

# CheckUp

## this month

focus on

**Privacy  
Respect  
Involvement  
Dignity  
Empathy**

See page 5 to learn about customer service theming.

VOL. 14, NO. 3 • MARCH 15, 2001

## Nurses Set Sights on Magnet Status

*"They Deserve the National Recognition for Excellence."*

A magnet attracts. It's a simple fact of physics.

A magnet hospital attracts, too. And it's one of the reasons that the nursing staff at LVHHN is lining up behind a dedicated effort to achieve "magnet hospital" designation, a prestigious accreditation from the American Nurses' Association (ANA).

But it's not the main reason.

"We have a professional nursing staff at LVHHN that is second to none, and they deserve the national recognition for excellence they will receive when LVHHN achieves magnet status," said Terry Capuano, senior vice president, clinical services.

Further, magnet hospitals' proven ability to attract and retain the best and the brightest registered nurses will ensure LVHHN's reputation for excellence in patient care continues into the future, she said.

The accreditation program grew out of an ANA study in 1983 that identified key factors in nurse job satisfaction and low turnover in hospitals: management style, nursing autonomy, quality of leadership, organizational structure, professional practice, career development and quality of patient care. Ten years later, the organization created the voluntary program to recognize hospitals for excellent nursing care, recruitment and retention.

The magnet program process includes a rigorous self-assessment, documentation, site visit and review, Capuano said. Magnet status is awarded by the American Nurses

Outstanding performance on these standards comprise the measurement criterion for the magnet hospital designation:

- Assessment
- Diagnosis
- Identification of outcomes
- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Quality of care and administrative practice
- Performance appraisal
- Education
- Collegiality
- Ethics
- Collaboration
- Research
- Resource utilization

Credentialing Center of the ANA for acute-care and long-term care hospitals, and has a four-year term.

"As we examined the extensive criteria for excellent patient care and professional nursing practice, it was very clear that our nurses met those criteria," Capuano said. "And although this is a nursing initiative, it's equally clear that all our patient care team members make a valuable contribution to that level of excellence."

The work to achieve magnet status recently received approval as a strategic initiative from the senior management council (SMC). A magnet coordinating group was organized in February, and is now working to complete the self-assessment and documentation process in 14 areas of nursing performance.

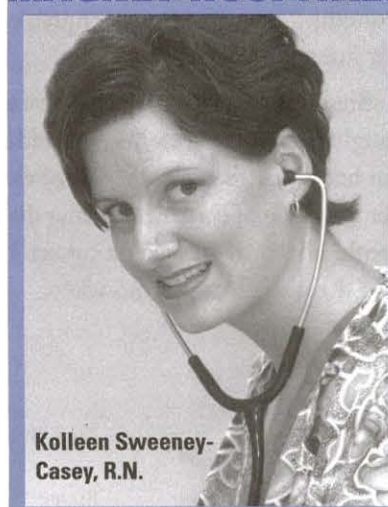
"What we're finding is that in most cases, we meet all the criteria for standards of excellence," Capuano said. "We have to assemble the evidence and document it appropriately. This is also an opportunity for us to look for ways to make the professional lives of our nurses even more satisfying and fulfilling."

The group's goal is to submit the application by this summer. A site visit and review would probably occur next winter.

"Every nurse at LVHHN will be involved in winning this designation," she said. "The award will belong to all of us." ■

by Mary Alice Czerwonka

## SHE'S DRAWN TO MAGNET HOSPITALS



Kolleen Sweeney-Casey, R.N.

Terry Capuano's announcement of LVH's intent to pursue magnet hospital accreditation was music to Kolleen Sweeney-Casey's ears.

"I remember how great it felt to work at a magnet hospital," said the R.N. who works per diem in the Cedar Crest ED and mother-baby unit. "Nurses are recognized every day for their contributions to patient care."

For 18 months in the early 1990s, Sweeney-Casey was a neurosurgical nurse at the magnet-accredited University of California Davis. She had to leave because her husband's job was transferred to the Lehigh Valley. She has always hoped to work at a magnet hospital again.

"Nurses are encouraged and supported to focus on providing medical care and educating patients," she said. "Patients want to come back because they know they're in the best hands."

At UC-Davis—a facility similar to LVH in size and services—nurses also had opportunities for continuing education and were compensated for earning advanced degrees. They received bonuses for working overtime or added hours on their shift.

Achieving magnet status is a rigorous process that takes great clinical leadership. And with Capuano leading the effort, Sweeney-Casey is hopeful she'll soon have her wish of working again at a magnet hospital. ■

by Rob Stevens

## MAGNET COORDINATING GROUP

Terry Capuano, R.N., leader  
Jann Christensen, R.N.  
Joann Geslak, R.N.  
Lois Guerra, R.N.  
Marilyn Guidi, R.N.  
Cindy Heidt, R.N.

Kim Hitchings, R.N.  
Christina Lewis, R.N.  
Anne Panik, R.N.  
Debra Peter, R.N.C.  
Molly Sebastian, R.N.  
Carol Sorrentino, R.N.

