

# MSSC NEWS

## Physicians must battle vaccine hesitancy



### 10 tips for talking with patients

*The AMA provides some tips to help patients move from vaccine hesitancy to vaccine acceptance.*

- **Understand your patients' concerns** – Is it coming from a cultural or other world view?
- **Ask why patient is hesitant**  
It is a less judgmental way to find out what they may be thinking.
- **Counter any misinformation**
- **Know you are the most trusted information source**
- **Tell patients they need to get the vaccine** – Adult patients say the second biggest reason they don't get an immunization is a "doctor hasn't told me I need it," according to a 2008 study in the American Journal of Medicine.
- **Tailor your message**  
Focus the discussion on how getting a vaccine can help protect a loved one such as a grandparent, a child or someone who is immunocompromised.

► **Address patients' fears about side effects**

► **Prepare your staff to answer questions** – Visit [ama-assn.org](http://ama-assn.org) for COVID-19 vaccine script.

► **Show your vaccination pride**  
Wear a button or sticker showing you received your COVID-19 shot, reinforcing to people the vaccine is safe and you trust in it.

► **Tell stories to make impact**  
Share stories that illustrate why the vaccine is important.

Although 90% of residents in Sedgwick County said they were concerned about the COVID-19 virus, only two-thirds of residents here said they planned to get the COVID-19 vaccine – sparking concern among health officials about reaching the goal of herd immunity, according to a study conducted the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita.

The study, which was conducted in November and December of 2020, surveyed residents in seven counties in south central Kansas, encompassing Butler, Cowley, Harvey, Marion, Reno, Sedgwick and Sumner. Researchers wanted to get an idea of what percentage of the population here would receive the vaccine, and whom they trusted most for information.

Nearly 20% of Sedgwick County residents said they might get the vaccine and 16% said they did not plan to get it at all. And of those who said they would get the vaccine, 50% of them planned to wait at least one to three months or longer after it became available. All this poses a challenge to getting to the point when most of Sedgwick County's popu-

PLEASE SEE **VACCINE**, PAGE 2

## As patient confidence rises, doctors warn not to delay care

Consumer comfort is increasing when it comes to seeing a health care provider, studies show, giving physicians key influence over community health and COVID-19 vaccine confidence, and hopefully stemming the tide of people delaying care over fears of COVID-19.

Some 72% of people are comfortable visiting their primary care physician for a check-up right now, up from 40% last April, according to February data from a Healthgrades' Patient Confidence Study.

The numbers show a renewed sense of confidence as a result of the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine, researchers said. Consumers report increased comfort in participating in medical-related activities (such as visiting a doctor or hospital) and everyday activities (like going to a restaurant or public gathering), especially if 100% of the staff is vaccinated.

PLEASE SEE **CONFIDENCE**, PAGE 3



MARCH  
2021

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and our profession.*

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(316) 683-7557

# Team-based care can improve outcomes, lower costs



**Stephen J. Grindel, DO**  
March President's Message

We as physicians are always looking at ways to improve quality and efficiency in the practice of medicine. Data over the past several years show the team-based approach to medicine gaining traction.

Multiple studies of team-based medicine have indicated improved patient outcomes and the highest quality of care provided with the lowest cost.

Studies performed by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan noted that a physician-led medical home results in significant cost savings along with a decrease in hospital admissions, readmissions and emergency department visits. Insurance companies and physicians both benefit financially. There also is improved quality and patient satisfaction.

Members of the team include nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, medical assistants, dietitians, physical therapists and pharmacists all working together to improve the quality of patient care. Staff members need to be working at the top of their licenses to allow for employee satisfaction along with efficiency in patient care. This leads to less physician burnout.

In specifically looking at nurse practitioners in independent practice, the state of Oregon has allowed unrestricted practice

for many years. In retrospective studies, this has not expanded access in rural and underserved areas. Meanwhile, states that require supervision of nurse practitioners have had the opposite effect, with more NPs in rural and underserved areas.

Another factor in looking at nurse practitioners is the increased cost of care. Non-physicians order far more diagnostic tests and have a 400% increase in skeletal X-ray exams, according to studies looking at Medicare claims data. In addition, they prescribed 20% more opioids and antibiotics. None of these factors improves quality or cost of care.

