



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



LVHN Encourages Colleagues to Get a COVID-19 Booster Shot

Booster shots strengthen protection against COVID-19 variants.

[Read more →](#)

Important Dos and Don'ts When a Colleague Has COVID-19

All colleagues must notify employee health services if they test positive.

[Read more →](#)



COVID-19 Booster Shots: Do You Need One If You Received a Third Dose?

If you had a third dose, timing for a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna booster is five months after.

[Read more →](#)



Black Americans Who Paved the Way for Generations of Medical Professionals

LVHN emergency medicine resident Robert Ray Jr., DO, writes about outstanding Black figures in medicine.

[Read more →](#)



February Calendar of Events

See what's happening at LVHN all month long.

[Read more →](#)



Ordering Food at Work? Don't Send Deliveries to the Hospital Front Desk

Choose an alternate location to accept your food delivery.

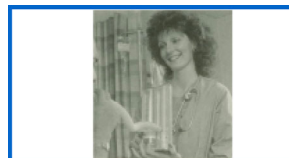
[Read more →](#)



Monica Stevko, RN, Retires After 42 Years with LVHN

Stevko's daughter and LVH–Hecktown Oaks med-surg nurse Rachel Eisenhardt, RN, shares a heartwarming tribute to her mo...

[Read more →](#)



Order Meals and Produce From Kellyn Winter Market Online

Healthy local groceries and pre-made meals can be ordered online and picked up at LVHN locations in the Lehigh Valley.

[Read more →](#)



Get Access to Pre-Sale Tickets for Imagine Dragons

Imagine Dragons is coming to the PPL Center on Feb. 16.

[Read more →](#)



Cooking Demonstration to be Held at LVH–Cedar Crest Feb. 8

Chef Shuichi Kotani will demonstrate how to make Japanese noodles from scratch.

[Read more →](#)



Service Anniversary List – February 2022

Happy anniversary to these colleagues celebrating a career milestone at LVHN.

[Read more →](#)



Thank a Resident or Fellow Today

Thank a Resident Day is Feb. 25. Join us as we celebrate the contributions of LVHN residents and fellows all month.

[Read more →](#)



Meet Provider Service Excellence Award Recipients

These providers demonstrate exceptional customer service behaviors.

[Read more →](#)



Meet the Recipients of the LVHN Guldin Award for Efficiency and Innovation

Colleagues were honored in clinical and nonclinical settings, as well as in physician practices.

[Read more →](#)



Virtual Event: What Women Need to Know About Heart Disease

LVHN Women's Heart and Vascular Program experts will discuss unique risk factors on Feb. 2.

[Read more →](#)



LVHN Takes COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts on the Road

Colleague Laura Williams helps Mobile Vaccination Unit

bring vaccine to communities throughout region.

[Read more →](#)



Quelling a Brain Storm

One man's recovery from autoimmune encephalitis required a team from LVHN Epilepsy Center.

[Read more →](#)



Weight-Loss Surgery Helps Area Woman Improve Health and Fertility

Kaitlyn Getz lost 165 pounds and finally conceived thanks to LVHN general and bariatric surgery.

[Read more →](#)





LVHN Encourages Colleagues to Get a COVID-19 Booster Shot

Booster shots strengthen protection against COVID-19 variants.

LVHN Insider

Monday, January 31, 2022

Although colleagues are not currently required to get a COVID-19 booster shot, LVHN strongly encourages booster shots as preliminary research has shown that they help strengthen your protection against new COVID-19 variants. Data suggest that levels of protection from the initial series can decrease with time. The additional shot five months after the initial series provides significant reduction in the risk for acute illness and the other complications of COVID-19.

Vaccines save lives

Widespread vaccination is critical to help stop the pandemic. COVID-19 vaccines do not prevent all infections. However, they remain effective at reducing the risk for infection and preventing serious illness and death from COVID-19.

Boosters strongly encouraged for LVHN colleagues

If you have not yet received a COVID-19 booster shot, you are encouraged to get your shot as soon as possible to help protect yourself, your family and our community.

Four ways to schedule an appointment

- Colleagues can schedule an appointment through MyLVHN, our patient portal, at [MyLVHN.org](https://www.mylvhn.org).
- Boosters are available at LVHN's five vaccine clinic locations.
 1. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic–Northampton Crossings](#) – Walk-ins and scheduled appointments are accepted at this location.
 2. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic–Pocono](#) – Appointment required
 3. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic–Hazleton](#) – Appointment required
 4. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic–Schuylkill](#) – Appointment required

5. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic–MacArthur Road](#)– Walk-ins and scheduled appointments are accepted at this location.
 - Call the COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline just for colleagues at 484-750-4951. The hotline is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
 - Call the COVID-19 hotline at 833-584-6283 (833-LVHN-CVD). The hotline is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Those seeking booster shots should bring their vaccine card to the vaccine clinic so it can be updated.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have authorized booster shots of COVID-19 vaccines for people age 18 and older, and for those 12-17 who received the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine series.

For information on vaccines and clinics, visit [LVHN.org/vaccines](https://www.lvhnhospital.org/vaccines). Information on boosters can be found at [LVHN.org/booster](https://www.lvhnhospital.org/booster).



Important Dos and Don'ts When a Colleague Has COVID-19

All colleagues must notify employee health services if they test positive.

LVHN Insider

Saturday, January 29, 2022

Employee health services is reminding all managers and colleagues about the steps you should take when a colleague tests positive for COVID-19 and to return to work. [Read the latest guidelines.](#)

The following applies to all colleagues.

Dos

- Notify employee health services if you test positive for COVID-19. This allows employee health services to determine the appropriate dates of follow-up testing and to send you the forms needed to return to work.
- Managers: Instruct a colleague who tests positive to inform employee health services immediately.

Don'ts

- **Do not** submit a “Return to Work Post-COVID Attestation Form” and return to work if you never notified employee health services that you tested positive. You must notify employee health services about your positive diagnosis first. Employee health services will determine the dates for return to work and testing (if needed) and send you appropriate forms for completion.
 - Managers: **Do not** instruct a colleague to submit a “Return to Work Post-COVID Attestation Form” if you have not received an initial notification from employee health services that the colleague tested positive.
-

HEALTH TIP

COVID-19 Booster Shots: Do You Need One If You Received a Third Dose?

If you had a third dose, timing for a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna booster is five months after

By **Maggie Wurst**



Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the recommendations for keeping ourselves protected have evolved.

