Patients and caregivers alike feel the effects of overcrowding, mainly when it comes to accessibility. Although PHMG is employing new tactics to improve access—offering evening hours and some same-day appointments—having enough exam room space is crucial to ensure that patients can be seen effectively. For example, three exam rooms per provider are the standard, but in many cases, the PHMG providers work with only two exam rooms. The new era of health care compels us to do as much as possible for patients in a primary care setting and to keep patients out of the hospital by providing care earlier. This, and the increasing health care demands of aging baby boomers, will require changes to our infrastructure. The availability of adequate clinical space will be key to providing patients the types of care they will need well into the future.

Thankfully, the Your Health—Your Future addition and alterations project offers many solutions to our community’s long-term health care needs. The carefully designed clinic space will allow PHMG to meet the region’s needs as they fluctuate over time. The addition of 30,000 square feet of carefully designed clinic space allows PHMG flexibility to expand or contract certain areas of service depending on the demand.

Ultimately, the new PHMG clinic will help our community attract and retain physicians—and it is now over capacity, with some clinics overflowing to hospital space not necessarily designed for outpatient use.

At this point, four of PeaceHealth Medical Group’s clinics call the Wilson Building home, including Family and Internal Medicine (referred to as primary care), Orthopedic & Sports Medicine, Pediatrics, and General Surgery. The additional clinic space provided by the Your Health—Your Future project, will allow the Women’s Health, Psychiatry and Visiting clinics to be in an adjacent space, which will promote care coordination and enhance communication among providers and support staff. Patients are sure to benefit from having all caregivers located in the same facility alongside other health care services—such as diagnostic imaging, the laboratory and surgery—positioning PHMG as an integral part of our emerging regional medical center.

“Ketchikan can be a regional hub for all of southern Southeast Alaska...21st century health care needs a 21st century facility.”

—Alan Yordy, PeaceHealth President
Welcome, new providers!

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center's PeaceHealth Medical Group has a new OB-GYN in its Women's Health clinic—and for Deborah Landis Lewis, MD, who started October 1, Ketchikan is a big change.

She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and for the last decade did most of her work there in a large hospital with almost every specialty available. In sharp contrast, she moved from a high-tech hospital and a big city to travel to southern Africa and work at a maternity hospital in Malawi.

Dr. Landis Lewis will work part time, alternating with other OB-GYN doctors. Her husband is presently in Malawi pursuing his doctorate in medical informatics, which blends health care with information and computer science. She hopes to join him there in February with their two children.

Also new to the Women's Health clinic is Patricia Thornton, CNM, MSN. The certified nurse-midwife joined the Ketchikan team in January, coming from Pinon, Ariz., where she worked for the Indian Health Service.

Farewell and congratulations to Kendall Sawa

Kendall Sawa, RN, has left his post as the Regional Vice President of Patient Care Services at PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center but remains with PeaceHealth. He is now the CEO at Ocean Beach Hospital in western Washington. He and his wife, Norma Sawa, RN, an Emergency Department nurse, departed with their family in October. Kendall had been with PeaceHealth Ketchikan for 17 years, five as the regional vice president. Norma had been with PeaceHealth Ketchikan for 19 years.

Patrick Branco, CEO and Chief Mission Officer of PeaceHealth Ketchikan, said that while Kendall will be missed, “his leadership, heart, compassion and commitment to excellence have prepared him well for his new role.”

On the positive side, Kendall’s departure provided the opportunity for advancement to Shannon Updike, RN, Home Health Manager, who accepted the vacated position. She has been with PeaceHealth for eight years. Julie Yonker, RN, has assumed the manager’s position at Home Health.

So healthy together

Facing our community’s challenges

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center is working with other community agencies to develop a community health needs assessment (CHNA). This assessment, a requirement under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), will be used to identify the health challenges and problems in Ketchikan and to develop a plan for agencies to work in tandem for improvement.

“We started the process this past May,” says Mischa Chernick, who chairs the CHNA group, “While PeaceHealth Ketchikan has been given this charge to lead this process, it is truly a collaborative effort by many people to help build a better community.”

Since May the CHNA group has researched and discussed the challenges our community faces—and the issues won’t surprise anyone: substance abuse, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and respiratory disease. Although making an impact on such large issues is a daunting task, combining efforts will have a far greater effect on our community than any group or organization could hope to make alone. The goal is to make good tools, in- formation and activities available to inspire individuals to make changes that will positively affect their health and overall wellness.

Chernick indicates that the CHNA will be an ongoing process. “We’ll develop a three-year action plan, present that plan to the community and then every three years we’ll repeat the process. Using the information we’ve already collected as baseline, we’ll measure our progress along the way and adjust as needed.”

The CHNA group has started discussing a community-wide wellness program that would encourage people to improve their quality of life by making a few positive choices from a wide variety of options. Parks and Recreation has been an enthusiastic ally in the area of fitness and group activities. The Ketchikan Public Library and Ketchikan Wellness Coalition have already scheduled a Saturday Morning Wellness series starting the first weekend of February, presenting the HBO special, The Weight of the Nation, which will feature various health-related service providers around Ketchikan. Ketchikan Public Utilities television and several other organizations and businesses have signed on as well.

“We’ve already started discussing ideas that might be part of our three-year plan,” Chernick says, “such as providing information on how to buy healthy food on a limited budget; partnering with businesses to encourage their employees to live well by doing things like providing a few extra minutes during the workday for a walk break; and involving kids in the growing and food preparation process to teach them about healthy food choices.”

