Sustainable Growth

In the past several years, Emergency Physicians Professional Association (EPPA) has grown on multiple fronts. We continue to serve an increasing number of patients with our hospital partners and in The Urgency Room facilities. Our scribe program is expanding to serve more clinics and healthcare organizations. And we’ve added a large number of physicians and advanced practice clinicians (APCs) to our group.

With this growth comes the opportunity to recommit ourselves to excellence, as we do every year. EPPA remains focused on growing our organization in a sustainable way to protect the expert care we provide. We have strong quality controls in place so we can deliver the kind of medical care our patients and partners trust.

We’re also addressing our growth by making sure our physicians, APCs and staff are healthy and happy. We’ve dedicated people and resources to wellness initiatives across the organization to ensure EPPA is one of the best places to work.

Looking to the future, we’re concentrating on providing high-quality care and a great patient experience at a reasonable cost. We expect to develop expertise in the analysis of acute-care metrics so we can improve quality, emergency department throughput, care standardization and patient outcomes. We’re also navigating healthcare payment reform so we can continue to deliver medicine effectively without putting too much pressure on our communities.

Technology is changing at a frantic pace. We anticipate that our patients and those of our healthcare partners will expect to access healthcare through a variety of modalities. Our initial explorations have shown that the use of technology can potentially boost patient satisfaction and reduce the cost of care. We’re excited about what the future holds for acute-care medicine.

I want to thank all EPPA stakeholders for your partnership and continued trust in our organization. I’m excited to see where our ongoing growth takes us in the year to come.

Rob Thomas, MD
President, Chief Executive Officer
EPPA Leaders

Management Team:

Rob Thomas, MD
President, Chief Executive Officer

Thomas Klassen, MHA
Executive Vice President and
Chief Operating Officer

Carolyn McClain, MD
Medical Director, The Urgency Room

Eric Haug, MD
Medical Director,
Allina Health Buffalo Hospital ED

Luke Dandelet, DO
Medical Director, Allina Health
Cambridge Medical Center ED

Michael Schwenem, MD
Medical Director,
Allina Health Mercy Hospital ED

David Romans, DO
Medical Director, Allina Health Mercy
Hospital—Unity Campus ED

Kurt Belk, MD
Medical Director,
CentraCare Health St. Cloud Hospital ED

John Houghland, MD
Medical Director,
Fairview Ridges Hospital ED

Michael Rock, MD
Medical Director,
Fairview Southdale Hospital ED

Brent Walters, MD
Medical Director HealthPartners
Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital ED

Peter Currie, MD
Medical Director, Quality

Michael Bryant, MD
Director, EPPA Scribe Program

Wendy Laine, MD
Director, Wellness

Timothy Johnson, MD
Reimbursement Advisor

Chad Strathman, JD
General Counsel

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Innovators in Emergency Medicine

EPPA is a leader in the development and delivery of emergency medicine. We’ve operated on the frontlines of emergency medicine since 1969.

We’re dedicated to providing exceptional emergency medical care to the 430,000 patients we see each year.

Mission
EPPA provides an innovative, stable and supportive platform to practice acute-care medicine as an independent group. This framework allows our health professionals the best opportunities to align with our partners in delivering world-class care for our patients.
Award-Winning Team
Four physicians started EPPA. We now have:

- 169 board-certified emergency medicine physicians
- 110 providers and staff at The Urgency Room
- 36 advanced practice clinicians
- 65 administrative staff
- 300 EPPA scribes

Evolving Emergency Medicine
EPPA does more than offer outstanding services to patients. We also provide forward-looking leadership in emergency medicine. Our providers serve in leadership roles, on councils and committees at each of our sites to help our hospital and health-system partners continue to improve the delivery of emergency medicine.

In addition, we’re constantly searching for ways to evolve emergency medicine within EPPA. Here are just a few examples of what we’re exploring right now:

- Ongoing training of our providers and medical staff
- Wellness and work-life balance initiatives to attract and retain the best of the best
- Data analysis to see where we can create even better outcomes
- Technology development to quickly serve patients with acute-care needs
- Virtual scribes to efficiently offer scribe services to more locations

Trusted Partners
Eight hospitals rely on EPPA’s emergency medicine expertise:

- Allina Health Buffalo Hospital
- Allina Health Cambridge Medical Center
- Allina Health Mercy Hospital
- Allina Health Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus
- CentraCare Health St. Cloud Hospital
- Fairview Ridges Hospital
- Fairview Southdale Hospital
- HealthPartners Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital

Acute-Care Providers
Three freestanding facilities provide fast access to emergency medicine providers.

