Proudly patient-centered:
Embracing high reliability and population health
To our community:

Via Christi is transforming into a clinician-led, high-reliability organization that consistently delivers quality, safe care and excellent service to every person, every time, from our clinics to our hospitals to our senior living residences.

Our 2014 Annual Report provides an update on our progress toward this vision.

In our journey toward this goal, Via Christi is delivering increased value by focusing on wellness and disease prevention to improve the health of the communities we serve while helping to lower the cost of health care.

Most importantly, we are strengthening the Mission begun by our founding Catholic religious congregations more than a century ago — to serve as a healing presence for all who need our care, especially the poor and vulnerable.

The needs of our patients, their families and our senior care residents guide all of our work. The story of one patient we treated in 2014 shows how we live our Mission daily and illustrates why achieving high reliability in health care is so important.

In January 2014, we began treating a vulnerable, uninsured person who had received episodic care for pneumonia-like symptoms in various locations throughout Kansas over the previous nine years. In his early 40s, the man had never regained his health since suffering a gunshot wound in 2005 and undergoing emergency surgery in another location.

When he arrived in Via Christi’s Emergency Room for the first time this January, the man was weak, in pain and suffering from pneumonia. Our clinicians discovered through diagnostic testing that two foreign bodies were lodged in his lungs. When he was operated on, the surgical team removed two drain pads that had been accidentally left in during that emergency surgery nine years earlier.

We’ve continued to treat this patient and have helped him through our new Transitions Clinic to slowly regain his health and access needed social services. The man is deeply thankful that Via Christi cared about him enough to find the source of his pneumonia and start him on a course of recovery.

As our founding religious orders of Sisters realized when they came to Kansas in the late 1800s, if not us, then who? If not now, then when? This is what living our Mission, achieving high reliability and improving the coordination of health care means to our patients and to the thousands of physicians, nurses and other clinicians who make a difference every day in serving Via Christi.

Sincerely,

Jeff Korsmo,
President and CEO, Via Christi Health

Gerald T. Aaron,
Chair, Via Christi Board of Directors

On the cover: The goal of the medical home model is to put the patient at the center of a physician-led team of caregivers. Tina Williams, a member of the patient advisory council at Via Christi Clinic in Newton, is surrounded by her care team: Gloria McBee, a patient-service representative; Karla Hostetler, an advanced practice nurse; Jamie Little, a medical assistant; Nellie Wells, RN; Greg Bartel, a medical assistant; Michael Williams, MD; Terry L. Mills, MD; Greta Sandovol, patient-care coordinator and Ann Yoder-Smith, RN.

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Our journey to a healthier community continues
For more than a century, Via Christi’s two founding religious orders — the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita — have advanced the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, providing health care and spiritual healing to all who need it.

Via Christi has taken steps to strengthen our Mission for the next 100 years to ensure the future vibrancy of our healing ministry to the people of Kansas and northern Oklahoma during a period of rapid change in the nation’s health care system.

In 2014, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother (SSM) are celebrating the 125th anniversary of their arrival in Wichita in 1889 when the city still served as a railhead destination for cowboys driving cattle up trails from Texas. The Sisters took over management of what is now Via Christi Hospital St. Francis in 1890 and built a vibrant health care organization that eventually merged with the St. Joseph health system operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph to become Via Christi Health in 1995.

In planning for the future of Via Christi and their two other health ministries in Wisconsin and Oklahoma, the Sisters discerned two years ago that they wanted to strengthen their Mission by joining Ascension, the nation’s largest Catholic health system, in a collaborative arrangement with other religious congregations. As a result, Via Christi fully joined Ascension in April 2013.

Via Christi had been 50 percent sponsored by Ascension since 2007 when the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita joined other St. Joseph congregations to form the Congregation of St. Joseph and sponsor its health care ministries through Ascension.

Today, with the addition of Via Christi and the other two SSM ministries, Ascension is the nation’s largest faith-based, nonprofit health care system with 155,000 associates serving in more than 1,900 care locations in 23 states and the District of Columbia.

“This was a milestone both for Via Christi and for Ascension because together we have strengthened Catholic health care for the future at a time of rapid and dramatic changes in health care,” says Jeff Korsmo, president and CEO of Via Christi.

“We have learned a great deal from our new Ascension colleagues to help improve the quality and safety of the care we provide our patients and senior care residents,” Korsmo says. “At the same time, Via Christi has contributed many best practices to Ascension, strengthening our shared mission for the future.”

