

HEALTH NEWS from

SPRING 2017

Northwest

Passion. Commitment. Experience.

Building a strong **SUPPORT SYSTEM** at Northwest

**“They have given me
my family,” says
Marla Flores**

Questions for expectant
moms answered

.....

Important news for
Medicare beneficiaries

Marla Flores, with her
children, Mariela and
Max, shares her story.

Compliments of

 **Northwest**

Northwest FROM THE CEO



It is a privilege to introduce you to the family on the cover of this issue of *Health News*, Marla Flores and her children, Mariela and Max. We first met Marla and her children's father, Jared Garcia, back in 2015. Since that time, they have undergone a remarkable journey at Northwest. They share their inspiring story on page 4.

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Keeping families and patients in our community healthy is at the heart of everything we do. On the next page, you can read about Urgent Care services and how they make quality care more accessible. Later, on page 6, our "Ask the Doctor" column addresses questions about childbirth for expectant moms. We also tell you about new germ-fighting equipment we've acquired to improve patient safety, as well as a new organization that aims to enhance care for Medicare beneficiaries in our community.

As the stories in this issue reflect, Northwest strives for the highest standards. Our team is heartened by the opportunity to care for Marla and her family, and we remain committed to helping all of our patients have the best healthcare experience possible.

Sincerely,

Mark W. Crawford, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer

ER JUST GOT EASIER



A more timely approach to treating less serious illnesses

ER Reserve* lets you request a time to be seen at Northwest Emergency at Town Square when you need care for less serious illnesses and injuries, such as sore throat, ear-ache, cough or cold, and muscle strains or sprains. Please note that ER Reserve is only for Northwest Emergency at Town Square located at 8960 Hillside Road.

To request a time online up to 12 hours in advance, go to www.nwths.com/reserve. We cannot guarantee the time you'll be seen, but we'll make every effort to honor your request.

*ER Reserve should be used only if you decide your care can wait several hours. Do not wait if your symptoms or condition worsens or if you need immediate care. If you are unsure of your condition or if your condition worsens, go to the nearest emergency room or call 9-1-1. Some insurance plans may not cover an ER visit if it is deemed urgent care or they may apply a different copay. Check with your insurance provider for details.

Timely treatment

for minor illnesses and
injuries, so you can
feel better faster



When you or someone in your family is not feeling well, you may not want to wait for an appointment with your doctor – especially if it's after office hours. The two Northwest Urgent Care locations are services of Northwest Texas Healthcare System and offer extended hours, with no appointment required. You simply walk in and get the medical attention you need.

Care and treatment is provided for minor illnesses and injuries including:

- Sore throat
- Fever
- Ear infections
- Allergic reactions
- Nose bleeds
- Headaches
- Minor burns
- Pink eye
- Rashes
- Sprains and strains
- Cuts and scrapes

Medicare is accepted as well as other insurance plans. Because each plan differs, check with your carrier to determine your benefits for Urgent Care.

The Northwest Urgent Care locations and hours of operation are:

1411 East Amarillo Boulevard
Amarillo, TX 79107
806-351-7510

Monday through Friday
8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Saturday: 8 a.m. – noon

SE 34th Avenue
Amarillo, TX 79118
806-351-7530

Monday through Friday
8 a.m. – 8 p.m.



**Northwest
Emergency**
at Town Square

Please remember ...

Urgent Care is for minor illnesses and injuries. If you believe you or someone you're with is experiencing a life-threatening medical condition, including a stroke or heart attack, call 9-1-1 and get to the nearest emergency department immediately.

Northwest Texas Healthcare System provides emergency services at its main hospital, located at 1501 South Coulter Street, Amarillo 79106, and its satellite facility, Northwest Emergency at Town Square, located at 8960 Hillside Road, Amarillo 79119.

To learn more about
emergency care and urgent
care at Northwest, go to
www.nwths.com/fastcare.



“Northwest is our family”

Marla Flores and her family moved to Amarillo to be close to the team at Northwest Texas Healthcare System. ►



Marla calls her children “miracle babies.” She and her children’s father, Jared Garcia, tried for years to have a baby before her daughter, Mariela, was born seven weeks early. Everything was fine with Mariela. She was growing and thriving. When she was 13 months old, she developed virus-like symptoms and stopped eating.

Marla and Jared first sought care close to their home in Earth, Texas. Mariela was then transferred to Northwest Children’s Hospital because of the specialty pediatric care. She was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer, and the team at Northwest helped Marla and Jared understand the difficult news and what was ahead for them.

“I was there from the time of Mariela’s diagnosis and continue to remain in touch with Marla and her family as needed,” says Pediatric Nurse Navigator Brooke Rodriques, RN. Brooke’s role is to help answer families’ questions about treatment and guide them through the process.

Mariela began treatments at Northwest, while Marla stayed in Amarillo and Jared commuted back and forth for work. At the same time, Marla and Jared learned they were expecting their second child, a son. They were told early in the pregnancy that he had Down syndrome.

Determined to do everything she could for her son, Marla turned to the team at Northwest. The hospital’s highly trained doctors, nurses and specialists

are well prepared for both normal and high-risk births, notes Lilia Castaneda, RNC-OB, MNN, Education Coordinator of Women and Infant Health.

Complications arose during Marla’s pregnancy, but she stayed strong. “I knew if my daughter could go through cancer and chemo, I can go through this,” she said.

With the Northwest team tending carefully to mom’s needs and also keeping a close watch over Mariela, Marla welcomed her son, Max, in December 2015 – three weeks ahead of his due date. The hospital team made sure Dad and Mariela were part of the experience.