The Urgency Room, which is owned and operated by EPPA, offers patients another option for acute care and reduces the burden on hospital emergency departments.
Quality-Improvement Initiatives

Delivering extraordinary care doesn’t happen by accident. EPPA has long included quality-improvement initiatives to continually find ways to evolve emergency medicine. Dr. Peter Currie, medical director of quality, reports on some of the projects EPPA worked on during the last year.

Care Plans for High-Utilization Patients
Teams at Fairview Southdale and Ridges Hospitals have worked to formalize care plans for patients who visit the ED more than 10 times a year. “We want these complex patients to get appropriate care from the people who can serve them the best,” says Dr. Currie.

The team created 26 new patient-care plans.

**Before:** In a six-month period, patients visited the ED 131 times

**After:** In a six-month period, patients visited the ED 69 times

**Result:** 47% reduction in visits

Pulmonary Embolism Treatment
The quality team worked with the insurer HealthPartners on a project to create a guideline that encourages outpatient treatment of appropriate patients with pulmonary embolism.

Cellulitis Treatment
At HealthPartners Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital the quality team worked on a new pathway for patients with cellulitis. This keeps appropriate patients out of the hospital by setting up rapid follow-up with an infectious disease expert. This pathway is now in effect throughout the entire Park Nicollet care system.

Sepsis Treatment
Sepsis care was a big focus for both Fairview Southdale and Ridges Hospitals. Results were overwhelmingly positive.

**Fairview Southdale Hospital**
- 93% of the time antibiotics were given to septic shock patients within 60 minutes
- 100% of the time the appropriate antibiotic was given
- 95% of the time the appropriate volume of IV fluids were given for fluid resuscitation

**Fairview Ridges Hospital**
- 82.9% of the time antibiotics were given to septic shock patients within 60 minutes
- 100% of the time the appropriate antibiotic was given
- 95% of the time the appropriate volume of IV fluids were given for fluid resuscitation

Mental-Health Treatment
The mental-health population is a big focus at Allina Health Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus. This year, the quality team created a program to deliver provider education in mental-health topics to improve care for mental-health patients within the ED.
The EPPA Scribe Program adds value to patient care and reduces burdens placed on providers, patients, pre-healthcare professionals and healthcare systems through the efficient, high-quality documentation of the healthcare encounter. Additionally, the program is committed to providing students exposure to the realities of a career in medicine and fostering their professional development.

“We continue to be happy with the success of the program,” reports Dr. Michael Bryant, director of the EPPA Scribe Program. “We’re proud to announce a new partnership with M Health University of Minnesota Physicians, through which we’re staffing scribes in primary-care and specialty clinics. An on-campus location gives us an opportunity to both grow and stabilize the EPPA Scribe Program.”

The program enlists pre-healthcare professional students and recent graduates to work with providers in emergency departments and clinics in specialties that include orthopedics, dermatology, oncology, primary care and others. Students create the patient’s medical record in real time so physicians and providers can focus solely on patient care.

Since 2006, the program has given students in-person medical experience while providing a service that has a huge impact on the delivery of care. In addition to clinical experience, students get pre-healthcare mentoring and education. Participating scribes have had immense success in obtaining placements in graduate medical education, and their experience in the program has helped their performance once in school.
Take Note
The clinics and hospital systems where EPPA scribes provide support to physicians discover significant benefits.

- **Physician Satisfaction.** Physicians have more time for patient care and report greater job satisfaction. Scribe availability is a leading topic in provider recruitment and retention.

- **Provider Communication.** Real-time documentation means patient-encounter details are available for seamless communication between members of the healthcare team.

- **Healthcare Access.** Scribes help our healthcare systems provide patients with greater access to clinics, emergency departments and consults.

- **Patient Satisfaction.** Patients report physicians and providers working with scribes spend more time with them and seem less stressed. By removing the distraction of a computer interface between patient and provider, patients feel a sense that the provider is more focused on their care.

- **Productivity.** Scribes help providers see more patients. Scribes also improve the capture of the appropriate relative value units (RVUs) assigned to the care provided.

- **Accuracy.** Documentation completed proximate to the care provided is more accurate, which results in a reduction of denials and an increase in revenue capture.

