

# Louisiana Medical News

SOUTH LOUISIANA EDITION

## On Rounds

### Physician Spotlight

#### Dr. Jason Baesler

*Living in the Line of Fire*

In his spare time, Dr. Jason Baesler enjoys scuba diving, martial arts and target practice. Through his SWAT connections, he gets to live every boy's fantasy – shooting guns ... **page 3**



#### Funding Cuts Mean Hospital Jobs Will be Lost

It's just a matter of time before Louisiana's 42 community hospitals have to start laying off workers and cutting services, according to a state hospital association executive ... **page 4**

#### "Meaningful Use" Finally Defined

*HHS Final Rule: Non-Compliant Providers Face Reduced Medicare Payments in 2015*

During the dog days of summer, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released the much-anticipated final "meaningful use" ... **page 5**

## State Moves Forward with IT Network

By TED GRIGGS

Louisiana took another in a series of steps that will eventually lead to a statewide network where healthcare providers can share patients' records electronically.

The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, a state-created nonprofit overseeing the effort, has asked the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to approve the draft of the health information exchange.

"Everything we're doing ultimately is about the patient and improving outcomes," said Cindy Munn, executive director of the forum.

The main goal of the health information exchange is to be able to have and provide relevant, clinical data to providers when they are treating patients, Munn said.

State and federal officials, employers, healthcare providers and consumers want to improve healthcare quality and



Cindy Munn

efficiency, Munn said. Health information technology and exchange are critical elements in achieving that goal.

The draft plan is 138 pages long and includes proposals to take advantage of existing electronic health records systems, such as the Louisiana Rural Health Information Exchange in North Louisiana, as well as strategies to overcome gaps in delivering lab results electronically, e-prescribing, and sharing clinical records.

Louisiana and the Quality Forum have been in the forefront of a number of efforts to improve healthcare quality and the state is expected to benefit from the experience. Those projects included a website allowing providers to check the medication histories of Hurricane Katrina evacuees; a demonstration program showing providers in New Orleans and Baton Rouge could share medical records; the Louisiana Rural Health

*Continued on page 10*

## Gift of Hope: Giving Infertile Couples a Winning Chance

BY LISA HANCHEY



Robin and Dion Carter

Robin and Dion Carter seemed to have it all. The attractive Ville Platte couple met during college, dated for six years, and have been married for five. But, something was missing from their lives, causing them to feel an agonizing void – a child. "We knew we wanted to start a family, because family is very important to us," Robin said.

Shortly after the honeymoon, the pair started trying to conceive. After several failed attempts, Robin saw a doctor, who diagnosed her with severe endometriosis. In 2005, she had an extensive laparoscopic surgery. Afterwards, the couple tried to have a baby again – and again and again and again. "After that point, it started to consume my life," she said. "I always knew that I wanted to be a mom. It was very hard for me."

Five years and five doctors later, Robin was still unable to become pregnant. Growing despondent, she started slipping into depression. Then, her sister, who also had endometriosis, told her about a fertility specialist in Lafayette, Dr. John Stormont with Fertility & Women's Health Center of Louisiana. Robin made an appointment with

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 12*

Read *Louisiana Medical News* online at [www.louisianamedicalnews.com](http://www.louisianamedicalnews.com)

"We see the Cancer Patient Today, as the Cancer Survivor of Tomorrow."

**OncoLogics, Inc.**  
Training Center for Oncology Professionals

For more information, Contact Us 800.237.2057 or Online [www.OncoLogics.net](http://www.OncoLogics.net) LAFAYETTE | NEW IBERIA | CROWLEY | OPELOUSAS | MORGAN CITY | LAUREL, MS



PRINTED ON 100% RECYCLED PAPER



# Gift of Hope: Giving Infertile Couples a Winning Chance, *continued from page 1*

Storment, who recommended in vitro fertilization. Unfortunately, the Carters could not afford the procedure.

