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Newsletters

Winter 2022

Better Medicine

Lehigh Valley Health Network

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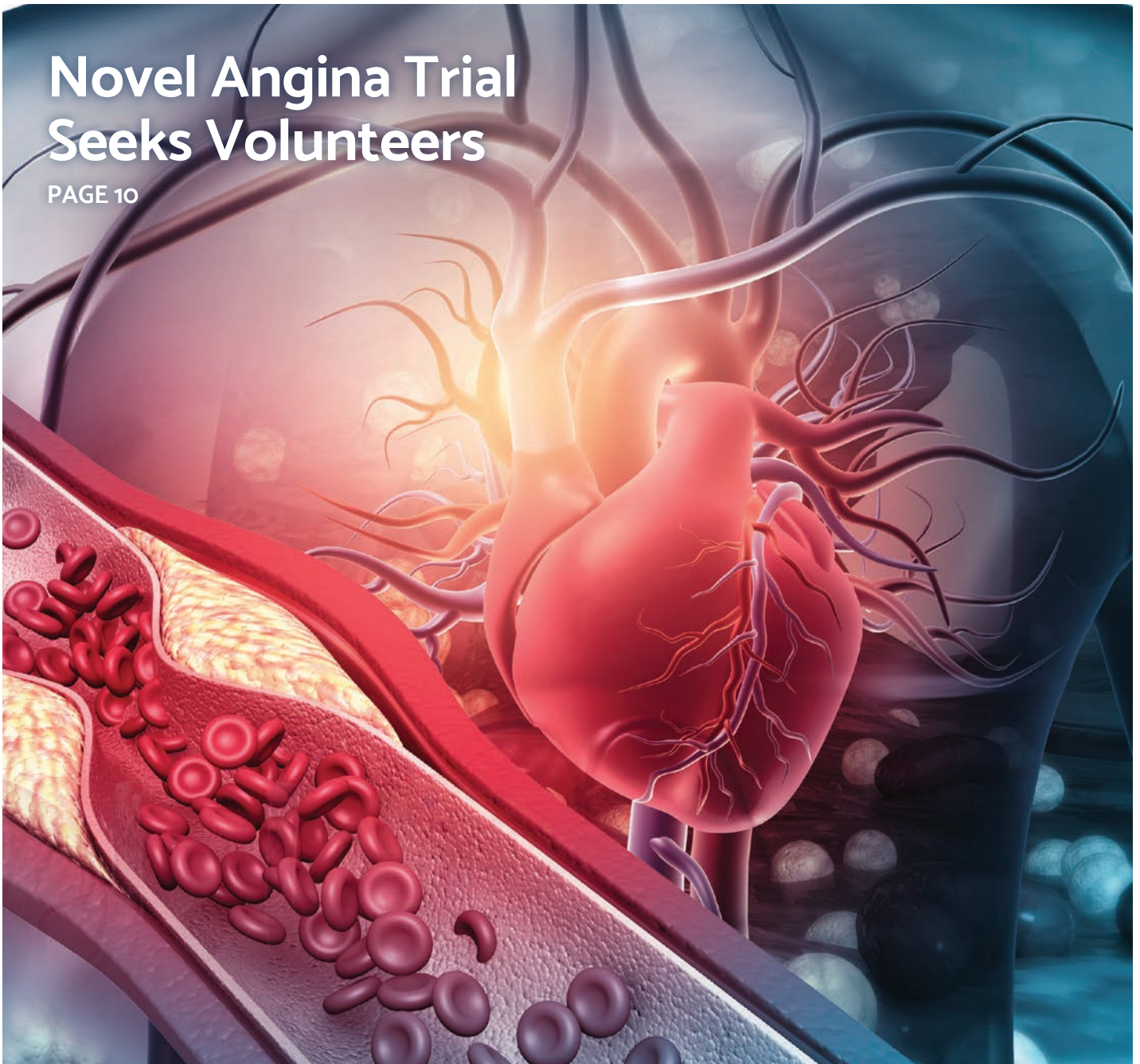
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PARTNERS IN
BETTER
MEDICINE

**Novel Angina Trial
Seeks Volunteers**

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Becoming Better Partners With Patients

LVHN PATIENT-EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK HELPS IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE CONCERNS TO IMPROVE OUR PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE

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Joseph DeFulvio, DO
Chief Medical Officer,
LVPG



Leilani Souders
Patient Experience
Operations Specialist

PARTNERING WITH NRC HEALTH, A PATIENT-EXPERIENCE VENDOR, allows Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) to have a better understanding of every patient's experience with immediate visibility into service issues. Patient concerns can be addressed quickly, and specific changes can be made to improve the overall patient experience moving forward. This direct insight will help foster a relationship-centric partnership between LVHN providers and patients, and increase patient loyalty.

Optimizing the patient experience

Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG) partnered with NRC Health in 2019. In July 2021, LVHN Inpatient, Emergency and Outpatient Services began using the service as well. The goal was to collect more timely feedback from patients about their experiences through their real-time feedback program.

"We felt we were not receiving adequate information in our patient satisfaction surveys," says Joseph DeFulvio, DO, Chief Medical Officer, Regional Campuses and Integration, LVPG. "To best serve our patients, we asked, 'How can we optimize our interactions and modify our outreach to meet their needs?'"


Real-time feedback provides email, phone and text message survey options, sent shortly after a hospital stay, outpatient test or LVPG in-person and virtual visits. DeFulvio shared the premise behind Real-Time surveying is for us to be better partners with our patients. "We are now able to provide service recovery when necessary within a 48-hour loyalty window," he says.

