One step ahead in healthcare.

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A s the delivery of healthcare becomes more complicated, the path to becoming a better provider in some ways seems simpler – we have to give nothing short of our absolute best effort, every day.

If there was ever any slack in the pressure to perform well as a healthcare organization, there is none now. The Affordable Care Act, federal quality initiatives, changing technological platforms, ever-present threats of pandemics such as Ebola — the list goes on. Amid these unprecedented challenges, healthcare organizations whose goal is merely to survive will have little chance of advancing.

But we’ve been preparing for these times for years. Our approach has always been to stay a step ahead in achieving our goals, and we think 2014 reflected a continuation of that approach.

Our six homegrown physicians on staff – an exceptionally high number and something we’ve always taken pride in – won’t be enough in the future as our patient load grows and more care is demanded of us. That’s why in this report you’ll read about the pipeline of future Rockcastle County physicians that we’ve constructed. No fewer than seven new faces – most of whom are from Rockcastle or nearby counties – are scheduled to join our team in the coming years.

Had we been satisfied with our physical plant as it existed a decade ago, we would be struggling to find space and resources for services that are now regarded as indispensable. The year 2014 witnessed the grand opening of the state-of-the-art Rockcastle Family Wellness. The construction of the $4.2 million facility was the flagship project in a year of ongoing expansions and renovations.

We also fully implemented our electronic medical records (EMR) system. In each stage of achieving “meaningful use” of the EMR, we have been ahead of almost every hospital in the state. Nearly everyone in healthcare agrees – the EMR, now in its infancy in terms of widespread use nationally – presents complex challenges to organizations and individual users, but everyone also agrees that it is here to stay. As an early adopter, we expect to be among the first to implement improvements to the EMR as it is developed.

If we had the mindset of just keeping up, rather than staying in front, our community relations team probably would have been satisfied with organizing just one 5K run/walk. For three years now, we’ve put on a 12-race series, mobilizing an entire community and in 2014 winning a hospital charitable services national award.

No matter how daunting or complex the task, you still have to walk up to the starting line. We do that with the expectation that throughout the race, we’ll be at least one step ahead. The success of our organization depends on it.

Stephen A. Estes
President and CEO
Rockcastle Regional Hospital &
Respiratory Care Center
The new recruits

In 2014, as a part of our ongoing commitment to recruiting top physicians to serve our patients, we added four specialists to our team:

- Dr. Ravneet Thind, Oncology
- Dr. Ashish Prakash Maskey, Pulmonology
- Dr. Jamie Settles-Carter, Podiatry
- Dr. Anna Christina dela Cruz, Gastroenterology

We also recruited two more physicians-in-training who will join us when they complete their education:

- Justin Williams, D.O., who is doing a fellowship at the University of Kentucky in hematology and oncology. He is expected to begin practicing in Rockcastle in 2017.
- Mary Saylor, who is in her first year of medical school at the University of Louisville.

They join five others who have committed to joining our team:

- Sarah Oliver, who is completing her pediatrics residency in South Carolina and is expected to join Rockcastle Pediatrics & Adolescents and Dr. Callie Shaffer in August 2015.
- Brandon Cowan, who is completing his family medicine residency at St. Elizabeth Hospital. He will begin in 2017.
- Angela Debord, a second-year medical student at Lincoln Memorial University DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine.
- George Swope Munday, who is in the general surgery residency program at the University of Louisville. He is expected to begin practicing in Rockcastle in 2017.
- Kevin McClendon, a medical student at Lincoln Memorial University DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine. He will begin practicing in 2020.
A new chapter began for Rockcastle Regional Hospital on May 5 with another major expansion – the opening of the new home of Rockcastle Family Wellness.

Located on High Street behind Rockcastle Medical Arts, the $4.2 million, 32,000 facility features 36 state-of-the-art patient exam rooms, sick- and well-patient waiting areas, private patient registration areas, consultation area for dietitians and pharmacists, and a children’s play area.

With the move of Rockcastle Family Wellness, space in the Medical Arts Building was retrofitted to expand Rockcastle Pediatrics & Adolescents to include separate waiting areas for sick- and well-patients, more exam rooms, and space for a new pediatrician, Dr. Sarah Oliver, who will join the practice in 2015. The remaining space has been utilized to further increase access to specialty clinics from UK HealthCare and other providers. The availability of these specialty clinics decreases travel time for our patients who are residents of Rockcastle County and surrounding communities.

The year also saw growth and change in other areas of the facility. In July, the renovation of two acute patient rooms was complete, allowing for even better patient care in a state-of-the-art environment.

Improvements were made to the west wing of our long-term care facility by the installation of new flooring. With improved patient and employee safety as the goal of the project, the new “floating” floor provides a higher-quality surface by removing indentations and other potential hazards in the old floor.

