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***The Quarterly Newsletter for Physician Office Staff***

**Volume 11, Number 3  
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## **Lehigh Valley Hospital Named Among the Best**

### ***U.S. News & World Report***

Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH) ranks as one of the nation's top hospitals for cardiology care and cardiac surgery in the 2002 U.S. News & World Report guide to "America's Best Hospitals." This is the seventh consecutive year that LVH has made the U.S. News rankings. In past years, the hospital earned distinction for cardiology/cardiac surgery, urology, hormonal disorders, geriatrics and respiratory disorders.

LVH ranked 32nd out of 50 hospitals on the Heart & Heart Surgery list, joining just four other hospitals in Pennsylvania on the list.

Each year, the cardiac physicians at LVH perform 1,000 cases of open heart surgery, nearly 5,000 cardiac catheterizations, 1,900 angioplasties and 1,250 procedures for electrical problems of the heart, making it the fourth largest heart program in Pennsylvania. In addition, LVH is a regional center for cardiovascular research, currently testing the effectiveness of drug-coated stents in preventing scar tissue re-growth and the administration of vascular growth factor to generate new coronary blood vessels in people with stable angina.

### ***LVHHN Receives Magnet Status***

Concluding a journey that began several years ago with the compilation of data and materials that grew to over 3,000 pages and filled binders, Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network (LVHHN) received the American Nurses Association's highest honor for excellence in nursing. The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) has granted LVHHN hospitals Magnet Nursing Services Recognition!

Lehigh Valley Hospital is the first full-service hospital to receive the prestigious designation in Pennsylvania, only the second hospital in the state to receive the recognition, and one of only 56 hospitals nationwide to be designated a Magnet organization.

Now LVHHN joins prestigious institutions around the country like Cedars-Sinai, the Mayo Clinic and Robert Wood Johnson as a national leader in nursing care, research and education.



## "LVHHN Compliance Briefing"

by Mary Ann La Rock, Corporate Compliance Officer

The focus of this month's briefing is on the need to obtain **patient authorization** pursuant to HIPAA guidelines.

*Generally, patient health information may be used and disclosed without patient authorization related to a provider's treatment services, payment activities and health care operations.* Treatment includes the provision of health care services, consultation between health care providers, or referrals from one health care provider to another. Payment generally includes billing and collection activities. Quality assessment, business improvement and accreditation activities are examples of health care operations. Additionally, there are a host of external agencies where we are mandated to disclose patient health information without patient authorization. Examples of these disclosures include information about deaths and births, reporting of communicable diseases, and reporting of cancer cases.

### ***When is patient authorization required?***

HIPAA does not specifically identify when patient authorization is required. The federal rule makes reference to the fact that if the disclosure is not specifically permitted by the HIPAA regulations, then patient authorization is needed. For example, most of us are aware that we obtain patient authorization in response to an attorney's request for records. Another area where patient authorization would be required is in the area of marketing. In the HIPAA world, marketing has a lot of exceptions with the greatest being that communications related to an entity's own products or services are excluded from the definition of marketing.

However, marketing does include the activity of selling lists of patients to a third party for the purpose of the third party's marketing activities. In such cases, patient authorization would be required prior to disclosing any data. Included in the authorization is the need to identify the purpose of the disclosure, to whom the disclosure is made, what information is being disclosed, the right to revoke authorization, a termination date, and a

statement describing the inability to condition treatment on the signing of an authorization form. If the entity received money from a third party, the authorization must state this fact.

The regulations also specifically address business associates and use of patient health data. Business associates are not permitted to use patient data obtained during the course of their contracted duties for their own commercial purposes, without patient authorization.

**Please note that selling patient data without patients' authorization is one area where the heaviest of HIPAA fines will be assessed. Specifically, the regulations indicate that if a disclosure is made with the intent to sell identifiable health information for commercial advantage, the fine can be as high as \$250,000 and imprisonment of up to 10 years.**

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Mary Ann La Rock, Corporate Compliance Officer, at (610) 402-9100.

### ***HIPAA Tip of the Month***

*Verify the identity of an individual or entity prior to releasing a patient's protected health information.*

### **Attention: Office Managers**

If any of the physicians in your practice are allopathic, his/her Pennsylvania license will expire on December 31, 2002.

Renewal applications are usually mailed 60 to 90 days in advance of the expiration date to the last address of record provided by the licensee. If the physician's address has changed since his/her last license renewal and they have not yet received the renewal application, they may want to notify the Pennsylvania Department of State of the new address. Licenses can also be renewed on-line at <https://www.mylicense.state.pa.us/Login.aspx>

In addition, since Medical Staff Services now verifies both licenses and DEA's on-line, there is no need to send a copy of either of these documents to Medical Staff Services when they are renewed.



## Upcoming Educational Session

### *"Making Sense of HIPAA Privacy"*

The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) is bringing sweeping changes to health care. Some important changes, contained in the HIPAA Privacy Standards, must be implemented by April 2003. To learn the aspects of the HIPAA Privacy Standards that are pertinent to the physician practice, plan to attend "Making Sense of HIPAA Privacy," an affordable one-day seminar presented by the Pennsylvania Medical Society. The program will be held on Wednesday, January 15, 2003, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., in the Auditorium of Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest & I-78.