Patient feedback leads to improved processes

"Working toward common key metrics to achieve greater patient satisfaction has become a very positive team-building experience for LVHN providers and staff," says Leilani Souders, Patient Experience Operations Specialist, LVHN. "We all work together to improve our processes based on patient feedback."

The data from the surveys is housed in a user-friendly portal that allows teams to identify patterns and inconsistencies, and provides key metrics regarding achieving greater patient satisfaction.

NRC Health also offers Community Insights, a program that brings LVHN patients together in a virtual panel to share feedback regarding service offerings or health topics.

"We have received actionable data from this partnership," DeFulvio says. "Our survey response rate has increased significantly with Real-Time surveying and we continue to receive better, more timely information from our patients." 

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➤ If you have questions, email PatientExperience@lvhn.org.

Orthopedic Services Now Under One Roof in Hazle Township

LVPG ORTHOPEDICS AND SPORTS MEDICINE-STATION CIRCLE INTEGRATES LVPG AND COORDINATED HEALTH ORTHOPEDIC PROVIDERS

WITH THE OPENING OF LEHIGH VALLEY PHYSICIAN GROUP (LVPG) ORTHOPEDICS AND SPORTS MEDICINE, 26 STATION CIRCLE IN HAZLE TOWNSHIP, patients in the greater Hazleton area with injuries or conditions affecting joints, tendons, ligaments, bones or muscles have access to more leading-edge specialty and subspecialty orthopedic care.

LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine-Station Circle is the first location to integrate LVPG and Coordinated Health musculoskeletal providers in one multispecialty facility.


“With the integration, we’ve expanded the level of access available to patients in Hazleton and surrounding communities for orthopedic services,” says Jennifer Roeder, Administrator, with Orthopedics, Sports Medicine, Physiatry and Spine at LVPG.

Increased access to specialists and subspecialists

With one-stop convenience, patients can access orthopedics, sports medicine, physiatry, chiropractic medicine and podiatry providers as well as hand, foot and ankle subspecialists.

“The integration ensures that patients see the right provider at the right time for their orthopedic condition,” Roeder says. Patients can access more highly skilled orthopedic specialists and subspecialists in the Lehigh Valley who are experts in performing the full gamut of orthopedic procedures, including:

- ACL reconstruction
- Hip, knee, ankle and shoulder (total and reverse) replacements
- Hip arthroscopy
- Cervical disk replacement
- Microdiscectomies
- Workers’ compensation injury treatment
- Physical, occupational/hand and industrial therapy

The provider integration at LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine-Station Circle has allowed the orthopedic surgery group to fully incorporate Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN)’s Epic electronic medical record system to leverage existing workflows and referral pathways. To streamline patient care and communication, “our orthopedic patient support team is on-site at 26 Station Circle to handle scheduling requests specific to the musculoskeletal needs of the Hazleton market,” Roeder says. 



ORTHOPEDIC AND SPORTS MEDICINE EXPERTISE

The orthopedics and sports medicine team at LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, 26 Station Circle, Hazle Township (Humboldt Industrial Park) includes the following providers:



Marcos Martinez, MD
Orthopedic surgery
Sports medicine



Jason Rudolph, MD
Orthopedic surgery
Foot and ankle



Thomas Meade, MD
Orthopedic surgery
Sports medicine



Chris Samujh, MD
Orthopedic surgery



David Nenna, MD
Orthopedic surgery
Hand and wrist



Ronald Ritchie, PA-C
Orthopedics




Lisa O'Brien, DO
Orthopedic surgery
Sports medicine



Tom Witter, PA-C
Orthopedics

LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, 26 Station Circle, Hazle Township, is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Public transportation is available at this location. Most insurances are accepted, including Geisinger Gold.

 To refer an individual for orthopedic care at LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine-Station Circle, call **570-861-8710**.



Patients Get Top-of-the-Line Gynecologic Surgery at Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute

HIGH-VOLUME ROBOTIC SURGERY PRACTICE EMPHASIZES FAST ACCESS AND EXCELLENT OUTCOMES



M. Bijoy Thomas, MD
Gynecologic oncology

MANY GENERAL OBSTETRICIAN-GYNECOLOGISTS PERFORM FIVE TO 10 GYNECOLOGIC SURGERIES PER YEAR. M. Bijoy Thomas, MD, Chief, Gynecologic Oncology at Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, averages 15 to 18 robotic gynecologic surgeries per week, ranking among the highest-volume surgical practices nationally in his specialty.

Thomas is a Mayo Clinic-trained, double board-certified gynecologic oncologist who has been practicing since 2006. Thomas performs surgeries for gynecologic cancers as well as complex benign gynecologic conditions. For approximately 95 percent of these procedures, he uses Lehigh Valley Health Network's state-of-the-art robotic technology. Recently, he surpassed 2,500 robot-assisted surgical cases over the course of his career. If experience is the best teacher, Thomas is undeniably a master of his craft.

"A high-volume surgeon can navigate through the complexities of the surgery in a safe manner," Thomas says. "There is always a learning curve. As you do more

surgeries, you get better at what you are doing. The time that patients spend under anesthesia becomes significantly shorter, surgical complications are less likely, and patients recuperate faster."

Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG) Gynecologic Oncology offers a comprehensive program to meet all types of gynecologic surgical needs, both for cancerous and benign conditions. In addition to Thomas, the program includes Christine Kim, MD, who sees patients at Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Pocono and LVH-Hecktown Oaks.

