

# SETTING THE PACE IN TULSA

THE NEW  
SCHUSTERMAN CENTER CLINIC  
IS TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED,  
FUNCTIONALLY EFFICIENT  
AND AESTHETICALLY PLEASING —  
A MODEL FOR 21ST-CENTURY MEDICAL CARE.

BY JERRI CULPEPPER  
photos by mcneese fitzgerald & associates

New. Clean. Light. Airy. Appealing. State-of-the-art.  
Old. Low-ceilinged. Claustrophobic. Piecemeal.

When the physicians, residents and staff at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa moved their quarters from their old clinic at 28<sup>th</sup> and Sheridan to the new Schusterman Center Clinic in July, the physical changes were readily apparent. No more long, dark corridors with low-hung acoustical ceiling tiles. No more mismatched furniture. No more bathrooms without disability access. No more cramped waiting rooms with ugly plastic chairs.

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The new, three-story facility features ample natural lighting – the entire front side is made of glass, allowing unrestricted viewing of the long, beautifully kept lawns. The furniture is ergonomically designed and attractive. Much attention has been devoted to aesthetics – artwork, largely pastels of plants and flowers, helps foster an atmosphere of tranquility.

But the change is more than skin deep, say its new tenants. While both patients and medical personnel have high praise for the appearance of the new facility, there also has been a deeper, yet subtle, psychological response to the new surroundings. Patients, from toddler to geriatric age, seem generally more positive and more confident in the care they are receiving.

“It’s so clean and fresh and new, as well as fragrant and modern!” exclaims Janice Guy, clinic manager for Internal Medicine. “On top of that, we now have a drop-off at the front door and an escort service to lead people from the entrance to where they need to go.”

Guy noted that the city of Tulsa has worked hand-in-hand with OU to make the new research and medical clinic easy to access by the some 250,000 patients they expect to serve annually. Among other things, the city expanded bus service to the facility to four times a day.

operations, registration and medical records has led to greater efficiency and faster service.

“Thanks to a centralized operator, patients now get swift responses to their calls and less hold time – and it takes much less time to speak to a ‘real’ person, as opposed to an automated system,” Guy says.

It also has led to what can be called, without exaggeration, a revolution in medical care management.

Thanks to the establishment of a new Electronic Medical Records system, or EMR, the new clinic is notably lacking the rows upon rows of file cabinets filled with paper medical files found in most medical facilities. Instead, patients’ medical charts now are maintained electronically – and access to those records by authorized medical personnel is now available 24/7, from the office or home.

When the system is fully automated, physicians and residents will have access not only to their patients’ entire medical records, but also to the in-house pharmacy’s records, allowing them to better oversee their patients’ total medical care.

Guy notes, “With this system, an ob/gyn can, for instance, access EMR to see what medications her patient is taking for diabetes or other ailments. The physician can then check to make sure there are no possible dangerous drug interactions, and

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The new facility “brings a new level of respect,” says Dr. Shea Bowling, medical director for Pediatrics, who noted that, by comparison, the former facility was “old and drabby. This place is clean and open with lots of sunlight and enough room to work.” The increased size also has another advantage, she points out; more exam rooms mean shorter waiting periods.

Dr. William Yarborough, medical director for Internal Medicine, also reports seeing a marked increase in morale among both staff and patients, who cannot help but respond positively to the open floor plans, natural lighting, new furniture and equipment and general beauty of the place.

Among the most appreciative of the new, modern facility may be those undergoing treatment for psychiatric disorders. “The setting here is very beautiful. Place plays an important role in one’s state of mind, and this sort of setting is beneficial to mental health,” says Dr. Bryan Touchet, medical director for Psychiatry.

#### CENTRALIZATION OF SERVICES AND ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS

In designing the new clinic, centralizing services was a top priority. In addition to saving money, centralizing switchboard

if desired, pre-print the list out so the patient can review it before taking a prescription to the pharmacy to be filled.”

Dr. Yarborough says he likes being able to access medical records at home, online. “It gives you the ability to better track and monitor your patients. And it makes it much simpler to see what you’re doing well, or where more action is needed.” For example, he says, upon reviewing 20 patients being treated for diabetes, it is discovered that while 16 are doing well, four are not showing the expected improvements. “With EMR, you can instantly find out that one of the patients has missed his past three doctor’s appointments.”

Yarborough adds that reviewing patients’ charts is much faster with EMR. Last year, he needed 15 to 20 hours to review all his patients’ records, and this year, using EMR, only an hour or two. “I think in the near future, it will get to be almost instantaneous.”

