

CLINIC NOTES

April 2015



News from the Children's Hospital Ambulatory Division

From the Chief Medical Officer

"This business ain't what it used to be!" Perhaps the only constant in healthcare today is perpetual change. Whether it be an imminent (but not yet!) shift from volume to value, or evolving treatment technology and methods, or ever-increasing demands from payors and patients alike—the terrain is changing before our eyes. We all know that standing still is not a great strategy in the face of rapidly moving threats or opportunities. So like the rest of the LCMC organization, Children's Ambulatory Division is in the process of reorganizing, retooling and reconfiguring our clinics. Change is hard, and lots of changes at one time are even harder.

However, if we are going to continue to be the premier subspecialty ambulatory operation in the region, we have to restructure the way that we care for outpatients.

The very fact that we have a consolidated Ambulatory Division is a notable step in and of itself. Under the able guidance of Tammy Reites, the division's top three priorities for our patients and the physicians who refer them are to: improve access, improve access and improve access. It is no secret that we have too long relied on our reputation for excellent care by a full array of pediatric subspecialists as an excuse for interminable wait times for appointments, and clinic environs and processes that could never be described as patient centric or convenient. Accordingly, many changes are

afoot, all with the goal of improving access to our unmatched complement of pediatric subspecialists, while at the same time making clinic visits less onerous for our patients and their families.

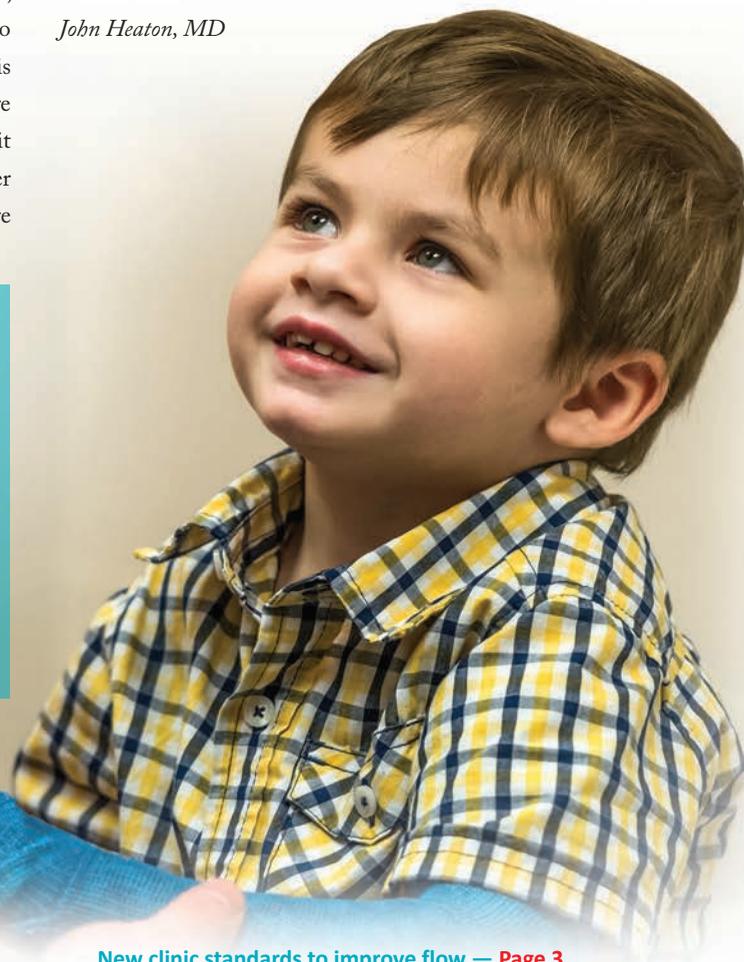
In the following pages, you will hear about some of the initiatives in the works, and the people who are making them happen. Perhaps most notable is the Ambulatory Physician's Operation Council, a multidisciplinary (and multigenerational) group of physicians that are serving to guide and inform this transformation. Their continuing contribution is essential to the successful execution of these projects, and they are your voice in the process.

In closing, we hope you find *Clinic Notes* to be useful and informative. For those of you on the cutting edge of these initiatives, we thank you for your adaptability. For those Medical Staff members who also refer to our clinic, we appreciate your business and your forbearance in days gone by.