Susan Steward, R.N.  
Mary Alice Czerwonka  
Linda Durishin, R.N.  
Joanne Gimpert

**LEHIGH VALLEY**  
HOSPITAL AND  
HEALTH NETWORK



# When Care at LVHHN Touches You and Your Family

Home Care Educator Tells Her Story

The care provided by LVHHN hit close to home in recent years for Darla Stephens, a clinical educator for Lehigh Valley Home Care and Hospice.

Her sister-in-law, Cindy Bittner, was diagnosed with an advanced stage of breast cancer in March 1996. In addition to her treatment, Bittner attended support groups at the John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center, was cared for by home care and hospice, and spent a week on the oncology floor before her death.

"She received tremendous support from many people in the network," Stephens said. "They helped alleviate her fears, educated her about resources and arranged for her son to come home from the Navy. The hospice nurse even attended her funeral."

Stephens herself, as well as her father and daughter, have all been hospitalized at LVHHN, but her mother's experience most clearly showed her the value of care. After being diagnosed at another hospital with colon cancer, her mother was told she would need a colostomy.

*Darla Stephens (right) with parents George and Alma Becker.*



"I told her, 'No, we're not staying with this hospital,' and I brought her here," Stephens said. "Our doctors treated her without a colostomy, and she's doing fine."

Stephens' experience with LVHHN care contributed to her decision to join the Employee Campaign Committee, which is inviting employees to support the overall Employee Campaign.

"I've worked here for 30 years, and I've seen the whole range of care," Stephens said. "There is a higher quality of care here than many of us realize. If you go anywhere else, you see how good we really are."

"This campaign will help us continue to do research and provide excellent care," Stephens said. "It all goes back to the community—our family, friends and neighbors." ■

## How Can You Support the Employee Campaign

You can participate in the "A Celebration of Community"—Lehigh Valley Hospital's Campaign to help build the next generation of world-class health services.

The campaign's goal is \$500,000. Nearly \$275,000 has already been pledged by 100 percent of senior leadership. You will receive pledge materials at home in May explaining how to participate. During the next few months, presentations will be made at employee staff meetings.

"Of all the opportunities to donate back to the community, I can't think of a better place to give than right here," said Kristi Schurr, committee chair. "I, and nearly every one I know, have benefitted from the expert care and services we offer."

Questions can be addressed to your department head, a committee member or Nancy Lloyd, director of annual giving, at 610-402-9121.

## Employee Campaign Committee

**Kristi Schurr, director**  
organizational development, 484-884-4864  
**Richard Cardona, director**  
logistical support services, 484-884-4302  
**George Ellis, director**  
respiratory therapy, 610-402-8055  
**Kevin Flynn, administrative director**  
department of medicine, 610-402-8272  
**David Freedman, manager**  
financial analysis, 484-884-4403  
**Paulette Kennedy, R.N.**  
3C-staging/monitored, 610-402-8228

**Carol Mutchler, consultant**  
human resources, 484-884-4961  
**Mary Jean Potlycki, R.N., director**  
4A/4C med surg units, 610-402-8777  
**Tracey Sechler, administrative assistant**  
Lehigh Valley Home Health Services  
610-402-7033  
**Darla Stephens, clinical educator**  
Lehigh Valley Home Care and Hospice  
610-402-7387  
**Susan Steward, R.N., director**  
nursing education, 610-402-1705



The year was 1975. Patricia Anderson had just given birth to the youngest of her three children and her only son. What was among the happiest moments of her life also changed her life forever.

After giving birth, Anderson felt paralyzed from the waist down. Her kidneys had simply "shut down" due to a chronic disease aggravated by the pregnancy. Anderson would spend the next five and a half years on hemo dialysis and eventually begin peritoneal dialysis treatment at her Whitehall Township home.

Anderson, 59, has been a patient of nephrologist James Kintzel, M.D., medical director of

## Doctor Prescribes a Special Dinner for a Special Patient

*"It's Just a Nice Thing to Do."*

*James Kintzel, M.D. (right), and long-time peritoneal dialysis patient Patricia Anderson enjoy patient photographs Kintzel took at office functions over many years.*

LVHHN's home peritoneal dialysis program, for nearly all of those 25 years—longer than any other patient in the program. Anderson's courage in living with her condition and in overcoming several bouts with cancer impressed Kintzel so much that he wanted to do something special for her.

Mrs. Anderson recalls the phone call from a nurse in Kintzel's office who said the physician wanted to take her and her family out to dinner.

"What for?" Anderson remembers asking in total surprise.

Not only did Kintzel invite Anderson, her husband, Dave, their three grown children, her mother-in-law and several staff members, he also

asked her to select the restaurant of her choice. Her pick was the Spice of Life near LVH-CC & I-78.

Anderson said the evening was wonderful and made her feel special. Kintzel later gave her a photo album including pictures from that night and at various dialysis program functions over the years.

