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With Lehigh Valley Health Network's Online Billing Manager, you now have access to your account, day or night.

Go to LVHN.org/online\_billpay and select Lehigh Valley Hospital-Hazleton.

### Health Care Providers Join Lehigh Valley Physician Group-Hazleton

To help provide the best care for you and your family close to home, Lehigh Valley Physician Group is proud to welcome the following health care providers:

#### **PEDIATRICS**



Amr Ahmed Elmeki, MD

LVPG Pediatrics-Brookhill Plaza

642 Briookhill Square, Conyngham, Pa.

LVPG Pediatrics-Hazleton Shopping Center

(Located inside ExpressCARE), 564 W. Broad St., Hazleton, Pa.

570-501-4LVH (4584)



Shakuntala Varhade, MD

LVPG Pediatrics-Brookhill Plaza

642 Briookhill Square, Conyngham, Pa.

LVPG Pediatrics-Hazleton Shopping Center

(Located inside ExpressCARE), 564 W. Broad St., Hazleton, Pa.

570-501-4LVH (4584)



Jocelyn Novak, PA

LVPG Pediatrics-Hazleton Shopping Center
(Located inside ExpressCARE)

564 W. Broad St., Hazleton, Pa.

570-501-4LVH (4584)

#### INTERNAL MEDICINE



Emilia Secheresiu, MD

LVPG Internal Medicine–Weatherly
500 First St., Weatherly, Pa.

570-501-4LVH (4584)



Adrian Secheresiu, MD

LVPG Internal Medicine–Weatherly
500 First St., Weatherly, Pa.

570-501-4LVH (4584)

### **LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS**

with Lehigh Valley Physician Group-Hazleton. Visit LVHN.org/findadoc or call 570-501-4LVH(4584).



# iPads Help Bring Medical Interpretation to the Bedside

Imagine you walk into the emergency room. You're feeling awful. You need help. Medical decisions need to be made quickly. You speak Spanish. Everyone around you is speaking English. You don't know where to turn.

To help you receive the right care in your language of choice, Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)—Hazleton offers certified medical interpreters in person and via telephone. Yet sometimes there still aren't enough resources to handle all patients. So the hospital – and all of Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) – turned to technology to find a solution.

#### **BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIER**

Now patients who prefer a language other than English for health care discussions have the option of accessing medical interpreter services on a provided iPad. It's a live video and audio chat made possible through a partnership with a company called Stratus.

"It works similarly to Skype, only with a secured connection," says Hipolito Madera, LVH—Hazleton patient relations manager. The iPad allows caregivers to access an interpreter via live video from a list of 20 of the world's most common languages, including Spanish, Arabic and even American Sign Language. If a patient doesn't speak one of those 20 languages, there are 200 other languages available in audio. The service is available 24/7.

"It's a wonderful way to eliminate communication barriers," says Kathleen Fogarty, information systems management director at LVH–Hazleton. "In most cases, we're able to provide faceto-face interaction at the bedside in the patient's language of choice."

#### **SMILES ABOUND**

570-501-4000.

Fogarty and technical analysts helped deploy 65 iPads at the hospital, health centers and at Lehigh Valley Physician Group practices throughout northeast Pennsylvania. When the service started on June 8, patients immediately noticed.

"The difference is like night and day," Madera says. "You can see it in the faces of our patients once they realize the person on the iPad speaks their language. It puts them at ease. It's a blessing for patients and providers." It also helps to ensure effective communication and a level of trust between patients and providers, and enhances the quality of care.

"The iPads have worked well in the Lehigh Valley, so we're very glad to help address this important language need in northeast Pennsylvania as well," says Joumana de Santiago, manager of interpreter services at Lehigh Valley Health Network. "We hope to do more going forward."

-Ted Williams

# The Power of PT

PHYSICAL THERAPY HELPS LEO AND FLORENCE OVERCOME SEVERE PAIN

A biology major in college, physical therapist Linda Banos, PT, began exploring potential careers while volunteering at a rehabilitation center. Her path became clear the day she saw a severely impaired young girl lean forward to hug her parents.

"It was the first time she could bend far enough for a hug," Banos says. "Physical therapy made that possible. I knew right there it was the career for me."

Over the next three decades, Banos worked in a variety of settings, from pediatrics to geriatrics. Today she provides outpatient therapy at the Lehigh Valley Health Network Health Center at Mountain Top.

"Everyone has a unique story," she says.

