Whether it’s sniffles, aches and pains or bumps and bruises, UTMB Health’s Urgent Care clinics are open to bring you relief. And now, they can help patients establish ongoing care with a primary care physician.

The use of urgent cares in the U.S. has grown rapidly. According to Consumer Reports, the number of urgent care facilities increased from 6,400 in 2014 to 8,100 in 2018, with another 500 to 600 expected to open nationwide.

Urgent care clinics are convenient, fast, close to home and don’t require an appointment—you simply walk in. And they are incredibly affordable compared to a visit to the emergency room. For a parent with a sick child, the availability of urgent care is a blessing.

UTMB Health’s first urgent care services were established in the pediatric care setting. After opening an adult urgent care clinic on the League City Campus in 2013, it was apparent that there was a high demand for quick, convenient access to care in the communities UTMB Health serves, so additional clinics were opened in Alvin and Texas City in 2016 followed by Angleton and Galveston in 2017.

Dr. Cynthia Judice, chief medical officer for UTMB Health’s Primary Care Services and Community-Based Clinics, says that since 2012, UTMB has recorded 337,654 urgent care visits. The busiest locations have been the pediatric urgent cares in League City and Galveston and the adult urgent care setting.

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To help make access to care even more convenient for patients, UTMB Health recently extended its urgent care availability to a daily 12-hour window—from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.—in League City and Texas City, which has significantly increased use of the service.

Health policy and research organizations like the Kaiser Family Foundation have found that urgent care and retail clinics are so convenient, many people now rely on them instead of seeing a primary care physician. This is a trend that is especially prevalent among millennials (those born after 1980), who make up approximately one-third of patients at retail clinics and a quarter at urgent care centers, according to a recent consumer survey by PNC Healthcare.

However, experts agree that while urgent care is great for emergent conditions that do not require emergency care, they should not be used as a substitute for primary care. The dependence on episodic visits to urgent care has resulted in a lack of coordination of care, according to a research study published in the March 2016 issue of Health Affairs. Care coordination is a key strategy that has the potential to improve the effectiveness, safety and efficiency of the American health care system, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Having a regular primary care physician is important because they provide patients preventive care, teach healthy lifestyle choices, identify and treat common medical conditions, manage chronic conditions and make referrals to medical specialists, when needed. Visiting an urgent care that is part of a health system like UTMB Health has advantages because patients can access the full spectrum of primary, specialty and emergency care services, as well as acute care. And, when UTMB Health clinicians document a patient’s visit in the electronic medical record, it can be viewed by other UTMB Health providers, when needed for treatment.

Over the course of time, access to primary care can also help keep out-of-pocket costs lower. The convenience of urgent cares and retail clinics is encouraging utilization of those services, and because the majority of visits are for routine medical care that patients otherwise would not have sought, some experts have noted a modest increase in per person per year spending on clinic visits for low-acuity conditions.

Dr. Judice says that in 2018, more than 25,000 patients seen at UTMB Health did not have an assigned primary care provider. She and her team quickly recognized an opportunity to help those patients get established with a family doctor to receive care in the future.

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possible results. We help patients with important wellness reminders, such as when it is time to get scheduled for annual screenings and vaccines. We also offer UTMB Health patients online appointment scheduling and online prescription refill requests through our MyChart application, which is accessible via the patient’s home computer or mobile device. With primary and specialty care locations and emergency services throughout the region, we bring patients all the benefits of academic medicine close to home!

Learn more about urgent care services at UTMB and find a location at www.utmbhealth.com. Just a friendly reminder, UTMB also offers employees and their dependents quick, convenient access to primary and specialty care through the Access 2-CARE program—you can see a primary care physician within 24 hours or a specialist within seven days. Learn more at http://intranet.utmb.edu/2-care.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY AND POPULATION HEALTH

UTMB expanded its work under the 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Program this month to take a broader approach to community and population health.

Under the leadership of Craig Kovacevich, in a newly expanded role as associate vice president, Community and Population Health, UTMB will strive to achieve the best clinical outcomes for patient populations by closing gaps in care and assisting patients throughout the care continuum. Supporting these efforts are a Wellness Team focused on pre-visit planning and patient scheduling and an Outreach Team focused on building and maintaining patient relationships with an emphasis on patient navigation for underserved patients.

Additionally, Craig and his team in the UTMB Office of County Affairs will oversee a new UTMB Health Clinic Support Center, which commenced operations on July 15. The team will provide support services such as transportation assistance, health plan and social services coordination to our valued Medicaid, county contract and self-pay patients. The new service can be contacted at (409) 747-5100, Option 2.

These efforts will go a long way toward keeping our patients healthy and better positioning UTMB for the value-based reimbursement landscape to come.

