New Survivorship Center Opens
Wichita Expansion Underway
Community Identifies Environmental Issues
Some medical students take non-traditional paths

A baseball player and studio artist find their way to medical school.

Tackling environmental concerns

Elizabeth Abalah, PhD, MPH, has engaged the community to identify and address environmental concerns in the Wichita area thanks to an EPA grant.

Another Wichita doctor receives national award

Barbara Coats, MD, a volunteer faculty member, received the 2009 Exemplary Teacher Award in the volunteer category from the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Genetic services now available in Wichita

After seven years, genetic services are again available through KU Wichita Pediatrics.

Removing breast cancer patient barriers

As a Cancer Patient Navigator and part of a pilot program through the Midwest Cancer Alliance, Carol Bush, RN, BSIN, helps connect breast cancer patients with resources.

Raising the roof for pharmacy

The construction of the KU School of Pharmacy–Wichita, celebrated at a “roof-raising” ceremony Sept. 30, will help educate more pharmacists for Kansas.

Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Wichita’s First Graduating Class in 1975

Thomas W. Alderson, MD
Joseph E. Bosiljevac, MD
John C. Chatelain, MD
Charles Czarinský, MD*
Randall K. Fahrenholz, MD
Kathleen L. Grandison, MD
Dennis D. Hatch, MD
Frederick J. Hesse, MD
Gaylin D. Lack, MD
Juliana M. Reser, MD
John A. Robinson, MD
Jeanine L. Roembach-Clark, MDRichard H. Stein, MD
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How You Can Help

There are many ways you can help support our efforts to educate doctors for Kansas:

Donations by Mail - KU Endowment, 1010 N. Kansas, Wichita, KS 67214
Online Giving - kuendowment.org/givenow

We welcome the opportunity to visit with you about how you might help. And we assure you that 100 percent of your gift will benefit the area of your choice. Please call Heather Clay at (316) 293-2601 or send her an e-mail at hclay@kuendowment.org.

KU Endowment
The University of Kansas
A woman learns she’s pregnant at the age of 40 and wants to know if everything’s all right. A couple has a child with developmental delays and wants to know why. Now, they and others have a place in the Wichita area to turn so they can try to find answers to some of their questions.

Starting in December 2009, KU Wichita Pediatrics began offering Genetic Services at the Wesley Medical Arts Tower, 3243 E. Murdock. Services include analyzing family history, determining which genetic tests will be the most helpful, interpreting genetic test results, and offering families education and counseling about how best to manage genetic conditions, according to Shobana Kubendran, MS, CGC, certified genetic counselor.

**Evaluating and managing conditions**

The center’s staff will offer both prenatal and pediatric services to start:

- **Prenatal Genetics**
  A genetic evaluation can help determine if there is a need for prenatal genetic testing, the results of which could help in delivery and management.
- **Pediatric Genetics**
  Focusing on children with developmental delays, seizures, birth defects, and cancer, a genetic evaluation can help determine diagnosis, risk of recurrence, and appropriate medical management.

“Genetic medicine has a rapidly expanding role in the evaluation and management of many medical conditions,” Shobana explained. “There’s also an expanding repertoire of genetic tests that are better at diagnosing disease and personalizing medical management. We’ll work with other medical specialties to promote appropriate utilization of genetic technology in diagnosis and management of various conditions.”

**Targeting efforts**

Genetic services can be crucial in eliminating some of the frustrations among many parents of young children or babies. Because genetic expertise allows for targeted testing, it can mean “fewer sticks and less frustration, fewer tests” on children in need of certain testing, according to Barry Bloom, MD, Pediatrics interim chair and professor. “When you’re talking about your child’s health, that’s an even bigger deal.”

**KU Wichita Endocrinology**

**Care Components**

- **Accessible** The patient can get in touch with a provider when help is needed.
- **Relationship-oriented** A continuous relationship between the patient and his/her physician is maintained.
- **Comprehensive** All of the patient’s endocrine/metabolic needs are taken care of in one location.
- **Coordinated** The patient’s health care needs are coordinated between several health care professionals, including physicians, nurses, diabetes educators, and the patient’s primary care physician.

