



BY JOHN BERGGREN

THINKING BIG

Expanded neuroscience services mean better care close to home

↑ As people age, the likelihood increases that they'll be faced with neck and back pain and have a greater risk for cancer. In a region with an aging population, access to neurosurgical services could play a big role in one's quality of life.

The addition of a second neurosurgeon to the staff at Salina Regional Health Center in August is already paying dividends to those seeking care. Wait times for new patients have decreased from nearly four months to about four weeks. The prospect of adding a third neurosurgeon to the staff in late summer 2013 positions the hospital to be a leader in neurosciences for years to come.

Justin Whitlow, M.D., a native of Beloit, joined Ali Manguoglu, M.D., at Salina Regional Neurosurgery after completing his training at the University of Kentucky.

"It's nice to be able to come back home and help Dr. Manguoglu after he's provided these services for many years all on his own," Whitlow says. "There was a strong desire to come back to

Neurosurgeons Ali Manguoglu, M.D., left, and Justin Whitlow, M.D., review a patient case at their clinic in Salina.

the region where I was raised and be back close to family. It's nice to take care of people who are grateful for the services we provide."

Since 1985 Manguoglu has worked nearly on his own to provide neurosurgical services in north central and north western Kansas and beyond. He as well as anyone realizes the need for more neurosurgical services in the state.

"The addition of Dr. Whitlow makes most of the general, state-of-the-art neurologic surgeries available here," Manguoglu says. "That means fewer patients will be required to go all the way to Topeka or Wichita for care."

A HOSPITAL PREPARED

Many departments within Salina Regional contribute to neuroscience care and many have made preparations for the growth in services: Pharmacists stock several new medicines; radiologists see greater numbers of advanced imaging studies; surgical staff work to accommodate greater caseloads; Rehabilitation Services received education on some of the latest advancements in therapy; and an expansion of Salina Regional's Intensive Care Unit is under way.

"It's exciting to see what's taking place in an effort to grow this program," Whitlow says. "There's been a significant effort and a lot of additional training received to expand the scope of practice."

Most of the services that support neurosciences are not new to the hospital, however.

"We've taken care of Dr. Manguoglu's patients for years and have commonly had neurosurgical patients come back to Salina after they've had surgery at a larger facility so they could be closer to home for their rehabilitation," says Patti Aumick, P.T., director of Rehabilitation Services at Salina Regional. "From a rehabilitation standpoint we're not expecting many new types of patients—just greater numbers."

The greatest increase in surgeries will treat spinal and peripheral nervous system conditions due to the sheer numbers of people who suffer from neck and back pain and loss of sensation in their extremities. These may be cumulative injuries where damage occurs over time or as a result of degenerative changes due to age and disease. The injuries also may be the result of a traumatic



event such as a fall or an abscess caused by infection or tumor.

MORE CRANIAL SURGERIES EXPECTED

Whitlow's training also allows Salina Regional to treat more patients needing cranial surgery, such as those with primary and metastatic tumors, stroke, and injuries as a result of a traumatic accident.

The ability to manage brain bleeds and swelling can be critical when caring for a trauma patient. Greater on-call coverage by the neurosurgeons means more patients from the region will be treated in Salina.

"So many traumas involve a spine or brain injury, that it's nice to have greater capabilities to be able to intervene if needed," says Rachelle Giroux, R.N., trauma services manager at Salina Regional. "We're able to keep more trauma patients in Salina than we have in the past, but there will always be a need to stabilize and transfer patients to a higher level trauma center when needed."

OUTPATIENT CLINICS IMPROVE ACCESS

Patients in north central and north western Kansas are benefiting from shorter drives to receive consultation with a neurosurgeon. Both physicians have established outpatient

clinics to see patients two days a month in the region.

Manguoglu sees patients in WaKeeney at Trego County-Lemke Memorial Hospital on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Whitlow sees patients in Beloit at Mitchell County Hospital on the first and third Mondays of each month.

In a region where many work in agriculture or are self-employed, there's a unique population that both doctors enjoy serving.

"People have always been so welcoming and grateful for the services we provide," Manguoglu says.

"They're very motivated to get better," Whitlow adds. "We find ourselves telling people to pull the reins back during their recovery. Many have felt so bad for so long that you have to convince them to take it slow." ❏

How Can We Help?

Visit salinaregionalneurosurgery.com to learn more about the services provided, or call Salina Regional Neurosurgery at 785-823-1032 for more information.

