

## Joan Farrell

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**From:** LVHN Insider <no-reply@insider.lvhn.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 09, 2021 5:01 PM  
**To:** Joan Farrell  
**Subject:** Vaccination Policy Update, Attend a COVID-19 Town Hall Meeting, and More

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**LVHN WEEKLY** | YOUR WRAP-UP OF THE WEEK'S NEWS FROM LVHN



### **COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Update**

Colleagues who recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 can receive a 12-month medical exemption.

[Read more →](#)



## Get Your Questions Answered at a COVID-19 Town Hall Meeting

Learn when the COVID-19 Town Hall meeting is scheduled for your location.

[Read more →](#)



## What You Need to Know About Breakthrough Cases of COVID-19

Read answers to some of the most common questions about breakthrough COVID cases.

[Read more →](#)



## In Search Of: Stories from Sept. 11 Helpers

If you were involved in helping in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, we want to hear your story.

[Read more →](#)



## Reminder: Vote for LVHN in Morning Call Readers' Choice Awards

Don't forget to cast your vote for LVHN today.

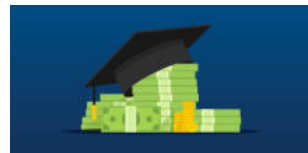
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## Details About the Tuition Reimbursement Enhancement

Get all the details about this excellent benefit for colleagues.

[Read more →](#)



## Attend Upcoming Mindfulness Session

Attend a mindfulness session and be automatically entered to win a raffle prize.

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## How to Get Prescriptions Filled at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hecktown Oaks

Get to know our new pharmacy location at LVH–Hecktown Oaks and how to get prescriptions filled there.





[Read more →](#)

### **Volunteer for Hazleton's Community Drive-Thru Flu Shot Clinic**

The clinic takes place Oct. 16 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

[Read more →](#)



### **Project ECHO: ABCs of Beta-Lactam Antibiotics**

Attend a presentation on Sept. 17 at noon.

[Read more →](#)



### **East Stroudsburg Woman Sings the Praises of Vocal Cord Implant**

Jessica Parshall had lost her voice to vocal fold paralysis, but she's back singing with her church praise band.

[Read more →](#)



### **Published Study of StrataNGS® and Tumor Tissue Samples**

Results mean increased patient access to tissue-based comprehensive genomic profiling.

[Read more →](#)





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

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## COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Update

Colleagues who recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 can receive a 12-month medical exemption.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

**This message is from Michael Rossi, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer, and Lynn Turner, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer.**

For the last 18 months, the COVID-19 pandemic affected almost every aspect of our lives. Following a period in early summer when cases were down, we are now seeing another increase in positive tests and hospitalizations. The number of COVID-19 patients in LVHN hospitals has grown from less than 10 to more than 100 in less than six weeks. Our testing positivity rate has hovered at 15-20 percent for the last two weeks, up from a rate of less than 5 percent in June and July.

In August, LVHN reaffirmed our commitment to do everything possible to protect our patients, colleagues and communities by implementing our COVID-19 vaccination policy. Vaccines save lives. Vaccination is the safest and most effective way to reduce the risk of exposure and COVID-related illness.

Due to the dynamic evolution of the pandemic, we've had to adapt and make decisions based on the latest information about the virus and the vaccines. Based on new data, the following update is being made to the COVID-19 vaccination policy. This update does not compromise our goal,



which is to protect our patients, their loved ones and our colleagues from being infected with COVID-19.

### **COVID-19 vaccination policy update**

**Temporary medical exemption for colleagues who recovered from COVID-19 has been extended from three months to 12 months.** To qualify, colleagues must provide laboratory confirmation of prior COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 12 months including a copy of the first positive PCR or antigen test result. The deadline to request exemption is Sept. 14. Call the employee health services office nearest to you to obtain a medical exemption request form:

- LVH–Cedar Crest, 610-402-8869
- LVH–Muhlenberg, 484-884-7098
- LVH–Pocono, 570-476-3779
- LVH–Schuylkill, 570-621-4351
- LVH–Hazleton, 570-501-4788