Waiting is a part of nearly every patient’s visit to his or her doctor. At KU Wichita Endocrinology, which opened in January 2010 at Cypress Medical Park near 29th Street North and Webb Road, a new model is in place — one in which the staff is filling those waiting “gaps” with valuable lessons that seek to offer patients a more complete and educational clinic experience.

“I am trying to make every minute at the new clinic count,” said Justin Moore, MD, Internal Medicine assistant professor and KU Wichita Endocrinology medical director (right). “When you go to the doctor, you sit in the waiting room, then they call you back and you wait in the exam room. The thing I’m more interested in is getting more use out of the time that people spend at the clinic.”

The staff at the center will fill the gaps of time that people wait for medical attention with “something useful,” according to Dr. Moore. For example, instead of sitting in a waiting room or thumbing through a magazine, patients might attend a quick class on a diabetes-related issue or watch a video on another topic related to their health. Instead of waiting in an exam room, patients might review their blood glucose records or read materials related to fruit and vegetable intake. Patients might even exercise inside the clinic.

“We have the ability to add comprehensive endocrinologic and metabolic care to the community,” Dr. Moore explained. “We don’t intend to focus solely on diabetes, thyroid cancer, or obesity, but rather integrate the care of all endocrinologic and metabolic diseases.”

**Prevalence of genetic conditions**

- 3-5% of all births have birth defects
- 20-30% of all infant deaths are due to genetic disorders
- 30-50% of post-neonatal deaths are due to congenital malformations
- 11.1% of pediatric hospital admissions are for children with genetic disorders
- 50% of mental retardation has a genetic basis
- 10% of all cancers have an inherited susceptibility
- 10% of adult chronic diseases (heart attack/diabetes) have a significant genetic component
Metabolism/Physical Health

Focusing on issues such as internal medicine, psychological support services offer individual and group counseling for survivors as well as their family and friends.

Virtual Support Services

Using technology, such as ITV, to offer services to people in rural Kansas as well.

Education

Seeking grant opportunities.

Reaching rural Kansas

Weight gain is among the side effects of breast cancer that women face. And for breast cancer survivors in rural Kansas, programs that deal with such a specialized topic aren’t always available.

Thanks to a grant the KU School of Medicine–Wichita received from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Mid-Kansas Affiliate and the American Cancer Society, women in rural areas of Kansas will be able to take part in a weight management program through which weekly group support sessions will be conducted via phone.

The Weight Management Program is led by Christie Befort, assistant professor in Preventive Medicine at the KU School of Medicine in Kansas City who conducts research on obesity issues at the KU Cancer Center’s Breast Cancer Survivorship Center. The group sessions will be held weekly with the hope that women will experience a decreased risk of breast cancer recurrence and improved quality of life.
Filling the prescription for more pharmacists in Kansas

“The greatest reason we need more pharmacists is that as our population ages, those in the greater-than-64-years-old group require more and more medications.”

Ken Audus, Dean, KU School of Pharmacy

Gov. Mark Parkinson and a host of dignitaries trumpeted the beginning of a new day for pharmacy training on the KU Wichita Campus.

Because of widespread support and relentless efforts by health care professionals, legislators, and others committed to the idea, construction of the KU School of Pharmacy–Wichita was celebrated Sept. 30 at a “roof raising” ceremony. The school will help fill a critical need for more pharmacists in the state.

“I’m still just pinching myself about the new pharmacy school,” said state Sen. Vicki Schmidt, District 20, who’s also a pharmacist. “It is a reality and it is happening.”

Lack of pharmacists

Why is the expansion of the KU School of Pharmacy to Wichita so important?

“The greatest reason we need more pharmacists is that as our population ages, those in the greater-than-64-years-old group require more and more medications,” said Ken Audus, dean of the KU School of Pharmacy. “But the number of pharmacists graduating from KU has not been great enough to keep up with the increased number of prescriptions.”