For example, Via Christi played a vital role in the creation of the national Ascension Health Senior Care ministry, formed July 1, 2014. The leaders of Via Christi Villages, our network of senior living communities and programs in Kansas and Oklahoma, are serving in major leadership roles throughout Ascension Health Senior Care, and the national ministry’s western region is headquartered at Via Christi’s West River Plaza in Wichita.

“Ascension’s goal is to strengthen and expand senior care to meet the needs of the nation’s growing elderly population,” Korsmo says. “Via Christi Villages’ person-centered approach to senior living is serving as a foundational element of Ascension’s new national ministry.”

“Joining the Ascension family: Via Christi now fully sponsored by the nation’s largest Catholic health system”

Visit ascension.org to learn about the nation’s largest Catholic health system.
A warm welcome: Full sponsorship of Mercy Regional Health Center

Via Christi helped strengthen Catholic health care within Kansas in 2014 when it assumed full sponsorship of Mercy Regional Health Center in Manhattan. Mercy Regional Health Center was formed in 1996 when the Saint Mary Hospital and Memorial Hospital were combined. Since that time, Via Christi and the Memorial Hospital Association (MHA) had had a joint 50-50 ownership of Mercy, with Via Christi providing management services.

On Feb. 28, 2014, the MHA transferred its ownership of Mercy to Via Christi Health in a move that strengthens care for the poor and vulnerable in Riley County while also providing needed capital improvements to expand the medical center in Manhattan.

Under the agreement, the MHA formed a nonprofit foundation to assist with other improvements as needed.

Mercy Regional Health Center will be renamed Via Christi Hospital in early 2015.

"Becoming a full member of Via Christi strengthens Mercy and the health care services we provide in Manhattan and the region," says John Broberg, Mercy’s senior administrator. "Together, we are sharing best practices to continue improving the quality and safety of the care and services we provide to our patients and their families."

Via Christi also operates a Via Christi Village senior care residence in Manhattan and will expand coordination of home care, physician clinics, hospitals and senior services to improve the health of the populations it serves in Manhattan and the surrounding region.

"With Mercy fully joining Via Christi, we are ensuring our health care services continue to evolve," says Doug Hinkin, MD, a family medicine physician and chair of the Mercy Board of Directors. "This enables us to serve our community in the best ways possible long into the future."

A blessing from the bishop

In 2014, we welcomed Bishop Carl A. Kemme on his first official visit to Via Christi since he was ordained as the 11th bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Wichita.

Bishop Kemme blessed more than 200 clinicians, patients and their families during his visit to Via Christi Hospital St. Francis on Aug. 6. "Jesus healed the body, mind and spirit," Bishop Kemme said. "He restored people to the way God created them."

Health care providers embody that mission every day in their work, he said.

Bishop Kemme noted how physicians, nurses and other clinicians often comfort patients with a simple touch on the hand or shoulder, affirming the person’s dignity.

"Never underestimate the touch of a hand," he said. "That’s how we can imitate the wonderful healing power of Jesus."

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"Never underestimate the touch of a hand," he said. "That’s how we can imitate the wonderful healing power of Jesus."
Via Christi Health provided $91.4 million in community benefit in the 2014 fiscal year, providing free medical care to those in need, educating health care professionals and supporting community health efforts in Wichita, Pittsburg, Manhattan and Wamego.

Via Christi’s community benefit is based on community health assessments conducted in Manhattan and Wamego, Pittsburg and Wichita to guide our work in addressing gaps in services, barriers to care and educating the public on better ways to protect themselves and their families from diseases.

Community benefit in Wichita

In Wichita, Via Christi provided community benefit of $76.9 million including $34.2 million in charity care.

Dispensary of Hope: The outpatient pharmacies at Via Christi Hospital St. Francis and Via Christi Clinic on Murdock both serve as a Dispensary of Hope, providing unused medications from manufacturers, distributors and physicians to uninsured patients as part of a national safety net. Since January 2014, more than 200 patients in need have received prescription medications free of charge, improving their treatment and quality of life.

Project Oasis: Via Christi Health, GraceMed and the Greater Wichita YMCA are working together to meet the need for affordable, close-to-home care in south Wichita. The collaboration is called Project Oasis because the area it will serve in south Wichita has been historically a “health care desert” where residents lack ready access to health care providers and services.

Plans have been developed for a hub clinic to be built on the grounds of the South YMCA along with three school-based satellite clinics. The hub clinic, which will provide routine and urgent care visits to more than 15,000 underserved area patients a year, will include exam and counseling rooms; dental and optical exam space; and a pharmacy and optical dispensary.