One of the latest guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) focuses on immunocompromised people who received a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine.

It is now recommended that these individuals receive a booster shot five months after getting their third primary dose. This will help maintain their level of protection, even as the omicron variant becomes more prevalent in the U.S.

Who qualifies for a third shot?

People with moderately to severely compromised immune systems do not always build the same level of immunity as others after their initial COVID-19 vaccine series.

Because of this, the CDC recommends that individuals age 5 and older who received the initial Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine series receive a third shot if they:

- Are receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Have received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress their immune system
- Have undergone a stem cell transplant within the last two years or are taking medicine to suppress their immune system
- Have moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome or Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Have advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Are undergoing active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress immune response

Individuals who received a Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine should receive a booster (preferably Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) two months after the initial one-shot J&J vaccination. They should only receive an additional dose of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine if they are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine booster (for example, patients with allergies to a component of the mRNA vaccines).



Black Americans Who Paved the Way for Generations of Medical Professionals

LVHN emergency medicine resident Robert Ray Jr., DO, writes about outstanding Black figures in medicine.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Robert Ray Jr., DO, is an emergency medicine resident with Lehigh Valley Health Network, pursuing a career in toxicology. He honors Black Americans who have made a long-lasting impact in medicine by telling their stories during Black History Month.

Black History Month is observed nationally in February and provides an opportunity to acknowledge the history and celebrate the achievements of Black Americans. At LVHN, we value the contributions our Black colleagues make to our workplace culture and honor their vital role in ensuring high quality, equitable care for our patients and families.

Throughout history, Black Americans have made monumental contributions to medicine and health care. Here are the stories of some outstanding Black figures in medicine:

- **James Derham (also known as James Durham) was the first Black American to practice medicine in the United States.** He was born into slavery in 1762 in Philadelphia. In 1788, he was sold to a surgeon in Louisiana. This is where he learned medicine. He won his freedom and provided medical care to free and enslaved Black people in Louisiana. He eventually opened his own practice in New Orleans, La., and is credited with opening the first documented medical practice owned by a Black person.
- **Rebecca Lee Crumpler, MD, (born Rebecca Davis in 1831) was the first Black American woman to earn a medical degree.** She also is the author of the first book written by a Black doctor in the United States, “A Book of Medical Discourses,” published in 1883. Raised by her aunt in Pennsylvania, historians believe her passion for health care was sparked by watching her aunt provide care to sick neighbors. She was admitted to New England Female Medical College in Boston, Mass., in 1860, where she earned her medical degree. At the end of the Civil War, Crumpler moved to Richmond, Va., to provide care to formerly enslaved people. She spent her career primarily focused on providing care to women and children.
- **Daniel Hale Williams, MD, performed the world’s first successful open-heart surgery on a human in 1893.** Born in Hollidaysburg, Pa., in 1853,

Williams earned his medical degree in 1883 from Chicago Medical College. He apprenticed with a surgeon and was one of three Black doctors in the Chicago area at that time. He also was the founder of the first Black-owned hospital, Provident Hospital and Training School for Nurses, founded in 1891. Provident Hospital was the first medical facility in the United States with an interracial staff.

- **Mary Eliza Mahoney was the first Black professional nurse in the United States.** She was born in 1845 in Dorchester, Mass. In 1879, she completed her nursing education at New England Hospital for Women and Children. The program was rigorous, and she was the only Black woman to complete her requirements that year. Of the 40 students in her class, only Mahoney and two other women completed the program's requirements. Mahoney is one of the original members of the Nurses Associated Alumnae of the United States and Canada (NAAUSC), which is now known as the American Nurses Association (ANA). In 1908, she co-founded the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) to foster inclusive support for Black nurses.
- **Prentiss Harrison became the first Black person to be formally educated as a physician assistant in America in 1968.** Harrison graduated from Duke University's program, which was the first of its kind founded in 1965. Prior to attending the program, Harrison worked as an operating room technician at UNC Chapel Hill Hospital. Throughout his career, he provided care to underserved populations, staffed one of the first rural satellite clinics and provided care to the Indigenous community. He was passionate about his work and eventually founded his own clinic in his hometown, Houston, Texas. Harrison passed away Dec. 11, 2018.

These outstanding Black Americans paved the way for generations of Black Americans and many other groups in the medical profession. It is an honor to celebrate their accomplishments and pursue my own career in medicine through my work at LVHN.



February Calendar of Events

See what's happening at LVHN all month long.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

From fun events, to month-long celebrations, to sales in our gift shops, there is so much going on at LVHN! You'll find it all on February's calendar of events. Print the calendar below, post it in your department, get involved and take advantage of everything LVHN has to offer our colleagues.

Cool Colleague Calendar



February is Black History Month

Feb. 1
Chinese (Lunar) New Year

Feb. 2
Women's Heart Health
Virtual Event
6 p.m.
LVHN.org/hearthelp to register

"Stress Less" Live Speaker
Presentation
12-12:30 p.m., Visit mth.lvhn.com

LVHN Gift Shops
Wacky Wednesday
All Day, 20% off anything red

LVHN Gift Cart
12-3 p.m.
LVH-Cedar Crest,
1230 and 1240 buildings

Feb. 4
National Wear Red Day -
Go Red for Women
Discounted Phantoms Tickets
7:05 p.m., PPL Center
Visit LVHN Recreation Committee
intranet page for details

Feb. 6
Heart Healthy Cooking
Demonstration
12 p.m.
Facebook Live on LVHN's
Facebook page

Feb. 7
Send an eCard to a Friend Day
Visit Partner Points via SSO Toolbar

Four My Total Health
challenges begin
Visit mth.lvhn.com

Feb. 9
LVH-Muhlenberg Blood Drive
8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Mobile Coach

LVHN Gift Cart at LVH-Cedar
Crest Kaysch Family Pavilion
12-3 p.m.