Then factor in that almost 40 percent of Kansas pharmacists are over the age of 50 and that 30 of the 105 counties in the state have only one pharmacy and six have none. With those numbers, Schmidt said, “we’re heading on a collision course, and it’s not a good situation.”

Pharmacists are often the first line of health care for many communities that lack adequate medical care, said Jennifer Schmitz, president of the Wichita Academy of Pharmacists. They often provide health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, bone density, and more.

However, too few pharmacists are available in many parts of the state.

Pharmacy school expansion

Efforts to address the need for expansion, a 26,000-square-foot addition will be built above the West wing to house labs, classrooms, and administrative offices. Part of the $4 million expansion, funded by state bonds, will be shelled in but not finished.

The expansion on the Lawrence campus will allow the School of Pharmacy to train 45 more students each year, up from its current 105. The Wichita campus will add 20 students each year over the six-year curriculum and could eventually increase to 40 students per class.

Building on success

Having an expanded KU School of Pharmacy in Wichita, according to Dean Audus, was perceptive because the school of medicine has a history of placing its physicians in central and western Kansas.

“A pharmacy campus in Wichita is intended to build on that success and enhance the distribution of pharmacists in those communities,” he explained.

Pharmacists Jonathan and Jena Brunswig know of the importance of having pharmacists, especially in less-populated areas of the state. The couple owns four pharmacies in three western Kansas counties: Scott, Kearny, and Wichita. The latter two counties have no other pharmacists.

Before the Brunswigs came to the area in 1996, residents had to travel to find a pharmacist. “They were going everywhere,” Jonathan said. “The closest pharmacy was 20 miles away.”

So what does Jonathan think of the KU School of Pharmacy expansion? “It’s the biggest positive in pharmacy in the state since I’ve been licensed.”

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signs legislation in 2008 expanding the KU School of Pharmacy in Lawrence and authorizing construction of a pharmacy school at the KU School of Medicine–Wichita. “People won’t live in a community without access to health care,” Gov. Sebelius said. “This is really our investment toward a prosperous future.”

In the 105 counties of Kansas, 30 have only one pharmacy and six have none.

Almost 40 percent of Kansas pharmacists are over the age of 50.

Between 2004 and 2010, the supply of all community pharmacists in the United States is expected to increase only 7.8 percent versus an estimated 27 percent increase in the number of prescriptions dispensed, going from 3.27 billion in 2003 to more than 4.1 billion in 2010—The National Association of Chain Drug Stores

Dignitaries at the Sept. 30 “roof raising” event at the KU School of Medicine–Wichita included, left to right, Gov. Mark Parkinson (also pictured at left); Dean H. David Wilson, MD, KU School of Medicine; Jennifer Schmitz, President of the Wichita Academy of Pharmacists; and Mike O’Neal, Speaker of the Kansas House of Representatives; and Ken Audus, Dean of the KU School of Pharmacy.
Fielding a new career in medicine

Whenever it was a choice between academics and baseball, James Hernandez (W11) usually picked baseball. “My original plan was to become a physician, but I had a baseball scholarship in college, so I spent more time on the baseball field than studying books,” he said. James knew his future in baseball was limited. “I was too short for first base and not a power hitter.” So after graduating from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, TX, with a major in biology and a minor in chemistry, James decided to go to graduate school and work on his Master’s degree. A year later, he landed a job in research at the University of Texas Health Science Center.

His love for baseball, however, kept calling.

Play ball
While playing part-time on a semi-pro team near the Texas/Mexico border, the owner of one of the league teams asked him if he’d be willing to fill in for their injured third baseman, even though James usually played first base. James agreed and signed a contract to play in the winter Mexican leagues. It was an exhausting schedule for three winters. “I played Friday night, a doubleheader on Saturday, and a game on Sunday. Then I’d drive back to San Antonio to work on Monday.”

