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Larger ER, New Observation Unit Coming to LVH–Cedar Crest

BY [RICK MARTUSCELLI](#) · JULY 10, 2018

This message is from Brian Nester, DO, MBA, FACOEP, LVHN President and Chief Executive Officer, Bill Kent, Lehigh Valley Hospital President, and David Burmeister, DO, Chair, Department of Emergency and Hospital Medicine.

Patients and families expect and deserve access to emergency care, an excellent experience when they're in the emergency department and efficiency if they need to remain in the hospital for additional care following their visit. To meet our community's needs, Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) is making a \$111 million investment to expand both the adult and Children's ER, and add a 62-bed observation unit for adults and a 12-bed observation unit for children. This state-of-the-art acute care facility is designed to provide ultimate flexibility for the coordination of care in a welcoming and comfortable environment for patients and their families. An expanded emergency department and observation unit for adults is estimated to be complete by the fall of 2020. An expanded Children's ER will open in early 2021. About 90,000 adult and pediatric patients receive care in the LVH–Cedar Crest ER annually.

Project overview

The LVHN Board of Trustees has approved a plan to construct a 120,000-square-foot addition onto the hospital's current emergency department. The expanded facility will include 97 adult beds (we currently have 42 beds), 26 beds in the Children's ER (we currently have 12 beds), three trauma bays, designated diagnostic testing, laboratory and pharmacy space, designated space for behavioral health care, large waiting areas, ample parking and more amenities for patients and families.



For patients who need additional care but do not require an inpatient hospital stay, the expansion includes a 62-bed observation unit adjacent to the emergency department. This unit will prevent patients from being transferred to 5C, the 32-bed unit where patients designated as “observation” currently receive care. Keeping these patients in the new observation unit will create efficiencies and eliminate confusion by helping patients understand they’re not being admitted to the hospital. The observation unit will be staffed by colleagues currently on 5C. As an added convenience to families, the Children’s ER will also have 12 observation beds that will allow caregivers to evaluate patients’ needs more efficiently.

Here are additional things you need to know about the project.



New features

- Patient and visitor parking will more than double from 100 current spaces to more than 230 spaces.
- The adult ER, Children’s ER and observation unit will have their own covered entrance.
- The adult ER and Children’s ER will have their own spacious and welcoming waiting rooms with

seating for 240 people. Food service will be available near the waiting area.

- The adult ER and observation unit are designed for future growth. They contain modules. Each module has 12 beds. As patient volumes fluctuate, modules can be opened and closed to ensure patients receive care as efficiently as possible. Future patient volumes will determine whether or not additional staff will be added.
- A new helipad will be located on an elevated space above the ambulance road. Patients will be taken from the helicopter, down an elevator and into a trauma bay. The elevated helipad will create space for up to 12 ambulances to remain under cover near the ambulance entrance.
- Consult and bereavement rooms will give families the privacy they deserve.
- Lactation rooms will be available for community members and colleagues.

During construction

- Depending on the severity of the winter weather, construction will start between late 2018 and early 2019.
- Construction will not affect how patients, visitors and EMS crews access the ER by car or ambulance.
- During construction, the helipad will be temporarily relocated to an area off Fish Hatchery Road near an employee parking lot.
- The campus' ring road will be permanently relocated from the front of the Hackerman-Patz House to the rear of the property.
- Changes to traffic patterns and parking will be communicated with colleagues and community members regularly throughout the duration of the project.
- Work on the adult ER and observation unit is estimated to be complete by the fall of 2020. When the adult ER opens, the existing ER will be renovated to become the expanded Children's ER. The Children's ER is expected to open in the first half of 2021.
- How 5C will be utilized following the opening of the observation unit has not yet been determined.

You can [use this Q&A](#) to answers questions you receive about this project from community members and colleagues.

The ER is the front door of the hospital for many of our patients. This meaningful and necessary investment will allow them to enter and receive care in a welcoming space, and give our emergency clinicians the resources to deliver outstanding care and a top-notch experience. We encourage you to share this exciting news with your family, friends and neighbors, and we thank you for all you do to heal, comfort and care for the people of our community.

