Quality-improvement initiatives focus on communication

“Quality improvement initiatives focus on communication.”

As part of UK HealthCare’s ongoing quality-improvement efforts, a committee of UK HealthCare physicians called the “DocCom” team has been created to make it easier for our physicians to communicate with one another to make every patient’s care seamless. The committee is looking into ways to reduce the barriers to how our doctors talk to one another and setting some internal expectations for how communication among physicians occurs.

Considering the complexity of some of our patients and the number of specialists involved, communication is crucial. One miscue can affect that patient’s care.

“We must enhance doctor-to-doctor communication to ensure that our hand-offs, or transitions of care, are seamless for our patients,” said Bernard Boulanger, MD, chief medical officer for UK HealthCare, who also serves on the DocCom team. “Managing patients, especially those with complex chronic conditions, across the continuum of care requires the timely sharing of information between care providers.”

If you look at everything through the eyes of the patient — if you’re a patient who experiences miscommunication, you may conclude that doctors don’t know what they’re doing or who to trust.

Good communication has the opposite effect. “Patients and families are most comfortable and confident in their care when they know that ‘all those specialists are talking to each other,’” says Joseph Iocono, MD, chief of pediatric surgery and a DocCom team member.

“Also, over time, repeat physician interactions build relationships and trust that cross disciplines. Even when the opinions about care differ, patients see how these interactions are necessary at times to deliver optimal care and enhance both care and patient satisfaction.”

Doctor-to-patient communication

The second initiative on the communication agenda is improving interactions between doctors and patients.

The idea here is the same: To look at the experience through the patient’s eyes and determine what the patient needs to get from each encounter with the physician. While the content of any interaction with a patient or family member may vary, the way doctors enter and exit that room creates a lasting impact.

The plan comes with a mnemonic device, “IN and OUT,” and whether you love or continued on page 4

IN and OUT

The UK HealthCare expectation for physician communication when going IN and OUT of a patient encounter:

- Introduce yourself and role in care
- Name the patient and make eye contact
- Do whatever you need to … then,
- Offer to answer questions
- Use plain language
- Is there anything else I can do for you?
Wear your new badge reel with pride

In honor of UK HealthCare earning the UHC Rising Star Award, all personnel will be receiving a new star-shaped badge reel signifying how we have reached being a national leader and putting our patients at the forefront of what we do. If you haven’t received your new badge reel, ask your supervisor how you can get one.

Circle of Love continues to serve area children

The Circle of Love, which has been sponsored by UK HealthCare employees for the past 30 years, helped over 800 needy children from Fayette and eight surrounding counties receive holiday gifts this year. In addition, gifts for the patients in the Kentucky Children’s Hospital are supported through this holiday-gift program. This is an extensive UK HealthCare team effort that makes the holidays special for many families throughout Central Kentucky.

New standard dress options for frontline staff

UK HealthCare frontline employees who currently wear standard dress now have the option of buying clothing and accessories – which includes a white or black shirt, sweaters and colored scarves or ties – from a store of their choosing rather than exclusively from the website.

The new clothing must be taken to one of two designated vendors for embroidery of the UK HealthCare logo if it will be worn as the outside layer of clothing. When dressing in layers, the logo must appear on the outside layer. Blue shirts must still be purchased online. The standard dress guidelines have been revised to:
- Offer improved fit options
- Give employees a choice for clothing
- Give employees better control of cost and quality of clothing
- Maintain a professional appearance for patients and visitors

Dial 3-6215 instead of 911 for Ambulatory Services patient emergencies

In case you haven’t heard, Ambulatory Services patient care areas in all of Fayette County are asked to dial 3-6215 for patient emergency situations instead of 911. The number 3-6215 should also be used for all transport requests for patient emergencies and patient admissions. If phones in your work area don’t have stickers with the 3-6215 phone number, please contact your practice manager or Ron Loveless at 859-323-5124.

Lung cancer survivors featured in photo exhibit

A traveling photo exhibit called “Faces of Lung Cancer” will make its way across the state and be displayed in various communities until this time next year. The exhibit of nine lung cancer survivors’ photos and biographies carded on page 4.