Short waits for expert care

For a patient who has just been diagnosed with a gynecologic cancer or whose life is being disrupted by gynecologic symptoms, a lengthy wait time for treatment can be agonizing. Timely access to care is a high priority for the LVPG Gynecologic Oncology team.

"At the Cancer Institute, we see new patients at my office within a week, and the average wait time for

surgery is two weeks or less,” Thomas says. “I have an excellent team of compassionate and competent nurse practitioners and nurses who stay in frequent touch with patients, making sure they are well cared for and all questions answered prior to and after surgery.”

Among the procedures that Thomas performs are:


- All types of gynecologic oncology surgeries and complex noncancerous gynecologic surgeries
- Robotic and open surgeries for both cancerous and noncancerous gynecologic conditions
- Hysterectomies for both cancerous and noncancerous gynecologic conditions
- Endometriosis resections, which may be complicated by extensive pelvic scarring and/or bladder and bowel involvement
- Removal of large uterine fibroids (myomectomy), with uterine reconstruction
- Gynecologic surgery for higher-risk surgical patients, such as those with a high body mass index or multiple medical comorbidities
- Combined complex surgeries in collaboration with other surgeons when patients have more than one surgical problem that needs to be addressed at the same time

The robotic surgery advantage

“Robotic surgery is a major upgrade from standard laparoscopic surgery,” Thomas says. He uses the analogy of comparing the difference between iPhone 1 and iPhone 13. Robotic technology affords surgeons highly magnified, three-dimensional views with true depth perception. Bleeding can be controlled at the capillary level, leading to negligible blood loss and minimal trauma. The wristed instruments allow for superior dexterity.

The result is typically same-day surgery with minimal trauma and minimal need for postoperative narcotics. The median recovery time for patients is two weeks.

“Patients who need complex, minimally invasive gynecologic surgeries can find care comparable to any premier medical institute in the world without leaving the Lehigh Valley,” Thomas says.

The Cancer Institute is a member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance, which gives women with gynecologic cancer access to even more lifesaving care options. 

M. Bijoy Thomas, MD, Chief, Gynecologic Oncology at Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, averages 15 to 18 robotic gynecologic surgeries per week, ranking among the highest-volume surgical practices nationally in his specialty.



“At the Cancer Institute, we see new patients at my office within a week, and the average wait time for surgery is two weeks or less.”

– M. Bijoy Thomas, MD

➤ For more information, providers can contact Thomas via Epic message for a response within 24 hours. Alternately, call 610-402-3650.

Surgical Oncology Excellence in the Lehigh Valley

PATIENTS WITH GASTROINTESTINAL CANCER CAN ACCESS EXPERIENCED SURGEONS AND ADVANCED PROCEDURES WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITY

SUCCESSFUL PATIENT OUTCOMES ARE COMMONLY LINKED TO A SURGICAL ONCOLOGIST'S SURGICAL VOLUME AND OVERALL EXPERTISE. This is particularly true for patients with gastrointestinal (GI) malignancies.

"There's no replacement for volume and experience when it comes to treating GI cancers," says surgical oncologist Jeffrey Brodsky, MD, with LVPG Surgical Oncology. "While completing hundreds of complex oncologic procedures, I've developed advanced expertise with surgical techniques, anatomy and anatomical variants. Simply stated, this leads to better outcomes."

While some may look to academic centers in urban settings for this vast expertise, at Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, Brodsky and his colleagues have similar surgical volumes and offer many of the same advanced procedures, allowing patients to be treated closer to home.

State-of-the-art gastrointestinal cancer procedures

Brodsky and fellow surgical oncologist Aaron Blackham, MD, with LVPG Surgical Oncology, treat a full range of GI malignancies, including rarer conditions like small bowel tumors, retroperitoneal sarcomas and carcinoids.

Working with specialized clinical staff, they offer a wide array of surgical treatment options not often seen in a community setting, such as the Whipple procedure, cytoreductive surgery with hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy and esophagogastrectomy.

"In order to perform advanced GI procedures in tertiary community hospitals, you need amazing critical care support and advanced

nursing care," Brodsky says. "The teams at our Cancer Institute are the strongest I've worked with in more than 30 years of practice."

Specialized technique


Brodsky follows a plane-based approach, which allows him to perform surgeries in less time and often lessens the intensity of patients' recovery.


"My surgical approach is focused on anatomy and tissue planes in the abdomen. It causes less trauma than blunt dissection," Brodsky says. "Because of this, there is less bleeding. This in turn allows the surgical procedure to take less time, which recent medical literature has shown correlates with better results."

Community access

There are many benefits to receiving cancer care in a community setting, including less travel and access to community resources.

In addition to this, Brodsky and his team are able to offer many surgical treatments to older patients and those with comorbidities who may find their options limited at other health care institutions.

"From the time I finished my fellowship, my goal was to bring complex surgical procedures to individuals in a community setting," Brodsky says. "At Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, with the support of my colleagues and clinical staff, I am able to do that and more." 

 To refer an individual for a surgical oncology consultation, call **888-402-LVHN (5846)**.

While some may look to academic centers in urban settings for this vast expertise, at Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, Brodsky and his colleagues have **similar surgical volumes** and offer many of the **same advanced procedures**, allowing patients to be treated closer to home.