Attend the Open House, Watch the Ribbon Cutting for the New Health Center at Richland Township

BY [JENN FISHER](#) · JULY 10, 2018

The ribbon was cut during a special VIP event on July 13 at LVHN's newest health center. However, the Health Center at Richland Township, is officially opening for patient care on Monday, July 16, serving residents of Quakertown and upper Bucks County. Before we open the doors, you and your family are invited to the community open house on Saturday, July 14. (To RSVP right now, visit LVHN.org/Richland.)

[!\[\]\(eafc244b53721dd1ec133f0772f70fc7_img.jpg\) Watch the ribbon cutting ceremony on LVHN's Facebook page.](#)

Renewed facility use

The former Workout Plus facility at 320 West Pumping Station Road, Quakertown, Pa., has been completely transformed into a modern, welcoming health care center. As part of LVHN's commitment to provide convenient, high quality health care to our communities, the Health Center at Richland Township will offer LVHN primary care and support services, including:

- Family medicine
- OB/GYN
- Pediatrics
- Imaging services (X-ray, ultrasound)
- Health Network Laboratories

The location will also serve as a new ExpressCARE location. ExpressCARE provides no-appointment evaluation and treatment services for children and adults with minor illnesses or injuries. ExpressCARE will be open 365 days a year.

Please join us

You are invited to attend the Community Open House at the new health center. It is scheduled for Saturday, July 14, 10 a.m. – noon.



The open house will include free health screenings, refreshments and giveaways for the whole family, as well as tours of the new facility. Get more information at [Health Center at Richland Township Open House](#) or RSVP directly to LVHN.org/Richland.

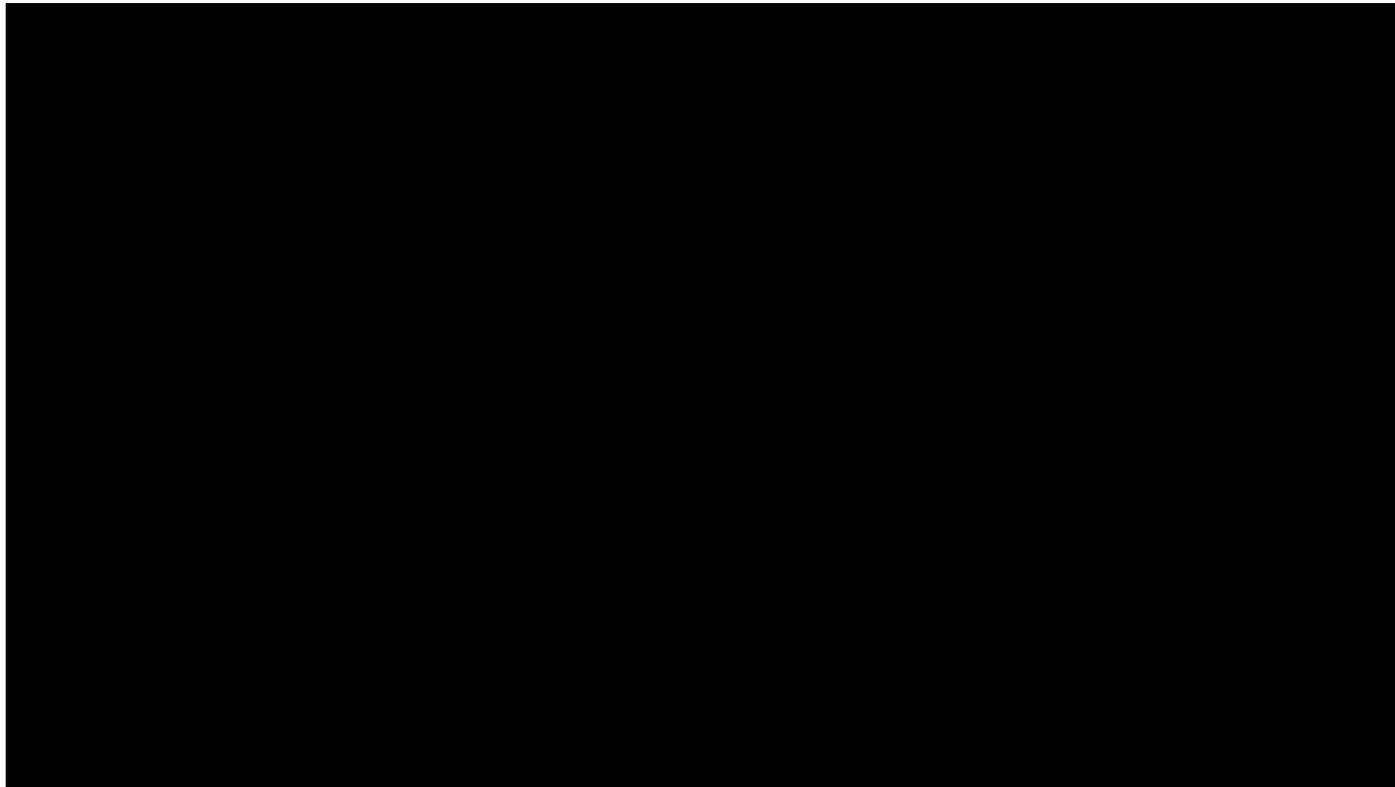
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CEO Update: Integration Progress Report – VIDEO