The new clinic also will offer extended hours, services and programs designed to target population health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes and behavioral health.

A major driving force behind this collaborative is the commitment of seven physician graduates of the Via Christi Family Medicine Residency Program to live and provide care in this underserved area of the community.

Community benefit in Pittsburg

Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg provided community benefit of $7.5 million in 2014 including $4.1 million in charity care.

As part of its community benefit, the hospital operates the only diabetes self-management program in southeast Kansas that is certified by the American Diabetes Association.

Via Christi Outreach also provides immediate post-concussion assessment and cognitive testing at no cost to Crawford County high school students, conducting more than 700 tests over the past three years.

The Pittsburg hospital also prepared more than 18,200 meals for delivery by Pittsburg Meals on Wheels to elderly and homebound residents over the age of 60.

Via Christi provided another $883,000 in community benefit through a variety of collaborative partnerships.

Mercy provided financial and in-kind contributions and community health improvement services as part of its commitment to the Flint Hills Community Clinic, which opened in 2006 to serve the growing number of uninsured in Riley County.

Wamego gave in-kind support to Community Health Ministries, a medical and dental clinic for low-income or uninsured residents. The clinic also provides prescription assistance, family counseling and other needed services.

As part of its community benefit, Mercy’s pre-professional program provided educational shadowing experiences to 74 students to help them narrow their field of study in health care.

Mercy also provided clinical rotations to regional nursing, radiology, Emergency Medical Services, dietetics, spiritual/pastoral care and social work students.

Mercy Regional Health Center and Wamego Health Center provided $6.3 million in community benefit in 2014, including $2.5 million in charity care.

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Community benefit in Manhattan and Wamego

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Via Christi provided $91.4 million in community benefit, care for the poor
For Dick and Jodi Stiles, Via Christi Villages’ newest independent living community was the answer to their prayers. Moving to Shepherd’s Crossing on the Catholic Life Campus in Bel Aire just north of Wichita allowed the Houston residents to return to their Kansas roots, be closer to family, and be active and involved in a safe, supportive community. It’s just a short walk to visit Jodi’s mother, who lives in an assisted living apartment at the adjacent Catholic Care Center, which Via Christi operates in partnership with the Wichita Diocese.

Via Christi is expanding its senior care services to meet the needs of the nation’s growing elderly population, from building new apartments at Shepherd’s Crossing to expanding skilled nursing services and an innovative program that helps vulnerable seniors stay in their homes. Via Christi’s continuum of senior care includes independent living, assisted living, intermediate nursing, skilled nursing and memory care. Our person-centered senior care is designed to provide everything for the body, mind and spirit of Via Christi Villages’ residents to help them stay as healthy and active as possible.

Via Christi Villages adds skilled nursing in west Wichita

In September 2013, Via Christi opened a new skilled nursing center at Via Christi Village on Ridge in west Wichita. The $13 million, 72,000-square-foot expansion added 80 private skilled-nursing rooms to the existing 60 assisted-living units already at the site. The expansion was designed so that residents can move from assisted living to skilled nursing without having to move to a new senior residence.

Via Christi HOPE expands to 22 counties

Via Christi HOPE, which provides community-based services and care to the elderly as an alternative to traditional Medicare and Medicaid services, is expanding its service area from one county to 22 counties in Kansas. HOPE has been providing services in Sedgwick County since 2002 and was the first “program of all-inclusive care for the elderly,” or PACE, organization in Kansas. The program helps elderly residents stay in their homes by helping them access the services and health care they need. Via Christi received approval in 2014 to expand HOPE to 21 additional counties. Via Christi HOPE services now will be available in most counties that surround Sedgwick County, cover the southeast portion of the state, including Pittsburg, and extend as far north as Johnson County near Kansas City.

“PACE is a model of care that we feel fits in well with the future of health care,” says Erik Hatten, leader of Via Christi Villages and CEO of Ascension Health Senior Care’s western region. “We realize there is a segment of the population that desires to remain in their own home as they age. Through PACE we are able to serve that population.”

Trish Ardissone, a resident at Via Christi Village on McLean, volunteers at Botanica.

