



**Merrimack
Valley
Hospital**

A New Day. A New Vision for the Valley.

Contact: Mary O'Neil

Director of Public Relations and Marketing

Office: 978-420-1157

Cell: 978-994-0509

Merrimack Valley Hospital Announces a New Surgical Office Opening in Merrimack Medical Center

Haverhill, MA-January 19, 2009- Merrimack Valley Hospital is pleased to announce the opening of Merrimack Valley Surgical Associates in the medical office building adjacent to the hospital. The practice will share a suite with Mill City Surgical Associates to offer patients three surgical specialties.

"I am pleased to announce that in early February 2009 Merrimack Valley Surgical Associates will share a suite with Mill City Surgical Associates at 62 Brown St. on the campus of Merrimack Valley Hospital. This office will provide board certified surgical services to patients at Merrimack Valley Hospital," said Merrimack Valley Hospital CEO Michael Collins. "The office includes Board Certified Urologist Christopher P. Birdsall, M.D., of Merrimack Valley Urology Services; Board Certified Vascular Surgeon Walter Kwass, M.D., Merrimack Valley Vascular Services, and Board Certified General Surgeon Kathryn Hughes, M.D. of Mill City Surgical Associates."

Dr. Kwass has over thirty years of experience in vascular surgery. He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgery and Diplomate of the Vascular Board of the American Board of Surgery. He comes from an established practice in New Haven, Conn. and moved here in part to be closer to family. He is pleased to be at Merrimack Valley Hospital because his practice will bring a vascular service dedicated to the greater Haverhill area.

"The office is temporarily located in the main lobby of Merrimack Valley Hospital, and although a relatively small office for now, it is very convenient for patients and provides a welcoming atmosphere. I do look forward to moving into our permanent facility next door at 62 Brown St. in the Merrimack Medical Building. Our new facilities on the fourth floor will be spacious and well-equipped. I look forward to providing a warm, professional and comfortable environment for my vascular patients," said Dr. Walter Kwass.

Dr. Hughes, of Mill City Surgical Associates, is board certified in general surgery and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. She is also the new Chief of Surgery at Merrimack Valley Hospital.

Hughes chose general surgery because she likes the challenge and spectrum of surgeries she does as well as the variety of people she meets and cares for: men and women, old and young.

She also has a special interest in minimally invasive procedures as well as breast surgery. She likes to help women through the complicated process of breast surgery because as a woman surgeon she has the ability to relate to her patient on a doctor to patient level, and also woman to woman.

"Seeing a surgeon in consultation is an unavoidably anxious experience. My goal is to help patients through the process in as warm and caring a setting as possible - to treat each person as I would like to be treated," said Dr. Hughes.

For twenty years, Dr. Birdsall, a board certified urologist, was with Urology Associates of Essex North, which had offices in Haverhill and Newburyport. He is now a physician employed by Merrimack Valley Hospital.

"I'm happy that I served this community for twenty years in Urology Associates of Essex North, but changes in the medical system caused me to make this change in my practice. I am pleased to still be in this community and working with Merrimack Valley Hospital," said Dr. Birdsall.

The hospital is pleased to have so many qualified surgeons able to serve the needs of residents in the community.

"The hospital now has a full compliment of surgeons to take care of patients in our service area," said Collins, referring to the surgeons already doing business at the hospital, including General Surgeons Nicholas Tsaparlis, M.D. and Antoni Jurkiewicz, M.D.; Associates in Orthopedics surgeons Eugene Brady, M.D., Pamela Jones, M.D., Gregory Johnson, M.D. and Barry T. Bickley, M.D.; as well as Gynecologists Bill Chun, M.D., Donald E. Brown, M.D, and Robert R. Joseph, M.D.

About Merrimack Valley Hospital:

Merrimack Valley Hospital maintains 108 acute care bed and 17 adult behavioral medicine beds; all are private rooms. The hospital's clinical strengths include a 24-hour emergency department; orthopedic, endoscopic and general surgery; adult behavioral medicine care with a focus on geriatric issues, a comprehensive Pain Management Center, and a Sleep Study Lab. MVH also provides a wide range of outpatient services, such as bone density testing; dysphasia testing; echocardiograms; electroencephalograms (EEG); electromyography (EMG); full-field digital mammography; magnetic resonance imaging (MRI); position emission tomography (PET-Scan); pulmonary function testing(PFT); nuclear medicine; surgical day care; ultrasound (general & obstetrical), and physical therapy and x-rays, and 64-Slice CT scans.

The hospital's awards for excellence include the Excellence Through Insight Award, 2008 (HealthStream Research); Best in Value Hospitals, 2008 (Data Advantage); #1 Nursing Team in New England Award, 2003 (Advance for Nursing Magazine); National Quality Leader Award for Pneumonia Care, 2006 (CareScience Select

Practice); High Reliability Cardiac Care Award, 2006 (MassPRO); Top 100 Best Acute Care Hospital Award, 2004 (Total Benchmark Solutions); and Top Ranked Community Value Provider Award, 2007 (Cleverley & Associates). An affiliate of Essent Healthcare, Inc., the hospital serves Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire. More information can be found at www.merrimackvalleyhospital.com.