

Faith and healing for the next 100 years.

1970-74

1970: Methodist Hospital kicks off another era of growth and expansion with the Development Fund Campaign and a goal to raise part of the overall cost to improve facilities. Don G. Furr is named chairman of the campaign. Serving as division chairmen are John Whitcomb, Harold Shipley, Jim Price, Don Crow, Robert J. Salem, T.H. Holmes and Don Hallmark. By the end of April, the hospital "family" — physicians, staff, students and auxiliary — pledge close to half a million dollars before the campaign is announced the following month. Permission obtained to close Knoxville Street from 19th to 21st streets and 20th Street from Joliet to Knoxville avenues.

1970: Methodist Hospital becomes the second Texas hospital to use Unit Dose System, medications prepared by individual dose in the hospital pharmacy and given by pharmacy nurses.

May 11, 1970: A deadly tornado strikes Lubbock (detailed earlier in our May monthly page) and local hospitals attend to the 26 dead and hundreds wounded.

May 1970: The 100th pacemaker is installed at Methodist Hospital.

October 8, 1970: 16-bed orthopedic unit opens on second floor of Methodist Hospital's former Medical Building, bringing number of adult beds to 410.



Drs. Bricker and Salem performing the surgery.

November 26, 1970: Dr. Donald Bricker performs Lubbock's first open-heart surgery, aided by Dr. Robert Salem (detailed earlier in our February monthly page).

1971: Methodist Hospital adds a helicopter port to the building plans after twice having to shut down streets in November of 1970 so Department of Public Safety helicopters could land.

August 1971: Methodist Hospital's fundraising campaign climbs to \$1.5 million — the largest amount ever pledged to a Lubbock community project up to that time.

December 3, 1971: Affiliation agreement signed between Methodist Hospital, Lubbock County Hospital District and the Texas Tech University School of Medicine to become interim teaching hospital for school once it opens. St. Mary of the Plains Hospital also signs an affiliation agreement after "a great deal of anxiety and deliberation."

July 17, 1971: The new St. Mary of the Plains Hospital gets a financial report showing it's operating in the black.

1972: St. Mary of the Plains Hospital becomes the first in the country to receive a new grant providing an interest subsidy for hospital construction.

January 1972: St. Mary of the Plains Hospital expands its Board, adding people from the community who bring additional expertise. Weldon Gibbs of American State Bank is elected chairman of the board.



East Tower nears completion in the early 1970s.

January 26, 1972: Methodist Hospital holds groundbreaking for eight-story addition.

August 1972: Texas Tech University School of Medicine starts classes.

April 1974: Methodist Hospital presents "Doctors Follies" — a musical variety show to benefit the Heart Institute of the Southwest.



Covenant Health serves a huge region in West Texas and eastern New Mexico. Facilities include Covenant Health Plainview (upper right), Covenant Health Levelland (lower right) and outpatient infusion therapy in Lea County (upper left). Every "Angel Cross" on the map represents an area Covenant Health serves.

Covenant's healing touch covers a massive region

Our pioneer doctors — as we've mentioned previously in these monthly series — would take horse-and-buggy rides from Lubbock out into the sparse South Plains to take care of patients.

More than a century later, Covenant Health still serves a massive region of West Texas and eastern New Mexico.

Even before the 1998 merger creating Covenant Health, its predecessors managed clinics and hospitals from Levelland to Lovington, Plainview to Pecos and Snyder to Seminole.

"We have a long history serving the rural South Plains. How it's done has changed, but we're still there," said Steve Beck, senior vice president of administration for Covenant Health.

Serving through hospitals, clinics and specialty care in small towns and leased physicians, hospitalists and mobile service units — all give people care where they live unless they need a higher level of care only available in Lubbock.

"The best care is closest to home," said Beck.

Plainview

Covenant Health's Plainview's history dates back to 1912, when Dr. J.V. Guyton opened the city's first hospital — in his house.

A year later, Dr. E.O. Nichols joined him and they opened what eventually became Plainview Sanitarium on West Eighth Street.

A nursing school opened in 1922 and operated until 1943.

By 1949, the Sanitarium was a nationally known center to treat polio — at one time it was treating a tenth of the nation's polio patients.

"The hospital is a point of pride for the community," said Bob Copeland, hospital administrator.

Besides emergency and primary care, the hospital has specialists — a cardiologist, two orthopedic surgeons, two OB/Gyn physicians and two pediatricians.

"We have a good mixture of specialists without people having to drive to Lubbock," said Copeland. "We have an older population and driving in Lubbock intimidates some of them."

"It's all about caring for patients. When I'm at a store or church I get compliments about the care provided by our physicians and staff," he said.