"Physical therapists assess your overall health and specific goals. So if you come to me with a knee injury but also have back issues, I'll create a treatment plan that makes sense for you."

To Banos, personalized care also means learning her patients' interests. "There are countless ways to improve strength and flexibility," she says. "Do you enjoy technology? Do you hate gyms? If I can match your therapy to your interests, you're more likely to stick with it."

Two patients Banos recently treated, Leo Marconi and Florence Migliore, know firsthand the power of physical therapy when pain becomes nearly unbearable.



### Leo Marconi, 70, of Mountain Top

My story: "I own Blue Ridge Pizza & Subs in Mountain Top and Mary's Family Restaurant in Drums. I started to experience severe pain in my right arm and shoulder in December 2015. Months later, unable to get relief, I turned to my family medicine physician, Mark Radziewicz, DO, with LVPG Family Medicine–Mountain Top. He told me I had spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the spinal canal. He prescribed physical therapy and recommended Linda."

My experience: "Before starting therapy, I was sleeping in a chair and in constant agony. I honestly didn't believe Linda could help, but I told her I really wanted to return to work. We worked on strengthening and stretching using lots of different activities, from exercise bands to massage to electrical stimulation. Linda was great. If the pain got worse in one area, she backed off and worked elsewhere. She answered all my questions and never let me give up."

My results: "When my pain level didn't change after a couple of sessions, I became even more skeptical. But shortly thereafter I started to see tremendous improvement. After three weeks, Linda discharged me with some home exercises. I went back to work – and tossing pizza dough – a few weeks after that. I even started going on motorcycle rides with my wife again. I have to keep up with my exercises and will probably need surgery someday. But my pain is gone, so I'm absolutely a believer now. Physical therapy works."





### Florence Migliore, 58, of Mountain Top

My story: "I was a licensed practical nurse, but had to stop working in 2002 to take care of my health. I have fibromyalgia, had lower-back fusion surgery, knee replacement surgery, two foot surgeries, scoliosis and diabetes. In December 2015, my back pain got worse. I struggled to walk upright, even with braces. In March, I was referred to Linda."

My experience: "I was completely hunched over and could barely walk an inch or two before the pain took my breath away. Linda listened and understood all I was facing. She varied my routine to keep it interesting, so I did yoga, Pilates, weights, exercise bands and recumbent cycling. If Linda saw I was tight, she massaged out the knots in my back so I could keep exercising. It was hard work, but we were constantly laughing and teasing one another."

My results: "Linda discharged me in May with a home exercise regimen. I still take pain medication, but much less than before. Better yet, I'm walking upright again. I use a back brace and will eventually need more surgery to correct some disk issues, but I'm so grateful for the progress I've made. And I'm not done. When I found out Linda would be teaching a chair exercise class at the health center, I signed right up. She's awesome."

-Gerard Migliore





## LEARN MORE ABOUT SERVICES AT THE **HEALTH CENTER AT MOUNTAIN TOP.**

Visit **LVHN.org/Mountaintop** or call 570-501-4LVH (4584).



# Dakota Mehlig saw the skate park and couldn't wait to try the jumps.

The 14-year-old pedaled hard on his BMX bike and hit the first jump. He went airborne much higher than he expected.

Then came the landing. He lost control. The front tire twisted as his body slammed forward. The handlebar jammed into his stomach. He stood and walked a few feet. Then he sat back down.

#### "I COULDN'T BREATHE," HE SAYS.

His father, Kenny Mehlig, was headed to fill up his car with gas when his phone rang. "It was Dakota," he says. "There was a rattle in his voice. I could tell there was something wrong. I raced back as fast as I could."

He found Dakota hunched over, but lucid and able to walk. "I thought he'd gotten the wind knocked out of him," Kenny says. Still, he decided to take his son to Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)—Hazleton to get checked out.

Kenny Mehlig didn't know it then, but had he gone home, Dakota would have died. Here's how teamwork between colleagues at LVH–Hazleton and LVH–Cedar Crest in Allentown saved Dakota's life.

3:16 p.m. – Dakota walks into LVH–Hazleton. Triage nurse Roxanne Piampi, RN, sees him and knows it's time to hurry. "He was just so pale," she says. When she learns he fell off his bike, she knows many of

his vital organs could potentially be injured – his liver, spleen, kidneys – increasing his risk for life-threatening internal bleeding. When Dakota complains of abdominal pain, "the spleen is the first thing I think of," she says. Quickly, she gets him a wheelchair and rolls him into the emergency room (ER).