### **Evidence behind the policy update**

LVHN continues to encourage vaccination of all colleagues, even those who recovered from COVID-19. Data from the United States and Israel (a country with one of the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates in the world) demonstrate the benefits of vaccination in this group of patients. The likelihood of reinfection is 2.3 times higher among patients who did not receive the vaccine after recovering from COVID-19 compared with patients who did get vaccinated following their recovery.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to stress the importance of vaccination after recovering from COVID-19. The CDC also supports the option of delaying vaccination in recovered patients for three months after the initial diagnosis because of the protection of natural immunity gained following infection. Recent data from studies in Israel demonstrate the durability of natural antibody protection for up to one year following infection. Other new studies have demonstrated that those who recovered from natural infection have at least equal if not greater protection from the highly contagious delta variant as those who have completed a full COVID-19 vaccination series.

LVHN's leadership team and infectious diseases experts are committed to continually evaluating the real-world experience with this incredibly challenging virus and making the appropriate adjustments to our plans based on data and science. Thank you for your ability to adjust, adapt and create better days ahead for our colleagues, patients and communities.

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## **Get Your Questions Answered at a COVID-19 Town Hall Meeting**

Learn when the COVID-19 Town Hall meeting is scheduled for your location.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are increasing in our region.

Following FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine, LVHN's COVID-19 vaccination policy went into effect Aug. 24. As per the policy, all colleagues – including those who work remotely and regardless of work location – must receive their first dose or have submitted a medical or religious exemption request by Sept. 14. All colleagues who are not approved for exemption must complete the vaccine series by Oct. 19.

To keep you informed, we are hosting another round of COVID-19 Town Hall Meetings for colleagues via Webex. Meetings will be held based on location to help prevent us from exceeding the maximum number of participants who can attend a Webex meeting. Webex meeting invitations will be sent soon. Please attend the meeting for your location only.

**COVID-19 Town Hall Meeting for colleagues at LVH–Cedar Crest and LVH–17th Street**

Thursday, Sept. 9, 3-4 p.m.



**COVID-19 Town Hall Meeting for colleagues at LVH–Muhlenberg, LVH–Hecktown Oaks, LVPG and administrative buildings**

Friday, Sept. 10, noon-1 p.m.

**COVID-19 Town Hall Meeting for colleagues at LVH–Hazleton, LVH–Schuylkill, LVH–Pocono and Coordinated Health**

Monday, Sept. 13, 3-4 p.m.

### **What to expect**

You'll get the latest updates on COVID-19 and the vaccines from LVHN physician specialists. You also will be able to submit questions and comments electronically during the meeting.

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## **What You Need to Know About Breakthrough Cases of COVID-19**

By Hannah Ropp



While breakthrough infections remain rare among those vaccinated against COVID-19, you may be hearing more about them and have questions. Do breakthrough infections mean I'm not protected? Am I at risk?

Fortunately, [Alex Benjamin, MD](#), Chief Infection Control and Prevention Officer with Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), has answers to some of the most common questions about breakthrough COVID cases.

### **Q. How common are breakthrough cases?**



**A.** Locally we do not track every person who has a positive COVID test to see if he or she has been fully vaccinated. We do look at hospitalizations for COVID, and we know that 10%-15% of our hospitalized COVID patients have been vaccinated. While that sounds like a lot, there are many more in the hospital who have not been vaccinated. The bottom line is that vaccines are keeping people out of the hospital and saving lives.

## **Q. Should people be concerned about breakthrough infections?**

**A.** Certainly. The number of new positive cases has been steadily rising in our area since early July. Even if you are vaccinated, you are likely to encounter a COVID-positive person in your daily activities. However, breakthrough cases remain rare. If you have tested positive for COVID, it's important to stay home and isolate. If you have been exposed, you should be tested.



## **COVID-19 Vaccine Receives Full FDA Approval**

The FDA-approved Pfizer vaccine is available at all LVHN vaccine clinics.

## **Q. Do breakthrough cases mean the vaccine isn't working?**

**A.** Absolutely not. None of the early trials claimed the vaccines would be 100% effective. Also, when the trials were conducted, masking was still required. It was only a few months ago that mask mandates were lifted, including in our area. We are seeing the effectiveness of the vaccine in real time, minus the effects of the mask, against the delta variant. The COVID vaccines are still very effective.

