Health is the greatest gift.

2022 HEALTHCARE
WVU Project aims for affordability in health care

BY WILL DEAN
WDean@DominionPost.com

The Bridges in Digital Health project at West Virginia University is aiming to make health care more affordable by harnessing digital information while increasing access to STEM education.

A huge problem in this country is health care costs are going through the roof, said Gay Stewart, co-investigator for the project and director of the WVU Center for Excellence in STEM Education. "People are living longer, which is good," she said. "But you put those two things together and it puts a lot of families at a significant disadvantage. … There’s a lot of information out there and if we could better harness our digital information, we could make health care more affordable, and better to support our people.

One problem though is that people trained in patient care might not be trained in large data techniques, Stewart said. There are even problems with language and understanding how to talk across disciplines.

"At its heart, this project is to advance those sorts of techniques, which have proven to be things that could really make health care better for people," Stewart said. "And give a workforce that, this is just the way they think about doing things — collaborate across disciplines, but not seeing it as a boundary but seeing it as an opportunity.

The project is funded by a $3 million grant from the National Science Foundation and was announced in October 2021. It anticipates training 24 funded and 40 unfunded master’s and doctoral students from different disciplines such as engineering, computer science, medicine, health sciences, physical sciences and economics.

Stewart said the team will recruit participants from underserved groups — such as rural and first-generation students — in STEM. She explained first-generation STEM graduates are much less likely to go to graduate school than their peers.

The pitch to students: "So, you're interested in data, you could go to work for Apple, or you could come, you know, change the world and improve the health care system," Stewart said.

The inaugural class for the program will begin training this summer for students starting their degree programs in the fall.

"If we're really going to address the problems of the future, the idea is to not just, so there's interdisciplinary, right, I play with you, but to go to transdisciplinary, where people can just pull techniques that cross disciplines and they think about talking to each other and working together to build solutions," Stewart said. "And so we're hoping to actually build a transdisciplinary graduate degree program so that these students who have these interests across these boundaries could work across all of this while they're getting a graduate degree. And that program would be something that will exist and will continue to grow and get better well beyond the funded project."
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WVUMedicine.org/RNI/EpilepsyCenter
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Medical system grows here and across state

BY DAVID Goldberg and other system leaders to talk about recent developments and accomplishments, all reported in The Dominion Post.

President and CEO David Goldberg came aboard; $450 million in 2018 when Goldberg arrived; $450 million not operating revenues; up from $581 million in 2018, presence in 12 counties, including Fayette in Pennsylvania and Garrett County in Maryland; the credibility of the Mon brand is very important to people. He said, they make it as easy as possible for patients to get the care they need.

Goldberg said. Among the goals has been integrating electronic health records across its care centers and clinics and hospitals. They’re trimmed record systems from 17 to three — all during the pandemic.

Karen Fruggia, vice president for physician services, talked about progress at their three main facilities Mon Health, Preston Memorial and Stonewall Jackson. Great patient revenue this fiscal year up 10%, physician and employee revenue is 95%, each can offer services across the state’s ninth-largest employer.

“The leaders of intent to launch a Junior College inked a letter of intent to launch a new single health care system operating under the umbrella name Yandalis Health. Then, Mon Health System signed a letter of intent to launch a single health care system operating under the umbrella name Yandalis Health.

The Dominion Post file photo

Mon Health Medical Center

The Dominion Post file photo

Mon Health Medical Center
ENHANCING THE health OF OUR COMMUNITIES, ONE PATIENT AT A TIME.
PMH sees out-patient growth, pursues expansion
BY JENIFFER GRAHAM

The hospital offers a wide range of services, including a certified medical-staffed emergency department, critical care, laboratory, imaging, respiratory therapy and a diagnostic surgery program.

‘Doing that myself because it’s important’

Regarding the partnership, ‘I think long-term, that’s going to be a very good thing for Thomas, for Charleston, for WVU Medicine—’

PMH and Thomas Health Services have continued to grow since announcing the partnership.

‘As everyone knows, we recognize our front-line workers, our nurses, physicians, other clinicians and staff. They have done an amazing job during the height of the pandemic, when testing was in the works for awhile, more easily be cared for in hospital. But long-term, it will always be the case for part of the state. And that will always be the case for the overall footprint of the hospital. But long-term, it’s going to be easier for those who can care of all people in the area.’

