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New campaign emphasizes hospital’s role caring for the most demanding cases.

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Next week the hospital launches a new community awareness advertising campaign. The campaign, which involves television, radio, print and billboards throughout the Kansas City metro, focuses on three stories that highlight the benefits of choosing academic medicine.

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The Emergency Department at The University of Kansas Hospital moves at a fast pace, with caregivers treating up to 125 patients on a busy day. Patient satisfaction is vital, so ED staff in recent years launched programs with names like Fast Track and Rapid Evaluation Assessment Care Team. The goal: Ensure patients see physicians quickly.

“We have altered the way medicine is done,” said Dennis Allin, MD, Emergency Medicine medical director. “Only one or two other EDs in the nation operate like us. We are committed to seeing patients in a timely and professional fashion.”

Our ED spans more than 160 caregivers, including 21 physicians — most of them board-certified in emergency medicine — as well as 18 residents, 26 paramedics and 80 nurses directly involved in patient care.

They are backed by an ED infrastructure featuring 32 patient and treatment rooms (23 of them private rooms), a dual-patient trauma bay, radiology equipment and a telemetry unit allowing staff to monitor patients in any room. Conveniences include covered drop-off, dedicated underground parking and an isolation waiting area for those with contagious illnesses.

The hospital also offers the region’s only nationally verified Level I Trauma Center, which means Emergency Medicine staff work hand in hand with caregivers in the hospital’s Trauma department as well as Cardiology, Neurology and the Burn Center. With that level of collaboration, Emergency Medicine at our hospital can treat patients seeking the most complex emergency care, from chest pain and respiratory failure to broken bones.

“The feedback we receive from our relationships with other specialists in the hospital is crucial,” Allin said. “Because we are in academic medicine, we constantly are held to a higher standard of care in Emergency Medicine — a state-of-the-art standard ensuring the best patient protocols and outcomes.”

In the News

A recap of recent articles, TV segments and other media coverage of the region’s leading academic medical center.

Type of shoes changes how people run — The Kansas City Star, March 26. The article highlights research by Scott Mullen, MD, Orthopaedic Surgery at The University of Kansas Hospital. He co-authored the study, which will be published in Journal of Pediatric Orthopaedics. It found that thick-heeled running shoes encourage runners to land on their heels, which could increase wear and tear to knees and hips.

Medical Center administrator to lead Edwards Campus — Lawrence Journal-World, March 25. David Cook, PhD, was named vice chancellor at the University of Kansas Edwards Campus in Overland Park. Cook is associate vice chancellor for community engagement at the University of Kansas Medical Center and associate professor in the University of Kansas School of Medicine. He begins his new role at the Edwards Campus Monday, April 15.

Early warning signs of autism — Fox News, April 3. As part of Autism Awareness Month, Medical Reporter Mellynn Lin Mickson talked with Leaunin Rinner, OTR/L, of the Center for Child Health and Development at the University of Kansas Medical Center. One in 50 school-aged kids displays an autism spectrum disorder, with warning signs usually appearing by 12 to 18 months. Early intervention is key for the child’s development, Rinner said.

Exploring “Milk and Cookies disease” — KMBC Radio, March 27. Jake Wei, MD, a pediatric otolaryngologist at the University of Kansas Hospital, explained how dairy and sugar do not digest overnight, causing a number of health problems. Wei said 75 percent of patients he sees suffers from the disease. If your child shows signs of bed, offer bananas or dry crackers and avoid foods containing dairy and sugar.

New hope for ALS patients

Researchers looking for a new treatment for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive neurological disorder commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, are turning to a drug already used in another neurologic disorder to see if it can help patients in the fight against the devastating disease.

Richard Barohn, MD, distinguished professor and chair of the University of Kansas Medical Center’s Department of Neurology, has treated patients with ALS for decades. He is now leading a new study funded by a $1.6 million grant from the Food and Drug Administration’s Office of Orphan Products Development.

Richard Barohn, MD, and ALS patient Dena Higbyer

Researchers at 10 different sites will enroll patients in a study examining the effect of the drug rasagiline — already approved for use in Parkinson’s disease patients — in patients with ALS. Fifty percent of ALS patients die within three to five years of being diagnosed. As many as 30,000 patients have the disease in the U.S. at any given time. Treatment options are limited too. A single drug is available to patients today, and it can delay the progression of the disease by about three to six months.

Beacons honor exceptional patient care

Three nursing units at The University of Kansas Hospital have won the Beacon Award for Excellence, which recognizes exceptional patient care.

Few hospitals in the Midwest can claim a Beacon Award, much less three. Currently the closest Beacon Awarded hospitals are in Denver, Memphis and Coralville.

“This is a fantastic accomplishment,” said Carol Clerk, RN, who oversees the hospital’s Emergency and Critical Care Services. “The fact we are the only hospital in the region to have a Beacon Award winning unit — and we have three — speaks volumes to the quality in critical care services we offer.”

The Beacon Award, from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, recognizes three levels, Gold, Silver and Bronze, and designations are awarded for three years. Our new Beacon Award winners:

• Medical/Transplant ICU (Unit 6B), Gold – Nurse Manager Adam Olbingord, RN; Medical Director Amy O’Brien-Ladnier, MD. This is the unit’s second Beacon Award.

• Cardiopulmonary ICU (ICU 8), Silver – Nurse Manager Stad Giudicessi, RN; Medical Director Jeff Kramer, MD. This is the unit’s second Beacon Award.

• Cardiopulmonary ICU (ICU 8), Silver – Nurse Manager Anna Werner, RN; Medical Director Greg Muehlbach, MD. This is the unit’s first Beacon Award.