During National Medical Laboratory Week, April 20-26, KU Med’s Clinical Laboratories will recognize an outstanding employee each day and celebrate the many significant changes the department has initiated during the past year.

The Clinical Laboratories are made up of about 150 people who perform a variety of activities: stat chemistry and hematology testing, culturing microorganisms, examining tissues for malignancies, genetic testing, cross matching blood products and many more services that physicians need to diagnose and treat patients.

In addition to a long-time commitment to quality, the department launched a new customer service initiative in 2002 to train employees to meet and exceed the needs of its customers, which include patients, physicians, nurses and other hospital personnel.

For the first time, laboratory staff and nurses on the units made patient rounds together. This collaborative effort has improved the relationship between the lab staff and nurses, unit clerks, physicians and patients. It also has resulted in better customer service and improvements to the computerized ordering system for clinical laboratory tests, according to Shirley Weber, assistant administrative director.

At the same time, the department has been undergoing a $4 million renovation and capital equipment project. When completed, KU Med will have one of the most technologically advanced clinical laboratories in the country.

Chemistry and hematology – 24-hour, 7-day-a-week operations – will be combined into one core lab. These kinds of tests will be fully automated, as will much of the specimen processing. In addition, the computer system, which has been upgraded to work with the new instrumentation, should be fully operational by this summer.

“Our workload has steadily increased over the past several years,” Weber said. “This automation will allow us to keep pace, improve turnaround times for most common tests and increase accuracy.

“We are incredibly fortunate to have a wonderful laboratory staff here at KU Med,” Weber added. “They have worked hard to make this transition go smoothly.”

Clinical Laboratories will staff an information table outside the cafeteria from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., April 21, 22, 24 and 25.
Last week KU Med announced we would postpone the start of our heart transplant program until an undetermined future date. This was a difficult decision – one made after much careful consideration by members of the hospital’s executive team and our cardiothoracic and cardiovascular surgeons and cardiologists.

Preparing to do heart transplantation has required a deep commitment and countless hours of training by KU Med’s physicians, nurses and other staff. I truly appreciate the exceptional effort they have put forth to develop this part of our program. KU Med is fortunate to have dedicated and hard working health care professionals like these to care for our patients.

Because of their intense preparation, I believe it is important to share the reasons behind our decision to postpone heart transplantation.

Reviving KU Med’s heart transplant program has been an important goal since we began to build our new heart team more than two years ago. At that time, we acquired two physician practices – Mid-America Cardiology and MidAmerica Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons – with recognized medical expertise and outstanding reputations in the community. We put together an experienced and highly qualified nursing staff and spent millions of dollars purchasing the latest equipment and constructing state-of-the-art facilities for our cardiology patients.

Our investment was a very wise one. KU Med is busier than ever. During fiscal year 2002, we cared for more than 17,000 inpatients, a 17 percent increase over the previous year. Much of the rise in patient volumes can be attributed to our growing reputation as a center for advanced medicine, including our successful heart program. One example of this growth is heart surgeries, which are up 50 percent from one year ago.

While we have successfully accommodated this increase so far, we need to continually re-evaluate our resources to meet growing patient needs. These resources include staff, facilities and capital.

Like most hospitals, KU Med faces many financial challenges. Health insurance companies and employers continue to demand efficiencies and reduced duplication of health care programs and services in the community. Reductions in Medicare reimbursements and possible changes in Medicaid reimbursements add to the strain.

Meanwhile, the number of our patients who do not have health insurance or who are underinsured continues to rise. Finally, there are significant state budget pressures on the university that may impact the hospital.

Given these challenges, we decided to allocate our resources where they will provide the greatest benefit to our patients – by meeting growing needs in existing programs. During our decision-making process, we also realized that KU Med does not need transplantation in order to have a highly successful heart program.

We will continue to do life-saving cardiothoracic and cardiovascular surgeries and treat patients with various heart conditions, including those who have had transplants at other facilities. We also will work to expand our new Congestive Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathy Center. And we will continue to evaluate future development of a heart transplant program as we grow our overall heart program.
KU Med’s Department of Radiology is in the process of installing one of the most advanced computed axial tomography (CT) scanners available in the world today.

The General Electric Medical Systems Light Speed® features 16 contiguous rows or slices of high-resolution detectors that can render images with finite detail down to 0.625 millimeter in size. This provides the most advanced level of early diagnostic capability.

Radiologists will be able to view tiny blood vessels and particles of calcium in the body, conduct a virtual colonoscopy and advanced lung analysis, and assess brain stroke and brain tumor conditions.

“What it really means is the power to scan finer, further and faster than ever before,” explained William Bunnell, director of Radiology.

“With this new state-of-the-art scanner, image quality is vastly improved while administering the minimum and safest radiation dose to the patient.”

The process is also much faster. For example, the heart can be imaged in less than 20 seconds – a comfortable breath hold for most patients. A chest-abdomen-pelvis CT can be completed in 17 seconds.

A special feature, called Color Coding for Kids, enables the radiologist to customize the CT scan based on a child’s weight and size, thus eliminating guesswork and reducing the chance of radiation dose errors.

