LVHN President and CEO Delivers State of the Health Network Address

LVHN President and Chief Executive Officer Brian Nester, DO, MBA, FACOEP, presented the State of the Health Network Address on Nov. 16. He began by reminding colleagues that you chose a career in health care because you care about people. Throughout his presentation, he talked about how LVHN puts people first: colleagues, patients and families.

Dr. Nester discussed the state of health care as well as LVHN’s strategy. The most important part of our strategy is creating a great experience for you and all colleagues, so that you can deliver a great experience to patients and families.

Here is a summary of his presentation.

STATE OF HEALTH CARE REGIONALLY AND LOCALLY

Amid the challenges of our evolving health care system, many Pennsylvania hospitals and health systems are realizing they cannot go it alone. Thus, we’re seeing mergers and acquisitions, and partnerships with health plans (payers) across the state. The graphic (above) shows the mergers, acquisitions and payer partnership that have occurred in the past three years.

Two mergers hit close to home when St. Luke’s announced its intent to merge with Blue Mountain Health System and Sacred Heart. We remain steadfast in our commitment to the people of Carbon County and central Allentown. As a charitable organization, LVHN provides substantial programs and services as part of our Community Benefit. LVHN has and will continue to add services and providers in Carbon County to meet the health care needs of its residents.

Creating strong partnerships with health plans also is important because health plans will continue to be the way Americans access and pay for care. Highmark, the largest insurer in Pennsylvania, chose to partner with LVHN to create a new health plan called Lehigh Valley Flex Blue. Highmark recognizes our ability to provide higher quality care to more people at a lower cost.

CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

We are Well Positioned for the FUTURE

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2018, inpatient admissions at LVHN were below budget. Contributing to fewer admissions is the hard work colleagues are doing to keep the people of our community healthy. We are well positioned for the future because we’re doing the right things: Providing great care, keeping people well and out of the hospital, and creating a healthier community. That will serve us well beginning in 2019 when 80 percent of Medicare payments will be based on the “value” of the care provided. In essence, we’ll be rewarded for how well we’re providing care and keeping people healthy (fee for value), rather than how much care we’re providing (fee for service).

ONE TEAM, ONE MISSION

Colleagues who work at LVHN sites outside of the Lehigh Valley are integral members of the LVHN team. You’re connected with the people of your community and passionate about caring for your family, friends and neighbors. And that’s what we’re all about:
Caring for people and being a network of neighbors. Everything you do is important to your community and impacts the greater success of LVHN. Growth in areas outside the Lehigh Valley is an important part of our strategy.

YOU COME FIRST

The LVHN strategy begins with creating a great experience for you and all colleagues. When you have a great experience working at LVHN, you’re able to give our patients and their loved ones the best possible experience. They’ll remember how you made them feel and continually turn to us when they need care. That’s how we gain momentum and move our organization forward.

At a recent leadership retreat, the visual of a flywheel was used to symbolize that momentum. With one push, the flywheel gains momentum and accelerates. LVHN’s first “push” is to create a great experience for you.

PRIDE is at the heart of everything we do because it’s all about how we treat people. We recently surveyed colleagues about our PRIDE behaviors, listened to your suggestions and updated our PRIDE behaviors to put you first, even before our patients. Here is what’s new about PRIDE:

- You’re asked to make the PRIDE Promise, a personal commitment to practicing these behaviors.
- We listened to you and included the new things that you told us are important to infuse into our culture (creating time, trust and teamwork by being present, engaged, positive and accountable).

Practicing PRIDE means we’re listening to you and making investments in you. Here’s how:

- You asked for better fitness benefits. Now, all colleagues can use LVHN Fitness facilities at no cost and with no minimum visit requirement.
- You asked for professional and personal growth opportunities. Now through January, we’ll begin rolling out free development opportunities designed to help you be at your best.
- You asked to have more interaction with leadership. Now, colleagues are invited to the State of the Health Network Address. We’re hosting Town Hall meetings, Casual Conversations and PRIDE Rounds. And leaders are providing more communication via blogs and emails. Coming soon, colleagues will be invited to join a “colleague ambassador” program, which will promote even more two-way communication between staff and leadership.

- We’ll keep listening to you. In February, we’ll conduct our next Colleague Survey. It’s your opportunity to provide feedback about your experience at LVHN. We’ll use your input to make your work experience even better.

Creating an exceptional experience for you is so important, next fiscal year we’ll expand our focus from the Triple Aim to the Quadruple Aim. We’ll set goals to create Better Health, Better Care, Better Cost and a Better Colleague Experience.

ENHANCING ACCESS

When you’re at your best, our flywheel gains momentum. When you have the right work conditions, we all can give people the conveniences and experience they desire. We can “Just Say Yes.” Here’s what we’re doing to provide people with convenient access to care:

- We’re making a promise to people who call an LVPG practice or our Access Center for an appointment to get them in “today, tomorrow or the next day.”
- You can call one toll-free number, 888-402-LVHN, to connect to everything LVHN has to offer.
- You can click LVHN.org or MyLVHN to schedule an appointment.
- You can have a video visit from the comfort of your home if you have a minor medical concern.
- You can view providers’ star ratings and comments from verified patients on LVHN.org’s Find a Doctor section to choose the best doctor for you.

