Medical center’s Girod tapped to lead university

‘KU is in good hands,’ outgoing chancellor says of ENT surgeon

Douglas Girod, MD, who has worked as a surgeon, teacher and executive vice chancellor at the University of Kansas Medical Center for 23 years, has been named the 18th chancellor of the University of Kansas.

He replaces Bernadette Gray-Little, PhD, who announced last year she will retire this summer.

“Doug Girod brings a wealth of experience to this role,” said Gray-Little, who has led the university since 2009. “He is a proven administrator and an excellent listener, and those on the KU Medical Center campus already are well familiar with Dr. Girod’s steady guidance and leadership abilities.

“I congratulate him, and KU is in good hands,” she added. “I know he will continue our work to fulfill our mission and elevate the national stature of our university into the future.”

During the May 25 presentation at the KU Lawrence campus, Girod, 59, told an audience he is “honored and humbled to lead this great institution.”

He is the third person from the medical center to be named KU chancellor. The first was Franklin Murphy, MD, in 1951, followed by W. Clarke Wescoe, MD, in 1960.

Specializing in head and neck surgery, Girod joined the medical center faculty in 1994 and quickly rose through the academic ranks, becoming Otolaryngology (ear, nose and throat) chair in 2002 and the medical center’s executive vice chancellor in February 2013.

In that role he oversaw the educational, research, patient care and community engagement missions of the KU Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions, with their total annual enrollment of more than 3,300 students; a workforce of more than 2,100 faculty and more than 4,000 staff; and research funding of nearly $100 million.

Bob Page, president and CEO of The University of Kansas Health System, which is separate from the medical center, said he was “thrilled” to learn of Girod’s appointment. “Doug has been an excellent partner and supporter of our patients and our health system. He is also a true friend,” Page said.

“I am confident,” he added, “the entire KU organization will benefit from his exceptional leadership skills, his passion for higher education and research, and his dedication to the University of Kansas.”

By the Numbers: Epilepsy Treatments

The University of Kansas Health System’s Comprehensive Epilepsy Center is designated at Level 4, the highest mark in the industry. The center’s physicians and caregivers continue to treat an increasing number of patients.

20,000
Number of epilepsy patients total in the region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epilepsy inpatient discharges</th>
<th>Epilepsy outpatient visits</th>
<th>Top centers for epilepsy care in Kansas City area</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>FY 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>FY 2014</td>
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<td>303</td>
<td>FY 2015</td>
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<td>404</td>
<td>Includes health system main campus and Indian Creek Campus</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on calendar year 2015 inpatient discharges

To suggest a By the Numbers, email Advances@kumc.edu.
A physician hotline for acute leukemia

For patients battling acute leukemia, time is of the essence. Characterized by seemingly commonplace symptoms – such as fatigue, weakness, fever, bruising and bleeding – the fast-progressing disease is often advanced before it is recognized, diagnosed or treated.

It’s why The University of Kansas Cancer Center has developed a hotline for physicians throughout the region to call if they suspect a patient may have acute leukemia. The hotline (888-588-1167), which launched in March, is the first of its kind in the nation.

“Every day counts in giving these patients the best chance at a positive outcome,” said medical oncologist Tara Lin, MD, who helped spearhead the program and is one of 11 leukemia and blood and marrow transplant physicians available to answer the hotline 24/7.

The new phone number is designed not only to be life-saving for patients but provide a streamlined, one-call option for referring physicians, rather than making multiple calls to specialists and clinics. If needed, the leukemia physician answering the call also will help coordinate care with The University of Kansas Health System’s Patient Transfer Center.

“Our team is their resource for getting specialty support faster,” said Lin, noting the group also includes transplant and financial coordinators. “We’re their immediate access to expert counsel. Our entire staff know precisely how to manage and protect highly susceptible patients.”

Studies in recent years underscore the importance of treating patients with acute leukemia at specialized, high-volume centers. Patient outcomes are better, in part because the centers’ infrastructures encompass physicians, pharmacists and other caregivers experienced in the side effects of chemotherapy and the unique needs of these complex patients.

Importantly, specialized leukemia centers offer a variety of clinical trials and investigational medications not yet approved, giving critically ill patients access to cutting-edge treatments.
A walk worth celebrating

At the May 20 Heart & Stroke Walk at the Power & Light District, Ricky McElwee (left) and John Findlay took the KC Live stage and drew immense applause when they announced they were two of The University of Kansas Health System’s first heart transplant recipients – numbers 5 and 2, respectively. At least four other heart transplant recipients joined staff, friends and family members on our health system’s heart walk team.
a police officer) initiated the project. Lynsey Ralston, an audiology student at the school who is married to a police officer. She got the idea after her husband’s friends talked about the need for better-fitting earpieces.

Lauren Mann, AuD CCC-A, clinical assistant professor in Hearing and Speech who helped secure funding and coordinate the program, isn’t surprised by Ralston’s initiative. “This is exactly what sets KU students apart from their peers,” she said. “We have students who see a problem in the community and come to faculty suggesting ways to fix the problem.”

More than 100 officers from Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas, departments received free hearing screenings May 16-17, as part of National Police Week and coinciding with Better Speech and Hearing Month. They also will receive custom radio earpieces, which cost about $100 each, allowing them to listen to their police radios more comfortably and safely while on duty. The devices were made possible by a grant from Sertoma International and donations from Starkey Hearing Technologies and Oaktree Products.

The push for the screening and hearing devices came from Ralston’s husband, Nick Ralston, a police officer. She got the idea after her husband’s friends talked about the need for better-fitting earpieces.

Clinical Nurse Specialist Lynelle Pierce, RN, has educated thousands of nurses and physicians in a wide range of skills. She initiated the health system’s molecular adsorbent recirculation system program, only the seventh in the nation. Her research into patient sedation has helped decrease use of ventilators and patients’ length of stay, and it has led to a standardized patient “awakening process” across seven adult ICUs.

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