



LVHN WEEKLY

| YOUR WRAP-UP OF THE WEEK'S NEWS FROM LVHN



Colleague Engagement Survey Results Are In

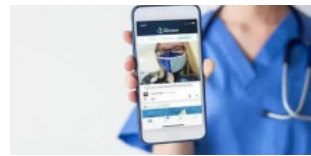
See our overall results and do your part to make LVHN an even better place to work and grow.

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Download the App to Get a Free Laptop Cover

It's your gift for being among the first 5,000 colleagues to download the LVHN Insider app.

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Vaccination Clinic May 28 at Cheston Elementary School, Easton

LVHN is proud to partner with the Easton Area School District to provide a clinic on May 28, 4-7 p.m.

[Read more →](#)



Additional Staff No Longer Needed at Vaccine Clinics

We now have a robust team of vaccinators to cover staffing at our vaccine clinics.

[Read more →](#)



Crisis Management and CISM Programs Help You Be at Your Best

If you're facing a crisis or serious incident causing great stress, these programs are available to help you.

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Watch Leader to Leader, May 2021

Get updates about our goals and finances, learn about LVHN Insider, My Total Health offerings and more.

[Read more →](#)



Performance Management Process Policy Will Answer Your Questions

It's posted on the Colleague Resource Center and will help you through the upcoming year-end review.

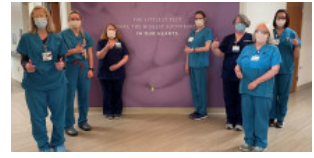
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LVH-Hazleton Family Birth and Newborn Center Receives Keystone 10 Designation

Center is recognized for supporting breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact for newborns.

[Read more →](#)



Does COVID-19 Cause Strokes?

Early on, a lot of information was coming in without a lot of context, but now we know more.

[Read more →](#)



Making Family Memories

Stage 4 breast cancer hasn't hindered Bridgette Elston thanks to advanced care at Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute.

[Read more →](#)



Lehigh Valley Health Network 1200 Cedar Crest Blvd, Allentown, PA 18105

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Colleague Engagement Survey Results Are In

See our overall results and do your part to make LVHN an even better place to work and grow.

LVHN Insider

Monday, May 24, 2021

In April and May, all colleagues had the opportunity to take the 2021 Colleague Engagement Survey. It was your chance to express what's on your mind about working at LVHN.

The results are in. Now, LVHN will listen to your input and once again turn your survey answers into action. Here's a look at our health network's overall results and your role in making LVHN an even better place to work and grow.

Participation

11,608 colleagues (66 percent of colleagues)

This is slightly lower than our participation in 2020 (69%). However, Strategic Management Decisions (SMD, a Press Ganey Solution), the independent firm that administers the survey, says this is an excellent result considering the demands placed on health care workers during the pandemic.

Key takeaway

Our overall engagement score, which measures colleagues' feelings about LVHN being a great place to work, continues to improve when compared with the 1,300 health care organizations in SMD's database. In 2018, 65 percent of these organizations had higher engagement scores than us. Now, we have a higher score than more than half of the organizations.

How colleagues respond to these statements determines our overall engagement score:

- I would recommend this organization as a great place to work.
- This organization inspires me to perform at my best.
- I am willing to put in a great deal of effort to help this organization succeed.
- I would recommend this organization to family and friends who need care.

Our strengths

There are three themes throughout the survey which reinforce our strengths as a health network:

- We are committed to safe work practices.
- We value colleague autonomy.
- We embrace teamwork.

Our greatest improvement

Leadership skills and career development – areas of opportunity from previous surveys – are now categories in which we are seeing the greatest gains.

Scores show that supervisors are:

- Having regular conversations with colleagues about their performance
- Ensuring colleagues' questions are answered
- Creating an environment of trust

- Having meaningful discussion with colleagues about their career

Our opportunities

There are always opportunities for improvement at both the department and network level. That is why the action planning process, which includes your feedback and participation, is so vital to promoting an outstanding colleague experience. We heard some themes, and colleagues feel we can do more to:

- Use the information from the Colleague Engagement Survey to make changes
- Address colleagues' emotional health needs and help them free their mind from work when they are away from it
- Hold others accountable for the quality of work and service they deliver

Next steps

Senior leaders will review network-wide results and identify opportunities for improvement. Based on your survey answers, they'll explore immediate and long-range tactics to make LVHN an even better place to work and grow.

