Keeping patients out of our beds
Why the hospital is expanding its ambulatory care

With approximately 700 beds, The University of Kansas Hospital is the single largest hospital in the Kansas City area. Yet the vast majority of the hospital’s patients never see a bed. They are treated in an outpatient setting, such as a physician’s office or hospital-based clinic, and soon are on their way home.

It is called ambulatory services, and it represents an increasingly important segment of the hospital’s approach to healthcare.

“Our goal is to keep patients out of the hospital and out of the Emergency Department,” said Kim Dixon, RN, director of the Marc A. Asher, MD, Comprehensive Spine Center, which treats patients at the main campus and the Indian Creek Campus.

The Marc A. Asher, MD, Comprehensive Spine Center is one many clinics helping expand the hospital’s ambulatory services. Physical therapists Meghan Kramer and Scott Bunselmyer care for outpatients at the center.

The spine center is one of more than a dozen hospital-based clinics opened in recent years to provide specialized ambulatory care. In addition to spine care, the clinics focus on burn and wounds, organ transplants, former neonatal patients, epilepsy, infusion therapy, sports and orthopedic injuries, plastic surgery, sarcoma, women’s reproductive health and more.

The clinics, which also are key in transitioning patients to inpatient care, are part of the hospital’s established ambulatory services specializing in heart care (Mid-America Cardiology) and cancer treatment (The University of Kansas Cancer Center).

Ambulatory services’ role in the area’s healthcare is immense. In fact, the hospital and its clinics recorded 562,977 “outpatient encounters” in fiscal year 2013 –18 times more than its number of inpatient discharges (30,689).

“It’s what most patients want: a high level of specialized, intimate care – and then they want to go home,” said Charlotte Adams, director of Indian Creek Campus operations, where about 90 percent of the 250 surgeries each month are outpatient.

For Carrie Jordan, the expanding ambulatory network also reflects the hospital’s proactive efforts to prevent patient illness and readmissions. The specialized clinics provide important “handoffs and transitions of care” between hospital physicians and patients’ primary care doctors.

“We don’t want to be reactive,” said Jordan, chief operating officer of the hospital’s Jayhawk Primary Care. “We want patients to have access to our specialists before they need a hospital bed.”

By the Numbers: Ambulatory Services

The University of Kansas Hospital in recent years has expanded its network of outpatient clinics at the main campus and throughout the city.

67%

Growth in number of the hospital’s outpatient encounters FY 2009-2013

Outpatient encounters

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<td>Movement disorders</td>
<td>154</td>
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<td>Epilepsy</td>
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<td>Spine-main campus</td>
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<td>Cancer-community Mid-America Cardiology</td>
<td>5,179</td>
<td>6,063</td>
<td>6,676</td>
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Patient visits to hospital-based clinics during Jan. 2014

To suggest a By the Numbers, email Advances@kumc.edu.
Events

Guided imagery toward relaxation – Let your imagination take you toward a more relaxed state. The program is for people living with serious or chronic physical illness, and for their supporters. Patients can use the tool to help manage stress, pain and other symptoms as well as for overall well-being. The class is 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday, May 13, at The University of Kansas Cancer Center-Overland Park. Call 816-691-5020 to register.

Chiefs Fantasy Camp – The inaugural event is Thursday, May 15, and Friday, May 16, at Arrowhead Stadium. A fundraiser for The University of Kansas Hospital's Center for Concussion Management, the camp offers 100 fans an exclusive experience: behind-the-scenes access and a chance to learn from former Chiefs players. Participants will break down film, gear up in the locker room and take the field at Arrowhead. Go to kcchiefs.com/fantasycamp for information.

Monthly blood drive – Give the gift of life at the monthly blood drive at our main campus. The drive is 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, May 21, at the Student Center. Walk-ins are welcome. The Community Blood Center is the primary blood supplier to patients at our hospital.

Fundraiser at the K – Proceeds from the Kansas City Royals' Diamond of Dreams June 26 will support The University of Kansas Hospital's Neonatal Medical Home. Held on the field at Kauffman Stadium, it features food and beverages from a variety of local restaurants, a band, socializing with Royals players, auctions for sports memorabilia, fireworks and more. Tickets are $125 per person. Details are at kansascity.royals.mlb.com/kc/community/diamond_of_dreams.jsp.