3:34 p.m. – "We could tell as soon as he came through the door that something was wrong," says KC Willis, CRNP, emergency room nurse practitioner at LVH–Hazleton. Willis and emergency medicine physician Gerald Coleman, DO, drop what they are doing to give Dakota immediate care. They get him to a bed and call









3:56 p.m. – Coleman watches in real time as the scan shows blood pooling in Dakota's abdomen. His spleen is badly torn. "There are lots of big blood vessels to the spleen," Coleman says. "When the spleen bleeds, you run into trouble quickly." At the same time, Willis arranges for MedEvac air transport to the Level 1 Trauma Center at LVH–Cedar Crest, where Dakota will receive the specialized trauma surgery he needs.

"It's a streamlined transfer process," Willis says. "We've trained with them, so it's easy to transfer a patient. They are familiar with our skills, and they know we know what we are looking at."

**4:18 p.m. –** LVH–Hazleton colleagues stabilize Dakota and stop his bleeding. It's part of their role inside a Level 4 Trauma Center.

**4:35 p.m.** – Dakota's heart rate increases due to blood loss. He gets a unit of blood before he's placed inside the MedEvac chopper.

4:45 p.m. – Dakota and his father are in the air and en route to Allentown. "The state gives us three hours to get patients out the door if they need to be transferred, and we did it in under 90 minutes," says Alexandra Malenka, RN, trauma program coordinator at LVH–Hazleton.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TRAUMA CENTERS IN HAZLETON AND ALLENTOWN WORK TOGETHER.

Visit LVHN.org/Trauma.

Later that day – Dakota begins his recovery at LVH–Cedar Crest, where physicians make the decision to repair his spleen rather than remove it. This will help strengthen Dakota's immunity in the years to come. He spends two days in the intensive care unit and 10 days total in the hospital. His mother, Deanna Mehlig, remains by his side 24/7, watching over him. "I knew he was going to be OK as I watched the doctors and nurses care for Dakota," she says.

## TODAY, DAKOTA IS BACK HOME IN FULL HEALTH.

"I'm so grateful for everything," Kenny Mehlig says. "The care was phenomenal. They knew exactly what they were doing because they had dealt with injuries like this so many times before."

a "trauma alert." A team of specialists rush to his bedside. Caregivers cut off his clothes, connect him to IVs and a heart monitor, draw blood, bring him units of O negative (the universal blood type), and perform X-rays and ultrasounds. Kenny Mehlig calls his wife, Deanna Mehlig. "You need to be here," he says. "I can't do this by myself."

## SHE RUSHES TO BE BY HER SON'S SIDE.

3:45 p.m. – Coleman performs a focused assessment with sonography for trauma (FAST) scan of Dakota's abdomen, finding blood where it doesn't belong. Coleman and a trauma nurse race Dakota down the hall to a CT scanner.



More than a year ago, Jeanne McArdle's cardiologist told her a day would come when her aortic heart valve would need to be replaced. The spunky, energetic Lansford woman told him, "You're crazy. I'm 85 years old. I can't go through that procedure."

McArdle was mistaken. She was a perfect candidate for transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR). "With TAVR, the diseased valve is replaced using a long flexible tube (catheter) inserted through a small incision in the groin or chest," says Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) cardiothoracic surgeon Timothy Misselbeck, MD, with LVPG Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery.

"TAVR is perfect for people who aren't candidates for open-heart surgery, but are generally in good health and wish to stay active," says LVHN cardiologist William Combs, MD, with LVPG Cardiology.

#### **HOW TAVR WORKS**

TAVR is performed by a team of expert cardiologists and heart surgeons. They work together in a hybrid operating room (OR), which contains the equipment found in both a traditional OR and cardiac catheterization lab. After TAVR, most people feel better almost immediately and are well enough to leave the hospital in three days.

TAVR is done for patients with aortic stenosis, the narrowing of the opening in the aortic heart valve. This results in decreased blood flow through the valve into the aorta, the large blood vessel that carries blood throughout the body. As it becomes harder to push blood through the valve, the muscles of the heart stretch and thicken, leading to an increased likelihood for heart failure.

People with aortic stenosis may experience:

- ► Chest pain
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Lightheadedness
- ▶ Fainting

#### IN HER OWN WORDS

After she started experiencing symptoms, McArdle – a mother of five, grandmother of six and great-grandmother of three – received the TAVR procedure at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest in January 2016. Here, she shares her story, her wit and her wisdom.

