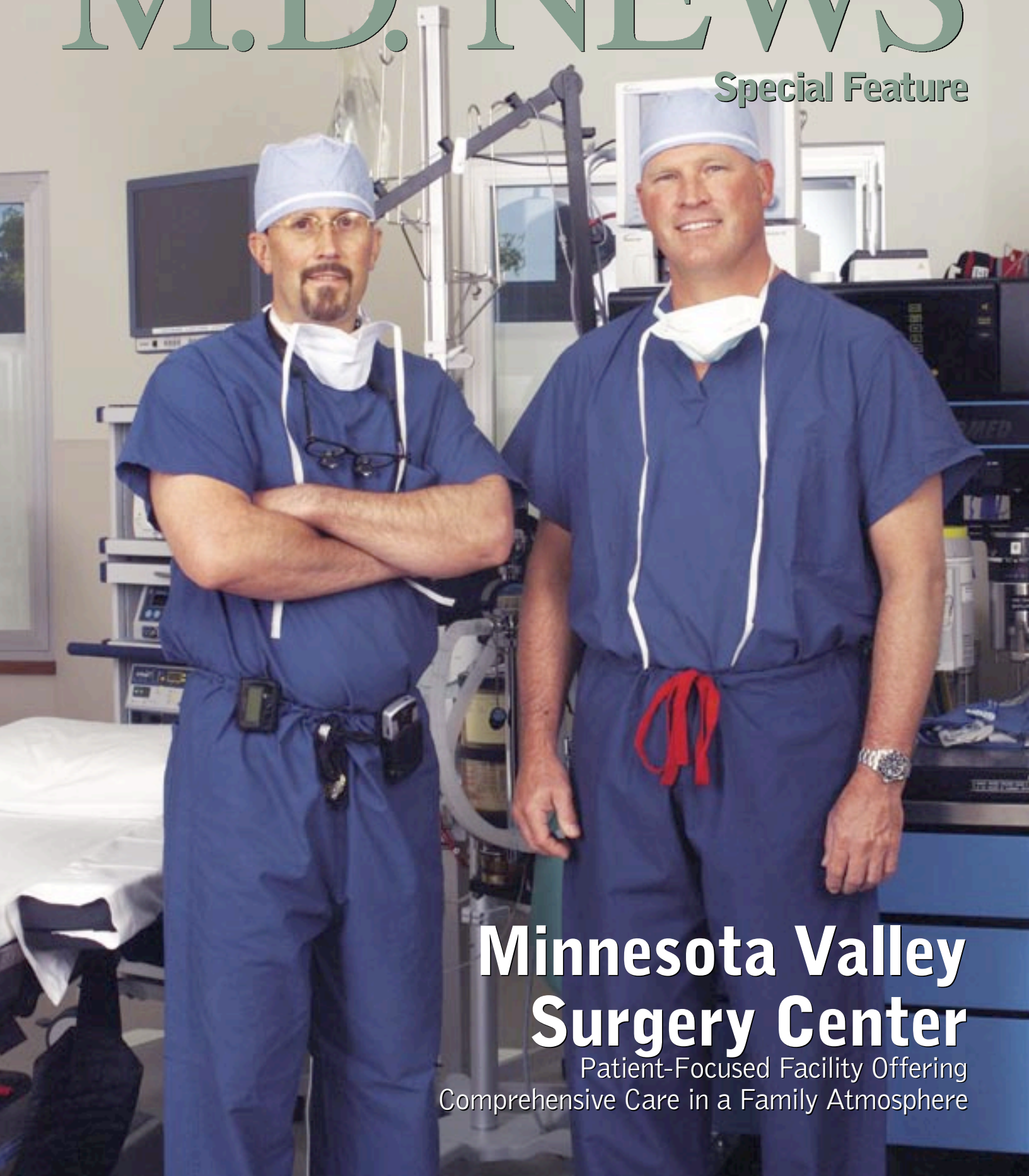


# M.D. NEWS

Special Feature



## Minnesota Valley Surgery Center

Patient-Focused Facility Offering  
Comprehensive Care in a Family Atmosphere

# Minnesota Valley Surgery Center

## Patient-Focused Facility Offering Comprehensive Care in a Family Atmosphere

By Jay Greene

Entering the large patient lobby of the Minnesota Valley Surgery Center, there is light filtering through a large plate-glass window that exudes a warm and inviting feel, as it ricochets off the light green, earth-tone colors of the vinyl walls and cut pile carpet. Meanwhile, a faint bubbling sound from a 280-gallon, salt-water aquarium creates a relaxing, calming and peaceful atmosphere for patients coming and going.

“There is no question when people come to see a surgeon they are anxious,” says Robert B. Hartman, M.D., MVSC Chairman. “To relieve some anxieties, we went with earth-tone colors and a light atmosphere. Minnesota can be gloomy during winters. The design is comforting.”

Three years ago, Hartman and Stephen L. Olmsted, M.D., part-

ners at Orthopaedic Consultants in Burnsville, had a dream to make surgery more convenient, relaxing, inexpensive and friendly for patients and doctors.

The two surgeons and six other partners regularly performed surgery at several outpatient surgery centers and hospitals, including Fairview Ridges Hospital, in the southern Twin Cities metropolitan area.

While the hospitals and centers offered good care, Hartman and Olmsted felt they could create a more user-friendly orthopaedic center that would reduce the time patients spent in surgery, recovery and rehabilitation while at the same time save money.

The solution they came up with was to build their own medical office building and outpatient surgery center. So, eight of the 30 partners of Orthopaedic Consultants formed Burnsville Surgical Properties

**Surgeons have the opportunity to provide personal attention to patients and families.**



PHOTO BY DAVID GINSBERG



**Minnesota Valley Surgery Center features fully equipped, spacious operating rooms with the latest advanced instrumentation.**

in 2004 and hired Ambulon, Grand Rapids, MI, to design and build the orthopaedic center.