This past Christmas, Robin's mom, desperate for grandchildren, wrote Storment a letter expressing her greatest wish — that one of her two daughters would have a child. Storment wrote back, telling her about the Gift of Hope, a program which awards free infertility treatments to one couple each year who demonstrates financial and medical need for the procedure.



Dr. John Storment

In April, Storment performed Robin's second laparoscopic procedure, which confirmed Robin's greatest fear — her endometriosis had returned. As the deadline loomed for applying for the Gift of Hope, she decided to give it a try. Through tears, she "poured her heart out" in the application letter, detailing her story, her struggles and her heartache.

On May 3, Robin received a call from Dion, who was unable to speak. He finally eked out the words, "It's good news." She asked, "Is it the doctor?" He squeaked out, "Yes." Then, she got paged at work — and hung up on him.

Later, Robin got the official call from Storment's office. "They put me on speaker," she recalled. "They were so excited for me. I started bawling."

Robin still cries when she tells the story. Recently, she underwent IVF, and is awaiting the results. "We're so blessed with this opportunity," she said. "It's a dream for me and my husband. We are extremely humbled by and grateful for this experience. I just can't express my gratitude to everyone, for everyone

who donated the services, the medication and time. It's surreal for me right now. My husband's on cloud nine, he's so happy."

The Gift of Hope started five years ago after Storment, a board-certified reproductive endocrinologist, was approached by a national foundation to participate in a program which awarded free in vitro fertilization to a couple in need. Storment mentioned it to his wife, Amelie, who liked the idea, but suggested that the prize winner be from Louisiana. Wisely, Storment credits his wife for the launching of the Gift of Hope. "We thought it would be a nice thing to do to offer an IVF program that's free of cost for people who needed it and were good candidates for IVF, but couldn't afford it," Storment said.

Infertility affects about one in six couples who are actively trying to conceive. "After a year of trying, if you are not pregnant, then you are considered infertile if everything else is normal," Storment explained. While some patients can be treated with fertility medications or surgeries, others must resort to IVF, an expensive procedure which, in most cases, is not covered by insurance.

In vitro fertilization involves stimulating the woman's ovaries to produce a larger number of eggs than usual. After surgical retrieval, the eggs are fertilized with sperm to create embryos. Three to five days later, doctors place the best embryos back into the uterus. In two weeks, the embryos are rechecked to see if one has implanted successfully. "In a normal risk population under 35 years old, IVF is over 50 percent successful on

the first try," Storment said, "which is almost three times better than the natural rate for 25- to 30-year-old women, who have a 20 percent chance."

In 2005, Storment, Women's & Children's Hospital and Sheridan Healthcare, anesthesia providers, awarded the first Gift of Hope to Laura and Terry Hughes of Lafayette. Starting off the program with a bang, the Hughes conceived a child, Hope Elizabeth, now age 3. The couple still brings Hope by the clinic just to say "Hi." "She's grown very close to all of the people in here," Storment said. "The Hughes are a very appreciative couple, and a couple that you know should be parents. This is a very feel-good type story, but when you see them come back all the time, it's pretty special."

Ironically, the next year's winners, Beth and Eric McCleery of Jennings, named their daughter Grace-Ann Elizabeth. But, that "inspirational" trend ended when 2008's recipients, Rachel and Tony Bourque of Lake Charles, dubbed their son Jagger (as in Mick) Dean.

To qualify, applicants must earn less than \$80,000 annually; have no insurance coverage for infertility; reside in Louisiana and have a documented medical need for IVF. In addition, they are required to submit a letter "stating their story — what's happened, what they've done to get there," Storment explained.

Once the packets are in, Amelie organizes them for review by four independent panelists — Kevin Caswell, vice president of commercial banking at Teche Federal Bank; Karen Allemen, surgical staff nurse at Women's &

Children's Hospital; Jaci Russo, senior partner of Russo Ad group, and Nawja Dibbs, psychologist. The selection team peruses the packets, then narrows down finalists for IVF or inseminations. Afterwards, they deliberate for about three hours with Storment, who scrutinizes the couple's medical records to insure that they qualify.