Darlene Kauffman, Associate Director of Medical Economics, will explain the HIPAA Privacy Standards in terms of the day-to-day operation of a physician's practice. In addition, you will receive all the tools you need to train your staff. Physicians will receive up to 7.5 hours of CME credit.

The cost of the seminar -- \$149 for Pennsylvania Medical Society members -- includes breakfast, lunch, afternoon break and materials. The cost for the second attendee from the same practice is \$129.

For more information or to register for the program, please contact the Pennsylvania Medical Society at 1-877-272-2425.

## Lehigh Valley Hospital to Begin Pancreas Transplants

The Transplant Center at Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH) has added pancreas transplants to its list of services, making it the first program in the region to offer this surgery. The center's physicians, Craig R. Reckard, MD, and Pradip K. Chakrabarti, MD, have begun to evaluate patients for their suitability for a pancreas transplant and expect to perform the first one within the next year.

"Pancreas transplantation dramatically improves the lives of persons with Type 1 diabetes," said Dr. Chakrabarti, who will perform the pancreas transplants with assistance from Dr. Reckard. "In addition to curing diabetes, a pancreas transplant reverses neuropathy (nerve damage) and cardiovascular complications caused by diabetes, and stops the progress of retinal degeneration which causes blindness in diabetics."

Dr. Chakrabarti, the region's only fellowship-trained pancreas transplant surgeon, performed more than 100 pancreas transplants while at the University of Pittsburgh, where he received fellowship training and held a faculty position. He came to LVH in April 2001 to help Dr. Reckard expand the kidney transplant program and to start the pancreas program.

"As the only transplant center in Northeastern Pennsylvania, our Center will provide access to this life-enhancing, and sometimes life-saving, surgery of the same high quality available in large urban centers, but closer to home," said Dr. Reckard, Chief of the Division of Transplantation Surgery at LVH. Dr. Reckard launched the kidney transplant program at LVH in 1991, where more than 300 kidneys have been transplanted.

Drs. Chakrabarti and Reckard will transplant a pancreas either in combination with or after a kidney transplant.

Candidates between 25-60 years of age will be thoroughly evaluated for their ability to undergo a major surgery. In addition, their overall physical health, heart function and condition of their vascular system will be assessed.

Once approved for a transplant, a person may wait a year before a pancreas becomes available. But, for many persons with no other medical option, the wait will be well worth it.

"This news gives hope to diabetics within the community," Dr. Chakrabarti said. "They no longer have to travel far from home to receive a transplant that can dramatically change their lives."



## LVHHN Announces Additions to LVH-Muhlenberg Expansion, Unveils Design of New Building

On September 5, Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network (LVHHN) officials unveiled the design of a new multi-story building to be constructed on the Lehigh Valley Hospital-Muhlenberg (LVH-Muhlenberg) campus in Bethlehem. Officials also said the revitalization and expansion project announced in January has been modified to include more beds and all private patient rooms. The upgraded project will increase the number of potential medical/surgical beds at LVH-Muhlenberg by 80 for a total of 188.

Other features of the new seven-story, 205,000 square foot facility include the expansion of LVHHN's Regional Heart Center, new intensive care unit, Diagnostic Care Center, new hospital entrance and lobby, new cafeteria, retail space, and increased visitor and staff parking.

The additional beds and decision to construct all private rooms has added \$21 million to the original \$39 million cost of the project, the total representing 12 percent of LVHHN's proposed total capital spending over the next five years. When the work is finished, all medical/surgical beds at LVH-Muhlenberg will be relocated to the new building.

The red brick and steel structure will be built on the north side of the hospital and face Route 22. Groundbreaking is expected next spring with completion anticipated in the spring of 2005.

## Center for Healthy Aging Celebrates Grand Opening

Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network has long been considered a regional and national leader in providing comprehensive care to older adults. In recent years, the hospital was recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* as one of the top 50 geriatric programs in the country. In October, Lehigh Valley Hospital "opened another chapter in its book" as it celebrated the grand opening of the **Center for Healthy Aging**.

Located on the ground floor of Lehigh Valley Hospital at 17<sup>th</sup> & Chew, the Center for Healthy Aging is a hub of wellness with a one-stop shopping approach to health care.

The Center for Healthy Aging, as its name implies, is designed to promote healthy and successful aging...and will serve to reduce the risk for disease and related disabilities among older adults.

The one-stop shopping approach of care for older adults will offer ease of access to a team of geriatricians, certified registered nurse practitioners, and a licensed social worker with an advanced degree. The Center for Healthy Aging will offer easy access and referrals to Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network, the region's largest network of family and specialty services. It will also promote a shift in focus from reacting to illness to disease prevention.

