

Evergreen Healthcare's commitment to provide services outside the walls of our hospital is unique on the Eastside and contributes significantly to the health and well-being of our community. In this continuing series, we highlight some of the programs made possible by your levy support.

“We take the extra time to really listen to our patients...”

On any given day, you might find 81-year-old Evelyn Driscoll working at the Evergreen Healthcare Thrift Shop, volunteering for the Auxiliary or organizing a cancer survivor support group. Driscoll credits the care she receives at Evergreen's Senior Health Specialists for allowing her to maintain her busy lifestyle.

“I don't want to sit around in some nursing home marking time,” Driscoll explains. “The Senior Health Specialists allow me to take charge of my own health care and enable me to give back to the community.”

SPECIALIZED CARE FOR SENIORS

The Senior Health Specialists provide specialized primary care for seniors, particularly those with multiple health problems. The practice includes five physicians – geriatricians and internists with a special interest in the elderly – as well as registered nurses, social workers, physician assistants, a pharmacist and a consulting psychiatrist. All have enhanced training in treating the elderly.

They meet weekly to assess and plan for the needs of each patient and their families. This “team” approach to managing chronic conditions reduces the need for emergency department visits or hospitalization.

“We take the extra time to really listen to our patients so we can understand their needs and their families' needs,” explains Dr. Connie Smith, co-managing physician for the Senior Health Specialists. “We care for each patient's total well-being as well as any illness or disease. Our goal is to keep seniors healthy, active and living life to its fullest.”

The Senior Health Specialists clinic is designed for those with limited mobility, and special features such as low examination tables make it easier for seniors to access services. The clinic even handles insurance billings.



Connie Smith, MD



Evelyn Driscoll volunteers at the Evergreen Thrift Shop.

Each new patient receives a comprehensive geriatric assessment, and appointments are longer, to allow a thorough review and assessment of each patient's status.

SUPPORT SYSTEM

Following colon cancer surgery in 2004, Evelyn Driscoll's home health nurse noticed that she wasn't getting better and alerted Dr. Smith, who coordinated testing and treatment for a post-operative infection. When Driscoll fractured an elbow and her pelvis a few months later, Dr. Smith continued to coordinate her care, while her regular home care nurse continued her case management and a social worker provided discharge planning.

Driscoll appreciates the care. “It's wonderful to have a health care support system geared to the needs of seniors,” she says.

The Senior Health Specialists are located in the Totem Lake Medical Plaza, just across I-405 from Evergreen Hospital Medical Center. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 425.899.6800 or visit our Web site at www.evergreenhealthcare.org.

ABOUT THE EVERGREEN LEVY

About 2.7 percent – roughly \$13.2 million – of Evergreen Healthcare's annual operating budget comes from the levy money paid to King County Public Hospital District No. 2. Some of this money is used to pay for buildings and equipment; the rest funds innovative community health programs to meet the diverse needs of the area we serve. The taxation rate for 2006 is \$.31 per thousand, or \$77.21 for a \$250,000 home.



Evergreen Horizons Newsletter

The quarterly Evergreen Horizons newsletter contains timely health information for seniors as well as a complete listing of health classes and other senior programs. For your free subscription, call 425.899.2661.