Another concern regarding nurse practitioners working without supervision is the safety of patients. The time required for training a nurse practitioner is 500-750 hours, in contrast to a physician's training of approximately 16,000 hours. We want the best-trained individuals to lead our health care teams.

For many years APRNs have been lobbying the Kansas Legislature for independent practice. This year's bills failed to pass either the House or Senate health committees. However, the House bill was "blessed" by House leadership, which kept it alive until the end of this month.

The team approach to health care can allow for improved access to care, enhanced quality and greater continuity of care with improved patient satisfaction. As a medical society, we need to advocate for the best health care for our patients, which includes a physician-led, team-based approach to medicine.

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## VACCINE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

lation is immune to COVID-19, thus providing indirect protection—or herd immunity—to those who are not immune to the disease.

"We will not achieve herd immunity with 65% of Sedgwick County residents getting vaccinated," said Elizabeth Ablah, PhD, MPH, a population health professor and researcher with KUSM-W. "To achieve herd immunity and improve the health of their patients, our physicians need to address the concerns of Sedgwick County residents."

That may be a viable plan. The survey found that 84% of Sedgwick County residents listed doctors/medical providers as their most trusted source of information, followed by researchers at 82%, pharmacies at 75%, and government agencies at 74%.

The least trusted sources were the news at 37% and social media at 7%, thrusting physicians to the forefront of educating and encouraging their patients to get vaccinated against coronavirus.

"Physicians will have to take a lead in letting their patients know the importance of getting a vaccine that is safe and very effective," said Garold Minns, MD, Sedgwick County's public health officer. "I think PSAs are planned, but there is so much politics and false information on social media sites that a personal statement by one's physician will be needed to overcome the falsehoods that are being propagated."

That's why the American Medical Association in December wrote a letter to the top executives at Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube imploring the social media platforms to share timely, accurate and transparent information on the vaccine from trusted public health institutions, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"This task becomes even more significant in the face of multiple, sophisticated disinformation campaigns targeting the American people by foreign governments through proxy news sites, social media personas and other means, as documented by the U.S. State Department," AMA CEO James Madara, MD, wrote. "Your vigilance will provide significant lift to efforts by leading health care organizations to overcome vaccine hesitancy and promote widespread vaccine acceptance at a moment when vaccinations are critical."

Physicians will have their work cut out for them as they face real fears—unfounded or not—about vaccine side effects and safety. Folks in Sedgwick County leery about getting the vaccine said they were most concerned about long-term side effects (61%), safety (51%), and that the risks of the vaccine outweighed the benefits (38%).

More than 30% of residents also felt the vaccine would not be effective. To a lesser degree, many people worried they might be allergic to it or couldn't afford it, and nearly 20% of people surveyed suspected the vaccine would give them COVID-19. Just over 10% of the population in Sedgwick County said it would refrain due to personal, religious, moral or ethical reasons, and another 10% cited a lack of access to a health care provider.

"A lot of people are still sick from COVID and are dying from COVID—so you have to ask yourself, do you want to take your chances with the COVID-19 vaccine or the infection?" said Diana Crook, MD, with Lakepoint Family Physicians. "I really try to educate my patients. COVID is not an innocuous bug. It is dangerous. If I can take it, you can take it. We all need to take our chances with it—not with the infection."



**DR. CROOK**

# Wichita doctors reach out to Arabic-speaking communities

Vaccine hesitancy and misinformation about side effects is not just a local problem. It is a global issue. So some Wichita physicians and colleagues in the U.S. are working to dispel fears and educate Arabic-speaking people here in Sedgwick County and around the world.

Ascension hospitalist Chady Sarraf, MD, U.S. president of the International Lebanese Medical Association, along with infectious disease physician Maha Assi, MD, have put together a short video featuring Arabic-speaking doctors

around the U.S. addressing specific myths surrounding the vaccine. Posted on Facebook (fb.watch/4gQdevoLIQ/), the video has gone viral, reaching hundreds of thousands of viewers in Lebanon and around the world.

"We have to be consistent in our message," Sarraf said. "You have to start somewhere."

Sarraf also helped the Sedgwick County Health Department translate palm cards about the vaccine, and joined several Wichita doctors in a national video showing them getting vaccinated.



▲ CHADY SARRAF, MD, GETTING HIS COVID-19 VACCINE IN JANUARY

## CONFIDENCE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Increasing patient confidence is good news for health care, but MSSC physicians are still seeing too many patients who waited too long to seek treatment for potentially serious medical issues.

