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**Truman Medical Centers Tackles Secretary's Challenge
To Provide Better Care, Improve Long-term Results and Reduce Costs**

KANSAS CITY, MO– During a visit to Truman Medical Centers (TMC) on Friday, September 30, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius met with medical providers and patients in the Sickle Cell, Cardiac Rehab and Cardiology Centers to learn about the innovative ways that TMC has improved patient care and lowered health care costs.

At the conclusion of the tour, the HHS secretary told the crowd assembled for a panel discussion on the Partnership for Patients that “One of the biggest challenges we have is a fragmented healthcare system that often results in uneven care for patients and costs continue to rise year in and year out. We have an opportunity to tackle that challenge.” She concluded that after her visit, she would be adding TMC to her “show and tell” as she tours hospitals across the country and studies their “best practices” to improve care.

The Partnership for Patients aims to save 60,000 lives by stopping preventable injuries and errors and ultimately reduce health care costs by as much as \$50 billion over ten years. TMC has been on a quest for more than four years to improve care, patient safety and lower healthcare costs for the nearly 100,000 patients it serves each year.

“The Partnership for Patients is truly the intersection of patient safety and quality outcomes and reduced costs,” said TMC President and CEO John W. Bluford. “Our role is to add value not just by reducing healthcare costs but by improving the quality of life for our patients and the entire community.”

For example, about 18 months ago, TMC introduced a program called Passport to Wellness. Passport is designed for those patients who seek emergency care and are repeatedly admitted to the hospital. TMC has taken some creative actions to help these patients and their families make lifestyle changes that will in turn help them better manage their health, resulting in fewer hospital visits. Through guided protocols and team-based care led by a Social Worker

and Registered Nurse who connect patients with their physicians, pharmacists and other care givers, the care team helps patients to better understand their illness, teach them firsthand how to manage it and guide them to becoming their own advocate in managing the disease. A second program, Guided Chronic Care, is structured similarly and focuses on heart failure care. The results have been truly phenomenal with statistically significant reduction in ER visits and hospital admissions. Additionally, pre-program median cost was \$1878 per patient per month, while post program cost is \$819 per patient per month. Other dramatic improvements include TMC Sickle Cell patient readmission rates reduced by 26 percent and asthma patients emergency room visits reduced by more than 23 percent.

“With many of our patients having at least one chronic illness, TMC has worked to customize our care for the specific needs of each patient and, in the long term, improve quality outcomes and improve the overall quality of life for chronically ill patients,” said TMC Corporate Medical Director of Quality Shauna Roberts, MD. “It seems counterintuitive, but our goal is to keep more patients out of our hospital.”

But when the chronically ill do need inpatient care, TMC is focused on improving their safety as well. Because many chronically ill patients are at risk for falls or other injuries, TMC has strengthened its procedures. All at-risk patients are given a yellow bracelet and grip footwear, and special bed alarms. Their chart, electronic record and doorway are marked to help clinical staff be aware of the vulnerability of the patient for falls. With these procedures and advanced training for clinical staff, TMC has reduced patient falls by 14 percent.

TMC has also worked to reduce hospital-acquired pressure ulcers, a danger for patients who are not regularly mobile. Upon admission, a skin-care team examines a patient and notes any pre-existing skin issues within their record. Through the use of a state-of-the-art electronic medical record system, a picture can truly be worth a thousand words. Any pre-existing skin issues or other areas of concern are also photographed and placed into the patient’s record so that physicians and nurses can monitor those areas throughout their inpatient care. State-of-the-art patient beds/technology – helps turn patients regularly and keep their skin aerated and dry. These efforts have led TMC to an impressive 73 percent reduction in hospital-acquired pressure ulcers.

About TMC

Truman Medical Centers is a not-for-profit two acute-care hospital health system in Kansas City. The TMC Health System includes TMC Hospital Hill, TMC Lakewood, TMC Behavioral Health, the Jackson County Health Department and a number of primary care practices throughout Eastern Jackson County. Recently named one of the nation’s top academic medical centers, TMC is the primary teaching hospital for the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Dentistry and specializes in asthma, bariatrics, diabetes, women’s health, and trauma services. For more information, please call (816) 404-3785 or visit www.trumed.org

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