Immunotherapy: Opening a World of Possibilities for Treating Patients

TREATMENT HAS REVOLUTIONIZED CANCER AND OUTCOMES



Suresh Nair, MD
Hematology oncology

WITH ONGOING ADVANCEMENTS IN ONCOLOGY, OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH CANCER NOW EXTEND BEYOND SURGERY, RADIATION THERAPY AND CHEMOTHERAPY. Immunotherapy, a newer treatment category, allows individuals to achieve long-term remission and in some cases, become cured.

There are varying classes and mechanisms of immunotherapy drugs, but at its essence, the treatment supports the immune system in recognizing and fighting certain cancers.

The research behind the 'cure'

While the first immunotherapy medication was developed and studied in the 1980s, it wasn't very effective. It wasn't until the 2010s that immunotherapy research kicked off, and within three years, three new medications (pembrolizumab, nivolumab and ipilimumab) were being trialed.

"Now these medications and countless others are FDA-approved for the treatment of more than 20 types of cancer," says Suresh Nair, MD, Physician in Chief, Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute.

Immunotherapy has been incredibly successful in treating certain late-stage cancers that previously had limited treatment options. For some individuals, immunotherapy treatment allows for longer-term remission, which can eventually be considered a cure.

Considering the safety profile

As with any treatment, there are risks that come with the benefits. Immunotherapy can sometimes cause the immune system to attack healthy cells and tissues in the body, leading to certain side effects. These include:


- Autoimmune conditions
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Skin rashes
- Fatigue

Immunotherapy at Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute

Clinicians at the Cancer Institute have been on the forefront of immunotherapy since the beginning. In fact, we were one of the first 10 hospitals to offer phase 2 trials of nivolumab for people with lung cancer and melanoma in the 2010s.

"Since then, we have offered more than 50 immunotherapy clinical trials," Nair says.

In addition to our many clinical trials, we also offer eligible people many of the latest standard-of-care immunotherapies and expert side effect management.

"We strive to offer our patients the most advanced treatments and best chances of success in their community," Nair says. "Our expertise with immunotherapy allows us to do just that." 



20+ INDICATIONS (AND COUNTING)

Immunotherapy is an option for specific subtypes and stages of:

- Bladder cancer
- Brain cancer
- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Endometrial cancer
- Esophageal cancer
- Head and neck cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Leukemia
- Liver cancer
- Lung cancer
- Lymphoma
- Melanoma
- Mesothelioma
- Multiple myeloma
- Ovarian cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Sarcoma
- Skin cancer
- Stomach cancer

"There is also a lot of research being done on additional medications and their effectiveness for other types and stages of cancer," Nair says.

 To refer an individual for cancer care or a second opinion, call **888-402-LVHN (5846)**.

New LVHN Hospital Campuses for Carbon County

BRINGING THE NEXT LEVEL OF CARE CLOSER TO HOME



TWO NEW LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK (LVHN) HOSPITAL CAMPUSES WILL OPEN THIS SPRING IN LEHIGHTON IN CARBON COUNTY AND DICKSON CITY IN LACKAWANNA COUNTY, bringing LVHN’s renowned expertise and high-quality, compassionate care closer to home for residents living in these two communities.

Both campuses have many features in common that will benefit patients and health care professionals alike. A full-service acute medical and surgical hospital connected to a health center at each site will provide streamlined inpatient and outpatient services at

Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Carbon

The LVH-Carbon campus is located on Route 443 in Lehighton. Services in the medical office building will include neurology, endocrinology, pulmonology, rheumatology, cardiology, oncology, orthopedics, infectious diseases and diagnostic testing.

The hospital has been busily recruiting highly skilled health care professionals across a range of clinical care areas. The ER will be staffed 24/7 by the same providers who offer care at LVH-Cedar Crest’s ER. LVH-Carbon patients will also gain access to surgeons from Lehigh Valley Institute for Surgical Excellence, trained in 13 robotic specialties, and cardiovascular specialists from Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute.

Individuals with cancer will benefit from access to specialists from Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, a member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Cancer Alliance. Through this alliance, community providers tap into MSK’s world-class oncology expertise, and individuals with cancer have opportunities to participate in an array of the most leading-edge clinical trials not available at other hospitals in the region.

“We know LVHN has a great reputation in the community because thousands of people have been leaving Carbon County every year to receive care at LVHN hospitals,” says Terrence Purcell, President of LVHN’s Northwest Region, which includes hospitals in Hazleton, Schuylkill and Carbon. “We’re excited the new hospital will mean residents can access top-quality care much more conveniently.”

“Family and community are essential parts of patient recovery,” says Lawrence Riddles, MD, LVHN Regional Chief Medical Officer. “It’s going to be a huge benefit for families not to have to travel far to take loved ones to the hospital for procedures or outpatient appointments for labs and imaging.”

BY THE NUMBERS



100,000-square-foot facility



18 private inpatient beds with capacity to expand to 36



12-bed ER, staffed 24/7



2 special procedure rooms



2 operating rooms with pre- and postoperative recovery space




1 helipad



150 new jobs created

and Dickson City

one convenient location. The hospitals include operating rooms, emergency rooms (ERs) and helipads, allowing critical patients to be transported quickly to other hospitals as required. In addition, each hospital will be equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic and imaging technologies and provide the latest technologies in digital health, including secure virtual care and electronic medical records.

Beyond these similarities, each hospital has a different area of focus that best addresses the needs of its respective communities. 



➤ To learn more, call **888-402-LVHN (5846)**.

Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Dickson City








The LVH-Dickson City campus is located at 334 Main St. in Dickson City. This campus will specialize in surgery and include emergency care. The helipad will be close by for times when a higher level of care is needed. Among the advanced imaging offerings, the campus will have 3-tesla MRI, the fastest diagnostic MRI technology available. Other services provided by Delta Medix will be offered 4 miles away from the hospital campus. (For more information about these services, see **page 15**)

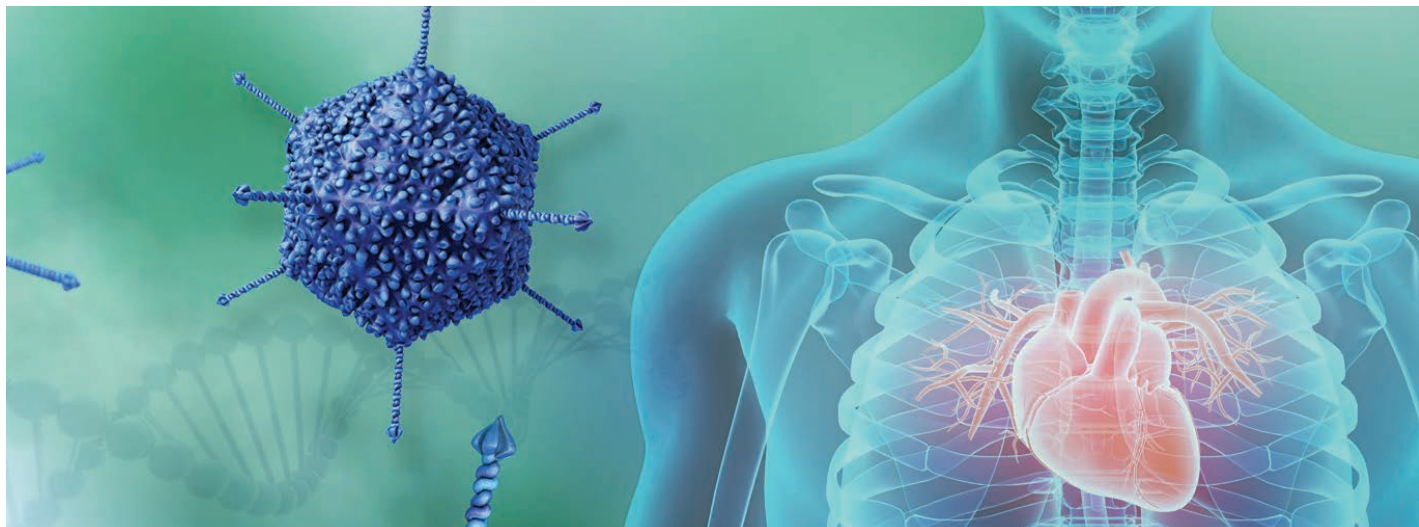
Orthopedic and musculoskeletal rehabilitation services will continue to be a significant focus of the hospital, building on the 25-year legacy of award-winning orthopedic care provided by Coordinated Health Scranton Orthopedics, which LVHN acquired in December 2019. The current Coordinated Health facility will become the new health center. The orthopedic walk-in injury center, with no appointments required, is already a big hit with people needing urgent care for musculoskeletal issues.

“We know from focus-group research that residents and providers living in the area are looking for the high-quality care, experience and convenience that our new LVHN hospital will deliver,” says John Fletcher, Interim President of LVH-Pocono. “Our team of talented health care professionals will be a combination of contracted services and providers that currently practice in Lackawanna County.”

“The new world-class hospital will offer coordination of a number of different services, all at one beautiful facility, delivering high-quality care from a medical provider that is well established and has a great reputation in the community,” says William Cors, MD, Chief Medical Officer of LVH-Pocono and LVH-Dickson City. “Having presurgical care, surgery, postsurgical care and rehabilitation all on one campus will be a big plus for Dickson City residents.”

BY THE NUMBERS

 <p>100,000-square-foot facility</p>	 <p>24 private inpatient beds with capacity to expand</p>
 <p>18-bed ER, staffed 24/7</p>	 <p>2 special procedure rooms</p>
 <p>7 operating rooms with pre- and postoperative recovery space</p>	
 <p>1 helipad</p>	 <p>More than 260 new jobs created</p>



Novel Angina Trial Seeks Volunteers

GENE THERAPY TARGETS NEW BLOOD VESSEL GROWTH



Ronald Freudenberger, MD
Cardiology

IF YOU HAVE A PATIENT EXPERIENCING REFRACTORY ANGINA AND YOU'VE EXHAUSTED THE STANDARD OF CARE, THERE IS GOOD NEWS: Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute has been chosen as one of only 16 sites to participate in the expansion phase of a clinical trial for an exciting new investigational product called XCOO1.

Produced by XyloCor Therapeutics, XCOO1 has been designed to promote revascularization around the heart. The hope is that new blood vessels will bypass diseased ones, improve blood flow and decrease recurring pain for anginas that are not responding to medication and stents, says Ronald Freudenberger, MD, Physician in Chief, Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute.

"XCOO1 is essentially a gene therapy. We're delivering a gene the body already makes to the heart via direct injection in the hopes the person's own heart cells will create more of a naturally existing protein in a process called gene transfer. It would be an incredible advance if we can show that it works," Freudenberger says.

