

## **The History of Sedgwick County Health Center**

**Medical care was first provided to Sedgwick County by physicians who treated patient/residents and performed surgery in the physician's homes. In the early 1900's, the community was served by many itinerant physicians. Offices were located in stores, hotels or their homes. A "pest house," located on 10th Street between Ash and Vine, served as a place to quarantine infectious persons.**

**Not until 1921 were efforts made to establish a community hospital. The first community hospital, staffed by five doctors, was located in a 14-room house at 600 West 5th Street. A four-bed emergency hospital, located on the second floor of 101 Cedar Street, began in 1927. A maternity home, located four miles south of Julesburg, operated in the 1930's.**

**In 1932, due to an increase in surgical work and medical treatment, the residence at 301 East 4th Street became a fully equipped hospital. Initially, the hospital had room for six beds as well as the**

**reception and operating rooms. As the need arose, the manager's apartment was converted into patient/resident rooms, increasing the capacity to 12 beds. The kitchen pantry was used as the nursery with babies being placed in baskets on the shelves. About 1940, a maternity home was located at 422 East 5th Street.**

**In the late 1940's a petition was presented to the newly formed Hospital Board of Trustees requesting a public hospital be established in Julesburg and that an annual tax be levied for maintenance and operations. Citizens of the Sedgwick County region raised \$105,000 to match a construction loan from government Hill-Burton Funds and the dedication ceremonies for the new hospital were held on November 19, 1950. The new facility boasted six double rooms, six single rooms, a six-bassinet nursery, up-to-date operating rooms, and a laboratory. Room charges were only \$10 per day!**

**A civil defense "disaster room" with emergency medical equipment and supplies was established in the basement of the hospital in 1954. For several**

**years, the hospital kept busy with 40-70 admissions per month and five doctors on staff.**

**A new \$60,000 wing was added to the hospital in 1958 consisting of six rooms and a solarium. A year later, Sedgwick County residents saw the need for a nursing home and responded with financial help. In November, 1962, a new \$400,000 32-bed nursing home was dedicated.**

**As the need for repair and maintenance of the hospital became apparent, community clubs and individuals volunteered their time and money in giving a much-needed facelift. Out of this renewed interest, the 2-H Club (Hospital Helpers) was formed. The fund-raising efforts of the club enabled purchases of needed emergency and medical equipment. The employees of the hospital and nursing home put together a cookbook to sell as a fund-raising project.**

**Throughout the 1970's memorial funds from concerned individuals/organizations were used to purchase medical equipment. A physician**

**recruitment committee worked diligently to recruit physicians. In the fall of 1980, Valley Medical Clinic, designed to provide offices and treatment rooms for three full-time physicians, was completed on the hospital campus.**

**In 1992, Gateway Medical Foundation was created and continues to be active in fund-raising activities. The foundation supports all aspects of medical care in our community, including the hospital, clinic, nursing home, and living center.**

**In the fall of 1996, the citizens of Sedgwick County approved a 1% sales tax increase. The proceeds of this sales tax funded extensive renovations in the hospital and nursing home and construction of the Jacob J. and Anne B. Walter Memorial Living Center. The Living Center opened in July, 1998 and was named after Jake and Anne Walter, who made a very generous donation toward the construction costs. Four residents moved in on opening day and the building was completely occupied by December 1998.**

**Valley Medical Clinic became a part of the Health Center in March, 1997. The Clinic is certified as a**

**Rural Health Clinic and has locations in Julesburg and Big Springs, NE.**

**The name, Sedgwick County Health Center, was adopted in 1998 to reflect the diverse nature of the organization. No longer just a hospital or nursing home, the Health Center now provides a broad continuum of health and resident care services to the residents of northeast Colorado and the Nebraska panhandle.**

**In 2005 an eight thousand square foot addition was added to the hospital, connecting the hospital and the clinic. It included an expanded emergency area with four rooms, business office and medical records, board room, clinic/hospital reception area, specialty clinic rooms and expanded physical therapy area. Other renovations to the existing building include a new OB area with two rooms, expanded surgical suite, expanded radiology and laboratory areas, and minor updates to patient rooms and hospital nurses' station.**

**The history of the Health Center dates back to the beginning of Sedgwick County. With the continued commitment of our community, staff, and**

**physicians, our history is sure to continue well into  
the future.**

**Written by Doris Heath, R N (Revised 2005;  
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