

WINTER 2008

YAKIMA  
REGIONAL  
MEDICAL  
& CARDIAC  
CENTER

# House Call

## From the Heart

FREE Events and  
Information to Keep  
You Heart Healthy

## Keeping Your Spine in Line

## When Seconds

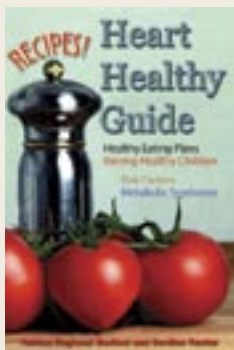
# COUNT

Yakima Regional medical staff  
helped former state trooper Herb  
Howe survive a potentially  
deadly cardiac event.



YAKIMA  
**REGIONAL**  
The Valley's Regional Medical & Cardiac Center

# Pick Up Your **FREE** Healthy Heart Booklet



February is American Heart Month and, to celebrate, Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center is offering a free "Heart Healthy Guide." This informative and

motivational publication features topics including:

- risk factors and metabolic syndrome information
- tips for incorporating exercise into your life
- advice on reading food labels
- tips for raising healthy children
- timely health topics
- "know your numbers" tracking tools
- heart-healthy menus and recipes

The booklets are available at Yakima Regional, or call (509) 575-5799 to receive a copy.

# Welcome, New Physicians



## Raul Garcia-Rodriguez, DO

Dr. Garcia-Rodriguez received his medical degree from the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine of New York in Old Westbury. He completed his residency at St. Barnabas Hospital in Bronx, New York. Dr. Garcia-Rodriguez is board certified in emergency medicine.



## Rick Gross, MD

Dr. Gross completed his education at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in San Antonio. He completed an internship at the Naval Hospital in Oakland, California, and residencies at the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute in Pensacola, Florida, and the Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. Dr. Gross is board certified in otolaryngology (ear, nose, and throat) and facial plastic and reconstructive surgery. He will join the staff at Yakima Regional as an ear, nose, and throat physician.



## Ashwin Shetty, DO

Dr. Shetty graduated from the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine of New York in Old Westbury. He completed his residency at St. Barnabas Hospital in Bronx, New York. Dr. Shetty is board certified in emergency medicine and joins the Yakima Regional staff as an emergency room physician.



## John Zambito, DO

Dr. Zambito completed his education at the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine of New York in Old Westbury. He completed his residency at St. Barnabas Hospital in Bronx, NY. Dr. Zambito is board certified in emergency medicine and will join our staff of emergency room physicians.

## Patrick O'Brien, MD

Dr. O'Brien attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. He completed residencies at the University of New Mexico Medical Center in Albuquerque and at Harvard University/Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. He is board certified in radiology.



# Save the Date!

## START THE NEW YEAR WITH A HEALTHY HEART CHECK™

Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center offers their Healthy Heart Check™ to anyone who would like to assess their risk for heart disease. The low-cost screening (\$49) includes a heart risk-factor assessment, complete cholesterol analysis, blood glucose check, blood pressure check, resting EKG, and a personal wellness and heart profile.

Call (509) 573-3592 to schedule an appointment.

## ANNUAL WOMEN AND HEART LUNCHEON

The annual Women's Heart Health Luncheon is slated for February 15 at noon in the Yakima Regional Auditorium. Plan to attend this free presentation focusing on cardiac issues unique to women, and enjoy a heart-healthy lunch. Space is limited.

Call (509) 575-5799 to reserve your spot.

# Not Letting **Diabetes** Get Them Down

When LaDonna Marie Schoengarth received a diabetes diagnosis, she was determined to live her life as normally as she could.

LaDonna was diagnosed with diabetes in September 1941, after experiencing the common diabetes symptoms of frequent urination and constant thirst.



Diabetes patient LaDonna Marie Schoengarth trusts Gary Treece, MD, FACP, FACE, endocrinologist at Yakima Regional, to care for her disease.

“I remember being teased in school because I couldn’t eat the same things as other students,” says LaDonna. “But I knew that what and when I ate helped me stay well.”

LaDonna went on to have two healthy children. She is involved in two music groups and enjoys quilting. LaDonna thanks Gary Treece, MD, FACP, FACE, endocrinologist at Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center, for helping her live healthily with diabetes.

## WORDS OF WISDOM

“It is up to you to take control of your diabetes. The keyword being *you*,” LaDonna explains. “It is your disease. Therefore, grab the bull by the horns and do the best you can at being vigilant and consistent.”