–Rick Martuscelli

#### MY TAVR EXPERIENCE

"When I came out of the operating room, I was ready to get off that table and walk home. That's how good I felt, and I've felt good ever since.

"They told me I would feel like a new woman. I feel like a bionic woman. I have all new parts."

#### MY LIFE AFTER TAVR

"My friends cannot keep up with me. I'm not bragging, but they just can't. And some of them are younger than I am.

"I'm a reader, so I have to go to the library. Then tonight, I'm going to play cards – pinochle. Tomorrow I have to visit a friend in the nursing home. Wednesday, I get my hair done and go bowling. Thursday, I play cards and go out to dinner. And then I'm free on the weekend.

"I'm looking forward to flying to Virginia to see my great-granddaughter, who is named after me – Elizabeth Jeanne. And next summer, I may go to Europe."



Timothy Misselbeck, MD Cardiothoracic surgery

Watch his video at LVHN.org/Misselbeck.



William Combs, MD Cardiology

Watch his video at LVHN.org/Combs.

# Is My Baby's Acid Reflux Normal?

As a new parent, you may be surprised or upset when your bundle of joy starts spitting up during meals.

In my practice I often hear parents ask, "Am I feeding my baby too much or too fast, or the wrong things?"

I'm always happy to share good news with these parents. Gastroesophageal reflux (GER) is normal in most babies. It usually disappears by age 2 with no special treatment. In fact, about half of all infants ages 0-3 months vomit at least once a day. Two-thirds of babies ages 4-6 months do too.

That's because their digestive systems are not fully mature. The gastroesophageal sphincter (the valve between the tube-like esophagus, which transports food after swallowing, and the stomach) normally does not close until babies get older. Plus, their tiny stomachs may have trouble holding everything they eat. As a result, food and sometimes stomach acids easily come back up.

By age 8 months, babies' digestive systems usually begin maturing, and vomiting starts tapering off.

#### WHEN TO WORRY

In rare cases, infant GER becomes a chronic problem called GERD (gastro-esophageal reflux disease) that continues into childhood and beyond. This mostly affects children with neurological disabilities like cerebral palsy. It also affects children with abnormalities in certain

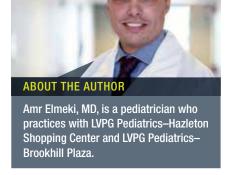
digestive organs (like the esophagus or bowel) that prevent food from moving in the right direction.

These children may fail to gain weight, or may experience severe gas pain, hoarseness, coughing, pneumonia and airway problems such as wheezing or apnea.

I urge parents to see a doctor right away if their baby shows any of the following symptoms:

- ▶ Poor weight gain
- ▶ Green or yellow vomit
- ► Increased vomiting during the first six weeks (regardless of color)

GERD treatments include providing smaller meals, thickened formula to help food stay down, and acid-reducing medications such as H2 blockers or proton pump inhibitors. A last option is



surgery to strengthen the valve between the esophagus and stomach.

#### **MAKING IT THROUGH**

Fortunately, parents of babies with normal GER also may try strategies to help relieve symptoms, such as giving babies breast milk or low-allergy formula thickened with 1-2 tablespoons of rice cereal per ounce of liquid.

I also encourage parents to share their concerns with me. GER is usually temporary, but talking about it can make it easier to cope.



# Making Northeast Pennsylvania Healthier

NEW SERVICES, TECHNOLOGIES AVAILABLE LOCALLY

To protect the health of our community, Lehigh Valley Health Network continues to add highquality services at Hazleton-area **locations.** Here are two new services – powered by technology - available for you locally.

#### **INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY (IR)**

What it is: This specialty provides minimally invasive (smaller scar) treatments. A specially trained doctor threads a catheter to sites inside the body - usually through an artery - under the guidance of imaging technologies such as X-ray or MRI (magnetic resonance imaging).

"Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Hazleton now has a full IR suite that allows us to provide an entire spectrum of procedures," says interventional radiologist Larry Braunstein, MD.

When you might need it: IR may be used if you need a minimally invasive biopsy or angioplasty to open clogged or narrowed blood vessels. IR also may be used to treat cardiovascular problems, such as an aneurysm, to deliver drugs or nutritional supplements intravenously, or to administer cancer therapies.

