Life is about change and little stays the same

by Brett Altman, CEO

For those of you who are parents, you know all about the inevitability, bittersweetness and joy of change. Perhaps your children are infants or toddlers; maybe they are attending school; or possibly you have watched your kids as they journey into adulthood and provide you with grandchildren and the cycle has started over again. Life is about change and little stays the same.

For those whose children are older, think about the differences you see in photos. Take out school photos of the same child at ages 3, 10 and 15, place them side by side, and note the astonishing result of change over time. Those little babies are big changes. Are they sad ones? Well, perhaps in a certain wistful way. Yet, think what experiences you would miss out on if a child was forever a toddler and his or her peers continued to mature and grow. Part of the “contract” of being a parent is knowing, and embracing, that change is inevitable. Getting to bear witness to the circle of life is one of the blessings of having offspring.

Analogous with kids growing up, there is a lot of excitement ahead, plus a lot of unknowns in health care. What will health care look like at Skiff Medical Center in five, 10 or 15 years? I would postulate that the “meetings” should be big changes. Are they sad ones? Well, not if the alternative is facing bankruptcy as a country or as a local hospital. I am amazed at the uncertainty expressed by the experts in our field. Nobody knows exactly how it will look or whether population health will actually work, but they do know that we need to try something different because volume-based care is unsustainable as a nation.

I have recently had the opportunity to ask the following question during a couple of hospital stakeholder group meetings: “What is your definition or vision of our hospital in five, 10 or 15 years?” The answer I typically hear is that it would be just as it is now. While I wish that the hospital could stay just as it is now, the odds are overwhelmingly against that. The only thing that is certain is change. Like the national trends, our inpatient volume has been trending downward for the past 15 years; and if our trend line remains the same, we will have somewhere in the neighborhood of 500 inpatient admissions by the year 2022, which is about a third of our current volume.

I would predict an increased emphasis on outpatient services as inpatient services decline. This is due to a number of factors, including: national trends (it is estimated that about a third of our current volume is now inpatient). Among those factors are: national trends (it is estimated that about a third of our current volume is now inpatient). Among those factors are: national trends (it is estimated that about a third of our current volume is now inpatient). Among those factors are: national trends (it is estimated that about a third of our current volume is now inpatient).

A look back: Pink Ribbon Support Group celebrates 20th

In the fall of 1994, five women came together at the home of Linda Hotger to discuss the possibility of starting a support group for women with breast cancer. This original group included Linda, Carol Hopkey, Jan Matson, Opal Snyder and Mary Lou Kaloupek, all of whom were survivors of breast cancer. The group agreed that the “meetings” should include an educational offering along with time for interaction between those who came together.

On Oct. 13, 1994, the Jasper County Breast Cancer Support Group held its first official meeting in the cafeteria conference room at Skiff Medical Center. Sixteen women attended. The speaker for the evening’s program was Dr. Gary Richardson, who spoke on breast cancer treatment options. Skiff Medical Center has sponsored the group from its beginning, offering a meeting place and refreshments for the monthly gatherings. Many of the speakers have been professionals from Skiff and the local medical staff community.

Since that first meeting, the group has met every month (except for the months of July and August). In the first few months, it was decided to name the group the Pink Ribbon Support Group. The group also developed the goal of education as the primary focus. Dues were discussed but through the generosity of individual donations, an account was set up to help purchase educational supplies. Within the first three years, a local sorority had fundraising activities and donated proceeds to the support group.

Along with educational publications and special...
Life is change … (from page 1)

we have 30 percent too many hospital beds in this country), increased competition (with the advent of ACOs and narrow networks that limit your choices of covered providers), a decline in reimbursement associated with the Affordable Care Act (health care reform), technology improvements (allowing more and more procedures to be completed on an outpatient basis), and a decrease in elective procedures (due to today’s high-deductible insurance plans). The take-home point here is that our hospital will look incrementally different in five, 10 and 15 years. In the year 2029, when we look back we will note that these continual changes were necessary, even independent of the reality that we needed to partner with another hospital in 2015. In fact, partnering with another hospital is just one of the bridges that we will cross as part of the massive changes expected in the next 15 years. Someone once told me, “If you expect periodic change, it isn’t such a surprise when it happens.” This is what I believe to be true: If we could gaze into the future and see Skiff in 2019, 2024 and 2029, I believe we would see a treasured community asset that is providing professionally delivered care which is compassionate, personalized and highly skilled. That’s what Skiff is all about now and what we can expect Skiff to be all about in the future.

None of us can accurately predict the future, but I’m eager for all of us to walk through it together using our mission, vision and values as our guiding principles as we move forward in unity with the common purpose of serving our community healthcare needs.

HEML open house … (from page 1)

HEML currently performs laboratory testing for Skiff Medical Center 24 hours a day. The laboratory has been adding testing and will continue to grow in testing capabilities as they prepare to receive reference lab work from other hospitals in the near future.

