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per hour.”

Fraser, who has been with Methodist Health System for 22 years, said his organization is ramping up for the myriad of compliance reporting and analysis required of the 2010 law. Fifteen new positions have been created at 8511 West Dodge Road where employees provide to each affiliate services that include accounting, finance, billing, collections, management engineering, marketing human resources and information technology and network development.

“We haven’t seen the end of additional new positions either,” Fraser said. “Also the information technology challenges are never ending and the new sources of communication available to consumers are a major reason behind it.”

Methodist Hospital’s president and CEO Stephen L. Goeser, a 35-year veteran of the health care industry, said Methodist is poised for the changes coming down from the federal level because it already has efficiencies in places such as its Shared Services Systems entity — established in 1969 — which is a regional medical and surgical supply distributor and full-service laundry serving about 650 health care institutions in a five-state area.

Efforts of a value-analysis team at Methodist over the past two years has resulted in nearly $15 million in savings.

“We’ve been working on achieving great staffing efficiencies and achieving non-salary expense reduction,” Goeser said.

He said Methodist Hospital had more discharges in 2012 than any other hospital, according to Nebraska Hospital Association statistics, and is well positioned for the changing regulatory atmosphere of the Affordable Care Act. Professional Research Corporation analysis — based on patient satisfaction surveys — has top-of-mind awareness (name recognition) and is the market share leader in the Omaha-Council Bluffs market.

Fraser oversees affiliates that include Methodist Hospital, Methodist Women’s Hospital, Methodist Jennie Edmundson Hospital in Council Bluffs, 21 Methodist Physician Clinics in Nebraska and southwest Iowa, Nebraska Methodist College-The Josie Harper Campus, Methodist and Jennie Edmundson foundations and Shared Service Systems.

Nebraska Methodist Health System is among the top five employers in the metro area.

Work is being completed on Nebraska
Methodist Hospital’s 700-stall new employee parking garage. One additional floor was added to the structure while reducing its overall footprint.

The hospital is a not-for-profit, 423-bed acute care facility with more than 2,000 full-time employees and 451 physicians on its active staff.

About 22,000 patients are admitted annually.

Methodist Health System has joined with The Nebraska Medical Center and their affiliated physicians to form an Accountable Care Alliance. This partnership is being developed to reduce costs to patients and to improve quality and efficiency of patient care across the two health systems.

Fraser said the alliance will be structured like an accountable care organization — one of the models being considered by the federal government under health care reform as a way to reduce health care costs. Such an entity is an integrated health care delivery system that relies on a network of primary care physicians, specialists and hospitals that are held responsible for the quality and cost of health care to a defined patient population.

“It leverages what we are good at and what UNMC is good at, raises quality and minimizes cost and controls with payers both government and private,” Fraser said.

Caregivers, he said, are being asked under the recent federal law to switch from a volume-driven incentive to value/quality incentive and at a cost-efficient price.

Methodist Hospital, which moved from 36th & Cuming streets to its new nine-story tower in 1968, added a second tower in 1981 and in 1991 another addition of 55,500 square feet was constructed to house the Methodist Estabrook Cancer Center. An additional 20,400 square feet was constructed nine years ago to house two new linear accelerators, as well as the area’s only Leksell Gamma Knife.

Goeser, who is in his ninth year with the institution, said the hospital has been a regional leader in the number of surgeries performed. Work was started in January on a two-year construction of a surgical renovation and expansion project that is budgeted for $90 million.

The expansion will include three additional operating rooms, including two heart and cardiovascular suites. While 15 operating rooms will offer more flexibility in scheduling procedures, Goeser said another important improvement is that operating room size will increase from 425 square feet to 650 square feet.

“Having additional space in each room is becoming a standard due to the technology support machinery needed in each operating room,” Goeser said.

Fraser said the innovations are a continuation of a plan to continually assess facility needs.

Two years ago the hospital opened a $22 million pathology center and Schenkken Pavilion on its campus. The facility’s 42,000-square-foot laboratory serves individuals, physicians, clinics and hospitals throughout a three-state area with pathology services. Of additional interest is its molecular laboratory for genetic testing.