"IR procedures generally have fewer complications and quicker recovery time," Braunstein says. Having these services available locally means Hazleton-area residents won't have to travel out of town. "If your case is complex, my IR colleagues at LVH-Cedar Crest in Allentown can provide more specialized expertise," Braunstein says.

**NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR LYMPHEDEMA** What lymphedema is: Lymphedema is a buildup of protein-rich fluid just beneath

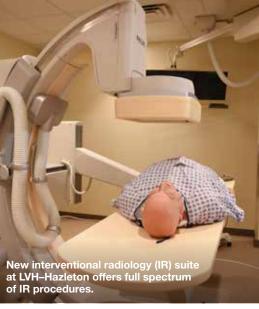
the skin. It causes swelling (typically in your extremities), can be painful and may make activities of daily living challenging. It often occurs when lymph nodes are damaged through cancer therapies. Left untreated, lymphedema can result in severe infection that may require hospitalization and intravenous antibiotics.

How therapy helps: "Lymphedema is like having a one- to two-liter bottle of fluid in your arm or leg," says occupational therapist Colleen Martonick of the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton. She treats patients two to three times per week, using a complete approach that includes massage, compression, exercise, skin care and education.

Now, a new handheld electronic device allows Hazleton therapists to screen certain at-risk patients for lymphedema prior to cancer treatment. "It's so sensitive, it can measure lymphatic abnormalities at stage zero - meaning before you can detect fluid changes with tape or by sight or touch," Martonick says. "That potentially allows us to reverse the condition before it advances. If we can stop lymphedema from occurring in these at-risk patients, we can keep our community healthier."

-Rich Laliberte





### **VISIT OUR NEWLY REVAMPED WEBSITE** AT LVHN.ORG.

Learn more about northeast Pennsylvania health care services.

### Calendar classes and support groups

#### **Health Screenings**

**Free!** Blood Pressure Screenings Call 570-501-4600 to register or for more information.

Wednesdays, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 21: 11 a.m.-noon at Hazleton Active Adult Center, 24 E. Broad St., Hazleton

Thursdays, Nov. 3, Dec. 1, Jan. 5: 8-9 a.m. Laurel Mall Walkers at Laurel Mall, Hazleton

#### **Community Events**

Drive, Hazleton

Stay Abreast of Breast Cancer
How to catch it, treat it and beat it

Informational session with a panel of experts, hors d'oeuvres, support and guidance provided. Seating is limited, call 570-501-6204 to register.

Wednesday, Oct. 12: 6-8 p.m. at Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton, 50 Moisey

**Tastes of Greater Hazleton** 

Enjoy samplings of various dishes from restaurants and businesses throughout the Greater Hazleton area. Hosted by the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce. Sunday, Oct. 16: noon-3 p.m. at Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton, 50 Moisey Drive, Hazleton

"Pink Week" Group Exercise Classes

Join us as we show our support for Breast Cancer awareness. A variety of classes will be held. Wear something pink. Free screenings include in-body scan, BMI, grip strength, plus fitness tips and opportunity to win a fitness membership.

Oct. 17-21 at Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton. For class times, visit the October fitness calendar at LVHN.org/hazletonfitness.

### Food for the Fight

Breast Cancer Awareness Event

Cooking demonstrations, healthy recipes, door prizes and tricky trays. RSVP required by Oct.17. Call 570-501-6204.
Guest speaker: Michael Evans, MD, hematology oncology, Lehigh Valley Physician Group Hematology Oncology Thursday, Oct. 20: 6 p.m. at LVH–Hazleton, lower level cafeteria; seating is limited.

Miller-Keystone Blood Drive

Call 570-501-6204 to register for a donation time. Please bring personal identification card.

Monday, Oct. 24: 2-6 p.m. at Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton Tuesday, Dec. 6: noon-5 p.m. at LVH— Hazleton, first floor lobby conference room

# Free! Bariatric/Weight-Loss Management Information Session

Learn about surgical and nonsurgical weight-loss options. Call 570-501-6322 to register or for more information.