- **Compliance.** Scribes also serve as accountability assistants by offering provider-directed prompts to ensure quality and safety areas are addressed at the time of care.
Happy Providers Mean Healthy Patients

Wellness has gained traction across the country as a critical part of running any business. And now research shows when doctors and medical staff focus on mindfulness techniques and their own well-being, it has downstream effects that result in better patient communication, connection and even outcomes.

EPPA has committed to physician and provider wellness as a major organization-wide initiative led by Dr. Wendy Laine, EPPA’s newly appointed wellness director.

“The need for more wellness and resilience is in all our lay journals and in the popular press. It’s been a part of the corporate world for many years now, but medicine is just catching up,” says Dr. Laine. “There aren’t many emergency-medicine groups focused on team-member wellness. We’re excited to lead the way.”

Since there’s more than one path to wellness, Dr. Laine and the team of people she works with on the social and wellness committees are creating multiple ways providers and staff can access evidence-based tools to create mindfulness, wellness and resilience.

During the past year, they:

- Created multiple social events to increase the connection between EPPA staff at different hospital sites
- Initiated mindfulness training for physicians and medical staff that the group will roll out to each hospital site
- Created a mindful listening and storytelling station during a staff training day to uncover motivational drivers for physicians and providers—with topics centered around making a connection, making a difference and being appreciated

Working on the frontlines of emergency medicine is exhilarating for EPPA providers. It can also be extremely stressful. Industry wide, burnout among physicians and medical staff is a growing problem. “We’re committed to hiring really good people and taking really good care of them,” explains Dr. Laine. “I want to develop more groups at EPPA so when people go through times of extra stress or crisis, they feel supported.”

In addition to bringing wellness to EPPA, Dr. Laine is also working to create programming at Allina Health Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus as the assistant medical director and vice chair of the emergency department.

“Dr. Laine is a champion of wellness,” says Dr. David Romans, Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus ED medical director. “She has an expertise and a passion for bringing mindfulness and resiliency training to our hospital and to the Allina health system.”

Dr. Laine is excited to take this focus on wellness, mindfulness and resilience to other EPPA sites, where it can benefit both providers and patients. “If we can connect with a patient, there’s a lot of evidence that shows the patient has better outcomes. And if we stay happy and engaged, it’s a win-win.”
A Mindful Approach to Healthcare Reform

In the Moment
Dr. David Romans is working in tandem with Dr. Wendy Laine and other EPPA leaders to promote the value of mindfulness training for physicians and advanced practice clinicians (APCs).

“As chief of staff-elect for Mercy Hospital and medical director of the Unity Campus ED, I’m working to promote the practice of mindfulness among our physicians and APCs to do three things—combat burnout, return joy to the practice of medicine and improve the quality of care we deliver,” says Dr. Romans. Mindfulness is a practice that uses evidence-based techniques to create present-moment awareness that promotes well-being.

Romans has already run mindfulness workshops with senior leaders and system directors. He’s also working with educational partners to bring in mindfulness workshops for all Unity physicians and APCs. “We’re in the process of analyzing and studying metrics, but we don’t have published data on this initiative yet. Anecdotally, though, we’re already seeing positive results.”

Dr. Romans says physicians reported that patient feedback was impacted: Bedside manner was improved and physicians were less rushed, and more empathetic.

“In my opinion, mindfulness is real healthcare reform. It’s the key to creating a sustainable practice,” says Dr. Romans. “If we can establish a culture of mindfulness in healthcare, we can translate that into better vitality for providers—and better care and outcomes for patients.”
I love working in the medical field because you’re challenged every day. You never know what you’re going to see and learn. It keeps the practice of medicine interesting.

Sam Frank, PA-C

Our People

Saving Lives
Dr. Kristi Trussell was featured by Fairview Southdale Hospital in a video documenting the inspiring story of Casey and Emily Parenteau. Casey was treated by Dr. Trussell in the emergency department for a heart problem that resulted in surgery and hospitalization. A week after her husband was admitted, Emily delivered their daughter in the same hospital. You can see the inspiring video at https://eppahealth.com/about-us/news-events.

Professional Service
Dr. Carolyn McClain is serving on the executive committee of the Twin Cities Medical Society as past president of the Board. She also sits on the Board of Directors of MMIC, a medical malpractice insurance company, where she reviews cases. Dr. McClain was featured in “Honoring Choices,” a story featured on KARE 11. Watch the video at https://vimeo.com/192135721/0963f54eaa.

