What does it mean to be an accountable care organization?

An accountable care organization (ACO) is defined as “a group of health care providers, potentially including doctors, hospitals, health plans and other health care constituents, who voluntarily come together to provide coordinated high-quality care to populations of patients.”

The goal of an ACO is to ensure patients and populations—especially the chronically ill—get the right care, at the right time, without harm and while avoiding care that has no proven benefit or represents an unnecessary duplication of services.

A strategy of ACOs is to coordinate with payors, such as insurance companies and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), to make sure that as a health care provider they are taking steps to help patients maintain their care plans and stay healthy. Through UTMB’s ACO efforts, we are currently working with four payors in accountable care partnerships: Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna commercial plans, and select United Healthcare and Amerigroup Managed Medicaid plans. UTMB clinicians can view whether or not their patients are part of these agreements by viewing the “Registries” section of the Epic electronic medical record.

As part of our ACO efforts, UTMB’s Care Management Department has focused on improving transitions of care and coordinating care for all UTMB patients. Our goals align with the ACO philosophy: reduce the overall cost of care while improving quality and overall health outcomes (also known as the “Triple Aim” of health care: better care, better health and better value).

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www.utmb.edu/fridayfocus
friday.focus@utmb.edu
Editor: Mary Feldhusen

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For example, an ambulatory nurse care manager may reduce the overall cost of care and improve quality in the following ways: by implementing care management interventions for patients with high emergency and/or inpatient utilization; coordinating and making connections with primary care providers; offering education on urgent care services; providing disease-specific education; making follow-up phone calls to patients and related services following a hospital discharge; and ensuring patients have a follow-up clinic visit following a hospital discharge.

Meanwhile, UTMB’s Health Maintenance Team focuses on connecting patients with preventive care screenings and well-care visits through telephone outreach, MyChart patient-focused communication, text messages and mailed outreach reminders for preventive care, as well as assistance with scheduling appointments.

Many of the achievement expectations of UTMB’s ACO and Care Management efforts are also consistent with UTMB’s efforts under DSRIP (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment) programs related to the Medicaid 1115 Transformation Waiver. Additionally, better coordination of care supports the Health System’s Best Care initiative.

ACO and DSRIP areas of focus include:

- Well-care visits (a visit for preventive care which includes a review of a patient’s current health and medical history, discussions about how to improve or maintain the patient’s health and a physician exam tailored to the patient’s preventive care needs)
- Routine screenings for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer
- Immunization status and vaccine administration
- Diabetes care and control
- Heart disease care

What can you do to help?

- Encourage your patients to attend their well-care visits and complete their screenings and preventive care. Epic’s “Health Maintenance” section can guide you on the services for which a patient may be due and allows you to document changes and updates to their health maintenance topics.
- Help your patients set up their Epic MyChart account. Using MyChart, patients can message providers, schedule appointments, review their test results, request medication refills and receive health reminders; they can also share portions of their medical record—all from within the app (https://mychart.utmb.edu/mychart).
- Talk to your patients about receiving the right care in the right place. Let them know about the differences in cost and services offered at primary care, urgent care and emergency rooms.
- Take care of yourself! Epic’s MyChart Health Reminders help you keep track of health maintenance actions for which you may be due—in most cases, you can schedule an appointment from within the app.

Online scheduling for mammograms now available

Patients can now self-schedule mammogram screenings in MyChart. The process begins when the patient’s physician orders a screening mammogram (2D or 3D) in Epic. The patient will then receive a “Scheduling Ticket” notification via MyChart.

After answering a few screening questions, they will be able to select a location (e.g., Primary Care Pavilion, UTMB Health Clinics, League City Campus or Angleton Danbury Campus) and the day and time most convenient to them—they may even select a same-day appointment, if one is available.

Breast Imaging is the first UTMB imaging department to go live with online scheduling, but will not be the last! To assist staff in helping walk patients through the scheduling process step-by-step, a workflow bulletin (PDF) can be accessed at the following link: https://utmb.us/2z1.