Thinking pink: Deborah Landis Lewis, MD, the new OB-GYN at PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center, tied ribbons on a memorial tree last October to honor people who have or have had breast cancer. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
Health talk NEWS, VIEWS & TIPS

Counting on home health—now and in the future

PeaceHealth President Alan Yordy was recently asked how the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would change health care. His answer? “I can’t give you specifics because no one knows exactly what it will look like at this point. What I can tell you is it will have as many unintended as intended consequences.”

One thing we do know is that both providers and patients will have to meet health care needs for less money and with greater efficiencies. One obvious way to lower health care cost is to increase the use of home health care services. Home care provides skilled care to those who are recovering, disabled, or chronically or terminally ill with in the comfort of their home.

Home Health Manager Julie Yonker, RN, who also serves as Vice President of the Alaska Home Care and Hospice Association, says the current team of more than 20 caregivers includes registered nurses, rehabilitation therapists and certified nurse assistants who provide skilled care seven days a week if necessary. They care for patients recently released from the hospital; who have a chronic disease condition such as congestive heart failure, cancer or Alzheimer’s, or who are receiving rehabilitation therapy such as physical, occupational and speech therapy.

Currently, PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center provides skilled home health care services to more than 35 patients each month. In July 2010, PeaceHealth also began offering Home Health services on Prince of Wales. Caregivers there now provide services to 5 to 10 patients each month. In the future, PeaceHealth’s goal would be to provide home health care services to other Southeast Alaska communities.

Get the latest information on health care

Here’s a website you’ll want to be sure to click on: www.healthcare.gov.

It’s maintained by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and it’s designed to put some very important health information right at your fingertips.

Are you trying to find affordable health insurance that best matches your needs? This government website has a list of more than 1,000 private insurance plans—plus public ones, such as Medicare. By using the site’s “Find Insurance Options” tool, you can search for insurance coverage and compare plan features and costs.

You can also:

• Learn more about how the 2010 health care reform law will affect you and your family.
• Find information about the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan, which was created as part of the 2010 law and makes insurance coverage available to you if you’ve been denied coverage because of a health problem.
• Compare the quality of care at hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies and dialysis facilities across the country.
• Discover what preventive services—such as colon cancer screening for all adults older than 50—insurance plans are required to cover at no cost.
• Learn about a healthy lifestyle and how to help prevent health problems.

Employees partner for Panda Warmers

More than 20 babies are delivered each month at PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center. Most of these babies are healthy from the start, but 10 percent of our babies require the initial steps of resuscitation, and 1 percent must have full resuscitation.

To ensure our newborns have the best care possible, the goal of this year’s PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center Foundation Employee Giving Campaign was to provide two Panda Warmers for the New Beginnings Birthing Center. The Panda Warmers are specialized newborn warming beds that integrate five vital pieces of equipment, offering efficiencies when time is of the essence. With a built-in warmer, infant ventilator/respirator, oxygen, scale and phototherapy unit, the display panel provides all information caregivers need to give each baby the special care they need, whether they are born healthy or need extra help.

The Employee Campaign was a success. Over 40 percent of our local caregivers participated and raised more than $40,000 for Southeast Alaska babies.

We invite the community to join us in this effort by donating resources for additional Panda Warmers, with a goal of having one in each of our six delivery rooms. You can find out more and donate online through the Foundation at www.peacehealth.org/foundation/ketchikan. You can also participate by bringing in your aluminum on Recycle Sunday—the first Sunday of each month between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the lower covered parking lot of the hospital. Proceeds from Recycle Sunday will be used for the Panda Warmers.

Guardian Angels:

• Jessica Verney, RN, ICU
• Eric Kerley, MD; Brian Muthyalia, MD; and the Medical/Surgical staff
• David Brown, MD; Dan Schlecht, PA; and the staffs of Physical Therapy and Orthopedics
• Jo Westlund, RN, and Lars Collins, CNA, Medical/Surgical
• Christa Bruce, Foundation
• Patrick Branco, CEO and Chief Mission Officer
• Kendall Sawa, RN and Norma Sawa, RN
• Courtney Gallyer, CNA, Medical/Surgical
• Vicki Malurkar, MD
• Andy Pankow, MD, Primary Care
BEV CRUM, RN, is the 2012 Manager of the Year at PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center. It’s not the first time she’s been honored for her leadership. She was named Best Boss in Ketchikan in 1997 by the local paper; in 2009, she received the Emergency Nurses Association Nurse Manager Award, and she was also Manager of the Year in 2004.

Her nomination read, in part: “Bev works hard and gives 150 percent daily for the ED and the whole of PHKMC system. She…is active in complete patient care throughout the PeaceHealth system and the community of Ketchikan…. Bev gives her staff the support to stand up and take control of a project and encourages each to do something. I feel that we need to recognize her devotion to PHKMC and the customers over the many years and honor her as Manager of the Year.”

Bev Crum has been at PeaceHealth Ketchikan for many years—36 so far. For 34 of those years she has been the manager of the Emergency Department, obviously following advice from one of her favorite Paul Harvey quotes, “Like what you do. If you don’t like it, do something else.”

Her colleagues, co-workers and all the other caregivers at PeaceHealth Ketchikan are very glad she likes what she does.

Others nominated for Manager of the Year are: Chris Baca, Clinics; Barb Bigelow, Regional Vice President, Quality; Joanna DeSanto, Rehabilitation; Valée Gray, Sleep Center; Gail Jones, Clinics; Lennetta Lundberg, Regional Vice President, Culture and People; John McCormick, Medical/Surgical and ICU; Rick Sayer, House Manager; and Tessie Manabat, Environmental Services.

Rosita Butler was recently awarded a Child Development Associate Credential in recognition of her outstanding work with children. She has been with the PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center Child Development Center since 2009.