Expanded Care
The EPPA advanced practice clinician (APC) program has grown every year. APCs now provide care at The Urgency Room and most of our hospital partner EDs.
Jason Dukes, APRN, CNP, leads the APC program in the southern EPPA region. He also coordinates the placement of student APCs at all EPPA sites. “Since starting the program, we’ve shown our value by supporting the volume of patients we move through the emergency rooms,” says Dukes. “We reduce some of the burden from our partners and colleagues and help patients get through the emergency department faster. It’s great because we impact patient experience and help EPPA providers deliver excellent care while giving APCs the chance to practice at the highest levels of their licensure.”

Exceptional Training
Colleen Weed, PA-C, leads the APC program at The Urgency Room. She’s also deeply involved with the APC Training Program, which offers group education and pairs new APCs with physicians for one-on-one guidance for up to a year. “There aren’t many places that offer residency programs for new APCs, and emergency medicine is a difficult thing to step into directly out of school. With our training program, we keep new APCs under our wing for up to a year.”

Emily Carlson, PA-C, participated in EPPA’s APC training program in 2015 and later joined EPPA as a provider. “I worked one-on-one with a physician for eight and a half months. Now I work alongside the docs, picking up patients each day. We’re busy and we often get complex patients, but EPPA creates such a nurturing environment. Someone always has your back.”

Full-Circle Scribes
A big measure of EPPA’s success is the number of people who work with EPPA as scribes and return after medical or PA school. Carlson worked in the EPPA Scribe Program in 2011 and 2012. “I worked at Mercy Hospital and Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus. All the doctors were great teachers. They were eager to help us learn,” Carlson says.

Carlson credits her scribe experience with helping her decide what she wanted to do for her vocation. “Being an EPPA scribe was an excellent way to prepare for my career. You get to see what it’s like to care for someone. That’s a huge responsibility—and an honor.”

Danielle Dunham, PA-C, has a similar story. She scribed for EPPA in 2011–12 and went to PA school in 2012–14. “It’s incredibly helpful to see how providers interact with patients,” says Dunham of her experience as a scribe.

In the coming year, several former scribes will be joining the EPPA team after completing medical school with emergency medicine specialties.

Women Leaders
In November, EPPA leaders put together a four-hour Women’s Conference for providers. The event was led by Drs. Amy Cho, Christine Kletti, Wendy Laine, Carolyn McClain and Kristi Trussell.

“We wanted to address issues that are unique to women providers—such as child care, breastfeeding and time off,” reports Dr. McClain.

The group created programming on topics that included: communication with patients and consultants, work-life balance, provider burnout, primary care-giving issues and wellness from a female provider perspective.

“Our providers are doing amazing things,” says Dr. Cho. “They’re providing excellent care for patients in an inherently challenging work environment, often while raising children, dealing with a cancer diagnosis, or managing elder care for family members. Our women providers want to hold the conference regularly because we want to support one another in making our work and lives fulfilling.”
After serving EPPA as an emergency medicine physician for 22 years, Dr. Dave Dvorak retired at the end of the year to focus on other areas of passion. He took three trips in the last year to provide medical relief on the Greek island of Samos to refugees from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

To help humanize the refugee crisis, Dvorak—a singer-songwriter and guitar player—wrote a song called “Refugee Lullaby.” “I tried to put the refugee experience into words and music. I wanted to describe the human experience that a refugee father and son go through,” Dvorak says.

The song was released on his first CD, Things You Cannot Measure, now available on iTunes and on Dvorak’s website. All proceeds from the CD and any live performances will benefit the Boat Refugee Foundation.

“The music has given me an opportunity to talk about the situation overseas to raise awareness. It’s also raising money for the cause,” says Dvorak. “Thanks to my years with EPPA, I’m lucky to be in a position to be able to do a little something to help.”

To purchase the CD, check out davedvorakmusic.com. For more information on the Boat Refugee Foundation, visit bootvluchteling.nl/en.
**Global Reach**

**Haiti**—Dr. Sharon Carmody is visiting faculty for Partners in Health (PIH) at Hôpital Universitaire de Mirebalais, a national 300-bed teaching hospital. PIH is a global health organization committed to improving the health of poor and marginalized people. They operate 12 clinics and hospitals across Haiti. Dr. Carmody has worked regularly since 2014 as core teaching faculty for the hospital’s three-year emergency medicine residency program. The first class will graduate in the fall of 2017.

Dr. Paul Tschetter has also served as a visiting faculty member at Hôpital Universitaire de Mirebalais. “During my time there I was incredibly encouraged by the enthusiasm of the young residents for learning the specialty of emergency medicine,” says Dr. Tschetter. “They have extremely limited resources, but use what resources they have to treat incredibly sick patients to the best of their capabilities.”

