

Labette Health honored for orthopedic surgeries

Jul 2, 2020



Labette Health and Southeast Kansas Orthopedic Clinic were recognized by Blue Cross Blue Shield. Accepting award plaques are (from left) Dr. Brad Meister, SEK Ortho; Stephanie LaRue, rehabilitation services director; Kerry Volmer, RN, and 3 North director/joint program coordinator; Ashlea Alloway, RN, surgery director; and Dr. Phil Gorman, chief of staff.

Courtesy photo

Labette Health trustees on Thursday morning recognized hospital and Southeast Kansas Orthopedic Clinic staff members for a recent Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Blue Distinction Center+ award for knee and hip replacement.

Blue Distinction Centers are nationally designated health care facilities that show a commitment to delivering quality patient safety and better health outcomes, based on measures developed with input from the medical community and leading accreditation and quality organizations, according to a release from the hospital.

Facilities designated as a center for knee and hip replacement demonstrate expertise in total knee and total hip replacement surgeries, resulting in fewer patient complications and hospital

readmissions. Designated facilities include hospitals (with and without an onsite intensive care unit) and ambulatory surgery centers (ASC). All designated facilities must maintain national accreditation, and ASCs are also required to have an advanced orthopedic certification. In addition to meeting these thresholds, hospitals designated as Blue Distinction Centers+ are on average 20% more cost-efficient in an episode of care compared to other facilities.

Knee and hip replacement procedures remain some of the most commonly performed, elective surgical procedures in the U.S., according to a 2018 study released by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. In 2014 there were 370,770 total hip replacements and 680,150 total knee replacements.

“Using minimally invasive, muscle sparing-small incision techniques helps to minimize pain and reduce recovery time,” said Dr. Kevin Mosier in a prepared statement. “The continued success of our joint replacement program reflects the commitment of our staff and physicians to provide the very best for our patients.”

“At Labette Health, we have a team that takes joint replacement patient outcomes and their satisfaction very seriously,” said Dr. Brad Meister in a prepared statement. “It’s nice to be rewarded for great effort and great outcomes. As surgeons, Dr. Mosier and I feel very blessed to be a part of this team.”

At Thursday’s meeting, hospital CEO Brian Williams noted that the orthopedic clinic is the best in Kansas and Drs. Mosier and Meister are recognized for their work. He said the clinic would not flourish without good support teams working with it.

Meister said he didn’t have much to say about the award.

“It’s just another honor. It seems like they’re easy to come by, but I don’t think they are. It’s a tribute to the teams that are around us. These are the leaders of the teams,” he said, referring to Stephanie LaRue, rehabilitation services director; Kerry Volmer, registered nurse and 3 North director/joint program coordinator; Ashlea Alloway, registered nurse and surgery director; and Dr. Phil Gorman, chief of staff.

Alloway noted how the teams work together in the operating room. She called it like watching synchronized swimmers or a NASCAR pit crew. The crew members know what to do and when to do it. They put the right tools in the hands of surgeons and other teams keep those tools

clean and sterile.

"It's a privilege to be able to work with all those people. I do very little. I'm amazed at how truly talented they all are," Alloway said.

Newer employees take copious notes and study those notes so they can work as well as the seasoned employees, she said.

"Just the way that they are down there it's amazing to be a part of that," Alloway said.

The Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cancer care, cardiac care, cellular immunotherapy, fertility care, gene therapy, knee and hip replacements, maternity care, spine surgery, substance use treatment and recovery and transplants. Research for many of these programs show that, compared to other providers, those designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate better quality and improved outcomes for patients, the hospital release said.

In other business Thursday, trustees also heard and accepted the 2019 audit report as presented by Heather Eichem of Wendling Noe Nelson and Johnson LLC, Topeka. Eichem said the financial statements are materially correct and noted an increase in the hospital's net position to \$43 million, up from \$40 million in 2018. The hospital's operating margin was down in 2019 to .8%.