

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD: *Todd Beardman, MD and Denny Fugate, PHARM D*

Stepping Up to Deliver Mass Vaccinations



Todd Beardman and Denny Fugate

During early 2021 as the COVID-19 vaccines were just being rolled out, demand was high and supply was uneven. In Clay County, a coalition of hospitals, government, businesses and the public health department was formed to help provide a coordinated approach to distributing vaccine in the county. The effort was named Operation Safe – Vaccinating Our Community, Together.

The program had to ramp up quickly to meet the demand. Two individuals from North Kansas City Hospital were instrumental in implementing the first Operation Safe vaccination site in just four days: **Todd Beardman, MD**, chief medical information officer, and **Denny Fugate, PharmD**, senior director of pharmacy. They continued their extraordinary efforts from February through May 6 when Operation Safe was completed.

For their contributions, Dr. Beardman and Dr. Fugate have been chosen to receive the 2021 KCMS Community Service Award.

Besides North Kansas City Hospital, other key partners in Operation Safe included Liberty Hospital, the Clay County Public Health Center and health information giant Cerner, where the first vaccine clinics were held on the company's north campus.

As operations chief, Dr. Beardman



Dr. Beardman discusses Operation Safe clinic operations with nurses Jenni Reno and Bre Kimberling on the Cerner campus.

worked with other clinic leaders to oversee the design, development and establishment of a call center waiting list, a notification process, an on-site admission system, an electronic medical record for each vaccinated person, and more.

After doors opened February 4, Dr. Beardman worked at the Operation Safe clinic for up to 12 hours a day. He comforted people who were unsure about getting vaccinated. He met with local politicians and educated them about the initiative. He became a spokesperson for the clinic's mission to get people vaccinated to save lives.

Dr. Fugate served as operations section leader in the pharmacy area. He began every day at 4 a.m. to ensure that vaccine preparation supported continuous patient throughput. With vaccine in short supply, he researched how to get the most doses from each vial, which resulted in a 20% increase or nearly 20,000 more people receiving the vaccine. He prepared vaccine doses side-by-side with other pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, while providing oversight for vaccine shipments. He spent countless hours at the clinic.

With hand sanitizer unavailable, Dr. Fugate obtained a supply of 100% alcohol and mixed a formula to produce hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes. He also oversaw construction of an ultraviolet light room to decontaminate N95 masks, which allowed for reuse.

Both Dr. Beardman and Dr. Fugate monitored the vaccine vials to help ensure there was little waste. At the end of each clinic day, if any opened vials remained, staff was urged to contact those on waiting lists, even if it was just a few doses. In total, Operation Safe administered vaccines to over 97,000 Missourians before doors closed on May 6.

About receiving the KCMS award, Dr. Beardman said, "I am humbled to represent the organizations and volunteers that joined together in a time of great crisis. We were able to deliver tremendous joy in addition to the vaccinations."

Dr. Fugate commented, "Operation Safe would have been impossible for me without the help and support of my team. I am profoundly honored and thankful for this recognition." 🙏