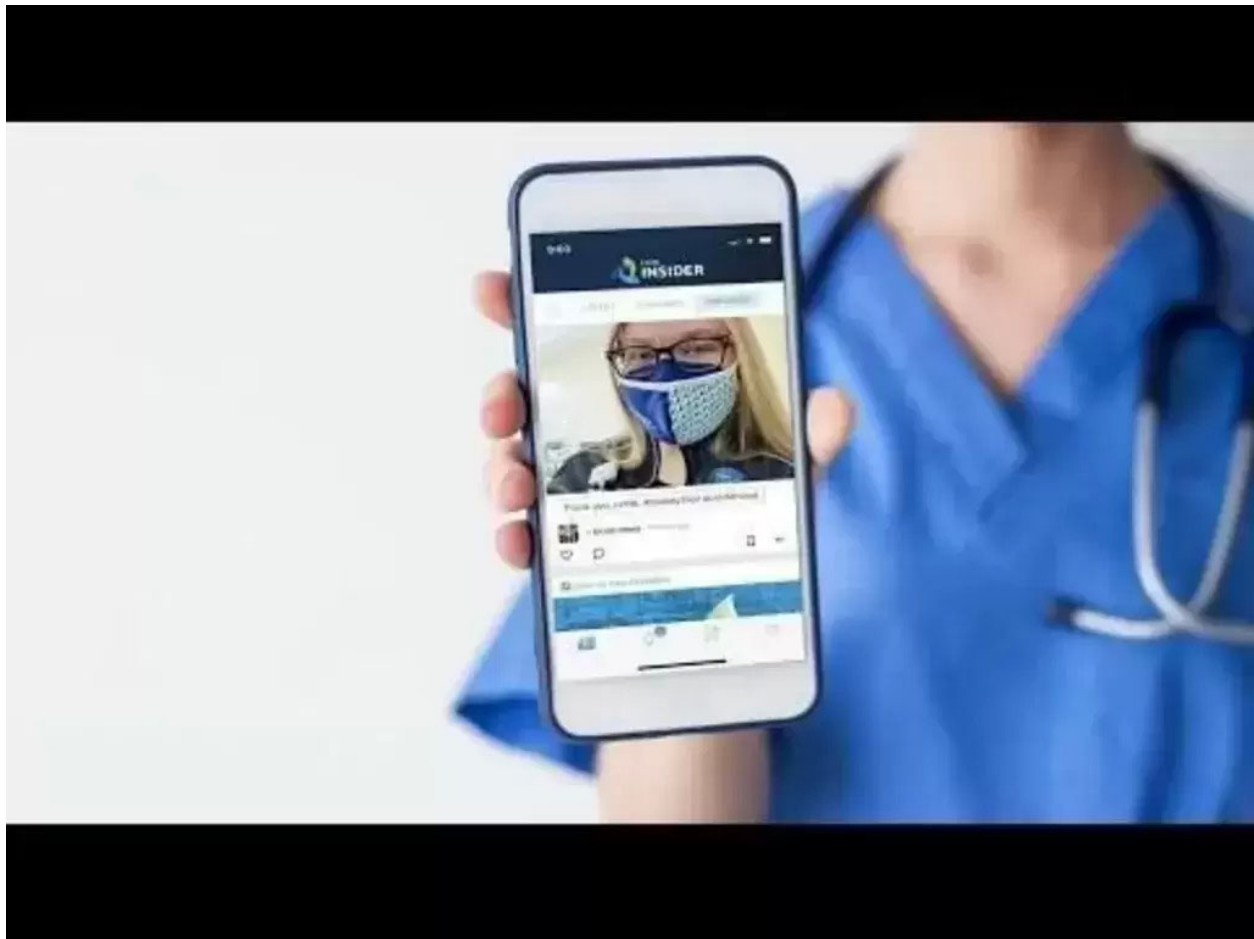
Your manager will share your department-specific results with you and your team. Your manager also will attend SMD information sessions and receive tools to develop action plans to make your department a great place to work.

New in FY22 – Every manager will be required to have a colleague experience goal.

Halfway through the year in late fall, we will conduct a “pulse” survey to check the progress of engagement.

Your role

Help your manager analyze your department results. As a team, talk about what the results mean and ensure they paint a true picture of your department. Offer to help your manager create an action plan and encourage others to do the same. Share ideas about ways to make the colleague experience even better. Together, we will take action to make LVHN an even better place to work and grow.