LVHN Gift Shops
Wacky Wednesday
All day
20% off jewelry

Hypertension Virtual Event
6 p.m.
Register at LVHN.org/hearthelp

Colleague College Fair
11 a.m.-5 p.m., Via WebEx

"Mindfulness at Work & Beyond"
Live Speaker Presentation
12-12:30 p.m., Visit mth.lvhn.com

Virtual "Worth the Weight"
program begins
Visit mth.lvhn.com

Feb. 10
LVHN Gift Cart
10-11:30 a.m., LVH-17th Street

Feb. 11
Make a Friend Day
Post a photo on LVHN Insider

Feb. 13-16
Free boxed lunches in hospital
and Mack Blvd. cafeterias
Call 610-969-2850 for meal delivery

Feb. 16
LVHN Gift Cart
12-3 p.m.
LVH-Cedar Crest
(ED, Reilly Children's Hospital,
Jaindl Family Pavilion)

Heart Attack and Stroke
Virtual Event
6 p.m.
Register at LVHN.org/hearthelp

LVHN Gift Shops
Wacky Wednesday
All Day, 20% off all pet merchandise

Feb. 17
Random Act of Kindness Day

Feb. 23
Managing Heart Valve Disease
Virtual Event
6 p.m.
Register at LVHN.org/hearthelp

LVHN Gift Shops
Wacky Wednesday
All Day, 20% off all signs

LVHN Gift Cart
10-11:30 a.m.
LVH-17th Street
12-3 p.m.
LVH-Cedar Crest, 1250 building

Feb. 25-26
Discount Tickets for Colleagues -
Monster Jam
7 p.m.
Visit LVHN Recreation Committee
intranet page for details



Scan the code
or visit mth.lvhn.com for
information about My Total Health





Ordering Food at Work? Don't Send Deliveries to the Hospital Front Desk

Choose an alternate location to accept your food delivery.

LVHN Insider

Friday, January 28, 2022

In recent weeks, a large number of food deliveries have been sent to welcome desks at LVHN hospitals.

These deliveries distract guest service colleagues from their primary focus of efficiently serving patients and visitors at all inpatient and outpatient areas of our hospitals.

If you order food at work, please do not have it delivered to the front desk. Instead, instruct the delivery driver to meet with you at a pre-determined location when your order arrives and ensure they have a way to contact you directly.

Monica Stevko, RN, Retires After 42 Years with LVHN

Stevko's daughter and LVH–Hecktown Oaks med-surg nurse Rachel Eisenhardt, RN, shares a heartwarming tribute to her mother's outstanding nursing career with LVHN. Stevko is a graduate of the Allentown School of Nursing and retires today from PCCU at LVH–Cedar Crest. A shining example of a successful career from hire to retire!



Dear Dr. Nester & [Lehigh Valley Health Network](#),

My name is Rachel Eisenhardt, and I am entering my eighth year as a registered nurse with LVHN, currently employed as a medical surgical nurse at [Lehigh Valley Hospital-Hecktown Oaks](#). I am truly grateful for the career opportunities that LVHN has provided me these past eight years, and I look forward to spending many more years as a registered nurse at LVHN.

However, this message isn't about me. It's about my mother, Monica Stevko, who is a registered nurse on PCCU (progressive cardiac care unit) at [Lehigh Valley Hospital - Cedar Crest](#). I know LVHN has a marketing campaign that I have seen along route 22 and over the radio, "from Hire to Retire." My mother is the absolute definition of this slogan, as she started as brand new registered nurse, having graduated from Allentown School of Nursing, at the age of 20 and is set to retire tomorrow, February 2nd, 2022 at the age of 62 years old. If you ask any of her colleagues, they would describe her as selfless, dedicated, compassionate, and talented. I have even been told by physicians and fellow nurses that she is a "nursing angel," aka the truest definition of what a nurse should be. Having followed in her foot steps, she is known by numerous colleagues that I have had the privilege of working with at both LVHN Muhlenberg and LVHN Hecktown Oaks Campus, and I am beyond proud to be her daughter. She emulates such compassion and empathy when caring for the sickest of the sick, including now as her unit has become a low level unit for COVID positive patients. She completed her progressive care certified nurse examination, and has been nominated for the Florence Nightingale friends of nursing award. She is reliable, responsible, and confident, training the next new cohort of graduate nurses who are entering the field at a beyond challenging time during the COVID 19 pandemic. But most of all, she is my hero, and is the person I hope to become in both my career and personal life. She is such a loving, kind-hearted, excellent registered nurse, and an even better mother, wife, sister, and friend. During her career as a registered nurse, she raised my brother and myself, and is set to celebrate 38 years of marriage to my father this coming April. She did it all: raised a family, had an amazing career, and touched the lives of thousands of patients she cared for during those 42 years of service.

She has given 42 years to this network, and I know she has made the difference in countless lives through numerous acts of kindness and the outstanding compassionate care she has provided to her patients. We are truly losing one of the best that nursing has to offer, but I promise to carry on my mother's legacy, and will always treat my

patients the way she has raised me to: with compassion and kindness.

I just wanted to take a few minutes of your time to let you know what a valuable, irreplaceable colleague my mother has been to this network, and how many lives she has touched as a “nursing angel” during the course of her career. She truly is LVHN’s definition of “Hire to Retire.”

Please join me in recognizing her for a wonderful and successful career!



Order Meals and Produce From Kellyn Winter Market Online

Healthy local groceries and pre-made meals can be ordered online and picked up at LVHN locations in the Lehigh Valley.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Do you have resolutions in mind for 2022? If you are trying to eat healthier, support the local economy or work on time management this year, try pre-ordering your groceries through the Kellyn Mobile Market.

With Kellyn, you will receive the highest quality produce (sourced locally whenever possible) and nutritious lifestyle medicine meals to support your health and save you time. Are your 2022 goals more altruistic in nature? Pre-order a meal for a busy friend or coworker.

[Order meals and produce](#) by Sunday evening for pick up the following week. Pay online and stop by the locations listed below to pick up your grocery order and pre-made meals. It’s simple, healthy and environmentally friendly. The schedule can also be found in the My Total Health portal at mth.lvh.com. Try it this week and get your 2022 off to a healthy start!



KELLYN WINTER MARKET SCHEDULE

Coordinated Health-Allentown- Pickup: Parking Lot
Wednesdays 11:45 AM - 1 PM

Cedar Crest- Pickup: Kasych Employee Entrance Lobby
Wednesdays 3:30-5:30 PM

17th Street- Pickup: Main Lobby Market Shop
Thursdays 11:45 AM - 1 PM

Muhlenberg- Pickup: Main Hospital Lobby (near gift shop)
Thursdays 3:30-5:30 PM



Get Access to Pre-Sale Tickets for Imagine Dragons

Imagine Dragons is coming to the PPL Center on Feb. 16.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, February 3, 2022

LVHN colleagues are getting special access to pre-sale tickets for Imagine Dragons at the PPL Center. The Imagine Dragons: Mercury World Tour, will be live at the PPL Center on Wednesday, Feb. 16 at 7 p.m.