The addition of this new technology to the department’s current four-slice scanner will increase KU Med’s capacity for CT scanning by an estimated 60 percent. CT scanning continues to be the highest growth clinical imaging technology in medicine today. New clinical applications in cardiac scanning and 3-D reconstruction imaging are expected to add more than 12,000 CT procedures at KU Med over the next five years.

The total capital investment, including renovation of the CT suite, is estimated at $1.25 million. Factoring in expenses and maintenance, the new CT technology is estimated to generate $7 million in revenue over the next five years, Bunnell said. The department currently performs more than 23,000 CT studies each year.

Correction
One program was inadvertently left out of the April 10 In The Center story entitled “U.S. News Ranks KUMC Graduate Programs.” The Master of Health Services Administration (MHSA) program in the School of Medicine is tied nationally for 18th among public universities and tied for 29th overall.

Crane Coming Down
After nearly nine months, the construction crane is scheduled to leave the hospital this weekend, April 19-20. However, work will continue on the roof, so construction fencing will remain in place to ensure everyone’s safety. When the project is completed this summer, KU Med will have a new state-of-the-art 22-bed medical/surgical unit and a 14-bed medical intensive care unit to better serve patients.
Rainbow Award
University of Kansas School of Medicine professors nominated for the annual “Rainbow Award for Teaching the Art of Medicine by Example” were honored at the Medical Student Spring Formal and Award Presentation, a “Grande Affair,” April 5. Those nominated, below from left, included Cathy Taylor, MD, Stephen Smith, MD, Belinda Vail, MD, and Melissa Parkhurst, MD. Vail (right) was selected the winner by student vote.

New Clinical Lab Equipment
Clinical laboratory scientists (from left) Susy Mathew, Sandi Smithhisler, Tracy Kisler and Zelpha Umali stand beside the new LX20 Pro, a new clinical chemistry analyzer that consolidates a number of tests in one machine.

Arthritis Foundation Hero of the Year
Nancy Olson, MD (above), a pediatric rheumatologist at KU Med, was recently named the Arthritis Foundation Hero of the Year. Olson received the honor by raising the most funds to support children with arthritis. She was one of nine Kansas Citians who vied for the top honor. The organization helps support research and improved medical care, programs, services and activities for nearly 3,000 children with arthritis who live in the Western Missouri/Greater Kansas City chapter area.
KUMC Auxiliary Luncheon

New officers for the KUMC Auxiliary were installed during the organization's annual spring luncheon held April 10 at Tatsu's Restaurant. Pictured left to right are June Arakawa, member-at-large, Pat Trueworthy, treasurer, Cheryl Pemberton, recording secretary, Shirley Schoenlaub, vice president, and Paula Gangel, president. Not pictured are Norma Winn, corresponding secretary, and Arlis Kerby, member-at-large.

National Library Week

The Archie R. Dykes Library celebrated National Library Week April 7-11 with a reception and games April 9. The theme was “Research Made Easy @ Your Library.” Librarians Betty Martin (left) and Cindy Gray served cake and punch to library visitors. Above, from left, librarians Crystal Vedros, Bob Pisciotta, associate director, and Anne Whitworth searched Internet sites for answers to biomedical questions posed during a “Stump the Librarian” contest.

Auxiliary members sponsor fund-raising events and run the hospital gift shops to benefit projects for the hospital, university and students. During the luncheon, Auxiliary scholarships were presented to students (bottom left, from left to right) Tasha Nellis, Hearing and Speech, KU School of Allied Health; Eva Davis, KU School of Nursing; Vaishali Patel, Health Information Management, School of Allied Health; Kelli Neimann, SoN; and Teresa Schreffler, Health Information Management, School of Allied Health. Not pictured were scholarship recipients Kimberly Mathews and Natalie Smith, both Physical Therapy students in the School of Allied Health, and Dana Whitmore, SoN.
To encourage and recognize the achievements of women in medicine and science, a Florida philanthropist and her husband, who is a medical school dean and KU alumnus, have given $500,000 for a professorship for women faculty members at the KU School of Medicine.

The gift to the Kansas University Endowment Association is from Joy McCann Daugherty and Robert “Bob” Daugherty Jr., MD, of Tampa, Fla. The gift, which was made through the Joy McCann Foundation, will endow the Joy and Bob Daugherty Professorship for Women in Medicine and Science Fund.

The professorship will be awarded to either a current or new faculty member of the SoM who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and mentoring of students, residents and other faculty members. The fund will be eligible for additional support through the Kansas Partnership for Faculty of Distinction.

“Dr. and Mrs. Daugherty’s generosity will help KU demonstrate that the School of Medicine values women and their contributions to academic medicine,” said KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway, PhD. “It will be an important tool in retaining and recruiting top women clinicians and scientists.”

Barbara Atkinson, MD, executive dean of the SoM, said the professorship will recognize women who act as role models for those with professional aspirations in medicine.

“It is extremely important to recognize women who provide mentoring and leadership to others,” Atkinson said. “As positive role models, women who achieve high positions in medicine inspire women at any level in the school – students, residents, faculty members – to become leaders in their fields.”

