There may be no place like home for the holidays, but caregivers at The University of Kansas Hospital are doing their best to bring a touch of home to patients.

Patient satisfaction is a top priority at the hospital, and providing quality care helps patients feel at ease.

“Our staff treats patients like they are family,” said Beth Clark, RN, nurse manager, Unit 46 and interim nurse manager, Unit 45.

“This is not just a job. We are caring for patients and families who may be anxious or fearful, and it’s important that we help them feel safe, comfortable and secure.”

Jennifer Bowman, RN, nurse manager, Unit 45, has worked extensively to create a patient-friendly environment within the unit.

“We have a very friendly and outgoing staff, and everyone pitches in and helps keep things running smoothly,” said Courtney Voss, RN, unit coordinator, Unit 45. “This helps patients see that they are an important part of the unit.”

Units 15, 45, 46 and 66 have consistently scored in the top percentiles in patient satisfaction over the past year and a half. Each unit credits teamwork and compassionate care for its success.

“Patients have multiple needs, and our job is to recognize these and make their stay feel as much like home as possible,” said Tarih Klein, unit coordinator, Cardiac Treatment and Recovery.

Units can become quite busy, so giving patients the individual attention they need means pulling together as a team. The units have developed checklists for maintaining basic patient care needs.

Each patient is welcomed by his or her nurse, receives basic comforts and learns where call lights and additional sources of help are located.

Unit 66 caregivers follow a similar series of checks, and this creates consistent care, said Chris Ruder, RN, senior nursing director. Staff members also bring ancillary and support services into the care process to ensure consistent, quality care is maintained throughout each patient’s stay.

Caregivers work as a team with one

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**PICU Reopening**

The Hospital’s Pediatric Intensive Care Unit has reopened in Unit 15A to serve patients ages 17 and under who have both medical and surgical needs.

“We’re staffed and ready to provide services to our pediatric patients,” said Jennifer Lombardi, RN, nurse manager for the PICU. “This unit allows us to serve a critical element of our patient population in an optimal setting.”

**Pipe Break**

A de-ionized water line broke in the Breidenthal research facility early Dec. 6, causing water damage to three floors and more than a dozen rooms. Damaged rooms include research labs, offices and a conference room.

The water line was located in one of the building’s second-floor research labs. The break was discovered at approximately 6 a.m. About 15 people worked together to set up fans and tear out ceiling tiles and about 3,000 square feet of carpet.

The clean-up process will take 10 days to 2 weeks, according to Don Rau, director, Facilities Management.

**STAR Fund Enhances Care for Patients, Families**

Family members of same-day surgery patients will be free to leave the waiting room without missing a beat, thanks to employees of The University of Kansas Hospital who contributed to the STAR Fund through the annual Family Campaign.

When patients are admitted for same-day surgery, their family members will receive restaurant-style pagers. The pagers will alert them when there are updates, questions or changes. This allows families to go to the restroom or visit the cafeteria without worrying about missing information.

“This system improves communication between family members and caregivers and puts families more at ease in the hospital environment, said Robyn Lindsey, RN, nurse manager, Same-Day Surgery and Post-Anesthesia Care Unit.

The STAR Fund was created to develop new patient-focused programs and purchase equipment, supplies and other items that are not included in the hospital’s budget. Hospital employees contributed $30,000 to the STAR Fund by designating their 2004 Family Campaign gifts to that area.

In addition to the $7,350 for pagers, other STAR Fund grants include:

- $6,500 for sleeper chairs for patient’s overnight visitors.
- $4,400 for blanket warmers to keep Cancer Center patients comfortable during treatment.
- $3,000 for automated external defibrillators to aid the Safety Office with emergency response.
- $2,500 for the beautification of the MRI outpatient waiting area.
- $2,400 to develop a music therapy program for Unit 55.
- $1,500 for artwork on Unit 53.
- $1,000 for family-focused artwork on Unit 51.
- $1,000 for adult comfort care carts for intensive care patients.
- $850 for Social Work to give clothing to discharged patients.

A committee of 16 hospital employees reviewed STAR Fund grant proposals and decided how the money should be distributed. Members were: Janice Benjamin, Development; Sally Brandt, Rehabilitation Service; Bill Bunnell, Radiology; Moyer Bunting, Patient Accounting; Linda Edwards, Billing Compliance; Fran Gebhardt, Admitting; Shannon Gist, Human Resources; Ruth Heaton, Organizational Improvement; Denise Johnson, Unit 51/Trauma; Diane Lee, Social Services; Kate Migneron, Development; Sharon Taylor, Information Technology Services; Roxanne Perucca, IV Therapy; Doug Peterson, Unit 65/MICU; Patricia Sanders-Hall, Ancillary Care; and Beth Vandenberg, Clinical Excellence.

KU Endowment, the hospital’s partner in philanthropy, conducts and administers the Family Campaign on behalf of the hospital and the university.
Adopt-a-Child

Glenn James, administrative assistant, University Human Resources, surrounded herself with the gifts and wrapping paper that have been donated to help more than 300 kids through the KUMC Adopt-a-Child program. James, who is participating in this year’s program, was excited that donations are beginning to pile up. Thirty-one children who submitted holiday wish lists still need to be adopted. To adopt a child, stop by Alumni and Community Relations, 1028 Murphy, and pick up a wish list by Dec. 10. All gifts must be delivered to 1028 Murphy by Dec. 13. For more information, call 8-1255.

Bargain Hunters

Second-year medical students Lisa Morris and Shawn Stanley browsed tables of sweatshirts, T-shirts and athletic wear at the KUMC Bookstore’s Holiday Sidewalk Sale Dec. 3. The sale featured reduced-priced books, clothing, collectibles and an assortment of holiday gift items.

Grand Goodbyes

Hospital and university employees recently honored their retiring co-workers with receptions. Left, Food Service supervisor Vesta Berry, center, is retiring after more than 22 years of service. Berry’s daughter Julie Wearda, left, and Andrew Stonestreet, director, Dietetics and Nutrition, joined the festivities in the hospital’s main kitchen. Above right, Sharon Grable, manager, Research Compliance, is retiring after more than 16 years of service to the university’s Human Subjects Committee. Friends, family and colleagues were on-hand in the first-floor of Murphy Lobby to say farewell to Grable.
common goal – patient comfort.

“Service to patients is the top priority – not just maintaining quality but paying attention to individual needs and helping people feel comfortable in their environment,” he said.

It’s often the little extra efforts that put patients at ease. It sometimes means holding a patient’s hand, setting up a manicure or spending time getting to know family members.

Unit 66 opened in September 2003, and teamwork and goal-setting have made it possible for this new unit to climb high in the ranks of patient satisfaction.

Unit 15 caregivers combine the same basic quality care with empathy, noted Stacy Smith, RN, nurse manager. Within this unit, helping patients find satisfaction means anticipating needs.

“We try to provide educated information to our patients and families so they don’t have to think of the big questions,” she said. “When you provide the little extras, you allow your patients to relax and feel truly safe.”

Clark sees patient satisfaction scores as a barometer of caring, a reflection of the units’ commitment to making the hospital “home.”

“We are building trust with our patients, and we know that we have to take really good care of them before this can happen,” she said.

Quality patient care becomes part of a unit’s culture, and patient satisfaction is a key result.

“It’s how you do what you do every day,” Ruder said. “Patient satisfaction becomes the norm. It’s not layered on top of the job but is absolutely essential to it.”