

Community VISION 2020



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

UH Conneaut Medical Center provides care for many area residents.

University Hospitals

Conneaut and Geneva medical centers
have upgrades and renovations on the way

BY SHELLEY TERRY
sterry@starbeacon.com

University Hospitals Geneva and Conneaut medical centers are looking to the future with advances in virtual technology, sleep medicine, ophthalmology, imaging and cancer treatments, as well as renovations and several upgrades. "Ashtabula County is very fortunate to have as asset such as University Hospitals in our backyard providing critical health-care programs and services to our residents," Ashtabula County Commissioner Casey Kozlowski said. "These investments show commitment to our county and we certainly welcome that."

VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY

UH Geneva and UH Conneaut have both invested in expanding virtual technology to keep patients close to home and provide easy access to specialists and critical care. On the inpatient side, they provide 24/7 care in Intensive Care Units supplemented by virtual technology, in addition to neurology, dermatology, palliative care, pulmonary and cardiology services, supported by technology that allows providers and nurses to work together for patient care.

That technology that includes high definition, zoom, stethoscope and Horus scope capabilities. "We continue to grow

outpatient virtual clinics and will be adding a complement of providers including sleep medicine, neurology, dermatology and rheumatology," said Jason E. Glowczewski, chief operating officer at UH Conneaut and UH Geneva. "We have committed to purchase an additional \$140,000 in virtual tech-

nology before the end of 2020."

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SLEEP MEDICINE

UH Geneva Medical Center Advanced Center for Sleep Medicine will be moving into a completely renovated location on the campus of UH Geneva Medical Center in August; an investment of more than \$350,000. Sleep studies will be available days and evenings to meet the convenience of the patient; studies are analyzed by experienced UH sleep medicine physicians trained in pulmonology and critical care.

OPHTHALMOLOGY

Optical Coherence Tomography for ophthalmology procedures was pur-

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING (UH CONNEAUT)

Digital X-ray replaces the use of film or computed radiography plates with

Casey Kozlowski
Ashtabula County commissioner

a direct digital transfer of X-ray images into the PACS. Digital radiography is the direct conversion of transmitted X-ray photons into a digital image using an array of solid-state detectors such as amorphous selenium or silicon, with computer processing and display of the image. DR X-ray systems are used for both fixed base room installations and mobile DR, or portable DR, systems that are wheeled to and from rooms for imaging exams.

"The UH Conneaut Diagnostic Imaging Department is excited to announce that all of its imaging is now being performed digitally," Glowczewski said. "University Hospitals has invested nearly \$1

million in the department to ensure the community will have the latest technology available for all of their imaging needs."

In summer of 2018, the department received a new Philips digital portable X-ray unit and September an upgraded MRI was installed. Last year, a new digital imaging plate was

purchased as an upgrade to the present X-ray room, and in late November of 2019, a brand new Digital X-ray room, was installed.

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING (UH GENEVA)

UH Geneva Diagnostic Imaging Department also is all digital.

"In the last 18 months, University Hospitals has invested nearly \$1.5 million in the department to ensure the community will have the latest technology available for all of their imaging needs," Glowczewski said.

In the winter of 2018, UH Geneva received a new Philips X-ray room. It was upgraded to a new Hologic bone density unit in 2018.

"This gave us the capability of performing vertebral fracture assessments. We purchased a new Philips Ultrasound unit in 2018, this allows us to do elastography," he said. "In early 2019 we got our first digital portable. We are now able to see images immediately at the patient's bedside. The technologists and physicians are very grateful to have this new technology."

Following the portable machine, UH Geneva upgraded to a new Philips radiographic and fluoroscopic unit. "This allowed us to be able to offer more services to pediatric patients," Glowczewski said.

SEIDMAN CANCER CENTER EXPANSION AND FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

"Over the past several years, University Hospitals has built on the strength of its outstanding physicians, nurses and staff at our Ashtabula hospitals to achieve notable accolades," he said.

UH Geneva and UH Conneaut are among only 19 hospitals nationwide to receive double Five Star Ratings from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services for both quality outcomes and patient experience scores. Less than 10 percent of the nation's more than 4,500 hospitals achieved Five Stars in both categories in 2018. Both

Patient safety at ACMC EARNs THE HIGHEST GRADE.

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Ashtabula County
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The Leapfrog Group is a national, independent nonprofit organization that sets the highest standards for patient safety in the United States.