A number of health programs will be available on-site at the Center for Healthy Aging, among those including screenings for memory impairment, osteoporosis, urinary incontinence, and fall and gait disorders. Community programs sponsored by Lehigh Valley Hospital will also encompass Vitality Plus/Healthy You classes, group teaching models on disease management, nutrition, pain management, and home care-hospice. Community organizations such as the AARP, Area Agencies on Aging, Meals on Wheels, the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Alzheimer's Association will also have a strong presence through the Center for Healthy Aging.

The Center for Healthy Aging will also offer social, leisure and exercise classes through the Vitality Plus program whose membership includes adults age 55 and older. The Vitality Plus program is designed to help older adults maintain close relationships with others, remain involved in meaningful activities and stay fit.

Educational programs through the Center for Healthy Aging will enable older adults to better manage their health and improve the quality of their lives. Resources available will include the Health Library and Learning Center, disease management programs, and monthly classes and lectures on a wide range of topics. Patients and caregivers will have the ability to access health and wellness Internet websites, as well as related reference materials, through the Health Library and Learning Center.

For more information regarding this new program, please contact Francis A. Salerno, MD, Chief, Division of Geriatrics, or Edward Roberts, Director of Geriatric Services, at (610) 402-7775.



## Lehigh Valley Hospital Opens Anticoagulation Management Service

Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH) has opened the Lehigh Valley Anticoagulation Management Service (AMS) for patients taking medications such as warfarin or low molecular weight heparin. Lehigh Valley Hospital is the first hospital in the region to offer this comprehensive management service.

Commonly known as blood thinners, anticoagulants reduce the amount of clots forming in the blood. They are often prescribed for patients who have experienced a stroke, atrial fibrillation, pulmonary embolism or deep vein thrombosis, or have had heart valve replacement surgery. The proper dose is critical to achieving the right balance of clotting ability.

"Proper monitoring of patients on anticoagulants is vital," explains Mark D. Cipolle, MD, PhD, Chief, Section of Trauma Research and an AMS director. "Too much medication and excess bleeding can occur. Too little and harmful clots can form. Either extreme can have deadly consequences."

Patients referred to the service by their physician will undergo a simple blood test to determine clotting time. Results are available immediately, and adjustments to the patient's medication dosage can be made on the spot.

A nurse practitioner specially trained in anticoagulation management performs the test, reviews the results and adjusts medication accordingly, and educates patients on medication interactions and dietary issues relating to anticoagulation. The nurse practitioner also keeps patients' physicians informed of their progress.

The service is located in the Diagnostic Care Center in the Jaendl Pavilion at Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest & I-78. A physician's order is required for this service.

For more information regarding this service, contact Renee Mitterling, Nurse Practitioner at the Anticoagulation Management Service, at (610) 402-0079, or page Dr. Cipolle at (610) 402-5100 2115.

## Patient Access and Central Scheduling Have Consolidated

Earlier this year, LVHHN took another step closer to its original vision for the scheduling departments, that of a single point of access, when the Patient Access Department joined the Central Scheduling Department and consolidated into one location at 17<sup>th</sup> & Chew in the School of Nursing.

The single number to call is **(610) 402-8378 (TEST)**. When you call, you will be asked to select **Option #1** for Outpatient Diagnostic Testing (Radiology, Nuclear Medicine, Heart Station, etc.) scheduled at Cedar Crest & I-78, 17<sup>th</sup> & Chew, LVH-M, and Bath, or **Option #2** for Patient Access.

As a reminder, Patient Access handles all calls for elective inpatient admissions to all three hospital sites, OR procedures in the main OR's at Cedar Crest & I-78, 17<sup>th</sup> & Chew, and LVH-M; Short Procedure cases in SPU at LVH-M; GI Lab procedures in the GI Lab at Cedar Crest & I-78; and Cardiac Cath Lab reservations that contain patient demographic, financial and admission information.

OR scheduling has also relocated to 17<sup>th</sup> & Chew in the School of Nursing. The new number is (610) 402-4990. The hours of operation will remain the same, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**One number does it all -- (610) 402-8378 (TEST)**  
Option #1 - CC, 17<sup>th</sup>, LVH-M Scheduling  
Option #2 - Patient Access

OR Scheduling - (610) 402-4990

The fax number for both OR Scheduling and Patient Access is (610) 402-4979.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact Lisa Coleman, Director of Support Services, at (610) 402-8066, or Mark Holtz, Vice President of Operations, at (484) 884-4710.



Happy Thanksgiving

**LEHIGH VALLEY**

HOSPITAL AND  
HEALTH NETWORK

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**From the Editor:**

**Please help us keep our records accurate. If your office manager has changed, please call Janet Seifert in Medical Staff Services at (610) 402-8590.**

***FOCUS* is published quarterly for the office staffs of physicians on the Medical Staff of Lehigh Valley Hospital. Articles for the next issue should be submitted by December 6, 2002, to Janet M. Seifert, Medical Staff Services, Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest & I-78, P.O. Box 689, Allentown, PA 18105-1556. For more information, please call Janet at (610) 402-8590.**