

General Surgeon Discusses Cancer

LAWRENCEVILLE - Dr. Faris AL-Gebory, Lawrence County Memorial Hospital's new surgeon, will talk about cancer prevention in a public education session at Central Christian Church on Jan. 24, a Thursday. AL-Gebory will speak from 6 until 7 p.m. in the church gymnasium, with the hospital providing coffee and other refreshments. The Jan. 24 speaking engagement will focus on cancer prevention, and will be the first for AL-Gebory. He plans to do similar programs every other month, according to Lawrence County Memorial Hospital Chief Executive Officer Don Robbins. "Dr. AL-Gebory actually came to me with this idea," Robbins said. "He pounded down my door and said, 'Hey, I want to do this.'"

The program at Central Christian Church will be accompanied by a power-point presentation, which AL-Gebory has put together. He'll answer questions at the end of the evening. "Any doctor will tell you that preventing things from happening is the best medicine," said AL-Gebory, who has been with LCMH since October. "When you catch the disease at the beginning, the chance for success is much greater. My goal is to help bring attention to certain crucial things that should be aware of." It's not the first time for AL-Gebory to attempt such an endeavor. He's hosted similar programs throughout his career, including a large-scale one in Houston, when he was serving a residency. He was also the guest at a recent "Dine With A Doc," program, which takes place monthly at the Lawrenceville Senior Citizens Center.

AL-Gebory's best advice in regard to cancer is to not ignore the warning signs. "There are a lot of red flags," he said. "If you see one, please don't sit on it. Make sure to see your family doctor as soon as you can." Such warning signs, according to AL-Gebory, include but are not limited to lumps on the body, moles that bleed or change shapes or color, changes in appetite, changes in bowel habits, heartburn and night fever. In addition, he advocates a healthy diet, good hydration habits, and less exposure to the sun at certain times of the day, and certain times of the year.

To the knowledge of Robbins, this marks the first time a LCMH doctor has attempted such an endeavor on "a regular basis." "In the past I think there have been good intentions, but it has never followed through," he said. "This will be the first time for a (LCMH) doctor to do something like this on a regular basis. It's a good chance for the public to get to know Dr. AL-Gebory, and they'll become educated on a lot of things."

AL-Gebory understands why someone is hesitant to visit a doctor, but stresses the importance of early detection. "People are afraid to go to the doctor," he said. "Fear is a natural phenomenon for all of us. None of us like to see a doctor. I don't like to see a doctor, myself. But its reality, when you catch something early, things are completely different. The treatment is different, and the outcome can be different,"

Office hours for AL-Gebory are from 1 until 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday at the Surgical Specialty Clinic, located on the second floor at the hospital. The office can be reached by dialing 943-3100.