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Submit news items to steve.harris@uky.edu or 859-257-5361.
Steve Harris, internal communication manager | Jan Taylor, director, Communications & Advertising
UK Markey Cancer Center welcomes four new faculty who make up innovative metabolic cancer research team

Four new faculty members at the UK Markey Cancer Center will study how metabolism affects cancer growth. Their research program – scheduled to begin February 2014 – could provide promising breakthroughs in the treatment of cancer patients in Kentucky and nationwide.

Teresa Fan, Andrew Lane, Richard Higashi and Hunter Moseley will bring in more than $17 million in research funding over five years and will develop a research center at UK.

The researchers will establish a UK Center for Environmental & System Biochemistry, in partnership with Markey, over the next few months. Their laboratories will be on the fifth floor of UK’s BioPharm Complex, which is already home to other innovative cancer researchers and the College of Pharmacy.

Fan, Lane, Higashi and Moseley use state-of-the-art instrumentation to understand – by tracking atoms – how various conditions or environmental exposures disrupt normal metabolism and how abnormal metabolism contributes to the development and spread of cancer.

“The addition of this team of highly accomplished researchers is a major catalyst in the efforts of the Markey Cancer Center to both grow its cancer-related research funding and enhance its ability to submit a competitive renewal application of its National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Center Support Grant in the next cycle,” said Mark Evers, MD, director of the UK Markey Cancer Center.

Meet the researchers:

Teresa Fan, PhD, serves as director of the UK Center for Environmental & System Biochemistry. She has been continuously funded in federal grants since 1996. She was trained as a plant biochemist at the University of California, Davis, followed by postdoctoral training at Stanford University. She has published 100 peer-reviewed papers and holds two patents. She has trained 11 postdoctoral scholars, one surgical resident, six medical students and eight graduate students.

Andrew Lane, PhD, is associate director of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) development. He was trained in biochemistry and enzymology at University College London and then received further training in biophysics and NMR before becoming a tenured staff scientist at the National Institute for Medical Research in London. Lane has published 189 articles, 160 abstracts and presentations, holds two patents, and has been awarded 25 grants as principal investigator or co-investigator from both federal and nonfederal sources.

Richard Higashi, PhD, is associate director of mass spectrometry development. He is a bioanalytical chemist with a highly diverse background spanning three decades, including work in pesticide chemistry, aquatic toxicology, plant biochemistry, bioremediation, air pollution, biochemical imaging, and most recently cancer metabolism. He has served as co-director of various research centers across all of these fields for more than 15 years.

Hunter Moseley, PhD, is associate director of informatics. He has degrees spanning computer science, mathematics, chemistry and biochemistry. Moseley also has more than 20 years of experience in bioinformatics research, particularly in the development of automated analyses of NMR and mass spectrometry data. He holds a patent in computational methods for NMR data analysis and has published 27 peer-reviewed papers. He recently received the Kentuckiana Metroversity Award for Instructional Development, the Kentucky Academy of Science Outstanding Early Career Award and an NSF Career Award.

James Jagger, MD, has been named the 2014 Southeastern Conference Team Physician of the Year. Jagger is an assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery and sports medicine and serves as the chief of athletic medicine and head team physician for all UK sports.

Vascular lab accredited by commission

The UK Vascular Laboratory has been granted a three-year term of accreditation in vascular testing in five areas by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC). UK is one of 35 institutions in the country accredited in all five areas. The IAC grants accreditation only to those facilities that are found to be providing quality patient care, in compliance with national standards through a comprehensive application process including detailed case-study review.
Affordable Care Act counselors help patients ‘kynect’ the dots

Open enrollment for new low- and no-cost health insurance plans available through the federal Affordable Care Act began Oct. 1, 2013, and continues through March 31, 2014.

To assist our patients who may qualify for these plans, UK HealthCare has certified application counselors who are trained to work with patients to explore their options under the law and assist them in filling out the necessary forms.

Kentucky’s health insurance marketplace, known as “kynect,” has had none of the problems that plagued the federal website. In fact, Kentucky has been held up as model of how the Affordable Care Act can work.