Please contact lab director Deb Corlew at (641) 841-1340 or by e-mail at dcorlew@healthenterprises.org or Beth Pettigrew at (641) 841-1313 or e-mail at epettigrew@healthenterprises.org if you have questions.

Location of HEML open house

HEML open house … (from page 1)

Skiff Medical Center's vision is to be firmly established as a treasured community asset reaching beyond the medical center walls to demonstrate our dedication to wellness, the healing of the sick and the relief of suffering.

Integrity
We are sincere and honest in everything we do. We inspire trust.

Service
We are unyielding in our commitment to quality through excellence, innovation and growth.

Passion
We are passionate about our calling: caring for our patients and each other

Advocacy
We are dedicated to supporting the communities we serve in everything we do.

Responsibility
We take ownership of our resources and are efficient and effective in using them.

Kindness
We value people, listen to them and care about their feelings.
Fall activity safety reminders

Many Iowans will be visiting pumpkin patches, apple orchards and petting zoos this time of year. Please remind patients that while these trips are fun and educational, they should take measures to ensure they stay healthy.

- Wash apples and other produce before eating them.
- Make sure any cider or juice has been pasteurized. If unsure, check the product labeling, or ask if the product has been pasteurized. Young children and people who are immune-compromised are at increased risk of infections.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap before eating, and after visiting the patch, orchard, or petting zoo.

Getting to know... Carol Hammer

Year started at Skiff: 1974. I’m at the very top of the seniority ladder.
Department: Home Care/Public Health
Title/job: Staff RN
Education: Eddyville High School; Marshalltown Community College; DMACC
Schedule: Full-time Monday through Friday, with call weekends about 7 times a year
Main duties: My duties vary from day to day, but most of my time is spent going out to client’s homes to do a general health assessment, maybe draw blood or take care of a PICC line or port. The clients I see vary in age from newborn to the elderly. I also do blood pressure clinics, go to the schools for immunization audits and give flu shots at the schools. It’s very diverse and I have many opportunities to be out of the office every day.
Favorite thing about Skiff: I love my co-workers, but the thing I love the most is my patients. I’m a huge advocate for them.
Family: I’ve been married to my best friend Toad for 40 years. We have three children; daughter Jessica who is married and has 4 kids; daughter Erica who is married and has newborn twins; and son Adam who is married with one son.
Hobbies and interests: My passion is gardening. I also love to read, snorkel, travel and spend time with grandkids.
Something people might not know about her: The only year that all three of our kids were teenagers, they threw a surprise party for our 25th wedding anniversary.
Something that makes her laugh: Physical therapist Kim Guthrie makes me laugh. Her laugh is so contagious.
Favorite candy/treat: Heath and hot fudge blizzard.

Our deepest condolences

The Skiff Medical Center staff expresses our shared sympathy to Dr. Rachel Knudson, Skiff Surgery Clinic, for the death of her father, Buryl Fleenor, on Sept. 28.

Taking on their roles

The Skiff Auxiliary recently celebrated their officer installation. Pictured, from left, are Connie Annis, president; Joyce Guthrie, secretary; Jane Repp, vice president; and Nancy DePenning, treasurer.

Giving back

Thanks to the generosity of Jim Regur, the Cancer Clinic now has a room equipped with a reclining chair and TV for patients who are not feeling well after chemotherapy treatments. Jim donated the funds to purchase the chair in memory of his late wife, Mary.
Skiff Medical Center Employee Newsletter

Where in the world ...

... have you been in your Skiff apparel?

Above, Jan Crall proudly displays her Skiff hoodie among the gorgeous mountains of Alaska’s Denali National Park and Preserve. In addition, Vicky Norrish was spotted at Newton Hy-Vee in her Skiff jacket.

If you submit a photo of yourself wearing Skiff gear while on vacation – or if you simply get “caught” by PR staff wearing your apparel while out in the community – you will receive 4 WeSpark points. Submit travel pictures to pr@skiffmed.com. Pictures and details will be included in Vital Signs. This is ongoing with no deadline.

Volunteers needed for annual Skiff-or-Treat event

Skiff-or-Treat will be held on Thursday, Oct. 30 from 5-8 p.m. Planning for the event has already begun and Leisa Zylstra, Foundation and Events Manager, is looking for individuals or departments that would be interested in decorating a section of hallway or handing out candy during the event. Family members are welcome and encouraged to participate with employees.

Skiff already has several themed decorations that employees can use if they wish, such as the Flintstones, Cinderella, Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan, a castle and more. Let Leisa know if you are interested in looking at the decorations on hand. Newton Community Theatre is also very good about letting employees borrow costumes, if you need. If you purchase or make your own decorations, Skiff will reimburse you up to $150.