Study details and mechanics

The current study is a phase 1/2 expansion trial seeking 21 volunteers across participating centers for a 13-month commitment. Geared toward further establishing safety and tolerability, the open-label study will explore use

of the highest safe dose of the drug established in a 12-person phase 1 study and will consist of a one-time injection of the investigational product directly to the muscle tissue of the heart by an experienced surgeon. Volunteers will then make nine clinic visits over the first six months of the trial. One final clinic visit will be required one year after initial drug administration.

"At this point, it's for people who don't have other options – those who are still having chest pain after proven treatments," Freudenberger says. "But for patients facing that incredibly unpleasant squeezing sensation when they exert themselves, this could potentially be an exciting opportunity to be part of advancing medical science while experiencing a reduction or even relief of symptoms."

First-of-its-kind in the Lehigh Valley

The trial is the first of its kind ever mounted in the Lehigh Valley.

"This gene therapy trial represents one of the most innovative types of research ongoing in cardiac care today. Being involved on the ground floor of developing these types of novel therapies is part of our mission, and I think the fact that we've been asked to participate recognizes our excellence in research and clinical care," Freudenberger says. 

➤ The Heart and Vascular Institute's participation in the study is being managed by clinical trial coordinator Matthew Karpowicz. Find out more about XCOO1 at xylocor.com/angina_trial.

Same-Day Knee Replacements: Beneficial Approach for Many People

HEALING CAN OFTEN HAPPEN BEST AT HOME

KNEE REPLACEMENTS ARE THE SECOND-MOST COMMON SURGICAL PROCEDURE DONE IN THE UNITED STATES, and Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) and Coordinated Health's team of orthopedic surgeons performs more total knee replacements than any other provider in the region, using the latest techniques and technologies.

Same-day knee replacements are one of the advantages of referring patients to LVHN, with Thomas Meade, MD, orthopedic surgeon, offering this procedure at the Coordinated Health Allentown facility. Especially since Medicare began covering knee replacements as an outpatient procedure in 2018, interest has been accelerating.

Meade says the same-day knee replacement is "a tremendously simplified procedure."

"Patients go directly home from the recovery room," he says. "They don't need postoperative lab work and antibiotics. There is not as much intensive physical therapy, and, most important, half of the patients never take any narcotic pain pills due to simplified pain-management protocols." Reduced costs – approximately one-third less – are another key advantage.

Less invasive and less pain

Same-day knee replacements are minimally invasive. Unlike traditional methods of the past, there is usually no kneecap dislocation or cutting of tendons. Instead, surgeons rely on natural separations between tissues and bones. Another significant development is pre-emptive pain management.

"We don't wait for the patient to have pain after the operation. Instead, we start non-narcotic pre-emptive pain medication 24 hours ahead of the surgery. So the patient never sees the same degree of inflammation or pain," Meade says.

Same-day surgery candidates


With fully integrated pre- and postoperative monitoring, a large percentage of knee replacements can now be done as outpatient surgeries, and they're predicted to account for 60 percent by 2026.

LVHN uses a clinically validated patient selection tool to assess each person's readiness for same-day discharge, and joint placement seminars help educate patients and families on the entire process.

Even people with comorbidities or other medical risk factors can be candidates for a same-day procedure if their primary care providers or internists are engaged before the surgery to address and help minimize those risks.

Sometimes, an individual's home situation, not a medical condition, prohibits a same-day knee replacement. For example, people who live alone and don't have someone who can be with them during the first few days after surgery will have a safer recovery in the hospital. A multistory home or rural address may be another inhibiting factor.

A big determinant for a successful outcome is the person's attitude, Meade says. "Patients have to be completely engaged and want to do this. They have to believe in the system, be accountable and have a care partner who gets educated with them.

"Outpatient is not only better and safer with less use of narcotics, but there are also fewer complications and it's cheaper. For all these reasons, I think it's the way of the future in value-based health care." 



Thomas Meade, MD
Orthopedic surgery



➤ To refer a person for orthopedic care, call **610-402-8900**.

Smart Thinking: Comprehensive Neurological Rehabilitation Services

LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK PROVIDES A FULL CONTINUUM OF CARE



patients' rehabilitation needs and develop individualized plans of care to improve independence and quality of life while addressing any medical needs that arise.

"Our multidisciplinary team sees patients as whole individuals," says Christina Wood, PT, DPT, a Rehabilitation Clinical Specialist for stroke. "We create customized recovery plans to help each patient maximize their return to independence."

State-of-the-art technologies

Rehabilitation specialists use various technologies to assess patients and help them learn how to safely perform activities of daily life.

For example, the EquiTest computerized dynamic posturography platform measures how individuals maintain balance while viewing different sensory conditions. The Bioness Vector Gait and Safety System supports an individual in a harness while unloading a programmed amount of body weight, allowing them to practice functional movements without risk for falling. Over time, people learn how to perform activities with less support from the system. The GAITRite pressure-sensitive walkway uses temporal and spatial parameters to analyze gait abnormalities.



Beth Stepanczuk, MD
Physical medicine and
rehabilitation

AFTER A STROKE, BRAIN INJURY OR SPINAL CORD INJURY, neurological rehabilitation helps people recover their highest possible level of independence. At Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), there is a robust team of neurological experts, ensuring that you receive the right care and close to home.

When it comes to inpatient care, "patients benefit from seamless transitions to neurological rehabilitation. They also have immediate access to the hospital if needed," says Beth Stepanczuk, MD, Medical Director of Inpatient Rehabilitation at Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)—Cedar Crest and LVH—Muhlenberg, two of five LVHN hospitals with inpatient neurological rehabilitation services. "We even take complex cases with left ventricular assist devices, tracheotomy tubes and peripherally inserted central catheter lines." After leaving the inpatient unit, patients can continue their recovery journey transitioning to one of LVHN's 51 outpatient rehabilitation facilities.