BY [RICK MARTUSCELLI](#) · JULY 10, 2018

Each month, LVHN President and CEO Brian Nester, DO, MBA, FACOEP, records a video called the CEO Update about a timely topic. It's part of the way we're sharing information with you called the [Communication Cascade](#). In this edition, Dr. Nester discusses the progress we've made to become one, fully integrated health network. Here is a transcript of the video.



In [last month's CEO Update](#), I dispelled any rumors that LVHN is merging with another organization. This month, I'd like to discuss the progress we've made to integrate following previous mergers. Each step we take to become one, fully integrated health network is important because when all of us move forward together, we're strong and at our best.

Our latest steps to fully integrate involve how we communicate with you. As of this week, colleagues at all sites now have access to LVHN Daily, your everyday source for LVHN news online. To colleagues in Schuylkill and Pocono who are new to LVHN Daily, welcome. This is where you can view my monthly CEO Update video, and get news, information and colleague stories every day. [LVHN Quarterly](#), our magazine for colleagues, was sent to all colleagues' homes for the first time in April. It contains the most important news of the quarter and is mailed to your home so you can read it at your leisure. Look for the next edition this summer.

Our HR department continues to take significant steps to fully integrate our health network. Like in the Lehigh Valley, colleagues in Hazleton and Schuylkill are now using Lawson, our HR and payroll management system. These colleagues also have access to the Colleague Resource Center, where you can access all your HR and payroll information in one location. If you work at Pocono, you'll transition to Lawson and get the Colleague Resource Center in September.

Consistency in the ways we reward and recognize one another is another important part of integration. We've made progress in this area too. Colleagues network-wide are now participating in our Service Star and nursing award programs. And this week, PRIDEpoints launched in Hazleton and Schuylkill. PRIDEpoints is a digital platform that allows you to thank, recognize and congratulate colleagues. On PRIDEpoints, you can redeem points you receive from your director, send eCards, nominate colleagues for awards and much more.

We're also working on expanding our electronic medical record system, Epic, to all our hospitals. It's a journey, but when it's available network-wide, Epic will give clinicians access to the information they need to provide optimal care, and give patients access to their personal health information.

Fully integrating a health network as large as ours takes times, but thanks to your hard work, we're coming together more and more every day. While these steps are important, it's our mission that truly makes us one health network. Thank you for all you do heal, comfort and care for the people of our community. I hope you enjoy the summer, and I'll talk with you next month.

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New Benefit Makes Saving for College Easier

BY [RICK MARTUSCELLI](#) · JULY 12, 2018

With college costs rising faster than inflation, many students need assistance paying for their higher education. To help you save for this important goal, LVHN is offering you a CollegeAmerica 529 Plan as part of your benefits package. (Note: Colleagues at LVH–Pocono will become eligible for this benefit this fall after the transition to our HR and payroll management system, Lawson.)