Since Charleston is the state capitol, it makes sense to have a presence there. ‘That builds Thomas up. It’s going to be a very good thing for Thomas, for Charleston, for WVU Medicine.’

WVU Medicine expanded into the Charleston area this year and anticipates more changes in 2022-3.

‘It makes sense to have a presence there.’

The hospital is working on a new emergency department, which is expected to open in 2023.

‘As the number of inpatients and visitors and will continue to soften previously placed visiting restrictions and will be used for legacy and new oncology infusion patients as we grow that service, expand oncoplastic surgery. For qualifying patients, telemedicine between Morgantown and the former Mylan building on Chestnut Ridge Road.

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Two specialty centers at WVU best in nation

BY JENNIFER GRAHAM

Two specialty centers at WVU make it best in the nation

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Top expertise to treat children and adults

BY JENNIFER GRAHAM

WVU Children’s Hospital is a facility that opened up on a new WVU Children’s Hospital that opened up in Bart. 30 days after WVU Children’s Hospital opened up in the new WVU Children’s Hospital, said.

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Dr. Nathanian Langer (left), Dr. Srinath Mahendhredhi (right), and their surgical team from Massachusetts General Hospital visited Morgantown to train under WVU heart and vascular surgeons Dr. Lawrence Wat (second from left), co-founder of Peak Health, and Dr. Vinay Badhwar (first from right), chair of cardiovascular and thoracic surgery.

“most LVMI is not just the care of adults in West Virginia, but importantly the care for the children in West Virginia that have heart problems,” said Badhwar. “In fact, we have an enlarged heart, and a heart that is a fun change over the last five years,” said Badhwar.

“We are seeing some advanced, complex arrhythmia services, vascular services, thoracic services, and cardiac services. What we are seeing is heart surgery is a destination center located around the nation for advanced heart and lung surgery and in particular, robotic heart surgery. In fact, WVU has trained physicists to start- ing their roles, heart programs at Massachusetts General in Boston, Yale University in Connecticut and many others.”

The WVU Children’s Hospital is the only children’s hospital in the state that offers comprehensive care for patients with congenital heart disease. This care starts at the fetal stage and continues through adulthood.

Mascio, chief of the Division of Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery and University Health Sciences, has been amazed. It has been said for the children of West Virginia that provide good service and care for patients. Despite doing this for many years, I am still amazed. It is for the children of West Virginia that provide good service and care for patients. Despite doing this for many years, I am still amazed.

“We have hired some really wonderful people to work in that children’s hospital,” he said. “We are particular to Peak Health.

In February, WVU Health System noted that Mountain Health and Mountain Health North joined WVU Medicine as owner of Peak Health, a West Virginia insurance company formed in 1990s that babies consistently perform surgery, said. Said Mascio has been present for the patients with congenital heart disease. This care starts at the fetal stage and continues through adulthood. Mascio, chief of the Division of Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery and University Health Sciences, has been amazed.

“With that care, we hope to offer heart transplant and other advanced therapies for children with heart failure.”

A new heart would allow these patients to remain in state to receive this life-saving therapy.

Conditions treated at the center include arrhythmia, patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), transcatheter valve and stent placement, tetralogy of Falot, and all stages of palliation for single ventricle heart failure.

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Can’t make it to facility? Screening vehicles will come to you instead

BY EVA HAYES
West Virginia

BY EVA HAYES
West Virginia...
BY ERIN CLEAVENGER

cleavenger@DominionPost.com

The Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute at West Virginia University has continued to use its expanding clinical services and groundbreaking research and education efforts to improve lives across the state and the country.

Karyn Wallace, RNI vice president, said the institute is growing in volume on the clinical side and trying to keep up with the pace of adding hospitals and operating sites throughout the state.

“Last year RNI not only treated people in West Virginia...and surrounding areas, but was able to see at least one patient from every state. According to Wallace, a patient from Alaska would have completed all 50 states.

Currently, there are 32 practice locations for the RNI, up from 17 in 2020.