You will have access to tickets before they go on sale to the general public during the pre-sale tomorrow, Feb. 3, from 11 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

To access the pre-sale, [click here](#).





Cooking Demonstration to be Held at LVH–Cedar Crest Feb. 8

Chef Shuichi Kotani will demonstrate how to make Japanese noodles from scratch.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, February 3, 2022

A new series of cooking demonstrations at LVHN hospital cafeterias is set to kick off this month.

The first demonstration will be on Feb. 8 at the LVH–Cedar Crest cafeteria. Celebrity Chef Shuichi Kotani will demonstrate how to make soba (thin Japanese noodles made from buckwheat) from scratch.

Japanese curry soba will be the featured dish in the cafeteria that day, and this dish will be available to purchase, while supplies last.

Chef Shuichi Kotani Cooking Demonstrations

LVH–Cedar Crest cafeteria

Feb. 8, 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

All colleagues who attend these demonstrations must be masked, per LVHN policy.

More cooking demonstrations are being planned in the coming months. Check LVHN Insider for more details.

About Chef Shuichi Kotani

Chef Shuichi Kotani is a soba master based in New York. He is the CEO of Worldwide-Soba Inc. and the founder of the NPO New York Japanese Culinary Academy Inc. He also founded the Samurai Papa BS Restaurant in New York.



Service Anniversary List – February 2022

Happy anniversary to these colleagues celebrating a career milestone at LVHN.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Happy anniversary to these colleagues celebrating a career milestone at LVHN in February 2022. Congratulate them on their years of service.

50 Years

Diane Lockard, HUC

45 Years

Linda Reinhard, Deposit Spec

40 Years

Debra Barraco, Data Analyst Cancer Institute

Linda McCarthy, Admin Partner

Stephanie Kita, Registered Nurse

Deborah Massari-Onest, Cert Resp Therapy Tech

Nancy Romanot, X-ray Tech Aide

Mona Hartle, Registered Nurse

Jane Haney, Clinical Coordinator LPN Phys Prac

35 Years

Janice Schuler, Registered Nurse

Edward Matos, Reg Respiratory Therp

30 Years

Tracie DeCrosta, Dir Diagnostic Imaging Services

Stephen Kichka, Pharmacy Tech

Joseph Mcaloose, Maintenance Worker

William Seko, Financial Analyst

25 Years

Dula Carballo, RN Home Care

Brian Nagy, Peri OP Specialist

Evamarie Poliquin, Bed Mgt Scheduler

Kimberley Rhody, Admin Partner

Jacqueline Stanton, Clin Staff Pharmacist

20 Years

Kelly Shak, VP Rehab Services

Marjorie Sickle, Billing Coord

Heather Moody, RN Phys Prac

Laura Transue, Guest Services Representative

Lisa Drenzo, Coord Credentialing

Raenette Schneck, Trauma Registrar

15 Years

Anna Fernandez, CNA

Margaret Kornuszko-Story, Pop Health Strategist, Sr Seg

Isabelle Muniz, Revenue Cycle Specialist Phys Prac

Jennifer Graaf, Secretary

Jennifer Bergenstock, Registered Nurse

Anthony Adamkovic, Clin Staff Pharmacist

10 Years

Chrissha Kuehner Litts, RN PDM I Evng/Night

Susan Berg, Registered Nurse

Lisa Cassavaugh, Registered Nurse

Mary Ellen Cochran, RN WKND Day

Paul Seyfert, Registered Nurse

5 Years

Maralynn Arbogast, HIM Sr Analyst Coding Data Qual-Facil Based

Sue Bommarito, OP Coding Analyst II Hosp Based

Danielle Butera, Occup Therapist PDM

Kayla Cantrel, Technical Partner

Evan Case, Help Desk Supp Analyst

Barbara Donker, RDMS/RVT

Robert Ealey, RN WKND Night

Melissa Enriquez, RN HC On Call

Brianna Famularo, Patient Care Spec

Guishu Fang, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

Adam Felke, RN Phys Prac

Dawn Folks, Reg Resp Spec Per Diem

Belinda Garay, Pharmacy Tech-Cert

Bhoj Gautam, Radiation Physicist II

Kimberly Hashin, Physician

Jamie Hines, Medical Assistant Phys Prac

Marissa Johnson, Registered Nurse

Karen Johnson, Scheduling Coord LVPG

Srivani Karra, Physician

Rebecca Kehley, LPN Phys Prac

Teresa Lalik, Credit Refund - Spec

Michael Lantz, Mgr Network Supply Chain Opns

Anthony Liotta, PA General

Michael Llado, Tech Dev and Supp Expert

Samantha Maccarone, Social Worker MSW

James Martin, PA General

Clotilde Martinez, Call Center Rep

Brenda Mateo, Medical Assistant Phys Prac

Gabrielle Matyus, CRNP

Courtney Mease, Medical Assistant Phys Prac

Sherwood Michel, Mental Health Technician

Melissa Mikovitch, RN PDM III Day

Carol Miller-Schaeffer, Physician

Martha Molina Nuesi, Suprv Supply Dist Svcs

Ronald Ondishin, PRO Collection Reconcil Spec

Christina Ortiz, Patient Services Rep

Danielle Paolini, Medical Assistant Phys Prac

Nancy Phillips, Ultrasonographer

Michael Rampulla, Clin/Rev Apps and Supp Expert

Gubbi Ranganath, Physician

James Roberts, Security Officer II

Joshua Rosentel, Dir Quality Svcs

Kelly Ryzner, RN PDM III Evng/Night

Shelly Schlegel, Call Center Rep

Amy Schueller, Casual RN

Wendy Scott, Elder Life Educator

Matthew Shaw, PA General

Jill Skinner, OP Coding Analyst I Hosp Based

Jessica Smith, Registered Nurse

Sandra Solis, Call Center Rep

Rhonda Spadell, Contract Spec

Michael Stecz, Physical Therapist

Kaitlyn Strausser, PA General

Dawna Suchoski, LPN Phys Prac

Kimberly Tacconi, PA General

Kysha Tingle, Medical Assistant Advanced

Morgan Vizzoni, PA General

Justine Wood, Inpatient Care Manager - BSN

Jenna Wyncoll, RN PDM II Day

John Zerfass, PA General



Thank a Resident or Fellow Today

Thank a Resident Day is Feb. 25. Join us as we celebrate the contributions of LVHN residents and fellows all month.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

This message is from Brian A. Nester, DO, MBA, President and Chief Executive Officer;

**Michael A. Rossi, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer;
Deborah Bren, DO, Medical Staff President; Robert D. Barraco, MD, MPH,**

**Chief Academic Officer; and Maggie Hadinger, EdD, ACGME,
Designated Institutional Official &
Chair, Graduate Medical Education Committee.**

Each year we join organizations across the nation to celebrate [Thank a Resident Day](#) on Feb. 25. To recognize the invaluable contributions of our residents and fellows, we invite you to join us in a month-long celebration at LVHN.