Mike Easler, a former major league who managed a minor league team, saw James play and asked him if he’d play first base for his team. “I’m 32 years old,” James said. “No one is going to sign a broken-down 32 year old.”

But Easler encouraged him: “I’ve watched you play, you’re fine.”

James spent four weeks in spring training in Florida along with several ex-major leaguers. When he discovered he’d be competing against former KC Royals’ Felix Jose, James said, he knew it was time to hang it up. “I came back home.”

Struggling medical student
In San Antonio, James worked in several restaurants as a wine steward and met his future wife who was working on her PhD in diabetes/endocrinology. James would often bring up the subject of his becoming a physician.

“She told me: ‘Either do it or shut up and don’t mention it anymore,’” he recalled. She urged him to study for the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) while he attended KU in preparation for medical school. Eventually, he was accepted at the KU School of Medicine.

Struggling as a medical student, James voluntarily repeated his second year. It was also a depressing time because his wife, Eleana de Filippis, was doing her residency more than 700 miles away in San Antonio. The most they had been together was two months. “It was one of the worst years I had experienced in my 42 years,” he said.

New step along the way
Now having completed his second year, James said he’s enjoying his clinical training in Wichita. He’s leaning toward specializing in ER medicine (“I’m an adrenaline, fast-pace guy.”), though he’s open to other medical fields.

Are there any regrets about leaving behind a potential baseball career?
“I talked to a couple baseball scouts who told me that if I had been a catcher, they would have looked at me seriously,” he said. “It’s kind of a regret.”

But, he added, each step along the way “made me who I am.”

“An artist’s approach to the science of medicine”

Peg Bicker’s (W10) path to medical school was serendipitous.

Steeped in the arts by her family (“Mom’s side of the family is full of artists.”), Peg was creating artwork long before she enrolled in 1993 at Emporia State University. There, she studied sculpture and art history, immersing herself in various media, including casting bronze, glass blowing, and creating ceramics. Embroidery and quilting stretched her talents and extended her love of hands-on art.

After graduating in 1998 with a bachelor of fine arts degree, she remained in Emporia, working as a studio artist. To help pay the bills, Peg was manager of the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve’s bookstore and then worked in student services at Emporia State.

A challenging idea
For six years she pursued her passion and traveled frequently with her husband, Larry Schwarm. Then one day at an arts reception, someone casually asked her how she was doing. Her response, half jokingly, was: “Well, if it doesn’t work out, there’s always medical school.” And the thought stuck with her. “It was an idea that wouldn’t go away,” she said.

She finally decided to pursue a career in medicine “because it was an amazing challenge with the potential for a very personally rewarding and fulfilling life.”

Six months later she was back in school, completing undergraduate requirements for entrance into medical school. Her mother was less than thrilled about Peg becoming a doctor. “I’m bucking tradition,” she explained.

Hands-on training
Peg, however, was determined to move ahead with her decision. After two years at the KU School of Medicine in Kansas City, Peg chose to come to Wichita to complete her clinical training in her 3rd and 4th years. The reason was as natural as her talent: “It’s more hands-on training,” she said.

Even at the KU School of Medicine–Wichita, Peg still sought a different approach to her training. She once attended a Live & Learn lecture – a monthly series of lectures offered at the school primarily for the public – to get a firsthand look at how a doctor addresses a particular health issue with people in the community.

The speakers are generally very good at translating complex medical concepts and terms into language that patients can understand, so it’s a good way to pick up communication skills for my own patient encounters,” she explained.

Now in her 4th year, Peg has her sights set on becoming a primary care physician while still creating art. “Whether it’s making art or practicing medicine, I enjoy solving problems.”

Peg Bicker’s latest work – which incorporates science and medicine in a whimsical way – will be featured in a solo show at Wichita’s Fiber Studio in April 2010. 
Carol Bush, Cancer Patient Navigator
Helping patients overcome barriers to better care

A two-way street
Carol, whose office is based at the KU School of Medicine–Wichita, started out assisting patients throughout central Kansas, particularly in rural, underserved areas. Recently, her role has expanded to develop patient navigator resources and support MCA partners statewide as they develop and enhance their programs.