Celebrating the launch of Option 2: Craig Kovacevich, associate vice president, Community and Population Health, Sandra Davis, senior administrative manager, Office of County Affairs and the Office of County Affairs COR Specialist team: Tashanda Evans, Elizabeth Hall, Shauna Molis and Melody Sifuentes.
Every day at UTMB Health, employees go above and beyond for our patients. This month, Donna Sollenberger, executive vice president and CEO, UTMB Health System, recognized staff members who were highlighted by patients and their colleagues for delivering Best Care.

**Blood Transfusion Services**

On July 2, a massive transfusion protocol was activated on a patient that lasted approximately 12 hours and spanned multiple shifts.

The Blood Bank issued 159 blood products to the patient, including 10 platelet doses, 76 red blood cell units, 13 cryoprecipitate doses and 60 frozen fresh plasma units. The team worked tirelessly to ensure that the patient received the blood products that he needed to save his life.

Technical Supervisor for Transfusion Services Cynthia Ngo says she witnessed firsthand the team working together flawlessly, with each person helping out and contributing to ensure that each round of blood products went out as fast as they could be tagged and issued.

In a situation like this, every second counts, and the team worked together to make sure that no second was wasted.

Aside from working on the massive transfusion, the team also made sure that other patients were taken care of and the Blood Bank’s inventory was restocked.

Kudos to everyone on the Blood Bank Team for working so hard and diligently to achieve the Best Care for our patients each and every day: Maisee Her, Ashlie Atchison, Daniel Madrigal, Gregory Botik, Rachel Marks, Ralph Escobar, Leonel Rendon, Marina Matherne, Herve Nyenti, Cynthia Ngo, Victor Baras, Kate Lagura, Sabin Maharjan and Christiana Mendez.
Rosibel Salgado works on Unit 9A (Intermediate Specialty Care Unit) in Jennie Sealy Hospital. Rosibel takes pride in her work and believes in making sure her patients are satisfied. Although she doesn’t speak a lot of English, she doesn’t let that hinder her from communicating with her patients. She talks to them, sings and even prays with her patients. She always has a positive outlook even though she has a lot going on in her personal life. Rosibel tries to motivate her coworkers and others to do their very best. Rosibel has received many GEM cards from patients and their family members. In addition, she has been mentioned countless times in the Press Ganey comments. She makes such an impact on her patients that one of them applied for a job with us solely based on his experience with her when he was a patient because he wanted to work for a company that had employees like Rosibel.

Reina Martinez, Environmental Services

Today during patient rounding, a patient was so impressed with Reina Martinez and her attention to detail.

Reina noted that her bedside table was not situated in a manner so that eating would be comfortable, so she correctly placed the table for the patient.

In addition, she noticed the trash bin needed to be closer, so she moved it, also. The patient was thrilled with Reina’s kindness and her attention to detail—not only in that she made her comfortable, but also in how she cleaned her room.

Elvira Martinez, Environmental Services

Mrs. Elvira Martinez has been our housekeeper for a long time. Each day she makes her rounds to each room with a smile and ready to help others. She’s the best, and when she is not here the unit feels it! Mrs. Elvira was in a patient’s room and fell ill. She immediately went down to the Emergency Department and even with her illness, came back to work several weeks later. Elvira is dependable, well-respected and admired by all her peers. If anyone that has struggled in health shows the same perseverance that she has, they are one strong individual. She is very personable and makes such a huge impact on her peers and patients. Thank you, Elvira, for devoting your years to us. We appreciate it.
What is Office 365 and what does it mean for you?

In addition to SharePoint and OneDrive, Office 365 provides online versions of Microsoft Office applications, such as Microsoft Word Online, Excel Online, PowerPoint Online and Outlook Online. The cloud-based software means you will be able access and share your files from anywhere—at the office, at home, or from a mobile device—simply by logging into Office 365 using your UTMB credentials. Office 365 also offers improvements in file sharing and security. You will still be able to host and work on documents on your computer locally. SharePoint allows you to easily collaborate on documents with others.

The upcoming migration of files from iSpace to OneDrive and SharePoint...

Office 365 contains two applications that will replace UTMB’s current iSpace (Xythos) environment: SharePoint Online (SPO) and OneDrive. The migration of files is scheduled to occur later this summer. SharePoint will contain “sites” which are similar to the Department and Collaboration folders you currently use in iSpace. OneDrive is similar to your personal iSpace folder. Every employee will be assigned a OneDrive account.

Prepare by setting up your Office 365 connection.