Here's how you can acknowledge the efforts of our residents and fellows in February:

- **Comment on this LVHN Insider post.** Share a story about a time an LVHN resident or fellow delivered care that exemplified LVHN's core values.
- **Nominate a resident or fellow for a special Thank a Resident Award.** Weekly nominations are due each Friday in February. Click [here](#) for nomination form.
- **Send a resident or fellow an e-card via Partner Points on your SSO toolbar.** Find a special Thank a Resident e-card under "Thank You" cards.
- **Speak with a resident or fellow personally to say "thanks!"** Just knowing their efforts are appreciated goes a long way, and only takes a moment.

Thank you, LVHN residents and fellows. Your efforts have been and continue to be extraordinary. You are valued members of our LVHN team, and we appreciate each and every one of you.



Meet Provider Service Excellence Award Recipients

These providers demonstrate exceptional customer service behaviors.

LVHN Insider

Monday, January 31, 2022

Congratulations to the following award winners of the Provider Service Excellence Awards.

Provider Service Excellence Award: Deanna Buhay, PA-C



Buhay is a nurturing and caring member of the LVPG Urology team, and her commitment is exemplified through the care she provides to patients. As a physician assistant, Buhay helps numerous patients and families navigate difficult decisions after a urologic cancer diagnosis. She sees people who are being treated for prostate cancer or bladder cancer. She takes the time to learn about her patients, determine their unique needs and provide personalized treatment options and specific care. She serves as a resource within the practice, supporting her colleagues and demonstrating that she trusts and values everyone's efforts. She is genuinely invested, interested and committed when it comes to her patients and colleagues. Interactions with Buhay are collaborative and compassionate. She works to achieve the best outcome in every situation.

Provider Service Excellence Award: Edward Schwartz, MD



There is not one particular incident that demonstrates Dr. Schwartz's exceptional customer service characteristics. He is consistently courteous to his patients and staff. Dr. Schwartz was nominated by an RN who works alongside him and has also been his patient. The nominator says that he treats everyone, patients and staff alike, with the utmost respect at all times. He is always kind and compassionate to patients and staff in the PACU, and the OR staff raves about his behavior in the operating room. With his patients, he always takes the time to listen and respond to their needs. From the first consultation to the final follow-up appointment, he goes above and beyond to make certain his patients get everything they need.

Provider Service Excellence Award: Chelsea Boyle, CRNP



Boyle's nominator says that she's never met a provider who is more thorough, compassionate, kind, patient and caring than Boyle is. She takes her time with all her patients to actively listen and address their needs. Regardless of the visit type, she addresses every concern, and patients leave with a smile on their faces knowing their voices have been heard. Boyle is a fantastic caregiver to patients and friend to colleagues. She is the hardest worker in the room and the last provider to go home at the end of the day.

Provider Service Excellence Award: Alyssa Menghini, PA-C



In extraordinary circumstances, Menghini provides extraordinary care. When she encountered a patient abusing narcotics, Menghini could have easily dismissed her from the practice. Instead, she sat with this patient and the patient's husband, explaining kindly what needed to happen. In a very difficult situation, Menghini expertly addressed the patient and provided resources for the patient to seek help. She worked with the patient's psychiatrist to ensure a warm handoff, remaining professional and calm from start to finish.

Congratulations to all.



Meet the Recipients of the LVHN Guldin Award for Efficiency and Innovation

Colleagues were honored in clinical and nonclinical settings, as well as in physician practices.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

The LVHN Guldin Awards celebrate colleagues and teams who make exceptional contributions toward the implementation of a new or more efficient work practice or process. These awards are named in memory of the late George Guldin, who worked in respiratory care.

LVHN Guldin Award for Efficiency and Innovation Nonclinical

Workplace: Perioperative Business Services Department: Brenda Covely, Lauren Cronk, Lisa Dibetta, Tajhal Dowling, Kim Dreisbach, Shakerra Herbert, Heather Klemped, Michele Stangl, Diane Swenk, Michele Taglioli, Renee Miller, Janeen Quanstrom, Jacquelyn Koren, Marianne Ondrasik

This team of 13 enthusiastic and unwavering colleagues provides support and customer service for all facets of LVHN's rapidly expanding comprehensive perioperative and endoscopy services program. The team is responsible for all scheduling, charge capture, value analysis and data analytics for all surgical and endoscopic procedures across 18 locations. To improve efficiency and create standardization, the Perioperative Business Services Department transitioned to a centralized team now covering Coordinated Health sites in Allentown, Bethlehem, Phillipsburg and Stroudsburg. The growth of patient care supported by these colleagues is astounding. They have designed and implemented innovative solutions that produce data to improve efficiency, lower costs and provide the highest quality patient care. The development of key performance dashboards has provided business intelligence around procedural volume, length of stay and efficiency metrics. The team continues to push forward with innovation, linking surgical case data with quality and cost data, setting LVHN apart from other health care systems nationwide.

LVHN Guldin Award for Efficiency and Innovation in the Nonclinical

Workplace: Leslie Ward



Ward consistently goes the extra mile for her patients and colleagues. It's impressive and inspiring. She played a key role in scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations for patients and Hazleton community members. Her ability to connect with patients is something that can't be taught. Ward's personal commitment to excellence inspires others to fulfill a greater potential than they even knew they had. Colleagues like Ward help make LVHN the great organization it is today.

LVHN Guldin Award For Efficiency and Innovation in the Nonclinical

Workplace: Kathryn Paone



Amidst construction and changes, Paone is a hero to her colleagues. While Lehigh Valley Hospital–Dickson City is under construction, front desk colleagues at Scranton Orthopedics have to adapt to different workstations, disruptive noises, questions from patients, new patient flow and new check-in procedures. Through it all, Paone has taken a hands-on approach to help her team to cope and work through challenges. She helps however she can to create a good environment and make the experience easier for all. Her nominator says, “We are now seeing a light at the end of the tunnel, thanks to her.”