Dr. Bowling notes another beneficial result of going to EMR. “It has brought us closer to the other medical disciplines. Just for an example, it’s now easier to work with someone in psychiatry if I have a borderline or depressed mother.”

EMR is still in its infancy, and its potential is far from



LEFT: Shea Bowling, M.D., clinical assistant professor of pediatrics and medical director for the Pediatric area in the clinic, examines a young patient. ABOVE: The Schusterman campus has established OU/Tulsa as a center for quality health care in northeast Oklahoma. OU clinics serve thousands of patients who might otherwise do without medical treatment.

realized. While there are features to be worked out – including privacy and security issues – one of the most exciting opportunities will be in the area of outreach – expanding EMR to rural clinics and hospitals.

Using EMR in conjunction with video, for instance, will allow doctors at OU-Tulsa to communicate and discuss treatment alternatives in real time with doctors and residents across the state.

"I'm anticipating in the near future the possibility of delivering psychiatric evaluations and services through a real-time audio-visual link, allowing outreach to rural areas," says Dr. Touchet. "This dovetails nicely with the training required of our residents."

But what do the patients say about the new clinic?

"Elmer," a 70-something-year-old patient from neighboring Okmulgee, who was visiting Dr. Yarborough at the new clinic for the first time for his three-month appointment for diabetes management, had nothing but praise. "The other clinic was much smaller," he says, "This one is more open, and cheerier. And I got right in. Plus the parking was better, and enclosed."

He paused a moment to consider, then added, "Dr. Yarborough is a wonderful fellow. I like him very much. He tells me what he wants me to do, and I do it. I follow a special diet, watch my weight and exercise. [The clinic doctors and staff] are

all part of the family. They're really down-to-earth here. Everyone's real easy to talk to."

#### OTHER INNOVATIVE FEATURES

Following are just a few of the innovations featured in the new clinic:

A play area for young children in the main waiting area helps keep the little tykes entertained and happy.

- The Tulsa branch of the Harold Hamm Oklahoma Diabetes Center, directed by board-certified pediatric endocrinologist Dr. David Jelley, will be built at the north end of the clinic along with the Tulsa branch of the University of Oklahoma Cancer Institute. The pediatric diabetes center, also under the direction of Dr. Jelley, is up and running on the first floor of the clinic and includes:

- ▼ an interactive diabetes learning center that is open to patients and their families looking for ways to live better with diabetes.

- ▼ a fully equipped demonstration kitchen that allows parents of children with diabetes and other illnesses to learn how to cook nutritional and diet-appropriate meals to better manage their disease. A video camera is mounted in the kitchen, so that small groups can watch on the screen as the meals are prepared. A similar kitchen for adult cooking



Representatives from OU and the City of Tulsa celebrate the opening of the Schusterman Center Clinic. The clinic will greatly increase health care access for Oklahoma residents, while expanding academic opportunities for OU students.

Scott Miller



## OU-Tulsa: Then and Now

OU's presence in Tulsa is longstanding, stretching back to 1957, when the School of Library and Information Studies began offering classes in the Tulsa community. The OU College of Medicine, Tulsa, traces its start to 1972, when the Oklahoma Legislature approved the opening of a clinical branch of the OU College of Medicine.

But in 1999, OU's presence in Tulsa changed dramatically. A major gift from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation allowed the University to purchase 60 acres at the corner of 41<sup>st</sup> Street and Yale Avenue, site of the former BP Amoco Oil Co.'s research center. That facility, now the Schusterman Center, serves as the home to all of OU's academic programs in Tulsa.

The Schusterman Center Clinic, which tripled OU's public clinic space, houses the following services: Geriatrics, Health Awareness, IMPACT (Integrated Multidisciplinary Program of Assertive Community Treatment), Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Pediatric Behavioral Health, Pediatric Diabetes and Endocrinology, Psychiatry, Women's Clinic/Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Women's Health Care Specialists.

During the ribbon-cutting for the new clinic, OU President David L. Boren observed that it will "assume a leadership role in improving the health of Oklahoma both now and in the future" as the site of advanced training for the next generation of medical students and resident physicians as well as students of nursing, pharmacy, occupational and physical therapy, public health and social work.

"This new facility will provide expanded access to care across the lifespan — literally from obstetrics to geriatrics services," Boren said, adding that it also allows the University to strengthen its statewide network of health research, education and clinical services.

Also speaking at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, OU-Tulsa President Gerard Clancy thanked the Schusterman family for

their generous contributions, which helped "give the University a visible home in Tulsa... and to provide a sense of place for the faculty, staff and students such that they could do the special work that happens at the University of Oklahoma."

