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LVHN Weekly-Pocono

Newsletters

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Lehigh Valley Health Network

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Breast Health Services Earns Designation

LVHN Breast Health Services has always attained high recognition from organizations focused on quality breast care, such as the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) and Breast Imaging Center of Excellence (BICOE) by American College of Radiology. Now Breast Health Services has attained another outstanding, quality-measured honor: Breast Health Services at Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH) and LVH-Pocono were named Certified Quality Breast Centers of Excellence™ in the National Quality Measure for Breast Centers (NQMBC) by the National Consortium of Breast Centers. In doing so, these locations are the only comprehensive centers in Pennsylvania to earn Certified Quality Breast Center of Excellence designations.

Catherine Taranto, Director, Breast Health Services, says this certification speaks volumes to patients. "Patients can be confident they will receive quality care from an institution rated as one of the top breast cancer programs in the nation and their care team is specialized in breast cancer treatment," she says.

Colleagues worked collaboratively to be assessed by the NQMBC, including Breast Health Services leadership, breast surgical oncologists, pathologists, radiologists, radiation oncologists, hematology oncologists, tumor registry and information services analysts. Taranto says the team is focused on excellence. "They are all experts in their field and dedicated to excel in their practice every day," she says.



HOW DOES NQMBC DETERMINE EXCELLENCE?

To earn the designation, Breast Health Services in the Lehigh Valley and Poconos were evaluated against 32 quality measures required by the NQMBC. "The measures include imaging timeliness of care, patient satisfaction, clinical quality, advanced breast cancer treatment protocols and survival rates," she says. "These measures are compared and ranked nationally with other breast centers."

Participation is voluntary, but provides benchmarks our Breast Health Services locations can aspire to. "Participating in the NQMBC ensures we continue to update our practices as standards of care change to continue to provide the highest level of quality care for our patients," Taranto says.

ARE YOU DUE FOR A MAMMOGRAM?

This fiscal year, one of our Better Health goals is to increase the number of screening mammograms across our patient population ages 40 and older. If you are a woman age 40 and older and you haven't had a screening mammogram in the last 365 days, you can directly schedule one through your MyLVHN account. If you would like to learn more about mammography at LVHN or where our convenient mammography sites are located, visit LVHN.org/mammo.

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**



POSITIVE PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

To the staff of outpatient services: I wish to thank everyone in this unit for the kindness and concern.

Holiday Party Benefits Local Children

LVH-Pocono eagerly welcomed children and families

served by the East Stroudsburg Salvation Army to a special, holiday party on Dec. 13 at the Hughes Cancer Center. Music and games were enjoyed by all with help from the volunteers of Spirit Girls and Healthy Young Men. To mark the true meaning of the season, Metz Culinary Management Inc. donated delicious food, drinks and desserts. Kids enjoyed getting their face painted. The largest smiles occurred when Santa Claus arrived with candy canes and gifts, and read the classic tale "Twas the Night Before Christmas." This is the seventh year LVH-Pocono has sponsored the holiday celebration for local families.



The Gift of Life

LVH-Pocono colleagues and community members participated in the American Red Cross blood drive at LVH-Pocono. The event was broadcast by Pocono 96.7 radio personality Gary in the Morning. Thank you to all volunteers and participants.



NO PASS ZONE CHAMP

Response time to a call light is one of the most highly correlated factors to a patient's overall satisfaction with his or her stay. Patients often view their call light as their "lifeline" to staff and help. Heather Marvin, Phlebotomy Services Technician, has been recognized by her peers as the November No Pass Zone Champion for always answering a call light when she sees one on. "Heather is recognized for being a role model in providing the service and care we want for all of our patients," said Kelly Gillick, Director of Patient Relations/Service Excellence.

Ask the Doctor: Talking About End-of-life Care

An LVH–Pocono provider is featured regularly in the *Pocono Record's Ask the Doctor* column. This week's featured physician is Vincent Francescangeli, MD. He is board-certified in internal medicine and hospice and palliative care, and a member of the American Society of Internal Medicine.



Q. My mother was recently referred for palliative and hospice care. What does this mean and should our family encourage her to fight her illness more aggressively?

A. As a physician for more than 34 years, part of which has been in LVH–Pocono's hospice house, I hear these concerns often. Truly, much of your answer lies with your mother and her wishes regarding her care and how to proceed. First, let's talk about the differences and similarities between palliative and hospice care, and the one thing to really think about.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care is supportive care for those with an illness. In other words, it's available to anyone, not just terminal patients. Our cancer center offers our patients a palliative care team to help with coping emotionally, financial planning and creating a treatment plan with physicians. The goal is to provide comfort, support and life-prolonging treatment such as radiation or chemotherapy. However, palliative care can be provided to anyone with an illness such as diabetes or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) to offer supportive treatments until recovery.

HOSPICE CARE

Like palliative care, hospice provides patients supportive care. The difference, however, is hospice signifies end-of-life care, in which all life-prolonging treatments have been exhausted and there's no expectation of recovery. The care provided allows terminal patients to progress along with their illness and receive pain management treatments that offer a pain-free quality of life as they near the end of their journey. In many settings, whether at home, in the hospital or at special facilities, hospice typically includes chaplains along with the nurses and physicians to offer care and palliative support. When a loved one is referred for hospice care, take heart knowing the care they receive from their medical team and palliative team will help them ease into the natural and final stages of their journey. It is a calm, peaceful and dignified journey.

TALK WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

One of the most inevitable challenges loved ones and their families face, and often don't agree upon, are the goals of care during the end-of-life process. I always suggest, no matter your age or the status of your health, having a simple conversation with your family about your wishes for medical treatment and care is vital before you need hospice.

The reason is simple. Many family members want to fight the illness to buy more time or because they can't accept the eventual outcome. Unfortunately,

this struggle is one I see in many situations and can be avoided much earlier by communicating and establishing with your family and your physician your goals for care.

As difficult as it is to hear, it's critical to choose a power of attorney that will fulfill your wishes. When there is no power of attorney, and especially when the patient isn't able to make decisions, it becomes a very challenging time for the family. It's important to understand the disease and its process, what your loved one's wishes are for medical care moving forward and how to achieve that care. Hospice physicians and nurses often provide this information with great consideration of the situation.

WHAT THEY ALREADY KNOW

Terminal patients, like your mother, often have resigned themselves to their terminal illness once they enter hospice care. There is no longer a need for aggressive, life-prolonging treatments or the physical strain associated with other routes of care. But this is really only something your mother can answer. Most patients understand the journey they are on and simply want a peaceful quality of life in which they can share positive memories with their families, and specifics about their final wishes and preparing financial details. These are difficult situations for everyone but our goal through hospice is to provide support and help families and patients understand the process and road nature will eventually lead them to.

THE QUESTION MOST PEOPLE ASK

Time. How much time; is always the true question families ask and patients face at the end of a terminal illness during hospice care. Of course none of us are truly in control of time, nor do we know how much we have at any given moment. I have seen many families appreciative of the time remaining through the comfort of hospice care. Many have in turn become volunteers helping hospice facilities like ours at LVH–Pocono. Enjoy your time with your mother and trust in the physicians and nurses to provide a peaceful environment with comfortable, compassionate and pain-alleviation care.