

## POWER IN PINK



### MORE THAN MEDICINE

**C**hristy Payne has every reason to look back on the year 2023 with sorrow and anxiety: She was still healing from the grief of her mother's passing just two years prior when she was shocked with her own diagnosis of breast cancer.

When she thinks back on that time now, however, alongside the painful memories there is also optimism – and T-shirts, lots of T-shirts.

"I came into the office one day, and everyone was wearing 'Team Christy' T-shirts, even people I didn't know were

determined that their work was about more than medicine – it was about people and creating an atmosphere where everyone felt cared for, whether that was patients, providers, or staff. That is why acts like the T-shirts that Christy, the Practice Analytics and Contracting Director for Longstreet Clinic, experienced are not uncommon. They are simple but powerful reminders that everyone involved with Longstreet Clinic is part of a family, and that health care works better when delivered with warmth and compassion.

That mindful approach was at the forefront when the clinic developed its Breast Center: To ensure that every

wearing them; I was shocked. It was such a humbling experience. I felt so much love, support, and generosity that I can't even adequately explain it," said Christy, who is now cancer free. "But that's what it's like to work at Longstreet Clinic."

Since Longstreet Clinic's founding in 1995, doctors, staff, and leadership

breast cancer patient receives not only the best in treatment, but also the best in physical comfort and emotional support. And when that patient is also a staff member, Longstreet Clinic providers don't do anything different than they would for a "regular" patient – that patient just feels support from every aspect of their care and their work life.

"There's a different environment here than anywhere I've ever worked," said **Kim Kermode**, a Re-Credentialing and Expirables Specialist in Longstreet Clinic's provider relations department. Kim received her own breast cancer diagnosis in November 2024 and is now cancer free. "Here you really feel like everyone cares for you. I had so many doctors say prayers with me after my diagnosis – my faith is a big part of who I am – and they made an uncomfortable situation as comfortable as it could be."

Scan here to read the full article



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# LONGSTREET CLINIC CELEBRATES 30 YEARS



On Saturday, Sept. 20, Longstreet Clinic providers and staff gathered at The Boathouse on Lake Lanier to honor longtime employees and celebrate 30 years of serving the community. Nearly **100 employees** received service awards.



## Employee Milestones by years:

- 5 years – 17 employees
- 10 years – 18 employees
- 15 years – 7 employees
- 20 years – 10 employees
- 21-29 years – 30 employees
- 44+ years – 4 employees

*\*Years of service reflect employment at practices that merged with Longstreet Clinic*



## Thank You

to everyone who joined us for food, fun and fellowship on this special day!



# TEACHER REDISCOVERS JOY OF TRAVEL AFTER BARIATRIC SURGERY

A lot of people like to travel, but **Jenny McClain** absolutely loves it. Whether it's Italy, Pacific cruises, spots in the Caribbean, Las Vegas, Disney World or beyond, Jenny says she revels in every new experience and discovery.

There was a point just over two years ago, however, when Jenny seriously contemplated the end of her globe trekking. Due to significant weight gain, traveling was not only becoming uncomfortable but almost untenable, as she struggled to deal with cramped seats, physical pain, and psychological discomfort.

Luckily, Jenny found a lasting solution that – thanks to **Longstreet Clinic's Center for Weight Management** and developments in insurance coverage – made travel a joy all over again.

As a teacher, Jenny discovered that state health insurance now covers bariatric surgery for those patients who meet certain criteria. That reality, combined with her weight and the side effects that she was experiencing due to

her obesity (now recognized as a chronic disease), made her an ideal candidate for weight loss surgery.

Jenny met with bariatric surgeon **Robert Richard, M.D., FACS**, who recommended a Roux-en-Y gastric bypass. After undergoing the procedure in March 2023, Jenny has committed to a new lifestyle that has helped her get back to one of the old loves her life.

She has dropped almost 150 pounds and is back traveling in style. She's also in remission from sleep apnea, acid reflux, and knee and back pain, so much so that she's even taken up jogging (including the completion of her first half marathon). And while Jenny does have to think ahead when traveling – so that she can maintain



her new dietary standards – she credits bariatric surgery and Longstreet Clinic for regained freedom.

“Dr. Richard saved my life – he and his team. I wholeheartedly believe he helped me get my life back,” said Jenny, who encourages anyone suffering as she once did to investigate bariatric surgery and their insurance coverage. “I wish I'd been able to do it sooner.”

