Putting surgeons, researchers together is leading to world-class innovations

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Putting surgeons and researchers together in the same facility is leading to world-class innovations.

L. Nelson “Nick” Hopkins is a pioneer in the use of catheters — long, flexible tubes — inserted into the vascular system in the groin and threaded to the brain to treat strokes. The procedure, once called “crazy” by the medical establishment, is now the preferred method in many situations.

His early use of endovascular surgery led Hopkins, SUNY Distinguished Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery, and a neurosurgeon with UB Neurosurgery, to confer with other types of surgeons — cardiologists, vascular surgeons and radiologists — who were using the technique. The cross-referencing broadened Hopkins’ appreciation for coming at a problem from different angles.

That cooperative approach is the driving force behind numerous research efforts now underway at a facility on the burgeoning Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The building is a partnership between UB and Kaleida Health that Hopkins helped usher into existence. The 10-story building houses Kaleida’s Gates Vascular Institute, dedicated to patient care, of which Hopkins is president, and UB’s Clinical and Translational Research Center (CTRC), dedicated to translational research. The juxtaposition allows for an unprecedented level of collaboration among clinical researchers, translational scientists, surgeons and engineers.

Researchers in UB’s CTRC study problems across the entire translational spectrum, from biomarkers for sudden cardiac death and the genetic architecture of Alzheimer’s disease to depression-related asthma and new treatments for macular degeneration.

Read more here.