Anderson is the latest patient to be treated to a special night out, which Kintzel began doing in 1988 to honor long-time dialysis patients because, he says, it is a "nice thing to do." While techniques and procedures have improved during the years, Kintzel says 25 years is a long time to be on dialysis and credits patients like Anderson for their commitment.

Anderson says the choice has been a simple one. "I wanted to stay alive to be with my children as they grew." ■

by Brian Downs



# Local Hospitals Face Tough Times

## LVHHN'S FINANCIAL TURNAROUND CONTINUES

### Health care giant eyeing local hospital

Tenet Healthcare, Easton Hospital talking sale.  
By EDWARD SIEGER  
The Express-Times

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### Feds suing Easton Hospital suitor

From staff and wire reports

The U.S. Justice Department is joining a Florida lawsuit against Tenet Healthcare Corp., the hospital chain negotiating to buy Easton Hospital in the Lehigh Valley. It claims that the North Ridge Medical Center in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., violated a law prohibiting physicians from referring their Medicare patients to the hospital.

### Easton Hospital looks to Tenet for aid

■ If negotiations succeed, it would become the region's first for-profit hospital.  
By ANN WLAZELEK  
Of The Morning Call

Financially strapped Easton Hospital may be in trouble by one of the nation's largest for-profit health care companies.

Easton Hospital officials said Friday they will negotiate exclusively with Tenet Healthcare Corp., which owns or operates 110 hospitals in 17 states, including Lehigh Valley University Hospital in Philadelphia.

If the negotiations succeed, Northampton County's only hospital would become the region's first for-profit hospital, losing its tax-exempt status and becoming subject to state income taxes.

Other effects on the hospital and community were less clear. Some about how the hospital would be run and how it would affect the local health care system.

Tenet, based in Santa Barbara, Calif., has proposed to buy the hospital in a leveraged buyout, which would involve the hospital's long-term debt and create a separate group to pay for community services.

"They met all the criteria," Easton Hospital President Donna Mithell said of the American Cancer Society's management.

Tenet is a for-profit hospital chain. It has acquired several hospitals in the Lehigh Valley, including Lehigh Valley University Hospital in Philadelphia.

The hospital's financial outlook is called 'negative' by Standard & Poor's, a major credit rating agency. The hospital's financial outlook is called 'negative' by Standard & Poor's, a major credit rating agency.

Sacred Heart Hospital's financial outlook is called 'negative' by Standard & Poor's, a major credit rating agency. The hospital's financial outlook is called 'negative' by Standard & Poor's, a major credit rating agency.

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Lower payments for Medicare and managed care contracts are taking their financial toll on hospitals in the Lehigh Valley. The issue has been a hot media topic locally and regionally.

Easton Hospital officials announced last month that they are negotiating the sale of the hospital exclusively with Tenet Healthcare Corp., one of the nation's largest for-profit health care companies. Meanwhile, Standard & Poor (S&P) has lowered the bond rating of Sacred Heart Hospital, which has lost \$8.5 million over the past 18 months. The move came one day after the hospital's president and CEO, Joseph Cimerola, announced his resignation effective March 16.

"The problems at Easton and Sacred Heart are unfortunate," said Lou Liebhaber, LVHHN's chief operating officer. "The level of uncertainty those staffs must be feeling would be frightening."

Easton Hospital has been searching for a financial partner since last fall to weather a loss of \$14 million since 1997. Tenet owns or operates 110 hospitals in 17 states, including Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia. The U.S. Justice Department and a former Tenet employee are suing the health care corporation alleging physicians were paid to encourage them to refer patients to the hospital, according to *The Express-Times*. Tenet denies it owned the hospital in question when the alleged violations began.

Easton approached LVHHN last fall about forming a partnership, but the health network decided in January to focus on its own resources

to care for the entire community and withdrew from consideration.

While Easton might have found an answer to its financial woes, S&P lists Sacred Heart's outlook as "negative." The downgrade means the hospital is considered a greater credit risk and will probably have to pay higher interest to borrow money.

In contrast to its competitors, LVHHN's intense efforts a year ago to reverse worsening finances produced a \$10 million turnaround by the end of January 2001, while maintaining high-quality care with little impact on staff.

Vaughn Gower, LVHHN's chief financial officer, said difficult decisions had to be made to produce that kind of improvement. Gower cited the end of LVH's contract with Aetna U.S. Healthcare on March 1 as an example.

"We knew the terms of the Aetna contract were financially devastating to LVH," he said. "As unpleasant as it was to inform the community that we could no longer participate in such an arrangement, the decision had to be made for the hospital to continue to be financially viable, provide the highest quality patient care and continue community services."

Liebhaber said focusing on teamwork, process improvement and communication will allow LVHHN to prosper. "We should all take great pride in our ability to pull together, face up to challenges and overcome them." ■

by Brian Downs

See *Issues & Initiatives* on page 4 to learn more.

## ROBERT X. MURPHY Jr., M.D.

### He's an Emerging Leader, AMA Says

Robert X. Murphy Jr., M.D., says he loves being a plastic surgeon because he can focus on improving lives by caring for one person at a time. But Murphy feels his work as a physician doesn't end there.

