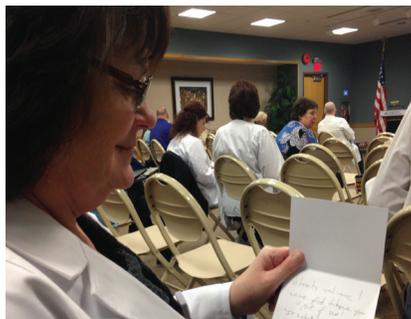


WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT



“It is what it is. But it will be what you make it.” That famous quote from the iconic University of Tennessee Lady Vols basketball coach, the late Pat Summitt, resonated with Pam Thomas, BSN, Director of Critical Care and Emergency Services at LVH–Schuylkill. Thomas was among 50 LVH–Schuylkill leaders who opened “Words of Encouragement cards” during LVHN’s monthly Leader to Leader (L2L) meeting. The cards were written by colleagues from the Lehigh Valley and LVH–Hazleton.

“I’m a Penn State fan, but coach Summitt has been my idol forever,” Thomas says. “It was so amazing. I opened my card to see coach Summitt’s message. What are the chances of that?”

Andre Grant, BSN, Director of Care Management, says, “These notes were really great, from the heart and inspiring.” Some were funny, some serious. All offered encouragement and support.

Each month, LVH–Schuylkill managers, directors and vice presidents join a network-wide videoconference. Hosted by LVHN Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Terry Capuano, the L2L program highlights colleague recognition, LVHN metrics and finances, and features briefings on topics such as the patient experience, service lines, merger updates and enhanced communications.

Stacey Kelly, BSN, Nursing Operations Manager, and Jennifer Collins read their letters to colleagues during the meeting. The letters welcomed LVH–Schuylkill colleagues to LVHN, acknowledged our rich local history and offered optimism about where LVH–Schuylkill and LVHN will be going forward.



Sundaes on Tuesday

“I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream.” LVH–Schuylkill colleagues did just that on Valentine’s Day when senior leaders visited all departments on all three shifts. Leaders scooped ice cream and offered a fixings bar for colleagues to customize their sundaes.

“Initially, we chose to do this to recognize and thank colleagues for their handling of a recent school bus accident, where all of the students and drivers came to both emergency departments,” says Bill Reppy, LVH–Schuylkill President. “From there, it evolved into an opportunity to connect, recognize and thank all colleagues for their dedication and support since the merger, now five months old.”

Frozen sundaes were also delivered to colleagues in all off-campus buildings and facilities. Staff members were thrilled with the gesture. “It was really awesome,” says Santina Bentz, MSN, of the Occupational Medicine Department. “What a nice way to recognize the staff, especially on Valentine’s Day. Everyone loved it.”

“This is a great way to get our leaders to connect with colleagues in an informal setting and learn more about what is happening on our units and departments,” says Sue Curry, MSN, Vice President of Patient Care Services. “It was a lot of fun, and our colleagues were definitely very appreciative.”

LVH–Schuylkill Shares the Love

Volunteers from LVH–Schuylkill joined volunteers throughout LVHN to make Valentine’s Day a little extra special for hospitalized patients. This year, we asked colleagues and community members to help us shower our patients with love. We created a website that people visited to create a personalized Valentine’s Day card for a random patient. People could choose from eight card designs (including one in Spanish), and write a personalized message. People from 10 different states and nine different countries, including Japan, Germany, Ireland and Australia visited our website. The messages on the cards truly came from the heart.

“Our patients really enjoyed receiving these cards,” says Mary Bardell, LVH–Schuylkill Auxiliary Liaison and Director of Volunteers. “Our volunteers also enjoyed the opportunity to interact with patients and positively influence their experiences.”

New Ways to Access LVHN

LVHN recently launched two new patient-centered initiatives to improve access to our health network. Currently, these initiatives are being implemented in the Lehigh Valley, but planning is underway to expand them throughout the health network.

One Click Scheduling

Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG) has undertaken a 30-day pilot to offer appointment scheduling on LVHN.org with more than 70 family medicine, internal medicine, gynecology and urogynecology physicians and advance practice clinicians. The one click scheduling is designed for patients who do not have an existing record with LVHN. Existing LVPG patients have the same opportunity to schedule on LVHN.org if they choose a provider they have not seen previously.

How It Works

When a patient visits LVHN.org Find a Doctor, one of the check box options is to only show providers who offer online appointment scheduling. The patient can also select from additional filter options. LVPG will add more providers after the pilot and will offer scheduling on LVHN.org by June for all primary care providers who have capacity. Specialty providers will schedule online too with target dates to follow.

One Call: 888-402-LVHN

LVHN is also improving patient access by piloting a new toll-free telephone number. In time, this new number will serve as a single point of contact to access all health network services regardless of location. Accessing patient information, scheduling appointments or tests, enrolling in a class or asking questions will be easier because patients will only need to dial one number.

The new toll-free number went into effect Feb. 3 for the Lehigh Valley area and will expand to serve other regions, including our region, over the next few months.



This is second in a series of stories about the presidents of our hospitals. As these leaders begin to play a greater role in keeping you informed through our Communication Cascade, their stories will give you a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and help you get to know them better.

Jim Geiger was an Air Force officer in the medical service corps in Germany when two embassies were bombed in Kenya and Tanzania. With

his boss away in Washington, D.C., it was Geiger who read the chaotic first reports of 5,000 dead or injured. His mission: Assemble a ground team in Kenya to set up the military's medical response. "We didn't have a script to handle that scenario," Geiger says. "We just jumped into action and created a plan."

