KU Chancellor to Step Down

University of Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway, PhD, will step down June 30 after 14 years at the helm.

Hemenway announced his intentions at a news conference Dec. 8. “I’ve had a heck of a good time being chancellor, and we’ve done some fantastic things,” he said. Noting there is “never a perfect time to step down,” Hemenway stressed KU “is a great university, well-positioned for the challenges ahead.”

At 67, Hemenway said he was ready to exchange the “24-7 demands” of the chancellor’s position to serve KU in a different role. After a one-year academic sabbatical to write a book on college athletics and American values, he plans to return to the classroom. He said he’s “just your standard English professor.” His specialty is African-American literature.

Barbara Atkinson, MD, executive vice chancellor, University of Kansas Medical Center, described Hemenway’s announcement as bittersweet. “Not only has he been a strong partner to work with, but we are grateful for his leadership in making National Cancer Institute designation the university’s number-one priority,” she said.

When asked to name his most important accomplishments, Hemenway mentioned helping KU “become one university,” treating KUMC and other campuses outside Lawrence as part of the whole institution.

Atkinson agrees. “Moving forward, we are confident the Board of Regents will select a successor with equal vision and commitment to collaborations that have allowed the medical center to strengthen our education, research and patient care efforts.”

During Hemenway’s years as chancellor, the university has undergone unprecedented expansion with $310 million in new buildings and remodeling. This includes building several facilities on the KUMC campus:

- School of Nursing building
- Theo and Alfred M. Landon Center on Aging
- Hoglund Brain Imaging Center
- Kansas Life Sciences Innovation Center

Hemenway played a key role in getting legislation passed to allow The University of Kansas Hospital to become a public authority in 1998.

Bob Page, hospital president and chief executive officer, noted the chancellor has been an advocate for everything the hospital has set out to accomplish. He said he has always appreciated Hemenway’s vision and leadership, and described the resignation announcement as a personal and professional loss.

Free Flu Shots Increase 16% Campus Wide

The campus-wide flu shot campaign prompted a 16 percent increase in the number of shots given to staff, faculty, students and volunteers this year.

As of Dec. 1, Pam Foerster, RN, nurse manager, Occupational Health Clinic, tracked 4,289 doses of flu vaccine, compared to 3,702 doses in 2007 and 3,024 doses in 2006. In just two years, the number of flu shots given to those on campus has increased 42 percent.

“For years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been promoting flu shots as a way to protect not just individuals, but entire communities,” Foerster said. “Increasing the number of flu shots on campus is nice, but we hope it helps keep campus healthy as well.”
Prevention (CDC) has advised flu shots for everyone working in health care environments,” said Ken Kuse, director, hospital Environment of Care. “So we’re pleased to see the steady increase in the number of people on our campuses who are getting vaccinated.”

Shots Still Available
Foerster noted it’s not too late to get vaccinated to protect yourself, patients, coworkers and family members from the flu. Flu season is considered to be October through March. Each year, an estimated 220,000 people are hospitalized from flu and 36,000 die.

Free shots are still available on all campuses while vaccine lasts. (See sidebar)

Flu Prevention
Once you’ve been vaccinated against the flu, you can help prevent the spread of the virus with three basic precautions.

1. Cover your cough. The flu virus spreads through respiratory droplets that occur when you cough or sneeze.

2. Wash your hands well — and often. The flu virus can spread when you touch an object contaminated by someone who is infected. The virus can live up to two hours on computer keyboards, phone handsets, door knobs, stair rails, desks, countertops and other surfaces.

3. Stay home when you’re sick. You can infect others up to five days after you become sick. Report your illness to a supervisor immediately, then rest and recover at home. Otherwise, you risk infecting patients and coworkers.

eXtra: For more information, visit cdc.gov/flu.

Hazmat Committee Wants You
The University of Kansas Hospital’s Hazmat Committee is seeking additional members.

All hospital employees are eligible; hazardous materials experience is not required. You may be eligible to attend government-sponsored training classes if your supervisor approves it.

Committee meetings are 11 a.m. the first Tuesday of each month in the Emergency Department. For more information, contact Wendy Miranda, RN, wmachado@kumc.edu.

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Units 61 and 62 Get New Digs and New Duds
Staff of the hospital’s new neuroscience units have state-of-the-art facilities and new matching outfits to demonstrate Units 61, Neuroscience Intensive Care, and 62, Neuroscience Progressive Care, work as a team. Attending the open house were (from left) Lora Crow, RN, and Tiffany Halverson, RN, Unit 62; and Jennifer Moran, RN, and Ashley Carpenter, RN, Unit 61. Patients moved to the units Dec. 8.
Thursday, Dec. 11
ANATOMY & CELL Biology Seminar: “Post-Transcriptional Regulation of Uterine Mmp9,” Warren Notthick, PhD, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Lied Auditorium.
LUNG CANCER Support Group: 5:30 p.m., Brandmeyer Patient Resource Center, Westwood Campus.

