



Welcome to Memorial Hermann Life Flight's quarterly newsletter for first responders. We hope you find the information contained within this publication interesting and informative. Our goal is to provide you with helpful articles about our services, case studies relevant to clinical protocols practiced on a daily basis, information about available educational opportunities, and any other updates that you as a first responder may find useful. We value the work you do and are grateful for your partnership as we work together to serve the people of Houston and its surrounding communities. Thank you.

### Memorial Hermann Life Flight's Advanced Capabilities:

- Pre-hospital blood product administration
- LVAD
- ECMO
- Intra-aortic balloon pump
- Portable blood warmers
- Ultrasound diagnostics
- Double-load capability
- Larger cabin (allows for CPR in the aircraft)
- Clot-busting agents for STEMI
- Direct access to cath lab for STEMI
- Direct access to CT for strokes
- ISTAT portable blood analyzer
- Video-assisted intubations
- Hemostatic agents for blood clotting
- Direct contact with physicians
- Night vision goggles for all crew members during flight to improve safety
- Twin-engine aircraft for patient and crew member safety and extra weight-loading capabilities
- Pediatric and neonatal transport services

## Memorial Hermann Health System Announces Benjamin K. Chu, M.D., as New President and CEO

Following an extensive nationwide search that included both internal and external candidates, the Memorial Hermann Health System Board recently announced the appointment of Benjamin K. Chu, M.D., MPH, MACP, as president and CEO of Memorial Hermann Health System. Dr. Chu – a well-respected national thought leader in the healthcare industry – brings to Memorial Hermann an accomplished, four-decade-long career as a physician, administrator and policy advocate.

Dr. Chu succeeds former president and CEO Dan Wolterman, who impressively and passionately led Memorial Hermann for 17 years.

Dr. Chu previously served as the executive vice president of Kaiser Foundation Hospitals and Health Plan, Inc., and Group President of Kaiser Permanente Southern California and Georgia regions. He directed health plan and hospital operations for 14 hospitals and 237 medical offices, serving more than 4.5 million members in Southern California and Georgia. Dr. Chu, who also served on the organization's national executive team, helped set the short- and long-term strategies of Kaiser Permanente, one of America's leading healthcare



Benjamin K. Chu, M.D., MPH, MACP

*“Ben is a proven leader with extensive national experience and a demonstrative ability to elevate an organization to the next level.”*

**WILL WILLIAMS,**  
Memorial Hermann  
Board Chair

providers and not-for-profit health plans, with an emphasis on quality and patient safety, physician integration and population health.

“Ben is a proven leader with extensive national experience and a demonstrated ability to elevate an organization to the next level,” said Will Williams, Memorial Hermann Board Chair. “We are confident he will be able to continue our mission of advancing health in Southeast Texas.” The complexity and size of an organization like Memorial Hermann called for a thoughtful and thorough selection process.

According to Williams, “After a comprehensive search that included strong and capable internal candidates, the decision to appoint Ben as the new president and CEO came

*(continued on page 2)*

down to his exceptional experience. That, along with his remarkable career, passion for people and commitment towards patient-centered care, is what makes Ben the right leader at the right time, and we are thrilled to welcome him to the Memorial Hermann family.”

In his career with Kaiser Permanente, Dr. Chu focused on quality, patient safety and service delivery, resulting in a number of national accolades. He effectively implemented a fully integrated electronic health record system and population health management tools in the Southern California Region and helped expand Kaiser Permanente’s health plan membership to 10.5 million for the entire program. Notably, he also successfully managed a multiyear, \$13 billion capital program.

Before joining Kaiser Permanente, Dr. Chu was president of New York City’s Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), the largest public hospital system in the country. In 1994, he was acting commissioner of health for the New York City Department of Health.

Dr. Chu also has experience as an academic health center leader, serving as senior associate dean at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. At New York University School of Medicine and Medical Center, Dr. Chu was associate dean and vice president for Clinical Affairs. As a policy advocate, Dr. Chu was a Robert Wood Johnson Policy Fellow, working as the legislative assistant for health for New Jersey

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**BENJAMIN CHU, M.D., MPH, MACP**

strategies, including the transformation from a hospital-centric system to one that is based on patient-centered care,” said Dr. Chu. “I’m deeply humbled and honored to join the System and look forward to building upon Dan’s legacy and continuing the journey he started to make Memorial Hermann a high-reliability organization, focused on population health.”

