

# Union General earns Chest Pain Center Accreditation for second time



L-R: Cardiologist Dr. John Kelley, Quality Director Cheryl Curtis, Chief Nursing Officer Julia Barnett, and Hospital CEO Lewis Kelley.  
Photo by Jarrett Whitener

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Once again, the American College of Cardiology has recognized Union General Hospital for medical excellence by acknowledging the hospital with Chest Pain Center Accreditation.

To reach the goal of accreditation, the hospital underwent a rigorous, self-imposed quality improvement program, taking a year to prepare for the onsite survey that occurred in October.

"The standards are rigid, they are national, and they generally and traditionally have applied to larger institutions, and we are one of the few rural hospitals to obtain certification," said Dr. John Kelley, a cardiologist with Piedmont Heart and medical director for the Chest Pain Center at Union General.

Continued Dr. Kelley, "Certification means that we have a planned template for management of any person, regardless of age, that comes into the emergency room with

chest pain. It's not a hit or miss – there's an algorithm, a template for management, and every single person gets managed that way."

Part of that planned management is a stratification of patients into one of three categories depending on symptoms and test results, according to Dr. Kelley.

"If you have chest discomfort, after appropriate testing, very quickly done, you will be stratified into a low risk, a moderate or intermediate risk, or a high risk," said Dr. Kelley. "If you are in the high risk, it may require transport to an appropriate institution for urgent heart catheterization, stent, or ultimately, sometimes bypass surgery."

"If you are at moderate risk, you will be admitted into the hospital with additional testing. If you are at low risk, you've been ruled out for any acute abnormalities, and you will be followed up in the office or by your primary care physician."

Team members in the Chest Pain Center worked to get the accreditation not because

they had to, but because it could only benefit these North Georgia Mountain communities.

"We chose to do this," said Julia Barnett, Chief Nursing Officer and Chest Pain Coordinator. "It's not something we have to do. It's an extra thing that we chose to do because it's the right thing to do for our patients."

There are two big illnesses that affect this area more than others, according to Dr. Kelley: heart disease and colon cancer.

"It's just significantly increased compared to the average population," said Dr. Kelley. "Why? Because we have a lot of smokers and a lot of people that are overweight, a lot of people that have poor health habits and traditionally have not sought medical advice until they got critical."

Of course, having a population that's prone to heart disease is just one of the many reasons why it is so important that the hospital chose to pursue Chest Pain Center Accreditation, which it has been awarded now for the second time in a row.

"I think heart health is very important, and just like Dr. Kelley said, it's one of the major causes of death," said Hospital CEO Lewis Kelley. "Of course, I think the more you focus on something, the better you get at it, so we are just really happy with what we have, and I think all employees are motivated to make stuff like this happen."

For more information on the symptoms and early signs of heart-related problems, the hospital recommends the early heart attack care website DeputyHeartAttack.org.

## Old Courthouse on the Square special Christmas concert

The Union County Historical Society presents "Christmas Favorites Meet Broadway" performed by W. Gordon Graff and Jay Robert Golden on Friday, December 21st at 7 PM, in the Old Courthouse on the Square in Blairsville. The concert will feature popular Christmas favorites as well as songs from Broadway. This will be the final Friday night concert of the 2018 concert series.

Dress warm - as our heating system is under repair and space heaters will be used in the courtroom.

William returns to the Old Courthouse for his 11th performance with musician/singer/songwriter Jay Robert Golden.

William's music interest began in high school as a member of the band "The Berets." He later developed into performing songs from Broadway to classic rock to contemporary and pop music.

Jay Golden began his musical career playing guitar at the tender age of 13. He has started and joined, since 1968, numerous bands playing: country, blues, rock, folk, gospel and contemporary Christian music. Jay currently feels privileged and so glad to be part of "Over-



W. Gordon Graff

flow @ The Well" at FUMC in Blairsville. Jay also has begun a solo tour "BluJay on the Fly."

The concert will include the Christmas Classics: "Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire," "O Holy Night," "Comfort and Joy," "I'll Be Home For Christmas," "Do You Hear What I Hear?" and many other classic songs.

The concert will also feature two songs from Broadway, family favorites from *Fiddler on the Roof* - "Sunrise Sunset" and from *Phantom of the Opera* - "Music of the Night" and ending with Leonard Cohen's



Jay Robert Golden

"Hallelujah."

So why not come and join us for the Friday night Christmas concert this holiday weekend, bring your friends - make new friends. Inside, the museum is decorated in a Christmas spirit; four Christmas trees and all exhibit rooms have a holiday decor. There is never an admission charge to concerts presented by the Union County Historical Society. The musicians donate their time and talents. Voluntary contributions to the maintenance fund are always appreciated.

## Earthquake...from Page 1A

10 years ago.

More than just Baxter and the four people who called dispatch felt the Dec. 12 quake in Union County, however, with reports coming in from all over via social media later that day.

And the same general area in Eastern Tennessee experienced at least three more earthquakes in the days following the Dec. 12 incident, though none of those – two 3.0s and a 2.7 magnitude quake – were strong enough to

noticeably shift the ground in Georgia.

Earthquakes are measured using the Richter magnitude scale, which was developed in 1935 by Charles F. Richter of the California Institute of Technology as a mathematical device to compare earthquake sizes, according to Earthquake.USGS.gov.

"On the Richter Scale, magnitude is expressed in whole numbers and decimal fractions," according to the website. "For

example, a magnitude 5.3 might be computed for a moderate earthquake, and a strong earthquake might be rated as magnitude 6.3.

"Because of the logarithmic basis of the scale, each whole number increase in magnitude represents a tenfold increase in measured amplitude; as an estimate of energy, each whole number step in the magnitude scale corresponds to the release of about 31 times more energy than the amount associated with the preceding whole number value."

## Heaton...from Page 1A

was set," continues Samuel, "this case (Heaton) was expected to last no more than two weeks.

"Now, however, with the superseding indictment, the government anticipates that the trial will last longer than two weeks, thus extending into the first date of the Olsen specially set trial."

Samuel concludes the motion by affirming that both the U.S. government and Heaton's co-defendants consent to the motion to continue, or postpone, Heaton's trial.

"Dr. Heaton requests that this court continue his trial to

a later date in the interest of justice," writes Samuel.

U.S. Magistrate Judge J. Clay Fuller of the Northern District of Georgia had previously certified the case as ready for trial on Aug. 28, according to court documents.

All three men pleaded not guilty to the federal charges earlier this year on April 9, after a federal grand jury handed up a 212-count indictment listing the Gowder brothers and Dr. Heaton as defendants on April 4.

Each defendant is presumed innocent of the

charges, according to the U.S. District Attorney's Office in Atlanta, "and it will be the government's burden to prove each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial."

As previously reported, prior to their Feb. 4, 2016, arrests in Union County, Mike Gowder was the CEO of Union General Hospital and Dr. Heaton ran a family practice clinic in Blairsville.

Dr. David Gowder was the emergency room director at Union General Hospital at the time of his initial arrest for allegedly attempting to fill fraudulent prescriptions in Fannin County on April 1, 2015, according to authorities.