In March 2005, Burnsville Surgical Properties purchased 3.65 acres near the Burnsville Marketplace, located west of I-35 W., off County Road 42 (Exit 88B). Construction began on the 50,000-square-foot medical office building in November 2005. The cost of the orthopaedic center totaled \$18 million when medical equipment such as the magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) was included, Hartman says.

## GRAND OPENING

In September 2006, the Minnesota Valley Surgery Center opened for business at 1000 West 140th St. in Burnsville. The surgery center is located on the building's first floor, which allows patients to easily move from admission to discharge. Physician offices, rehabilitation, physical and occupational therapy are located on the second floor. The building currently has another 6,000 square feet to sublease for additional medical offices.

On Sept. 20, after the Minnesota Valley Surgery Center received their

licenses from the Minnesota Board of Health and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the first surgery was performed on a hand to repair carpal tunnel syndrome.

"We do all kinds of orthopaedic surgery, hand surgery, foot surgery, complex joint reconstruction, sports medicine, pediatrics and geriatrics," says Hartman, adding, "About the only thing we don't do here is total joint replacement."

In keeping with the group's desire to provide "one-stop shopping" for patients, MVSC also offers general surgery, ophthalmology, plastic surgery, pain management, podiatry, physical therapy, occupational therapy and orthotics, Olmsted says.

"Our idea is to provide a point of service for patient care in the community," Hartman says. "We wanted a place that is convenient for patients to go to one location and have all their cares met, so they wouldn't be chasing around from place to place tracking down a therapist, or test, or waiting some period of time to get on a surgery schedule."

"We felt that could be more efficient for physicians, and patients could be treated in (a) more pleasant and economical environment," he adds.

Olmsted, the surgery center's Vice Chairman, says that having the orthopaedic center connected with the practice creates more of a team approach that allows for greater continuity of care.