With a single application through kynect, a person can explore the available plans and find out if they or a family member qualifies for coverage by programs such as Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or for government subsidies to help offset the cost of health insurance.

For those who apply by Dec. 23, coverage begins Jan. 1. For those who apply later, plans will begin on a rolling basis.

People who think they may qualify for insurance plans through the exchange can call the UK HealthCare Financial Assistance Line at 859-323-9898 or 855-211-4707 to make an appointment to meet with one of our counselors, either in person or over the telephone. Appointments are available Monday–Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST and may last up to an hour. Kiosks for easy access to the exchange are located throughout UK Chandler Hospital.

Or people may visit kynect at kynect.ky.gov.

Quality Improvement Initiatives

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hate mnemonics, the tool itself is a good one (see related article).

It starts with health care workers introducing themselves. Hospital patients encounter a dizzying array of people during their stay, and it’s crucial that they understand the role each person plays in their care.

The next step is to address the patient by name and make a connection. Using the patient’s name not only confirms the patient’s identity but also shows that you know and care about them as an individual. We also need to use our physical presence to establish a connection – to touch their arm or shake their hand.

As we are wrapping up our time with the patient, we need to offer to answer their questions.

People are notoriously intimidated by doctors, and the question most people tend to ask, “Do you have any questions?” may actually make things worse. “What questions do you have?” implies it’s assumed you have questions, it’s normal to have questions, so what are yours?

While talking with patients, it’s also important to use plain language. A good rule is to use words the patient would use.

When it comes time to leave the room, the techniques come into play once again. We want every single health care worker to end every encounter with: “Is there anything else I can do for you?”

Our goal is to set this expectation and “hardwire” this behavior so it happens with every doctor, every patient, every time. That’s when our patients – all of our patients – will have complete confidence and trust in the excellent clinical care that we provide.

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began its journey at the Markey Cancer Center, where it was displayed for a week following a dedication reception.

The exhibit was coordinated by the Kentucky Cancer Program (KCP) to spread awareness about lung cancer and prevention. KCP is a state-funded cancer control program jointly administered by UK and the University of Louisville. The photos were taken by Richmond photographer Tim Webb.

New video shows Rising Star Award’s journey across campus

We recently received the Rising Star award from UHC, a consortium of 118 leading university hospitals across the country. UK HealthCare showed the highest jump ever among Rising Star winners in UHC’s rankings of quality care. A new video on the Quality and Safety page of the UK HealthCare website shows more about the award and its journey across our campus. Feel free to share it with friends and family. We have a lot of which to be proud, and our patients are the true winners.

Wanted: Good Samaritan Hospital historic photos

The planning committee for the Good Samaritan Hospital 125th Anniversary event is looking for more photographs of the historic building and staff. Photos are needed for a timeline of the hospital’s history that will be featured during the anniversary event on Feb. 5, 2014. Email Geoffrey Blair at g.blair@uky.edu if you have historic photos to share.

Upgrade to SCM 6.1 scheduled for late January

The upgrade to SCM 6.1 scheduled for Jan. 26, 2014, will have ICD-10 coding enhancements for compliance, advanced patient lists and document recovery, plus improvements in the Immunization Registry, Status Board and Health Manager. The upgrade will also feature e-Prescribing for inpatients.
Alzheimer’s disease trial first of its kind worldwide

A new clinical trial being conducted at the UK Sanders-Brown Center on Aging and the UK Alzheimer’s Disease Center (ADC) may signal new hope in the future for those who might be afflicted with the devastating disease. Laboratory research pioneered at the Sanders-Brown Center and the associated ADC is being taken into human trials. The federally funded research project will examine the potential to delay or prevent Alzheimer’s disease.

Led by physician-scientist Gregory Jicha, MD, and building off of the work of fellow physician-scientist Peter Nelson, MD, the project, formally titled “Modulation of micro-RNA pathways by gemfibrozil in pre-dementia Alzheimer disease,” will operate with a total budget of $1.5 million over three years. Funding was awarded by the National Institute on Aging as the result of a competitive process.