Each year, the committee selects two couples — one for free inseminations and one for free IVF. When it's time to make the call to the winner, Storment puts his phone on speaker so that the close-knit office staff can share in the moment. "I always say I feel like the Publisher's Clearing house guy," Storment said with a laugh, "because the winners are very excited. The staff gets excited as well."

From 40 applications in 2005, the number has grown to 59 in 2010. The estimated value of the donated services is \$10,000.00 to \$15,000.00. For a couple without insurance coverage for IVF, the gift is priceless. "It's just amazing," Robin said. "I feel like here, I've made friends for life. I think they're going to do everything to make our dreams come true."

Storment's prize comes when he has a successful IVF or fertility treatment. "It's fairly indescribable," he said. "I have two big shoeboxes full of thank-you letters, and bulletin boards around the office full of photos of babies that we've had. I think our count is up to 1,200 babies that have been born resulting from either IVF or fertility procedures. People bring their babies by, and we take pictures. It never gets old. It's very rewarding. I have the best job that I think anybody could have."

## Report Underlines Dangers, *continued from page 8*

caffeine or caffeine-containing herbs, it increases the risk for high blood pressure, fainting, heart attack and stroke.

**Chaparral:** Used for weight loss, inflammation, detoxification, cancer, colds and infections, the chemicals in the chaparral plant are thought to act as antioxidants. However, potential risks include liver damage and kidney problems.

**Colloidal Silver:** This mineral has been used to combat chronic fatigue syndrome, Lyme disease, HIV/AIDS, psoriasis and fungal infections. However, it can cause skin to turn a permanent bluish color, neurological issues and kidney damage.

**Coltsfoot:** Often used to for respiratory issues including cough, sore throat, bronchitis, asthma and laryngitis. It has been linked to cancer and liver damage when used in high doses.

**Comfrey:** The plant is taken for cough, chest pain, heavy menstrual cycles and cancer. It's also thought that the chemicals in the plant might have a healing effect and reduce inflammation when applied to the skin, but it also has

toxic chemicals that can be absorbed through the skin. Taken orally, it can cause liver damage and cancer. It seems to be safest if applied topically to unbroken skin in small amounts for less than 10 days.

**Country Mallow:** Used for weight loss and respiratory ailments including allergies, asthma and bronchitis. This plant contains ephedrine and is considered unsafe for any use. Its risks include heart attack, arrhythmia, stroke and death. It is banned in the United States.

**Germanium:** A chemical element used for pain, infections, arthritis, osteoporosis, glaucoma, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, cancer and liver problems, but usage has been linked to anemia, muscle weakness, nerve problems, kidney damage and death.

**Greater Celandine:** Most commonly used for liver disorders, upset stomach and irritable bowel syndrome, the plant has a potential risk of liver damage.

**Kava:** The root of this South Pacific plant is used to curb anxiety, but it has been linked to liver damage and other

severe illness even when used in the recommended dose for short periods of time.

**Lobelia:** A "natural" smoking cessation aid that is also used for asthma, coughing and bronchitis, an overdose can cause a very fast heartbeat, low blood pressure, coma and possibly death.

**Yohimbe:** The bark of the yohimbe tree is used as an aphrodisiac and purported solution for erectile dysfunction; it is also used for chest pain, depression and diabetic complications. It appears to be fairly safe for adults using it under the supervision of a healthcare professional. However, improper, unsupervised use has been linked to severe low blood pressure, heart problems and potentially death.

Although the Food and Drug Administration has limited power over supplements, the agency has issued some type of warning about eight of these 12: chaparral, colloidal silver, comfrey, country mallow, germanium, kava, lobelia and yohimbe. With few exceptions, these supplements, which appear under a variety of different names, are still readily available.

**Take 2 ads  
and call us  
in the morning...**



*Louisiana Medical News'*  
prescription to grow  
your practice or business.

**No More Cold Calls!**

*Make all your calls warm —  
advertise in Louisiana Medical News*