If you haven’t already, connect your UTMB credentials to the Office 365 environment, before you need to access or share documents. It’s easy to do and takes just a few minutes. Visit office.com or mymail.utmb.edu to start the process. Follow along with our quick reference guide, and you’ll be done in no time! Email questions to spo@utmb.edu.

UTMB Mac computers are not able to take advantage of the OneDrive for Mac application, because Macs do not join the UTMB domain in the way that Windows computers do. Mac users must visit the office.com web portal in order to access OneDrive.

Important: The OneDrive client will only sync with Windows computers on the UTMB network. If you aren’t on the UTMB network, access to your OneDrive data is available via the office.com web portal.

How will my files currently in iSpace move into Office 365?

UTMB Information Services will migrate the data currently in iSpace (Xythos) to SharePoint and OneDrive for you.

Get trained!

If you currently use iSpace to collaborate on documents or to share meeting materials, you will want to go ahead and familiarize yourself in advance with the new tool on UTMB’s Office 365 website (www.utmb.edu/o365) where you can find additional details about the new tools and watch training videos that will give you a overview of all the bells and whistles in the new Office 365 environment.

SharePoint mimics the structure and functionality of iSpace, but also contains greater capabilities. For example, folder permissions in SharePoint are very similar to the way you share and protect information in iSpace.

Important: Websites and many documents containing links to iSpace will require maintenance.
CREATING A CULTURE OF SAFETY: STANDARDIZING HAND-OFFS

UTMB Health recently received the results of its Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Patient Safety Culture Survey.

The survey provided a wealth of information about how UTMB can improve its Culture of Safety. In particular, the survey identified four key areas of focus: (1) hand-offs and care transitions, (2) teamwork within and across units, (3) non-punitive response to error and (4) staffing.

To help improve these processes, Dr. Gulshan Sharma, chief medical and clinical information officer, has appointed an interdisciplinary Culture of Safety Focus Group at UTMB to review the data of the survey and gather feedback from frontline staff to explore ways we can work together to make the necessary changes that will support patient safety.

The first key area of improvement the group is focused on is hand-offs and care transitions. They are currently working to create a standardized method for hand-offs across the organization.

Health care professionals take great pride and exert painstaking effort to meet patient needs and provide the best possible care. However, when the responsibility for patient care is transferred from one individual or team to another in real-time, the potential for patient harm—from the minor to the severe—is introduced.

In 2017, The Joint Commission issued a Sentinel Event Alert regarding hand-off standardization. They later established a standard that addresses hand-off communication to help promote patient safety. They estimate that a typical teaching hospital may experience more than 4,000 hand-offs every day.

While it sounds simple, a high-quality hand-off is complex, and sometimes hand-offs are conducted too casually, when they should be structured, focused to ensure continuity of care and documented. In a busy patient care environment, health care professionals may inadvertently omit critical information when communicating important information about each individual patient during a hand-off.

Hand-offs should be highly reliable and conducted in a high-quality manner for every patient with every transition of care, and at a minimum, The Joint Commission recommends the following critical content is communicated during each hand-off:

1. Sender contact information
2. Illness assessment, including severity
3. Patient summary, including events leading up to illness or admission, hospital course, ongoing assessment, and plan of care
4. To-do action list
5. Contingency plans
6. Allergy list
7. Code status
8. Medication list
9. Dated laboratory tests
10. Dated vital signs

Based on the critical content and feedback from frontline staff, UTMB’s Culture of Safety Focus Group has nearly finished their recommendations for the new standardized tool. It will then be brought forth for approval.

Once the tool is implemented, which will function in the Epic electronic medical record, it will continue to be optimized as needed and areas will have an opportunity to add unique information. The goal is to make sure hand-offs are more efficient for everyone at UTMB caring for our patients. More information will soon be available on the new hand-off tool.
Every Wednesday at 2 p.m. in Jennie Sealy Hospital Conference Room 2.506A, UTMB’s Health Resource Center offers 30-minute Caregiver “Time Out” sessions focused on caregiver support, self-care and other topics. Sessions are free and open to all. For more information, contact Patient Resource Specialist Savannah Parks at (409) 266-7542 or sjparks@utmb.edu

AUG. 7 – THE GROCERY SHOPPER: EMPOWERING YOUR DECISION presented by: Registered Dietitian Rae M. Kretzmer, MS, RD, ACSM-CPT
Grocery shopping can be overwhelming! Nutrition labels contain an enormous amount of information and making quick decisions on which foods to buy can be a challenge. During this session, Rae Kretzmer, a registered dietitian on the national multi-center study, STEP-HI (Starting a Testosterone and Exercise Program after Hip Injury study) will empower you as the consumer with knowledge to make informed shopping decisions. Learn about USDA and FDA regulations, organic vs. natural, nutrition labels, the “Dirty Dozen” and “Clean 15” lists and more. Kretzmer will also provide the audience with worksheets and take-home materials.