During the leadership retreat, we brainstormed new ways to increase access to our services while keeping in mind things already on your plate. Innovative ideas were shared. For example, LVPG is now hiring Access Coordinators, a new position in practices that are seeing patients going elsewhere for care. Access Coordinators will focus on removing barriers and getting people in the door for care. These colleagues fulfill a need and allow other practice colleagues to focus on their responsibilities. It’s another example of LVHN’s commitment to you and our patients.
WITHIN DRIVING DISTANCE

The flywheel is gaining momentum. As we make it easy for people to access our service and provide the best experience, people will continue to turn to us for care, and they will tell their family and friends about their experience here. That patient loyalty propels the growth and revenue that allows us to create an even better place to work and make investments in all the regions LVHN serves.

We created a health network in which all of the quality services we provide are accessible within driving distance. Now, we will continue to make investments in all the communities we serve.

► In Hazleton, we’ll modernize LVH–Hazleton, creating mostly private patient rooms, expanding its ER and adding parking. We will further develop the services we provide in center city Hazleton. We will create a new health care campus of the future at the existing Health & Wellness Center location. Recruitment of new primary care and specialty providers is also underway.

► In Monroe County, we’re building LVH–Pocono West in Tannersville. It will include an ER, operating rooms, an inpatient medical-surgical unit with private rooms, advanced imaging services, a medical office building and Sleep Disorders Center.

► In Lower Nazareth Township, we’ll break ground on a new campus this summer. Nearly one-third of the people in Northampton County already receive care from an LVHN provider. Our focus is to help them get the care they need close to home.

► In Carbon and Schuylkill counties, we’ll work to expand access to primary and specialty care. Significant activity is underway to identify locations where we can give residents easy access to the services they need close to home.

► In Bucks County, we’re planning a new health center at the intersection of Pumping Station Road and Route 309.

► Growth is taking place behind the scenes to connect our health network with one integrated health record: Epic.

NEXT STEPS

The LVHN strategy is summed up in the statement above. The state of our health network is strong. Together we can make it even stronger.

Leaders should:

► Help create a great work experience by supporting your staff.

Colleagues should:

► Take advantage of the opportunities LVHN makes available to you. Join LVHN Fitness and take advantage of professional and personal development opportunities so you are at your best for our patients.

► Practice PRIDE. Promise to treat colleagues, patients and their families with PRIDE during every interaction.

► Just say yes when someone needs and appointment, test or service. If you see a barrier, raise the issue with the right people and help fix it.

► Never forget why you chose a health care career and that LVHN delivers care from the heart.

ABOUT ME: My name is Brian Nester, DO, MBA, FACOEP, and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN). I came to LVHN in 1998 as the Director of LVH–Muhlenberg’s Emergency Department. Prior to becoming President and CEO in 2014, I served as the health network’s Chief Strategy Officer. I am originally from Reading, and I’m proud to lead an organization that continually strives to provide better health and better care at a better cost for the great people of our community.
Thankful Patient Returns

Tears, laughter, hugs and gratitude ruled the morning of Nov. 2, when Armand Llanes, who survived an aortic rupture, returned to LVH–Pocono to thank his rescuers on the one-year anniversary of his near-fatal emergency. Emergency department colleagues and West End EMS staff were awed at the Saylorsburg man’s miraculous recovery. WBRE-TV’s Brianna Strunk was amazed by the story she was covering as it unfolded during interviews.

The patient’s wife, Gina, wept with thanks for the team, led by Nche Zama, MD, Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery, who saved Llanes’ life against grim odds. “I was a dead man walking,” said Llanes, who lost six liters of blood during the ordeal and needed months to heal fully. “I’m grateful to everyone involved.”

“Patients like you don’t often come back to thank us,” Zama said to LLanes. “Most don’t survive.” This early Thanksgiving visit bore testimony to the fragility of life, the human spirit’s will to survive, the power of clinical excellence and the strength of teamwork to achieve near-impossible results.

Attend a Town Hall Meeting

Get updates from LVH–Pocono President Elizabeth Wise. You’ll also have an opportunity to ask questions. All colleagues are encouraged to attend these one-hour meetings.

Thursday, Dec. 7
7:30 a.m., Mountain Healthcare Center

Friday, Dec. 8
7:30 a.m., Stroud/Brodhead Rooms
2 p.m., Stroud/Brodhead Rooms

Monday, Dec. 11
7:30 a.m., West End Healthcare Center
2 p.m., Chestnut Street

Tuesday, Dec. 12
7:30 a.m., 447 Office Plaza/500 Building

Wednesday, Dec. 13
2 p.m., Professional Center

Monday, Dec. 18
7:30 a.m., Bartonsville Healthcare Center

Chest Pain Certification Earned

LVH–Pocono has been recognized and awarded The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval® for Chest Pain Certification. LVH–Pocono is the only certified chest pain center in Monroe County to earn this award, demonstrating the hospital’s commitment to providing compassionate and effective patient care. Earning the certification means LVH–Pocono demonstrates continuum of care in the areas of:

- Compliance with consensus-based national standards
- Effective use of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines to manage and optimize care
- An organized approach to performance measurement and improvement activities

Where is it at LVH–Pocono?

