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### **Great Plains Health launches Clinical Research Institute**

***North Platte, Neb., December 15, 2021*** – Great Plains Health is proud to launch its Clinical Research Institute and further establish itself as a leader in the region for innovation and excellence.

The vision is to make Great Plains Health’s Clinical Research Institute a preferred location for clinical research trials while maintaining the highest clinical and regulatory standards. The Clinical Research Institute is committed to caring for patients, as well as impacting the future of medicine.

“Clinical trials are key to developing our medical knowledge and they contribute to the future of healthcare,” Joe Ruybal, director of the institute, said. “They help us understand new and advanced opportunities for treatment. They can be life changing. The fact that Great Plains Health is offering this opportunity for patients in Greater Nebraska is exciting.”

Ruybal assumed the role of director in November and comes with a decade of clinical research experience in the fields of oncology, pediatrics and biotechnology.

“Great Plains Health has researched clinical trials before,” Ruybal noted. “We are excited to build on this foundation and expand far beyond what we’ve ever done.”

The Clinical Research Institute aims to make clinical trials more financially and geographically accessible for the communities of Greater Nebraska. The institute is also focused on bringing a larger number of clinical trials to Great Plains Health, as well as engaging patients in the process for their own health and the development of medicine around the world.

“The research we're doing in Greater Nebraska is innovative and, in some cases, the first of its kind. Our clinical trials make care more accessible for patients and have offered the hope of healing for COVID-19 patients,” Dr. Guido Molina, pulmonary medicine, said.

Molina led research on a COVID-19 clinical study, which collected data on a way to improve oxygen levels in infected patients.

“The creation of the Clinical Research Institute helps us establish our position in the field of research and has significant implications for the care we give to our patients. It’s remarkable,” Molina said.

Mel McNea, chief executive officer, said the Clinical Research Institute is an all-around amazing addition to how Great Plains Health serves the region.

“This is a natural next step for Great Plains Health as we strive to provide outstanding care to our patients. Having a clinical research institute also helps to recruit and retain the best physicians and employees,” McNea said. “There is no doubt that the research we are doing here in North Platte, Neb., will have a worldwide impact in the years to come.”

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### **About Great Plains Health**

Based in North Platte, Nebraska, Great Plains Health is a fully accredited, 116-bed acute-care regional medical center serving western and central Nebraska, northern Kansas and southern South Dakota. With 90 physicians representing nearly 30 medical specialties, the Great Plains Health system offers advanced health care, including heart and vascular, cancer, and orthopedic surgery services. Great Plains Health is a Level III trauma center, and all of its emergency department physicians are residency-trained and board-certified in emergency medicine. The system employs approximately 1,200 employees and serves a geographic area spanning approximately 16,000 square miles.

The hospital is accredited by the Center for Improvement in Healthcare Quality (CIHQ) and is home to an American College of Surgeons-accredited cancer center and Level II bariatric surgery program. For more information, visit [gphealth.org](http://gphealth.org).