With CollegeAmerica, you get some great benefits:

- **Tax-advantaged investing.** Earnings in a 529 account grow free from federal tax. This can help you accumulate more over the long term.
- **Flexibility.** You can use the assets in your account to fund expenses at any U.S. public or private college – undergraduate, graduate, professional or vocational. Qualified expenses include tuition, fees, room and board, and many more.
- **Investing for any beneficiary.** You can save for anyone: your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, friends, etc. You can even save for yourself. In addition, there are no age or income limits.
- **Convenience of automatic investing.** You easily invest on a regular basis through deductions from your personal bank account or payroll deductions.
- **Low plan costs.** You never pay a sales commission, and you benefit from low operating expenses. That way more of your money goes toward pursuing your goal.
- **Control over your account.** Unlike other college funding vehicles, you always control the assets in a 529, even when your beneficiary reaches the age of enrollment.

Get more information

- [Learn more about 529 plans.](#)
- [Download CollegeAmerica® 529 Plans flier.](#)

Call 610-402-8801 to talk with one of our VALIC financial advisors.

Colleagues in Schuylkill and Pocono: Welcome to LVHN Daily

BY [RICK MARTUSCELLI](#) · JULY 9, 2018

If you've never visited LVHN Daily before, welcome. LVHN Daily is your everyday source for LVHN news. Today, all colleagues now have access to the same version of LVHN Daily. It's another move in the process to fully integrate our health network. Previously, colleagues in the Lehigh Valley and Hazleton saw separate version of the site, and colleagues in Schuylkill and Pocono didn't have LVHN Daily at all.

You can access it by clicking the "LVHN Daily" box on the intranet home page. LVHN Daily is filled with features to help you get the information you need to be at your best. If you're new to the site, here's a lesson on how to use it.



Click a category

New stories are added to LVHN Daily regularly, so visit often. Every time a new story is posted, it will fall into one of nine categories listed in the top navigation bar. Here are the types of stories you'll find in each category:

- **News** – When there's a breaking story, announcement or event, you can read about it here.
- **Stories About Colleagues** – Meet the Service Star of the Month and PRIDE Award recipient, read the Service Anniversary list and learn about great things your colleagues are doing.
- **#LVHNProud** – It's a place to [share the voice of colleagues](#). See inspirational stories from and about colleagues. Plus, you can [submit your story, videos and photos](#).
- **Wellness** – Get information about ways LVHN can help you live healthy.
- **Benefits** – Get information related to your health plan and other benefits.
- **Discounts and Perks** – Learn about opportunities to save money, go on trips, get tickets to events, celebrate with colleagues and discover more of the advantages of working here.
- **Nursing** – Meet members of our nursing team and learn about their exceptional work.
- **LVPG** – Meet colleagues from LVPG practices and learn about the exceptional things happening within our physician group.
- **From Our Leaders** – Read messages from President and CEO Brian Nester, DO, MBA, FACOEP, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Terry Capuano and our other senior leaders.

Read all stories

An infinite scroll of all the stories ever posted on LVHN Daily appears in chronological order.

Like and share stories

Each story contains a like button, similar to Facebook. You also can share a story by emailing or printing it.

What next in Schuylkill and Pocono?

Beginning July 13, colleagues in Schuylkill and Pocono will receive a new version of LVHN Weekly via email every Friday that is different from the magazine-style version you currently receive. The new LVHN Weekly will be completely electronic and contain headlines that link to the week's LVHN Daily stories. Colleagues in the Lehigh Valley and Hazleton have been receiving such a version. LVHN Weekly will be customized based upon where you work (the Lehigh Valley, Hazleton, Schuylkill or Pocono) and will contain both network and site-specific news.

What's new on LVHN Daily?

- **More information.** Now that all colleagues have access to one LVHN Daily, it will contain more news and information pertaining to all our sites. This will help all colleagues stay up to date about things happening throughout our health network.
- **Access to social media.** The right column of LVHN Daily shows the latest photos and information posted on LVHN's Instagram and Facebook pages. You also can link to these and LVHN's other social media sites by clicking the icons at the bottom of the right column or within LVHN Daily stories. This makes it easier for you to share LVHN information with people in your social network. Remember to use #LVHNProud.

Effective communication in health care is more important than ever. Having one LVHN Daily will help all colleagues stay informed about the exciting things happening at LVHN so we can move forward together and make LVHN even stronger.