Details and more events are at kumed.com/event-detail.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Boutique grows with patients’ needs

Missy's Boutique is among The University of Kansas Cancer Center's best-known and most frequented patient services. Missy's (kucancercenter.com/missys) opened in June 2010 in the Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Care Pavilion at the Westwood Campus, offering post-surgery garments, breast forms, pocket bras, headwear, cancer awareness items, accessories, gifts and "retail therapy" bling.

The sole paid employee was manager Judy Newell, a 40-year licensed cosmetologist and licensed mastectomy prosthesis fitter. A handful of volunteers assisted retail customers.

“My, how we’ve grown!” said Newell, an 11-year cancer survivor. “We’ll serve about 1,500 patients for fittings this fiscal year – more than triple our first year.”

Among the other changes from four years ago:

• Nearly 1,500 uninsured and underinsured patients have received free wigs, breast forms and post-surgery garments through the boutique’s Patients In Need Fund.
• A part-time assistant manager and two part-time fitters have joined Newell as paid staff; volunteer staff has grown to 20.
• The boutique became Medicare-approved.
• Major donor support comes from Art Bra KC, employee contributions and fundraisers ranging from golf tournaments to Brownie Scouts collecting pennies.

What hasn’t changed is its mission: to help cancer patients restore their dignity and reclaim their self-image with spirit and style as they journey through treatment, recovery and survivorship.

The boutique is named in memory of Missy Malter Newell and Missy Wilcox O’Neill, two young Kansas wives and mothers who lost their lives to breast cancer. Before their deaths, they both asked their families to do something to help other cancer patients. The boutique is their legacy.

“Missy’s Boutique offers more than cancer-related products and services,” Newell said. “We offer compassion and understanding. We offer a shoulder to cry on, a friend to laugh with and support for their cancer journey – every step of the way.”

EXPOSURE

Pretty in pink

Brooklynn Macan, 4, and other young patients enjoyed a "pink party" in Pediatrics at The University of Kansas Hospital. Miss Topeka, Jennifer Salva, painted Brooklynn’s fingernails and toenails. The April 23 day of beauty was hosted by Shadow Buddies Foundation and several Kansas City Chiefs wives.
In the News

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

▶ Stroke age disparity rising among races – MedPage Today, May 1. Strokes among black and Hispanic Americans occur at a younger age than among whites, and the disparity is growing, according to research conducted by Cynthia Costa, MD, neurology resident at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Average age for strokes has dropped to 65 for blacks and 68 for Hispanics, while the age for whites has held steady at 75. Reasons could be due to inadequate healthcare among those populations, Costa speculated.

▶ Selfie craze boosts plastic surgeries – KCTV-5, April 30. A third of the 123 plastic surgeons who responded to a survey said they saw an increase last year in requests for plastic surgery as a result of “patients being more self-aware of their looks because of social media.” “To some extent there is a greater pressure to always be on, to always look good,” said Richard Korentager, MD, Plastic Surgery chair at the University of Kansas Medical Center. However, he said his main worry is unrealistic patient expectations.

▶ Annual events help battle skin cancer – The Kansas City Star, April 29. The third annual Outpacing Melanoma 5K was May 4 followed by Melanoma Monday the next day. Oncologist Gary Doolittle, MD, at The University of Kansas Cancer Center said the events are important to raise awareness of the skin cancer. “Anytime this disease has spread beyond where it started, we have a great challenge trying to treat it,” he said. “Early detection results in a better shot at a cure.” At least half his patients are under age 50.

▶ Students exploring Alzheimer’s through patients’ lives – Fox 4 News, April 23. Scott Koppel, a first-year medical student at the University of Kansas Medical Center, is gaining special insight into Alzheimer’s disease through patient Herb Miller. Their close relationship is part of a new Alzheimer’s Association program called PAIRS. “These are wonderful, intricate people just like you and me,” said Koppel, who plans to become an Alzheimer’s researcher. “They haven’t lost that part of themselves that made them special.”

Helping hands

Patient care assistant Danniele Hickman and 33 other staff, friends and family members from The University of Kansas Hospital participated in a city-wide service event May 3. They tackled a variety of minor home repairs for area residents in need. The project was part of Nurses and Nursing Support Staff Week.

