

# Making a Difference

The medical community is constantly seeking new treatment options for diseases and conditions. To ensure new medications and devices are safe and effective, they are tested by volunteers in clinical research trials at facilities such as Meridien Research in Lakeland.

Meridien Research has been conducting clinical trials for more than 10 years and its medical doctors have worked in research for decades. Meridien is celebrating the one-year anniversary of its Lakeland site, the company's fifth location.

"We studied Florida sites for several years," said Lakeland Site Director Christine Salvaggio. "We were looking for an underserved community that we could become an active part of and bring with us an unprecedented access to cutting-edge drugs."

"The people of Polk County, and specifically Lakeland, have warmly welcomed us," continued Christine. "Our site has grown every year, and we are happy to have a positive impact on the health of the public at large. Who knows? Maybe the next landmark cure will come from Lakeland."

Vikki A. Wiener, DO, FAAFP, Board Certified in Family Medicine, has more than 25 years' experience in family medicine with a focus on urgent care. She has been a principal investigator with Meridien Research since 2013 and has more than eight years of clinical research experience involving more than 50 research studies.

"Clinical research is an exciting area," said Dr. Wiener. "Our volunteers are not guinea pigs, but everyday people who play an important part in the development of new treatments for medical conditions. We monitor each volunteer closely to ensure they have no serious side effects, and have even found medical problems that volunteers did not know they had which needed to be followed up on."

By participating in a research study or clinical trial, people may benefit by gaining access to new treatments that are not yet available to the public, testing drugs and procedures at no cost, obtaining improved medical care at a leading health care facility, playing an active role in their own health care, improving their quality of life and helping others



Dr. Vikki A. Wiener

by contributing to medical research.

"At Meridien, our studies are protocols for pharmaceutical companies," explained Dr. Wiener. "Research participants undergo careful evaluation by study physicians and are closely followed by the medical staff. There is never a charge to the participant as the cost of medical research is paid for by the pharmaceutical company that sponsors the research program."

Medical research is for patients who are interested in looking for new treatments, who have the time to answer questions about side effects, who are willing to undergo testing, and who are willing to follow the requirements of the study. Sometimes new, unproven medications are compared to already-approved medications in clinical trials; sometimes older medications are improved upon chemically and then studied again for safety and effectiveness.

New research studies begin almost every month. In Lakeland, currently enrolling clinical research studies include those for diabetes, smoking cessation and constipation.

For more information on Meridien Research or the studies enrolling now, call 863-940-2087 or visit [www.newstudyinfo.com](http://www.newstudyinfo.com) today. ❖

**ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE**  
**June 28 • 10am-2pm**  
**3133 Lakeland Hills Blvd. #2**