Carol’s position and the program are funded by gifts of $1 million and $180,000 from the Kansas Masonic Foundation and were a good fit for the Masons’ “service to all mankind” mission, said Mark Nelson, the foundation’s executive director. “We feel it’s important that everybody in Kansas be given a fair shake, and this program is a way for us to help cancer patients navigate the rough waters they’re going to encounter. We’ve taken this service out to where the patients are; we made the access to care a two-way street rather than a one-way street.”

Lifting barriers
Among the program’s many benefits, agreed Carol, is the ability to meet patients’ practical needs. Some of the most common patient concerns include insurance and co-payment issues along with transportation difficulties. Addressing these “little” things can make a big difference.

“The perception is that there is only an issue if someone has to go 50 miles or more for treatment, but in fact, the financial burden is so high for people getting treatment that it’s a hardship to get gas to drive to radiation treatment daily for three to eight weeks, even if it’s not that far away,” she said.

Mark Fesen, MD, author of “Surviving the Cancer System” (June 2009, AMACOM), often sees patients struggle with these issues in his oncology practice at Hutchinson Clinic. The problem, he explained, isn’t necessarily identifying the people who need help. It’s connecting them with the resources. “There are lots of resources that go underutilized because there’s not a patient navigator there all the time,” he said. “It would be ideal if we had more such positions.”

Campus connections
The Midwest Cancer Alliance, a network of hospitals and health care organizations throughout the state, disseminates discoveries from the University of Kansas Cancer Center through clinical trials and community outreach to rural areas. By locating Carol’s office at the KU School of Medicine–Wichita, she can effectively collaborate with doctors, researchers, and students. And because the program serves people of the community at large, not just patients seen by a singular practice, it’s easier to connect with multiple resources and create partnerships within the region and nation, all the while monitoring whether this program is an effective model for future expansion.

“The dream would be to have other navigators at other partner sites throughout the state,” Carol said. “I have found in talking with cancer patients that they are just so happy to have someone to listen to their concerns, that if I never connected a person with a resource, it would be enough to simply know someone cared.”

Want more information?
Midwest Cancer Alliance
www.mwican.org
Heartland Cancer Center
www.kumc.edu/heartland
Carol Bush, Cancer Patient Navigator
cbush@kumc.edu or 316-293-2650

Efforts moving forward to tackle ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

“We are out in the community and working side-by-side with these folks so we’re contributing in a way that’s meaningful.”

Elizabeth Ablah, PhD, MPH Preventive Medicine and Public Health Assistant Professor

The next step
The teams will now work on putting together “issue papers,” which are meant to serve as fact-finding pieces that address the community’s concerns. By March, WIRE will apply for the second level of the EPA grant – a $300,000, two-year grant. During that time, the teams will seek to implement a plan of action based on the prioritized concerns.

Kathleen Fenton, EPA CARE Program Manager, said Dr. Ablah, Project Director Jack Brown, and the KU School of Medicine–Wichita have done a “tremendous job” in gathering information and implementing leadership teams.

“I think Dr. Ablah has set an example of how to do CARE Level 1 work, and how to engage her community,” Fenton said. “She’s wanting as much representation from the public as possible.”

“We have all these people who are dedicated to this project,” Dr. Ablah said, “and then we have the community at large, which has been very interested in what we’re doing. Working together, I know we’ll be successful.”

One question was posed to people who attended meetings: “What are your environmental concerns?” While the group heard several concerns, many were shared, including:
• Lack of recycling
• Water quality/quantity
• Issues of neighborhood light
Project leaders formed a Design Team and the Environmental Leadership Council (ELC) made up of volunteers from various backgrounds to help with planning, including leading meetings to gather community feedback.
A search is underway for a full-time Associate Dean for Research at the KU School of Medicine–Wichita. The committee, led by Russell Scheffer, MD, Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences chair, is looking for a person who will serve as the Dean’s representative and provide leadership to local research initiatives; provide an infrastructure for the training of residents, students, and faculty for research; and develop further infrastructure to support research in an ongoing effort.