The Daughertys chose to support the professorship because they see a need to increase the number of women in academic positions in medicine. Although women make up 50 percent of students pursuing medical degrees, many don’t move up into the higher academic positions.

The gift from the Daughertys counts toward the $500 million goal of KU First. KU Endowment is conducting KU First on behalf of KU through 2004 to raise funds for scholarships, fellowships, professorships, capital projects and program support for the university, and capital projects, program support and patient services for the hospital.
Judge Jean Presents

Jean DiMotto, RN, JD, a nurse and circuit court judge from Milwaukee, Wis., will be the featured speaker Monday, April 28, 3-5:30 p.m. in Rieke Auditorium. DiMotto will speak on “Legal Challenges in Today’s Educational Environment.”

The presentation is designed for educators who are responsible for evaluating student performance in clinical and professional laboratory experiences. Administrators who direct educational programs and professional counselors who provide legal advice are also encouraged to attend.

DiMotto previously was a trial attorney defending nurses, doctors and health care facilities in malpractice litigation. She is a former faculty member in both nursing and law at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

For more information, call 8-3329. DiMotto’s presentation is sponsored by the KUMC Department of Nurse Anesthesia Education.

Cancer Expo

If you are living with cancer, have a loved one who has been diagnosed with cancer or just want to learn more about cancer, visit the Cancer Awareness & Prevention Expo, 8 a.m.-noon, Saturday, April 26, in the KU Med lobby.

Health care professionals will identify cancer care options and provide educational materials about preventing and treating various forms of cancer. Free screenings will be given for prostate, skin, oral cancers, cholesterol, blood pressure and more.

To register or for more information, call 8-1227.

Spanish Classes

Through KU Med’s Interpretive Services Department, Carlos Navarro, interpreter, will offer Spanish classes for medical professionals. Three courses will run simultaneously – a basic, an intermediate and an advanced course. All courses will cover Spanish grammar and pronunciation, emphasizing medical vocabulary.

The two-hour, eight-week courses cost $130 per person and include a manual. A beginner’s course will start May 5 and meet every Monday, 5-7 p.m. An intermediate course will begin May 6 and meet every Tuesday, 5-7 p.m. An advanced course will begin May 7 and meet every Wednesday, 5-7 p.m.

All courses will be held in 1030 Sudler. Space is limited. To enroll, contact Navarro at 913-244-6659.

Golfers Wanted

Two golf tournaments in June offer opportunities for fun and fund raising.

The 12th annual KUMC Golf Tournament will be held Monday, June 2, at 1 p.m. at the Adam’s Point Golf Club in Blue Springs, Mo. Entry fees are $60 per person for staff, faculty and alumni and $50 per student. The tournament is a four-person scramble. For more information or to register no later than Wednesday, May 21, contact Tamela Loos, 8-5148 or tloos.

The 20th annual Cancer Golf Classic, sponsored in part by KU Med in conjunction with the Cancer Golf Association of Greater Kansas City, will be held Tuesday, June 3, at Tiffany Greens Golf Club in Kansas City, North. The six-player scramble will start at 12:30 p.m. The entry fee is $200 per golfer. Proceeds benefit local cancer patients. To sign up or for more information, call 816-943-0645.

Auxiliary Spring Sale

The annual KUMC Auxiliary Spring Plant and Bake Sale will be held Wednesday, April 23, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Since the sale is held on National Administrative Professionals Day, it’s a perfect opportunity to shop for your support staff.

Bedding and potted plants will be sold in the Auxiliary Garden, baked goods will be sold outside the cafeteria, and Tupperware will be sold in the hospital lobby across from the Information Desk.
**Friday, April 18**

- **2003 Leadership Series, “Organizational Change That Lasts,”** Shelley Gebur, noon-1 p.m., 1050 School of Nursing.
- **Psychiatry Grand Rounds, Faculty and Resident Research Forum,** 10:30 a.m.-noon, Sudler Auditorium.
- **Neurology Grand Rounds, “Sneddon's Syndrome/Anti-Phospholipid Syndrome,”** Louis Giron, MD, 8-9:30 a.m., 1563 Neurosurgery Conference Room.

**Monday, April 21**

- **“Managing Depression and Anxiety: A Generalist Approach,”** Stephan Quentzel, MD, Beth Israel Medical Center, noon-1 p.m., Rieke Auditorium.
- **National Volunteer Week, April 21-25.**

**Wednesday, April 23**

- **KU Dizziness and Balance Disorders Support Group,** 6:30 p.m., Landon Center.
- **Student Leadership Awards,** noon-1 p.m., School of Nursing Atrium.
- **“Redefining Self: Long-term Persistence of Maternal and Fetal Cells,”** J. Lee Nelson, MD, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, 11 a.m., Lied Auditorium.
- **KUMC Auxiliary Spring Sale,** 8 a.m.-3 p.m., hospital lobby, outside cafeteria and in the Auxiliary Garden.

**Thursday, April 24**

- **Music at the Med, Andrea Coleman, mezzo-soprano, and Alexis Sanchez, soprano,** noon-1 p.m., Battenfeld Auditorium.

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