

From health of children, seniors to workplace, organizations reflect on priorities

by Michelle Leach

Not unlike individuals, organizations are reflecting on their overall health and looking to a better new year — one project, service, or patient at a time.

Occupational therapist and certified hand therapist at Methodist Physicians Clinic, Sue Schroeder specializes in treating upper extremity injuries. She highlighted the importance of reducing repetitive strain at work through “ergonomic positioning.”

“Even sitting at our computers, our bodies are at risk of injury,” Schroeder said, adding long hours at the computer every day means your desk takes a toll, and it’s easy to brush off daily aches and subtle pains.

“But proper ergonomic positioning can help reduce the strain and fatigue on your body,” Schroeder said. “Proper positioning and the design of our work area or tools can make all the difference on your neck, back, shoulders, wrists and fingers.”

This includes using a chair that supports the back’s S-curve, and proper placement of the keyboard (close to the natural bend of the elbow) and phone (at arm’s length) — centering work in front of you.

“You may have to adjust the feet on your keyboard or use a wrist rest for comfort,” Schroeder said. “Anything more than a 30-degree wrist extension causes strain.”

Organizations reflect

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same issues it did around this time last year, such as increased compliance for Medicare-certified home care agencies and increased emphasis on quality care (i.e. more publically-reported ratings based on outcome improvement and consumer satisfaction). Hiring quality caregivers in the face of limited resources lingers.

“One of the biggest challenges we have

Walking or stretching every two hours to improve circulation and reduce joint stiffness, and encourages changing position every 45 minutes.

Improving the well-being of children by supporting communities and partnerships is the goal of the Children’s Center for the Child & Community, according to Dr. Richard G. Azizkhan, president and CEO of Children’s Hospital & Medical Center.

Partnerships and evidence-based strategies aim to prevent childhood obesity.

“Obese children are more likely to have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes,” he said; for instance, a grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics helped Children’s develop a statewide shared learning collaborative and tele-monitoring sessions to address health disparities in underserved rural areas and close gaps in access to pediatric specialty care.

“Injuries continue to be the leading cause of death for children,” he said. “The Injury Prevention Program at Children’s is committed to decreasing the incidence of traumatic injuries through multi-faceted, community-based child safety education programs.”

Azizkhan said Children’s and Building Healthy Futures will roll out pediatric vision care through Visionmobile to Omaha Public Schools students in early 2018, with a goal of treating 3,500 students in year one and 6,000-plus by the third year.

faced recently is the ability to recruit qualified staff for the open positions — more so on the skilled level than the paraprofessional level,” she said.

Nebraska Medicine CEO Dan DeBehnke notes the most prominent trends in health care in the last couple of years include: Improved value, health care “consumerism” and technology as a “strategic asset.”

While health care always strives for the best quality and safety, he said, it encompasses patient experience, some of which is driven

“The program team will include a full-time optometrist, an optician, care coordinator and van driver,” he said.

The Hubbard Center for Children is described as a “transformational project” to help Children’s accommodate growing demand for services and improved pediatric care (in 2016, Azizkhan said, the hospital experienced more than 13 percent growth in surgeries and 6 percent overall growth).

The new facility will include a neonatal intensive care, cardiac care and oncology care units; fetal care center; emergency department; and surgical services.

Construction is underway on Children’s main campus at 84th & Dodge streets, and it’s set to open late 2021.

In 2016, Azizkhan said Children’s bought properties from HDR for additional admin, education and research spaces.

“Seizing another rare growth opportunity, Children’s signed a purchase agreement in the fall of 2017 to acquire 12 acres of property adjacent to the HDR buildings along West Dodge Road from Nebraska Methodist Health System,” he said, referring to collaboration with NP Dodge Co. “At closing, Children’s will retain the east parcel of approximately seven acres and buildings and NP Dodge will purchase the west parcel of approximately five acres and a building.”

To, perhaps, the other end of the age spectrum, Interim HealthCare of Omaha owner, President and Administrator/Director of Health Care Services Paula Stapleton, indicated the industry continues to experience many of the

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by technology and a real emphasis on ease of access.

“There has been a pivot in employee benefits to shift some of the cost to consumers,” he said of the consumerism piece. “Price transparency for commodity services — imaging, lab services, primary care and urgent care visits, simple procedures — will become more and more important as patients will be responsible for some, if not all of that cost, out of their own pocket.”



Azizkhan



DeBehnke



Sue Schroeder, occupational therapist and certified hand therapist at Methodist Physicians Clinic.