Christina Wood, PT, DPT
Rehabilitation Clinical
Specialist


Multidisciplinary care from the start

Physiatrists offer consultations in the hospital. In the acute rehabilitation unit, physiatrists, along with board-certified physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, recreation therapists and neuropsychologists, conduct rounds to assess

Individualized care

Following comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation, people may progress to outpatient care at LVHN sites located conveniently throughout the region. Outpatient rehabilitation facilities are well equipped with innovative technology and board-certified therapists prepared to serve patients with a variety of neurologic conditions, such as stroke, brain injury, Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and multiple sclerosis.

"When a full recovery is not possible, rehabilitation specialists can still recommend assistive devices for maintaining independence, such as supportive braces and wheelchairs," Stepanczuk says.

"The key to successful rehabilitation is assessing patients' individual abilities and establishing trust," Wood says. "We have seen patients after stroke unable to follow commands who required two-person assists progress to walking on their own by the time they finished with outpatient rehabilitation." 

 To refer a person for neurorehabilitation services, call **888-402-LVHN (5846)**.

Pottsville

New Provider Seeing Patients at LVH-Schuylkill Adult Behavioral Health

Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Schuylkill Adult Behavioral Health at LVH-Schuylkill S. Jackson Street welcomes licensed psychiatrist Akram Elawady, MD. He joins the LVH-Schuylkill Adult Behavioral Health program after completing his residency in psychiatry at Delaware Psychiatric Center in New Castle, Delaware. Elawady specializes in inpatient adult and geriatric psychiatry.

The hospital's Adult Behavioral Health program offers a variety of treatment approaches provided by multidisciplinary teams to deliver comprehensive care. Care teams may include registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, social workers, psychologists, mental health technicians, activity therapists and aides.

Psychiatrists tailor treatment plans to meet people's individual needs. Treatment plans offered in the program include group, individual and family therapies; diagnostic and evaluation services; educational programs; activity therapies; and medication.

LVH-Schuylkill S. Jackson Street is located at 420 S. Jackson St., Pottsville.

➤ To refer an individual for inpatient psychiatric care, call **888-402-LVHN (5846)** or **570-621-5673**.



Hazleton

Occupational Medicine Integration at LVH-Hazleton

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) and Coordinated Health Occupational Medicine clinics have partnered together to better serve the Hazleton market, effective April 1, 2021. This consolidation combines the excellent care provided at both Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton and LVHN-Coordinated Health at 26 Station Circle.

Colleagues requiring preemployment services, drug screens, sick visits or injury care can all be seen at the Station Circle location. For specialty care and rehabilitation services, colleagues can make an appointment at either Coordinated Health at 26 Station Circle or Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton.

Colleagues requiring after-hour services can visit Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Hazleton Emergency Room, which is available for work-related injuries. The 24/7 Virtual Injury Center remains open for non-emergent needs.

With this integration, all services formerly provided at Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton Occupational Medicine are available at Station Circle. These services include chiropractic medicine, orthopedics, podiatry and sports medicine.

➤ For more information about occupational medicine services, call **610-861-8080**.



Allentown

EPEC RANKED BY NEWSWEEK AS TOP AMBULATORY SURGERY CENTER

Newsweek has recognized Eastern Pennsylvania Endoscopy Center (EPEC) as one of America's Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers for 2022. This marks the second year in a row that EPEC has received such distinction.

In order to compile the rankings, Newsweek joined with research firm Statista to assess hospitals on quality of care, performance data and peer recommendations relative to competing centers. The top 400 ambulatory surgical centers across 25 states were considered as part of their grading.

"Being recognized as one of the country's top ambulatory facilities is something each colleague working at EPEC should be proud of. We treat patients from around the region and provide the highest level of care, with safety as our top priority," says Anthony Auteri, MD, Chief, Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) Division of Gastroenterology.

Located in Allentown, EPEC offers a wide range of procedures, including upper endoscopy, screening colonoscopy and diagnostic colonoscopy. Procedures are performed by board-certified gastroenterologists of Eastern Pennsylvania Gastroenterology and Liver Specialists as part of LVHN.

Around the Network

NEW PROVIDERS ACROSS THE NETWORK

Hazleton



Mohammad Elmusa, MD
LVPG Family Medicine-
Station Circle



Shanna Kulick, CRNP
LVPG Internal
Medicine-Alliance Drive



Mikayla Lentz, CRNP
LVPG Internal
Medicine-Weatherly

Schuylkill



Daniel Pedersen, DO
LVPG Family Medicine-
Schuylkill Medical Plaza

Lehigh Valley



Joelynn Fitz, DO
LVPG Pediatric
Gastroenterology



**Elizabeth
Adamson, CRNP**
LVPG Pediatric
Rheumatology

➤ For more information about these providers, visit LVHN.org/findadoc or call **888-402-LVHN (5846)**.

Hazleton

Retiree Announcement From LVPG Gastroenterology

At the end of 2021, Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG) Gastroenterology-Health & Wellness Center said goodbye to two well-known area physicians, Robert Yamulla, MD, and Edward Polashenski, DO, as they embarked on their retirement. Lehigh Valley Health Network thanks them for their many years of dedicated service to the Greater Hazleton community.