LVHN Guldin Award For Efficiency and Innovation Clinical Workplace: Amy

Kolb, Cynthia Pasquale

Like many of the Technology / Informatics projects we focus on, this project was defined in partnership with Dr. McCambridge and the quality team as errors from mislabeled laboratory bar codes were tracked. Mislabeled lab specimens represent a risk to patient safety, and LVHN recognized a need to implement a new process to minimize risk of missing, mismatched or unreadable labels. The Lab Barcode Specimen Collection Project Team removed barriers to create and implement a system for lab barcode specimen collection. Together, they updated LVHN's Epic mobile Rover software application to work with our partner HNL Lab Medicine and the Sunquest Laboratory Information system to support specimen barcode scanning and label printing at the patient's bedside. They evaluated, purchased, tested and installed new label printers and deployed leveraged iPhones used by nursing running Epic Rover as the barcoding devices. The new system is being used at LVH–Muhlenberg, is being implemented at LVH–Cedar Crest. Further deployment to all LVHN inpatient

care units will accelerate as the impact of COVID reduces in the inpatient setting. There have been tangible improvements to the number of label reprints and we see a decreasing trend in mislabeled specimens.

LVHN Guldin Award For Efficiency and Innovation Clinical Workplace: Nicole Cameron



It is an understatement to say that the COVID-19 pandemic has made waves throughout the health care system. One area experiencing a big impact is behavioral health. Cameron is one nurse who stepped up to the challenge. The pandemic led to an increase in behavioral health patients at LVHN. Cameron saw one challenge was the transportation of those patients to the proper facilities for their care. So, she met with a transportation service to ask for assistance and was able to coordinate transportation through them. The length of stay for behavioral health patients has been reduced since then due to Nicole's intuitive thinking and determination.

LVHN Guldin Award For Efficiency and Innovation Clinical Workplace: Tamara Miller, Shannon Donahue, Janel Nelson Ford, Shantal Seerattan, Veronique Milfort, Amanda Johns, Lakala Burgess, Giovanna Timana, Shondell Labastide

This team at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Pocono launched a project focused on skin care in March 2018. This project was aimed at studying and improving hospital policies and protocols to create a skin care bundle that would reduce risk of pressure injuries and improve the quality of care for patients at risk for skin breakdowns. Skin breakdown can cause serious harm, become vulnerable to infection and cause complications to already compromised individuals. The team worked tirelessly to find and implement a plan that worked. Ultimately, the team's efforts resulted in the right products being more readily available to prevent injuries, including heel protector boots, cushions, turn and repositioning clocks, skin risk bracelets and patient education materials. The team educated nurses on how using these products helps reduce skin injury. They analyzed data and reported on how changes were benefiting patients. Their nurse-driven skin bundle has been adopted by LVHN and is now used at all hospital campuses as of August 2021. Thank you for your commitment to this cause. Patients across our health network are receiving better care because of you.

LVHN Guldin Award for Efficiency and Innovation in the Clinical Workplace: Trisha Connolly



Connolly goes above and beyond for her patients and colleagues. As a scribe, she has the skills to fill both clinical and clerical roles in the office and she is dedicated to delivering a patient experience that exceeds expectations. Connolly is always punctual and reliable, willing to pick up extra shifts when needed and answering calls on her days off to help however she can. In her free time, she assists with COVID vaccination and testing sites as well as flu clinics. Connolly travels with Dr. Sten Kjellberg daily, visiting six different locations within the health network. Everywhere she goes, she is consistently warm and outgoing toward patients and colleagues alike. Her positive attitude shines through in everything she does, and her drive to do anything she can for her patients and colleagues makes her the perfect colleague for this award.

LVHN Guldin Award for Efficiency and Innovation in the Clinical Workplace: Julia Jurkiewicz and the Enabling Services Department



Jurkiewicz leads a team of professionals who are dedicated to supporting the needs of the community. The team is made up of RN care managers, behavioral health specialists and social service workers. They focus on being a lifeline for providers, colleagues and patients to enable more comprehensive care for those in need. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing health disparities for already at-risk populations. During the pandemic, the team intensely reviewed care gaps and challenges experienced by vulnerable populations and worked with providers and leaders to efficiently meet the identified needs. The Enabling Services team has more than doubled in size and added a new clinical pharmacist while managing nearly

1,000 referrals per month. We applaud you for all you have done and continue to do for our community.

LVHN Guldin Award for Efficiency and Innovation in a Physician

Practice: Valeria Intravaia



Intravaia goes above and beyond for her colleagues every day. Whether she is helping the practice run smoothly or supporting someone in need, colleagues know they can always count on Intravaia. She is always available to her team, even after hours. They feel comfortable coming to her with problems in and out of the office, and she is a solid shoulder to lean on. Even in the most hectic times in the office, she is calm, collected and solution-oriented. She balances efficiency with maintaining a positive environment and makes sure every colleague feels like "part of the family."

LVHN Guldin Award for Efficiency and Innovation in the Physician

Practice: Nathan Miller, MD



Dr. Miller instituted a surgical technique called Targeted Muscle Reinnervation - or TMR - here at LVHN. The TMR procedure, which was developed in 2002, involves transferring amputated nerves to activate the remaining muscles in the limb during a surgical procedure. By initiating the TMR surgical technique, Miller is improving both immediate post-operative care, as well as long-term pain in the amputee population. This procedure also improves a patient's control of prosthetic devices, which will make for a higher long-term quality of life and easier adaptation post-amputation. Miller is paving the way for continued innovation and development of next-level care right here at LVHN.

Congratulations to all the recipients of this prestigious award.



Virtual Event: What Women Need to Know About Heart Disease

LVHN Women's Heart and Vascular Program experts will discuss unique risk factors on Feb. 2.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

When it comes to matters of the heart, men and women are not created equal.

You're invited to join Amy Ahnert, MD, and Deborah Sundlof, DO, at 6 p.m. Wednesday (Feb. 2) for a discussion on what makes women's heart care unique, including learning about risk factors that are specific among women.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the U.S. Knowing how to stay heart healthy can help you live your best life.

Tune in and share this learning opportunity with family and friends. It's time well spent.

