School of Medicine offers three new clinics to serve Nevadans

With a mission of improving the health of Nevada’s diverse population, the University of Nevada School of Medicine has recently added several new medical services to the school’s clinical offices in Reno and Las Vegas to help meet the growing health care needs of the state. As the state’s only public medical school, the research-intensive, community-based School of Medicine has served Nevada’s residents statewide for more than 40 years.

Patient-Centered Family Medicine

The School of Medicine’s Patient-Centered Family Medicine clinic is a new, primary care program located on the Reno campus in the Thelma B. and Thomas P. Hart Center for Community Wellness and Sports Medicine. The program focuses on organizing medical care around the patient, working in teams and coordinating and tracking care over time.

“Our primary goal is to give patients the best possible medical care by building a trusting partnership between you, as an informed patient, and the health care team. The center of this team is you, the patient,” said Dr. Daniel Spogen, chair of Family and Community Medicine in Reno, who spearheaded the new program.

Educating patients so that they can make the best health care choices possible is a top priority at Patient-Centered Family Medicine, which complements the existing Family Medicine Center in the Brigham Building.

“The patient with the proper education can participate in their health care,” Spogen said. “Armed with that information, they tend to make better health care decisions.”

The team approach involves physicians overseeing and directing patients’ health care. Other health care professionals including nurses, nurse practitioners, dieticians and physical therapists work together with the physicians to provide care that is coordinated and sensitive to patients’ needs.

With collective responsibility for patients’ health, clinic staff take the initiative to call to remind patients to make appointments for routine preventative care, such as blood pressure checks, lab work, gynecological exams and well-baby care.

“Until now, the patient had to remember to make an appointment to come in for care. We are taking some of that pressure off,” Spogen said.

Other patient resources, including round-table group visits centered on a particular condition and webcam chats between patients and providers, are also planned.

The Patient-Centered Family Medicine clinic is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Appointments may be made by calling (775) 682-8200.

Travel medicine

The prospect of travel abroad can be exciting, yet daunting. In addition to deciding where to stay, what to see and booking transportation, there is something else to consider: Will your destination affect your health?

Travel to many parts of the world, whether for a professional conference or an exotic vacation, means taking extra precautions to ensure a healthy stay outside the United States.

Those planning a trip overseas, especially to an underdeveloped country, now have a School of Medicine resource in northern Nevada offering pre- and post-travel health consultations, including an in-depth analysis of a traveler’s itinerary and assessment of potential health risks that might arise.
Dr. Steven Zell, a board certified internist, who is also certified by the International Society of Travel Medicine, offers age- and gender-specific adult preventive health exams and provides patients with recommendations for appropriate screening and laboratory testing to optimize health while traveling, especially to underdeveloped countries. He is located in the School of Medicine’s Internal Medicine and Multispecialty Clinic at 1500 East Second Street, Suite 302, in Reno. The clinic is certified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to administer the Yellow Fever vaccine, required for travel to some countries in sub-Saharan Africa and tropical South America.

While not required, vaccinations against Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid fever and influenza, as well as boosters for tetanus and polio are often recommended prior to travel, based upon one’s itinerary and past vaccination history. In addition to any required or recommended vaccines, the School of Medicine’s travel service includes advice on avoiding common travel medical conditions such as diarrhea.

Through the International Society of Travel Medicine, Zell has access to a network of more than 1,400 travel experts and colleagues worldwide. Through the society, he can help arrange medical care for travelers abroad or get current medical updates on global health risks in specific destinations.

Travel medicine appointments with Zell may be scheduled by calling (775) 784-7500.

**Diabetes center**

Diabetes is a chronic metabolic condition that affects many organs in the body. Nearly 26 million people in the United States have diabetes and as many as 79 million more have prediabetes, according to the CDC. And the rate is increasing.

By 2050, one in three adults could have diabetes if current trends continue. When diabetes is not managed adequately, it can result in several serious complications, including loss of vision, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and amputations.

The University of Nevada School of Medicine Diabetes Center in Las Vegas was recently named an accredited diabetes education program by the American Association of Diabetes Educators. This will allow residents of Clark County, which has a nearly 8 percent prevalence of diabetes, increased access to critical diabetes education services.

The Diabetes Center, which is part of the School of Medicine’s Department of Internal Medicine in Las Vegas, affords patients the chance for one-stop clinical care in the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes disorders, according to medical director Dr. Kenneth Izuora.

The Diabetes Center’s multidisciplinary management team is directed by endocrinologists and includes nurse diabetes educators and dieticians, who can address the multiple organ system pathology of diabetes and the complexities of treatment.

“The problem with traditional practice is you don’t have this concentration of providers,” Izuora said. “The new team approach means that there will be multispecialty involvement to ensure the best treatment.”

Diabetes education is a collaborative process through which people with or at risk for diabetes gain the knowledge and skills needed to modify behavior and successfully manage the disease and its related conditions. Services offered by the center, located in the School of Medicine’s Patient Care Center at 1707 West Charleston Blvd., in Las Vegas, include diabetes self-management education, group diabetes classes, and nutrition counseling.

These services are provided by certified diabetes educators, such as Shelley Shockley, R.N.

“We find out what our patients are interested in learning, and then provide them the tools and equipment to help them improve their health,” Shockley said.

The center will also serve as a venue to train medical students and residents, and conduct clinical trials. As a regional center of excellence, the center works to increase diabetes research in southern Nevada in collaboration with scientific investigators throughout the country.

The diabetes center received funding from an $800,000 grant awarded to the School of Medicine’s Department of Internal Medicine as part of an appropriations bill passed by the U.S. Senate.

Open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., appointments may be made by calling (702) 671-6469.