Workers put the finishing touches on the Ashtabula County Medical Center Plaza. WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

ACMC shares vision for the future

BY SHELLEY TERRY
sterry@starbeacon.com

ASHTABULA — On July 1, 2020, Ashtabula County Medical Center began its 116th year of providing care to Ashtabula County. From its humble beginnings in 1904, which was brought about by community response to the 1876 train disaster, to today, one thing has never changed — ACMC’s commitment to providing the highest quality care that a community hospital its size can provide.

“Ashtabula County Medical Center is one of our county’s largest employers and we are very appreciative of that,” Ashtabula County Commissioner Kathryn Whittington said. “Its mark on our community is long lasting and we appreciate the willingness to make our county its home providing vital services to our residents.”

COVID-19 RESPONSE

ACMC has been a primary leader in Ashtabula County’s health care, and no where was it more evident than the hospital’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even before COVID-19 came to the United States earlier this year, ACMC administrators were planning for the best way to keep patients, caregivers and the community safe. Working with Ohio Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Cleveland Clinic, ACMC implemented protocols for diagnosing and treating COVID-19 positive patients.

Keeping patients and caregivers safe in the hospital and in doctors’ offices was at the forefront of every decision. To do that, ACMC quickly implemented the option of Telehealth visits. This allowed patients to connect with their provider to discuss health concerns from the comfort of their homes instead of coming to the office.

ACMC played a key role early on in helping several long-term care facilities respond to positive cases among residents and staff. That support continued after the Governor and Ohio Department of Health developed plans for regional hospital-nursing home collaboration. The hospital proactively held weekly conference calls with the Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners and Ashtabula County Emergency Management Agency, as well as participated in the weekly calls led by the county.

“More than 125 business and individuals have donated supplies, cloth masks, food and money to sup-

port ACMC’s response to COVID-19,” said ACMC President and CEO Michael Habowski. “A prayer service was organized to thank ACMC caregivers, banners were hung recognizing them as heroes, children wrote messages in chalk on the sidewalk and dozens of heartfelt messages of thanks were written on the ‘Thank you’ page on ACMC’s website.”

ACMC HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLAZA

Those who drive by the ACMC Health and Wellness Plaza regularly will see the scaffolding that has covered the façade for the past 10 months is now gone. The building boasts a completely new look and a uniform style from end-to-end. Hospital leaders continue to evaluate options for the remaining empty space, with a focus on additional health-care services.

Ashtabula Family Health Center (which opened in 2018) is the primary anchor for ACMC’s services in the plaza. Other hospital services include ACMC Regional Home Health, Premiere Fitness and non-health services such as accounting, scheduling and patient financial services.

ACMC also collaborated with independent health-care entities Cleveland Dental Institute and Fresenius’ Ashtabula Renal Care Group to bring those much-needed services to the county.

In August, Apex Dermatology will open its doors in the plaza, providing expanded access to skin care in Ashtabula County. The move is an expansion of Apex, which has two other offices — one in Concord and one in Mayfield Heights.

A NEW FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

In January, ACMC opened its fifth Family Health Center in Orwell. The new facility is designed to offer primary care and lab services. With the addition of Orwell Family Health Center, ACMC also began accepting Cleveland Clinic + Oscar health insurance, giving county residents who purchase insurance on the exchange another coverage option.

NEW PROVIDERS IN 2020

ACMC welcomed six new providers in the first seven months of 2020 – General Surgeon Tianli Du, MD; Pediatrician Sampurna Shakya, MD; Endocrinologist Rahul Sharma, MD; Family Medicine provider Zane Zimmerman, DO; Urology Nurse Practitioner Joni Sims and General Surgery Physician Assistant Simona Dobos.

Later this summer, ACMC will welcome new pain management

providers and new primary care providers to our community. In the past seven years, ACMC has almost quadrupled its full-time employed provider network.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION AT ACMC

Earlier this year, ACMC was awarded an ‘A’ rating in the Spring 2020 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade, recognizing ACMC’s achievements providing safer health care. This was the third consecutive “A” rating given to ACMC.

“The dedication of our caregivers has reduced the number of patient falls, lowered infection rates and decreased the number of bed sores,” said Lew Hutchison, ACMC vice president of quality and operations. “We’ve also improved communication about medications and discharge, enhanced communication with doctors and nurses and increased the responsiveness of staff.”

In June, the ACMC Wound Healing Center earned the Center of Distinction award a sixth time for outstanding clinical outcomes. The recognition comes from Healogics, a national leader in wound care center management.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The ACMC Healthcare System, which includes ACMC, ACMC Regional Home Health, and Glenbeigh, is the largest private employer in Ashtabula County. Through the system’s more than 1,500 caregivers, more than \$100 million in salaries and benefits is invested into Ashtabula County’s economy every year. The ACMC Healthcare System spends hundreds of thousands of dollars with local businesses buying products and services, which in turn helps those businesses employ staff. And, each year, the organization provides sponsorship dollars to help local non-profits raise money so they can provide services to their clients and our communities.