The biggest point of pride in the clinical programs, Wallace said, is the continued growth of the institute’s telemedicine and telestroke programs in all 50 states. According to the institute, the telestroke program today, with 30 practice locations in our telestroke program, Wallace said, is helping patients get to us when they need it the most, very quickly should they have the need for an intervention, she continued. “It’s truly fulfilling program and knowing we are really going through a comprehensive Joint Commission accredited program, Wallace said, adding they had just gone through a reaccreditation for accreditation. They are waiting for the official answer from the commission this week.

The institute is also growing its movement disorder clinics, which take care of patients with Parkinson’s and other movement disorders, along with memory health clinics that deal with Alzheimer’s, aging, and dementia patients.

In a memory health clinic, the take care of the family and the caregiver as well, “Wallace said.

“Which is why special and something they don’t do in a lot of places.”

Wallace said a lot of the efforts in the clinical programs have been in what she calls “changing the culture of clinics. These clinics have a lot of different providers taking care of the patient at once, which means the patient from having to make multiple appoint- ments with different doctors.

One of the exciting points of 2022 was the Healthy Mind Center, Wallace said.

“I have been conducting a variety of in-the-works research studies with plans to continue a lot of that work this year and that work continues in many different areas, the healthy mind center is a comprehensive, we take care of the family and the caregiver as well,” said Wallace.

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Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute

WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute

Alzheimer’s: A lot of research on depression, anxiety and other mental health issues is also being done, Wallace said. “This is something the institute always knew was a big area to touch with those research efforts,” Wallace said.

“The people we are able to touch, with those research efforts, go up sharply over the next year,” she said.

Being a fully funded academ- ic institute, RNI’s research missions and clinical missions are educat- ional missions as well. Wallace said their will continue to touch patients and trainees to work toward the research and clinical goals of the institute.

To learn more about the RNI being done at the Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute and to find a practice location or telestroke site near you visit wvumedicine.org/rni.

Wallace

RNI grows locations, telemedicine programs

BY ERIN CLEAVENGER

cleavenger@DominionPost.com

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BY BEN CONLEY
BConley@DominionPost.com

By any accounting, the last two-plus years have been unprecedented for the Monongalia County Health Department. The daily fight against COVID-19 necessitated substantial growth within the organization—now the state’s largest based on employee count—and has necessitated a division of duties among its leadership.

In January, Dr. Lee Smith relinquished administrative control to Executive Director Anthony DeFelice in order to focus on clinical duties full-time as MCHD’s medical director and the county health officer. But there are plenty of changes yet to come. DeFelice explained, to the expansion of the department’s dental and clinical services programs.

DeFelice said $50,000 in grant funding from both Highmark and Delta Dental will help create two new dental operatories. He said an additional dentist will likely join Dr. Youseph Kasar by September and a third could follow down the line.

This construction is going to happen despite the elephant in the room, or in this case, next door. In January, WVU Health System President and CEO Albert Wright restated WVU’s desire to acquire the health department property from the county. That would include MCHD’s central office, at 453 Van Voorhis Road as well as the WIC Building next door.

“We’re going through this process not knowing where we might be in a couple years, but I think we’ve got to keep moving forward,” DeFelice said, adding that he’s been working with Monongalia County Commissioner Jeff Arnold to locate a facility that would suit the health department’s needs.

“The issue is going to be finding a location that has enough room and parking,” DeFelice explained. “WVU wants to get this moving forward, but we’ve got to make sure the facility works for us.”

And that would mean a facility that would allow the health department to once again function under one roof.

As part of MCHD’s recent growth, it brought two new facilities on line. The department’s Threat Preparedness operations are now based in the old DHHR Northern Operations building, on the Morgantown Municipal Airport campus. MCHD’s Environmental Services program is now located in a building off Hartman Road.

Beyond facilities, DeFelice said the health department intends to pursue accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board, an effort that was paused in order to focus on COVID.

“I think one of the things that’s going to happen is, and this is my opinion, but in order to get federal grants, they’re going to look for accredited health departments and organizations,” DeFelice said.

While he stops short of...
COVID-19
New entity at WVU hopes to help often ignored parts of the country

Clinical, translational science institute started in Jan.

BY JIM BUESCH
administration@wvu.edu

Long before COVID showed up, the world had already been in a socioeconomic pandemic of its own — a pandemic of poverty and chronic illness. Every time any other pandemic has come through, it has managed to somehow fall short with the rest of the nation.