LVHN Takes COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts on the Road

Colleague Laura Williams helps Mobile Vaccination Unit bring vaccine to communities throughout region

By **Hannah Ropp**



Laura Williams, outreach specialist, infection control, helps coordinate LVHN Mobile Vaccine Unit clinics



Laura Williams, outreach specialist, infection control, helps coordinate LVHN Mobile Vaccination Unit clinics

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) is committed to providing everyone access to COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. In order to do that, LVHN began the mobile vaccination unit, which allows a team of LVHN providers to reach a large concentration of people eligible for the vaccine or booster, but unable to get to a clinic. Over the past nine months, the LVHN mobile vaccination unit has visited many sites including schools, skilled nursing facilities, community centers and more.

“The mobile vaccination unit is extremely important because it creates a safe and comfortable environment for those who are getting a vaccine. Sometimes getting a vaccine can cause some nervousness and inconvenience. By going on site, we are able to eliminate some of that,” says Laura Williams, outreach specialist, infection control.

Born out of necessity

Williams says the idea of the mobile vaccination unit was born out of necessity. “There was a large population that we weren’t able to vaccinate because they were unable to get to us; it was important for us to get to them,” she says.

In March 2021, Bennett Toyota donated three new vehicles to transport vaccines, IT infrastructure (such as computers) and the medical team. The COVID-19 mobile vaccination unit serves all areas of our region and visits high-rises, community centers and other facilities to reach community members with limited transportation or other barriers that could keep them from receiving their COVID-19 vaccine or booster.

According to Williams, the mobile vaccination unit is generally on-site for two to three hours and averages about 200 vaccines during that time. She says that some weeks the mobile vaccination unit is at several locations, while others it may only be at one or two facilities.

Behind the scenes

Vaccinating a large number of people off-site is a team effort. “The mobile vaccination team is comprised of registration specialists, pharmacy colleagues,

vaccinators, team leads, scribes and non-clinical support. There is a lot of logistics that need to take place before we ever step out the door,” says Williams.

To make sure each clinic runs smoothly, the team for the mobile vaccination unit follows a process to ensure they have everything they need from paperwork to supplies. All the materials needed for the mobile vaccination unit are kept at an LVHN site and loaded in and out of the van as needed. Once the team is on-site, they are able to provide vaccinations without interruption.

Williams says that during cleanup, the team does inventory to make sure all necessary paperwork is accounted for and all unused vaccines and supplies are stored properly.

[A grateful community](#)

Williams says the reaction to the service has been overwhelmingly positive. “People have been so grateful that they have the opportunity to get the vaccines that they need without having to worry about how to schedule it or how to get there,” she says.

It’s a sentiment that is echoed by many who have been vaccinated through the mobile vaccination unit, including Gladys Pickering, a resident of Luther Crest in Allentown. “I was so thrilled when I heard that LVHN was coming to us. It was important because we have an elderly population who can’t always be mobile enough to get out to get their vaccines, so this helps protect them and everyone here in our community,” she says.

Quelling a Brain Storm

One man’s recovery from autoimmune encephalitis required a team from LVHN
Epilepsy Center

By **Joe Nixon**



The storm in Frank Taylor’s brain was subtle at first, without a clear cause.

About three years ago, there were unexplained headaches, bouts of forgetfulness, mood swings and depression.

A year later, the storm roared. He suffered a grand mal seizure at home. Taken to Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest, he says family told him he didn't know who he was for two weeks. He was talking to deceased people and there was a slight chance he might not break the neurological stranglehold that kept him in limbo.

He was eventually discharged from the hospital and went to rehabilitation. The subsequent diagnosis was autoimmune encephalitis, a rare condition in which the body creates antibodies that attack the brain, creating inflammation that can produce seizures and other negative side effects affecting memory, mood, sleep and more.

About 4,000 people are affected by it each year in the U.S. Frank Taylor was one of them – emphasis on past tense with the help of [Zehra Husain, MD](#), and the [Lehigh Valley Health Network \(LVHN\) Epilepsy Center](#). He received medication that stopped the autoimmune attack on his brain, and he was able to resume things such as driving and watching his young granddaughter.

Did you know?

Just 4,000 people are affected by autoimmune encephalitis each year in the U.S.
[In the beginning](#)

Those who develop epilepsy as adults usually experience very sporadic seizures stemming from a single spot in their brain. Taylor didn't fit that mold because he went from having no seizures to having a lot of them, originating on both sides of his brain.

“It came on really fast, really intense,” says Husain. Taylor's seizures didn't respond well to standard anti-seizure medication.

Seizures are not always visible and can be hard to spot. Husain said some are nearly imperceptible to the untrained eye. Outside of his grand mal seizure, many of Taylor's subsequent seizures fell into that “hard to spot” category. “They can be extremely subtle, even unnoticeable to someone sitting next to you,” she says, adding electroencephalogram (EEG) monitoring pinpointed where Taylor's seizures were originating in his brain.

[The journey](#)

Taylor, of Bethlehem, says things were stressful in the beginning before the cause of his seizures was pinpointed. “I just started rolling with it and stopped dwelling on it,” he recalls. “I thought I may have to live with this. I have to live my life and whatever happens, happens. That got me through it.”

Taylor, head custodian at Asbury United Methodist Church in Allentown, says he continued going to work during the search for the source of his problem, though at some points he was not climbing ladders or operating power equipment due to safety concerns. “They were phenomenal,” he said of support from his employer throughout his ordeal.

Husain says Frank’s circumstances immediately led her and other caregivers to suspect an autoimmune cause. That was confirmed when blood and spinal fluid samples tested at the Mayo Clinic lab confirmed autoimmune encephalitis and identified the responsible antibody. Hospitals around the country send samples to the Mayo lab to be tested for the inflammation associated with autoimmune encephalitis.

The antibody that caused Taylor’s problems tends to cause autoimmune encephalitis just once, Husain says.

Treatment stops inflammation

Treatment with a drug called rituximab was ultimately what was able to eliminate the rogue antibodies and tests later showed Taylor’s inflammation was gone. “What tends to fix most things is treating the underlying cause, which was the autoimmunity,” says Husain. “We saved his brain from quite a bit of permanent scarring. There’s marked improvement in his mood and memory. He’s a tough guy. He was working through all of this.”

Husain says she and others worked against the clock to stop Taylor’s seizures and limit any lasting effects or lifelong disabilities.