"Outpatient surgery is somewhat of a specialty of itself," says Olmsted, who specializes in hand surgery. "Our goals are to have good outcomes and be efficient. We want to do things the same way each time so things aren't missed and we don't have errors. We don't want patients waiting all day long for a 10-minute procedure."

As word of mouth grew and as surgeons became comfortable moving away from traditional hospital ORs, surgical cases rapidly grew from seven last September to 77 in October, says Sharon Richmond, the center's administrator.

By March, MVSC conducted 261 surgical cases in its three 440-square-foot ORs. More than 300 a month is projected this year for the 20 surgeons who practice at the center, Richmond says.

"We ramped up a lot faster than we dreamed," says Richmond. "We have room for more cases."

At press time, six doctors were in the final stages of applying for surgery privileges — two general surgeons, two ophthalmologists, a plastic surgeon and a podiatrist. It takes about a month to complete background license checks, clear quality review and gain board approval.

## A PROVEN TRACK RECORD FOR HIGH-QUALITY CARE, LOW COSTS

Formed in 1940, Orthopaedic Consultants includes more than 30 surgeons in nine clinics in Burnsville, Waconia, Eden Prairie and several other locations.

“We have been a leader in managing health care costs and manage the delivery of orthopaedic care within the confines of a sound economic model,” Hartman says.

Practicing at the Burnsville office with Hartman and Olmsted are partners Patrick B. Ebeling, M.D.; David C. Fey, M.D.; Richard N. Hadley, M.D.; Neil R. Johnson, M.D.; Randall A. Lewis, M.D.; and James M. Schaffhausen, M.D.

The eight partners are also co-owners of the office building and real estate. MVSC, however, is owned by seven orthopaedists: pain specialist Lon Lutz, M.D.; ophthalmologists Jeff Stephens, M.D.; Marshall Everson, M.D.; Eugene Gullingsrud, M.D.; and podiatrists Roy Moeller, D.P.M.; and Kim Fjelstad, D.P.M.; Hartman says.

MVSC employs 19 full-time staff members and five part-time employees, including Sharon Richmond, a business office manager, scheduler, medical biller, receptionist, materials manager, OR supervisor, three OR nurses, three surgical technicians, an instrument technician and four post-acute care unit nurses. The part-time, or casual, employees, who fill in during vacations, maternity leaves or illness, include an OR

nurse and four PACU nurses. The center also includes a volunteer who offers assistance to patients during mornings.

“We look for people who have a very high experience level and have a commitment to providing the best patient care,” says Richmond. “Being a new facility, I wanted the most highly trained people I could find.” Most MVSC employees, including Richmond, worked previously at Fairview Ridges.

Some of the MVSC nurses and employees have more than 20 years experience in surgical operations. “I feel the more experienced R.N.s, the more successful you can be, and the doctors support that 100%,” she says.

## TEAM APPROACH MAXIMIZES PATIENT CARE

Richmond says flexibility and friendliness describe Minnesota Valley Surgery Center’s staff.

“We wanted pioneer-type nurses, ones who had the personality fit to be team players,” she says.

Olmsted also credits the dedicated staff with helping patients maintain positive attitudes. “Our staff welcomes patients and treats them as if they are coming into their home as opposed to a sterile facility,” he says. “We have a lot of motivated, upbeat people who have great ideas and have taken a real personal interest in having (MVSC) succeed.”

Once people enter the surgery center, says Richmond, “They get

**The comfortable recovery rooms assure patient privacy. The qualified nursing staff were chosen for their vast experience in perioperative nursing.**



PHOTO BY DAVID GINSBERG

excited. They see the spaciousness of the new rooms and the beauty of the facility. . . . The goal for everyone here is to make patients feel very special and comfortable.”

The “spa atmosphere” the center and staff have created appears to work as several patients have returned for additional procedures, Richmond says.