LVPG Anticoagulation Management, a New LVPG Practice With the Same Focus

BY [MARCIAANN ALBERT](#) · JULY 9, 2018

Back in November of 2017, [LVPG Anticoagulation Management](#) transitioned from the division of cardiology and became aligned with the division of internal medicine. At that time, something changed: It became its own LVPG practice. What remains is the staff's focus on providing quality, patient-centered care.

LVPG Anticoagulation Management provides extraordinary support to patients who must follow a lifestyle plan to prevent the risk for bleeding or clotting. To monitor the risk, clinicians regularly test a patient's international normalized ratio (INR), a laboratory measurement of how long it takes blood to form a clot. "Our practice dissects all facets of warfarin (a blood thinning medication) therapy and determines why a patient's INR is out of range," says practice Medical Director [Shahrukh Mirza, MD](#).



When looking at INR ranges, practice providers are able to:

- Decipher whether a patient is becoming Coumadin (a blood thinning medication) resistant.
- Determine if patient is not taking medication properly.
- Perform "annual risk stratification visits" to address dietary, lifestyle or environmental factors.
- Provide the patient with counseling or education.
- Identify INR trends and patterns before they become an active problem.

At times, an INR can start to rise a few weeks prior to a patient going into congestive heart failure. When providers see this trend, they can refer the patient to cardiology for intravenous medication (Lasix) and avoid a hospitalization.

If a patient experiences chronic pain, it may sometimes cause fluctuations in their INR that can otherwise not be explained. "Uncontrolled blood sugars, blood pressure and thyroid conditions can do the same," Mirza says. Managing INR requires knowing a patient well and not only adjusting medication. "Education and consistent monitoring are key factors in limiting adverse events regardless of which form of anticoagulation is used," Mirza says.

LVPG Anticoagulation Management is set up to offer same-day appointments or appointments in less than 48 hours to all new patients. “We want to ensure we’re able to establish care for patients in need of anticoagulation management that cannot physically come to the office in a timely manner,” Mirza says. Future projects for this practice include incorporating direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs).

LVPG Anticoagulation Management colleagues pride themselves on going beyond maintaining a dose of medication. Colleagues advocate, support and become the champions of the patients they serve.

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Fix Your Mix: Ensure Your Investments Align With Future Goals

BY [RICK MARTUSCELLI](#) · JULY 7, 2018

Do you know how your retirement plan assets are allocated? If not, you are not alone. At LVHN, we offer you a healthy mix of investments options to suit every kind of investor. To see how your assets are allocated, log in to your retirement account on lvhn.valic.com and try out the FutureFIT Calculator®. It will help you see how you can fix your mix to be more aligned with your goals, if they aren't already.

Attend our monthly seminar: Retirement Pathfinder

Find out how small changes today can impact your total retirement picture with Retirement Pathfinder®. With Retirement Pathfinder, you can get real-time answers to your most pressing retirement questions like:

- Can I retire when I planned?
- How much monthly income will I need?
- Am I currently saving enough?



Attend the seminar and see how Retirement Pathfinder can help you get on track for your future. Register for one of these seminars today at VALIC.com/seminars and use the code associated with your preferred date and location.

July 10, 12-1 p.m.

LVH-Cedar Crest ECC room 5

Code: LVHALL11BA

July 11, 12-1 p.m.

LVHN-Mack Boulevard room 6B

Code: LVHALL11AL

July 12, 12-1 p.m.

LVH-Muhlenberg ECC room D

Code: LVHALL11AO

July 17, 12-1 p.m.

LVH-17th Street auditorium

Code: LVHBET11AL

July 18, 12-1 p.m.

LVHN-One City Center room 8 east 2

Code: LVHALL11CD

If you have questions, contact our dedicated VALIC financial advisors by calling 610-402-8801.

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LVH–Pocono Welcomes Oncology Surgeons

BY [HOLLY YACYNYCH](#) · JULY 13, 2018

As an extension of the LVPG network and to provide a greater breadth and depth of services to LVH–Pocono, oncology surgeons have begun seeing patients at the Dale and Frances Hughes Cancer Center.