About 50 Wichita-area high school students took part in the annual “Doc for a Day” event on Nov. 7 at the KU School of Medicine–Wichita. The event is coordinated by the Family Medicine Interest Group and led by KU medical students for high school students who have an interest in a career in health care. Medical students helped the high school students study heart sounds, check for vital signs, and learn how to conduct knee and ankle exams.

The KU Academy of Student Pharmacists offered 1,000 free seasonal flu vaccines in October to people who otherwise may not have received them as part of Operation Immunization at the Guadalupe Clinic in Wichita. The effort was held in collaboration with the Guadalupe Clinic and the KU School of Medicine–Wichita JayDoc Community Clinic.

R. Hal O’Dell, MD(W90), and his wife, Carol, are living in Edmond, Ok., where Dr. O’Dell is a radiologist with Radiology Associates, Inc.

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A group of 4th-year medical students in the “Health of the Public” class met Nov. 17 at Wesley Medical Center, where they used the school’s patient care simulator in a real critical care environment. Students inserted a breathing tube in the simulator, assessed the patient for changes in clinical condition, and intervened to stabilize the patient in the hospital environment. Fourth-year medical students Nichole Riddell, Terry Hansen, and P.J. Stiles are pictured above.


James R. Larzalere, MD (W78), received his fifth fellowship certification, this time as a hospice and palliative care specialist from the American Board of Medical Specialties. Dr. Larzalere’s other board certifications include family medicine, geriatric medicine, sports medicine, and adolescent medicine. He and his wife, Tamra, have three children: Jordan, Jena, and Ryan. He has practiced in McPherson, KS, for the past 18 years.

Jon Schrage, MD, Internal Medicine chair, is leading the effort to identify the next Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education at the KU School of Medicine–Wichita. The search committee will convene in January 2008. Dan Brada, MD, interim residency program director and clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry, will continue in the position until the new associate dean is in place.

Jessica Ramsey, MD (W06), has joined the medical staff at Weatherford Regional Medical Center in Texas as a pediatrician and is establishing a new practice – Weatherford Children’s Clinic. Her areas of interest include allergy, asthma, and childhood obesity.

Dustin Lee Smoot, MD (W04), his wife Vinnie, and daughter Emmarie have moved to Rochester, MN, where Dr. Smoot is currently completing a Trauma and Surgical Critical Care Fellowship at the Mayo Clinic.

An annual award will be given to a graduating master’s of public health student in honor of Dr. Fredrickson, whose parents, Ronald and Patricia Fredrickson of Osage City, KS, will present the second award to a student at next May’s graduation ceremony.

Heather Clay joined the KU School of Medicine–Wichita as Development Director in October. Heather works as a representative of KU Endowment in seeking funds for the Wichita medical school. A Kansas native, Heather has nearly 15 years of development experience in higher education and health services.

The KU School of Medicine–Wichita Family and Community Medicine department recently received an endowment that will allow the department to bring in national speakers for its Family Medicine Winter Symposium. The department was the grateful recipient of the Knorr Family Healthy Lifestyles Lectureship, endowed by Ric and Darlene Knorr of Wichita, which will focus on issues that include eating disorders, diabetes, weight control, and physical activity, according to Rick Kellerman, MD, Family & Community Medicine chair. The department also received an endowment supporting the new Delos Smith Geriatric Care Lectureship, endowed by the Delos V. Smith Senior Citizens Foundation in Hutchinson, which will feature a national expert on geriatric care.

The most current issue of the Kansas Journal of Medicine features articles such as: Perceptions of Child Weight Status by Parents of Children on Medicaid, Messages of Child Drowning Prevention Messages in Newspaper Coverage from Midwestern Regional Papers Recurring Acute Respiratory Failure Caused by Propionibacterium Acnes, Leukemic Meningitis in Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia: A Rare Condition.
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