Goeser said another important decision, which was made about 12 years ago, involved construction of Methodist Health West, a $17 million ambulatory care center at 162nd Street and West Dodge Road. Patients there were among the first in the region to benefit from a high-tech networking system that immediately transfers filmless digital X-ray images between medical facilities for faster diagnosis and treatment.

“It was innovative at that time for our testing site to be away from the hospital,” Goeser said.

Fraser said another innovative step was taken a year ago when Nebraska Methodist Health System, The Nebraska Medical Center and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska announced the development of a “select-tier” health care network and health care products under the name “Select Blue.”

“This collaboration is the kickoff to more affordable care, which is one of the goals of health care reform,” Fraser said. “Independent of an employer-based plan, this provides families and individuals with access to higher quality health care at an affordable price.”

The network offers internationally recognized cancer and transplant treatment, leading neurology and cardiology programs, complete women’s care and a center of excellence for orthopedic and sports medicine and with better-coordinated care for consumers.

Additional coverage is expected to be added under the initiative.

Late last month, Methodist Hospital was informed that it had earned its third straight Magnet designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Goeser said considerable space was opened on Methodist’s main 84th Street campus three years ago with the opening of Methodist Women’s Hospital. The new facility on 38 acres at 192nd Street and West Dodge Road last month set records as 381 babies were delivered and another 80 were cared for in the neonatal intensive care unit.

More than 10,000 babies have been delivered in the facility’s first three years.

Sue Korth, vice president and COO of the facility, said that while she can’t speak to national trends, the concept of a separate women’s health center is a relatively new idea for the Midwest.

Methodist Women’s Hospital and the Methodist Physicians Clinic Women’s Center nearby at 707 N. 192nd St. provide care for women from their teens through their aging years. A differentiating factor is the “one-stop shop” approach from ob-gyn services, pediatrics, family practice, to physical therapists to pelvic pain and sexual medicine.

“Once we opened our doors we wanted to continue being the metro leader in deliveries and grow to be number one for NICU care,” Korth said. “The two go hand-in-hand.”

She said a reason for the record-setting numbers generated by the NICU is the use of a variety of technology components for surgical procedures for women such as hysterectomies and urogynecology procedures, among others.

Korth, who has more than 30 years of medical management experience, said the specialty-focus on the hospital has enabled planning and procedures to be fine-tuned well beyond the latest in technology such as the da Vinci robot system for surgical procedures.

Processes are in place for emergencies.

“A hemorrhage cart, a common word or statement in a process that alerts the team to a situation at hand . . . these are the key to our teamwork and addressing a situation,” Korth said. “These are the difference makers.”

Goeser, who joined Methodist Hospital in 2004 as vice president, said the women’s campus approach also makes sense economically.

Fraser said Council Bluffs’ Methodist Jennie Edmundson Hospital, which has been in the Methodist Health System since 1994, is seeing growth as a 230-bed regional medical center serving about 250,000 residents in southwestern Iowa.

It employs a workforce of 430 full-time and 148 part-time staff and has 157 staff physicians. The facility has southwest Iowa’s only accredited cancer program and offers radiation oncology services.

“It’s the only hospital in this region that offers nationally-accredited cancer and breast cancer programs while also featuring southwest Iowa’s only advanced wound center.”
Fraser said, “With three hyperbaric chambers available, hyperbaric treatments began to be offered in March of 2010.”

Each of the chambers features high-pressure oxygen to facilitate healing of difficult wounds.

Fraser said Nebraska Methodist College, with roots going back to 1891, has an enrollment of more than 700 students, up from about 500 in 2011.

“The demand for medical education has increased because while the economy may be lagging, our industry has continued to show the need for trained students,” he said.

Innovative programs, such as one that allows a student to graduate with an accelerated Bachelor of Science degree in nursing in 15 months, have been important in the growth numbers. Admissions officials also promote nursing’s improved compensation packages nationally which feature a median salary of $65,470 for a registered nurse, and the attractiveness of such work for career-changers who already have a two-year or four-year degree.

Nebraska Methodist Hospital Foundation, a nonprofit corporation founded in 1977, has raised more than $121 million from 1997 through April of this year.