



UPMC Passavant
GI Center Designed for
Patient Comfort and Privacy

If your response to the word “colonoscopy” is to run out of the room, chances are you’re not alone. Due to this procedure’s private and personal nature, it’s something that most people are not only uncomfortable discussing, but are also reluctant to have performed. Fortunately, the staff at UPMC Passavant realized this and addressed patients’ concerns when building the hospital’s new Gastrointestinal (GI) Center.

“We designed the new GI Center to offer our patients the comfort and privacy they deserve. We understand how uneasy patients can be when



Private patient registration area.



A procedure room showcases state-of-the-art equipment and technology.

they arrive for many of the GI procedures and we’ve taken every measure to preserve their dignity and respect. Each patient has their own pre-op and recovery room with separate walls and a door,” explains Andrew Thomas, MD, chair, Division of Gastroenterology.

Last year, over 16,000 GI procedures were performed at UPMC Passavant, which has one of the busiest GI labs in the UPMC network. “Being the busiest lab is due in part to the demographics of our location,” says James Celebrezze, MD, colon and rectal surgeon. “In addition, access to specialty care in surrounding areas to the north is more limited, so we draw patients from that territory as well.”

“Our goal is to be the best GI Center in the region in terms of patient-centered care; patient satisfaction; state-of-the-art services, equipment and technology; and excellence in patient safety and quality outcomes,” says Dr. Thomas. “The key to our success is the dedication of our staff

“The new GI Center is beautiful. We strove to create an environment in which our patients would have the best possible experience, and seeing it come to life is very rewarding.”

Janet Surrena, RN, MSN,
unit director

and physicians to achieving each of these measures.”

The new GI Center has 26 private rooms with anesthesia capability used for both pre-procedure and recovery. This represents a significant increase from the former lab, which had four pre-procedure and six recovery bays utilizing only privacy curtains to separate the patients. The center’s décor combines warm, soothing tones with attractive wooden floors. Large windows in the majority of

rooms provide a bright, cheery atmosphere. A television in every room and large blanket warmers also help to make patients' surroundings more comfortable.

"We will be able to take care of our patients in a much more pleasant environment," says Dr. Celebrezze. "If their initial experience is a good one, then it makes it that much easier for a patient to come back for subsequent follow-ups."

The new GI Center houses eight procedure rooms—twice as many as the former lab. "One of the goals in the design of the new GI Center was to drastically increase the capacity so that we can expand into it, as opposed to just building for what we do currently," says Dr. Celebrezze.

No detail left undone, the physician's monitor is located overhead in the center of each procedure room. This not only allows for better visualization of the procedure, but also results in a more efficient process in which each patient does not require repositioning.

Two nursing stations and a computerized patient tracking system will help physicians to quickly determine the status and location of each patient. The new design even makes cleaning and disinfecting the scopes utilized in the procedures more efficient. The patient registration area, procedure and recovery rooms, and a spacious, comfortable waiting area for family members are all conveniently located within the GI Center.

One of the eight procedure rooms is used solely to perform ERCP (endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography) to help treat patients suffering from blockages in their bile or pancreatic ducts. "UPMC Passavant's new GI Center is a full-service, high-tech lab with equipment that most other GI labs would envy," says T. Jan Ravi, MD, gastroenterologist. "The expanded capacity will allow us to better serve our patients with more convenient scheduling of their procedures."

In addition to the eight procedure rooms, the new GI Center has a dedicated pulmonary/bronchoscopy suite. "As well as traditional bronchoscopy, we perform endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS) and navigational

Did you know that according to the American College of Gastroenterology, gastrointestinal diseases cause more people in this country to be hospitalized than any other single group of disorders?* These illnesses affect both the upper GI tract, including such conditions as ulcers, polyps, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), and gastric cancer, and the lower GI tract, including celiac disease, colitis, Crohn's disease, polyps, irritable bowel disease (IBD), and colon and rectal cancer.

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While emphasizing privacy and comfort, the center also has everything—registration, pre-op, recovery and procedure rooms, and a family waiting area—conveniently located in one space.



The attractive waiting area provides ample room for family members to be comfortable and relax.



Physicians practicing in the GI Center include (from L to R): Dr. Andrew Thomas, Dr. James Celebrezze, Dr. Krysia Zancosky, Dr. Marc Brozovich, and Dr. Ved Kaushik.

bronchoscopy—sometimes referred to as virtual bronchoscopy or lung GPS—that targets difficult to reach lesions located in the middle of the lung,” explains Joann Kim, MD, FCCP, pulmonologist. “Prior to the new GI Center, both techniques were only performed in the operating room (OR). Now, with the dedicated suite for pulmonary care in the new GI Center, we can schedule procedures on any day of the week and we won’t be limited by the schedule in the OR.”

Other advanced diagnostic and treatment capabilities available in the GI Center include:

- BARRX procedure that destroys pre-cancerous cells in the esophagus with radio frequency ablation.
- Bravo esophageal pH test for evaluation and treatment of acid reflux disease.

- Single balloon enteroscopy for direct visual inspection of the small bowel.

Given all of the design improvements, technology upgrades, and capacity enhancements at the new GI Center, there is one major element that will not change: the highly experienced, efficient, and dedicated staff.

Michael L. Mlecko, MD, gastroenterologist, says, “It’s the people who make the difference. The staff at UPMC Passavant make our patients feel relaxed because they understand what patients are going through. We also enjoy an environment of teamwork here, where everyone is very competent and knows exactly what needs to be done.”

“We are very proud of our physicians, nurses, and technicians

“The new center will enable us to improve certain processes, making our work much more efficient. And I’m thrilled to be able to care for my patients in such an attractive, soothing setting.”

Sue Thomas, RN, BSN,
professional staff nurse

for their level of commitment and patient care,” says Dr. Thomas. “While the GI Center has changed, the same highly personalized service we have always provided will remain the same. In fact, we’re confident we’ll be able to make that service even better with all of the enhanced privacy and comfort features.”

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