CLOSING SKILLED NURSING AND MATERNITY SUITE

In June, the ACMC Healthcare System Board of Directors voted to permanently close the 16-bed Skilled Nursing Unit and to discontinue deliveries in the Maternity Suite as of Aug. 1. Although the hospital will no longer deliver babies, office-based OB services including prenatal and post-partum care, gynecology, and hospital-based services including mammography, needle biopsies, gynecologic surgery and breast surgery will continue to be offered.

Patterson reflects on past — looks to future

BY WARREN DILLAWAY
warren@starbeacon.com

JEFFERSON — John Patterson has never ventured far from the shadows of Ashtabula County abolitionists Benjamin Wade, Joshua Giddings and Charlie Garlick.

Patterson remembers walking around the village seeking donations to try and save Wade's home when he was 5 years old. The attempt to save the house was unsuccessful, but the memory lives on about a county that was nationally influential in providing safety on the Underground Railroad for escaping slaves.

The sense of social obligation and helping others has been a driving force behind Patterson since he was a child. He was born to John and Donna Patterson and has lived most of his life, except for college, in Jefferson where he and his wife Nancy raised their sons Josh and Jeremiah.

Patterson has been a state representative for four terms and is unable to run again, but says he is still full of energy and excited about his home county.

"I am bullish on Ashtabula County," he said.

Patterson said he will miss the relationships with constituents and colleagues.

"I get calls from people [area residents] here at home," he said.

A rocking chair or regular golf trips are not in the cards for Patterson, who has not decided what the next chapter in his life will be.

"I don't know yet. God is going to guide me," he said.

Patterson sees five priorities as essential stepping stones toward the future in Ashtabula County. The first is education.

He was a teacher at Jefferson for three decades and realizes the importance of education on the future of Ohio and Ashtabula County.

"When we are talking



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

State Rep. John Patterson poses at noted abolitionist Benjamin Wade's Jefferson grave. Patterson is ending his time of service in the legislature and is excited about the future of Ashtabula County.

about economic growth we have to have an educated work force," Patterson said.

Proper funding of education has been put on hold for decades after an Ohio Supreme Court decision stated that the Ohio system of funding education was inequitable.

Patterson has teamed with Republican Bob Cupp to try and find a funding system that provides school districts with a more specific understanding of how they will be funded over a five-year period instead of two-year state budgets. He also has concerns about the testing that has increasingly dominated school districts' attention.

"What we have done in Ohio is mandate testing and threaten to withhold funding," Patterson said.

He said the 2008 recession and reduced

available money for education led to a reduction in opportunities for students.

"If it wasn't tested, it was cut," Patterson said. He said home economics and shop classes and other more relaxed opportunities were scuttled.

"It is no wonder kids don't find school enriching," Patterson said.

Patterson and Cupp have been working together for a long time trying to create a funding mechanism that school districts can use to play over a longer period of time. He said the early stages of the plan would be expensive, but could be "eased in" over time and provide educators with the ability to budget over a five-year cycle.

Patterson said his senior year of high school was illustrative of the importance of a variety of courses. He said a

teacher decided to create an opportunity for boys to take a cooking and typing class. He said at first losing a study hall was not an exciting option, but creative marketing by the teacher, free food and a typing class with girls, led to two important skills Patterson has used the rest of his life.

"I would never have learned to type," he said.

Patterson said high school can be a place where a student can have a smorgasbord of experiences that hopefully match gifts and calling for students.

"We actually had an Ohio history class," Patterson said of his early 1970s educational experience. He said history is not tested, so many similar classes are gone from the curriculum.

Patterson said the school funding system would go along way to help schools, but the bill may face challenges during this year because of the coronavirus pandemic and all the state revenue lost during the shut down.

"A school district will be able to know its own wealth. The state share will be come much more predictable," Patterson said. He said a good example

of funding issues that can destroy a district include a school district near Manchester, where two power plants were shut down.

Patterson said the loss of funds would have involved a 130-mill levy to replace the lost funds.

A second major point of emphasis in Patterson's look at the county's future includes the critical importance of infrastructure. He said Ashtabula County is blessed with access to water (Lake Erie),

critical highway systems and two national railroads and a local rail line.