New faces in new places: Via Christi expands senior care services

Behind the numbers: 2014 community benefit

Via Christi’s contributions to the overall benefit of the communities it serves included $40.9 million in charity care and $271 million in unpaid costs of Medicaid services. Via Christi provided another $23.4 million worth of community benefit through such initiatives as:

- Nearly $500,000 in subsidized health services provided by our specialty and family medicine clinics, behavioral health facilities and other subsidized health services.
- More than $17.4 million to train physicians, nurses and other health professionals.
- More than $5 million in other services such as support of community clinics, health screenings, research, community building activities and donations of space to community organizations.
Making the impossible possible: Hybrid OR paves way for new heart procedures

In June 2014, Jo became the first patient in south-central Kansas to undergo a minimally invasive surgical procedure to repair the severe leak in her mitral valve. She returned to her home the next day. “I was amazed at how good I felt,” she says. “It was clearly God’s plan for me to come to Via Christi.”

Jene and Jo both were helped through the leadership of a multidisciplinary team of physicians, who guided Via Christi to develop the new structural cardiology program, Heart Valve Clinic and hybrid OR at St. Francis. The hybrid OR combines the technology of a cardiac catheterization lab with an operating room.

“Our new lifesaving heart care is just one example of how Via Christi’s commitment to physician leadership is improving the quality of care for all Kansans,” says Jeff Korsmo, president and CEO. “We believe physicians and other clinicians — those who care for our patients — are in the best position to lead Via Christi.”

Surgery Center opens in Pittsburg

To better serve patients in southeastern Kansas, Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg opened a new 40,000-square-foot Surgery Center in October 2014, the largest construction project undertaken since the hospital was built in 1971.

The center houses eight procedure rooms — five operating rooms, two endoscopy suites and a minor procedure room. A new family waiting area puts families closer to the patients, physicians and nurses during procedures. All preoperative and postoperative rooms in the new Surgery Center are private.

At the Surgery Center’s blessing and dedication Oct. 5, senior administrator Randy Cason said the center opens a “new chapter” in the history of Via Christi Hospital’s healing mission in southeastern Kansas.

“It’s going to make a world of difference,” added Jacob Tarabolous, DO, chair of the hospital Medical Staff’s Surgical Section. “It really is going to benefit our community by allowing us to practice with state-of-the-art equipment.”

The size of the operating rooms in the new center was increased to allow for use of the latest technology, including the da Vinci Robotic Surgical System. Michael Fenech, MD, performed the first procedure in southeastern Kansas using the da Vinci Surgical System on Aug. 15, 2013, at Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg. Since then, more than 190 robot-assisted surgical procedures have been performed.

Visit viachristi.org/heart to watch a video of Jo McDonald discussing her care and learn more about our advanced heart care procedures.
Via Christi develops protocol for clinicians to help human trafficking victims

Via Christi Health is training physicians, nurses and other clinicians to recognize warning signs that a patient may be a victim of human trafficking.

Via Christi launched its program as part of a national awareness campaign by the Catholic Health Association and Ascension, the nation’s largest Catholic health system, to combat human trafficking.

More than 125 clinicians attended training in late February 2014 at Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph and Via Christi Hospital St. Francis. A team of Via Christi clinicians developed a four-step protocol for front-line caregivers to follow, outlining warning signs to look for and the procedures for helping victims.

“I think this goes right to the heart of Via Christi, and who we are,” says Robert Stangl, MD, medical director of Emergency Medicine for Via Christi. “This is helping people who need to be helped, and doing it for all the right reasons.”

The program was developed in response to a growing concern in the region and across the nation about human trafficking, particularly sex trafficking.

New wound treatment therapy available

Patients suffering from difficult-to-heal wounds now can undergo hyperbaric oxygen therapy at Via Christi Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Therapy on the St. Francis campus. With hyperbaric oxygen therapy, patients breathe 100 percent oxygen under pressure in a specially designed chamber, helping cells heal more rapidly. Patients who are candidates for this type of therapy often suffer from chronic diabetes-related wounds, delayed damage from radiation treatments and wounds caused by insufficient blood flow.

Sedgwick County District Attorney Marc Bennett, one of the guest speakers for the training program, called the sex trade “another form of child abuse” and a “form of slavery” that is a multibillion-dollar industry nationally. In 2013, Wichita police identified 29 victims of human trafficking and charged 14 suspects with trafficking people under the age of 18.

Since the training program, Via Christi clinicians have identified and helped four young women who were victims of human trafficking.

U.S. Attorney for Kansas Barry Grissom recognized Via Christi for its work with a Community Service Award. “Human trafficking is a crime that hides in plain sight,” Grissom says. “Via Christi Health is leading the nation by training its health care professionals to recognize warning signs and offer victims assistance that could save lives.”

To watch a video about the training program and the four-step protocol, visit viachristi.org/human-trafficking

2014 Philanthropy highlights

Via Christi’s community benefit is a manifestation of our deeply rooted value of philanthropy: love of mankind.