AUG. 14 – IMPROVING HEALTH CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS presented by: Occupational Therapists Loree Pryor, OTD, OTR and Diane M. Collins, PhD, OT
Learn how patients and caregivers can work with health care providers to promote healthy aging. Healthy aging allows older adults to maintain or return to a positive quality of life, enjoy activities that are important to them and maintain their independence!

AUG. 21 – PRIMARY FOOT CARE presented by: Foot and Ankle Podiatrist Oluwatosin “Fatima” Ogunlana, DPM
Taking care of your feet today can help prevent foot problems tomorrow. If you already have foot problems, good foot hygiene will help keep these problems in check and may help some of them disappear altogether. Join us during this session as we discuss common foot care issues in adults, how to take care of your feet and when to see a foot and ankle specialist.

AUG. 28 – HELP US HEAR (BETTER): RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS presented by: National-Consumer Hearing Assistive Technology Trainer Carolyn McMahon, N-CHATT
What do Whoopi Goldberg, Phil Collins, Lou Ferrigno and Rush Limbaugh have in common? They, along with 48 million other people in the U.S., have hearing loss. Most people with hearing loss don’t seek help. Untreated hearing loss is believed to be a contributing factor for dementia. The presentation will include a brief overview and demonstration of various devices for people with hearing loss. There are many free or low-cost options to assist people with hearing loss. This presentation will also cover state and private resources to assist people who have a hearing loss. Options include the Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program, a free telephone program in the State of Texas; vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services and private resources.

Flu Vaccine Poster Contest: Support flu vaccination! Keep patients safe!
UTMB’s Population Health team is holding a poster contest to promote flu vaccination. Submit a high-resolution image of your hand-drawn poster or original digital image (size 8.5”x11” to 11”x17”) to Andrew Herndon at atherndo@utmb.edu by August 30, 2019 (you will be contacted if the original poster is needed for final voting). Entries will be judged by the UTMB Population Health Team, and the winning poster will be reproduced and shared around UTMB to promote flu vaccination.

Feeling extra creative and want to do a video? Please limit your video to one minute. You can save your video file to iSpace and share the link with Andrew. It may be featured on social media and the population health website.
The 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.

Top: The third-quarter Ambulatory Always Award went to Family Medicine, Dickinson for significantly improving their patient satisfaction scores. From March to May, their provider rating improved from the 70th percentile to the 90th percentile. Patients commented: “My doctor always listens actively and takes the time to progress my care,” and “I’ve always had an exceptional experience with my doctor and the clinic; I feel like I am always in good hands.” Vanessa Gutierrez, nursing supervisor, Zanita Gaither, senior practice manager, accepted the award on behalf of the clinic (pictured with Jenny Lanier, director, clinic operations).

Bottom left: The Inpatient Always Award went to the Clear Lake Hospital Labor and Delivery team. They sustained exceptional patient satisfaction scores during their transition from League City Hospital to Clear Lake Hospital. Their “Rate the Hospital a 9/10,” “Care Transitions,” “Communication with Nurses” and “Communication with Doctors” scores all remained in the 99th percentile. Patients commented: “They’re always courteous and respectful,” “The lactation specialist was wonderful,” and “All staff were courteous.” Annette Macias-Hoag, interim associate chief nursing and patient care services officer, Clear Lake Campus, and Christina Wade, administrator, League City Hospital and associate chief nursing and patient care services officer, accepted the award on behalf of the team.

I knew we needed to get to an ER...I decided we would try the UTMB [League City Campus ER] because it is now the closest to us and I really wanted to try somewhere [different than where we had been going]...from the moment we walked in until the moment we left, the staff was exceptional. They had my son checked in and called us back to a room in record time. Once we were roomed, we waited maybe 15 minutes max, and an actual doctor came in to assess him.

In our past experiences, we are usually seen by the hospital finance person before we are even seen by anyone who has any sort of medical expertise. The doctor who took care of my son was top notch; she was thorough, she was kind and very honest with us about everything. I didn’t once feel pressured to run unnecessary tests...I know every hospital has good and bad days, and some days will be busier than others leaving patients feeling unhappy about their visit. But as far as first impressions go, and as far as picking an ER to go to when we should need one next time, UTMB League City will be my first choice. Many, many thanks to all the staff we encountered last night.

A recently discharged complimented Dr. Laticia Stewart. She was able to adjust his medications which made him “pain free” and “able to walk.” He was accompanied by several balloon-carrying family members whose faces seemed to express the same feelings of gratitude. He said he was “so grateful” to her for the care she provided.