By Dustin Defee

UTMB recently acquired 34 new hospital beds for critical care.

Each state-of-the-art hospital bed is valued at approximately $21,000, which is nearly double the cost of a typical medical/surgical bed. The new intensive care beds are equipped with intuitive, advanced technology designed to ensure optimal comfort for our sickest patients while also preventing adverse events that can occur in critical care, such as ventilator-associated pneumonia, patient falls and pressure ulcers.

For example, pressure ulcers, which are damaged areas of skin that may form when a patient has stayed in one position for a prolonged period of time, can lengthen a patient's hospital stay, increase morbidity and mortality, and cause severe physical and emotional pain for patients and their loved ones. The newly acquired hospital beds will play a pivotal role in preventing this hospital-acquired condition, and prevention is much more cost-effective than additional treatment. In the case of an advanced stage pressure ulcer, for example, a health care provider may incur a cost of up to $45,000 or more, which can include material costs, nursing costs and additional patients days—the cost of this care is not reimbursable.

Critical care patients are highly susceptible to adverse conditions because of their acuity of illness and immobility. In the case of pressure ulcers, a combination of factors including the increased use of medical devices in the intensive care unit (e.g., respiratory equipment and catheters), hemodynamic instability (this means the patient's blood pressure may be too low to keep blood flowing reliably to all the various parts of the body) and the use of vasoactive medications, which affect the diameter of blood vessels, can put a patient at risk.

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Pressure ulcers can be prevented by ensuring the patient rests on a high-quality mattress and that they are frequently repositioned. UTMB Nurse Manager Dell Roach explains, “The nursing staff in the ICU implement a turning and repositioning schedule into the patient’s plan of care. Our new specialty beds have pressure redistributing surfaces which aid in the comfort and care of the immobile patient by offsetting points of pressure and improving blood flow to the skin.”

The new beds also allow nurses to set custom safety configurations that assist them in monitoring the position of each patient. Special sensors can alert them if a patient is at risk of a fall. Additional control features assist nurses in physically repositioning the patient, as needed. For example, the touch of a button elevates the head of the bed to the prescribed position to help prevent ventilator-associated pneumonia.

Ensuring UTMB care teams and supporting staff have the equipment and resources they need to care for our patients is an important focus of Best Care. The new critical care beds will support our nurses in the care of our patients, promote patient safety through the prevention of adverse events and contribute to exceptional patient outcomes.

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**Best Care is alive and well: Lunch & Learn series continues**

From faculty and advanced practice providers to nurses, administrators and employees, it takes everyone at UTMB to make Best Care a reality for our patients, staff and organization. That’s why this month, UTMB relaunched its Best Care initiative.

Since Best Care began in full force in 2016, it has evolved beyond the inpatient clinical encounter to include all interactions our patients have with the UTMB Health System. Best Care means we are committed to delivering the right care, at the right time, in the right way, for the right person, and have the best possible results for every patient, every time. It encompasses the critical elements of quality and safety, exceptional service, value and how well we manage our patients in the outpatient setting.

To learn more about the many initiatives that make up our efforts to achieve Best Care at UTMB Health, please join us for the remaining Best Care Lunch & Learn Sessions, which will be held in Levin Hall Dining Room at noon on the dates provided below. A boxed lunch is provided, and no RSVP is required.

All sessions are video recorded and will be available online at http://intranet.utmb.edu/best-care Previous sessions include: “Best Care is Alive and Well at UTMB” with Donna Sollenberger and “Ambulatory Quality and Accountability Study – Aiming our Sights High” with Ann O’Connell and Dr. Rex McCallum.

**Tuesday, Feb. 5 - Excellent Service Starts with Me – Accelerating Best Care through Patient-Centeredness**

*Presented by: David Marshall, DNP, JD, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, CENP, System Chief Nursing & Patient Care Services Executive*

During this session, we will explore UTMB’s efforts to improve patient satisfaction and assure equity of care.

**Tuesday, Feb. 12 - Health in the Community: Population Health and DSRIP**

*Presented by: Katrina Lambrecht, JD, MBA, Vice President Health System Operations & Regional Hospitals*

This session explores UTMB’s efforts to keep patients healthy and how these efforts are related to our role as an accountable care organization and as a participant in the 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver.

**Tuesday, Feb. 19 - Becoming a High Value Practicing Organization**

*Presented by: Gulshan Sharma, MD, MPH, FCCP Vice President, Chief Medical and Clinical Innovation Officer*

This session explores UTMB’s efforts to become a High Value Practicing Organization as we strive to ensure evidence-based testing and treatments that are appropriate to each individual patient’s care.

**Wednesday, Feb. 27 - How Do I Make A Difference in Best Care?**

*Presented by: Donna K. Sollenberger, Executive Vice President and CEO, UTMB Health System*

This session provides a summary of Best Care at UTMB Health and describes how everyone in every role at UTMB contributes to the success of our Best Care initiative.
Clear Lake Campus scheduled to open March 30

The UTMB Health Clear Lake Campus opening date has been extended from February 16 to March 30, 2019. This shift is to allow our teams adequate time to prepare to care for patients in the facility and complete all related accreditations.

