



Last year's addition of a 60,000-square-foot Medical Plaza 2 (at right) to the Platte Valley Medical Center, added significantly to the medical center's footprint 10 years after the hospital and Medical Plaza 1 were occupied. *Local Color photo*

# Decade adds healthy dose of growth

By Mark Humbert

**A**lmost 10 years ago (July 10, 2007), Platte Valley Medical Center opened its doors to its new campus, with a \$138 million three-story, 98-bed hospital and attached three-story Medical Office Building.

My, has it grown, and grown – in every way.

In the past 10 years, based on a timeline provided by PVMC, it opened the new campus and within it:

- The cardiac catheterization lab;
- Its first satellite medical plaza at Turnberry Marketplace (104th Avenue and Colorado 2);
- Created Total Joint University for its orthopedic patients;
- Became a Planetree Affiliate (2010 – increasing its emphasis on patient-centered care and establishing its 10 Pillars of Healing);
- Opened the High Plains Heart and Vascular Center;
- Launched the eCareNet electronic medical records system;
- Started its Primary Stroke Care Center and a Nurse Navigator program;
- Created the ProHealth Wellness

## Big Picture

Program;

- Was first in Colorado to implant the world's smallest heart monitor, the Medtronic Reveal LINQ Insertable Cardiac Monitor System;
- Earned its Planetree Designation (2014);
- Opened the Platte Valley Medical Plaza in Reunion;
- Signed its affiliation agreement with SCL Health System;
- Opened Platte Valley Medical Plaza in Fort Lupton;
- Opened Apex Surgical Partners;
- Was the first hospital in Colorado to perform the drug-coated balloon procedure for Peripheral Arterial Disease;
- Began integration of the PVMC/SCL Health System;
- Opened the 60,000-square-foot Platte Valley Medical Plaza 2;
- Opened Spectrum Medical Imaging (outpatient medical imaging);
- Opened Advanced Wound Center and Hyperbarics;
- Became a Level III Trauma Center;
- And began construction on a

second Cardiac Catheter Lab;

- Numerous awards and recognition for excellence in patient care.

Since 2007, PVMC also has added 50 new physicians.

"One thing that hasn't changed is some great people," PVMC President and CEO John Hicks said, alluding to the community support for the original hospital fund drive in 1960, the millions raised communitywide for the 2007 campus and the hospital personnel that put the patient first.

The number of staffers in the "Platte Valley health-care enterprise" also has grown by "500 to 600 people," Hicks said. "The first few years after we came out here the economy pulled back. But we sure made up for it since then.

"In fact, as we sit here today we are re-engaging the master plan program for the campus: We are growing out of space – often at our bed capacity – and we have to look at the surgery program. We have to come back and look at it."

Personnel numbers aren't likely to change too much with the new affiliation with SCL, Hicks said.

"Even though a number of functions will move off this campus to



**Platte Valley Medical Center's Wound Center medical director, Dr. Ilka Nowak, stands next to one of the new hyperbaric chambers.** *Platte Valley Medical Center photo*

corporate headquarters and Central Services in Broomfield, we will backfill those way more than those who leave," he said. "We'll never see any kind of dip. We will have more back-office jobs performed (here)."

PVMC spokeswoman Charmaine Weis said that although the integration with SCL began almost two full years ago, "we have seen what things need to be integrated and how: 2017 will be the year of integration."

The biggest step might be electronic, rather than personnel.

"Our entire electronic backbone encompasses 208 different software programs, and they're all linked," Hicks said. "Those will change from our platform to the system platform. That goes live June 1.

"It's a big undertaking. The way we currently do things will change: When you put new kinds of systems in place, often your workflow and

work process changes – and it's a lot of change in that regard."

He added that the conversion to the EPIC system would be "front and center to the patient, beginning with check-in. It aligns with all medical protocol, all monitoring, all interventions, the way St. Joseph and National Jewish and Good Samaritan and Lutheran. The way they operate now will be encompassed here."

Weis said most health-care systems in the nation use EPIC software, to the benefit of Platte Valley patients: "Their records will be more broadly accessible.

"It is easier to share information when you are on a similar system," Hicks added. He said there are five health-care systems in Colorado and SCL, Centura and University all have gone to the EPIC system.

"Kaiser is not just insurance – it, too, is a health-care provider," Hicks said. "Kaiser wants us to move over

so we can 'talk.'

"Since joining with a larger system, economics of scale make it less expensive, lowers the cost of acquisition of materials."

The coordinated communications system also points to another way that PVMC has expanded its service line – in shared expertise via partnerships with other hospital systems in addition to SCL.

Before it moved to the Prairie Center campus, Platte Valley developed a partnership with Children's Hospital for neonatal and pediatric care. Hicks said that partnership is strong.