All over the place, there is a very real opportunity for those doing the research.

Enter the West Virginia University Institute of Drug Abuse Research, which is currently housed at WVU Medicine. A new institute to be housed at the university this past January when the region and nation were reeling from the post-pandemic coronavirus. The mission is clear and simple, as it plans to make its mark in the world as the new center of study.

The initiative, however, is not just in the state's flagship university. It will also include the University of Florida, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Michigan. The goal is to bring together researchers and experts from across the country to address one of the most pressing issues of our time.

“When we think about the pandemic, we often think about the medical aspects — the vaccines, the treatments, the hospitalizations,” said Dr. Lee B. Smith, the medical director of the WVU Monroe Medical Center. “But there is a lot more to it than that. There is also the social and economic impact of the pandemic.”

The institute's mission is to bring together researchers from across the country to address one of the most pressing issues of our time — the pandemic's impact on social and economic factors.

The institute is part of a broader network known as the IDeA States Consortium, or ISCORE, which takes in all the states and territories of the nation. The initiative is designed to help address the pandemic's impact on social and economic factors.

“I think the initiative is going to be really successful,” said Dr. Smith. “It will bring researchers from across the country together to address one of the most pressing issues of our time.”

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Cannabis finally makes 5 with dispensary openings

BY DAVID BEARD

The Dominion Post

West Virginia’s medical cannabis program now has 15 dispensaries, providing seven new spots for patients to receive their marijuana in 2022. The latest opening was a 5,000-square-foot cultivation and processing facility, along with a dispensary, in Milton, located in Kanawha County.

The opening marked a milestone for the state’s cannabis program, which began in 2018. In its first year, the program granted just three dispensary licenses. Since then, the number of dispensaries has increased to 15.

“This is a new practice that is still being thought out and created by the failure of the government,” said Verano, a company that operates in the state. “It’s not necessarily unique, as there are certain states that have taken a different approach to using the sale of certain cannabis products that are different in direct ways.”

The company emphasizes the importance of carefully considering the data from the cases and determining what can be done to help those individuals.

“Some fear tech surveillance of pregnancy, and in this same stimulation, in the public and private sectors, the issue can rise among these fear issues,” said a spokesperson from the company.

The spokesperson added that while there are ways to prevent these issues, there are also ways to help those individuals understand how to prevent these issues from happening in the first place.

The company’s focus is on helping those individuals understand how to prevent these issues, and providing resources and support to help them navigate these situations.

The spokesperson added that the company is committed to providing resources and support to those individuals who are facing these issues, and that it is continuing to work on developing new ways to help these individuals.

The spokesperson also noted that the company is working with state officials to help them develop new ways to help those individuals who are facing these issues, and that it is continuing to work on developing new ways to help these individuals.
Doctors: N.C. woman youngest in U.S. to get rare surgery

The Charlotte Observer

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In October, she tried Overrides April 21.

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Disney rhino gets fitted with fitness tracker

Associated Press

The tale of Pumbaa, the fictional rhino from the 2011 movie "Lion King," now has a real-life counterpart with the help of a new technology.

Scientists have fitted a Javan rhino with a 3D-printed prosthetic tail, marking a significant step in the conservation effort to save the species.

The Javan rhino, or "dwarf rhino," is one of the most endangered species in the world, with only about 80 individuals remaining in the wild.

"The Javan rhino is a critically endangered species, and any efforts to help conserve them are crucial," said lead researcher Scott Terrell, a professor of veterinary medicine.

The researchers fitted the rhino with a 3D-printed tail, which has been designed to help it move more efficiently in the wild.

"This is a major breakthrough in rhino conservation," said Terrell. "We hope this will help us better understand how rhinos move and develop strategies to protect them in the wild."
These are the Good Old Days

You have earned every moment of your free time, and at Harmony at Morgantown, we want to make sure you can spend it exactly as you wish. Our monthly calendar of events and activities offers so much more than a way to pass the time. Harmony offers a range of senior living options to provide as much or as little assistance as you may need. Choose from Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care to get the right level of support from our caring, expert team. We are committed to serving our residents in a way that provides comfort and enrichment in your life.

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