Patients of either provider may continue their care with LVPG Gastroenterology by scheduling appointments with Young-Kul Yoo, MD, Joseph Yoo, MD, or Linda Yan, MD.



**Robert
Yamulla, MD**



**Edward
Polashenski, DO**

➤ To refer a person for gastrointestinal care, call **888-402-LVHN (5846)** or **570-455-7677**.

Pennsburg

HEALTH CENTER AT PENNSBURG OPENING SOON

People in Montgomery County can soon receive care for the whole family at the new Health Center at Pennsburg, located at 101 W. Seventh St., Pennsburg. The center will help retain and expand Lehigh Valley Health Network's patient volume in the Pennsburg area.

The new health center will offer a variety of services. This includes ExpressCARE for no appointment, walk-in care; family medicine; and obstetrics and gynecology. Hospital-based services include adult and pediatric rehabilitation, pediatric specialty care (pulmonology, endocrinology and gastroenterology), imaging, mobile breast health services and an on-site patient service center provided by HNL Lab Medicine. General pediatrics will be available this summer.



➤ For more information about available services, call **888-402-LVHN (5846)** or visit LVHN.org/pennsburg.

Scranton

LVPG Acquires Scranton Delta Medix Practice

Effective late 2021, Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG) has acquired the Delta Medix practice located in Scranton. This acquisition is intended to grow Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) patient volume within the Scranton region while simultaneously expanding specialty care services in Lackawanna County.

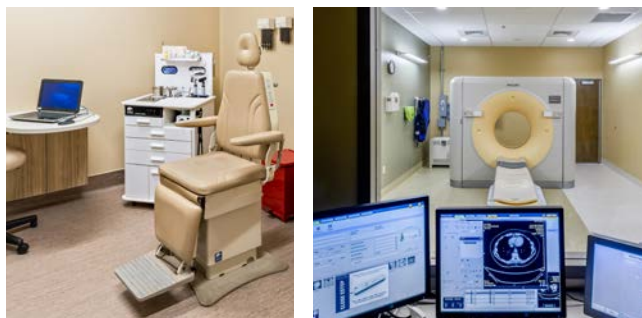
Founded in 1970, the Delta Medix practice has fostered a close connection with its local community. Delta Medix is the Scranton area's leading specialty practice with a long track record of success. Each year, it cares for more than 42,000 patients and performs more than 17,000 surgical procedures.

Margo Opsasnick, Chief Executive Officer for Delta Medix, says joining LVPG sets current and future patients up for long-term success.

"The medical depth and breadth of LVHN on so many fronts is a game changer," she says.

Delta Medix is currently split between two Scranton offices. Its location at the Steamtown Mall includes eight practices with services specializing in urology, pulmonology, breast and general surgery, family medicine, internal medicine, ultrasound, mammography, CT, audiology and allergy, otolaryngology ENT, diagnostic radiology, vascular lab and pulmonology function testing. A separate Cancer Center provides radiation oncology and radiation therapy. It is located at 5 Morgan Highway, Scranton.

Both locations are within 5 miles of Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Dickson City. Currently under construction to open in spring 2022, LVH-Dickson City will fulfill the practice's needs for surgical space for urology, ENT, pulmonology and general surgery with added oncology services.



Hazleton

LVH-Hazleton Prepares for Cancer Center

The site preparation for a brand-new state-of-the-art cancer center has officially begun. Located at the former site of the Hazleton General Hospital School of Nursing, the center's construction will continue throughout 2022 for its opening in spring 2023.

In order to deliver more consolidated care, the new cancer center will have three floors and include provider practices, an infusion center and radiation oncology services.

"The need is very clear, and this expansion will allow our patients to receive many of their treatments in a centralized location," says Terrence Purcell, President, Lehigh Valley Health Network Northwest Region. "Our community will benefit greatly from this advanced cancer facility, and we are very proud to build upon and enhance the current cancer services we offer."

The center will be part of Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, which is the only cancer center in the region to be part of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance, providing people with additional lifesaving care options close to home.

"The field of oncology is rapidly evolving, and the clinicians in our cancer program are dedicated to providing our patients with the highest level of care within our community," says hematologist oncologist Michael Evans, MD, with LVPG Hematology Oncology.

➤ For more information about Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, call **888-402-LVHN (5846)** or visit [LVHN.org/cancer](https://www.lvh.org/cancer).

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) includes nine hospital campuses: three in Allentown, one in Bethlehem, one in Easton, one in East Stroudsburg, one in Hazleton and two in Pottsville, Pa.; Coordinated Health, which includes two hospital campuses, nearly two dozen multispecialty locations including ambulatory surgery centers and orthopedic injury centers in northeastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey; numerous health centers caring for communities in seven counties; numerous primary and specialty care physician practices throughout the region; pharmacy, imaging and lab services; and preferred provider services through Valley Preferred. Lehigh Valley Hospital has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report for 21 consecutive years as one of America's Best Hospitals and is a national Magnet[®] hospital for excellence in nursing.



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CONTINUING EDUCATION CONFERENCES

FEBRUARY

26 Annual Endocrinology
and Helwig Virtual
Symposium

MARCH

17 Child Maltreatment
Hurts Us All

APRIL

15 Just Culture 2021-2022

The above conferences will be held virtually. Details and registration are available at LVHN.org/ContinuingEducation.

Dates and topics are subject to change.

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Cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms?

Try an ExpressCARE Video Visit on
your MyLVHN app, found under "Menu."
LVHN.org/videovisit



ExpressCARE

