

Looking to the future

As Ashland's KDMC celebrates 100 years, it's not slowing down

By LYNNE AUSTIN
The Herald-Dispatch

ASHLAND — As 70-year-old Shirley Keller lay dying at King's Daughters' Medical Center last spring, he was surrounded by family members and friends, just as he wanted.

It was important to Aimee Sutphin that her father be close to home and KDMC offered the services he needed as his condition deteriorated over two weeks.

The hospital, an institution in Ashland since 1899, is growing every day so that it may better serve more families like Sutphin's. "It's good they're expanding so they can begin to meet everyone's needs," she said.

As KDMC prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary on Tuesday, it is spending \$32 million to build on its future. The hospital recently began construction on its Parkview Building, a four-story expansion that will add 117,000 square feet housing a new cafeteria, a state-of-the-art intensive care unit and more specialized care for heart patients to the facility's already long list of services.

As the hospital celebrates its centennial, staff and administrators are remembering the changes the hospital has undergone as it grew from three rooms above a downtown Ashland drugstore in 1899 to a 24-acre state-of-the-art medical facility.

Under the direction of President and CEO Fred Jackson, not only is the hospital growing physically, it is filling the void in the com-



Photo courtesy of KDMC

This is an artist's rendition of the \$32 million Parkview Building, a four-story expansion at King's Daughters' Medical Center that will add 117,000 square feet.

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Fred Jackson
CEO, King's Daughters' Medical Center



munity after the departure of Ashland Inc. by expanding its own community service efforts. It also is marking its anniversary with a 128-page coffee table book publishing this fall recapping its history.

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ing to add more beds."

The hospital, incorporated under state law on July 6, 1899, quickly outgrew each of its four locations during the century as demands increased for better medical services. The hospital moved from the drugstore to a nine-room house on Winchester Avenue in 1906, then to a new 50-bed structure on Lexington

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Avenue in 1917.

In 1972, the original building was torn down as KDMC finally settled into a permanent location on Lexington Avenue. It has continued to change over the years with new additions and a new facade that has molded the facility into a medical center.

The building's outside appearance isn't the only thing that's changed. Debbie Taylor, director of home health services at KDMC and a 23-year employee, said health care professionals have begun focusing on patient wellness rather than illness.

"We're seeing more

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KDMC

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advanced cases because of technology and advances," she said. "We're focusing more on wellness so they won't get in these advanced stages."

Home health services have made some of the biggest strides over the years. Taylor said nurses have begun working with pediatric, heart and mental health patients in their homes and can now administer intravenous drugs and chemotherapy, under a doctor's order.

"I feel like we're reaching out in the community more," she said. "Everything used to be on-campus and that's changing. We have to think beyond the walls of the hospital."

King's Daughters' has grown remarkably in recent years while changes in the health care industry have caused some other organizations to struggle.

In 1991, KDMC opened a Cardiopulmonary Institute, which offers comprehensive cardiac care and open-heart surgery.

Since 1993, it has added Family Care Centers in Burlington and Wheelersburg

in Ohio and Cannonsburg, Grayson, Catlettsburg, South Shore and Flatwoods in Kentucky to expand its base of both doctors and patients.

In 1997, KDMC's neonatal intensive care unit earned Level III status, allowing the hospital to care for more at-risk infants.

Taylor said she attributes the hospital's success to the vision shared by its leaders.

"They wanted our area to have the best services and they wanted to stay in business," she said.

But KDMC hasn't been without its struggles. During the Great Depression, the hospital barely stayed afloat.

"Patients paid for doctors' visits with eggs and other produce," said Julie Marsh, spokeswoman for the hospital.

Despite the hard financial times, community members rallied to raise enough money to build a new wing, which was completed in 1931 and increased the bed count from 50 to 86.

Beginning in the 1940s, the hospital began to see prosperity as it completed more additions and increased its bed count to 225 in 1953. Now KDMC is capable of handling 340 patients.

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Julie Marsh
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"We have a fascinating, enriched history here," Marsh said. "It's exciting to see a period of prosperity and that's come about because of extraordinary people."

The Parkview expansion includes cafeteria expansion, a 24-bed intensive care unit, a cardiac-care center and three catheterization labs, 14 pre-operative and postoperative

beds, three suites and an eight-bed ICU for open-heart surgery patients.

The Parkview Building is only one of KDMC's efforts to meet increasing patient demands. Jackson said the hospital plans to continue expanding its Family Care Centers. Two more centers will open soon although locations have yet to be determined, he said.

"Our seven Family Care Centers are an effort to get into medically underserved communities," Jackson said. "I'm amazed at the number of people who have never been to a physician."

Once construction of the Parkview expansion is complete late next year, KDMC patients and visitors will have a new main entrance that faces Central Park. A fountain and outdoor bronze sculpture of a father, mother and child will greet those entering its doors.

"Water is a healing element and each member of the family (in the sculpture) will be touching the water," Jackson said.

The work, sculpted by Sam McKinney of Olive Hill, Ky., also will be a reminder of the hospital's commitment to the family, he said.