Employees who assist with Halloween will receive 4 WeSpark points for setting up before the event, 4 WeSpark points for handing out candy during the event and 3 WeSpark points for tearing down after the event. All employees and family members who hand out candy will be treated to pizza prior to the event.

Please contact Leisa at Ext. 3179 or lzylstra@skiffmed.com, if you will be participating.

Take part in healthy start!

Earn 2 Healthy You points on Oct. 8 by participating in the Healthiest State walk. Go to http://goo.gl/xk8RFW to join the Skiff Healthiest State walk. Then log into beBetter to confirm your participation. If you are unable to walk at noon, walk anytime that day – it still counts! The walk route starts at Skiff, then around the square and to the park where employees may pick up a free lunch!

Pink Ribbon Support Group ... (from page 1)

programs, the group has also assisted in decorating and supplying items for the chemotherapy area at Skiff (which is now located in the Ross Medical Arts Building and serving patients as the Skiff Cancer Clinic). This has included chemo-lounge chairs, various decorative items and necessary supplies as directed by the chemotherapy staff. A newsletter was initiated in 2001 (Skiff supplies the materials and postage for the letters) to be sent to women with breast cancer throughout the county.

When possible, a gift pack is given to women who undergo breast cancer surgery at Skiff. These are also available to women in the county who might have had surgery elsewhere. The packet includes educational materials as well as “fun” items donated by the group.

The support group has been involved with activities such as the Jasper County Relay for Life and the Des Moines Race for the Cure.

Women are encouraged to join a support group of some kind to help them cope with the diagnosis of breast cancer and also to help them through the different phases of treatment. Several of the members have continued to come to meetings throughout the years and have been a source of encouragement and hope to those just newly diagnosed. The group has become a “sisterhood” of women dedicated to sharing and caring.

In this photo from October 2011, the Pink Ribbon Support Group had the opportunity to tour the new Skiff Cancer Clinic. The support group had donated one of the chairs in the infusion room. Pictured were Pink Ribbon Support Group members Jo Tomlan, Sherry St. John, Mary Lou Kaloupek, Paulette Penning, Darlene Illingworth, Andrea Birkenholtz, Carol Hopkey and Ramona Osborn. Seated on the chair donated by the group was member Linda Hotger.
Screen time

Skiff wishes to thank Underwriters Laboratories for their donations of a 24-inch LG TV and a 29-inch LG display. These will be utilized by our Information Technologies department. Seen above accepting the donations are Chris Carter, Public Relations, and Robert Braafhart, Laboratory Technician.

Dr. Jennifer Paisley

Pediatrician and internist

Specializing in:
- children’s health
- women’s health
- diabetes
- breastfeeding consultation
- thyroid disorders
- obesity management

(641) 791-0790
Skiff Medical Center Employee Newsletter

United Way fundraising events planned

Monday, Oct. 6
United Way pledge cards delivered to department directors.

Tuesday, Oct. 7
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Books are Fun book fair – Radiology corridor – A large selection of books at discounted prices … great for gifts!

Friday, Oct. 10
11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Z Marie’s – Radiology corridor – Z Marie’s provides home cooked meals to go! Whether you’re a busy family rushing to practices, sporting events, and activities, or empty nesters, let Z Marie’s prepare a home cooked meal for you. Z Marie’s will be on-site taking orders for a variety of meals. Meals will be delivered approximately two weeks after the order date. Menus can be obtained beforehand by contacting Leisa Zylstra at Ext. 3179 or lzylstra@skiffmed.com.

All day – Jeans Day – For a $5 donation to the United Way, Skiff employees can wear jeans and their favorite Skiff t-shirt to work. Pay your fee at Customer Relations or Human Resources and receive your jeans day sticker.

Friday, Oct. 17
11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Bun in the Oven – Radiology corridor – Bun in the Oven will be here selling a variety of delicious cupcakes and cookies. Items can be pre-ordered by contacting Leisa Zylstra at Ext. 3179 or lzylstra@skiffmed.com.

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United Way fundraising events planned

It was a frightening day when we learned my mother was facing breast cancer. We knew we had many options of where we could seek treatment, and I couldn’t be happier that we selected Skiff. My mother’s surgeon, Dr. Dominic Formaro, was such a good match for her. He instantly caught on to her sense of humor, and they would banter and laugh with each other. She needed exactly that – someone to not just take care of her, but keep her positive. I know that played a part in her speedy recovery and excellent outcome.

I applaud Dr. Formaro’s many outstanding abilities. His technical skills were exemplary – you can’t even see a scar from her lumpectomy – and his bedside manner was terrific. Whenever I see him, I tell him two small, sincere words from the bottom of my heart: “Thank you.”

I’m so grateful we could stay right here in Newton to receive such high-quality care.

– Sharil Van Note, with her mother Pat Spellman

In the cloud of cancer, Skiff was the silver lining

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