

Meadows Regional Medical Center

<https://meadowshealth.com/>

For many people living in the area served by Meadows Regional Medical Center, access to quality healthcare is a major issue. Located 90 miles from the nearest major city and tertiary center, Meadows is situated in the middle of one of the most rural and economically challenged areas in the United States.

Our primary service area has a population of approximately 40,000, and our secondary service area population of approximately 100,000, including a high percentage of Hispanic, African American, Medicare, Medicaid and uninsured citizens.

At \$18,000, our per capita income is a fraction of the national average. Less than 14% locally have a college education and more than 25% of our citizens are below the poverty level. Unfortunately, we carry one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Despite the above, over the last 15 years Meadows has built a new state-of-the-art hospital and has attracted over 50 excellent physicians to our facility. We average more than 35,000 ER visits per year, with many of those visits consisting of patients from one of the other 9 counties accessing our facility. Our website www.meadowsregional.org will provide all of the advances we have brought to this very rural region.

In addition to generous donations from the community to build a state of the art cancer, we also deliver outstanding care in many other specialties, such as women's services and cardiovascular services, that are life breathing arms of our organizations.

Proximity is one key factor, according to Karen McColl, M.D., FACOG, a gynecologist who has been practicing medicine at Vidalia Women's Center for nine years. Particularly if you're actively growing your family. "First," says Dr. McColl, "select an obstetrician who's relatively close to your home. Meadows has committed to the region by bringing home six OB/GYNs, and an additional mid level provider, and now the center delivers slightly south of 1,000 babies annually, with the highest percentage being Medicaid and self pay patients. And that number is expected to climb even higher.

The needs of the citizens in our nine county are as great or greater than any other region in the state. Without Meadows Regional Medical Center, they would have to drive a greater distance for quality care than from any other region in Georgia. Or, and this happens more than one might suspect, they may just forgo the treatment needed, which is the same treatment readily available to every citizen in metro Georgia.

Meadows Regional Cancer Center just celebrated its fourth year of providing comprehensive, innovative cancer treatments in Vidalia.

"Our cancer center and hospital are home to the most sophisticated cancer-fighting technologies and treatment options available today," said Henry Cline, M.D., FACRO. "In Vidalia now, we are able to offer comprehensive multidisciplinary cancer treatment that is almost unheard of in small towns."

More than 46% of visits to the new center were from those patients who are considered to live outside of the primary service area, who are now traveling to Vidalia for their cancer care.

The center schedules typically 40 patients per day, including consults with providers for new patients. This number does not include the 1 to 5 acute care visits daily, or the chemotherapy patients who visit the office daily.

And now, we even employ a patient navigator to help every family coordinate care, deal with the stresses of treatments and aid in mapping personal treatment plans.

We have been working to provide this region with advanced cancer care since 2004 and, just two months ago, we opened our doors to the second phase of our center that tripled the building size and placed radiation and chemotherapy under one roof.

Additionally, Meadows has been a leader in Cardiac Care and is part of a nationwide record setting trend.

According to the World Health Organization, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death worldwide, with an estimated 17.5 million deaths each year, representing 31 percent of global deaths. It is also the number one killer in Georgia. Toombs County, the home of Meadows Regional Medical Center, ranks 50th out of 159 counties state - wide for heart - disease related deaths. In a community, where the per capita income is \$18,000, health and diet play a large role in the pandemic of heart disease.

A national focus this week has been on how quickly hospitals in the United States are treating heart attacks. According to a release by a recent Associated Press release, hospitals have set a record pace for how rapidly they are able to open blocked arteries at just under an hour. However, this trend is not news for Meadows Regional Medical Center, a small community hospital in rural South Georgia that has been hitting this benchmark since 2014. In fact, Meadows has shattered the national average record for life saving speed. Clocking in with an incredible 24 minute average time for “door to balloon” (the time it takes to unblock an artery during a heart attack) - the team at Meadows has become one of Georgia's fastest.

Importantly, as you are deciding on which hospital or hospitals your donation will go to, please consider that, in terms of the rural hospital tax credit, our management team, physicians and community leaders have let their donations speak for their commitment to our medical community. From the inception of this wonderful program, our entire community has actively promoted and participated in the tax credit which, we believe, is a factor that potential donors will consider important in deciding where to make their philanthropic investments in support of rural health care.