Much of Murphy's 12-year career also has been spent serving on numerous local, regional and national medical boards, societies and committees. It's his way, he says, to deal with bigger issues and care for the population.

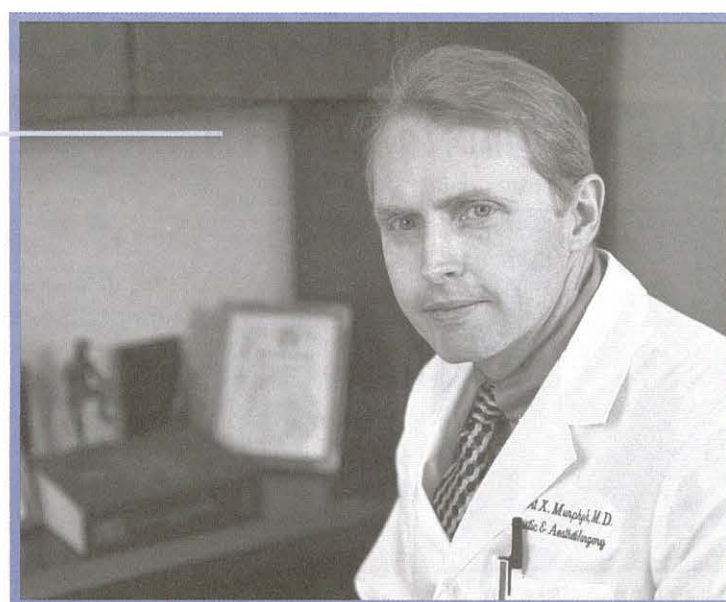
"There are many demands on a physician's time—most important is caring for our patients," Murphy said. "But it's also important to me that health care issues that affect us all be addressed."

Murphy's dedication has been noticed by the American Medical Association (AMA), which invited him to participate in its prestigious AMA/Glaxo Wellcome Emerging Leaders Development Program earlier this month in Washington, D.C.

Only 50 physicians nationwide are invited each year, and Murphy was one of three from Pennsylvania selected. The program focuses on providing physicians with skills to more effectively influence health policy.

How has Murphy led LVHHN? He is past president of the medical staff, during which he oversaw the merger of the LVH and LVH-Muhlenberg medical staffs, and has also served on the LVHN board of trustees and its executive committee. During last November's election, he worked to educate physician leaders about the views of the local congressional candidates on health care issues.

Robert J. Laskowski, M.D., LVHHN's chief medical officer, is one of Murphy's colleagues who highly recommended him for the AMA



Robert X. Murphy Jr., M.D., says he became interested in leadership roles when he participated in worker's compensation policy discussions, upon the completion of fellowship training in the early 1990s.

honor. "Given the challenges posed by the advances in medicine and the constraints in financing them, it is vitally important that talented physicians like Dr. Murphy help guide the health care system into the future—and are recognized for their efforts." ■

by Brian Downs





## Issues & Initiatives

is a series providing employees with information about current health care issues at Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network.

# Our Ship Rides the Crest of the Wave

**There is some grim news on the local health care scene. Easton Hospital and Sacred Heart Hospital are in the equivalent of financial quicksand.** The story of how these institutions got into such serious trouble is specific both to their internal workings and the result of market forces that threaten all hospitals. While our hearts go out to our colleagues at these hospitals, we must take stock and understand why LVHHN continues to weather the storm successfully.

In the book and movie "The Perfect Storm," bad and powerful forces of nature come together at once to create a monumental and overwhelming storm. Well, we in health care are in the midst of our own "perfect storm." But this "perfect storm" has gone on and on, and will continue not for just a few days but for years.

#### *The elements of our storm?*

- Unprecedented government payment reductions
- Price cutting by private insurances
- Failed promises of managed care
- Unparalleled advances in technology and pharmaceuticals, which drive up cost at an ever accelerating pace
- A robust economy that has put pressure on attracting and retaining staff

- An increased cost of borrowing money, due in part to the bankruptcy of the Allegheny Health System
- An increase in competition and many other factors

We at LVHHN have not been immune to these pressures. But together we have faced them down and managed to keep our ship afloat and moving in the right direction.

*How?* While the answers to this simple question are complex, they can be boiled down to three key elements:

#### **FOCUS—**

When training for a marathon race, one cannot start exercising the day before the race. Nor can one just exercise the body. One must train well in advance, eat right and prepare mentally. We have maintained a focus on reducing our cost, improving and streamlining our processes, and making disciplined business choices. We have not done this in spurts or with the heavy hand of slash-and-burn consultants. We have accomplished this focus through relentless attention to avoid the atrophy of our organization.

#### **TEAMWORK—**

The historical and future success of LVHHN is inextricably linked to the talent and cooperation of our team—our fellow employees, medical staff, board of trustees and senior management. As with all truly successful teams, not only must each player have individual talent, but the whole team must work effectively together.