Tuesdays, Oct. 25, Nov. 1 and Thursdays,

Dec. 1, Jan. 5: 6 p.m. at LVH—Hazleton, appe

Dec. 1, Jan. 5: 6 p.m. at LVH–Hazleton, annex building, second floor conference room

#### What Every Person Should Know About Stroke

Learn about the signs, symptoms, treatment and rehabilitation available. Call 570-501-4600 to register or for more information. Wednesdays, Nov. 2, Dec. 7, Jan. 4: 2-3 p.m. at LVH—Hazleton, sixth floor, Gunderson Center for Inpatient Rehabilitation

#### Senior Choice Lunch and Learn

Speaker: Anthony Valente, MD, LVH—Hazleton Vice president of medical affairs Topic: Quality Initiatives

Free for Senior Choice members; \$9 per person for non-members. Seating is limited. RSVP required by Oct. 31. Call 570-454-4752.

Tuesday, Nov. 8: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Lobitz Catering–Safari Room

Topic: Holiday Party

Free for Senior Choice members; \$15 per person for non-members Seating is limited. RSVP required by Dec. 1. Call 570-454-4752. Sunday, Dec. 11: 1-4 p.m. at Lobitz Catering—Safari Room

#### Infants and Children

Infant Care/Breastfeeding Class
Call 570-501-4200 to register.

Wednesdays, Nov. 16, Jan. 18: 7-9 p.m. at LVH—Hazleton Family Birthing Center

#### **Labor and Delivery Class Series**

Call 570-501-4200 to register. \$40 per couple delivering at LVH—Hazleton; \$50 for non-LVH—Hazleton deliveries

For due dates in January and February: Wednesdays, Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30: 7 p.m. at LVH–Hazleton Family Birthing Center

For due dates in March and April: Wednesdays, Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25 at LVH–Hazleton Family Birthing Center

Free! Sibling Class

Call 570-501-4200 to register.
Wednesdays, Nov. 2, Jan. 4: 6-7 p.m. at
LVH—Hazleton Family Birthing Center

#### Infant/Child CPR Class

Free if enrolled in prenatal class series. Fee is \$25 per couple if not enrolled in prenatal class series or \$25 per additional person for registered couples. Call 570-501-4200 to register. Wednesday, Nov. 30: 7-9 p.m. at LVH—Hazleton Family Birthing Center

#### **Support Groups**

(New members always welcome)

Bariatric Support Group
Call 570-501-6322 for more information.

Wednesdays, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 21: 7-8 p.m. at LVH—Hazleton, Business and Education Center, first floor conference room

Stroke Support Group Call 570-501-4632 for more

information.

Mondays, Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 26: 2 p.m. at LVH–Hazleton, sixth floor, Gunderson Center for Inpatient Rehabilitation



#### Lehigh Valley Hospital-Hazleton

700 E. Broad St. Hazleton, PA 18201

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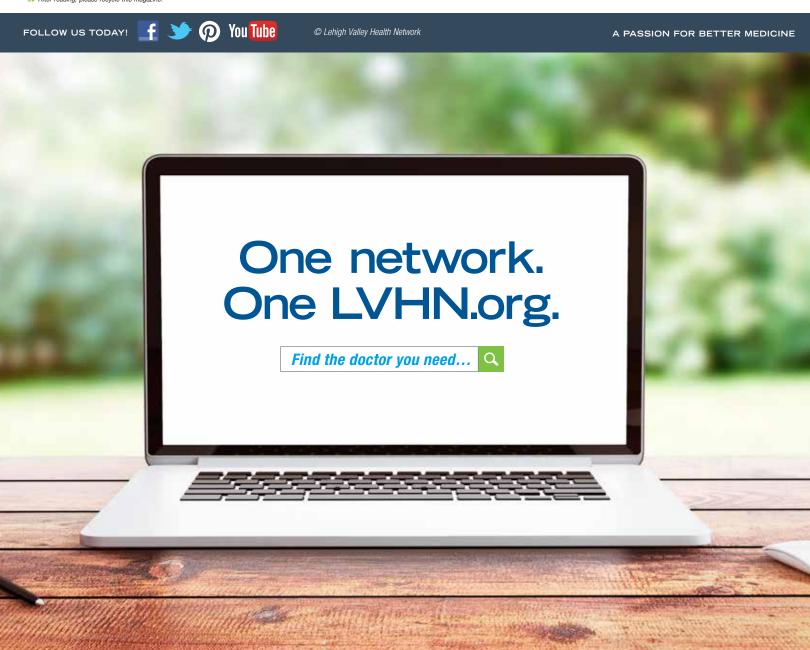
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Whether you are looking for a provider in northeast Pennsylvania or in the Lehigh Valley, find the right doctor for you at **LVHN.org.** 