“That was absolutely the goal. It’s so gratifying to see someone come out on the other side, seeing how bad it was for him,” says Husain. “It’s really kind of amazing and humbling to see how someone could have all these symptoms and see how eventually over time they get better.”

Not all cases turn out as well as Taylor’s, admits Husain. “It was just really nice to see it all work out for him,” she says.

Recovery continues

Taylor says those who know him saw him getting back to his old self.

“It’s totally 200 percent different than it was,” says Taylor. “I came pretty much full circle.”

One of the great things about getting better, says Taylor, is interacting with his granddaughter. “The first year after she was born, I had no interaction with her. I didn’t trust myself around her and I almost didn’t know her.”

Things are different now. “She’s a smart kid. I’m glad I’m around to see her grow,” he says.

Taylor is on just one anti-seizure medication and likely will be for the rest of his life. His memory still isn’t where it was, but it’s much better than when the inflammation was present.

Grateful for great care

“They are some of the most phenomenal people I’ve ever met. They took care of me like I was a part of their family.” – Frank Taylor

He praised Husain and everyone at LVH–Cedar Crest who had a hand in his care and treatment. “They are some of the most phenomenal people I’ve ever met,” he says, his voice choked with emotion. “They took care of me like I was a part of their family.”

Husain said one of her EEG technicians recently asked about Taylor, wondering why she hadn’t seen him lately. At one point, he was such a frequent visitor to the epilepsy center, he was on a first-name basis with most there.

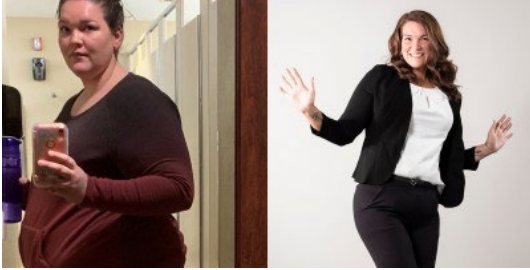
“I said, ‘Didn’t you hear? He’s all better!’” Husain says.

PATIENT STORY

Weight-Loss Surgery Helps Area Woman Improve Health and Her Fertility

Kaitlyn Getz Lost 165 Pounds and Finally Conceived Thanks to LVHN General and Bariatric Surgery

By **Emily Shiffer**



At 27, Kaitlyn Getz's health was at an all-time low prior to her bariatric surgery at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN).

"I was taking multiple prescriptions, dealing with diabetes, and failing miserably at losing weight on my own," she says. "I wanted to be active, and I never really let my weight bother my active lifestyle. However, no matter how much I tried, I just could not lose the weight."

On top of her weight-loss struggle, she also was dealing with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which was affecting her fertility journey.

"I was seeing an endocrinologist for my PCOS and infertility when she recommended the weight-loss surgery program at LVHN," she says.

Her doctor told her that she would have about a 90% chance of getting pregnant after she lost a significant amount of weight.

"At this point, I was already taking hormone replacements and injections, and the next step was in vitro fertilization (IVF)," she says. "I didn't want to have a failed attempt at IVF."

Life-changing decision

After the appointment, she immediately called her mom to talk it over, followed by a discussion with her significant other. The decision was easy.

"I knew if I wanted to keep up with my child that I would need to make major changes, and at that point in my life, I would have done anything to be called 'Mom,'" she says. "Within a week, LVHN had my referral and scheduled my first information session."

After three months of weigh-ins at [LVPG Surgery–Health & Wellness Center](#), Getz's surgery was scheduled.

Her surgery took place March 25, 2019, the day that “changed my life forever.”

“I woke up at 4 a.m. that day. My mom met me at the hospital, along with my then-husband. While in the pre-op, we downloaded the EASE app so nurses could give my family the updates needed to keep their mind at ease while I was in the operating room,” she says. “My surgeon greeted me with the biggest smile on his face. I remember the last words I heard him say as he left my room so I could finish preparation was an emphatic, ‘I’ll see you in there!’ This was so reassuring.”

Within two hours after surgery, she was up and walking.

“After I started walking, I did not stop. Lap after lap, I was on the move,” she says. “The nurses would ask, ‘Didn’t you just have surgery?’”

“I have never felt better in my life. For me, it’s not about what the scale reads – it’s about how I feel after I see myself in that beautiful red dress that I was always too scared to wear, that two-piece high-waisted bikini that never hid enough skin, or a pair of shorts,” Getz says.

On track despite setback

After her gastric sleeve surgery, she lost weight very quickly – 42 pounds in nearly one month. The rapid weight loss resulted in gallbladder issues.

“My surgeon had me in his office in no time,” she says. “I was weak, and he knew just what to do.”

The LVHN team quickly helped her resolve the issues. An ultrasound confirmed gallstones. Getz shared that her surgeon called ahead to Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Hazleton and had them prepare a bed for her for the surgery. Her gallbladder was removed shortly thereafter.

With help from an LVHN dietitian, Kaitlyn was educated about weight loss and given tips to help her stay on track after her surgery.

Overall, Kaitlyn has lost about 150 pounds.

Feeling better than ever

Weight loss is so much more than pounds lost – it’s about living life to the fullest. And for Getz, her life completely changed.

“I have never felt better in my life,” she says. “For me, it’s not about what the scale reads – it’s about how I feel after I see myself in that beautiful red dress that I was always too scared to wear, that two-piece high-waisted bikini that never hid enough skin, or a pair of shorts.”

The surgery was a success for her fertility as well. After her surgery, she became pregnant naturally.

“With my gastric sleeve, I was blessed with a beautiful and healthy 6-pound, 5-ounce baby boy named Gideon,” she says.

After the birth of her son, Getz decided that she wanted to become a runner, and was motivated by her aunt, Jeri Klick. One night, she drove herself to a track in Berwick, Pennsylvania, and gave it a go.

“I stretched like my elementary teacher taught me to do many years before, put my earbuds in (and put on my favorite song, “Independence Day” by Martina McBride) and put one foot in front of the other. I was off,” she says. “I was not fast, and I was struggling to breathe...but I was doing it.”

Since then, Getz has run multiple 5K races. She’s also started backpacking with her 1-year-old son, and started hunting again.

“The world is a beautiful place when you take a moment to take care of yourself,” she says. “Weight-loss surgery is not the easy way out. It will test you in more ways than one and is just a tool to help you. Maintenance is key, and the scale does not define you. Know your worth, and do it for your health.”