The Saturday “soft” opening will begin with approximately 79 beds; this will allow our teams to get a sense of the patient volume we may initially experience on the campus. In the following months, additional beds and services will be opened until approximately 190 inpatient beds are brought back into the community (this strategy is planned to take approximately 18 months).

Information on services provided at each UTMB campus and a list of “Frequently Asked Questions” about the Clear Lake Campus are now available online at http://intranet.utmb.edu/clear-lake-campus

We look forward to serving our patients in the Clear Lake area!

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**Time Out!**

**FREE EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS FOR CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES**

*Every Wednesday at 2 p.m. in Jennie Sealy Hospital Conference Room 2.506A, UTMB’s Health Resource Center offers 30-minute “Time Out” sessions focused on caregiving, caregiver support, self-care and other related topics. Sessions are open to all. For more information, contact Patient Resource Specialist Savannah Parks at (409) 266-7542 or sjparks@utmb.edu*

**February 6 – Caring for a Person with Dementia**
*Presented by: Melissa C. Lockhart, PhD, GNP-BC*

The stress of caring for a person with dementia can be a heavy burden, not only financially and socially, but also physically, affecting the caregiver’s own health. During this session, caregivers work to identify their Top 5 stressors and develop action plans to reduce their negative effects. A brief video, *The Biology of Dementia*, will be shown.

**February 13 – Positivity: The Power of Change**
*Presented by: Sarah Linde, LCSW and Angie Gomez, LMSW*

We often hear about increasing positivity in our lives and making positive changes in places like social media, magazine articles, and more, but how can we actually go about making such changes in our daily lives? Presenters Sarah and Angie will discuss the effects of positivity, as well as how to identify negative thoughts and transform them into positive ones.

**February 20 – Patient and Caregiver Zen Hour w/Pet Therapy**

Caregivers take on many responsibilities, and often their emotional and self-care needs go unmet. Caregivers, family members and patients are invited to participate in the “Caregiver Zen Hour” which offers relaxing and comforting activities to decrease stress and provide a little quiet time. Other activities include: aromatherapy, adult coloring, conversations with Pastoral Care, inspirational reading and a massage chair.

**February 27 – Taking the Message and Medicine Home**
*Presented by: Meredith Masel, PhD, MSW*

Did you know that as soon as you finish talking to your doctor, nurse, or other health care team member, it is common to forget nearly half of what was said? It doesn’t have to be that way anymore! Join us to learn about how you can discuss audio recording the information shared between you and your health care team so you can review important information after your hospital discharge or clinic appointment. As one patient said, “It’s like having another person there with you.”
Did you know that heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, claiming the lives of 1 of in 3 women? Cardiovascular disease forces us to consider that a woman we know and love may be affected at any age.

The first Friday of every February, which is designated as American Heart Month, is National Wear Red Day—wear red to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease and save lives!

It’s no longer just about wearing red; it’s no longer just about sharing heart health facts. It’s about all women making a commitment to stand together with Go Red and taking charge of their own heart health as well as the health of those they can’t bear to live without.

While there are many similarities in the symptoms of heart disease in men and women, there are even more differences—differences that could save or end your life if you don’t know them. So before you pass that jaw pain off as the result of sleeping funny or lightheadedness as something a snack or rest can fix, learn the symptoms. And don’t ignore them.

**Symptoms of a heart attack:**

- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of your chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath, with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs such as breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

As with men, the most common heart attack symptom in women is chest pain or discomfort. But it’s important to note that women are more likely to experience the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

**What to do during a heart attack:**

If you experience any of these signs or symptoms:

- Do not wait to call for help. Dial 9-1-1, make sure to follow the operator’s instructions and get to a hospital right away.
- Do not drive yourself or have someone drive you to the hospital unless you have no other choice.
- Try to stay as calm as possible and take deep, slow breaths while you wait for the emergency responders.

**Why it’s important to know the symptoms of a heart attack:**

Women who consider themselves healthy often misdiagnose the symptoms of a heart attack because they don’t think it could happen to them. That is why it’s crucial to learn about heart disease and stroke, know your numbers, live a heart-healthy lifestyle and be aware of the risk factors of heart disease.

**Raise cardiovascular disease awareness by wearing red in February:**

During the month of February, UTMB will raise awareness alongside the American Heart Association by sharing photos of our teams wearing red.

**February 1 is National Wear Red Day, so wear red, snap a picture with your team and send it to social@utmb.edu.**

Additionally, “Ms. Ruby,” the AHA’s Wear Red Mascot will be on each campus on the following dates from 10 a.m. to Noon. Visit the AHA booth and snap a photo with Ms. Ruby to help raise awareness of AHA’s efforts to beat heart disease and stroke.