Martin Martino, MD



M. Bijoy Thomas, MD

Gynecological Oncologists Martin Martino, MD, and M. Bijoy Thomas, MD, both board certified in

obstetrics and gynecology and gynecologic oncology, offer complex and radical gynecologic surgery, reconstructive pelvic and advanced laparoscopic or minimally invasive surgeries, as well as robotic surgery.



Aaron Blackham, MD



Jeffrey Brodsky, MD

Aaron Blackham, MD, dual-certified in general surgery and complex general surgical oncology, and the only board-certified complex general surgical oncologist, will see patients at LVH–Pocono. Blackham and his partner Jeffrey Brodsky, MD, specialize in pancreatic and liver surgeries. Brodsky also specializes in hepatic, biliary and GI surgical oncology surgeries.

These specialized services will help improve outcomes for oncology patients in Monroe County through the Dale and Frances Hughes Cancer Center.

Two Local Families – Once Strangers – Find Their Lives Stitched Together Forever

BY [DAN WECKERLY](#) · JULY 11, 2018

Francis Flexer of Barnesville, Pa., an information services colleague at LVH–Hazleton, dealt as best as possible with the polycystic kidney disease that covered his kidneys with noncancerous round sacs of fluid. But a fall several winters ago damaged the organs even further, leaving him in need of dialysis.

Flexer hoped to undergo a kidney transplant, but until a suitable donor – living or deceased – became available, he opted for home dialysis. For four years, the equipment needed to manage his condition filled an entire room in the house he shared with his wife.

“I got 13 calls for a transplant,” Flexer says. “Every time, the surgery either got canceled or the kidney went to someone else.”

What Flexer could not have known is that a mere 70 miles away, a total stranger was putting wheels in motion that would eventually answer his need.

Devon Diaz, a member of the military stationed at the Army’s New Cumberland Defense Depot, saw a Facebook post asking for a kidney donation for a man from the area. The request resonated with her.

“I don’t know why,” Diaz says. “Maybe it was all the bad things going on in the world. But I figured: Let me call just to see if maybe I was a match.”

Diaz underwent the rigorous screening process, chronicling the details on Snapchat. “I had to give like 21 vials of blood. I was like, *Really?*” she laughs.

Tests revealed she was not a match for the particular online search she answered. However, she was asked if she would donate nonetheless – aiding someone else. She agreed. “People thought I was crazy,” Diaz says, “but it felt right.”

Although she shared her intent with friends and family, it turns out she should have informed one more person: the U.S. Surgeon General. She learned there were official channels she needed to go through



before the U.S. Army would consent. She quickly navigated her way through the paperwork, submitted it and anxiously waited. Seven days before the scheduled operation, she received the paperwork that cleared her to proceed.

Meanwhile, Flexer and his wife were understandably moved by the gift coming their way. “We were like ‘Who *is* this crazy person; this person who has so much to give up?’”

The surgery was May 31, 2017, at LVH–Cedar Crest. Patty Liu, MD, was Diaz’ surgeon, removing her kidney laparoscopically through two band-aid incisions and a three-inch incision. Michael Moritz, MD, was Flexer’s surgeon and implanted the new organ in his right lower abdomen.

Although everyone on the team has performed anonymous donor transplants before, this was the first time they had seen both a donor and recipient who were so thoughtful and gracious to have written notes to their “partners.” Diaz and Flexer did so spontaneously, having never communicated with the other before.

Diaz wrote about herself, looking to give the recipient insight about who he was getting a kidney from. The Flexers expressed their deep gratitude for changing their lives.

After the successful operation, Diaz experienced a three-week recovery, during which she gradually regained her strength. Flexer felt better almost immediately and rejoiced at regaining a spare room in his home with the exit of the dialysis equipment.

Diaz and Flexer recently met for the first time – a year post-surgery. It was an afternoon of stories and laughs, humble gratitude, expressions of generosity and even a small gift, a token of the enormous gift received. The two even shared a peek at their scars. Together, they are now committing to mentoring other patients and donors at LVHN.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, more than 100,000 people in the U.S. are currently awaiting kidney transplants. The median wait time is more than three years, and on average, 13 patients per day die waiting for a donated kidney.

Learn more about [kidney and pancreas transplants at LVHN](#).