

Oroville Hospital's Trauma Center

For Dr. Mark Heinrich, co-director of the Emergency Service Department at Oroville Hospital, no two days are ever the same. He and his colleagues never know who might come through the Emergency Room door at any moment, and in what sort of distress.

"It can be so wide-ranging," he says, "anything from a gunshot wound or a stab wound to a motorcycle accident to a child falling out of a second-story window. Oroville Hospital is an amazing place, because we see a high volume of a wide array of patients."

Whatever the circumstance, the Emergency Service Department is ready to help the approximately 40,000 people who come through the door each year.

Oroville Hospital is a Level 3 Trauma Center, meaning its Emergency Service Department staff treats all but the most severe neurological, pediatric and burn patients. Every nurse holds Trauma Nursing Course Certification, and the hospital as a whole is a member of the Sacramento Sierra Valley Trauma System.

"All of our emergency physicians are Emergency Medicine residency trained and/or board-certified in Emergency Medicine, so we're

trained in how to handle trauma.

Now, that's all

well and good, but unless you have a strong trauma surgery program to back that up, you really can't handle

Whatever the circumstance, the Emergency Service Department is ready to help.

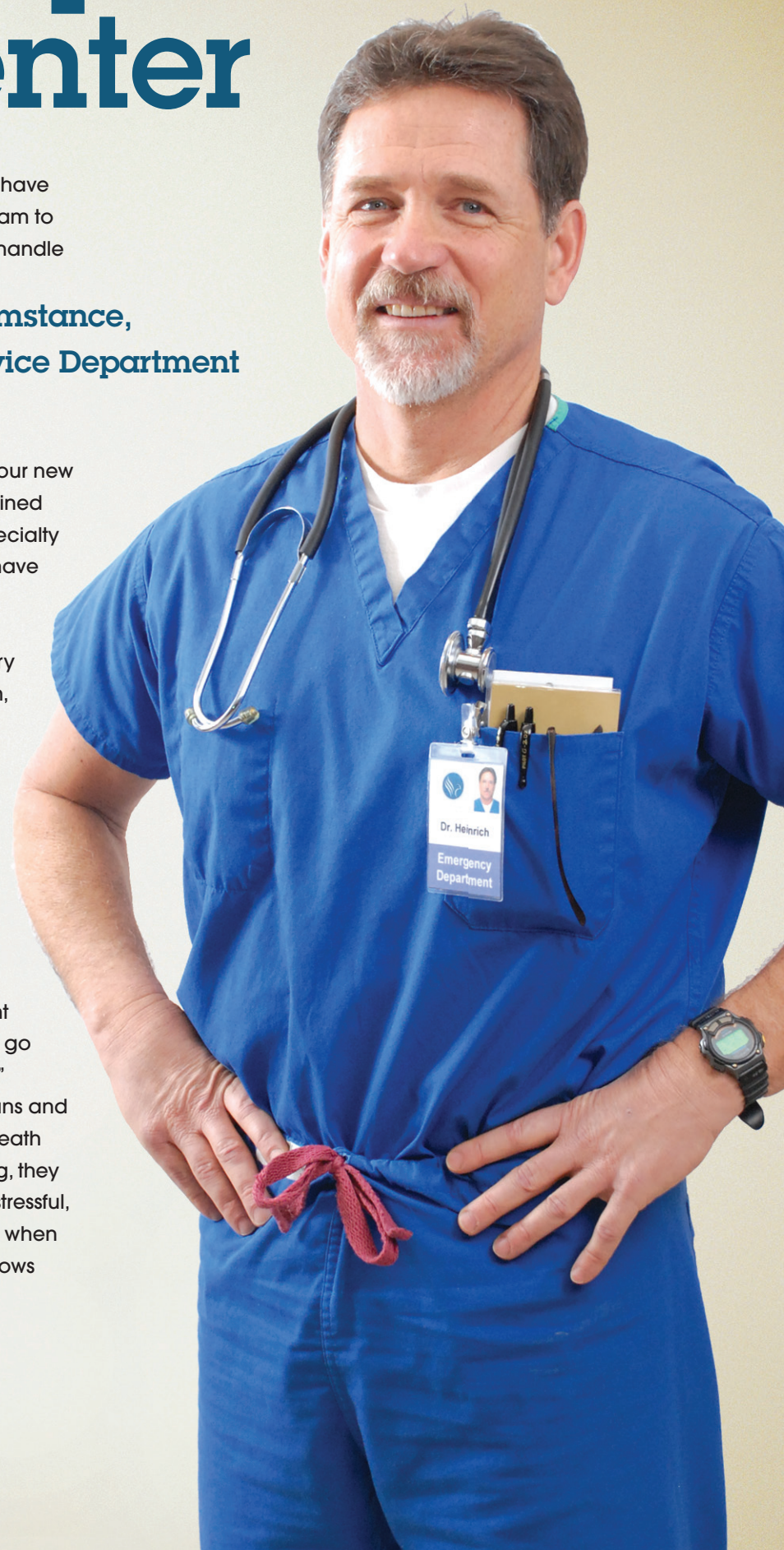
trauma well. We have added four new surgeons who are very well trained in general surgery and sub-specialty surgery and trauma. We now have a very strong trauma surgery program.

"Dealing with trauma is a very organized, protocol-led system, and it's that way because trauma can be chaotic," Dr. Heinrich explains.

"Your approach has to be systematic, because a lot of times—if not most of the time—it's not obvious what the injury is.

"We are trained to deal with the most serious and significant injuries first, rule them out, then go on with evaluating the patient."

It's difficult work. E.R. physicians and nurses constantly face life-or-death situations. With the clock ticking, they must make vital decisions. It's stressful, yet it's also satisfying, because when each shift ends, Dr. Heinrich knows he's saved lives.



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