Officially retiring Aug. 1, Wolterman will work with Dr. Chu over the course of the coming months to effectively transition his role.

Wolterman joined Memorial Hermann in 1999 and was promoted to CEO in 2002. Known for his passion for creating solutions to increase access to care for the underserved and uninsured, he spearheaded the creation of the Memorial Hermann Community Benefit Corporation.

His tenure as CEO saw Memorial Hermann achieve year-over-year double-digit growth, and ascend to the largest not-for-profit health system in Southeast Texas and one of the largest in the country, while expanding to 14 hospitals with more than

Sen. Bill Bradley. In 2014, Dr. Chu, who gained a national profile in health policy, was elected chair of the American Hospital Association Board of Trustees, becoming the top elected official who represents America’s hospitals and health systems.

“I’ve admired the success of Memorial Hermann from a distance and have always been impressed with its forward-thinking

24,000 employees and 5,500 affiliated physicians. Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center, the System’s flagship hospital, is home to the country’s busiest Level I trauma center and is the primary teaching hospital for McGovern Medical School at UTHealth.

Dr. Chu’s appointment as president and CEO marks the first time in Memorial Hermann’s history a physician will be leading the System. The move is indicative of the changing landscape in health care where the successful future of the industry relies on the true integration of provider and physicians, according to Williams.

“Physician integration is a key tenet of Memorial Hermann’s operations. For two consecutive years, Memorial Hermann has led the country’s most successful Accountable Care Organization (ACO), and has been at the forefront of practicing innovative, evidence-based medicine to better manage populations, improve outcomes and deliver value for the healthcare dollar,” said Williams.

While Dr. Chu has nearly 30 years of experience in healthcare administration, he began his career as a primary care internist in Brooklyn, New York.

“I am first and foremost a clinician who became an administrator because I wanted to change our healthcare delivery system to a markedly more effective outcome-oriented, patient-centric model,” said Dr. Chu.

Dr. Chu earned his medical degree at New York University, his master’s degree in public health from Columbia University and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Yale University. He is married to artist Donna Moylan and has three adult children.

# Memorial Hermann Pearland Opens Its Doors

The cranes and construction crews are gone, and in their place is the new Memorial Hermann Pearland Hospital – a 250,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art healthcare facility that ushers in a higher level of quality and safe care to the Pearland community.

The hospital, along with the Convenient Care Center and adjoining medical office buildings, make up a 40-acre comprehensive medical campus. Memorial Hermann Pearland becomes the 14th hospital in the Memorial Hermann Health System.

“This is an exciting time for us as we open our hospital and I say *our* hospital because many of our employees, including myself, live in Pearland,” says Mario Garner, senior vice president and CEO of Memorial Hermann Pearland. “We want Memorial Hermann Pearland to quickly become the hospital of choice for the residents of Pearland, Alvin, Angleton, Manvel and surrounding communities.”

With its 64 beds, Memorial Hermann Pearland offers a number of high-quality services and specialties, including orthopedics and sports medicine, neurology, general surgery, heart and vascular, labor and delivery, gastroenterology and urology.

As an added amenity, Pearland Café, located inside Memorial Hermann Pearland, is

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**MARIO GARNER, Senior Vice President and CEO of Memorial Hermann Pearland**



Memorial Hermann Pearland, which opened in March, becomes the 14th hospital in the Memorial Hermann Health System.

open to the public serving breakfast from 7:00 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. and lunch from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. daily. While

at the hospital, patients and guests can also view Pearland’s historical timeline located just off the hospital’s main lobby. The timeline, which was developed in coordination with the Pearland Historical Society, illustrates the history of Pearland dating back to the early 1800s.

“We wanted our patients and their families to walk through our doors and into a warm, welcoming environment,” says Garner. “The unique architectural design of the

hospital – which includes high ceilings and a lot of natural light – promotes a

comforting healing environment for all. Equally important, the new hospital offers advanced, state-of-the-art technology to expertly address any healthcare need of the patient.”

The medical campus will offer additional benefits as part of the Memorial Hermann Health System. For example, if a patient arrives at Memorial Hermann Pearland in need of a higher level of care, he or she may be transferred to Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital, or Memorial Hermann Life Flight® can quickly and safely transport patients to Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center or Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital.

Memorial Hermann Pearland is located at 16100 South Freeway on the southbound side of Highway 288 near FM 518.