In fact, 32% of practices among Wichita-area physicians saw a decrease of 25-49% in patient volume during last year's stay-at-home order, according to an MSSC 2020 survey.

That means many people stopped seeking help when they needed it most, leading to sicker patients when they finally sought care for non-COVID-19 illnesses, physicians said.



DR. CHANG

"What we're seeing is patient acuity and mortality has increased," said Howard Chang, MD, an emergency room physician and medical director at Ascension Via Christi's emergency department. "This is probably the highest acuity I've ever seen in Wichita. We shouldn't have patients not wanting to see a physician because they are afraid of COVID."

Those sentiments were echoed by physicians throughout the county.

Hematologist-oncologist Quoc Truong, MD, with the Cancer Center of Kansas, recounted a story of a young woman he saw in clinic earlier this month who had noticed a breast lump about six months ago. The woman never notified her primary care doctor because she was afraid of going to the doctor's office or hospital due to COVID-19.

This patient started getting headaches, then had a seizure and ended up in the hospital. "Subsequently, we found out she's got a triple-negative breast cancer, which is a very aggressive breast cancer that moves quickly," Truong said.

Had the patient sought medical attention when she first noticed the lump, there was a high chance of curing the cancer, he said.

"Unfortunately, when we found her, since it penetrated her brain already, it is considered stage 4 and is no longer curative," he said. "We can treat it to palliate it, but we can no longer cure it. That's one of the stories where COVID has impacted patients. We've gone from cure to devastating circumstances."

Interventional cardiologist Wassim Shaheen, MD, said he saw a patient this month in clinic who had recently experienced chest pain but didn't want to go to the hospital. The patient convinced himself it was indigestion and waited.

Several days later, an EKG revealed the man had had a heart attack and his artery was 100% blocked. Although revascularization was performed, Shaheen said the effort isn't as meaning-



DR. TRUONG

## Consumer comfort with essential and non-essential activities *COVID-19 Patient Confidence Study*



72%

are comfortable visiting their primary care physician for a check-up tomorrow.

69%



seeing a specialist

53%



going to a restaurant

52%



Staying in a hotel

54%



having an elective procedures at a hospital

36%



traveling via airplane

Source: Healthgrades.com

ful because the man's heart muscle is now damaged and can never be fully repaired – all because he waited and missed that golden window for treatment.

"Now this gentleman will have to live with his congestive heart failure and damaged heart muscle (which affects his) quality of life as well as quantity of life," Shaheen said. "That's why we stress, if you think you're having a heart attack – or any medical problem – please seek medical attention. Our ERs in this community are open for you anytime 24-7 and are very safe."

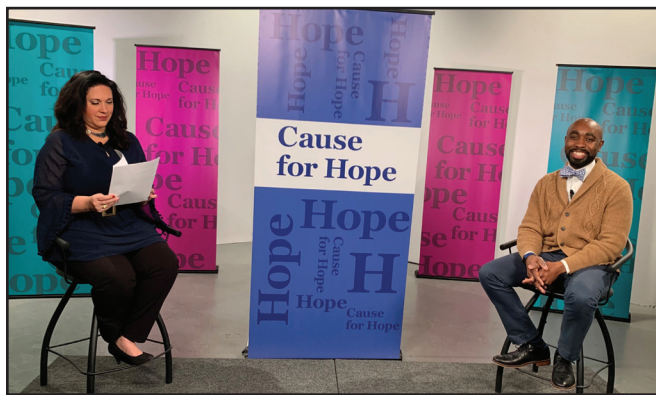
Although the COVID-19 vaccine is fueling optimism for the future and more confidence when seeking medical care, COVID-19 still remains top of mind for most people.

The Healthgrades survey found that 81% of people are concerned that COVID-19 will impact their or their family's health.

"Our work is not done yet," said Ascension hospitalist Chady Sarraf, MD. "Our job is to educate about not delaying care and taking the vaccine so we can have that leverage."



# MSSC physician promotes mental health with wellness show



**ABOVE:** CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIST LARRY MITNAUL, MD, AND JOURNALIST PILAR PEDRAZA CO-HOST *CAUSE FOR HOPE*, A PBS KANSAS NINE-MONTH SERIES THAT EXPLORES FAMILY MENTAL WELLNESS. **BELOW:** DR. MITNAUL INTERVIEWS WSU'S JESSICA PROVINCES, PHD.