The answer will be given in the next issue of LVHN Weekly–Pocono. Happy guessing!

Last week’s answer
Celebrating a Career in Patient Care

After enjoying a nursing career caring for mothers and their babies that has spanned four decades, Frances Renkert, LVH–Pocono Maternal Child Technician, is set to retire. All colleagues are invited to a Retirement Tea in honor of Renkert on Nov. 27 at 3 p.m. in the Brodhead room.

“Every birth I’ve ever seen is like the first, and it’s just such a miracle, such a wonder,” Renkert says. She and her husband hope to travel and spend time enjoying their grandchildren. “But you know I love people, I love the hospital, and I hope I made a difference in someone’s life,” she says. “It’s been a wonderful experience. Who knows, maybe I’ll come back and be a volunteer.”

Giving the Gift of Life

When the American Red Cross arrives for a blood drive, community members and colleagues eagerly roll up their sleeves to donate. Jennifer Rand, RN (shown with American Red Cross representative Rhayanin Barchik), was among the many colleagues and community members who stopped by the hospital on Nov. 10 to donate. “As a nurse, I see the need and how blood saves lives,” Rand says, “and I want to be part of that.”

Interesting facts

▶ A single blood donation, a process that takes less than 12 minutes, can help more than one patient.
▶ Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs a blood transfusion.
▶ Type O negative blood is universal and usually in short supply because it’s always in high demand.

The American Red Cross will host a special holiday blood drive the morning of Dec. 12 in the Stroud and Brodhead rooms. Contact 800-Red-Cross to sign up and donate.

Williams is DAISY Award® Recipient

The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses for the month of November was presented to Robert (Bob) Williams, RN. Williams is the fourth nurse from the cardiovascular care unit to earn the award. He was presented with a hand-carved sculpture, A Healer’s Touch, and certificate of appreciation in front of colleagues, patients and visitors.

Williams was nominated from an outpouring of patient letters recognizing his unwavering and attentive care to his patients. One letter read, “I believe you have to be born with the desire to help others, and that is Bob. He helped our family. Bob calmed me with his words, knowledge and mannerisms.” The DAISY Foundation’s program, now in its 18th year, recognizes the incredible efforts nurses perform daily.
Giving Thanks Project

LVH–Pocono colleagues answered the call to help less fortunate families in Monroe County by generously donating 125 boxed Thanksgiving meals through The Giving Thanks Project. The Salvation Army accepted the boxed meals, which included everything from cornbread to cranberries. In the spirit of giving, LVH–Pocono colleagues also donated 112 frozen turkeys along with a monetary donation from the Medical Staff Office. Thank you to all for your compassion to care for our community and help those in need.

Colleagues Offer Healthy Lifestyle Tips

WFMZ 69 News at Sunrise broadcast a diabetes awareness segment with reporter Alexandra Hogan. During the segment, colleagues offered healthy lifestyle tips and recipes for the holidays. Lynne Garris, Clinical Nutritionist, and Musa Tangoren, MD, shared tips on healthy food substitutes, food portion control, and information on preventing and managing diabetes through diet and exercise. They also educated viewers on diabetes risk factors. Tangoren discussed his Healthy Lifestyle Challenge program, which kicks off in January for colleagues and community members who would like to sign up and join.

To register call 888-402-LVHN.
Training for First Responders

Developed from lifesaving military techniques on the battlefield, the Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) Program is a specialized training course now offered at LVH-Pocono. We are the only hospital in Monroe County to adopt the program and become an authorized training center for care of patients under fire. Steve Kulick, EMS Continuing Education Administrator, sought to bring the TCCC program to Monroe County after recent active-shooter events across the nation to better prepare local first responders and ensure they too return home safely. The TCCC program trains paramedics, EMTs, fire departments and others on how to render immediate care to downed victims of explosives and gunshots at the scene of hostile situations. The two-day program debuted on Nov. 11, with instructor-led classroom training. Participants then put their skills to practice with a simulated gunfire situation and trauma victims.

A Career Dedicated to Cancer Care

After providing care to the Monroe County community for more than 32 years, Medical Oncologist and Hematologist William Ryan, MD, with the Dale & Frances Hughes Cancer Center, will retire at the end of November. “I’ve enjoyed working with the staff and working with patients,” Ryan says. “I will always miss the camaraderie of the staff and physicians and wish them well in the future.” Ryan, who spent most of his career specializing in a full range of cancer prevention and treatment services, noted the improvements and change in care over the years. “When we started, patients were treated in the ER and had no radiation therapy,” he says. “Now we’ve enhanced the cancer center, and that will continue to improve care as time goes on, allowing patients more access to trials and treatments.”