An infrastructure investment is desperately needed for broadband Internet, Patterson said. He said a recent house bill was passed to use \$20 million to start broadband growth, but \$250 million is needed, Patterson said.

An on-going tightrope walk between economic development and environmental concerns is critical and involves on-going tension, Patterson said.

A third challenge facing Ashtabula County is the importance of the health of its workers. Patterson said high rates of diabetes, heart disease, Lyme disease and vitamin D deficiency are a challenge for area residents.

"Our county is not known for its health," he said.

Patterson said the on-going work of University Hospitals and Ashtabula County Medical Center have been very important in helping educate area residents.

"If people aren't healthy, they can't work. A business has a right to depend on the reliability of workers," he said.

Patterson sees quality of life opportunities abundant in Ashtabula County. He said recreation is important in the lives of area residents and the opportunities are extensive with Lake Erie, the largest public lake in Ohio (Pymatuning Valley reservoir), the largest private lake in Ohio (Roaming Shores) and four scenic rivers (Pymatuning Creek, Conneaut Creek and the Ashtabula River and Grand River).

Nationwide only two

Oregon communities have more scenic rivers, he said.

Patterson said the bike trail circuit in the county offers huge potential and fishing and hunting are a huge draw for tourists. He said Japanese businessmen fly in for the fishing.

A final component in the future from Patterson's perspective is "a living wage."

"It is important because people have to have enough money to pay their bills, provide for their children's college and put away for retirement," Patterson said.

He said the millennials are getting squeezed with college debt and flat wages.

"Business has to make a profit and workers need to get a fair day's wage. They both have a place at the table," Patterson said of management and labor.

One of the potential changes forced by the coronavirus pandemic may make living in Ashtabula County a viable option for talented professionals with unique skills. He said people who love the recreational opportunities in the area with a relatively cheap cost of living may be a huge drawing card.

"The option of working at home will bring them [residents] back. That may be the silver lining of the COVID cloud," he said.

Patterson said he hopes the work done by the state legislature, local politicians, businesses and private institutions will provide an opportunity for young people to succeed.

"It is about giving the tools to the next generation they need to improve what we have been doing," he said.

HOSPITALS: UH Conneaut and Geneva medical centers have upgrades on the way

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hospitals are the only Critical Access Hospitals in Ohio to receive such commendations.

University Hospitals has made capital improvements in both hospitals totaling more than \$7 million. Since 2016, UH has spent \$5 million at UH Conneaut and \$2.5 million at UH Geneva, Glowczewski said.

For cancer services at UH Geneva, University Hospitals has invested \$575,000 on Phase I and an additional \$17,000 on Phase II.

For cancer services at UH Conneaut, construction has not begun, but projected cost for infusion center renovations totals \$450,000.

"The Seidman Infusion Center physicians and staff already provide the latest and most effective treatment options," he said. "Now they are working to offer cancer patients a comfortable and peaceful environment in which to heal by upgrading facilities with tranquil aesthetics, natural light and inspirational artwork."

Telemedicine is now being utilized at UH Conneaut and Medical

Oncologists, Dr. Judah Friedman and Dr. Xuan Huang, are treating patients using this advanced technology.

"A successful effort requires recognized community and business leaders to set an example about the importance of cancer care close to home," he said.

Ashtabula County Commissioner J.P. Ducro IV said UH has been a great community partner.

"We appreciate their willingness to provide capital investment and engage actively in the health and wellness of our residents," he said.

University Hospitals Conneaut Medical Center other capital projects include:

- Air Handling Unit Upgrades — First quarter 2020 marks the completion date for the new air handling system at Conneaut. The new units are energy efficient and provide more reliability than the older counterparts. This was a two-year project with an expense of more than \$2 million.

- Generator System Replacement — First quarter 2020 was the start date of the generator replacement project. Phase 1 is a 10-month

project with an expense of more than \$1 million. Included in that cost is a generator that can provide emergency power to the facility and new electrical panels and equipment.

- Emergency Power Phase 2 — Project is scheduled to begin the fourth quarter of 2020 and roll into 2021 with an added expense of \$1.3 million. Phase 2 will provide a replacement of the Primary First Energy transformers along with the automatic transfer switches for back-up emergency power.

- Elevator Equipment Replacements — With a third quarter start, the main visitor and patient elevators will be fitted with new equipment, cooling and an overall facelift. This update will cost \$600,000.

"We are in the process of evaluating the facility and budgeting for 2021," Glowczewski said. "We have served our community for almost 100 years; we want to ensure we can continue to care for you another 100 more. Thank you for the opportunity to allow us to be your first-choice partner in healthcare."



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