If you have any questions about the program or would like to learn more, please reach out to Imaging Director, Angie Bush at apbush@utmb.edu or 409-747-2835. UTMB is thrilled to offer this convenient service to the communities we serve!
The 2018-2019 flu season has arrived! UTMB has already seen several cases of the flu so far this season.

While we are still early in the season, and it is not possible to predict what the flu season will be like each year, it is best to get your flu vaccine before the flu begins widely spreading in our communities. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies that protect against flu to develop in the body, so make plans to get vaccinated now! The CDC recommends that people get a flu vaccine by the end of October; getting vaccinated later, however, can still be beneficial and vaccination should continue to be offered throughout flu season, even into January or later.

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months and older. This is especially important for people at high risk for flu-related complications. High-risk groups include adults 65 years of age and older, pregnant women and those with chronic health conditions.

Incorporating general healthy habits into your daily routine can also help prevent the spread of the flu and germs to you and the people around you. For example, avoid close contact with people who are sick and if you are sick, do your best to stay home. Remember to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Practice proper hand hygiene—it is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of infection and illness. Other good health habits include eating a balanced diet, exercising, getting plenty of sleep and managing stress.

Where should you go to get vaccinated? UTMB offers free flu shots to its employees, retirees and volunteers each year to help prevent the spread of seasonal flu (visit https://hr.utmb.edu/ehc/flufree for details). Local pharmacies like CVS, Walgreens, Target, Walmart, Randall’s and Kroger also administer flu vaccines, or you can schedule an appointment with your primary care provider.

Additionally, UTMB clinicians are encouraged to immunize their patients in both clinic settings and in our hospitals prior to discharge. Keep in mind that as a condition of continued employment, all UTMB health care workers must get an annual flu shot or formally decline the vaccination by signing a written statement. This institutional requirement applies to anyone who provides direct patient care, enters patient rooms, and/or comes within 6 feet of patients in the course of his or her duties. Please visit the Employee Health webpage for more information about UTMB’s health care worker requirements.

Take your health into your own hands and make this year a flu-free season!
The President’s Cabinet celebrated its 25th anniversary with a dinner and awards program the evening of Friday, September 7, 2018 at The San Luis Resort, Spa and Conference Center in Galveston. Several UTMB faculty, staff and students received awards for projects that recognize and address health needs in our community. The 2018 grant recipients are, seated from left, Rebecca Castro, Sylvia Campbell, Jennifer Higgs, Anna Fields, Anthony Nguyen, Brenda Yanez, Shelley Smith and Kaitlyn McMahon. Standing, from left, President’s Cabinet Chair, Dr. Tom Kimbrough, President’s Cabinet Awards Chair, Dr. David Niesel, Barbara Slusher, Julia Anderson, Savannah Parks, Katherine Golden-Beck, Emily Motter, Daniel White, Jessica Stauber, Briana Sowell, Jennifer Bledsoe, Sara Nowakowski, Souby George, Ashley Kwartler and UTMB President, Dr. David L. Callender. (Not pictured Kelsie Carpenter, Mercedez Hernandez, Vic Sierpina, Lauren Michelle Thierry and Jay Truitt.)

UTMB League City Campus Patient Navigation and Health Resource Center
Sylvia Campbell, RN, BSN
Savannah Parks, MEd, LBSW
Lauren Michelle Thierry, MHA
Patient Navigation and Support

Studies show that low-income and elderly patients with complex life-altering health diagnoses often have trouble accessing adequate health care. Some may lack transportation, are unfamiliar with the hospital system, lack insurance or are unable to afford medication. Those barriers ultimately may lead to a poor quality of life and unfavorable health outcomes. In an effort to improve hospital access, the UTMB League City Campus Patient Navigation and Health Resource Center will provide patient education, dedicated navigation team support, community outreach, enhanced communication and increased access to multidisciplinary care.