Download the App to Get a Free Laptop Cover

It's your gift for being among the first 5,000 colleagues to download the LVHN Insider app.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, May 20, 2021

If you are one of the first 5,000 colleagues to download and use the LVHN Insider app, you will receive a free LVHN laptop cover. The laptop cover will be mailed to your home address. There's nothing you need to do. We will announce when the giveaway is closed after 5,000 colleagues download the app. Get instructions for downloading the app at LVHN.org/insider.



Community COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic Tomorrow at Cheston Elementary School in Easton

Ages 12 and older are eligible for vaccine

Lehigh Valley, Pa.,
May
27,
2021

[Lehigh Valley Health Network](#) is proud to partner with the [Easton Area School District](#) to provide a Community COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic on Friday, May 28, 2021, from 4-7 p.m. at [Ada B. Cheston Elementary School](#) on the city's South Side.

Cheston Elementary is located at 723 Coal St. and the clinic is open to anyone 12 years of age and older. The clinic will be held in the gymnasium and signs will be posted at the appropriate entrance. Walk-ins are welcome while supplies last.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) recommends everyone 12 years and older should get a COVID-19 vaccination to help protect against COVID-19. Widespread vaccination is critical to help stop the pandemic. Getting you and your child vaccinated can bring you one step closer to enjoying the activities you miss.

“We at Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital are encouraging parents to get their child vaccinated for their safety, as well as the safety of their family,” says [J. Nathan Hagstrom, MD, Chief of Pediatrics at Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital](#). “The Pfizer vaccine has emergency use authorization for ages 12 and older and has been proven safe and effective. The clinical trial data submitted to the [Food and Drug Administration](#) demonstrated 100% effectiveness at preventing disease in this age group, which now represents nearly 20% of current COVID-19 infections.”

The Pfizer vaccine is a two-dose vaccine. The second vaccination will occur at Cheston on June 18 from 4-7 p.m.

Children ages 12-17 must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or an adult approved by the parent/guardian. We will require proof of identification and consent.

[Learn more here](#)



Additional Staff No Longer Needed at Vaccine Clinics

We now have a robust team of vaccinators to cover staffing at our vaccine clinics.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

This message is from Lynn Turner, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer.

Several weeks have passed since LVHN began holding mass COVID-19 vaccination events. During this time, colleagues partnered together to vaccinate thousands of people in all the communities we serve. Whether you served as a vaccinator, registrar, verifier, traffic controller or scribe, you played a vital role and helped us further our mission to heal, comfort and care. Thank you for all you have done to accomplish this major undertaking.

Since the start of our vaccination efforts, we have hired a robust team of vaccinators. As a result, the need for additional staffing at our vaccine clinics is no longer needed. Managers: You no longer need to provide staff to help with the remaining clinics.

Our entire executive leadership team wishes to express our deepest appreciation to all colleagues who helped make LVHN's vaccine clinics an outstanding success. Our colleagues' commitment to getting our community vaccinated is one more reason we all should be #LVHNProud.



Crisis Management and CISM Programs Help You Be at Your Best

If you're facing a crisis or serious incident causing great stress, these programs are available to help you.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, May 27, 2021

During Mental Health Awareness Month, we are featuring programs at LVHN that support your overall well-being in a range of ways. Here, we take a closer look at the Crisis Management and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) programs.

You come to work prepared to do whatever is needed to help our patients and colleagues. Sometimes the work is challenging and mentally draining, even without the added worry that COVID-19 brings. Stressful experiences are experienced by most health care professionals on a daily basis. At LVHN, the following programs are here to provide mental health support to you and your colleagues.

Crisis Management Program

At LVHN, anyone interested in crisis management can take this eight-hour course designed to equip you with the skills and knowledge you need to recognize and prevent crisis situations. The class covers verbal de-escalation skills, how to recognize risk factors, maintaining safety during potentially dangerous situations and emergency safety interventions.

“If you can help de-escalate a situation in the moment, that will reduce the negative impact and, over time, staff burnout. That helps colleagues feel more connected to their jobs, which is ultimately the goal of crisis management,” says course instructor David Yadush, Behavioral Health Education Specialist in the department of psychiatry. “The program offers an all-around holistic approach. It doesn’t just focus on the patient, it focuses on how staff can care for themselves, how to fill your bottle using self-care techniques and supporting each other.”

Sign up for the class on TLC.

- Access TLC from your SSO toolbar.
- Click the “Search” icon and type “Crisis Management.”
- Select the course named “2021 Comprehensive Crisis Management Initial Training.”

