

Hospital sets new record with 71 births in August

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Labor and Delivery section of the Women's Health Center inside Union General Hospital really earned its wings in August with a record 71 baby deliveries.

Dr. Kevin Davis serves as the hospital's Medical Director of Perinatal Services, and he said the previous record was set in 2008 with 49 deliveries.

"The (Great Recession) had a tremendous effect here – it was pretty devastating," said Davis. "People made smart decisions. They didn't expand their family and they moved elsewhere to get jobs."

Given the improved economy, people seem to be doing the things people do when not restrained by financial burdens and job concerns, and Davis said the hospital is on track to deliver about 500 babies this year.

And the future looks even

brighter for area families, as Davis believes that he and his team will probably deliver about 600 babies next year, assuming the current upward trend.

"We now have four OB-GYN providers, also a family practitioner, Dr. David Breedlove, and a midwife, who all deliver babies here, which is a big expansion of our capabilities," said Davis, adding that Sheila Whitener, wife of Dr. Breedlove, is the midwife.

"Dr. Kimberly Denton and Dr. Benjamin Harris were practicing in Fannin County and saw the attractive nature of this opportunity, including our great facilities, and (recently) came and joined us here," said Davis, adding that he and Dr. Cynthia Mercer are the other two OB-GYN providers.

Also a part of the team are Trudy Lockaby, Nursing Director of Perinatal Services, and Perinatal Nurse Marci Mize.

Lockaby said they now have five state-of-the-art labor and delivery rooms, one recovery room, one operating room suite, and one triage room, all secluded within an area gated by electronic security doors and monitored by remote cameras.

With an OR suite in labor and delivery, Lockaby said it's



Nurse Marci Mize, Dr. Kevin Davis and Nurse Trudy Lockaby of Union General Hospital's Labor and Delivery unit.
Photo by Mark Smith



Labor and Delivery at Union General Hospital is equipped with everything families need to feel comfortable having children in the mountains.
Photo by Mark Smith

no longer necessary to rush a patient over to the surgical wing should that become necessary.

She was also excited to say that expectant mothers in this facility have the luxury of a Bluetooth fetal monitoring system, so they're not required to stay in a bed. But should they require immediate attention, the mobile unit will alert the staff.

With this capability, she said, UGH is attracting mothers who might otherwise prefer a home delivery.

And Davis said the hospital employs the STANLEY Healthcare Hugs Infant Protection System to guard against infant abduction and mother/infant mismatching.

Changing gears, Davis

said obstetrics facilities in rural areas, both nationally and regionally, have slowly been closing their doors over many years. He said the UGH obstetrics facility now serves nine counties: four in Georgia, four in North Carolina and one in Tennessee.

"I think people in communities should be loyal to their local hospital in order for them to keep their doors open and supportive when they hear initiatives like Union General Hospital offering new services," said Davis.

Added Lockaby: "You also get quality care in a smaller unit where it's more personal. It's more of a personal experience versus you're just here to

have a baby."

Of course, Davis would like people to know that patients of every stripe are getting the same high quality of care here that they would get in a larger facility.

"I think we will become a regional referral center, not just for obstetrics, but for other medical specialties also, which would be a huge thing for Blairsville – lots of jobs," said Davis. "What's unique about (this) hospital, in terms of funding, is this hospital is not part of a corporate chain."

"It is still run locally by the Union County Hospital Authority, with board members in the local community."

Murphy Murder...from Page 1A

Harkins was taken into custody on Sunday, Sept. 9, in Union County, according to Lt. Osborn.

Being charged with "aiding and abetting" means that a person is not considered the main offender in a crime, but that authorities have found fault with the actions of a person in connection to a crime.

The investigation is still active and ongoing, and authorities have yet to disclose what role Harkins may have played in Dalrymple's death.

As previously reported, shortly after Dalrymple was discovered badly beaten inside his home on Sept. 7, authorities began to develop information implicating a 19-year-old Murphy man named Isaiah Eric Beavers in the crime.

Beavers was taken into custody on Saturday, Sept. 8, in Union County and subsequently charged by the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office with the murder of Dalrymple and the theft of his vehicle, according to Lt. Osborn.