A year ago, Via Christi transitioned to a new model of philanthropy that will provide opportunities to impact the growth of our healing ministry’s service to others — and carry on the work of our founding religious orders — for generations to come.

With traditional health care revenue continuing to be challenged, philanthropy is increasingly vital to faith-based organizations like Via Christi. Our focus for the future will be to build long-term relationships with community benefactors who want to make a lasting impact on improving the health and wellness of Kansans for years to come.

Wichita: Via Christi Foundation

Via Christi Foundation, Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals at Via Christi Health; Via Christi Volunteers, Partners in Caring; and Via Christi Gift Shops raised more than $3 million in 2014 to help expand care for the poor, vulnerable and uninsured.

Via Christi associates in Wichita raised more than $889,000 through One Community, which supports Via Christi programs and United Way of the Plains.

Riverside Health Foundation gave $500,000 to support the Family Medicine Residency Program at Via Christi Hospitals in Wichita and Via Christi’s International Family Medicine Fellowship. With its 2014 donation, the Riverside foundation has given $7.5 million to support the training of osteopathic and family medicine physicians since its formation in 2002.

Radiothons held in Garden City and Wichita raised more than $184,000 for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals at Via Christi Health.

The Emerald Ball had a record-setting year, drawing more than 400 guests and raising more than $147,000 to support the Via Christi Cancer Institute and Gerard House, which provides a safe, supportive home for expectant young women in need.

Manhattan: Mercy Community Health Foundation

More than 200 community members celebrated the 10th annual “A Dress the Heart Gala,” raising more than $100,000 for the cardiac initiative and surgical service programs at Mercy Regional Health Center for a 10-year total of nearly $900,000.

The 24th annual Mercy Golf Classic was held with 128 golfers, raising more than $67,000 for community health initiatives at Mercy.

Mercy collaborated with the Kanza United Way and

Via Christi Village in Manhattan to kick off its sixth annual 3Community campaign, a fundraising collaboration for programs at the health center and for United Way. Staff from both Mercy and Via Christi Village raised more than $47,000.

Mercy Auxiliary provided $7,000 to 17 Mercy associates for certifications in their fields through the Mary Linda Guest Memorial Scholarship Endowment Fund. $100,000 for new patient-room recliners; and more than $234,000 for a state-of-the-art fracture surgical table and IV simulator for associate training and orientation.

Pittsburg: Mount Carmel Foundation

The 30th annual Gala drew 300 attendees, raising funds toward the creation of a Mount Carmel Foundation Endowment.

The Mount Carmel Foundation donated more than $300,000 to support patient care at Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg, ranging from a handicap lift device for the new aquatic therapy pool at the Via Christi Physical Therapy Center to medication and transportation assistance for the vulnerable.

The month-long “Paint it All Pink” celebration raised more than $5,000 to help cancer patients with travel, lodging, prescriptions and nutritional supplements.

Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg cardiologist Bashir Harji, MD, and his wife Chantal, at the 2013 Gala.

How to help

Via Christi Health needs your support to continue developing innovative new programs to help patients from all walks of life, including those who are most in need. To learn more about how you can help in all of our communities, please contact Monica Coen, senior director for development, 316-239-3521, or monica.coen@viachristi.org
Patients are receiving higher-quality, better-coordinated and safer care as Via Christi becomes a high-reliability organization led by physicians, nurses and other clinicians.

Via Christi’s journey to become a high-reliability organization (HRO) grew from our Vision 2020 strategic plan, developed in 2011 with broad input from more than 400 physicians, business and political leaders, patients and staff members. HROs use regular training, continuous improvement and frequent process audits to ensure their work is consistently safe and of the highest quality.

Our vision is to become “One Via Christi,” a clinically integrated system of care that seamlessly connects hospitals, outpatient clinics, therapy centers, senior care and home medical services. Navigators will guide patients through the system and physician-led clinical teams will deliver the highest-quality, safest care in the most appropriate clinical setting to every person, every time.

In 2014, Via Christi made strong progress toward achieving this Vision 2020 goal.

Clinician leadership

Physicians and nurses now are in major senior leadership roles throughout Via Christi.

Karl Ulrich, MD, serves as Via Christi’s chief operating officer and oversees our integrated clinical operations. He also chairs the Clinical Practice Committee, the governing body for clinical decision-making and a forum for advancing leadership and collaboration among our employed and community physician partners.