#### **QUALITY—**

Quality of care to our community is the final element explaining why our past has been successful and why the future will be bright. Our reputation for providing unquestioned and unparalleled quality care to our community means that we are built to last. Fancy advertising and boastful claims that are not backed up by substance are never successful or sustainable. Our quality is a hallmark of the talents and focus of our entire team. And our community knows it!

I am optimistic that given our unique focus, teamwork and quality, our community will continue to benefit from our fine work for generations to come.

*Thank you for all you do every day!* ■

## Connections & Reconnections

### Why I Came to LVHHN...



**HEATHER BLAIR, R.N.**  
4A, LVH-CC

#### **9 MONTHS AGO**

“I grew up in Pittsburgh, where there has been much animosity and bankruptcy among hospitals. I actively looked to begin my career at a financially stable institution with a strong teaching mission, and I found that right here at LVHHN. It was worth the move from my hometown.”



**CHRISTI THAMARUS**  
TECHNICAL PARTNER, 5C, LVH-CC

#### **1 YEAR AGO**

“I pursued my career at LVH because of its great reputation. Working here is an investment in my future, and I learn so much from the nurses every day. They understand my passion for healing people and are so willing to mentor me in my goal to become a nurse.”

### Why I've Stayed at LVHHN...



**TRISH MAKARA, R.N.**  
PAIN MANAGEMENT, LVH-MUHLENBERG

#### **10 YEARS**

“My love of this hospital is the reason I have worked here so long. It's a warm, friendly place with a lot of camaraderie between co-workers and genuine caring for patients. I couldn't be happier at any other hospital.”



**CARLOS MOLINA**  
INVENTORY COORDINATOR

#### **15 YEARS**

“I could work in another industry, but the job wouldn't be as rewarding. The products I provide help in the healing process, and that's pretty special. LVH has a culture where employees not only treat people, but are treated like people rather than a resource.”

**CheckUp wants to know what inspires you at LVHHN.** Tell us about your most touching day at work, and you may be featured in a future issue. E-mail [pamela.maurer](mailto:pamela.maurer) or call her at 484-884-4818.



# THE Music Men

Their Tunes Uplift Patients in the Morgan Cancer Center

Clarinet in hand, Ray Wetherhold takes his position in the radiation lobby of the John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center. He's just about to raise the instrument to his lips when he spots a radiation oncologist buzzing by. Without missing a beat, Wetherhold puts on a sheepish grin and says: "Hey, can you X-ray my clarinet? I think there's a crack in it."

"Does your clarinet have an HMO?" the doctor quips. Ta-da—dum.

Giggles emerge from the "audience"—the cancer patients waiting for their appointments. At that, Wetherhold and his buddy, guitarist Carl Trollinger, begin playing a Benny Goodman tune.

Lorraine Wolfinger of Balliettsville can't believe her eyes. "Look, it's Ray from the Melody Aces!" she says, referring the to the legendary local band. "We used to dance our feet off when they played at the Fearless Fire Company."

Now, people dance in the Cancer Center. They sing, too. And they celebrate birthdays and anniversaries to songs played by musicians who volunteer their talent each month.

"I don't understand all this medical stuff, but I do know that these people are struggling," Wetherhold says. "The little bit we do helps make them happy."

The Music Men are carrying on the legacy of Phil Spazionni, a singer who began the program nearly a decade ago. Spazionni, who lost his long battle with stomach cancer in November, found solace in music when he was first hospitalized.

"Phil would jam with a friend who played guitar," Trollinger said. "Music kept him alive a little longer."



Patient Michelle Getz (center) of Allentown enjoys the music of Ray Wetherhold (left) and Carl Trollinger at the JDMCC chemotherapy area.

Trollinger knows firsthand about the healing power of music. He has lived with chronic leukemia for 18 years. "When I had to retire from teaching, I didn't have to retire from music," he said.

Today, when Trollinger plays for patients, he understands their experience. But of course, he would never tell them that—he doesn't have to.

"The music is our bond," Trollinger said. "They don't want to think about the needle in their arm or what's draining in or out of them. They listen to a song, and it reminds them of a wonderful time in their life. Isn't that what it's all about?" ■

by Pamela Maurer

Call Wetherhold at 610-956-2958 for information about the program. Learn about what music can mean to you and read about LVHNN physicians who are musicians in the March/April Healthy You.



Breast Health Services nurse Kerri Sucky with one of the garments used to enhance the privacy of mammography patients.

Privacy looks like covering the patient and sounds like, "I'm concerned about your privacy."

## When Very Good Isn't Good Enough

CUSTOMER SERVICE THEMES MOTIVATE

Sitting with several Cancer Services managers last October to help them choose a customer service theme, Jack Dunleavy was impressed by their Press Ganey results. They were in the 99 percentile—good enough to rank first in customer service among all outpatient cancer services in the country.

Then Dunleavy, a LVHNN organizational development consultant, was startled by their request. They wanted his help to improve even more. He responded with an idea for a theme—*"When Very Good Is Not Good Enough."* They agreed.