**Peru**—Dr. Joseph Lynch is serving as medical director for Programa San Francisco de Asís, a local nonprofit that provides reconstructive surgery to children in Peru with congenital and acquired facial deformities. Dr. Lynch began volunteering in the program in 1983. Since the program’s start, physicians and providers have worked with 6,500 children, and 17 current and former EPPA partners have served as medical volunteers.
Allina Health Buffalo Hospital

Team Building
In July 2016, EPPA began running the emergency department at Allina Health Buffalo Hospital in Buffalo. Since then, the team has worked hard to assimilate into the existing culture. “We’ve got a great group right now that’s a combination of physicians from other EPPA sites and physicians who were on staff here at Buffalo,” reports Dr. Eric Haug, medical director of the Buffalo Hospital ED. “It’s exciting to be able to provide the same level of high-quality emergency medicine outside the metro area and inner-ring suburbs.”

Broader Care
At the same time, the team has introduced several initiatives to standardize and improve care. Dr. Haug and his team are working to keep more patients at Buffalo Hospital. They’re collaborating with a group of specialty-care practitioners who can consult on more complicated cases, which the hospital used to have to send out for admission at a bigger hospital.

Care for stable GI bleeds will now be available during weekdays. Additionally, intensivists may now be consulted via telehealth to assist with critically ill patients in the ICU. “The consultant will be able to manage ventilators, drips and pressor medicines so we can keep septic patients we might not have been able to keep,” reports Dr. Haug.

Added Coverage
The team at Buffalo Hospital will be adding advanced practice clinicians to the ED to ensure their median door-to-doctor time of seven minutes remains low.

Improved Efficiency
The EPPA team is currently working with hospital leaders on a minor remodel of the ED. “We’re adding a couple of rooms to see patients, moving a triage room to a more central location, and creating a bigger and more user-friendly work area,” says Dr. Haug.
Dedicated Leadership

In a new pilot program, EPPA is providing ED leadership to the Allina Health Cambridge Medical Center in Cambridge. EPPA physicians do not work in the medical center’s ED. Instead, Dr. Luke Dandelet is operating as the ED’s medical director, overseeing the hospital’s own group of emergency medicine physicians and medical staff. “We did a lot of background research to determine the strengths and areas of deficiency within the ED,” says Dr. Dandelet.

Standardized Care

Dr. Dandelet’s leadership includes helping to create more standardized emergency medical care for common conditions by creating opportunities for education and information sharing. In one example, Cambridge Medical Center physicians were invited to participate in an EPPA procedure lab with EPPA physicians for ongoing professional education.

Additionally, Dr. Dandelet is providing leadership in quality-improvement initiatives, including sepsis treatment.

Trusted Partners

Hospital leaders asked Dr. Dandelet to join the executive operations group right away. The group consists of heads of each department and the hospital president. “It’s been a wonderful experience to be part of the nerve center of this hospital.”

“A lot of the providers have been here for more than 20 years, and they have incredible pride in this hospital. I’ve really focused on building trust and camaraderie with this exceptional team.”

Dr. Luke Dandelet
Allina Health Mercy Hospital

Big Changes
This year the EPPA team and staff at Allina Health Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids have faced multiple challenges. In addition to merging with Unity Hospital, the emergency department has experienced reduced resource availability and a major construction project that’s decreased capacity.

“Just like when you remodel a house, we’ve gone through a lot of growing pains,” reports Dr. Michael Schwemm, medical director of the Mercy Hospital ED. “I’ve been impressed with our team’s flexibility and willingness to participate in process-improvement projects. The construction gave us an opportunity to have many of our physicians and advanced practice clinicians on process panels and committees to make things work better for our patients.” The construction is scheduled to be complete in the summer of 2017.

Process Review
The EPPA team at Mercy Hospital has worked to break down the hospital and ED flow into several major buckets to improve average times for door-to-discharge and door-to-floor.

“We’re looking at improving the admission process, patient placement and transfers. And we’re working on reducing medical and mental-health boarding that happens in the ED. For our mental-health patients, we want to get them to the right person while they’re in the midst of a crisis. We’ve brought in a group of mental-health specialists to help better serve our patients,” says Dr. Schwemm.