The 14-member Via Christi Leadership Team, the organization’s top clinical decision-making group, includes six physician leaders, two nursing leaders, two administrative leaders who worked earlier in their careers as nurses and one who worked as a pharmacist.

“As we developed our Vision 2020 plan, we committed to becoming a health care organization led by physicians, nurses and other clinicians working as care teams in partnership with our patients and senior village residents,” says Jeff Korsmo, president and CEO.

“We believe physicians and other clinicians, those who care for our patients, are in the best position to lead Via Christi,” he says. “We think it’s equally important to involve our patients in helping us improve.”

Creating a culture of high reliability

Wichita is known as “The Air Capital of the World” because of its history of aviation innovation and manufacturing. For the past two years, Via Christi has tapped the expertise of the aviation industry to help our clinicians improve the quality and safety of the care they provide.

(Cont. on page 18)
BECOMING A HIGH-RELIABILITY ORGANIZATION

HRO highlights

- Via Christi reduced serious safety events by 44 percent in one year.
- Via Christi is training all 10,000 of its employees in the principles of high-reliability science and quality improvement.
- Via Christi participated in a Wichita-wide coalition, led by the Medical Society of Sedgwick County, to create and implement a standard protocol for the use of safety checklists and time-outs before surgeries and other procedures. The project’s goal is to make Wichita the safest place in America to undergo surgery or an invasive procedure.
- Embracing the truth that “clean hands save lives,” clinicians have improved hand-hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of hospital-acquired infections.

Achieving High Reliability
the right care, for every person, every time

A small cadre of aviation experts trained as black belts and master black belts in the Japanese quality improvement methodologies of Lean and Six Sigma work in Via Christi’s Center for Clinical Excellence. In partnership with Via Christi’s physicians and other clinicians, they have formed dozens of performance improvement teams that have propelled a dramatic leap forward in quality and safety.

To guide the work of these teams, Via Christi set a “big aim” goal of reducing serious safety events — defined as deviations from standard medical care that reach the patient — to zero by the year 2020 with an interim goal of achieving a 40 percent reduction within three years.

“We achieved this interim goal in just one year, reducing serious safety events by 44 percent,” Korsmo says. “That is truly remarkable.”

He credits Via Christi’s practice of holding daily, 15-minute safety huddles throughout the organization with creating a culture of high reliability.

“Our leaders and staff members have an intense focus on patient safety as a result of these huddles,” Korsmo says. “And many of our quality-improvement projects have resulted from problems we identified in the huddles.”

OneChart for all: New Via Christi-wide EHR launches

Via Christi has invested $75 million in a new electronic health record system to help improve patient care by connecting all of its hospitals and outpatient clinics — and giving patients access to their medical records on the web.

With the new OneChart electronic health record, doctors and nurses in Via Christi’s Wichita hospitals and clinics now have instant access to details about past treatments a patient has received and what medications they are taking. If a patient needs emergency room care, for example, the patient’s primary care physician now can review the ER treatment and laboratory results during a follow-up visit.

Via Christi also now provides patients access to their medical records through a new patient portal on its website, viachristi.org. By registering to use the new myViaChristi web portal, Via Christi patients can review their laboratory test results, use secure email messaging to communicate with their Via Christi Clinic physicians, and request prescription refills and renewals.

OneChart was led by physicians and other clinicians, including from left, Ed Hett, MD; Brendan Rice, MD; and Samer Antonios, MD.

The OneChart project was led by physicians and other clinicians, including from left, Ed Hett, MD, Brendan Rice, MD, and Samer Antonios, MD.

OneChart

A new era for Via Christi, says Jeff Korsmo, president and CEO. “With OneChart, our physicians, nurses and other clinicians have a digital platform that enables us to provide higher-quality, safer and better-coordinated care to our patients.”
Throughout Via Christi, physicians are leading the development of new models of care aimed at improving the overall health of the communities we serve.

As Via Christi’s leader of new care models, Ed Hett, MD, a family medicine physician, is guiding the development of accountable care organizations involving clinicians from Via Christi in collaboration with other physician practices in Wichita, Manhattan, McPherson, Pittsburg, Wamego and other areas of Kansas.

Terry L. Mills, MD, also a family medicine physician, is overseeing a pilot program that has transformed Via Christi Clinic in Newton, where he practices, and two other Via Christi Clinic offices — both on West 21st Street in Wichita — into “patient-centered medical homes” over the past two years. This new approach provides patients with more coordinated medical care, increased access to preventive services, such as cancer screenings, and better management of chronic diseases such as diabetes.