Cancer Services is one of eight departments using Dunleavy's unique customer service improvement process that begins with choosing a theme to define their efforts. "It's the groundwork for the framework," Dunleavy said.

"The theme recognizes staff's good work and challenges us to be even better," said Jill Anderson, vice president of Cancer Services. "We don't want to become complacent, so this process helps us get very specific about where we can improve."

Departments build on the theme by developing "touch points"—the various points in which they interact with patients—to help them under-

stand how patients flow through the system. Then they examine how these touch points relate to Press Ganey "service drivers," the behaviors that patients identify as important. Finally, they develop "service descriptors"—what customer service behaviors should look like and sound like.

"This helps take Press Ganey from abstraction to a practical application," said Elisabeth Ladd, program director of Breast Health Services and a Cancer Services manager who is identifying touch points.

Breast Health Services' touch points begin when patients call for an appointment. They continue with parking, a greeting at the front desk and then the actual interaction with the imaging study—a study that patients dislike and that gives technicians only a minute or two to establish rapport, Ladd said.

"Everyone here is committed to improving, and I think that's a reason Cancer Services has scored so high in the past," she said. "There is a tremendous attitude of empathy and concern that's modeled from the top down. There's no one here who can't identify why we're here and who always comes first—the patient." ■

### Customer Service Themes

The LVHNN customer service theme is *All Hospitals Are Not Alike*, and eight LVHNN departments have developed their own customer service themes.

**Organizational development:**  
*Creating Pathways*

**Radiology:**  
*Creating Lasting Images*

**Diagnostic Care Center:**  
*Be Our Guest*

**Valet parkers:**  
*Creating Awesome Arrivals and Fond Farewells*

**Materials management:**  
*Creating Smiles*

**Resident practices:**  
*Creating Healthy Minds and Bodies*

**Regional Heart Center:**  
*A Beat Above the Rest*

**Cancer Services:**  
*Very Good Plus or When Very Good Isn't Good Enough*

### Disney Book to Feature LVHNN

A book due out this year by the Disney Institute on building a performance culture will feature sections about LVHNN's efforts to improve customer service. The book, "Be Our Guest," describes how LVHNN developed its "All Hospitals Are Not Alike" theme, PRIDE behaviors and performance culture.

The Disney Institute promotes customer service excellence and has been attended by Jack Dunleavy. Institute staff also visited the Diagnostic Care Center, which adopted "Be Our Guest" as its theme.



# How Can I Help You?

## Bed Management Team Balances Patient Needs With Staff Capacity Every Day

You might not realize it, but there's a team of people helping staff every day. The bed management team works behind-the-scenes day and night, admitting some 36,000 patients annually.

"We try to balance providing quick, quality care to patients with concern for the understaffed units," said Lisa Romano, R.N., manager of bed management.

*How do they do it?* Take a walk in their shoes for a week.

### Monday

It's early morning on Jan. 29, and Romano fears that her staff will be super-challenged to find beds for incoming patients at LVHHN's three hospitals. All CC inpatient beds are full, and there might not be beds for new admissions or emergency department patients.

Throughout the day, the team coordinates the admitting of seven patients in critical condition, 15 from doctors offices and 59 from the CC-ED into beds. By the day's end, new patients wait in the emergency room.

### Tuesday

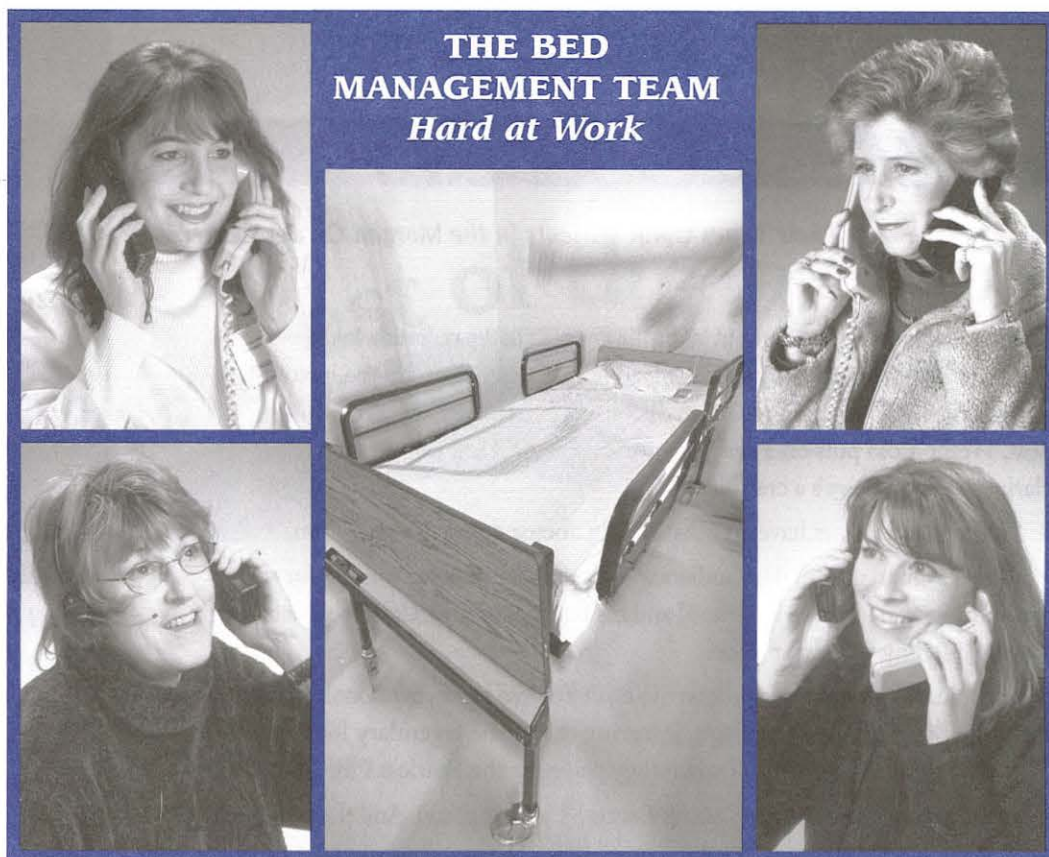
The census stays at 100 percent. Romano's staff—a nurse who arranges transfers from other hospitals to LVH and a registrar—are able to place patients, but with difficulty.