“This is the first trial in the history of mankind to test the therapeutic potential of micro-RNAs in modulating neurodegenerative disease states,” Jicha said. “If our discovery is successful, we may be able to prevent Alzheimer’s disease, or even stop it when it is in its earliest stages,” Jicha said.

Fortunately, an FDA-approved drug that can increase miRNA-107 levels already exists, and is currently approved for treating high cholesterol. In cell culture experiments this drug, called gemfibrozil, can prevent Alzheimer’s disease-associated changes.

Gemfibrozil is one of a class of drugs currently used worldwide to treat high cholesterol. Previous studies of people taking these drugs have consistently demonstrated about a 50 percent reduction in risk for Alzheimer’s disease.

“In U.S. terms,” Jicha said, “that could potentially cut the burden of Alzheimer’s from 5.4 million cases to 2.7 million nationwide.”

This pioneering clinical study shows how Nelson and Jicha, and the Sanders-Brown Center on Aging, are leading the world in testing promising new approaches to Alzheimer’s therapy.

“This innovative clinical trial is a great example of the ‘bench to bedside’ focus of the UK Sanders-Brown Center on Aging – taking a research discovery made in the laboratory and translating that knowledge into a human clinical study,” said Linda Van Eldik, director, Sanders-Brown Center on Aging.

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Health care provider hired for new onsite, employee clinic

Scheduled to open early January 2014, the new UK Health Plan Urgent Care will be an onsite, employee clinic for UK-insured (UK-HMO, UK-RHP, UK-PPO, UK-EPO) employees and their covered dependents 18 years or older.

The clinic will be located on the first floor of the UHS building near the Employee Health Clinic. It will provide same-day appointments for urgent, low-acuity health problems and will be open Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Diana Bratcher, APRN, has been hired as the health care provider at UK Health Plan Urgent Care. She has been an advanced practice registered nurse for 19 years, 12 of those years at UK HealthCare. Bratcher has worked in health care for 33 years.

Recognition

Doherty elected two-term president of respiratory care association

Dennis Doherty, MD, has been elected to a two-year term as president of the National Association for Medical Direction of Respiratory Care (NAMDRC). Doherty appears annually on nationally recognized physician lists, including being honored the last two years as one of the top pulmonologists in the country by U.S. News and World Report.

First quarter award winners committed to patient-centered care

The Patient Experience Award winners for the first quarter of fiscal year 2014 achieved tremendous results among our UHC peers, with results showing how much our patient’s appreciate the high-level of care they receive at UK HealthCare. The winners achieved a high percentage of positive feedback in every survey category. Their achievements reflect UK HealthCare’s commitment to patient-centered care. First quarter winners are:

• Pavilion A 6th Floor Acute Care
• 6 West Cardiovascular Unit
• Labor and Delivery
• Center for Advanced Surgery
• Family Care Center

Evers named president of surgical organization

Mark Evers, MD, director, Markey Cancer Center, professor and vice chair for research in the Department of Surgery and Markey Cancer Foundation Endowed Chair, has been elected the new president of the Southern Surgical Association. One of the nation’s leading medical groups, the association is dedicated to furthering the study and practice of surgery, especially in the southern states. Previously, Evers served as secretary for the association.
Quality, safety, service awards handed out at Dec. 5 meeting

Outpatient Chemotherapy was recently recognized with the Top Performer Award, which recognizes a UK HealthCare group or team that has demonstrated best overall performance or service in health care quality measures. UK HealthCare’s chemotherapy units have been ranked in the 99th UHC percentile for the entire fiscal year to date.

At each UK HealthCare Quarterly Report on Quality meeting, awards are presented for quality, safety and service.

The Patient and Family Services team was one of two recipients to receive the Service Home Run Award recently. The award recognizes individuals or groups that go above and beyond for patients and/or their families.

Patient centeredness is a fundamental value of this team every day. Dawn Atkinson, RN (in photo with bat), was also awarded a blue jacket for going above and beyond for a patient.

The Cardiovascular Service Line team was the other recipient of the Service Home Run Award for its outstanding work across the care continuum.