The course is available to colleagues. Emergency department, behavioral health and security colleagues are required to take the course. Last year, more than 2,000 staff completed the course and received certification.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)



The CISM team is available to provide support services to all colleagues during an adverse event. The CISM team consists of 33 certified volunteers including nurses, social workers, pastors and security colleagues trained in basic individual and group interventions.

“During the pandemic, there was a lot of stress, so we intervened on site with our colleagues, which provided them with access to support in their area of work,” says Licensed Clinical Social Worker Anthony Buchman, Clinical Coordinator of Psychiatric Evaluation Services. “We provided a model of peer support that included tools to assist staff in managing the stress of their work under the added pressures presented by COVID-19. We also developed our own blended approach, where we started weaving in mental performance coaching with the crisis counseling. Our goal with the CISM Peer Support Program is to provide on-site support that assists our colleagues personally and professionally. This support identifies healthy ways of coping which promotes and maintains the high quality of care that our colleagues provide to our patients.”

The CISM team is ready to be deployed to any LVHN site to provide the most appropriate intervention given the situation, such as the death of a colleague, community crisis or catastrophe. The goal is to help colleagues manage emotions and to better understand the stress that they are under, and then be prepared for the next time a situation happens. Emergency management and Preferred EAP manage the program.

Call 610-402-2333 with questions about the CISM program.

LEADER TO LEADER

Watch Leader to Leader, May 2021

Get updates about our goals and finances, learn about LVHN Insider, My Total Health offerings and more.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

May's Leader to Leader meeting is chock-full of information. You'll get updates about a variety of topics, including our goals and finances, and learn about others, including LVHN Insider and the latest offering from My Total Health. Use these [talking points](#) to learn and share the information presented at the meeting with colleagues on your team. Then click below to watch each presentation.

[Network Goals Update](#)

Lynn Turner, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

Network Financial Update

Rob Thomas, Senior Vice President, Finance - Controller

National Nurses Week

Kim Jordan, DNP, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer

2021 Colleague Engagement Survey Overview

Jane Leary, Vice President, Colleague Relations and Talent Acquisition

LVHN Insider

Kirstin Reed, Internal Communications and Engagement Manager

My Total Health

Kristen Behler, Director, Health Promotions/Wellness

COVID-19 Update

Alex Benjamin, MD, Chief Infection Control and Prevention Officer



Performance Management Process Policy Will Answer Your Questions

It's posted on the Colleague Resource Center and will help you through the upcoming year-end review.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

As we prepare for the conclusion of our first year under the new Performance Management process, we appreciate that some of you may have questions.

That's why we are pleased to inform you that the new [Performance Management Process Policy](#) has been posted on the Colleague Resource Center. The policy will likely address any remaining questions you may have. If not, please know the following are available:

- Take60 Year-End Review class for managers (June through mid-August) – Register on the [OE website](#)
- New “how to” videos and job aids on the PeopleFluent dashboard for all colleagues
- Your partners in human resources and leadership and organizational development

During the upcoming year-end review, please take a moment to reflect on the outstanding work you and your colleagues are doing. Thank you for all you have done this past year to create Better Days Ahead.



Family Birth and Newborn Center at LVH–Hazleton Receives Keystone 10 Designation

Hazleton, Pa.,
May
24,
2021

Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Hazleton has been recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Health as a Keystone 10 designated facility that supports breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact for newborns.

Supporting the initial breastfeeding efforts of a mother gives her the confidence she needs to provide her child with enhanced neurological, physical, and emotional development through their entire life.

In affiliation with Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital, all LVH–Hazleton maternity staff completed specialized training and competencies led by Heather Garcia, RN, certified lactation counselor.

When breastfeeding is not appropriate, LVH–Hazleton provides information on safe formula preparation. Safe formula preparation includes letting newborns feed on demand with paced bottle feedings. Education regarding pacifier usage is provided only at the mother's request. The key is providing education and guidance to every family we care for.

"I am so proud of our staff and administration for the support and the hard work in obtaining this designation," says Mary "Marfy" Yanac, RN, BSN, Director of patient care services, Family Birth and Newborn Center at LVH–Hazleton. "Thank you to Pennsylvania Department of Health and American Academy of Pediatrics for providing the educational opportunity to improve patient care practices. As a team, the obstetric prenatal offices, inpatient staff and pediatric offices navigated the extensive training of Keystone 10 into our care, giving families that choose to breastfeed a good start."