The Care Closet
Rebecca Castro, LCSW, Savannah Parks, MEd, LBSW
Health Resource Center

An unexpected health crisis often means patients and their families are unprepared for hospital stays, and many find themselves in need of food, clothing, personal hygiene products and laundry services. Through the creation of The Care Closet at John Sealy Annex, patients will have access to such items and will be provided with information and referrals to community resources. Two adjoining rooms will be dedicated within the hospital for laundry services and food storage. The project will be sustained through partnerships with the Galveston County Food Bank and the Salvation Army of Galveston County.

Disaster Day - Preparing for Community Safety
Kelsie Carpenter, School of Nursing Student
Ashley Kwartler, School of Nursing Student
Kaitlyn McMahon, School of Nursing Student
Shelley Smith, MEd
Interprofessional Education

Disaster Day is a student-led exercise designed to recreate an emergency scenario where students and members of the community act as first responders and patients. This simulation aims to prepare health care students for catastrophic events, allows them to practice skills they are learning in class and fosters interprofessional teamwork. This program, in conjunction with the Galveston County Community Emergency Response Team, teaches students to successfully manage disasters while preparing them to act as a community resource. President’s Cabinet funds will be used to purchase simulation and casting/molding supplies and related equipment for a two-year period.

UTMB Stroke Program Proposal - Advanced Stroke Life Support Classes
Brenda Yanez, RN, BSN
Julia Anderson, BSN, RN, CCRN
Jennifer Higgs, MSN, RN, CEN
Georgia Emily Motter, RN, BSN
Briana Sowell, MSN, RN, CEN, TCRN
Hospital Administration

Since 2016, more than 100 nurses and emergency medical services (EMS) staff have attended the Advanced Stroke Life Support class. UTMB is the first academic center in Texas to serve as a training
site for this certification. The university has noticed an increase in the number of stroke patients who are brought to the emergency department via EMS rather than a personal vehicle. This might indicate an increased awareness that being transported by ambulance means quicker treatment for stroke patients. Due to the program’s success, President’s Cabinet funds will support training for an additional instructor and educational materials to certify an additional 200 per-hospital and hospital providers.

Realizing UTMB’s Institutional Vision through 100 Kitchen Gardens and Door-to-Door Compost

Victor Sierpina, MD
Anna Fields, School of Medicine Student
Mercedez Hernandez, School of Medicine Student
Jessica Stauder, School of Medicine Student
Daniel White, School of Medicine Student
Family Medicine

Food insecurity is an unreliable access to affordable and nutritious food. Rates of food insecurity in Galveston exceed national and state averages. A partnership between UTMB, the UTMB Greenies Gardening Club and Seeding Galveston will work with at-risk residents to build and maintain backyard and neighborhood gardens. The program will also establish a compost pick-up program designed to generate a cost-effective alternative to conventional garden fertilizer.

The Mother and Babies Course

Soubh George, MSN, RNC-MNN, CKC
Sara Nowakowski, PhD, CBMS
Obstetrics and Gynecology

In an effort to provide mental health treatment for new mothers who may be experiencing perinatal depression, the Mother and Babies Course will launch a new clinical service within UTMB’s pediatric clinics. This course will be facilitated by psychologists, nurses and lactation consultants trained to address issues surrounding motherhood. President’s Cabinet funds will be used to purchase instructor manuals, equipment, supplies and marketing materials.

An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure: The St. Vincent’s/Luke Society Preventive Dental Health Clinic Collaboration

Anthony Nguyen, School of Medicine Student
Jaspreet Sodhi, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Student
Jay Truitt, MD, PhD, PharmD
Barbara Slusher, MSW, PA-C, DFAAPA
Physician Assistant Studies

In 2014, the President’s Cabinet supported the creation of St. Vincent’s Dental Clinic for basic dental services to Galveston’s indigent, uninsured and under insured populations. Since the program’s inception, the clinic has modestly addressed the need for end-stage dental services by treating oral infections through tooth extractions and antibiotics. This new project will expand current services by establishing a new preventive dental health clinic that will offer oral health education, dental exams and cleanings, fluoride varnish and seal applications for adults and children. The goal is to prevent new tooth/oral infections, reduce dental decay, decrease the need for antibiotics and improve overall health.