Cecilia Marsh, another patient of Dr. Treece who has lived with diabetes since 1951, also lends her words of wisdom to those newly diagnosed with diabetes.

“There have been many advances in diabetes care since my first diagnosis,” says Cecilia. “Don’t let the disease get you down. Take advantage of the education and care Yakima Regional has to offer. I consider Dr. Treece and myself a team, and, working as a team, I have been able to live a long and healthy life with diabetes.”

## Have No Fear, Diabetes Help Is Near

According to the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), approximately 21 million Americans have been diagnosed with diabetes. Even more startling, nearly 54 million Americans over the age of 20 have pre-diabetes.

By understanding the disease so many are living with, you can learn how to treat diabetes or even prevent it.

### PREVENTION

“The most important keys for diabetes prevention are lifestyle modifications,” says Gary Treece, MD, FACP, FACE, endocrinologist at Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center. “This is good news for those with diabetes and pre-diabetes—it means they have the power to take control of their health.”

If you want to make lifestyle changes to help you and your loved ones prevent the onset of diabetes, try:

- limiting sugar consumption
- exercising for 30 minutes a day, five days a week

- maintaining a healthy weight
- cutting out tobacco and alcohol use

### TREATMENT

For those living with diabetes, Yakima Regional physicians like Dr. Treece can prescribe lifestyle modifications, blood sugar testing, and medications.

“People dealing with diabetes can live long and healthy lives,” says Dr. Treece. “At Yakima Regional, our medical professionals act as resources for these patients—we are truly here to help.”

*For more information on diabetes prevention and treatment or to schedule an appointment with Dr. Treece, please call (509) 577-4600.*



# Montana Man

## 'At the Right Place, at the Right Time'

A potentially fatal heart condition was diagnosed and treated quickly at Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center, allowing a grateful patient time to tell his story.

Herb Howe, pictured in his hospital room with his wife Diane, survived an aortic dissection thanks to the expertise of thoracic and cardiovascular surgeons at Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center.

*"I was at the right place at the right time, and somebody was watching over me," says Herb. "I'm an awfully lucky guy."*

**It famously** felled actor John Ritter and King George II of England. Aortic dissection is a rare and potentially fatal condition in which blood passes through the inner lining and between the layers of the aorta. Depending on the nature and extent of the dissection, death can occur within a few hours.

### MEET A SURVIVOR

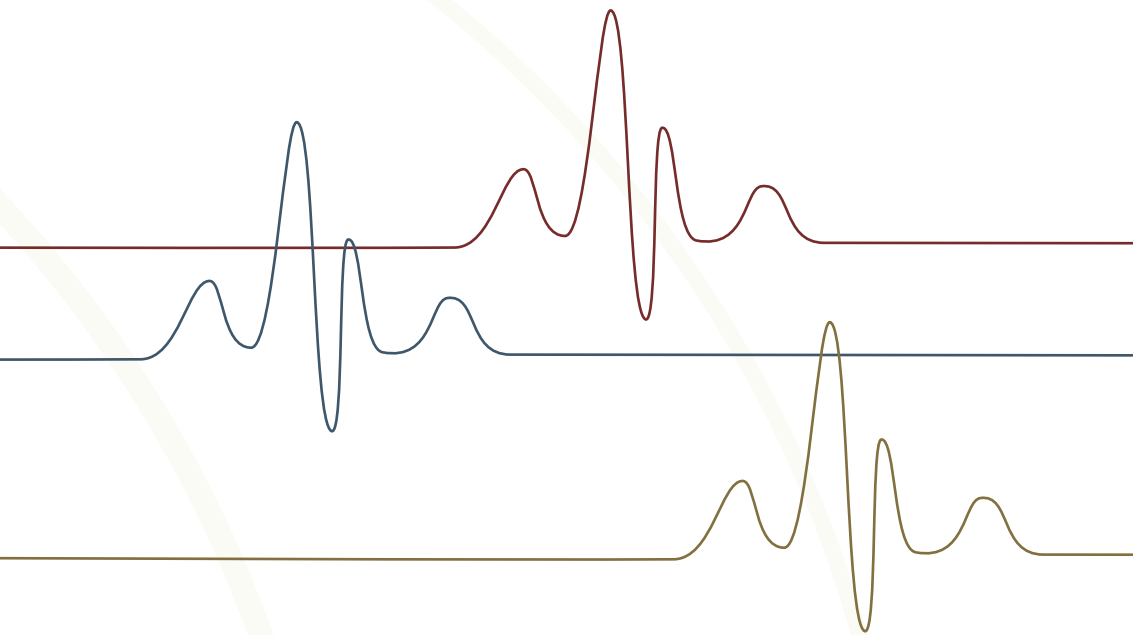
Herb Howe of Montana considers himself one of the lucky ones. This past summer, the former Washington State Trooper was driving on White Pass toward Yakima when he was struck by intense pain.