Excellent Care
The team in the Mercy Hospital ED continues to have outstanding management of stroke patients. “We administered TPA more than 90 times last year. We don’t have a neurologist here doing that for us. We’ve embraced that care on our own, and it’s resulted in excellent patient outcomes,” Dr. Schwemm says.
Engaged Partners
“We have 21 physicians and six advanced practice clinicians (APCs) at Allina Health Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus in Fridley. Even with a smaller cohort of physicians and APCs, we have a high level of engagement in quality-improvement initiatives and administration work,” says Dr. David Romans, medical director of the Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus ED. This participation has proven extremely valuable during the merger of Mercy and Unity Hospitals.

As of January 1, 2017, Allina Health Unity Hospital became Allina Health Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus. “For the past 12 months we’ve done a lot of groundwork to facilitate the merger successfully for the Allina Health system,” reports Dr. Romans.

EPPA providers are trusted leaders at Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus.
Dr. Romans is currently serving the hospital as medical director and chief of staff. Three assistant medical directors—Drs. Susan Hafferman, Wendy Laine and Andrew Meister—are working collectively on process improvement within the department. They’re focusing on scheduling, patient flow and wellness. “Dr. Andy Winter has been serving as quality assistant medical director and will be passing that torch to Dr. Steve Hagen. Dr. Ian Moorhead is leading Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus as medical director of trauma services. We have several other people involved in high-level, system-based quality work around sepsis, stroke and infectious disease,” reports Dr. Romans.

Dr. Meister began working with the Allina Health System as an ED liaison on the Disaster Emergency Preparedness Council after working on emergency management protocols for the Ebola virus scare several years ago. In his continued work with the council, Dr. Meister created a workplace-violence educational video, which is now shown to employees throughout the entire Allina Health System.

Community Leaders
The Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus EPPA team is also involved in several projects to build community partnerships. “We’re working in close collaboration with local law enforcement to strengthen our relationships. We want to have a better understanding of our roles and processes and how we can improve the continuum of care for victims of abuse,” says Dr. Romans.

The Healthcare Emergency Responders Operations (HERO) program is an initiative the ED team is developing to meet the specific needs of first responders. “The people who put themselves on the line to help others need a safe, private and high-quality place where they can receive their own care,” says Dr. Romans. EPPA team members have gone out in the field with police officers to better understand the kind of stresses they’re under and how it affects their anatomy and physiology.

Dr. Romans collaborated with Spring Lake Park High School to form Angels in the ED. This ED-specific volunteer program is designed to help students develop compassion and empathy early on as a foundation for possible careers in healthcare. “We’re getting feedback from doctors, staff and patients that the Angels are one of the best additions to our ED in a long time,” says Dr. Romans. “Their spirit, energy and helpfulness really improve the quality of practice for our physicians and staff. And we’re seeing direct patient comments about how much they appreciate the exposure to these volunteers, who take the time to sit and comfort patients through their ED experience.”
Team Building
When EPPA stepped in to run the Emergency Trauma Center (ETC) at St. Cloud Hospital last summer, the biggest immediate challenge was to merge two groups that hadn’t worked together before. “It’s been a top priority to create a collegial relationship between all the providers who didn’t know each other,” says Dr. Kurt Belk, ETC medical director. “Our job is to take care of each other and to take care of our patients. It’s been successful so far, and it can only get better.”

Experienced Leaders
Since arriving in St. Cloud, the newly formed EPPA team has worked on building out the back-end support and procedures to support the ETC. “What makes EPPA a good partner to our hospital is that we offer schedule stability, economic stability and a stable work force with a lot of structure behind it—with our peer review, our coding and billing, and our quality department,” explains Dr. Belk. “We’re trying to limit stress for our frontline providers through supportive infrastructure and systems so they don’t have to worry about those factors—they can just practice medicine.”

Several providers have stepped into leadership roles within St. Cloud Hospital. Dr. Jack Stinogel is the department chair, Dr. Andy Schippel is the vice chair and the quality representative. Drs. Mark Hoffmann and Scott Cline have stepped up to lead as assistant medical directors. And Stacy Schmitz-Jansky is the lead advanced practice clinician. Members of the EPPA team sit on many hospital committees, including the medical executive committee, and the stroke, trauma and sepsis committees.

ED Remodel
Alongside the leadership and cultural changes EPPA has introduced at St. Cloud Hospital, the ETC is also undergoing a physical remodel. The new 51-bed facility with state-of-the-art equipment and design will be complete in 2019.

