16, 2015

While these words are unlikely to be etched into the granite entrance of a presidential library anytime soon, there is at least a bit of truth to them ... (based upon your own personal political leanings, you might assign a varying degree of accuracy to different parts of that statement.)

Obamacare will indeed continue to “kick in” throughout 2016, and regardless of whether you back a Clinton, a Bush, a Trump, a Rubio, a Biden or a Bernie, one thing is certain: another round of open enrollment on the health care marketplace started November 1 and will run through January 31, 2016.

As has been the case in 2013 and 2014, certain headaches and glitches can be expected. However with each successive round of open enrollment, shoppers will become more familiar with the perils of the online experience and the process will (hopefully) continue to improve.

**By Dustin Summers
Executive Director,
West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance**

While there will be certain changes that affect employer exemptions and the dollar amounts of out-of-pocket expenditures, I want to focus on two specific aspects of the marketplace that are poised to directly impact every consumer: cost and coverage.

Returning shoppers to the marketplace might suffer an acute case of sticker shock as the rates for premiums are set to significantly increase from their 2015 coverage year levels. According to filings with the Tennessee insurance commissioner, rates for marketplace plans will increase anywhere from 0.4 percent to a whopping 44.7 percent.

Like last year, subsidies are available for buyers based upon individual or household income levels up to approximately \$45,600 and \$63,000, respectively. Even with this financial assistance in place, however, consumers need to be prepared for elevated prices.

Buyers also need to be aware of provider participation in various plans available on the marketplace. Many familiar faces will be offering plans (i.e. BlueCross BlueShield, United, etc.), however several plans will be offered by



Dustin Summers

insurance carriers that might be unfamiliar to shoppers, and there is no guarantee that your provider will be accepting those insurance products.

Before purchasing, make sure that your physician is “in-network” with that plan or call your doctor’s office to confirm participation.

Each carrier should have a “find a doctor” search feature on their individual websites, but please make sure you double check before you buy.

While improvements have been made since the disastrous initial rollout in 2013, the open enrollment stampede can be confusing and overwhelming. Luckily, assistance services are available for consumers through a variety of local organizations. For a complete list, please visit localhelp.healthcare.gov and enter “Jackson, TN” in the search box. Health care “navigators” will work with you to find a plan that fits your specific needs.

Winter months in West Tennessee are not the most conducive for golf, and the closest Trump course is more than 500 miles away from here anyway, so devote some time to re-searching a plan that will provide the best care for yourself and your family.

Four doctors join Physicians' Alliance

David C. Garrett, M.D.

Dr. David Garrett joined Professional Anesthesia Associates after completing his residency at the University of Missouri – Kansas City where he was chief resident in 2014-2015.

He earned his medical degree from Ross University in the Caribbean island of Dominica where he graduated with high honors.

He also was treasurer of the Missouri Society of Anesthesiologists Resident Component and is a member of the American Society of Anesthesiologists.



Dr. David C. Garrett

Kyle R. Stephens, D.O.

Dr. Kyle R. Stephens recently joined West Tennessee Bone & Joint Clinic to practice at its Paris location.

He completed a spine fellowship at Regions Hospital in St. Paul, Minn. He graduated from Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences in 2009 and completed his orthopedic surgery residency at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital in Michigan in 2014. Dr. Stephens performs orthopedic surgery as well as spine surgery.

Beginning at age 16, Dr. Stephens has traveled to Honduras, Romania, Mexico, Brazil, Kenya and Peru on mission trips. A standout basketball player at Henry County High School, he received a full scholarship from Lipscomb University, where he majored in biology and Biblical studies with a minor in chemistry. He followed that degree with a master's degree in divinity from Abilene Christian University.

For an appointment with Dr. Stephens, call 888.661.9825.



Dr. Kyle R. Stephens

Stan Ragon, M.D.

Dr. Stan Ragon spent four years on active duty with the U.S. Navy where he was stationed in Guam and Pensacola, Fla., before joining West Tennessee Bone & Joint Clinic.

Board certified in orthopedic surgery, he completed his residency at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine at Chattanooga and served as chief resident in 2011.

He completed medical school with high honors at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis in 2006 and graduated summa cum laude from the University of Tennessee at Martin in 2001.

Dr. Ragon grew up in Jackson. He was valedictorian of the class of 1997 at Jackson Christian School.

For an appointment with Dr. Ragon, call 888.661.9825.



Dr. Stan Ragon

Kandarp Patel, M.D.

Dr. Kandarp Patel, who founded Core Heart & Medical Center, is board certified in internal medicine and cardiology.

He received his medical degree from Baroda Medical College and has been in practice for more than 20 years.

He completed a fellowship in cardiovascular medicine and his residency in internal medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. Dr. Patel moved to Jackson as a physician in 1999 and opened his own practice in 2011.

Dr. Patel is also an assistant clinical professor of medicine at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

For an appointment, call 731.300.0227.



Dr. Kandarp Patel



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