"All of a sudden, it felt like a semi truck had run through my left side, from my hip up to my shoulder," recalls Herb. "It was the worst, heaviest feeling I've ever had. I knew something was wrong, and I knew I was in trouble because there wasn't anything I could do out there. I needed to get to a hospital. I didn't know if I had internal bleeding, but if I did, I knew I was going to be gone pretty soon and I'd probably pass out and run into somebody, or go into the river."

Fortunately for Herb, two fellow travelers came to his aid when he stopped to ask for help. "Without any hesitation at all, they hopped in the driver's side of my vehicle and headed for the nearest Yakima hospital. I can't thank those two enough," he stresses.

Tests were run, and it was determined that Herb needed to be transferred to Yakima Regional immediately.

"I was told that Yakima Regional had the best people to handle this—period. The thoracic and cardiovascular surgeons, Dr. Nepal Chowdury and Dr. Baljit Sharma, who treated me, cover Eastern Washington into Idaho and Montana, and if they couldn't do it, they'd ship me on to Harborview in Seattle," Herb says. "They put me in an ambulance and took me to Yakima Regional. They ran tests and decided the aorta was the culprit. After that, I went straight into the operating room."



## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE AORTA TEARS?

The aorta is the main artery of the body and is an area of high blood pressure. When a defect develops, blood pressure can force the tear to open and allow blood to pass through. Since the blood is under pressure, it eventually splits (dissecting) the middle layer of the blood vessel, creating a new channel for blood. The channel's length grows over time and can result in the closing off of connection points to other arteries. In Herb's case, the entire aorta was involved.

"Fortunately, he was able to get to the hospital and have it diagnosed very quickly and taken into the operating room," says Dr. Chowdhury. "He did very well after the surgery and was able to return home within six days."

The cardiologists in Missoula who have seen Herb since his surgery were impressed. "They said 'Make sure you write a letter to the staff in the intensive care unit and advanced care unit and the doctors who operated on you because they saved your bacon,'" Herb relates. "They told me without the care I received, I wouldn't even be talking to them today."

Herb was also impressed with the service he received at Yakima Regional.

"I've been in several hospitals for other procedures, but the staff—everyone from the lady mopping the bathroom to the doctors and physical therapists—was super. They kept my wife advised. Several of my kids were there from various parts of the country as were some of my other relatives, and the staff managed to put up with them, too," he says with a laugh. "The facility itself and the people were just great. Every one of the employees I came in contact with treated my wife and me with the utmost respect and caring. If I have the misfortune again, I'd like to be right outside Yakima Regional's doors."

*For more information on services provided at Yakima Regional, please visit [www.yakimaregional.org](http://www.yakimaregional.org).*

## Rebuilding the Aorta

Approximately 2,000 cases of aortic dissection occur yearly in the United States. Nepal Chowdhury, MD, thoracic cardiovascular surgeon at Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center, says he and his cardiac team see approximately five to 10 cases per year. In surgery, damaged sections of the aorta are removed and a synthetic graft is often used to reconstruct the damaged vessel. Patients are usually given long-term treatment with drugs to reduce their blood pressure, even if they have had surgery.

### **Physicians at the Spine Center include:**

*Peter Gilmore, MD, neurologist*

*Eddie Meirelles, MD, PhD, neurosurgeon*

*Sören Singel, MD, neuroradiologist and neurosurgeon*

*Michael Thomas, DO, neurosurgeon*

# Keeping Your Spine in Line

The new Spine Center at Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center provides a comprehensive approach to spine care. From a thorough evaluation to rehabilitation, the Spine Center is designed to meet all medical and surgical needs for the simple to even the most complex spinal injury.

“The medical staff and hospital administration noticed a need in the community for a comprehensive approach to spinal injuries and disorders,” says Eddie Meirelles, MD, PhD, neurosurgeon at the Spine Center. “We realized with our vast array of experience and broad range of specialists, we could meet those needs.”

The new Spine Center is a joint effort between Central Washington Neurosciences Clinic and Yakima Regional. In order to provide an all-inclusive approach to spinal care, the Spine Center has experts on staff in the fields of neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry, orthopedic surgery, radiology, and physical therapy.