“We’ve had repeat business already at the pain management clinic and surgery,” she adds. “One patient has been here three times. He had carpal tunnel surgery on both hands and had his knee done. He loves it here.”

Other patients seem to echo that positive feeling as evidenced by extraordinarily high patient satisfaction scores recorded each month.

“Our center is so clean and new, 100% say their overall experience was very good or excellent. Those who say they would recommend (the center) to others has gone up from 94% to 100% in April of 2007,” Richmond says.

After the first few months, Richmond says staff fine-tuned a few processes to improve patient flow and make clearer patient information sheets. “We changed some things based on feedback we received from our patients,” she says. “What matters to patients the most is waiting time and how informed they are in the process.”

One measure of efficiency is how fast OR staff can set up a surgery room for another operation. Typical hospital OR “turnaround” times range from 20 minutes to 45 minutes. Keys to quick turnaround time are having the state-of-the-art technology, adherence to strict standards of care, spacious ORs and a “pleasant, relaxed atmosphere with a happy staff,” Richmond says. “Our (surgery) turnaround time is five to 10 minutes.”

Patients spend varying amounts of time at the center, depending on the type of surgery, procedure or therapy. For surgery, the total time spent at MVSC is generally four to five hours once the patient arrives at the center, checks in, goes through pre-op, post-op and then recovery, Hartman says.

“Because of the increased efficiency, we all have doubled the numbers of surgeries we can do compared with the hospital. That has shortened the waiting time for patients,” says Hartman, who used to do three shoulder arthroscopies during a four-hour schedule at hospitals. At MVSC, he can do six to eight of the same surgeries.

Faster turnaround times also mean patients wait fewer minutes for their surgery, Olmsted says.

Another less costly and time-saving benefit for patients is having an on-site pharmacy. “We dispense a limited number of narcotic

**After surgery, patients and families can be reunited in a relaxed, comfortable environment.**



PHOTO BY DAVID GINSBERG



Minnesota Valley Surgery Center, Orthopaedic Consultants, MRI and physical therapy are all located in the Minnesota Valley Professional Building.

medications (10 most frequently used) so patients don't have to make separate stops after their surgery," Hartman says. For a set fee of \$20 per prescription, patients can purchase such prescriptions as pain medications Darvocet, Vicodin, Tramadol and antibiotic Keflex.

Recovery times are also quicker because MVSC uses regional anesthesia that blocks, or numbs, major nerves in certain selected sections of the body. Regional anesthesia also causes fewer major side effects than sleep-inducing general anesthesia, which affects the entire body.

"Our goal is to do as many of the cases as we can under a regional anesthetic block so patients don't have to go to sleep. It is faster, more efficient, and patients like it better because they don't get nauseated and drowsy," Hartman says.

For most major joint surgeries, patients are provided what is called a "pain pump," in which a small, thin catheter is placed in a joint. "It has a pressured anesthetic called Marcaine," Hartman says. "It reduces pain on the joint dramatically."

The reduction of pain in swelling after surgery allows doctors to start patients in rehabilitation much faster than five years ago, Hartman says.

## FRIENDLINESS, POSITIVITY HELPS PATIENTS RECOVER FASTER

Having physical and occupational therapy services located within

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the building is convenient for patients because they can have their condition diagnosed, surgically repaired and also rehabbed in the same building.

"It gives them a comfort level knowing that we have a team approach where they can see therapists on-site and know that their surgeon is at the same place," Olmsted says. "If we have problems, I can talk with my assistant (an occupational therapist) and we can come up with solutions."

While patients come to Minnesota Valley Surgery Center because they have had an injury or suffer from a medical problem, surgeons, medical specialists and staff want them to have as pleasant an experience as possible and receive superior care, Richmond says.

"We realize the patients' motivation and ability to get home and get on with their life has a big impact on how they recover," Olmsted says. "We find they recover faster when we get them back to their home environment and their normal daily activities."

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