

# In Sickness and in Health

## Turn to DeKalb Medical



Named the top hospital in the state for stroke patients and one of top 5 percent in country for clinical excellence, DeKalb Medical is another great reason that the living is good in Decatur.

Decatur residents take great pride in the homes, towering oaks and walking neighborhoods that are the city's trademark. Then there's the square, with its variety of restaurants and shops that make the city one of metro Atlanta's most desirable residential destinations.

But did you know that great health care is also another huge plus of living in Decatur?

In January, DeKalb Medical was designated as a Distinguished Hospital for Clinical

Excellence, placing it among the top 5 percent of hospitals in the U.S. for clinical care. The hospital also ranked first among all Georgia hospitals for treatment of stroke.

The rankings are a result of a comprehensive, three-year study that the independent health ratings organization HealthGrades conducted from 2005 to 2007. The study finds that 5 percent of hospitals in the U.S. meet quality clinical standards. DeKalb Medical is one of 270 nationally to do so. "This top ranking is

from an independent health ratings organization, so it's a reaffirmation of the high clinical quality and outstanding patient outcomes provided by DeKalb Medical," says DeKalb Medical President and CEO Eric Norwood.

The designation is important not only in name. According to HealthGrades, 152,666 lives could have been saved and 11,772 complications could have been avoided had all Medicare patients been treated at a Distinguished Hospital for Clinical Excellence. Also, HealthGrades says that Distinguished Hospitals for Clinical Excellence have mortality rates



that are on average 27 percent lower than those that do not receive the grade.

"Distinguished Hospitals for Clinical Excellence comprise an unparalleled group of hospitals that excel across the board, not just in one or two specialties and they should be commended for their relentless commitment to exceptional patient care. Patients should expect and demand the same level of care at all hospitals," says Dr. Rick Mays, HealthGrades' senior physician consultant and an author of the study.

DeKalb Medical, with three locations in DeKalb County, opened May 1, 1961 as DeKalb General on North Decatur Road — the present location of one of its three branches. In addition to the medical center at that location, DeKalb Medical now includes an acute care, long-term treatment center in downtown Decatur and a hospital in Lithonia.



Originally, the hospital was envisioned as a place to treat the rapidly growing, and changing, population of DeKalb County. The 1940 census of DeKalb County showed a population of 87,000. Many, if not most, residents lived on farms. By 1950, DeKalb's population had swelled to 137,000, and farms were vanishing. Medical visionaries saw that the county would need a cutting edge facility of its own. The two hospitals where DeKalb residents often were treated — Grady and Emory University Hospital — were changing to meet the growing population of metro Atlanta as well as their individual missions. Grady was making a name for itself in treating low-income patients with a range of illnesses, and Emory was sharpening its focus as a research institution.

The push to build a new hospital was long and difficult, but May Day of 1961 brought a great celebration—and three patients! It didn't take long, however, for news to spread about the modern facilities—a half bath in

every room, for example—as well as the excellent care provided at DeKalb General.

Over the years, the hospital grew to meet the needs of the community, adding additional locations, changing its name, adding specialty clinics and centers. Today, DeKalb Medical has 627 acute care beds. Last year, 6,480 babies were born at DeKalb Medical, and 209,700 patients sought outpatient treatment.

In addition to such cutting edge facilities as the Women's and Surgery Center, opened in 2007, DeKalb Medical's doctors bring unmatched expertise in orthopedics, cancer treatment and stroke. DeKalb Medical is technologically advanced, with Computerized Physician Order Entry, which allows doctors to place orders via computer rather than on paper. Patient rooms also are advanced technologically, with patient call lights that connect patients wirelessly to their caregivers.

DeKalb Medical is also known for community outreach. In addition to having one of metro Atlanta's premier wellness centers, DeKalb Medical also has a Wellness on Wheels mobile health van that performs free diagnostic procedures such as blood pressure screenings and mammography.

So, as you count your blessings on the benefits of living in Decatur, or if you're trying to persuade friends or family that they should consider a move to one of metro Atlanta's best cities, don't overlook the benefit of having a first-rate medical center literally around the corner. And take comfort in knowing that DeKalb Medical staff are ready to meet your medical needs at any time.

*For more information, contact DeKalb Medical Center at 404.501.WELL or [www.dekalbmedical.org](http://www.dekalbmedical.org)*