"Now add to that three basic areas greatly helped by SCL Health," Hicks said. "First there's cardiovascular (St. Joseph's), the other is oncology. National Jewish is an affiliate of the same family (it has a joint operating agreement with St. Joseph's), playing a big role up here, in cardiovascular and oncology, as in the interest they have also taken over our Intensive-Care Unit intensivists."

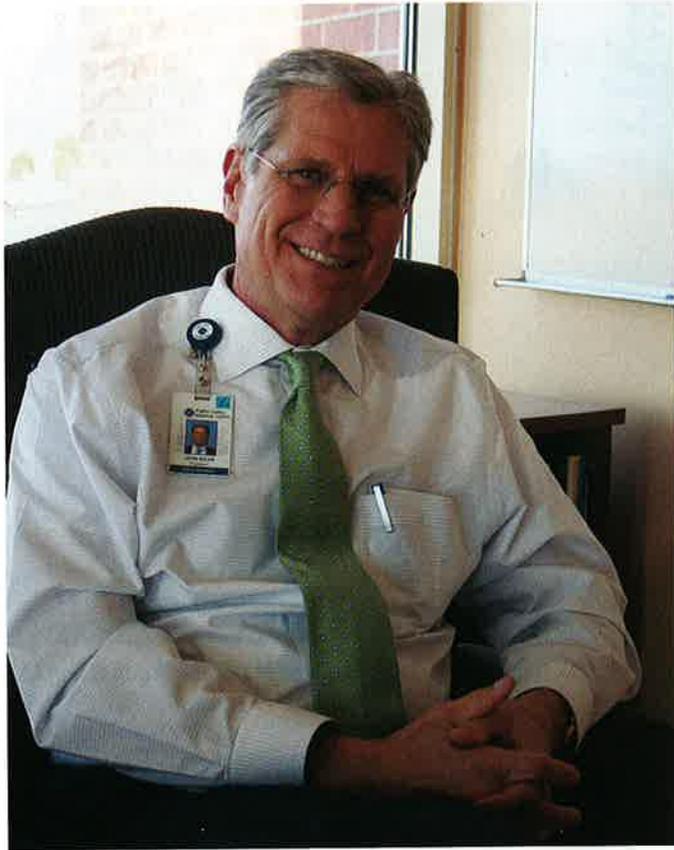
He explained that about 10 years ago, a trend began to replace community physicians, who made rounds to care for their patients in the local hospital, with "hospitalists." It has become rare for family physicians to take care of their patients in the hospital. The "intensivists" are the ICU equivalents.

"They (National Jewish) are THE vascular hospital of this whole Rocky Mountain Region and currently staff 50 ICUs." It is also the premier pulmonary hospital, he said.

"(National Jewish) has been a tremendous help in advancing those programs here."

PVMC also has something to offer to the partnerships: Its Cardiac Catheter Lab was new with the campus in 2007 and added a Chest Pain Center in 2015. A second Cardiac Cath Lab is being added this year.

"We started with the Stroke



Platte Valley Medical Center President/CEO John Hicks credits staff and the community for the hospital's success.

Center and now it's upgraded," Hicks said. "In '17 we will move to a 24-seven cath lab, chest pain and full cardiac program."

And there's still more: On Jan. 26, PVMC cut the ribbon on the new Advanced Wound Center & Hyperbarics. Pushing oxygen-rich cells into the body has been known for years to be an effective way to treat wounds. In the past it was used for bends (a scuba-diving condition from surfacing too quickly) and for burn care. Athletes have been using hyperbaric treatments for several years as well.

Hicks said it would be the only wound-care program in the northern part

of the Denver area, because when St. Anthony's Medical Center moved to its new campus off 144th Avenue, its hyperbaric center was left behind and had to close down.

"As a result, we're flooded," he said. There had been a hyperbaric wound-treatment center in the old St. Joseph's campus. It's a treatment being used for diabetic wound care.

Finally, the network apparently is growing by bringing back an old-school concept. A local physician recently related that SCL Health has reached out to community physicians – possibly reversing a 10-year trend in the other direction and making yet another investment in the community. ●

## Awards and recognition

2007

- PVAS – Colorado Ambulance Service of the Year Award

2008

- Received Avatar International's Exceeding Patient Expectations

Award

2010

- Platte Valley Medical Center celebrated its 50th Anniversary

2011

- The Joint Commission National Top Performer on Key Quality

Measures award

2012

- Named a Top 10 Hospital by *Consumer Reports*

2013

- The Joint Commission National Top Performer on Key Quality

Measures award

2014

- Became Planetree Designated
- The Joint Commission National Top Performer on Key Quality

Measures award

2015

- Achieved Chest Pain Center Accreditation

2016

- Became Level III Trauma Center

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