Friday, Dec. 12
PEDICATRIC GRAND Rounds: “Mechanism of Fetal Brain Damage During Chronic Hypoxemia and Its Pharmacological Prevention Despite Continued Hypoxemia,” Carl Weiner, MD, 8-9 a.m., Wahl Hall West Auditorium.
PSYCHIATRY GRAND Rounds: “Cardiorespiratory Fitness in Early Alzheimer’s Disease,” Jeff Burns, MD, 10:30 a.m.-noon, 3015 Sudler.
ANATOMY & CELL Biology Seminar: “Association Models for Clustered Data with Binary and Continuous Responses,” Debajyoti Sinha, PhD, noon-1 p.m., G013 School of Nursing.

Monday, Dec. 15
MOLECULAR & INTEGRATIVE Physiology Seminar: “Ovarian Cancer and Preclinical Development of Nanotax,” Kathy Roby, PhD, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Beller Lecture Center.

Tuesday, Dec. 16
INFECTIOUS DISEASES Journal Club: 4-5 p.m., Norton J. Greenberger Conference Room, 4050 Wescoe.

Wednesday, Dec. 17

Thursday, Dec. 18
CANCER & DEVELOPMENTAL Biology Seminar: “Human Embryonic Stem Cells as Models for Trophoblast Differentiation,” Michael Roberts, PhD, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Lied Auditorium.
FAMILY CAREGIVERS Support Group: Noon-1 p.m., 145 Landon Center on Aging. Lunch provided. Information: Myra Hyatt, 8-2365.
PREVENTIVE MEDICINE and Public Health Seminar: “Understanding Uncontrolled Hypertension,” Dan Berlowitz, MD, noon-1:10 p.m., Clendening Auditorium. Lunch provided for first 40 attendees.
BLOOD & BONE MARROW Transplant Support Group: 1 p.m., Atrium Conference Room, Westwood Campus.

Friday, Dec. 19
NEUROLOGY/NEUROSURGERY Grand Rounds: “Interventional Treatments in the Management of Chronic Spinal Pain,” Talal Khan, MD, 6:45-9 a.m., Lied Auditorium.
PEDIATRIC GRAND Rounds: “Allergic Rhinitis and Obstructive Sleep Apnea,” Mutasim Abu-Hasan, MD, 8-9 a.m., Wahl Hall West Auditorium.

Saturday, Dec. 20

Annual Nursing Comp Fair Is Dec. 15-17
The University of Kansas Hospital’s annual Nursing Competency Fair is 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Dec. 15, through Wednesday, Dec. 17. It will be in Varnes Conference Room and the Skills Lab in KU School of Nursing.

Enjoy a Party and Donate to Harvesters
Holiday parties for The University of Kansas Hospital staff will provide food, fun and the opportunity to donate non-perishable food and paper goods to Harvesters Community Food Network.

Blood Drive Planned in Stolard Lounge
The University of Kansas Medical Center will sponsor a blood drive 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, in Stolard Lounge.

Children’s Wish Lists Are Unfilled
More than 465 Wyandotte County children will have a happier holiday through the Holiday Giving Program. But about 10 children from Project EAGLE remain to be “adopted” with the deadline barely more than 24 hours away.

Please send news and calendar items to mmurphy@kumc.edu or contact Marli Murphy at 5-5192. Items must be received by noon on the Monday prior to publication.
Lab to Aid Diabetes Researchers

A new Core Islet Biology Laboratory for diabetes researchers throughout the region is open in Wahl Hall East at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

The new facility will allow researchers who are interested in diabetes, but have no expertise in islet isolation, to begin working in the field, according to Lisa Stehno-Bittel, PhD, scientific director, Great Plains Coalition for Diabetes. She also chairs KUMC Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sciences.

“We want to break down barriers so more researchers will begin working toward a cure for diabetes. Diabetes is a complex disease, and it is likely there will be more than one path to a cure, so we need as many approaches as possible,” Stehno-Bittel said.

Found in the pancreas, islet cells make insulin and become dysfunctional during the onset of diabetes. Better understanding of how these cells live and die is essential to discovering new treatments and a cure for diabetes. With this facility, Kansas City area scientists will have a ready supply of islets for their research.

The lab is the result of a collaborative research program started in 2000 between KUMC and Children’s Mercy Hospital and Clinics. The Hall Family Foundation funded the program. The facility is under the auspices of the Great Plains Coalition for Diabetes.