To be closer to their doctors and care providers, Marla and Jared relocated to Amarillo, which they now call home. “Northwest is our support and my family. The nurses are my friends and everything to us,” Marla says.

Max celebrated his first birthday in December 2016 and visits Northwest Children’s Hospital regularly to be treated for chronic lung disease. His sister is in remission and is enrolled in day care where she can enjoy being a kid.

In November 2016, Marla and Mariela were introduced at the annual Cattle Barons Ball in Amarillo and recognized by the local chapter of the American Cancer Society for their resilience and fight. Their story is an inspiration to others that with love, support and determination, miracles can happen. ■

Healthy relationships start here

Northwest is proud to provide compassionate, quality care to help families in the community stay healthy and strong.

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Advanced maternity care through the Childbirth Center, as well as a Level III NICU and LIFESTAR air medical transport services
- The Northwest Children’s Hospital with more than 40 pediatric subspecialties
- Obstetrical and gynecological services, digital mammography and advanced diagnostic testing through the Women’s Imaging Center
- Two satellite Women’s and Children’s centers, where both women and their children may receive diagnostic, treatment and preventive care services

To find out more about care at Northwest, visit www.nwths.com.

Planning for your best childbirth experience

Getting ready for your baby's arrival can be exciting, but also a little scary. To help you feel more confident and prepared, **Roberto Carrasco, MD**, Chief of Obstetrics at Northwest Texas Healthcare System, answers some of the questions asked by his patients. Whether you are having your first baby or have been pregnant before, planning ahead of time can ease your nerves and help you have the best, healthiest experience.

Q: What will labor be like, and how can I manage the pain?

Every mom's experience and pain tolerance can be different. At Northwest we respect your right to decide what is best for you, as long as it's safe for you and your baby. Talking with your doctor ahead of time is important. Also, it's helpful to attend a childbirth education class, where you can talk with other expectant moms and learn about relaxation, breathing and coping strategies for labor and delivery.

Q: What if I have a high-risk pregnancy?

Communicating regularly with your doctor and being prepared can give you added reassurance, which can be good for both you and your baby. Northwest specializes in high-risk deliveries and neonatal care, offering technological advancements and an experienced, highly skilled team. Obstetrician/gynecologists, maternal-fetal medicine specialists, neonatologists, nurse anesthetists and neonatal nurses are available 24 hours a day.

Q: If I had a C-section for my first baby, can I still have a vaginal birth later?

Many patients who have had C-sections go on to have vaginal births, but it depends on a number of factors, such as the type of incision you had with your C-section, the reasons for the C-section, and how healthy you and your baby are in the subsequent pregnancy. Keeping you and your baby safe is the top priority.

Q: What if I need help with breastfeeding?

The first days and weeks after your baby is born are very important, and we do everything we can to help you be successful. Through "couplet care," mom and baby stay together in the same room. This enables an uninterrupted feeding schedule and can help to establish your milk supply. Support from nurses, board-certified lactation consultants and breastfeeding classes at Northwest can also help ensure a healthy start. ■

For more information about the Childbirth Center at Northwest and to watch a brief video about our services, visit www.nwths.com/childbirth.



Coordinating care for a better patient experience

Are you a Medicare beneficiary? Learn about the new Texas Panhandle Clinical Partners ACO

An ACO, or Accountable Care Organization, is a group of doctors, hospitals and healthcare providers that work together to deliver coordinated service and high quality healthcare. It's not the same as a Medicare Advantage Plan or Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), and there's no cost to Medicare beneficiaries. Rather, it's a voluntary organization that helps providers and participants share information to improve the health of the community.

The Texas Panhandle Clinical Partners Accountable Care Organization, LLC (TPCPACO) is led by participating providers. Its network includes over 250 physicians and healthcare professionals.

If your Medicare provider participates in the ACO, your Medicare benefits, services, rights and protections won't change. You can still use any doctor or hospital that accepts Medicare at any time. You may notice, however, that you do not have to fill out as many forms with the same information or repeat medical tests, because providers share information. For patients, it's positive, says Brandon Coats, Manager of ACO Operations and Development. "It improves the communication and collaboration of providers in the community, thereby improving the care beneficiaries receive." ■

For more information, talk to your doctor or call 1-800-MEDICARE.

Doctors or healthcare providers who participate in an ACO must display a poster that notifies you of this and informs you of your option to decline sharing your healthcare information by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Investing in patient safety

Northwest Texas Healthcare System has added five R-D™ Rapid Disinfectors™ units to its germ-fighting arsenal, providing another safety measure for patients, visitors and staff. These portable units use ultraviolet C (UVC) radiation to eradicate harmful viruses, spores and bacteria. Remote sensors placed in the room with the unit tell when disinfection is complete. "This is a very powerful tool," says Manager of Infection Prevention Phyllis M. Riles, BSN, RN CIC.

She notes that this equipment reinforces the comprehensive cleaning and safety measures in place, including hand washing, which remains key to preventing the spread of infection. "Our environmental services staff members are diligent," she adds. "They know what they do matters."



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Amarillo, TX 79106

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A good night's sleep can make all the difference

Millions of Americans suffer from chronic or occasional sleep difficulties and one in three adults does not get enough sleep.*

Our Sleep Disorders Center can help diagnose and evaluate conditions that include:

Insomnia, Sleep Apnea, Narcolepsy, Restless Legs Syndrome, Periodic Limb Movement Disorder.

Sleep disorders do not have to define your life. Get the best rest possible with help from Northwest. For information, call 806-351-7013.

**Northwest
Sleep Disorders Center**
a service of Northwest Texas Healthcare System

1301 S. Coulter, Suite 110, Amarillo, TX 79106 • nwths.com

* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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HEALTH NEWS FROM
NORTHWEST TEXAS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

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