## **Q. When should you be tested if you are vaccinated?**



**A.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines tell us that if a fully vaccinated person is exposed to someone with COVID and that exposure is deemed high-risk (meaning within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes), that person should get tested. The timing of the test is important. You should be tested within three to five days of the exposure. If you are tested too soon, you may get a false negative. Beyond that, if you're exposed and you have symptoms, you should get tested again.



## **Delta Variant and How It's Changing the COVID-19 Landscape**

Timothy Friel, MD, Chair, Department of Medicine, Infectious Diseases for Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) and Alex Benjamin, MD, LVHN Infection Control Officer, answer your questions about COVID-19 and delta variant

### **Q. If you are fully vaccinated and test positive for COVID, what should you do?**

**A.** If you are fully vaccinated and test positive you should isolate.

Keep in mind, if you have symptoms of COVID and you are fully vaccinated, you might be a candidate for monoclonal antibody treatment. Monoclonal antibodies are synthetic antibodies against COVID that can be administered as a one-time dose, either intravenously or subcutaneously. Monoclonal antibody treatment has been proven to be effective against COVID, including delta variant, so contact your primary care physician to learn more.

### **Q. Will third shots (or booster shots) help prevent breakthrough infections?**



**A.** Hopefully. Pfizer has submitted data to the FDA regarding the effectiveness of an additional dose of vaccine, and we should hear shortly on whether a third dose will be approved for the general public.

For more information about COVID-19, visit [LVHN.org/COVID-19](https://LVHN.org/COVID-19).

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### **In Search Of: Stories from Sept. 11 Helpers**

If you were involved in helping in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, we want to hear your story.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

With the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sept. 11 attack on the horizon, LVHN Insider is looking to tell the stories of Lehigh Valley Health Network colleagues who responded to the call for help.

It doesn't matter if you worked for LVHN on Sept. 11, 2001. If you're a colleague today and you helped in rescue, recovery or cleanup, we want to hear from you. If you were a medical professional, a first responder or someone who helped in any way in New York, Washington, D.C., or Shanksville, Pa., your story matters.

In one of America's darkest days, the helpers answered the call. If that's you, let us know.

Comment on this post so someone from marketing and public affairs can reach out for more information or submit your story on [LVHN.org/stories](https://LVHN.org/stories).





### **Reminder: Vote for LVHN in Morning Call Readers' Choice Awards**

Don't forget to cast your vote for LVHN today.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Every day you make a difference in our community. You go above and beyond to provide exceptional care to our patients and make LVHN a great place to work. Together, let's celebrate everything we do as a health network by voting for LVHN in **The Morning Call Readers' Choice Awards** contest by **Sept. 19**.

If you haven't already, please take a moment to cast your ballot for LVHN in a number of categories including **Best Hospital/Health Network**. You can vote one time in each category.

**How to vote for Morning Call Readers' Choice Awards** (all categories are multiple choice):

- Visit <https://mcall.secondstreetapp.com/Readers-Choice-2021/>
- **Use Google Chrome** as your web browser. If your default browser is Internet Explorer, copy and paste this link into Google Chrome: <https://mcall.secondstreetapp.com/Readers-Choice-2021/>
- Select the Home & Services Ballot and/or the Wellness & Personal Style Ballot.
- Register with your email. Click continue.
- Enter your first name, last name, ZIP code and birthdate.
- Submit your vote.

Note: If you log out and come back another time to vote for other categories, you will need to enter your email again to vote like the first time.



**Vote for LVHN on the Wellness & Personal Style Ballot in the following categories:**

- Cancer Center
- Emergency Services
- Family Doctor
- Hospital/Health Network
- Nursing Services
- Obstetrician
- Orthopedic Services
- Patient Care
- Pediatrician
- Physical Rehab Center/Services
- Place to Have a Baby
- Sports Medicine
- Surgeon
- Urgent Care

**Vote for LVHN on the Home & Services Ballot in the following category:**

- Best Place to Work

Thank you for your support and for being #LVHNproud every day!