- Angleton Danbury Campus Hospital Lobby: February 13
- League City Campus Clinics Lobby: February 14
- Galveston Campus Jennie Sealy Hospital Foyer: February 15

For more information, visit: [https://www.goredforwomen.org](https://www.goredforwomen.org).
UTMB’s Department of Internal Medicine’s ambulatory locations were recognized this month as Patient Centered Medical Homes by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). Practices that are recognized by NCQA have been found to use evidence-based, patient-centered processes that focus on highly coordinated care and long-term relationships between patients and care providers that encourage patients to actively participate in their care.

The departmental practices join Family Medicine in sharing this important recognition. According to research conducted by the NCQA, patients who receive their care from Patient-Centered Medical Homes have increased access to care and higher quality of care at lower cost. Research also shows that Patient-Centered Medical Homes reduce disparities in care for people with lower incomes.

**Always Award**

The quarterly Always Award recognizes units, practice areas and groups who have demonstrated exceptional performance based on patient satisfaction scores from Press Ganey surveys, quality data and other measures.

**Left:** The Women’s Health Clinic at UTMB Health Clinics received the Ambulatory Always Award for the first quarter of FY2019. Patients described the clinic staff and providers as respectful, calming and friendly; they said they felt very well cared. Dr. Tonya Callender and Kathryn Davis accepted the award on behalf of the clinic.

**Right:** Neurology/Neurosurgery received the first Inpatient Always Award for FY2019. The unit was rated highly (a 9-10) by patients overall. The care environment and communication with nurses were also highly rated. Patients said the team helped them feel comfortable and their teamwork was palpable. “I don’t think I could have received better care if I was the President of the United States!” commented one patient. Kaysie Stratton and Lee Alviza accepted the award on behalf of the unit.
SHOUT OUTS!

I have spent the last month at UTMB Galveston L&D/Antepartum and I just want to say thank you to the amazing staff! The majority of nurses and [patient care technicians] have been so awesome, attentive and friendly. Especially nurses Susan Foster and Monica Wyckoff! They have made the whole stay so much better. Thank you all!

Dr. Kent Anthony and his staff were amazing with our toddler. Treatment was thorough with an excellent bedside manner for toddlers and parents. Very few strangers can make our toddler smile, but Dr. Anthony did! (UTMB Health Urgent Care, Angleton)

Dr. Hemamalini Pilla has been my doctor for about eight years and has delivered both of my beautiful sons. I highly recommend her to all of my friends or anyone looking for an OB who knows what she’s doing while interacting with you in a warm and trusting way. With both [sons], I had complications, but when she came into the delivery room, she was calm, confident and took care of business. When it came to delivering my “sunny-side up” first born, there’s no one else who could have handled the situation like she did…She is somehow able to block out all of the craziness that is going on during delivery and focus on what is best for the patient. When I had reached the point where I did not think I could go on with my second son, she calmly talked to me in such a calming way (almost Zen-like) that I was suddenly able to calm down, breathe and (literally) push through. In our house, Dr. Pilla is regarded with the utmost respect.

I was in the ER today with my aunt who is 80 years old. The nurses were absolutely fabulous. With my aunt’s mentality, they were so kind and worked with her in a very positive fashion.

Mr. Anthony Azagidi [of the Sleep Center] was most certainly functioning beyond being exemplary. As his patient, I knew immediately when introduced to him that my sleep apnea study was going to be a positive experience. And it sure was!! Mr. Azagidi was informative, gracious, concerned, and attentive to my questions and assistive to my requests. He made my stay in your center an enjoyable one. Having the requirement that I get into the realm of deep sleep as much as possible was facilitated by the way he structured my immediate environment. Anthony was better than any sleeping pill.

I never was able to get to breast feed with my other pregnancies, thanks to my nurse Shelley Phillips I was able to fully understand what all to look for watch out for… I got to come home with a completely breast-fed baby—that is something I was never able to accomplish before with my other children.

We came here because my daughter was very ill with strep! I was nervous to bring her to a new place. They were very fast to attend to her and very friendly. All staff was very kind and caring. Thank you for taking good care of my baby. And I also had no health insurance for her and they still treated us well!

The smallest surviving baby born at UTMB weighed 320 grams (that’s only 11.29 ounces). For comparison, a can of Campbell’s Soup weighs 12 ounces.

$3,000 Employee Referral Bonus - Available Jan. 23 to May 31

All paid UTMB employees who refer an applicant to a Nurse Clinician (II–V) position or an identified hard-to-fill position for the Health System will be eligible for a special $3,000 bonus. If your referral is hired into a benefits-eligible position between Jan. 23 and May 31, you will receive $1,500 when he or she completes six months of service and another $1,500 when he or she completes one year of service.

There is no limit to the number of referrals you can make, which can really add up for you and benefit UTMB. For details about the referral bonus, including applicant requirements and guidelines, see https://hr.utmb.edu/recruit/referral/.