"It is important we provide support, education and guidance to all mothers in order to promote the health of our smallest patients," Shawna Bernotas, RN.

"Knowledge is power," says Noelle Tessitore, RNC-OB. "Our goal is empowering women to care for their infants in the best way possible. This is the gold standard of care and we are here to encourage it."

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Keystone 10 is a quality improvement breastfeeding initiative aimed at improving the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding for all Pennsylvania infants, mothers and families. The Department of Health has developed the Keystone 10 Initiative as a means to assist Pennsylvania's birthing facilities in adopting and implementing evidence-based maternity care practices with the goal of improving individual facility and state level breastfeeding care and rates and ultimately improving the health of mothers and babies.

Participating facilities focus on breastfeeding initiation, exclusive breastfeeding, skin-to-skin contact and rooming-in, among other elements. Keystone 10 is based on similar

initiatives in other states that have shown success in assisting birthing facilities in the promotion of breastfeeding through establishment of breastfeeding policy, implementation of procedure improvements and supporting families in making informed feeding decisions. This initiative is engaging Pennsylvania's birthing facilities in local, regional and state level efforts to improve the initiation, duration and exclusivity rates of breastfeeding across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

For information on the Family Birth and Newborn Center at LVH–Hazleton, go to <https://www.lvhn.org/locations/family-birth-and-newborn-center-lehigh-valley-hospital-hazleton#>

For more information on Keystone 10, go to [Keystone 10 Initiative \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov/keystone10)



Does COVID-19 Cause Strokes?

May 21, 2021

BY RICHARD LALIBERTE

It was bad enough that an exceptionally dangerous new respiratory virus was ravaging New York City in March and April 2020. Then doctors noticed something else. “Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, we started seeing alarming reports of young patients without typical risk factors who developed severe stroke,” says vascular neurologist [Kathryn Cheponis, MD](#), with [Lehigh Valley Hospital \(LVH\) Neurology—1250 Cedar Crest](#).

In the space of two weeks, five New Yorkers between ages 33 and 49 had blockages in arteries of the brain – more than five times the expected number in such a normally low-risk population during such a short period of time, Cheponis recalls. “This was a disturbing increase and looked like an anomaly,” she says. “But all five were diagnosed with COVID. That was the first signal this might be an area of concern.”

A blockage in an artery of the brain is the hallmark of ischemic stroke, the most common form. It occurs when a blood clot either develops elsewhere in the body such as the heart and travels to lodge in the brain or forms at the site of the blockage. In either case, impaired blood flow can deprive the brain of oxygen and damage brain tissue or even lead to death. Could COVID-19 be related to stroke?

“In those early days, a lot of information about COVID-19 was coming in without a lot of context,” Cheponis says. “We didn’t know what it meant yet.”

Subtle connection

As the pandemic enters its second year, potential links between COVID and stroke are better defined, but the relationship is complex and nuanced. “Changes in clotting systems through the whole body have become clearer, especially in people with severe COVID,” Cheponis says. “We especially see clotting in microscopic tissues of the lungs.”

It’s thought that inflammation from the virus may trigger tiny lung clots. “One theory is that inflammation in cells lining artery walls likewise makes people with COVID prone to large, disabling strokes,” Cheponis says. “But no one has been able to prove that association.”

In fact, tiny lung clots may use up platelets in blood that help blood coagulate, preventing them from contributing to larger clots. “Looking at the big picture, there may not be a greater stroke risk in COVID patients,” Cheponis says, “or some may be at higher risk, but not all.”

Instead, a more subtle – and, fortunately, avoidable – link has emerged. As the pandemic gained momentum, stroke cases in hospitals actually dropped, but not because fewer strokes were happening. “People with milder stroke symptoms were staying home” due to concerns about catching the coronavirus, Cheponis says. “Since the pandemic’s one-year mark, we’re seeing people with manageable conditions that have been neglected who are now experiencing serious consequences of delayed care.”

Early treatment is important

In the first 24 hours of a stroke, an array of treatments can minimize its effects. “We can administer intravenous clot medications that increase the likelihood of a complete recovery,” Cheponis says. “For a major blockage, we can go in with a catheter through a blood vessel to remove a clot. But if you come in two weeks later, there’s not a lot we can do to reverse the damage.”

Many people also delayed or neglected care for conditions that predispose them to stroke such as atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat) or heart valve surgery. “We’ve seen many people, for example, who’ve had trouble managing blood thinners during the pandemic and experienced significant repercussions,” Cheponis says.

