The Baton Rouge General is a pioneer in the development of health care in our community. "The first of its kind," "The only one in the state," "A leader in the South." These are the phrases people use to describe our programs.

A burn unit treating critically injured patients from all over the South. A chemical dependency unit that has become a model for programs across the country. A cardiovascular rehabilitation clinic working to restore heart patients to normal day-to-day lives. A Better Breathers Club that brings in lung-disease patients from as far away as Shreveport. An ostomy program that is a leader not only in Louisiana but throughout the South. The Baton Rouge General Hospital is in the forefront of medical advances in the community, the state, and the region.

We're proud of that reputation, and we're expanding physically as well. You are probably aware of our construction program. By 1985, we will have 513 patient beds, all in private rooms. We'll continue to add state-of-the-art equipment, such as our CT Scanners that detect everything from brain tumors to subdural hematomas.

But one thing about the Baton Rouge General will not change, and that is the people who are the heart of the hospital. From the surgeon to the floor nurse to the housekeeper, we have a staff unparalleled in its spirit of caring. There's a pride here, and a true dedication to the well-being of the patient— it's something you feel the minute you walk inside.

You may not need the Baton Rouge General today or tonight or tomorrow. But we're here when you need us—and we have been for more than 50 years...
Our community has always had a spirit of caring, of reaching out to those in need. It has also espoused a "can-do" spirit, in the best tradition of Americans who see that something needs doing—and simply do it.

The history of the Baton Rouge General Hospital is a story of caring...and doing for others.

Just after the turn of the century, a train wreck on the old Y and MV Railroad became the first link in a chain of events that eventually led to the building of Baton Rouge's first general hospital.

Dr. T. P. Singletary, a young surgeon for the railroad who also had a small practice in Baton Rouge, brought two severely injured passengers to a large frame building on the corner of Florida and Church (now Fourth) streets for treatment.

As he guided the patients back to health, Dr. Singletary soon discovered that he and several other Baton Rouge doctors could treat more patients more effectively by moving them all to one location.

Singletary built a three-story brick building in 1908 next to his office. The Sanitarium, as the clinic became known, was the forerunner of the Baton Rouge General Hospital.

By 1912, Dr. Singletary's own health was failing, and the Charity Ward Association of Baton Rouge accepted responsibility for the Sanitarium. By 1923, its name was officially changed to the Baton Rouge General Hospital and the facility was moved into a large house on the corner of East Boulevard and Government Street to accommodate more patients.

But the BRGH quickly outgrew its new quarters. The public spirited women of the Charity Ward Association launched a $150,000 fund drive to build a new hospital. The four-story, 62-bed brick hospital at 900 Government Street was dedicated and opened in 1927.

In 1944, at the request of the hospital's board of directors, the Louisiana Baptist Convention took over the ownership and operation of the Baton Rouge General Hospital and successfully guided its growth over the next 24 years.

The major event of that period was the completion in 1950 of the present site of the hospital at 3600 Florida Boulevard.

At the time of its dedication on January 28, 1950, BRGH housed 250 beds, a chapel, and a solarium.

While the hospital was under the segs of the Baptist Convention, it added a nursing-education building, a purchasing and stores building, the south addition, the north administrative wing, and the Guest House nursing home on Florida Boulevard.

In 1970, the Louisiana Baptist Convention relinquished ownership and control to the local board of directors. BRGH became, in the truest sense, a community general hospital. The board was made up of Baton Rouge citizens from throughout the community who served without pay. The Baton Rouge General Hospital now belonged to the people.
Every single person who comes in to the hospital has some type of laboratory work done. When we look at tissue from a patient, it’s extremely important that we get the right diagnosis, because the treatment will be dependent upon what we say. There’s a lot of pressure on us. We’re so concerned about the patients even though we don’t always know them personally. We know their names and their ages, and there is a real feeling down here for the patients. Sometimes we take the job home with us. We think about the patients, and what they’re going through, and their families.

— Robert L. Ward, M.D., Assistant Chief of Pathology
Until 1970, there was no burn unit in Louisiana. Baton Rouge General's was the first, and it was one of only 14 such centers in the United States when it opened. In the South, it is regarded as a pioneer in the treatment of scald, electrical, and chemical burns.

Since then, the center has treated more than 3,000 persons (not including outpatients) and has expanded its services to include a rehabilitation clinic and support groups. Even with advanced burn-care techniques and medication, there are no quick cures for the burn patient. Patients must go through months of hospital stay, surgery, and rehabilitation. Occupational and physical therapy, beginning at the time of admission, are essential to successful rehabilitation.

Many of our patients come back and visit us later. Sometimes we don't even recognize them because their hair has grown back and plastic surgery has given them a new face. We are so happy for them. And they thank us for taking such good care of them. Even the most difficult patients come back to thank us.

— Robin Talbot, RN, Burn Unit

I always feel that I plea-bargain with God. I've got seven children, and if I'm working with a child or a young adult who has been severely burned or has a closed head injury, I say, "I'll do everything I can for this person, just please don't let it ever happen to one of mine."

— Agnes McLindon, RPT, Assistant Director, Physical Therapy
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BATON ROUGE GENERAL HOSPITAL BALANCE SHEET

Operating Revenues
1982: $51,552,446
1981: $42,219,924

We billed patients for services:

Of this amount, we made reductions for:
Discounts to Medicare and Medicaid patients
Community service (charity and bad debts)

Therefore, from patient services we received:

Other operating revenues received:
Employee and visitor food services
Child-care services
Interest income
Donations
Miscellaneous

Total Revenues
1982: $48,431,363
1981: $40,779,692

Operating Expenses
1982: $19,806,902
1981: $17,305,968

We paid for:
Salaries and wages
Employee benefits
Hospital-based physicians' fees
Drugs
Food
Contract services
Utilities and telephone
X-ray film
Medical supplies and other costs
Depreciation and amortization
Interest expense

Total Expenses
1982: $45,000,939
1981: $38,312,825

We had an excess of revenues over expenses to use for working capital, new equipment, capital improvements, and better services:

$3,430,424
$2,466,867