Ashley West, BS, MT, who works at the blood bank, was recently rewarded the Great Catch Award for her persistence in verifying that a patient was receiving the correct blood type. The award recognizes team members who intervene to prevent harm or potential harm to a patient, particularly events that lead to an improvement in the clinical care process.
Chandler Hospital recognized for organ donation outreach

Chandler Hospital was among a select group of hospitals nationwide recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for reaching gold, silver, and bronze levels of outreach for organ donation and registration. Organ donor teams conducted awareness and registry campaigns to educate staff, patients, visitors and community members about the critical need for organ, eye, and tissue donors and, by doing so, increased the number of potential donors on the state’s donor registry. The hospital earned gold recognition through the Workplace Partnership for Life Hospital Campaign, a program launched in 2011 by HHS’s Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

CERH honored by Eastern Kentucky economic development group

Accepting the award from Gov. Paul Patton (far right), on behalf of the UK CERH/AHEC Health Careers Enrichment Camp, are, from left: Michael Gayheart, director of the SE Kentucky AHEC; Dr. Fran Feltner, MD, director of the UK CERH; LeeAnn Helton, of UK CERH student services.

The Health Careers Enrichment Camp offered each summer by the UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health (CERH) and the Southeast Kentucky Area Health Education Center (AHEC) has received a 2013 Innovation Award from the Appalachian Innovation Collaborative (AIC), a group whose focus is on educational excellence and economic development in Eastern Kentucky. To date, about 150 students have completed this unique learning opportunity that offers hands-on activities, shadowing of health professionals, plus a trip to tour the UK campus in Lexington.

Patient stories are invaluable to UK HealthCare’s reputation

Our recent advertising campaign, which features patients sharing their experience with UK HealthCare in their own words, is gaining momentum throughout the region.

Why do we ask patients to tell their stories? It is a valuable way to explain what makes us unique as a provider and build the reputation of UK HealthCare. Prospective patients want to hear from patients themselves.

By explaining how well they were cared for, Margaret Yost, Mike Hill and Nicole Upchurch solidify the reality of UK HealthCare as a regional leader in high-acuity care. These patient testimonials allow us to connect their stories with services that require high levels of expertise or advanced technology.

Margaret was treated by doctors at Markey Cancer Center, Mike received heart care and a transplant thanks to the doctors of the Gill Heart Institute and UK Transplant Center, and Nicole’s difficult diagnosis and treatment required expertise from multiple doctors.

Their testimonials will connect with audiences because their stories represent what matters most to our patients: the ability to return to their normal lives and loved ones.

Margaret is back to enjoying time with her granddaughter and being active in her church. Mike is happy riding his motorcycle and playing with his grandsons. And Nicole is glad to be playing soccer again while looking forward to college.

When deciding who to see for the health and well-being of themselves and their families, our reputation is one of the key factors patients consider.

In the clutter of information about medical services, it is vital that our story conveys the integrity of the care we provide. UK HealthCare represents exceptional medical skills while maintaining a personal touch.

While the UK HealthCare campaign certainly acknowledges the expertise of UK physicians, the care and support of the UK nursing staff, and the technology used to save lives, it really reinforces the true benefit of what UK HealthCare offers: the ability to heal patients and help them return home, just like Margaret, Mike and Nicole.

Thanks to all of you and what you do every day, we have a great story to tell.
The power of giving:

Circle of Love and Jarrett’s Joy Cart Holiday Store

The Circle of Love pairs UK HealthCare employees with approximately 800 needy children from Fayette, Anderson, Clark, Scott, Nicholas, Bourbon, Madison, Woodford and Jessamine counties who would otherwise not have gifts this holiday season.

Jarrett’s Joy Cart Holiday Store provides pediatric patients with the opportunity to select gifts for family members at no charge. The gifts are wrapped by volunteers and delivered back to the patients so they can hand them out to their family members. This was the 14th year for the event.

Clockwise, from top: While picking up Circle of Love gifts, a county representative is overcome with joy at the generosity of UK HealthCare employees; Claire Mynear, Jarrett’s sister, helps with the annual Holiday Store; Volunteers help patient Derick Slone, 15, of Pike County, shop for gifts for his family at Jarrett’s Joy Cart Holiday Store.