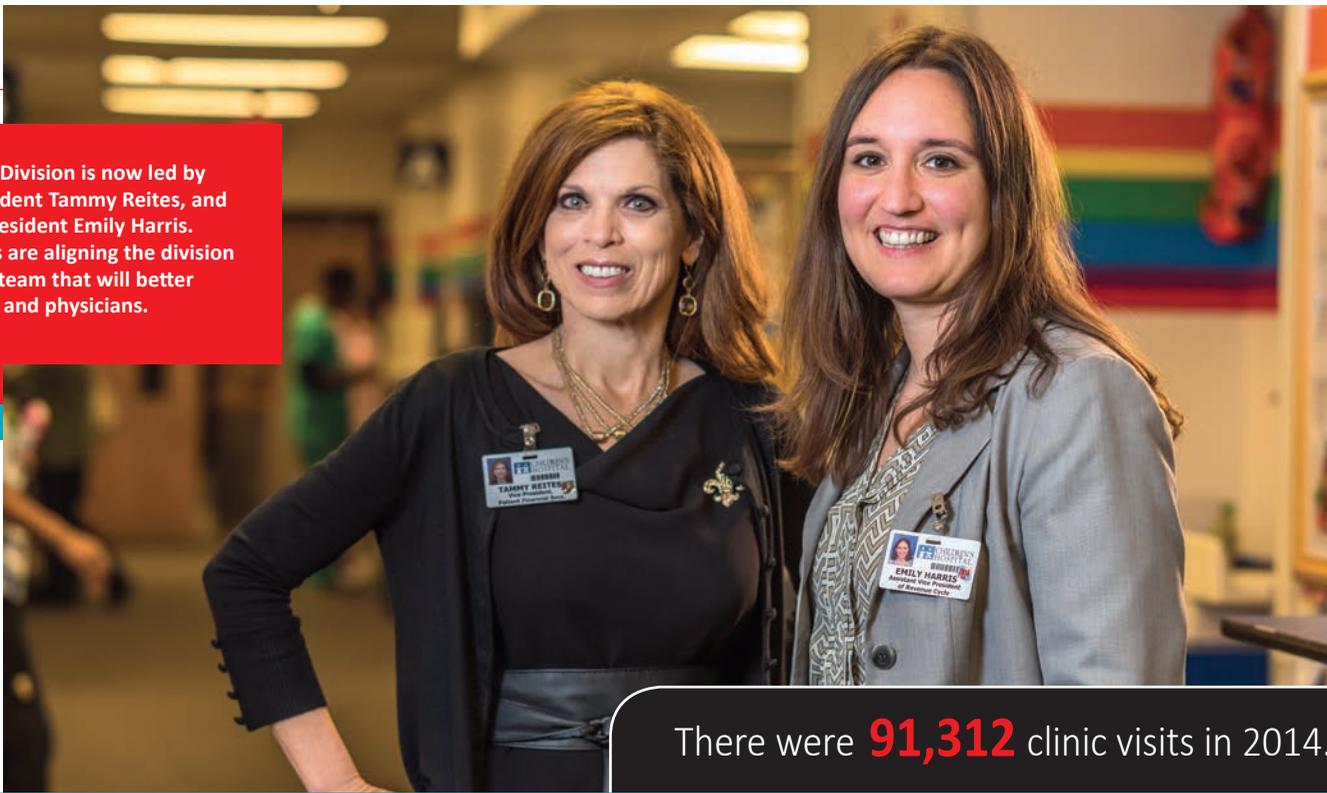
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The Ambulatory Division is now led by Senior Vice President Tammy Reites, and Assistant Vice President Emily Harris. Reites and Harris are aligning the division into one unified team that will better support patients and physicians.



There were **91,312** clinic visits in 2014.



Referral Service Responds to Physician Needs

One phone number, one fax number and one e-mail address is the shortest route to scheduling patients thanks to a new Physician Referral Service at Children's Hospital. The service is expected to benefit both referring physicians and our own Children's Hospital specialists by offering a simplified approach to making appointments and seeing patients.

"We are finding that we need to be able to say 'yes' to the physicians when they call to schedule an appointment," said Gretchen Dondis, director of the Call Center. Divided into the Scheduling Center, the Authorization Department and the Physician Referral Service, the Call Center is Children's Hospital's answer to improved scheduling procedures. "The Physician Referral Service will make it easier for outside pediatricians and referring physicians to schedule patients and for our own doctors to schedule from specialty to specialty."

Liz Milligan, manager of the Physician Referral Service, and her staff will handle all referrals, easing the burden on nurses, office staff and referring physicians who would otherwise have to contact multiple departments to schedule appointments and obtain or send records.

Patient records can be e-mailed to a central address, referrals@chnola.org.

"We are asking pediatricians and other referring physicians to send us all their referrals and records, and we'll take care of getting the information



Call Center director Gretchen Dondis, RN, will lead the Physician Referral Services for the Ambulatory Division. Formerly a Children's Hospital orthopaedic nurse coordinator, she has 21 years of experience managing patient and physician needs.

where it needs to go," said Dondis.

The Physician Referral Service will also work with clinic physicians to evaluate their templates for optimal patient access. By becoming more familiar with physicians' schedules, the Physician Referral Services staff will know when there are openings should patients need sooner appointments.

The new Physician Referral Service will also benefit patients needing appointments with multiple specialists. "We are obtaining the medical records from the pediatricians and scanning the images into an electronic document management system. We are storing the information so multiple specialists can access it when they're in clinic," said Dondis. "The Physician Referral Service makes it easier for clinic physicians to see patients, knowing they have everything they need.