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## **Details About the Tuition Reimbursement Enhancement**

Get all the details about this excellent benefit for colleagues.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

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



Earlier this year, we announced that LVHN is enhancing our tuition reimbursement benefit plan to make it consistent at all LVHN locations, effective **Jan. 1, 2022**. All colleagues will utilize Edcor, an online tuition management system, for the entire tuition application and reimbursement process. This is the same system currently utilized by colleagues who work at LVHN facilities in the Lehigh Valley and Coordinated Health. We look forward to having colleagues in our Hazleton, Pocono and Schuylkill locations join this online process through Edcor for courses beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2022.

#### **Enhancements to the tuition reimbursement plan for courses beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2022:**

- Colleagues will have access to academic advising at no cost through Edcor for undergraduate degrees. You can meet with an advisor to discuss things like schedule, budget, degree choice, lifestyle, learning preference, career goals and more. Then, an advisor will provide options for cost savings and time needed to complete your education for several schools. This empowers you to make the best decision about your financial future and career goals based on the options provided.
- The percentage for reimbursement will be 100% for all colleagues, up to the annual maximums as outlined below, for college-credited courses leading to a degree which is job-related. Some colleagues currently receive a lower reimbursement percentage.
- The cost of textbooks will be eligible for reimbursement.
- Reimbursement will be provided for fees charged to the student, including graduation fees. Fees that are not eligible for reimbursement include items such as meals, housing, transportation, finance/deferral fees, late fees, test/exam fees, supplies that are retained after the completion of coursework (aside from textbooks) and home technology fees. Additional fees may not be eligible for reimbursement.
- Colleague eligibility and the annual maximum reimbursement will change as follows:

<b>Scheduled Work Hours</b>	<b>Undergraduate Annual Maximum</b>	<b>Graduate Annual Maximum</b>
36-40 hours/week	\$4,000	\$5,000
15-35 hours/week	\$2,000	\$2,500

Union colleagues will continue with their current tuition reimbursement process and benefit, per their collective bargaining agreement.

#### **When you can apply for tuition reimbursement**

For any courses beginning in 2022, you should wait to apply for reimbursement until Jan. 1, 2022. At that time, the Edcor system will allow fees and textbooks to be included as part of the application process.



To learn more, read these [frequently asked questions](#) about our tuition reimbursement plan. If you have questions about the provisions of the tuition reimbursement plan, contact Edcor's customer service line at 855-258-3499.

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## Attend Upcoming Mindfulness Session

Attend a mindfulness session and be automatically entered to win a raffle prize.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

Colleagues are invited to attend a mindfulness session provided by My Total Health and Gympass. The sessions will include mindful meditation and light stretching. Two sessions are offered from noon-12:30 p.m. on Sept. 15 and Sept. 22.

[Register for the Sept. 15 session on GoToWebinar.](#)

[Register for the Sept. 22 session on GoToWebinar.](#)

Note: GoToWebinar works best on Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge or Safari browsers.

### **Your chance to win a raffle prize**

When you register, you are entered into a raffle to win a decompression kit.

After the second session, 50 participants will be selected to receive a decompression kit, including relaxing room spray and essential oil, a water bottle and a stretching band.



If you receive a kit and don't need it for yourself, consider gifting your kit to a colleague who can use some extra care.

### **Share your #LVHNProud selfies**

Share a mindful photo to the #LVHN Proud channel on LVHN Insider.

Download this flyer to learn more.

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## **How to Get Prescriptions Filled at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hecktown Oaks**

Get to know our new pharmacy location at LVH–Hecktown Oaks and how to get prescriptions filled there.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

With the opening of Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Hecktown Oaks, Lehigh Valley Pharmacy Services (LVPS) offers a new type of pharmacy to satisfy the prescription needs of patients and colleagues alike. This new location is different than our larger, full-retail locations at LVH–Cedar Crest and LVH–Muhlenberg.

Instead, the pharmacy at LVH–Hecktown Oaks is a hybrid inpatient and outpatient pharmacy with a prescription pick-up window. With that difference, the consumer experience is different, and includes different hours and requires more time to have non-urgent prescriptions filled.