"This all started Friday, Sept. 7, at approximately 9:52 in the morning," said Lt. Osborn after Beavers' arrest. "Union County Sheriff's Deputy Chris Jackson was traveling east on Highway 325 when he observed a 2002 Chevrolet S-10 pickup speeding westbound toward the dam.

"It was traveling at a high rate of speed, the radar clocked him in at 66 mph in a 45 mph zone. Deputy Jackson turned around on the vehicle and activated his blue lights and siren. The vehicle turned left into the boat ramp area right before you get to the dam and crashed into the guardrail."

The driver fled the scene on foot, after which deputies inventoried the vehicle prior to impounding it and found a recent Dollar General receipt, according to Lt. Osborn.

They also discovered that the truck belonged to Dalrymple in Murphy, according to Lt. Osborn.

UCSO Deputy Jerrit Pack was familiar with Dalrymple, and he was able to determine through contact with the man's family that he would never let anyone borrow his truck, according to Lt. Osborn.

The Union County Sheriff's Office notified Cherokee County authorities about what had happened here, and they in turn responded to Dalrymple's home with several of his family members, according to Lt. Osborn.

"They went over there to do a welfare check on him and found him severely beaten," said Lt. Osborn. "At that time, he was still alive, and that's when we went to the Dollar General store and pulled video."

Investigators used the video from Dollar General to post a bulletin to Facebook asking the public's help in identifying the person associated with Dalrymple's stolen truck, according to Lt. Osborn.

Tragically, Dalrymple never regained consciousness, and he passed away on Saturday, Sept. 8, the day after he was beaten, according to Lt. Osborn.

Also that Saturday, investigators received information that led them to Beavers as a suspect in the murder, according to Lt. Osborn.

Authorities located Beavers at a residence off of Georgia 325 in Union County, and around 7

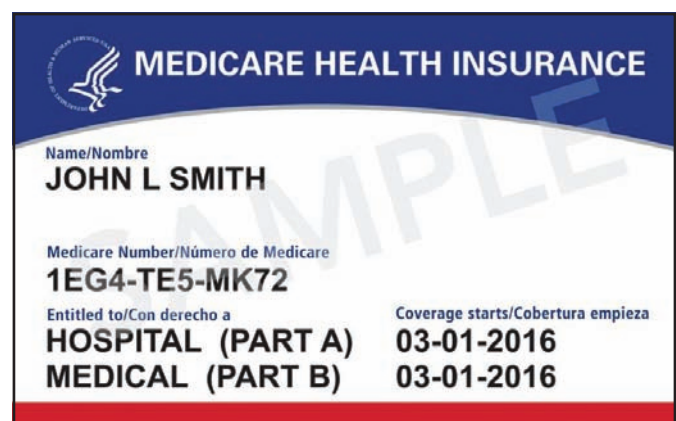
p.m. that Saturday evening, Union and Cherokee County deputies converged on his location to take him into custody, according to Lt. Osborn.

Both Beavers and Harkins were awaiting extradition in the Union County Jail at press time Monday, according to Lt.

Osborn.

Citing the ongoing nature of the investigation, Lt. Osborn said he was still unable to offer any information regarding motive and relationship of Beavers and Harkins to the victim as of press time.

Union County Sheriff's Office: Watch out for scams



To help protect your identity, Medicare is mailing new Medicare cards. Your new card will have a new Medicare Number that's unique to you, instead of your Social Security Number. Your new Medicare Number is a unique combination of numbers and letters. Your new number uses numbers 0 thru 9. The letters S, L, O, I, B, and Z are never used.

Medicare will never call you uninvited and ask you to give them personal or private information to get your new Medicare Number and card.

Scam artists may try to get personal information (like your current Medicare Number) by contacting you about your new card.

If someone asks you for your information, for money, or threatens to cancel your health benefits if you don't share your personal information, hang up and call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

If you suspect identity theft, or feel like you gave your personal information to someone you shouldn't have, contact the Federal Trade Commission. (N/Sep19.230)CA