Geiger spent 26 years in health care operations assigned to Air Force bases and military medical centers from California to New York. He also did stints in Turkey and Germany. "The military taught me teamwork, professionalism and execution," says Geiger, LVH-Muhlenberg President. "That's where I grew an appreciation for the synergy and camaraderie that comes from facing a challenging task."

Like his time in the military, Geiger relies on situational awareness to sharpen his focus for the day. That awareness often comes during the morning's daily leadership huddle where LVH-Muhlenberg directors report on open issues from the night before and new ones brewing that morning.

Weekly rounding throughout the hospital also provides insight into what's working and what needs attention, while giving him the face-to-face time with colleagues and patients he loves so much. "Visibility is so important," Geiger says. "I'd rather be walking the hallway than behind my desk. Sometimes a brief interaction with a colleague or patient can change the care experience."

Whether he's popping into patient rooms

Military Experience Helps Jim Geiger to Stay Mission Ready

to say hello, addressing issues or hearing praise about the staff, rounding is the most rewarding time of the day. Several times a year, he rounds on the night shift to let colleagues know their hard work is appreciated.

After 14 years with the health network, Geiger was named President of LVH-Muhlenberg. He equates his role to a "complex Rubik's Cube of issues" that's in constant motion. His job is to stay abreast of all the moving parts without losing focus – it's a mission he accepts gladly. He manages operations, finances, patient satisfaction and employee engagement for the entire campus. That's in addition to network-wide operations and staying abreast of the changing health care environment. "We're living in a very uncertain time in health care," says Geiger. "More than ever, we need to be flexible and nimble so we can make the best decisions with the information available."

Geiger believes LVHN is extraordinarily strong and well positioned for the future. The key performance indicators he tracks on patient volume, discharges, ER admissions and other items point to a "strong year and a staff that is doing a magnificent job serving the community."

Following a nomadic military career, Geiger and his wife, Debra, were happy to put down roots in the Lehigh Valley. They enjoy boating, hiking and skiing. His daughter Kristen Negvesky is a doctor of veterinary medicine who lives in southern California with her husband Alex. Geiger also makes sure to eat right and squeeze in the occasional workout at LVHN Fitness to maintain stamina for a demanding job. Yet it's colleagues he credits with energizing him most of all.

"LVH-Muhlenberg is like a large family that looks out for patients and each other," says Geiger. "I see pride, passion and professionalism from all our departments. That energizes me."

IronPigs Ticket Pre-Sale for Colleagues

Now through March 2, all LVHN colleagues can get Lehigh Valley IronPigs single-game tickets before they go on sale to the general public. Here's how:

Visit ticketreturn.com

Search "IronPigs"

Select the game you would like to attend

Enter promo code: BACONUSA

Take a New York Gourmet Shopping Trip

Spend the day in New York City visiting gourmet shops such as Zabar's on Broadway, Dean and DeLuca's in SoHo and Ferrera's Pastry. Have lunch on your own and shop in Chinatown and Little Italy. Be sure to bring a cooler to safely bring home all your purchases.

LVHN's Recreation Committee invites you to come along on

May 21, 2017

Price: \$35 per person

Email Roberta.Meckes@lvhn.org for more details and a reservation form.

CEO update

February's topic:

STAFFING OUR SERVICES

Each month, LVHN President and CEO Brian Nester, DO, MBA, FACOEP, records a video called the CEO Update about a timely topic. To watch it, visit our intranet. Don't have time? Here is what he said.

If you've been following recent LVHN news, you may have noticed something that raised questions in your mind.

We recently told you about the difficult decision we made to adjust staffing and reduce costs at LVH-Pocono. You may also have read stories about events to hire colleagues for new facilities we're opening this summer.

This may lead you to ask: Why are we eliminating positions in one location and adding positions at other locations? Here's the answer: It's because that's what we need to do to best meet our patients' needs. Let me explain. At LVHN, we staff our services based on patient volume and demand. As health care evolves, more patients are receiving care in outpatient settings.

That's the case at LVH-Pocono, where changes in the local health care environment and declining inpatient volumes were affecting our financial performance. Adjustments needed to be made. We also found ways to reduce non-labor expenses, so the total savings were created by more than staff reductions. As a not-for-profit health network, we have an obligation to all of our communities to operate efficiently and have the resources to fulfill their greatest needs.

When it comes to Northampton County, we know there is great demand for our care. Data, research and conversations with community members tell us so. That's why we will open the

Family Health Pavilion at LVH-Muhlenberg and two health centers this summer. It will take great people like you to meet the demand for our care in Northampton County. That's why we're hiring in that portion of our health network. We are also planning for future growth in Monroe County, and we look forward to opening positions in that area in the near future.

The bottom line is this: When it comes to staffing, we must be flexible. Patient volumes and needs will continue to dictate how we staff our services. We will ensure we have the staff to provide the safe, high-quality care for which LVHN is known. It's how we will stay strong and further our mission.

If staffing adjustments affected you, thank you for your dedication as you worked through it. It's never easy. In fact, working in health care isn't easy. But as we work together to care for others, we will do great things for our community.

Thank you making LVHN the place people turn to first for the best care. When we release the next CEO Update, spring will be near. We'll be closer to being out of this very tough flu season. For all you've done to help our patients get well again, thank you very much. I look forward to speaking with you next month.

Have a question about this topic or another topic? Talk with your supervisor or contact human resources.