It takes creativity, persuasion and luck to serve doctors' offices, emergency department, surgeons and referring hospitals who want to admit patients, while being sensitive to the staff workload.

### Wednesday

Things get worse. The census at Cedar Crest this morning is 108 percent. All staffed beds are full—24 overflow beds are opened, and 12 patients are bedded in the 17<sup>th</sup> and CC emergency departments.

There won't be enough discharges to free up beds for new patients. Romano and her staff ask doctors if they can delay admitting patients and proceed to alpha-page nursing directors, physician chiefs, administrators and discharge planners to ask about pending and early discharges.



**THE BED MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
*Hard at Work*

*The bed management team members spend most of their time on the phone locating empty beds for incoming patients. They are (top-left, counterclockwise) Lisa Romano, R.N., Gillian Amey, Kim Rhoad and Julia Clelland, R.N.*

By 6 p.m., all patients are in beds. Of the 100 patients admitted, many stay in the ED for the night.

### Thursday

The trend continues. Romano and her staff repeat their actions from the day before, staying long into the evening. Despite having 24-7 coverage of nurses, it is necessary to schedule additional registrar staff to help place the 82 admissions.

### Friday

The day begins no better. Another overflow area is ready. Bed management continues discharging and admitting patients, trying to be considerate of the short-staffed units. Miraculously, beds begin to open up around 3 p.m., and three hours later, all patients have beds.

It's strangely quiet in the out-of-the-way space that is bed management. The staff breathes a huge collective sigh of relief and brace themselves for another challenging, but rewarding day tomorrow. ■

*by Rob Stevens*

## One-Size-Fits-All Works Wonders

**I**n her 20 years at LVHHN, Debra Peter, R.N.C., patient care specialist on 7B/7C at LVH-CC, has seen almost everything. But when she and her team saw a way to standardize equipment and save the network money at the same time, they jumped at the chance.

The team knew that sequential compression devices (SCDs) were essential for patients after surgery as a noninvasive way to help reduce blood clots in legs. The boots, or "sleeves," are attached to a pump that circulates air into the sleeve and around the leg. When put on a patient's leg, the sleeve inflates and deflates around the calf in a wave-like motion that helps to empty the veins and increase blood flow.

But having a variety of different sizes just didn't seem necessary. After all, the one-size-fits-all sleeve had been used effectively at LVH-CC since 1980. That's why Peter suggested using the one-size-fits-all sleeve at LVH-Muhlenberg instead of the small and medium sleeves.



*Debra Peter, R.N.C., 7B/7C (right), shows co-worker Susan Fackler, R.N., how the sequential compression devices inflate and deflate to help increase blood flow after surgery.*

To submit your ideas to Working Wonders, e-mail Jacqueline.Straley or call her at 484-884-4840.

### How Working Wonders Adds Up

**IDEA:** Standardizing one-size-fits all prophylaxis boots for reducing blood clots

**BY:** Debra Peter, R.N.C., Susan Fackler, R.N., Barbara Moyer, Sharon Rabuck, R.N.

**ANNUAL SAVINGS:** \$5,463

**AWARD AMOUNT:** \$313 each

The cost savings was significant. The one-size sleeve cost \$28 while the small and medium sleeves ran more than \$40 each. Because all sizes produced the same effect and it didn't matter to the patient which size was used, it seemed impractical not to use the most cost-effective size across the board.