## **Important details about the pharmacy at LVH–Hecktown Oaks for colleagues**

The pharmacy is in the Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute building. There is a dedicated entrance that may be open, but you are also able to get to the pharmacy from the main hospital. It is located to the right, after passing the Healing Garden.

To drop off a prescription, go to the pharmacy service window. For many colleague prescriptions, it will take 48 hours for the prescription to be filled as the medication will be ordered in specifically for you. Your health care provider also can call in a prescription or have it sent through Epic.

Urgent prescriptions (such as: antibiotics, pain medications, inhalers, etc.), can be accommodated as same-day pick-up with notice when the prescription is dropped off or called in.

Hours:

- Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.
- Saturday–Sunday 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
- Closed holidays

Telephone: 610-333-8900

## **Convenience shipping**

LVPS offers colleagues free shipping of prescription medication through its convenience shipping program. This is an ideal option for medications that are refilled on a regular basis, saving you a trip to the pharmacy. The pharmacy located at LVH–Hecktown Oaks does not currently offer mail service, however, you may utilize one of the other LVPS locations for this service. (Note: This service is available for all LVPS customers including LVHN colleagues who have health insurance through LVHN Health Plan.)

To enroll, complete the PDF found on [LVHN.org/pharmacy](https://www.lvh.org/pharmacy), in the section titled, “Convenience Shipping.”

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## **Volunteer for Hazleton's Community Drive-Thru Flu Shot Clinic**

The clinic takes place Oct. 16 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

LVHN Insider

Friday, September 3, 2021

Flu season is just around the corner and LVH-Hazleton is happy to announce its Second Annual Community Drive-Thru Flu Shot Clinic.

The clinic is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 16, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on the grounds of the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton. The clinic's main focus is providing flu shots to our community members; colleague flu shots will be provided at your workplace. Please help us to spread the word about this event to your family and friends.

As with any event, **volunteers are what make the difference**. Please consider volunteering some time to help our community stay healthy during the upcoming flu season. Approximately 100 clinical and non-clinical volunteers are needed. All volunteers will receive a free "Flu Crew" long-sleeved T-shirt.

If you are interested in volunteering, please click on the link below and complete the Volunteer Registration Survey indicating your availability.

Here are the event details.

**Event date and time:** Saturday, Oct. 16, 2021, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Volunteer hours:** 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

**Where:** Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton, 50 Moisey Dr., Hazle Township



Sign up to help: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CC2M38S>

Questions: Contact Jane Danish at [Jane.Danish@LVHN.org](mailto:Jane.Danish@LVHN.org)

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## Project ECHO: ABCs of Beta-Lactam Antibiotics

Attend a presentation on Sept. 17 at noon.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

LVHN is proud to be part of Project ECHO, an innovative telehealth program designed to connect health care specialists with providers located at distant sites. Project ECHO aims to help eliminate health care inequities through the use of telehealth technology.

Join us for **ABCs of Beta-Lactam Antibiotics** presented by Jarrod Kile, RPh, Clinical Pharmacy Specialist, Infectious Diseases.

**When:** Friday, Sept. 17 at noon

**Target audience:** Physicians, APCs, clinical pharmacists, nurses and infection control practitioners

**Register using this link:** <https://redcap.lvh.com/redcap/surveys/?s=NC9YWYADHJ>

At the end of this presentation, you should be able to:



1. Define and compare beta-lactam antibiotics
  - o Penicillins
  - o Cephalosporins
  - o Carbapenems
2. Identify nursing considerations for beta-lactam antibiotics
3. Describe which indications nursing will see beta-lactam antibiotics utilized

Participants are encouraged to submit questions in advance regarding beta-lactam antibiotics by emailing Carolyn Suess at [carolyn.suess@lvhn.org](mailto:carolyn.suess@lvhn.org). All patient information submitted should be de-identified for HIPAA compliance.

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### PATIENT STORY

## East Stroudsburg Woman Sings the Praises of Vocal Cord Implant

Jessica Parshall had lost her voice to vocal fold paralysis. Today, she's back singing with her church praise band.