## Memorial Hermann Opens Convenient Care Center in Cypress

**M**emorial Hermann recently opened its 45,000-square-foot Convenient Care Center in Cypress. The facility provides highly coordinated access to adult and pediatric primary care via Memorial Hermann Medical Group, as well as affiliated specialty physicians, sports medicine and rehabilitation, lab services, outpatient imaging – including The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center Breast Care with Memorial Hermann – and a 24-hour emergency center.

“Bringing access to quality health care in Houston’s communities is priority for Memorial Hermann,” said Dan Wolterman, former Memorial Hermann president and CEO and advisor to the Memorial Hermann Health System board of directors. “The opening of our Convenient Care Center in Cypress is the first step to giving the growing community the ability to receive specialty care close to home.”



Located at 27700 Northwest Freeway near the Grand Parkway, the Convenient Care Center is designed to take the stress out of scheduling appointments for routine health needs by offering families options such as walk-in access and extended evening and weekend hours for primary care – Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. For added convenience, appointments also can be scheduled online by visiting [www.memorialhermann.org/cypress-ccc](http://www.memorialhermann.org/cypress-ccc).

“Today marks a major milestone in our phased approach to bring unparalleled healthcare access to this community,” said Scott Barbe, CEO, Memorial Hermann Cypress. “Our Convenient Care Center offers flexibility to complement today’s busy lifestyles in a single location, and we are honored to become a trusted partner for the residents of Cypress.”

The Convenient Care Center, housed on the first floor of the newly-opened Medical Plaza, is the first phase of Memorial Hermann’s \$168 million medical campus in Cypress, which will be anchored by an 81-bed acute care hospital that is currently under construction. This development is part of Memorial Hermann’s growth initiative – *Breaking New Ground* – created to meet current and future healthcare needs in the Greater Houston area.

Slated for completion in Spring 2017, the hospital will house eight operating rooms, a 16-bed intensive care unit, a neonatal intensive care unit, a cardiac catheterization lab, and a dedicated Memorial Hermann Life Flight® helipad, with room to expand.

Houston’s 12-county region has a projected five-year (2015-2020) population growth rate of 7.6 percent. The Cypress area alone has a projected population growth rate of more than 11 percent in the same time period. Cypress also is home to the three largest growing zip codes (77433, 77377, and 77499) as well as the three largest populated zip codes (77429, 77095, and 77433).

“As Cypress continues to grow, so will Memorial Hermann,” added Barbe. The campus has the footprint to accommodate significant future growth, including two additional medical plazas and two additional patient bed towers, bringing the total bed count to more than 400 beds.

The economic impact also will serve the local community, as the new Convenient Care Center brings with it 50-plus job opportunities, both clinical and administrative. More than 250 additional job opportunities will become available when the hospital opens next year.

The Cypress Convenient Care Center joins sister facilities in Summer Creek, Sienna Plantation, Pearland and South Katy.

For more information on Memorial Hermann Cypress, call 832.658.3100 or visit [www.memorialhermann.org/cypress-ccc](http://www.memorialhermann.org/cypress-ccc).

# Local Family Raises Awareness of Nation's First Mobile Stroke Unit

**R**andi and Johnny Carrabba – of Houston's original, family-owned Carrabba's Italian Grill – recently hosted an event for more than 50 guests to educate them about the nation's first mobile stroke unit (MSU), a research program spearheaded by a partnership between Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center and McGovern Medical School at UTHealth. Introduced in 2014 under the direction of James Grotta, M.D., director of stroke research in the Clinical Institute for Research & Innovation at Memorial Hermann-TMC and director of the mobile stroke unit consortium, the MSU is the first specialized ambulance for prehospital stroke treatment in the United States. It provides all diagnostic tools, including a CT scanner and stroke expertise that result in therapeutic treatment at the site of the emergency, and if it is determined that a patient is having a stroke caused by a blood clot, the clot-busting drug tPA also can be administered onboard.

Randi and Johnny's cousin, Joe Carrabba, was treated on the MSU after experiencing stroke-like symptoms in his home at the age of 59. Due to the unit's ability to treat stroke patients within the first "golden hour" after the onset of symptoms, Carrabba recovered with no residual physical or speech deficits and was discharged from Memorial Hermann Mischer Neuroscience Institute at the Texas Medical Center (MNI) three days after his stroke. Carrabba shared his profound appreciation for the MSU at the event stating, "My wife, Donna, knew something was wrong and immediately called 911.

I owe my life to my wife, the fast response of EMS, Dr. Grotta's vision for the MSU and the MNI team. I would not be standing here talking to you tonight if it were not for them."