Mental health issues have taken a front-row seat over the past year as families deal with the fallout from COVID-19, community restrictions and other unprecedented changes in their lives stemming from the pandemic.

Child and adolescent psychiatrist Larry Mitnaul, MD, has taken his popular YouTube videos that encourage families and kids struggling with mental well-being and has channeled them into a new monthly television series called "Cause for Hope," airing for the first time this month on PBS Kansas.

"That has been an interest of mine, how to communicate about mental health and destigmatize it; to communicate about it in an approachable way," Mitnaul said.

The 30-minute show with co-host and local journalist Pilar Pedraza was born from those ideas and aims to address family wellness in the Kohl's Cares-funded teen suicide prevention initiative with Ascension Via Christi and PBS Kansas.

"The goal is to communicate health and resilience," Mitnaul said. "COVID really brought about the perfect storm of people being at home, people feeling isolated and looking for ways to both connect and nourish those connections they had prior to social distancing and masking."

Topics include depression, anxiety and bullying, and initially will span nine monthly episodes. Episodes will air at 8 p.m. on the last Thursday of each month, starting March 25.

Mitnaul also appears in one of six "Mental Wellness Moment" PSAs appearing on KWCH that feature Wichita police Chief Gordon Ramsay, Wichita State University men's basketball coach Isaac Brown, and others. A \$100,000 Kohl's Cares grant also is funding a Suspenders4Hope program with Ascension Via Christi and WSU focused on teen suicide prevention.

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# ROSTER UPDATE

Keep your 2021 roster current with this information.

Key: [BC] Board Certified [F] Accredited Fellowship [R] Residency [AT] Additional Training [F\*] Unaccredited Fellowship

## REINSTATE TO ACTIVE



**Caryn N. Bryant, MD**  
[R] Obstetrics & Gynecology  
HealthCore Clinic  
OFF: 691-0249  
FAX: 691-9939  
2707 E 21st St N, 67214  
NPI: 1215138375

*Laborist at Via Christi St. Joseph 2008-15. Active MSSC member 2009-15.*

## CHANGES

**Nisha Agasthya, MD**  
[BC] Pediatric Critical Care Medicine  
Wesley Medical Center - Pediatric Critical Care

**Mohammed F. Ali, MD**  
[BC] Pediatric Nephrology  
Children's Mercy Wichita Specialty Clinics

**Mahdi M. Alsaleem, MD**  
[BC] Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine  
Children's Mercy Wichita - St. Joseph

**Shubika G. D'Souza, MD**  
[BC] Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine  
Pediatrix Medical Group

**Heartland Dermatology and Skin Cancer Center, PA**  
New west-side location as of 4/5/21:  
13213 W 21st St N, 67235  
Same phone, FAX

**Denis D. Knight, DO**  
NMC Health-Family Medicine North Amidon  
OFF: 838-8585  
FAX: 838-6222  
3443 N Amidon, 67204  
e.mail: denisdwightknight@icloud.com

**John F. McMaster, MD**  
Mail address: PO Box 782497, 67278  
Office appointments: 101 S Webb Rd, 67207

**Jerry E. Niernberger, DO**  
Aetna – Medical Director – Heartlands  
North Central Territory  
OFF: 250-8508  
FAX: 609-2346  
9401 Indian Creek Parkway S-1300  
Overland Park, KS 66210  
email: jniernberger@aetna.com

**NMC Health-Family Medicine North Amidon**  
(formerly North Amidon Family Physicians)  
Same address, phone and FAX

**Matthew B. Powell, MD, MPH**  
[BC] Pediatric Critical Care Medicine  
KUSM-Wichita Pediatric Hospitalist

**Monica C. Quinn, DO**  
[BC] Pediatric Critical Care Medicine  
Wesley Medical Center - Pediatric Critical Care

## CORRECTIONS

**Penny E. Jeffery, MD**  
OFF: 691-0249

**Michael L. Su, MD**  
NPI: 1245617406

## DROPPED

**Brenda L. Harkins, MD** – Moved out of state  
**Margaret R. Yoder, DO** – 3/8/21

## RETIRED

**John M. Donovan, MD** – 1/1/21  
**Milton H. Landers, DO, PhD** – 4/1/21  
**Kimberly K. Snapp, MD** – 10/22/20

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# MSSC NEWS

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