De-escalation and Response to a Violent Event

Katherine Golden Beck, RN, MS
Jennifer Bledsoe, RN, BSN
Ambulatory Services

Workplace violence incidents are on the rise and are the fourth-leading cause of death in the United States. Employers and employees are ill prepared and unable to respond swiftly in the aftermath of these events. Experts agree that proper training and access to medical response resources can lead to a reduction in fatalities. This project will work with Galveston Police Department Sgt. Destin Sims and the NEAR program to provide training for emergency staff on how to recognize, de-escalate and respond to aggressive behavior. Bleeding management kits will be distributed to 80 UTMB clinics and staff will receive training on how to use the kits and where each should be located within the clinics.

UTMB’s commitment to a Culture of Safety

At UTMB, we are committed to:

- The well-being of patients and the quality of care they receive
- Safety at all levels — everyone has a part to play in creating a safe and reliable care environment!
- Working together with respect, teamwork and transparency
- Using a learning approach to determine how systems fail, not who failed reporting is safe and valued
- Supporting effective safety measures and demonstrating accountability
- Recognizing individuals who act with safety in mind
Caregiver “Time Out” Sessions: October

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.

October 3 – No session this week

October 10 – Patient and Caregiver Zen Hour w/Pet Therapy
Caregivers take on many responsibilities, and often their emotional 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.

October 17 – Aromatherapy for Emotional Health
Presented by: Charlene Nieten, BSN, CCRN

There are many factors that can trigger depression, anxiety or any other emotional imbalance. These factors can be related to food allergies, medications, poor diet, illness and many other environmental influences, along with emotional trauma or painful childhood memories. Essential oils are a terrific way to address some of these factors and enjoy enhanced emotional health. Join us to learn more on how essential oils and aromatherapy can help improve and balance your emotional health.

October 24 - Everything but the salt
Presenter: Jymann Davis MS, CFCS, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent-Family & Community Health Agent

Don’t get in salty situations—move away from the salt shaker! Experience this fun and educational class that addresses the importance of decreasing your sodium intake and how to adjust your diet accordingly. Americans tend to consume more sodium than what is recommended and should limit the amount of sodium they eat daily. In this class, we will cover the topic of sodium, including the history of its use, its role in foods and public health, current sodium consumption trends and some national initiatives on reducing sodium intake. Get updates on the new nutrition facts label and the 2015-2020 New Dietary Guidelines for Americans. You’ll even get to take home a great recipe to use as an alternative to salt on a variety of foods from steak, chicken, fish, salads and even popcorn!

October 31 – I have been diagnosed with cancer- now what do I do?
Presented by: Cheron J. Hillmon, LMSW, UTMB Oncology Social Worker

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be difficult and stressful news, whether it’s happened to you or to a loved one. Join us to learn more about community resources that can help patients address the physical, emotional and financial challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

www.utmb.edu/health-resource-center

Inside the new UTMB Health Surgery and Cancer Clinics

On Sept. 17, UTMB Health officially opened UTMB Health Surgery and Cancer Clinics on the UTMB Health League City Campus. UTMB’s clinic, located on the second floor of MD Anderson’s outpatient facility, is a 9,100-square-foot, multi-purpose clinic with 12 flex exam rooms, 2 treatment rooms and surgical oncology services.

An employee open house will occur Oct. 11 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The open house will include self-guided tours of the treatment center and UTMB Health clinics. Details about the event will be available in next week’s Relay Notes and on iUTMB.
Congratulations to UTMB’s WIC Team on the results of their 2018 Bi-Annual State WIC Audit! UTMB had no findings during the audit and received several accolades. Auditors commented that the team exhibited great teamwork and was courteous and welcoming. The auditors also noted the good rapport staff had with children, families, parents and other staff members. They found all WIC sites to be well organized, clean and efficient, and exceptional in appearance. Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a federal assistance program of the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture for health care and nutrition of low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding women and children under the age of five.