Others have had trouble controlling blood pressure or diabetes. Often, people have reduced their activity. “All of these can affect traditional vascular risk factors that increase the likelihood of stroke,” Cheponis says.

Reducing risks

As the pandemic continues, COVID-19’s association with stroke appears largely manageable. “Most important is prioritizing normal, routine medical care,” Cheponis says. “Telehealth and video visits are very safe and make it possible to monitor risk factors such as blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar.”

It’s also important to recognize signs of a stroke. “If you notice weakness or numbness on one side of the body, a drooping face, trouble speaking or understanding speech, loss of vision or sudden severe dizziness that doesn’t go away, you should call 911,” Cheponis says.

[Learn more about signs of stroke.](#)



Making Family Memories

Stage 4 breast cancer hasn't hindered active mom Bridgette Elston, thanks to advanced, personalized care at Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute

May 24, 2021

BY SIDNEY STEVENS

As a busy mom of two young daughters, Bridgette Elston of Easton is no stranger to occasional soreness and aches. That's why in the fall of 2017 when she began experiencing a "weird" pain in her back, she quickly brushed it off as a normal part of being an active parent. "I couldn't shake it, but nothing said 'catastrophic,'" says Elston, who was then 38. "It was more like I pinched something."

About that time, Elston's husband, Mike, ended up in the ER with a kidney stone and suggested she get her back X-rayed while they were there. A week later Elston received a call to come in for an MRI. The results showed a tumor compressing her spinal cord, which doctors believed had spread (metastasized) from a primary cancer elsewhere in her body. Further scans confirmed everyone's worst fears: Elston had stage 4 breast cancer in both breasts that had spread to her bones.

“It was very hard because my daughter Marcy was only five and Brooke was two,” Elston says. “So I decided to do whatever was necessary to be here for them.”

Team treatment

Elston began treatment with hematologist oncologist [Ranju Gupta, MD](#), with [LVPG Hematology Oncology](#) and Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute. “Bridgette had hormone receptor-positive HER2-negative breast cancer, meaning estrogen and progesterone were causing her cancer cells to grow, but she didn’t have abnormally high HER2 protein levels that can also fuel cancer growth,” she says. “We started her on anti-estrogen therapy to stop hormone production, plus a CDK4/6 inhibitor to slow the growth of cancer cells. This drug combination delays the need for chemotherapy, which has a higher risk of serious side effects, and allows patients a better quality of life during treatment.”

To further decrease hormone production, Elston had her uterus, cervix and ovaries removed in spring 2018. The following spring she underwent a double mastectomy with Cancer Institute surgical oncologist [Lori Alfonse, DO](#), with [LVPG Surgical Oncology](#). The procedure was performed as a palliative measure to reduce pain caused by large breasts, and not to treat her cancer.

In addition, Elston began receiving precision-targeted radiation treatments with Cancer Institute radiation oncologist Hasan Danish, MD, to manage symptoms caused by her bone metastases, including pain and periodic fractures. She continues to receive treatments as needed.

Living well with cancer

Since her diagnosis, Elston has stayed focused on raising her daughters, now eight and five. It’s not always easy for the girls, but Elston is honest about her condition while working to keep life normal, positive and fun. Family time is precious, including the Elston’s memorable weeklong trip to Disney World in 2019, paid for by the Mama Mare Breast Cancer Foundation.

“It was absolutely amazing because I got to focus on being Mom and Bridgette, and not being a cancer patient,” Elston says. “I want to continue making memories with my kids and husband.”

New challenge, new therapy

This January, Elston learned her cancer had progressed. However, Gupta remains hopeful a new drug combination that pairs anti-estrogen therapy with an mTor inhibitor that slows cancer growth will continue postponing Elston's need for chemotherapy while maintaining her high quality of life.

"Stage 4 breast cancer doesn't mean end of life," Gupta says. "We're now treating it like a chronic disease, personalizing therapy through genomic sequencing so patients have a longer duration of treatment with fewer side effects. I have many patients like Bridgette who are five or 10 years into treatment and doing well."

Elston recently started mentoring other cancer patients as a way to give back. "I tell people to focus on the good," she says. "Get your annual screenings and listen to your body. If something doesn't seem right, get it checked. Find a doctor you trust with your life. I'm 100 percent confident putting my life in Dr. Gupta's hands and absolutely love my medical team."

Learn more about breast cancer treatment at [Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute here](#) or call 888-402-LVHN.