By Ted Williams



Every time Jessica Parshall gets to sing with the praise band at Stroudsburg Wesleyan Church, she considers it nothing short of a blessing. The 36-year-old East Stroudsburg native had been a longtime band member before she suddenly began to lose her voice three years ago.



“At first, doctors thought it was a virus or an allergy,” Parshall says. “We tried different things and didn’t get anywhere. Finally, they found a tumor on the nerve that controls one of my vocal cords. Thankfully, it turned out to be benign.”

Doctors were able to remove most of the tumor that had immobilized her vocal cord (also known as vocal fold), but Parshall’s voice remained little above a raspy whisper.

“I lived with that for close to two years,” she says. “When I took my kids to the park, I had to take along a whistle in case they wandered too far away. I couldn’t yell for them to come back. Things like ordering a meal at a diner were really difficult.”

## Voicing her concerns

Finally, Parshall had enough. In 2019, she began searching the internet for ways to address her problem and came across Lehigh Valley Health Network laryngologist [Mausumi Syamal, MD](#), with LVPG Ear, Nose and Throat, who specializes in vocal cord disorders.

The vocal cords are two bands of muscle tissue in the larynx that vibrate when they meet as air passes through the larynx, creating the sounds we use for speech. They also help to regulate breathing and prevent choking when food or other items pass through the larynx.

“They operate like hands clapping to produce a strong, audible voice,” Syamal says. “When a patient has vocal fold paralysis, the vocal cords can’t meet. The breathiness that results is the sound of one hand clapping.”

## Delicate steps to restore a voice

Initially, Syamal injects a temporary gel into the affected area, then follows the patient for a year to see if the gel can repair the vocal cord immobility before it dissolves completely. In most cases, vocal fold implant surgery becomes necessary.

I lived with that for close to two years. When I took my kids to the park, I had to take along a whistle in case they wandered too far away. I couldn’t yell for them to come back.



“I place a customized silicone implant, generally around 2 centimeters, that assists in the contact between the vocal cords,” Syamal says. That customization is something unique to Syamal and a handful of other laryngologists around the country who carve their own implants following measurements of the larynx done by computed tomography (CT) scan rather than use pre-manufactured implants.

“I think we had five or six Dr. Syamal had carved for my surgery,” Parshall says. “It’s kind of an unusual surgery in that I was awake for it so they could test the sound of my voice and make sure it wasn’t impacting my breathing.”

## **Singing, praising, believing**

Syamal call this “voice-affirming surgery,” where she may try different implants to get the patient as close to their original voice as possible. The entire procedure usually takes about 90 minutes.

“It’s a delicate balance,” Syamal says. “Our success rate has been excellent. Many patients come back for a checkup saying friends don’t realize they’ve ever had any problem. It’s gratifying to hear.”

After a few sessions of speech therapy, Parshall can enjoy singing with the praise band again, or just singing along on the car radio.

“I don’t quite have the same range on the high notes, but I feel like I’m getting there,” she says. “It’s amazing really. To be able to sing again, have my kids hear me again, I’m very thankful.”

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## LVHN Participated in Published Study that Demonstrates Ability of StrataNGS® to Expand Proportion of Testable Tumor Tissue Samples

Results mean increased patient access to tissue-based comprehensive genomic profiling

September 2, 2021

Lehigh Valley, Pa. (Sept. 2, 2021) – A newly published study involving hundreds of Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) patients demonstrates significant progress in the amount of tumor tissue required for comprehensive genomic profiling (CGP).

[Opens in new tab](#)Strata Oncology, Inc., a precision oncology company advancing molecular indications for cancer therapies, announced the publication of the study in which more than double the number of tumor tissue samples met minimum tumor surface area (TSA) for genomic



profiling. StrataNGS requires the lowest amount of tumor tissue of any CGP test currently available.

This new study published in *JCO Precision Oncology* presents an analysis of 32,048 consecutive tumor tissue samples received for StrataNGS testing as part of the Strata Trial. The study demonstrates that the multiplex PCR-CGP StrataNGS testing, coupled with an inclusive exception testing policy, can increase patient access to CGP and significantly expand the impact of treatment.

LVHN had 493 patients participate in the trial.

“Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute is proud to be a partner with Strata Oncology to increase patient access to tissue-based genomic profiling,” said [Suresh Nair, MD](#), Physician in Chief, Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute and the principal investigator for the study at LVHN. “These results will help us connect more patients to precision cancer care.”

Nair said the Strata testing is used most for lung and colon cancer as well as for melanoma.

## About the study

LVHN was among 28 U.S. health systems that participated in the clinical trial.

Investigators characterized the attributes of more than 30,000 real-world tumor samples.

The study found:

- Of the 31,165 tested specimens, 10.7% had low tumor content and 58.4% were small.
- Only 41.6% of samples (12,957 of 31,165) had TSA greater than or equal to 25mm<sup>2</sup>, the minimum TSA requirement for several leading commercial hybrid capture-based CGP tests. The results were similar for the testing at Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute.
- 94% of samples (29,302 of 31,165) were successfully reported by StrataNGS. At LVHN, more than 92% of tissue samples were successfully reported.

“Tissue availability is one of the biggest obstacles to widespread use of CGP in



clinical practice. For example, approximately 30% of patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer have insufficient tissue for biomarker analysis,” said Scott Tomlins, MD, PhD, co-founder and Chief Medical Officer, Strata Oncology. “Despite advances in liquid biopsy testing, tissue remains the gold standard for tumor profiling, providing more comprehensive and reliable molecular insights. Through this study, we were able to show that StrataNGS, with its industry-leading low tumor tissue requirements, is uniquely positioned to help usher in a future where every patient with advanced cancer is molecularly profiled and receives their best possible treatment outcome.”

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) includes nine hospital campuses, three in Allentown, one in Bethlehem, one in Easton, one in East Stroudsburg, one in Hazleton and two in Pottsville, Pa.; Coordinated Health, which includes two hospital campuses, nearly two dozen multispecialty locations including ambulatory surgery centers and orthopedic injury centers in northeastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey; 27 health centers; numerous primary and specialty care physician practices; 20 ExpressCARE locations including the area’s only Children’s ExpressCARE; pharmacy, imaging, home health, rehabilitation and lab services; and preferred provider services through Valley Preferred. Specialty care includes: trauma care for adults and children, burn care at the Regional Burn Center; kidney and pancreas transplants; perinatal/neonatal, cardiac, cancer, orthopedics, neurology, complex neurosurgery capabilities including national certification as a Comprehensive Stroke Center, and robotic surgery in 10 specialties. Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute, Lehigh Valley Heart Institute and Lehigh Valley

Institute for Surgical Excellence physicians provide the most advanced treatments. Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute is a member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Cancer Alliance, an initiative that helps community providers improve the quality of cancer care and offers access to MSK clinical trials. Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital, the community’s only children’s hospital, provides care in more than 30 specialties and general pediatrics. Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest is ranked as the region’s No.1 hospital for eight straight years and has been recognized among Pennsylvania’s top six hospitals for eight consecutive years by U.S. News & World Report, including No. 5 in 2021-22, the only hospital in the region ranked in the top five. Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Cedar Crest, LVH–17th Street and LVH–Muhlenberg are the region’s only Magnet® hospitals for nursing excellence. Additional information is available by visiting [LVHN.org](http://LVHN.org) or following us on Facebook , Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.



## About StrataNGS

StrataNGS is a comprehensive genomic profiling (CGP) test that features the lowest tumor tissue requirements in the industry ( $\geq 2\text{mm}^2$  surface area). The 429-gene assay is performed on co-isolated RNA and DNA. Single-/multi-nucleotide variants (SNVs), short insertions and deletions (indels), copy number alterations (CNAs; amplifications and deep deletions), microsatellite instability (MSI) status, gene fusions, and tumor mutation burden (TMB) are assessed simultaneously.

## About Strata Oncology

Strata Oncology, Inc. is a precision oncology company dedicated to delivering the best possible treatment for each patient with cancer. The company combines molecular profiling, real-world data, and a large-scale clinical trial platform to identify and deliver optimal treatments for patients with cancer. For more information visit [Opens in new tabstrataoncology.com](https://www.strataoncology.com).

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