Kudos to UTMB’s Blood Bank on an outstanding AABB survey with no deficiencies, no citations and “Commendable Practice” recognition for extending the use of platelets. AABB (formerly known as the American Association of Blood Banks) is an international, not-for-profit association representing individuals and institutions involved in the fields of transfusion medicine and cellular therapies. The association works to improve health through the development and delivery of standards, accreditation and educational programs that focus on optimizing patient and donor care and safety.

Kudos to Beth Reimschisse, administrator of the UTMB Health Angleton Danbury Campus, who was recognized by the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) as a 2019 Young Professional Voices honoree. This program recognizes nurse leaders who exhibit significant potential as a health care leader and demonstrate exemplary leadership within their organization, community and the nursing profession. AONE is a subsidiary of the American Hospital Association.

Recent patient comments:

“We’ve been seeing Dr. Harold Pine with two of my four children for a total of over 7 years. Both children have special needs. He is by far the most awesome ENT for kiddos that my husband and I have ever encountered! Not only is he great with the kids but he really knows is field, explains all very well, and his staff keeps you updated regularly during surgical procedures. Highly recommend him.”

“The young man who cleaned my room was excellent. He cleaned the room spotless without so much as a peep, except for a polite greeting and explanation as to who he was and why he was there.” (Environmental Services)

“Nurses Sandy Tadlock and Dyana Leteff were amazing. They treated me with respect and compassion. This was my third birth and by far the best hospital/birth experience. They took the time to listen to me and treat me like a person and not just another patient. Great job ladies!!!”

“My room was like I was at a 5-star hotel. Nice and clean. The people who cleaned the room were wonderful.” (Environmental Services)

“Dr. John Hagedorn is the best doctor I have ever used. He is so good at listening and answering questions. A very humble person for having so much skill.” (Orthopaedic Surgery)

“All of the Orthopaedic Surgery staff were so friendly and concerned. I couldn’t have asked to stay at a better hospital. Jennie Sealy is a beautiful hospital and I would recommend ANYONE to stay there. Loved my stay! P.S. Physical Therapy staff was excellent as well.”

“My entire experience was AMAZING! I was treated with great care and dignity. The staff and team of physicians were the epitome of Best Care. Dr. Lin Gao, Dr. Wissam Khalife and his team... the nurses were all amazing in their care and kindness. I would recommend this hospital to everyone.” (Internal Medicine – Cardiology)

“I was late for appointment (that’s never happened before) and the doctor worked me in without much of a wait. I had to travel an hour, so I appreciated the doctor accommodating my mistake.” (UHC Dermatology)

“Since the report on my A1C was very good, Dr. James Doe let me know I could take less medication. I explained to him that I have been omitting certain foods from my diet, incorporating less carbs/less sugars and that has helped me tremendously. Dr. Doe showed interest in what I was saying…I have recommended my husband to make Dr. Doe his PCP.” (Alvin Family Medicine)

“I give Mr. Joseph Poole a rating of 10! He goes above and beyond his call as a PA. I highly recommend anyone to visit him. He cares for his patients, is kind and courteous, has good bedside manner, and explain everything to you. He listens, he laughs with you, he understands your feelings, and he has patience and is not in any rush…he makes sure you are completely satisfied with the care before you leave. He will explain your test results…I give all my trust to him concerning my health care. God bless his healing hands and guide him in his walk in caring for the community.” (Texas City Family Medicine)

“Dr. Mark Foreman was absolutely amazing. He explained everything very well and made it fun while doing so…he definitely knows what’s he’s doing and clearly enjoys it as well. If we ever have to return, I will definitely request Dr. Foreman again… I give him two thumbs up.” (Texas City Orthopaedic)

“I enjoy going to this doctor’s office. Everyone from Dr. Rachel Nginyi-Munyoli to the receptionist treats you with respect and dignity. They all care about your well-being; great staff. I’m just disappointed that I don’t have to go back until next year but thankful I am healthy.” (Internal Medicine, Texas City)