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Facilities We Serve

- **39** private patient rooms
- **480** hospital beds
- **60,000+** emergency trauma center visits a year
Fairview Ridges Hospital

Substantial Growth
The southern suburbs are booming, and that trend is evident in the growing number of patient visits in the ED at Fairview Ridges Hospital in Burnsville. “We had another year of significant year-over-year growth and are now the largest hospital ED within the EPPA portfolio,” reports Dr. John Houghland, ED medical director. “At the same time, we closed the year with patient satisfaction in the 95th percentile, an all-time high.”

Dr. Houghland credits his team of engaged physicians and advanced practice physicians (APCs) with gracefully handling the rapid expansion while maintaining high-quality care. “Our physicians remain resilient and engaged as we work through ED and hospital-capacity issues.” To help navigate the growth in a sustainable way, the ED team created a fast-track care model for the weekends, which expedites the care of lower-acuity patients. “Our APCs have taken ownership of this, and the department maintains strong throughput on these busiest days. Patients receiving care in our fast track wait an average of 14 minutes to see a provider and are in the department for 65 minutes total. This care model has halved our left-without-being-seen numbers on the weekends,” says Houghland.

Exceptional Care
Dr. Jerome Walker, assistant medical director, continues to have significant system-wide ED leadership in the sepsis arena. Representing Ridges ED, Walker is part of a larger Fairview workgroup that was awarded the Innovation of the Year Award, in Patient Care (large-hospital category), from the Minnesota Hospital Association.

Dr. Walker and Dr. Lucas Mailander, quality improvement assistant director, led a major quality project at Ridges ED that focused on optimizing and expediting the care for ED patients with septic shock. Mailander is also providing key leadership and work on the ED Care Plan Committee. This collaborative, multidisciplinary project aims to standardize care for patients with complex medical issues and frequent visits. Drs. Scott Thielen and Brian Roach made significant contributions on this committee as well. This committee is in its second year, and early data suggests the care plans are associated with a significant reduction in ED visits, imaging utilization and admissions.

Dr. Kristi Trussell, liaison for pediatric ED patients, guided the development of the Asthma Pathway project and related EPPA clinical guidelines. Working with respiratory therapists, pediatric and ED nurses, and the pediatric hospitalists, this protocol was implemented in the late fall to standardize and expedite care for pediatric patients presenting with asthma symptoms. The project has been a major success, and compliance with the guidelines’ indications for chest radiography was greater than 90%.

Additionally, Dr. Trussell helped lead a multidisciplinary effort to increase administration of nitrous oxide in the ED. Thanks to the new ED-Pediatric Clinical Workgroup physicians can now page a pediatric nurse 24/7 to administer nitrous oxide for children undergoing minor procedures in the ED. “Our patients and families love having this therapeutic option, and it’s been a great way to collaborate further with our pediatric colleagues,” says Dr. Houghland.

95th percentile for patient satisfaction

20% of cases are pediatric patients

63,000+ emergency department visits a year
Fast Growth
The biggest news at Fairview Southdale Hospital in Edina was the impressive 9% increase in ED patient registrations. This growth follows year-over-year increases. “Despite our massive growth, we’ve continued to be in the top quartile for patient satisfaction,” says Dr. Michael Rock, ED medical director.

The ED continues to have excellent operational flow, including average door-to-doctor times of 28 minutes and room-to-doctor times of eight minutes.

The EPPA team at Southdale Hospital is working on several quality-improvement initiatives, including the recognition and accelerated treatment of sepsis patients, especially those with septic shock. The providers have demonstrated sustained excellence in the initial hours of sepsis resuscitation. In addition, a care-plan program and team are now in place to assist patients with complex care needs when they come to the ED. “This has been an extremely successful program,” says Dr. Rock. “We’ve been able to substantially reduce ED visits, hospital admissions and radiology imaging in this complex patient population.”

To help manage patients with less medical acuity, the ED offers a fast track on Saturdays through Tuesdays in the afternoon and evening. Fridays will be added in July. During the fast-track hours of operation, there’s a markedly reduced length of stay, which has been popular with many patients.

In the fourth quarter of 2016, two state-of-the-art digital radiology rooms and two CT scanners were added to the ED. This has dramatically increased timely access for patients in need of ED radiology studies. In addition to cutting-edge CT technology, the ED team also has rapid access to MRIs 24/7, which is critical given that Southdale Hospital is a comprehensive stroke center.

