



## **KershawHealth CEO Column**

**Terry Gunn, FACHE**

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### **Strategic Partnerships and Alliances**

KershawHealth's Strategic Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees earlier this year, makes it clear that alliances and partnerships are essential to the organization's future success in caring for our community. We must recognize that there are 13 not-for-profit and investor-owned hospitals within a 50-mile radius of Kershaw County and that KershawHealth competes to some extent with all these organizations. An openness to new ideas and new ways of partnering in a rapidly-evolving healthcare environment is the only strategy for success.

Our strategic plan recognizes the necessity for significant investment in developing those services which meet the greatest community need and offer the best growth potential. We have already addressed one of those needs – orthopaedic surgery. In July, KershawHealth began an alliance with Orthopaedic Advantage with the end goal of creating a joint replacement center of excellence. This will allow us to build on the strength of our local orthopaedic surgeons and on the reputation of KershawHealth's RACE short-term inpatient rehabilitation program, as well as our outpatient rehabilitation programs at West Wateree and in the town of Kershaw. Data shows there are significant opportunities for growth in orthopaedic surgery and rehabilitation, and a desire for patients to receive these services close to home.

In addition, KershawHealth has formed an alliance with Team Health to provide emergency department physicians and management services. As anyone familiar with hospitals knows, the emergency department is in many ways the healthcare system's front door, and therefore it is critical to provide a safe, efficient, and customer-centered experience. Team Health is one of the country's premier providers of emergency services, with proven expertise in managing patient flow, ensuring patient safety, reducing costs through operational efficiencies, and improving customer satisfaction. Over the coming months, we fully expect to see the same improvements at KershawHealth.

Also recently, KershawHealth announced the formation of a new general surgery division, KershawHealth Surgery Associates, which will integrate the practices of Paul Christenberry, MD, FACS and Edward Gill, MD, FACS. Consolidating our general surgery service line was a key objective of our Strategic Plan, and we were happy to be able to accomplish this goal quickly. Establishing this two-physician practice is a major step forward to ensure the continuation of strong general surgery services for our community. Plans are to recruit a third general surgeon to Kershaw County, which will allow us to provide physician services in other parts of the county, including our Elgin campus. A recent community needs assessment and physician recruitment plan developed by Coker Group, a nationally-recognized healthcare consulting firm, validated the need for an additional general surgeon in Kershaw County.

These partnerships and alliances enable KershawHealth not only to continue but enhance the services essential to our community. That in turn ensures our ability to execute our ongoing mission of providing the highest quality care for everyone.

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