Screening rural Kansas for skin cancer

The Midwest Cancer Alliance is holding 11 free skin cancer screenings in rural Kansas communities. The alliance, which is the outreach arm of The University of Kansas Cancer Center, has provided the screenings for about 10 years, but this year’s number of stops is more than double previous years.

Residents from the University of Kansas School of Medicine’s Dermatology program perform the screenings. They begin May 24 in Parsons and will wrap up in Pittsburg this fall. Other stops are in Pomona, Independence, Manhattan, Walnut, LeRoy, Moran, Goodland, Louisburg and Girard.

The screenings are held by the Kansas Masonic Foundation in collaboration with the Midwest Cancer Alliance.

Dogs and people: Link to osteosarcoma?

Researchers at the University of Kansas Medical Center, working with colleagues at Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics and Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine, will screen thousands of drugs in a new project that seeks to improve the treatment of a rare bone cancer in humans and dogs alike.

Osteosarcoma is the most common bone tumor among children and young adults, with about 400 U.S. cases diagnosed each year. While advances in chemotherapy have helped, the five-year survival rate is still 50-60 percent.

The disease in dogs is much more common, with more than 10,000 cases diagnosed each year.

Because osteosarcoma is one of the few cancers that behaves the same in dogs and humans, the team of scientists believes finding treatments that work in one species will also help the other.

Funded by $500,000 from the Midwest Cancer Alliance and working with scientists at the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, the researchers will explore both human and dog cancer cell lines, looking for the most effective drugs. No dogs will be harmed while obtaining tissue.

“Because osteosarcoma is one of the few cancers that behaves the same in dogs and humans, the team of scientists believes finding treatments that work in one species will also help the other,” Scott Weir, PharmD, PhD, professor of pharmacology, toxicology and therapeutics at our medical center. “We’ll identify winners and losers, finding the drugs that have the most promise and then we’ll move forward.”

The most promising candidates will be tested in dogs that have osteosarcoma. With more cases to work with, it is easier to gather critical preclinical data in dogs by seeing which drugs are most effective. A breakthrough could lead to a cure for both dogs and people.
Our People

Scientist named to NAS – Joe Lutkenhaus, PhD, a University Distinguished Professor in Microbiology, Molecular Genetics, and Immunology at the University of Kansas Medical Center, has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

He is one of 84 new members and 21 foreign associates from 15 countries elected to the academy in recognition of their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research.

“I was obviously pleasantly surprised and perhaps a bit in shock considering how prestigious the academy is,” Lutkenhaus said. He is one of just three active scientists throughout the University of Kansas in the academy.

Established in 1863, the NAS is charged with providing independent, objective advice to the nation on matters related to science and technology. Scientists are elected by their peers to membership in the academy for outstanding contributions to research.

“Being a member of the academy had never been a goal of mine, but I am obviously thrilled,” Lutkenhaus said. “I am also thankful to all my students and postdocs over the years who have been responsible for helping with my work.”

Nurse teaching award – Elaine Williams Domian, PhD, APRN, clinical associate professor at the University of Kansas School of Nursing, has received the 2014 Phyllis Keeney Lawrence Teaching Award.

The award was established in honor of Lawrence, a 1990 School of Nursing graduate, following her death. Her parents recalled her daughter saying, “Nurses will only be as good as the teachers from whom they learn.”

Happy reunion for pilot, staff – On the one-year anniversary of the day he almost lost his life, Dennis McNish and his family returned to The University of Kansas Hospital.

MCNISH said during the May 1 surprise visit. “They took real good care of me, so they deserve all the credit. I’m just here to tell them thank you one more time.”

Nurses, who were delighted to see his remarkable recovery, said they always welcome such reunions with patients.

As for his days piloting ultra-light aircraft, McNish said he has “given that up for walking.”

Advanced emergency care

Drivers, crew members and fans at Kansas Speedway are in good hands. There to keep everyone in the race is The University of Kansas Hospital’s expert medical team.

Physicians, nurses and technicians on the infield care team earned NASCAR’s Team Work Award for excellent care during even the most medically challenging event.

Official Healthcare Provider of Kansas Speedway. 913.588.1227 kumed.com/speedway

The University of Kansas Hospital

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