**To learn if you may qualify for bariatric surgery, or if you have questions concerning your weight, please contact the Center for Weight Management at 770-534-0110.**

**See Jenny's before and watch her story here**



# INNOVATIVE NEW PROCEDURE NOW AVAILABLE TO TREAT COMPLEX AORTIC ANEURYSMS

An innovative corrective procedure known as Thoracoabdominal Branch Endoprosthesis (TAMBE) is now available for patients with complex aortic aneurysms. Longstreet Clinic Vascular & Vein surgeon **John “Will” Perry, M.D.**, performs the minimally invasive procedure at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville.

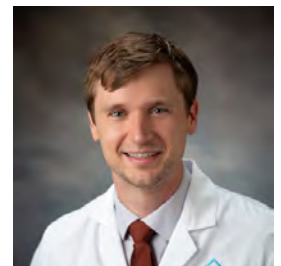
An abdominal aortic aneurysm (sometimes referred to as AAA) occurs when the section of the aorta that travels through the abdomen/near the stomach becomes weakened and begins to expand outward – much like a balloon. While a small AAA may only require regular monitoring, larger abdominal aortic aneurysms require surgical intervention to prevent a rupture, a complication which could cause life threatening internal bleeding.

TAMBE is an innovative alternative for many patients with these complex aortic aneurysms who previously required an open approach (which included an abdominal incision to access the site of the AAA).

During TAMBE, Dr. Perry utilizes catheters and wires – inserted into the body via small incisions – to navigate the vascular system and place a Branched Stent Graft on sections of the aorta. This stent graft reroutes blood flow and bypasses weakened areas of the aorta (the aneurysm), preventing aortic rupture.

TAMBE is both safe and produces improved post-operative recovery times. It also lowers the risk for complications, as compared to open surgery, and can deliver potentially improved outcomes for high-risk patients.

If you are concerned about aortic aneurysm, contact us today to take advantage of preventative screening.



Medicare covers a one-time screening for patients with a family history of abdominal aortic aneurysm, as well as for men age 65-75 who have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime.

**For questions or to schedule an appointment, please call Longstreet Clinic Vascular & Vein at 678-207-4000. Visit our website to learn more.**

# Benefits BEAT

## HR CORNER

**From the Desk of  
JOHN DIONNE**

*Human Resources Director*

One of the things the Human Resources (HR) Team truly loves here at Longstreet Clinic is getting out and doing our quarterly HR visits to each location. We really enjoy seeing the different offices, watching you all interact with our patients, each other, and having the opportunity to talk to employees and build relationships. We truly hope the quarterly visits have also made the HR Team more accessible for all employees. Our next quarterly visits are scheduled for the first two weeks of December; specific dates and times will be sent in late November.

Also coming up in November will be open enrollment for 2026 Benefits. We are still working on finalizing 2026 Benefits and will have more information out to you all shortly. As always, thank you for all you do, and we sincerely look forward to seeing you all soon!

## DR. RICHARD ACHIEVES SURGERY MILESTONE



Longstreet Clinic surgeon **Dr. Robert Richard** is one of the recognized leaders in advanced bariatric surgery – not just in Georgia but across the nation.

Dr. Richard's focus is on helping patients to realize a healthier lifestyle – which is why for more than 26 years he has continued to perform successful bariatric surgeries day after day. In fact, Dr. Richard recently completed his 7,000th successful weight loss surgery.

To put that into perspective, as noted in a 2018 study in the journal of *Surgery for Obesity and Related Diseases* a typical bariatric surgeon's average case volume over a 20-year career

is around 4,000 cases. We congratulate Dr. Richard on this impressive achievement and are proud to call him one of our own.

"I'm always honored when someone trusts me to help them gain control over the health. And we make it clear to them that surgery is just one step in an overall approach to weight loss," Dr. Richard said. "It is very gratifying to get this group of patients back on the road to a healthy lifestyle."

Recognized as a Surgeon of Excellence in Robotic Surgery and Minimally Invasive Surgery by the Surgical Review Corporation, Dr. Richard not only helps lead our Center for Weight Management but also is the current Longstreet Clinic President and Governing Board Chairman.

Dr. Richard welcomes patients in Gainesville, Suwanee and Braselton.

## EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER



Congratulations to our Employee of the Quarter (Q2), **Melissa Hendrix**! Melissa has been with Longstreet Clinic since 1997 and is the Administrative Lead at our Family Medicine office in Oakwood. During Melissa's 28 years with the Clinic, she has held multiple roles and exceeded expectations in each one. Her colleagues had many wonderful things to say about her including: "Melissa is always willing to go the extra mile not only for her department but for Longstreet Clinic as a whole," and "She always has the best interest in mind for the patients and the office. Working with her provides a positive environment." Thank you, Melissa, for your nearly three decades of superior service and compassion!

To nominate, visit [longstreetclinic.com/employees](https://longstreetclinic.com/employees)