Jennifer Jackson, MD, a specialist in heart failure, is leading two new outpatient programs — one to help hospital patients recover fully so they avoid a relapse and another to help patients with chronic diseases, such as lung disease, remain in their homes.

The outpatient transitional programs led by Dr. Jackson and the medical home project led by Dr. Mills are elements in Via Christi’s transformation into an organization focused on improving health and reducing the cost of health care.

The Healthier You Alliance in Accountable Care

Accountable care organizations, known as ACOs, are groups of physicians, hospitals and other health care providers who work together to provide coordinated, high-quality care to their patients.

Ultimately, the goal of ACOs aligns with Via Christi’s high-reliability work — ensuring that patients, especially those with chronic diseases such as heart failure or diabetes, receive the right care at the right time in the most appropriate clinical setting, such as a physician’s office rather than an emergency room.

ACOs, the medical home model and the care transitions clinic are intended to achieve what has evolved into the “quadruple aim” of quality: improve patient outcomes; improve the patient experience; reduce overall health care costs; and enhance the professional lives of physicians and other caregivers by equipping them with better tools — such as improved care navigation — to serve their patients.

Ultimately, ACOs are one vehicle through which the nation’s health care system will transition from “Curve One,” the current fee-for-service model, to “Curve Two,” the value-based pricing model in which providers are compensated for keeping patients healthy and out of the hospital.

In January 2014, Via Christi launched its first ACO, called the Healthier You Alliance in Accountable Care, to serve 20,000 patients in the federal Medicare insurance program for the elderly. The ACO operates within the Medicare Shared Savings Program.

“In an ACO, we become accountable for the health of the community,” Dr. Hett says. “As a physician, I am responsible to look at the health of the whole person, identify the care you need as a patient, and partner with you to make sure you get that care. The patient-centered medical home is the tool that teaches us how to do that.”

New models of care: creating and innovating

Raising the bar: Via Christi focusing on population health improvement
NEW MODELS OF CARE

Medical home and patient-care teams

Via Christi is among 16 health care organizations nationwide participating in a three-year, $20.75 million project to create patient-centered medical neighborhoods.

The medical neighborhood coordinates care throughout a community among physicians, hospital systems and other community health services. The project is funded by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation.

Like quarterbacks on football teams, in the medical home model, physicians serve as the leaders of patient-care teams that include physician assistants, nurses, nurse navigators, other clinicians and patient service representatives.

The $1.5 million in funding for the Wichita project has provided Dr. Mills and other clinicians access to robust data analytics about their patient panels. The care teams review the data and each patient’s health record regularly to ensure patients receive all recommended diagnostic screenings, laboratory tests and other wellness services — before each office visit.

In very early results from its pilot program, Via Christi has seen a modest decline in the number of medical home patients who have had to be hospitalized for their chronic illnesses, compared with other primary care patients, and improved patient adherence to recommended preventive screenings.

“I’m really excited about where this is taking medicine,” says Tina Williams, 47, a patient of Dr. Mills. “I think it’s a tremendous opportunity for patients to be pioneering this new era of doctor-patient relationships. This allows patients to be more engaged in their medical care.”

Community Cares program helps patients regain optimal health

In another new care model being tested at Via Christi, Dr. Jackson and Jennifer Rodgers, APRN and assistant chief nursing officer, are overseeing two programs intended to help patients recover fully from hospital stays and better manage chronic diseases.

The Transitions Clinic makes sure patients receive needed follow-up care in the critical window of seven to 14 days after they are discharged from the hospital. If they can’t get in to see their primary care doctor — or for the more than 40 percent of hospitalized patients at Via Christi who don’t have one — the clinic ensures they have a follow-up appointment scheduled with a team of health care providers who help them recover fully after leaving the hospital.

The second program, called Community Cares, is essentially a return to the old-fashioned house call. Community Cares is funded with a $408,000 start-up grant from Ascension Health, illustrating one of the benefits of Via Christi fully joining the national health ministry.

A health care professional makes regular home visits to patients suffering from COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a group of debilitating lung conditions including emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

The professional has connected nearly 50 patients in the program — many of them older adults on fixed incomes, uninsured or underinsured — with a Via Christi care team involving advanced practice registered nurses, social workers and other resources.

As a result of the program, Mike Lack is no longer homebound because of his COPD. “It’s such a reassurance that someone is looking after us,” says Mike’s wife, Lyn.

Visit viachristi.org/community-cares to watch a video about the program.
A trusted guide: Navigator role key in population health improvement

Nurse navigators play a central role in Via Christi’s new models of care, guiding patients and coordinating their care to ensure they receive needed services and, in some cases, helping them make lifestyle changes like quitting smoking.