Another major renovation project of the year was the relocation of the human resources, quality, and employee wellness departments to newly remodeled spaces on the third floor of the Outpatient Services Building. The space vacated by these departments allowed for the expansion of the offices for security and information technology.
Health outcomes are enhanced when patients become partners in their own care with providers who have instant access to that patient's full health records and care team.

Rockcastle Regional helped empower patients by launching an online patient portal, allowing them to see every aspect of their care, both during and after their hospital stay or outpatient treatment.

In addition to the growth of the patient portal, we saw the completion of a major project years in the making – the organization's full transition to an electronic health records system (EHR). An EHR is essentially the digitized version of a patient's paper chart. It provides physicians and other care givers real-time access to a patient's medical information.

All of these projects are part of an overall goal of achieving all stages of Meaningful Use, a series of incentive program requirements established by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for healthcare providers to show they are “meaningfully using” technology to better serve their patients.

Our journey towards Meaningful Use began in 2011. Along the way, we have continued to stay a step ahead by being among the first in Kentucky to achieve each stage.
Our five star vent unit

Thirty-three and counting.

As the years tick by, the Respiratory Care Center at Rockcastle Regional Hospital, founded in 1981, continues to grow in reputation and service to the community and much of the nation.

Known also as the vent unit, it contains 93 beds for patients who are unable to breathe on their own.

But just because they arrive on mechanical ventilation doesn’t mean they won’t someday leave to resume a normal life, free from the ventilator. Nearly 40 percent are able to wean from breathing assistance.

“That’s the goal,” said Jeff Smithern, director of respiratory therapy. “That’s what we’re always striving for.”

While here, our residents’ quality of care and quality of life are our top priority, and that dedication was reflected in our winning U.S. News and World Report’s Best Nursing Home designation in 2014 for the second year in a row. The designation means we were one of the few facilities that earned a five-star rating given by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
It might be as simple as paying for the next person’s breakfast in the cafeteria line or scraping the icy windshields of co-workers on a cold January afternoon, but acts of kindness or uncommon professionalism do not go unnoticed at Rockcastle Regional.

Even the smallest of gestures amount to a big difference in the environment we create for our patients. That’s why we make note of all that are shared with us by highlighting them as “WOW” moments – instances of exceptional work and/or caring - throughout the year.

Most of the dozens of such moments reported in 2014 involved patient care, and often they consisted of one employee recognizing another for an outstanding act of compassion or dedication. Fostering such an environment leads to higher employee engagement and satisfaction, and that leads to better care.

“A few WOW moments from 2014:

“...stay one step ahead

"The maintenance department, information technology, purchasing, environmental services, and all of the Rockcastle Family Wellness staff and providers have worked very well together as we prepared for the opening of our new facility. The communication between departments was excellent. This group was dedicated to the goal that we would open as planned, and everything would be done with no shortcuts. A phrase that I heard over and over when working through issues was, ’What will be best for our patients?’ Very proud to be a part of this team!’"

Submitted by Brandy Bullock, Rockcastle Family Wellness practice manager
“My mother has recently been in our ER twice and an overnight hospital stay. She received excellent care from the ER staff and acute staff as well as Drs. Griffith and Bullock. A WOW to Ms. Janet Adams for making her feel at home and WOW to Ms. Tara Smith from lab for being persistent with getting blood drawn from my mother (it was no easy task).”

Submitted by Twila Burdette, director of Rockcastle Child Development Center

“I would like to commend Mel Reppert for her excellence in attitude and spirit of cooperation. During a surgical procedure, my nursing assistant and I were sterile for the procedure and were unable to locate necessary sutures and supplies. Mel continued to carefully monitor her patient, but at the same time went out of her way to locate the necessary materials to care for the patient in an excellent fashion. I know that this was not her area of assignment, but she was able to stretch beyond doing what she was obligated to do and did far more, all with an excellent spirit.”

Submitted by Dr. David L. Brabon
“Our mission of community outreach is one that unites all of our employees.”
In 2014, we soared above our goal of 14,850 community interactions, reaching more than 20,000 at 130 events.

Whatever the event, the mission was the same: to help people find a healthier life through improved diet, exercise, and preventive care. This was achieved through free stroke screenings at more than 14 events, such as the annual Healthy Joe Expo and the Ladies Night Out. It was accomplished at each of the 12 County-wide stride run/walk race events, where 2,160 participants made strides toward a healthier life.

Outreach events don’t merely stop with education. Each year, Rockcastle Regional employees team up to raise funds for various charities such as The American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life, March of Dimes, The Alzheimer’s Association’s Walk to End Alzheimer’s, and Rockcastle Regional’s Hope Fund for cancer patients.