That special work is going full steam ahead with the completion of the Schusterman Center Clinic. Clancy noted, pointing out that several long-term goals for OU in Tulsa already have been met or surpassed with its opening. Those include:

- increased patient visits — and patient satisfaction;
- the opening of more after-hours clinics at no cost to the working uninsured;
- the establishment of new health education programs, including emergency medicine residency, radiography, sonography and physician assistant programs;
- and an increase in research from \$9.2 million per year to more than \$17.5 million per year.

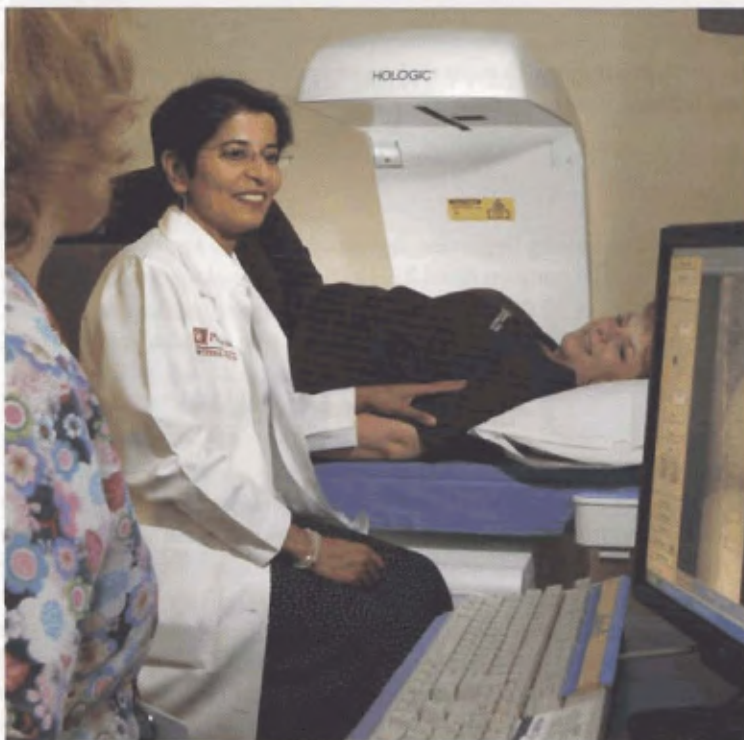
"This buzz, this momentum, this excitement and energy around this campus, and this \$35-million clinic, has already generated more than 1,000 new jobs in the region and a \$50 million increase in economic development per year," he said. "Simply extraordinary!"

In addition to the clinic, construction has begun or soon will begin on:

- a Diabetes and Cancer Center adjacent to the clinic (some portions of the diabetes center, such as the demonstration kitchen and exercise room, are located and will remain in the existing clinic);
- a Learning Center that will include 20 new classrooms and a 350-seat auditorium;
- a state-of-the-art university library;
- and an advanced outpatient services clinic to provide health services to underserved areas and populations in the broader Tulsa region.



Sculpture and other artwork add warmth and beauty throughout the campus. *Navajo Sunrise* by Oreland C. Joe greets visitors to the Schusterman Center.



TOP: Dr. David Jelley, director of the Harold Hamm Diabetes Center in Tulsa, and Cathey Colburn, lead diabetes educator for the Pediatric Diabetes Center, check out the facilities in the demonstration kitchen. ABOVE: Dr. Chandini Sharma, assistant professor of Geriatric Medicine, demonstrates the new bone densitometry machine. The clinic will enhance the programs of radiography, sonography, emergency medicine residency and physician assistants, among others.

classes is planned down the line. Soon, some of the popular OU-Tulsa "Mini-Med" classes will be held in the kitchens so that members of the community also can participate.

▼ (in the works) a fully equipped demonstration exercise area where fitness experts introduce children to fitness routines while their parents watch so they can supervise their children later, in their own homes. Again, a similar room for adults is in the planning stages.

▼ An in-house pharmacy operated by the OU College of Pharmacy, which opened in mid-August, and radiology and laboratory departments make the clinic a one-stop place for all of a patient's medical needs. Unique to the pharmacy are consulting rooms where patients can ask questions about their disease or condition and their medications in a confidential setting. The Schusterman Center Clinic Pharmacy also offers diabetes and asthma education and management.

▼ The Center for Clinical and Translational Research, supported in part by a grant from the Mary K. Chapman Foundation of Tulsa, is a facility for clinical researchers from OU-Tulsa as well as from the OU Health Sciences Center.

The clinic also serves as OU's home base for outreach health services across northeast Oklahoma, including 15 school-based clinics serving more than 25 schools across three public school systems, and a new mobile clinic, affectionately called "Sooner Schooner II," that will link with the planned OU North Tulsa specialty clinic.

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