“The goal is to be able to provide comprehensive medical and surgical care to patients with spinal disorders utilizing a treatment program that is aimed at meeting their specific needs,” says Dr. Meirelles. “The Spine Center has the infrastructure necessary to optimize patient care and to provide a variety of approaches in the management of back and neck disorders caused by degenerative, traumatic, infectious, or cancer-related conditions.”

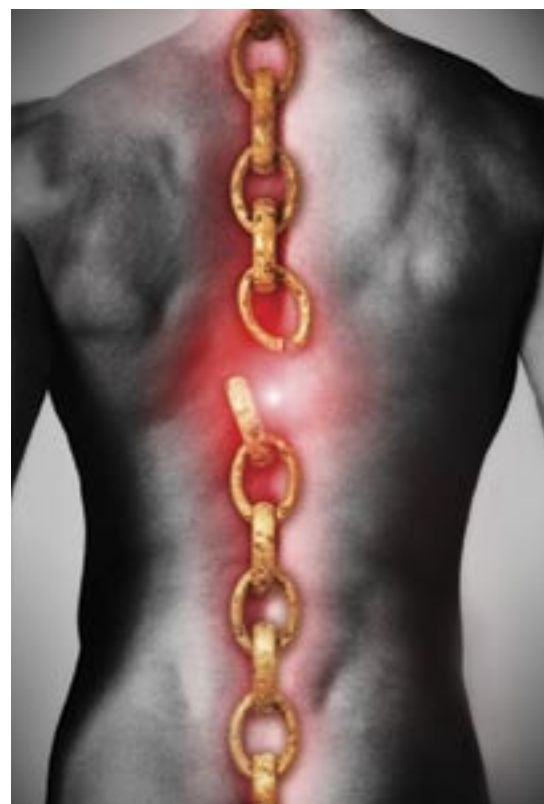
### **WIDE SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The Spine Center offers a variety of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, computed tomography (CT) scans, discograms, myelograms, nerve blocks, nuclear medicine studies, and X-rays.

A variety of treatments are available, ranging from minimally invasive procedures such as spinal injections (see “Injections Provide Relief Without Surgery”), nerve root blocks, kyphoplasty, and radiofrequency ablation. Experienced neurosurgeons on staff perform various complex spinal surgeries at the cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine, including decompressive procedures as well as stabilizing interventions.

As part of comprehensive spinal care, physical therapy is also offered on an inpatient and outpatient basis. Physical therapy is frequently used as an alternative to surgery or for rehabilitation after a spinal procedure.

If you suffer from neck or back pain, or think you have a spinal condition, speak to your primary care physician regarding a referral to the Spine Center.



### **Injections May Provide Relief Without Surgery**

Typically an outpatient procedure, steroid injections are a minimally invasive alternative to surgery that can help relieve back pain for patients who suffer from arthritis, osteoporosis, or pinched nerves.

During the procedure, X-ray imaging is used to guide a needle to the exact location of the source of pain and inject steroids and analgesics to reduce inflammation and pain.

The Spine Center at Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center offers a variety of spinal injections, including:

- facet joint injection (lumbar and cervical)
- lumbar epidural steroid injection
- lumbar transforaminal epidural steroid injection
- nerve root blocks (lumbar and cervical)
- sacroiliac joint steroid injection



Dennis Criswell, RRT, director of respiratory care services at Yakima Regional uses the endobronchial ultrasound machine.

# A New Tool in the Battle against Cancer

In November 2007, Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center became the first hospital in the region to offer endobronchial ultrasound—an advanced technology that allows physicians to visualize tumors and lymph nodes in the chest without performing an open surgical procedure.

**In the past**, physicians wanting to evaluate a patient's airways would perform a bronchoscopy by passing a lighted viewing tube called a scope through the patient's nose or mouth and into the airway. While this test was successful, bronchoscopy results were limited because it was impossible to visualize tumors or lymph nodes located outside the large passages that connect the trachea to the lungs.

The next generation of bronchoscopy—the endobronchial ultrasound—now allows physicians to perform the same procedure with real-time ultrasound guidance. As a result, physicians can mark the site of the growth and take biopsies without having to perform open thoracic surgery.

“An endobronchial ultrasound is the most accurate, noninvasive method we have to obtain an accurate diagnosis of lung cancer and correctly establish the stage of the disease,” says Dennis Criswell, RRT, director of respiratory care services at Yakima Regional. “By using this tool to quickly and more accurately diagnose the patient's disease, our oncologists are able to determine the best type of treatment for the patient without having to perform a series of invasive procedures.”