“Our mission of community outreach is one that unites all of our employees,” said Jana Bray, community relations director. “The collective amount of healthcare knowledge and experience at any one of these events is enormous. It’s such a valuable resource to our community – and one that we are passionate about delivering.”
To say the least, 2014 was an interesting year when it came to health and healthcare. Take the Ebola virus outbreak, for example. The epidemic that has killed thousands in Africa also appeared in the U.S., prompting healthcare officials to action.

The situation reinforced the need for all hospitals to be on high alert, and it reminded us why we stay one step ahead.

Our diligence is visible daily. For example, 2014 was our first full year of having daily safety huddles to communicate any safety issues or potential concerns between departments. So when extraordinary events such as the threat of an epidemic occur, we’re already in heightened problem-solving mode.

“The practices, such as safety huddles, that we have in place are designed to make us responsive and proactive,” said Traci Bullens, infection control and patient safety coordinator.

As a part of our continuing partnership with StuderGroup, one of the nation’s premiere healthcare management consultants, we have implemented many such best practices designed to enhance awareness, communication and accountability to each other and to our mission.

One result of that work was a significant increase in patient satisfaction scores in 2014. Other results – perhaps some of the most important – aren’t as easy to measure.

“We want the community to have peace of mind knowing that we’re doing everything we can to stay prepared and sharp for them,” said Stephen A. Estes, president and CEO.
On October 24, 2014, I was out in the woods when I suddenly began to feel dizzy and weak. My heart rate had increased drastically and within moments I could barely walk. I managed to drive myself home but upon arriving I knew something was seriously wrong when I began to vomit blood. My family immediately rushed me to the E.R. at Rockcastle Regional Hospital.

The entire staff – from Dr. Hamilton to the nurses – went to work right away. My stomach was pumped and I was given two blood transfusions. I was quickly transferred to another facility where I was able to be diagnosed with a bleeding ulcer. After a few days of hospitalization I was released to go home.

Two weeks later, I had a follow-up appointment with Dr. Bullock where I had to be hospitalized once again and received two more blood transfusions. A couple weeks later, blood work was performed at my second follow up appointment and my blood count was back to normal and I am feeling well once again.

I am fortunate to have been able to receive this type of quick and efficient care so close to home during this situation. The doctor and the nurses – all were excellent, thank you Rockcastle Regional!

-Sam Mullins

Letters from home

We have always felt really fortunate to have a facility like Rockcastle Regional in our community. After spending a few hours in the Emergency Room in early November, we have a new appreciation for both the facility and the staff – admitting clerk, nurse, technicians, and doctors – were friendly and caring. They are all skilled and efficient. The knowledge of Dr. Hamilton and Dr. Griffith enabled us to have a quick diagnosis of my husband's problems. He is well on his way to complete recovery due to their quick decision to send us to the stroke team at UK. We are very grateful for the dedicated medical staff at Rockcastle Regional Hospital, including Bro. Luther Allen who visited us once we were at UK.

-Iris Young

96% of our patients said our doctors treated them with courtesy/respect and involved them in their care

95% of our patients say our nurses treated them with courtesy/respect
Rockcastle Regional Hospital enjoyed another banner year by being honored no fewer than nine times for accomplishments related to quality and community outreach.

“It’s always nice to be recognized by your peers for the quality of your organization,” said Stephen A. Estes, president and CEO. “It confirms what we know is happening every day, that we are delivering exceptional care because we have an exceptional team.”

Awards included:

- Deficiency-free long term care survey
- Successful Joint Commission accreditation survey
- Joint Commission Top Performer for Pneumonia Care
- Women's Choice Award winner - American’s 100 Best Hospitals for Patient Experience
- 2014 Women’s Choice Award winner for Emergency Care
- Recognized by iVantage Health for overall performance excellence in areas of quality, patient satisfaction and financial stability
- US News & World Report Best Nursing Home
- Program of Excellence award winner for Charitable Services by Jackson Healthcare
- Thoroughbred Award and three certificates of merit, from the Kentucky Society for Healthcare Public Relations

“It confirms what we know is happening every day, that we are delivering exceptional care because we have an exceptional team.”
Statistics

Inpatient Admissions
904

Outpatient Visits
33,603

Emergency Dept. Visits
12,679

Breakdown of Expenses

Salary and Benefits: $29,022,754.00
Provider Tax: $408,024.00
FICA Tax: $1,502,853.00
Uncompensated Care: $5,427,921.00

Buildings
Medical Arts Building: $4,586,759.85

Equipment
Patient Beds: $108,000.00
Ventilators: $103,750.05
Wireless IT Access Equipment: $65,151.40

Other Expenses
New Patient Monitors $41,655.09
and Bariatric Exam Tables and Chairs $44,552.45
Total: $86,207.54

Finances
For Fiscal Year 2014