



**UNMC**

**REGIONAL  
PATHOLOGY SERVICES**

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## **Regional Pathology Services and Kearney Regional Medical Center Celebrate 5 Years of Partnership in Laboratory Medicine**

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According to the Health Resources and Services Administration and Rural Health Information hub, the number of physicians per 10,000 people is 13.1 in the rural healthcare settings and 31.2 in the urban healthcare settings. That number goes down to 30 per 100,000 people in rural areas, and to 263 per 100,000 people in urban settings for sub-specialties including pathology.

Pathology is a medical discipline that utilizes laboratory testing to provide diagnostic information to patients and clinicians. It impacts nearly all aspects of patient care from diagnosing cancer to managing chronic diseases.

For many Nebraskans, accessing this type of specialized care can be difficult. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in May of 2021, the number of employed physician pathologists was 50-60 for the state of Nebraska, with most currently practicing in the Lincoln/Omaha area.

In 2017, Kearney Regional Medical Center (KRMC) established a partnership with University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Regional Pathology Services to increase access for those in out-state Nebraska.

Dr. Tareq Qdaisat, an Assistant Professor of Pathology and Microbiology at UNMC and Board Certified Anatomic and Clinical Pathologist, joined the team at KRMC in July of 2020 and began providing on-site pathology services for patients.

When reflecting on the past two years, Dr. Qdaisat shared a story of a 32-year-old patient who was being seen by obstetrician Dr. Jesse Loeffler at Kearney Regional Medical Center. During surgery Dr. Loeffler noted a suspicious lesion and contacted Dr. Qdaisat for further testing. Dr. Qdaisat was able to analyze a frozen section of tissue on-site during the procedure, and send it out to his colleagues at UNMC for additional testing. The results were that the tissue was cancerous, and the patient was able to begin treatment right away. "I'm not sure that we would have been able to catch that diagnosis so early if it wouldn't have been for our collaboration with Dr. Qdaisat and the team at UNMC," said Dr. Loeffler.

Other examples of on-site pathology services include working with KRMC radiologists to review tissue samples in-real-time—often while a patient is still under local anesthesia—to ensure an adequate sample has been taken, or reviewing lymph node samples ahead of potential lung surgery to determine whether a patient would benefit from surgery or not. Dr. Qdaisat is also a subspecialist in Molecular Genetic Pathology and is able to work with oncologists to provide targeted therapy for cancer patients. All of these services are designed to help minimize unnecessary procedures and excess travel/recovery time, and improve results for patients.

Technology also plays a key role, says Dr. Qdaisat, “With the recent expansion of our digital pathology and microbiology services, we can run many additional tests in-house now at KRMC and provide same-day results to patients. And for things that we’d like to send out to specialists, we’re able to securely share those test results with physicians anywhere in the world.”

The future of this partnership is bright said Bill Calhoun, CEO at Kearney Regional Medical Center, “We look forward to other shared endeavors such as bringing on dermatology services at Platte Valley Medical Clinic/Kearney Regional Medical and providing corresponding pathology testing at UNMC, and continuing to expand UNMC student clinical rotations at KRMC.”

The partners marked the five-year anniversary of shared services by providing a free coffee cart for all KRMC staff, a lunch for the lab staff, and an in-depth tour and meet-and-greet.

## **Representatives from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and Kearney Regional Medical Center**



Front row: Bill Calhoun, CEO, KRMC, Kirk Hansen, Director of Regional Pathology Services, UNMC, Dr. Tareq Qdaisat, Physician KRMC & UNMC, Corlis Kozera, Lab Manager, KRMC, Dr. Joseph Khoury, Department of Pathology and Microbiology Chairman, UNMC, Brandi Larson, Director of Clinic Operations & Nursing, KRMC, Dani Ramsey, Director of Human Resources, KRMC Back row: Brian Lenz, Business Development Coordinator, UNMC, Dr. Scott Smith, Director of Medical Affairs, KRMC, Ryan Lukas, Director of Ancillary Services, KRMC, Danny VanRanken, Vice President of Clinical Services, KRMC, Melissa Morrison, Front Desk/Patient Accounts/Switchboard Manager, KRMC