*For more information about endobronchial ultrasound, call (509) 575-5000.*



Barb Strutner, guest relations coordinator

## Guest Relations Impacts Cardiac Patient's Family

Yakima Regional and Cardiac Center's focus on patient and family comfort makes time spent in the hospital easier for all involved.

**After being** admitted to Sunnyside Community Hospital, Barbara Wickham's family was told she might not survive the transfer to Yakima Regional.

By the time they arrived at Yakima Regional, Barbara's family was scared, confused, and desperate for information. After spending their first night in the ICU waiting room, Wickham's daughter, Theresa Hancock, received a visit from Barb Strutner, Yakima Regional's guest relations coordinator. Strutner serves as a link between families and Yakima Regional caregivers.

“She was able to provide us with information and really cared about our comfort level during my mom's stay,” Theresa says.

Physicians diagnosed Barbara with takotsubo cardiomyopathy (TC). Although this condition can be life threatening, once the diagnosis is made and treated, patients usually return to their regular lifestyle with no long-term heart defects.

During Barbara's 20-day stay at Yakima Regional, Strutner became a family fixture and made sure the family's needs were addressed.

### A JOB WELL DONE

Barbara and her family made sure the Yakima Regional staff knew their efforts were appreciated. Barbara, Theresa, and other family members crocheted dishtowels and wrote personal notes to everyone who cared for them. Intensive care unit and ambulatory care unit nurses, respiratory therapists, housekeeping staff, and Strutner all received these special handmade gifts.

Strutner maintains that at Yakima Regional, guest relations is everyone's job. From patient care employees to housekeeping end security, everyone works together to ensure patients and family members are comfortable and cared for.

“Guest relations isn't a position, it is a process,” Strutner says. “It involves every one of us.”

## Cardiac Rehabilitation Classes

Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center offers the following free classes in the ICCU Conference Room. Call (509) 573-3592 to find out more about dates and times and to register.

### Life Effectiveness Training

Led by Patricia Robinson, PhD, this class encourages you to clarify values that provide a sense of meaning and effectiveness in life and supports your lifestyle behavioral change efforts. Making changes in our daily life is challenging, and there are always barriers to pursuing valued directions. New ideas and skills often help us address barriers successfully. Every class is unique, as Dr. Robinson accommodates the interests and needs of those attending. Choose your lifestyle and pursue it!

### Heart Basics

This class is designed to give you an understanding of how your heart works, as well as diagnosis and treatment options for heart disease. Risk factors, signs and symptoms of heart attack, and skills to assist you in living with your cardiac disease will be covered.

### Heart-Healthy Eating

Changing what you eat is one of the most effective ways to reduce cholesterol and blood pressure levels, and lose weight. Today's foods and recipes offer many good-tasting choices. Topics to be discussed and information may include: nutrition guidelines, label facts, restaurant dining, and "good" versus "bad" fats. Also included are clarification of terms such as cholesterol, fat, unsaturated fat, etc. Learn how food and exercise work together to improve your numbers. (Please attend Heart-Healthy Eating before attending Label Reading.)

### Label Reading

Learn what facts on food labels are important and how to apply this information to your individual needs.

## One-on-One Nutritional Counseling

A registered dietitian is a reliable source of food and nutrition advice, can separate fact from fad, and can translate scientific findings into easy-to-understand information. One-on-one nutritional counseling with a registered dietitian can help you create an eating pattern and nutrition program designed especially for you.

### Principles of Exercise

This class will highlight aerobic exercise, strength, and flexibility. Answers to the following questions will be addressed:

- How often should I exercise?
- How long should I exercise?
- How do I know how hard to exercise?
- What if I don't even like to exercise?

### Stretch, Flex, and Relax!

This class discusses the importance of maintaining flexibility through stretching. In addition, the class covers ways to use stretching exercises as a form of relaxation when dealing with stress.

### Understanding Your Medications

This class offers expert advice concerning problems frequently encountered with medications, how to make your prescription dollar count, medication rules to save your life, and what to do when medication becomes your worst enemy.

### Tobacco 101

This class is designed to help you understand nicotine addiction and why it is so hard to quit. You will learn about the benefits of quitting tobacco use and tips on how to develop a successful quit plan.

Want more information? Call (509) 573-3592.

## Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center

Jay Finnegan, CEO

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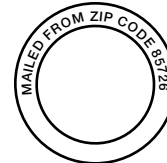
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**House Call** is published by Yakima Regional Medical and Cardiac Center as a public service to the people of Central Washington. This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

Editor: Janice Richards, marketing director  
(509) 575-5282



110 S. 9th Avenue,  
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