"It typically takes an hour once a stroke patient arrives in the emergency room to receive treatment, and that's not counting transport time. In these situations, every minute – every second – counts, so the earlier the clinical team can intervene, the better the outcome," Dr. Grotta told guests.

According to Dr. Grotta, this innovative model for delivering acute stroke treatment is advancing stroke care within the Greater Houston area and has the potential for broad impact across the nation. If patients can be evaluated, imaged and treated before they are transported via ambulance to an emergency department, critical time can be saved. He says this vital step greatly increases the odds of a patient being discharged directly home after their stroke.

David Perse, M.D., City of Houston EMS Medical Director, said, "The MSU makes it possible for the team to treat stroke patients quickly, swiftly and effectively." The MSU is operated in conjunction with EMS of Houston, Bellaire and West University Fire Departments.



The nation's first mobile stroke unit provides all diagnostic tools, including a CT scanner and stroke expertise that result in therapeutic treatment at the site of emergency.

This year, the team will embark on Phase II of the research trial. "Philanthropic assistance is needed to support this next phase, which includes a second unit and expanded hours of operation. The groundbreaking project has great promise to dramatically improve stroke outcomes and impact countless lives," said Grotta.

To learn more about the MSU or ways to support the project, visit [www.memorialhermann/msu](http://www.memorialhermann/msu).

## From Patient to Caregiver: Nurse's Personal Journey Comes Full Circle

**S**un Ko doesn't remember the horrible car crash, the urgent rush to the hospital aboard a Memorial Hermann Life Flight® helicopter, or the emergency surgery to stop the swelling in her brain that would've killed her. But UTHealth neurosurgeon Dr. Ryan Kitagawa remembers her.

It was late on Thanksgiving night in 2013 when Ko was wheeled into the operating room at Memorial Hermann Texas Trauma Institute. Ko had been driving to dinner when she stopped along U.S. Highway 290 to offer assistance to an accident victim on the side of the road. That's when another driver slammed into her, flinging Ko's body into her own vehicle. The impact crushed the entire right side of Ko's face and left her with bruises on her cerebellum, an area in the back of the brain responsible for balance and movement.

The injury could've killed her, but Dr. Kitagawa – who is affiliated with Memorial Hermann Mischer Neuroscience Institute at the Texas Medical Center – spent hours meticulously removing a section of Ko's skull to relieve the pressure on her brain. The emergency procedure helped save Ko's life.

“That kind of injury is very rare in trauma cases because it's an area of the brain that's not often injured,” Dr. Kitagawa said. “And people who sustain those kinds of injuries typically don't survive long enough to make it to the hospital.”

The story could've ended there. Instead, Ko's experience and her weeks long

recovery at Mischer Neuroscience Institute in 2013 was the start of a transformation that would lead her back, more than two years later, to the very same place where she received the lifesaving surgery.

At the time of the accident, the 26-year-old had been studying to become a nurse. She had already completed three semesters of nursing school and she was nearing the end of her fourth. She planned to graduate, take her licensing exam, and then find a job working in oncology. But the injuries she sustained put her life on hold. She was in a coma for weeks before moving to TIRR Memorial Hermann to complete her rehabilitation.

After months of painstaking rehab, Ko decided to return to school in the fall semester of 2014 to finish her nursing degree. School had always been tough, but Ko found it especially difficult to concentrate after the accident. The traumatic experience left her shaken, struggling to cope with what happened to her, and she failed the semester.

“After the accident, I was so miserable and depressed,” she said. “It was consuming my life. I just felt so sad and alone. I was so young, and it felt like my life had stopped while everyone else's had just started.”

According to Dr. Kitagawa, Ko's struggles were



While Sun Ko does not remember much from the night of her horrific car accident in 2013, she often thinks of the first responders and Memorial Hermann Life Flight® crew members who played a crucial role in saving her life.

typical of traumatic brain injury survivors. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says traumatic brain injury is a leading cause of death and disability in the United States, contributing to about 30 percent of all injury-related fatalities and resulting in 138 deaths every day. Those who survive can struggle with impaired thinking or memory, loss of movement, vision and hearing, personality changes and depression. Those complications can linger for days, weeks or a lifetime.



“It’s a pretty devastating disease because it affects all aspects of your life, even the relationships you have with your family, friends and co-workers,” Dr. Kitagawa said. “There’s a social stigma surrounding brain damage that’s unfair. There’s this connotation that survivors are in a total vegetative state, or they are so severely disabled, when in fact, there are lots of people like Sun who are able to recover to normal.”