Expert Partnership
As one example of how much EPPA providers are trusted as indispensible resources, Dr. Rock was appointed last year to Fairview’s Provider Partnership Principles Task Force. The working group of 10 physician leaders (composed of independent physicians, Fairview employees and university faculty) was formed to craft principles and guidelines for how a clinically integrated system should work. After the recent arrival of the new Fairview CEO, James Hereford, Dr. Rock was appointed to the newly developed Physician Advisory Council. The council serves as a collaborative think tank and provides insights, advice and feedback to Mr. Hereford. Dr. Rock has also continued to serve on the Board of Southdale Hospital.
HealthPartners Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital

Reduced Costs
In the past year the EPPA team at HealthPartners Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park focused on projects to reduce costs and improve patient experience.

“The ED partnered with radiology to drive down the total cost of care,” says Dr. Michael Seim, former medical director of the Methodist Hospital ED. “We were successful in our process of building relationships between the departments and working together.” The groups assessed testing protocols and decreased repeat testing, where possible.

The results of the project were extremely successful. “Over a three-year period we saw a significant improvement in the cost of care in high-tech radiology imaging,” reports Dr. Seim. “We’re now below the community average.”

Improved Care
The ED team also partnered with neurology and the Struthers Parkinson’s Center—which has been designated by the National Parkinson Foundation as a center of excellence—to improve medication use for Parkinson’s patients in the ED. Within just three months of implementing a new workflow, the number of patients who received medications on time rose from 42% to 81%. The success was profiled on the National Parkinson Foundation’s website.

An expansion in fall of 2016 enabled the ED team to create a rapid-assessment area to handle a 5% increase in patient volume. Approximately 30% of patients are able to go through the rapid assessment, which now means door-to-doctor times of approximately 20 minutes on average, an improvement over last year. As a result, patient satisfaction ratings rose to 80% compared to 60% last year.

In addition, the ED team is working on several quality initiatives, including improving sepsis core measures, appropriate antibiotic stewardship and decreasing short-stay admissions.

New Leadership
In spring 2017, Dr. Seim stepped down as medical director of the Methodist Hospital ED. He continues to work in the ED as an EPPA physician while filling his new role as vice president of medical affairs for Park Nicollet.

Dr. Brent Walters took on the role of medical director of the Methodist Hospital emergency department in May 2017.
80,000+ patient visits a year

3 East Metro locations

5% more patient visits this year
Other independent care groups want to work with us because they know the excellent degree of acute care we provide.

Dr. Robert Anderson
The Urgency Room Statistics

UR Patient Volumes
EPPA owns and operates three UR facilities, where we provide expert care by ER physicians to patients in Eagan, Vadnais Heights and Woodbury.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eagan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,848</td>
<td>13,743</td>
<td>19,934</td>
<td>23,552</td>
<td>24,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadnais Heights</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,491</td>
<td>20,218</td>
<td>25,988</td>
<td>26,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbury</td>
<td>13,774</td>
<td>15,402</td>
<td>17,311</td>
<td>24,069</td>
<td>27,592</td>
<td>27,748</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017*  
13,774 22,250 40,545 64,221 77,132 79,682  

*Projected totals.

It’s really a joy to work with the providers, nurses, the medics, and the techs at The Urgency Room. Everyone has the same goal—to take care of our patients with the highest quality.

Dr. Susan Hafferman
EPPA Statistics

Patients Served
EPPA’s providers deliver comprehensive emergency-medicine coverage and leadership alongside our partners in four health systems and seven hospitals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th># of Patients</th>
<th>% of Patients</th>
<th>Patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admit</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Admit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo Hospital</td>
<td>1,763</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy Hospital</td>
<td>14,472</td>
<td>2,442</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy Hospital—Unity Campus</td>
<td>7,856</td>
<td>1,771</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Hospital</td>
<td>16,541</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridges Hospital</td>
<td>10,674</td>
<td>1,726</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southdale Hospital</td>
<td>12,161</td>
<td>1,048</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Cloud Hospital</td>
<td>15,700</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79,167</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,261</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Charitable Healthcare
Each year our physicians and providers serve under-insured or uninsured patients in need of emergency care. This chart shows EPPA’s yearly volume of charitable care in dollar amounts.

### 2008
- **$7,670,048**

### 2009
- **$9,950,742**

### 2010
- **$13,299,986**

### 2011
- **$14,915,431**

### 2012
- **$14,734,903**

### 2013
- **$14,347,853**

### 2014
- **$14,678,709**

### 2015
- **$12,500,101**

### 2016
- **$13,552,859**

### 2017
- **$20,173,050**

*Projected totals.*
FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE WORK WE DO

Learn more