Via Christi’s navigators help patients with challenges like breast cancer manage chronic illnesses and even sign up for health insurance as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Greta Sandoval, RN, a navigator and patient care coordinator at Via Christi Clinic in Newton, estimates that she has helped 20 patients enroll in tobacco cessation programs. She’s also found financial help for patients who couldn’t afford their medications and connected patients with such social services as affordable housing, transportation to their doctor and Meals on Wheels.

“My biggest successes have been helping patients make transitions in their care after a hospital stay,” she says. “We’ve found patients who were sent home without medications or without the medical equipment they needed. We help get the services they need so they can get better and aren’t readmitted to the hospital.”

Via Christi and Ascension have been strong supporters of the provisions of the ACA that extend health insurance coverage to millions of Americans. Through Ascension, Via Christi has received an ACA grant to employ three nationally certified navigators to offer one-on-one assistance to help Kansans enroll in health insurance through the new marketplace exchanges.

Since October 2013, they have helped more than 3,700 Kansans understand how to access the new insurance marketplace, 176 obtain health insurance and 74 enroll in Medicaid.

Via Christi’s navigators also guide cancer patients throughout their journey to survivorship.

Terri Leschuk, RN, a nurse navigator for Via Christi Clinic Breast Care Services, coordinates patients’ care plans from diagnosis through treatment — from setting up appointments with specialists to scheduling tests and surgeries.

“My role is to help educate and guide patients as they consider their options and do what I can to alleviate any anxiety they may be feeling,” Leschuk says.

Maggie Ward, CNS, serves as an oncology nurse navigator for the Via Christi Cancer Institute at Via Christi Hospital St. Francis. She helps patients with all types of cancer better understand their diagnosis, treatment and follow-up plan of care throughout their hospitalization, and to successfully transition home or to the next level of care. “My main focus is to help patients improve their quality of life,” Ward says.

Cindy Miles, a busy mother and business professional, stood before more than 300 leaders of Via Christi and urged them to move the health system into the 21st century of electronic communications.

“I can email everybody else so why shouldn’t I be able to email my doctor’s office? I would like the ability to email questions to the nurse or the doctor and get some sort of response,” Cindy told the leaders as part of Via Christi’s Vision 2020 strategic planning process in 2012.

Today, Cindy’s vision is reality with Via Christi’s web-based patient portal, called myViaChristi. Cindy was among the first to sign up for the new portal in June 2014 on viachristi.org and is thrilled with how it empowers patients to take an active role in managing their own health care.

“The fact that I can track my medical records, I can request appointments, I can review my lab results, I can request prescription refills, I can review medical records, I can track my medical records, I can request appointments, I can contact my doctor via email — it’s all very exciting to me,” Cindy says. “I just can’t believe that, a couple of years later, what I dreamed of has come to fruition.”

As part of its Vision 2020 strategic plan, Via Christi invested $75 million in a new electronic health record system to help improve patient care by connecting all of its hospitals and outpatient clinics — and giving patients access to their medical records through myViaChristi.

Cindy’s family physician at Via Christi Clinic, Andrea McCarty, DO, says she likes providing patients with access to their medical records, including care instructions, through the portal. “A lot of times that will clear up easy questions that normally would take three or four phone calls between the nurse and the patient,” Dr. McCarty says. Cindy also likes that Dr. McCarty can review her records if she receives care in another location, such as an emergency room.

“As a very busy person,” Cindy says, “this allows me to manage my medical care easily and more effectively.”

Visit myviachristi.org to learn more about the new patient portal and watch a video of Cindy Miles as she signs up.
During a visit by Ascension leaders to Via Christi, a Mass was celebrated in the Chapel of the Sorrowful Mother at Via Christi Hospital St. Francis in June 2013.
Our Values

Service of the Poor
Generosity of spirit, especially for persons most in need

Reverence
Respect and compassion for the dignity and diversity of life

Integrity
Inspiring trust through personal leadership

Wisdom
Integrating excellence and stewardship

Creativity
Courageous innovation

Dedication
Affirming the hope and joy of our ministry

Our Mission

Inspired by the Gospel and our Catholic tradition, we serve as a healing presence with special concern for our neighbors who are vulnerable.

Our Vision

As an innovative, integrated health care team, we build healthier communities and deliver the ideal experience in the way of Christ.

In 2014, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother are celebrating the 125th anniversary of their arrival in Wichita.