Despite the hardships created by the injury, not to mention the multiple facial reconstruction surgeries she would require in the months and years that followed, Ko said she was determined not to let the event define her life. “I didn’t know how hard the road was going to be, but I had this feeling like I had to do this.” She returned to school the following semester, passed all of her classes and became the first in her family to graduate with a college degree.

Although her heart had always been in oncology, when it came time to apply for jobs, Ko saw an opening for a nursing position in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Mischer Neuroscience Institute, one

of the largest and busiest ICUs of its kind in the country. It also happened to be the very ICU that had taken such great care of her not so long ago. “I thought, ‘How cool would it be if I could go back?’” she said. “So I applied for it.” And she got it.

On her first day on the job, on her very first shift on the floor, Ko ran into Dr. Kitagawa. At first, the neurosurgeon didn’t recognize his former patient in her bright blue scrubs. But then she smiled. “Right then, I immediately knew who she was,” he said. “This is why we do what we do.”

For Ko, the experience was surreal. “Not only did he save my life, but he gave me a second chance to live it all over again. I’m forever indebted to him. He’s seriously my hero.”

Ko is now working on paying that debt forward to patients who are in the same

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position. As she makes her rounds each day, she’s reminded of the challenges she faced and the tough times her family endured. With each patient, she shows the same compassion and provides the same high-quality care that was given to her and her family. “They are more than just patients to me. I truly understand what they’re going through.”

In addition, she recently joined the Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center, where she’s found comfort and peace in sharing her experience with others. “It’s really therapeutic,” she said. “And when I tell people in the group, ‘I was also a patient here and now I’m a nurse,’ they’re so happy. I just want to be an inspiration to others with traumatic brain injuries to show them what they can accomplish.”

*TIRR is a registered trademark of TIRR Foundation.*



## May is National Stroke Month

While stroke threatens millions of lives, it is largely preventable, treatable and beatable. National Stroke Month is recognized in May to raise awareness of risk factors and symptoms of stroke. As any first responder knows, time is critical when it comes to treating strokes. Please help us spread the message – if you see the warning signs of a stroke, act FAST:

### **FAST can help people remember the warning signs of a stroke.**

- F – FACE:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- A – ARMS:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- S – SPEECH:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?
- T – TIME:** If you observe any of these signs, act quickly. If given within three hours of the first symptom, the thrombolytic drug tPA can reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke.

**For more information, visit [www.strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org).**

## Black Hawk Helicopter Lands at Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital as Part of Hurricane Exercise

**H**urricane season begins June 1 and Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital intends to be ready if called upon during a major disaster. Recently, a Texas Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter landed on the helipad at Memorial Hermann Southwest as part of a hurricane preparedness exercise.

In the event of a major disaster, where access to the Level I trauma centers in the Texas Medical Center are at capacity or inaccessible, Memorial Hermann Southwest is prepared to serve as a go-to trauma center for the Greater Houston area. The hurricane preparedness exercise was intended to familiarize Army National Guard pilots with the helipad and layout of Memorial Hermann Southwest, should they need to land at the hospital for potential patient transports.

“As a Level III trauma center, our dedicated staff and affiliated physicians are prepared to care for critical and urgent medical emergencies,” says Laura Price, director, emergency and trauma services at Memorial Hermann Southwest. “Should we be faced with a major disaster in our

area, including the potential devastation a hurricane can cause, we are prepared to care for the community we have now been serving for nearly 40 years. We feel strongly that it is not only our responsibility to do so, but also our great privilege to care for our residents when they need it the most.”

The exercise gave Memorial Hermann Southwest emergency department staff and affiliated physicians the opportunity to simulate what it might be like transferring patients into the hospital from the larger helicopter. The UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter is 65 feet long and the main rotor has a 54-foot diameter. The helicopters currently in use by Memorial Hermann Life Flight® are about 42 feet in length and the main rotor has a diameter of 36 feet.

“Doing an exercise like this is huge for us because we can familiarize ourselves with a location and the staff before we’re in a crisis situation,” says Lieutenant Colonel Troy Meuth, Texas Army National Guard. “We’re thinking about 100 things during a disaster and being able to go through this exercise helps us take one of those things off the list.”



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To transfer a patient, please contact the Transfer Center at 713.704.2500.



Memorial Hermann Southwest employees participate in a hurricane preparedness exercise with the help of a Texas Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

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