Plainview will soon offer Telestroke — a telemedicine program where if someone in Plainview is showing stroke-like symptoms, they can be put in touch with a neurologist who can see tests done in Plainview and decide if medicines can be given at the hospital

About This Page

This is the tenth of 14 monthly pages celebrating Covenant Health's 100th anniversary. Each month we'll highlight a specific piece of our history, along with a quiz and timeline of important dates. Information for this page was gleaned from the Covenant Health Archives and the books "The First Sixty-Two Years: A History of Methodist Hospital," "St. Mary of the Plains Hospital: Our First 50 Years" and "He Wore A Pink Carnation: A Biography of Dr. M.C. Overton."

Visit our centennial website to see videos about our history covenant100.org

Be involved

You can share your stories on our website and we would love to be gifted or borrow your mementos from Covenant, St. Mary of the Plains Hospital, Methodist Hospital, Plains Hospital and Clinic, Lubbock Memorial Hospital, nursing schools or the Lubbock Sanitarium and Clinic. If you have questions about items, please contact Covenant Health Foundation office at (806) 725-6089.

or the patient needs to come to Lubbock for intervention.

That's one of the benefits of being part of a larger system, but the hospital is also the go-to facility for the northern part of Covenant Health's region — from Hale Center to Tulia and Dimmitt to Lockney, said Copeland.

And Covenant Health is investing \$30 million in a hospital it doesn't own — it's owned by the Hale County Hospital Authority.

It's an investment in the health of people in the "northern service area" and also provides an economic engine.

A vibrant hospital helps boost the economy, which Plainview needs after losing a Cargill plant a few years ago.

Covenant Health Plainview employs more than 345 people, including close to a dozen physicians.

Levelland

The original hospital in Levelland opened in 1938, 26 years after the city was founded.

The existing building opened in 1972.

When the company running the hospital

left in 1988, Levelland — like Plainview — reached out to Methodist and St. Mary of the Plains hospitals in Lubbock.

It became part of the Methodist system and eventually Covenant Health.

"It's very much a community hospital and people see it as their hospital even if it is part of a system," said Bruce White, the hospital's administrator.

It also serves as a regional hospital for people in small towns surrounding and to the west of Levelland.

Covenant Health's Levelland's one-block campus has the county-owned 48-bed hospital, three rural health clinics and an outpatient physical therapy building.

It offers primary and emergency care, OB/Gyn care including labor and delivery, lab and radiology.

Specialists come from Lubbock to see patients, who can also review their medical records in the same system.

That integration offers better continuity of care if a patient needs to be transferred to Lubbock, said White.

Covenant Health Levelland employs more than 180 people, including close to ten physicians.

Outreach and Community Benefit

Covenant Health reaches into the region in many other ways through its service outreach and Community Benefit operation.

A mobile dental unit visits Plainview and Levelland, said Tavia Hatfield, Community Benefit director, and offers free dental sealant clinics for third graders in Levelland and surrounding counties.

Patient navigators work in a 70-mile radius from Lubbock, on home visits helping patients with medications, transportation help and even aid in addressing utility bills if the patient has to choose between having heat or seeing a doctor.

Covenant Health funds the Go Noodle Plus health and education program in school districts in Lubbock, Hockley and Hale counties.

In Plainview, Covenant Health offers the Snack Pack program — sending home food every Friday and a summer feeding program — for children in need.

Covenant Health provides outpatient infusion therapy at Nor-Lea Hospital in Lovington so patients don't have to drive 90 minutes for quality cancer care.

Big mission, big region, big need — one hundred years and counting and Covenant Health continues to serve the South Plains.

CovQuiz



1. Dr. John C. Long was recruited by Plainview Sanitarium and Clinic to head the Tumor and Cancer Clinic. When he was in New York before that, who did he help treat?

- President Harry Truman
- Baseball legend Babe Ruth
- New York Mayor William O'Dwyer
- Metropolitan Opera Tenor Giordano Paltrinieri

2. What was proposed to be added to St. Mary of the Plains Hospital in October of 1972?

- 24-hour Emergency Room
- Psychiatry Department
- Cardiology Department
- Rehabilitation Medicine Department

3. On January 10, 1974, the last two bricks were mortared into place on Methodist Hospital's eight-story addition. Who did the ceremonial brick laying?

- Methodist Administrator George Brewer and Lubbock Mayor Morris Turner
- Texas Tech President Dr. Grover Murray and Dr. R.S. Sheffield, chief of medical staff
- Joe Horkey, chairman of the hospital board and Rolan Simpson, chairman of the Building Committee
- Drs. Robert Salem and Sam King

4. In 1972, Methodist Hospital bought a Pho-Gamma Scintillation Camera to aid in identifying and locating tumors. It cost:

- \$22,000
- \$39,000
- \$56,000
- \$93,785

ANSWERS

1. b — Babe Ruth, who became famous as the "Sultan of Swat" for the New York Yankees. Long helped treat Ruth at Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York before coming to Texas.

2. d — A Rehabilitation Medicine Department. It took almost three years for a construction contract to be signed for the addition on the 4th floor.

3. c — Joe Horkey and Rolan Simpson. It was months before the new tower opened, but it was a morale booster.

4. c — \$56,000

Keeping the Covenant

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