"We are providing customer service for physicians on both sides—for the doctor who will see the patient in clinic by obtaining the records and for the doctor who is referring the patient by being able to offer an appropriate appointment."

PHYSICIAN REFERRAL SERVICE AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

A physician link to patient scheduling

Phone: (504) 896-2888

Fax: (504) 896-2889

referrals@chnola.org

The Children's Hospital Ambulatory Clinic in Lafayette has seen a **37%** increase in patient volume over the past year.



Christi Cabos, RN, director of Clinic Operations, is helping to guide physicians and staff through the many changes underway in the Ambulatory Division. She has been a part of the Children's Hospital family for 15 years and was formerly the clinic charge nurse.



New Clinic Standards **to Improve Flow**

Approximately 1,750 patients visit the Children's Hospital outpatient clinics every week. They see one of 40+ specialists who hold clinic at the hospital or one of its satellite centers throughout the state. To help manage the ever-increasing activity, clinic directors are rolling out new standards to enhance operations.

Director of Clinic Operations Christi Cabos, RN, is working with new clinic staff to enact changes that will improve the clinic experience for patients and physicians. Among these developments is the standardization of clinic sessions.

"We are asking physicians to flex their start times with other physicians and spread their templates out a little more," said Cabos. "This will help ease the burden on Radiology, Registration and the rooming process."

Physicians are asked to schedule four-hour sessions beginning

in the morning at 7:30, 8:00 or 8:30 a.m., and in the afternoon at 12:30 or 1:00 p.m. Fluctuating start times will decrease the number of patients who arrive within a short timeframe, improving wait times in both the Clinic and Outpatient Radiology. Standardizing the clinic sessions to four-hour blocks will aid clinic staffing and increase patient access.

"Physicians will decide what their template will be, but we will work with them to standardize it," said Cabos. "Because of this flexibility, we can provide the physicians with more resources." The new standardization procedure is expected to improve both patient and physician satisfaction.

Several services, including Neurology, Neurosurgery and Gynecology, have already transitioned to the new standard. Clinic management is currently working with other specialties that will follow suit.



The longest-serving Children's Hospital employee is **Leola Roland, 43 years**, Ambulatory Division patient registration representative.



New Coding Services Contracted

Children's Hospital recently contracted with MedKoder for physician coding services. MedKoder is a medical coding company that employs certified coders that are trained in every speciality to help physicians code inpatient and outpatient procedures performed in the OR, PACU and Cath Lab, as well as surgical bedside services.

MedKoder will review physician operative

notes and ensure that claims are submitted timely. This service is available to physicians who currently bill through the Children's Hospital Physician Billing Department.

If you would like to learn more about MedKoder and the benefits it may provide for your practice, please contact Carol Snyder at (504) 896-2909 or by e-mail at csnyder@chnola.org.

The Children's Hospital Ambulatory Clinic in Baton Rouge has seen a **33%** increase in patient volume over the past year.

CLINIC NOTABLES

Clinic Manager Named 2014 Outstanding Employee of the Year

For all who know her, Sandra Corley, clinic manager, exemplifies the spirit of Children's Hospital. An employee for 23 years, Corley was recognized as one of the 2014 Outstanding Employees of the Year. The Ambulatory Division is proud to have her on the team.

In 1992, Corley began in the Accounting Department, followed by Patient Accounts, before opening and managing a Kids First clinic in her Desire neighborhood in 2002. When Hurricane Katrina destroyed the clinic, her home, her church and "everything she knew," she was asked to help the hospital with a clinic in Baton Rouge to serve the many patients who were also uprooted by the storm. She has stayed in Baton Rouge ever since, and is currently managing the Baton Rouge and Lafayette clinics.

"The Lord had a plan for me here," said Corley of her move to the capitol city where she later met her husband. "I miss New Orleans, but I love my job here. I get to see miracles happen all the time."

Corley, rooted by faith, feels as though her job is a mission. In an area where many specialists do not provide care for Medicaid patients, Corley is driven by a desire to help the underserved. "Because we're Children's Hospital,

we've been blessed to serve the least of these. The care and love our doctors and staff give children is awesome."

Corley credits her staff of nurses in Lafayette and Baton Rouge who go above and beyond every day to provide wonderful service to the specialists, patients and their families. Christina Coffman, RN, Ongelle Bergeron, RN, Amy Adams, RN, Veronica Guillory, MA, and Jamie Kernan, LRT(R) work closely with Corley to enhance the patient experience.

To Corley, Children's Hospital is not just her employer, but also a network of endearing friends and support. Her job, for which she is ever grateful, has enabled her, a single mother for most of her life, to raise three children and put them all through college. Admired for her work ethic and loved for her life-giving presence, Corley represents the best of Children's Hospital.

"Hearing that I was Employee of the Year was very humbling," said Corley. "It was probably the best thing that has happened to me in a very long time."



Sandra Corley accepted the award March 13 from Children's Hospital president and CEO Mary Perrin amidst an applauding crowd of admirers.

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