"We shared our idea with the vascular clinical nurse specialist, nursing clinical experts from trauma, neurology and critical care, a vascular surgeon, nursing administrators, the products committee and the staff at both LVH-CC and LVH-Muhlenberg and were given the 'green light' to proceed," Peter said. "We also conducted literature reviews to find articles to support our idea and followed up with educating our physicians and staff members." ■

*by Leanne Strawn*



## Susan Gaspar, R.N., and Susan Schalk, R.N. ~ Hospice

THEY HELPED A PATIENT PASS WITH COMFORT AND DIGNITY

When Susan Gaspar, R.N., Lehigh Valley Hospice, received a referral on a patient at LVH-CC for an inpatient hospice admission, she knew what she had to do. It was customary for her to discuss the final wishes with her patients and their families, and because this patient had been brought in the night before with complications, she unfortunately knew the end was near.

The patient had undergone multiple surgeries in the past with a variety of problems and through counseling had decided not to pursue further treatment. His final wish and that of his family was to allow him to die at home.

After speaking with the patient's physician, Gaspar and fellow employee Susan Schalk, R.N.,

proceeded to make arrangements for home hospice services. An ambulance was scheduled to take her patient home that evening at 10 p.m., but Gaspar was concerned that might be too late because of his rapidly deteriorating condition. Determined to help her patient realize his last wish, Gaspar accompanied the couple home and got him settled comfortably in his own bed.

"The patient and his wife were extremely grateful for not only assistance in meeting the patient's dying wishes, but for the support provided to them in their time of need," said Kelly Minnich, inpatient hospice supervisor. "This is just one example of the care and compassion hospice provides to patients, while always maintaining their pride and dignity." ■



Susan Gaspar, R.N. (left), and Susan Schalk, R.N., of Hospice.

## Special Care at Home for Your Patients

**Don't you want your patients to be cared for by Service Stars?** When your patients need special care at home, Lehigh Valley Home Care and Hospice are ideal choices for a referral.

"Our Service Star winners are an example of how our staff go above and beyond to meet our patients' needs," said Ann Casterlin, vice president of Lehigh Valley Home Health Services. "The personalized care we provide is a natural transition from the excellent inpatient care at LVH-CC or LVH-Muhlenberg. It's part of the full service of caring for the whole person."

Hospice, which offers home care and inpatient care at LVH-17th & Chew, works with a team of physicians, nurses, chaplains, aides, volunteers and other staff to comfort patients and their families and help them deal with terminal illness.

Lehigh Valley Home Care helps people sustain their optimal health and independence through skilled nursing, physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, cancer care, heart care and more.

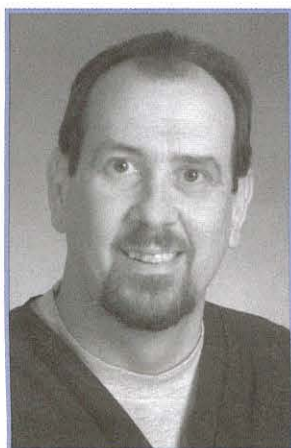
"We match our programs with the specialties of the hospital and continuously look at new, innovative and effective ways to provide care," Casterlin said. "In the world of shrinking reimbursement for health care, we're exploring telemedicine to enhance communication and increase contact between our patients and nurses." ■

To refer a patient to Lehigh Valley Home Care or Hospice, call 610-402-2166 or 1-888-217-2660.

## MARCH 2001 SERVICE STAR

### Paul Miller, R.R.T., Respiratory Care

HE MADE THE HOLIDAYS SPECIAL FOR A PARALYZED PATIENT



With five sons of his own, Paul Miller, respiratory therapist at LVH-CC, knows how exciting the

holidays can be. But for "Brian," one of his patients who is paralyzed and ventilator dependent, to be home on Christmas Eve with his family—even for an evening—was something special.

That's why Miller went out of his way to contact Helen Cherewaty, Health Spectrum of Lehigh Valley Home Health Services (LVHHS), for a van equipped with a wheelchair lift and tie-down system. He also arranged for Health Spectrum to deliver oxygen to Brian's home.

"He took this young man home last year, and it was really good for Brian who has been in a nursing

home for over a year. Miller wanted to make arrangements that would allow him to be with his family again this year," Cherewaty said.

With clearance from LVHHS, Miller made sure all of his patient's medical needs were met, preparing equipment and later riding in the van with him to Brian's home. Miller unselfishly spent Christmas Eve with Brian and his extended family.

"Paul was really giving his sons a wonderful example of sacrifice for others in the giving season," Cherewaty said. "On behalf of Brian and his family, I thank Paul for his selfless gift of time and caring."

"He not only took care of his patient's physical needs, but his emotional ones as well. I am proud to have him as a colleague in my profession." ■

by Leanne Strawn

### Congratulations to Feb./March Service Star Nominees:

Melissa Getz, nuclear medicine technologist, LVH-Muhlenberg

|               |               |              |                |                    |                   |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| CHILD         | Jessica Banks | Jamie Gordon | Linda Hoffman  | Stacy Ryan         | Kristen Suda      |
| CARE          | Nancy Dilcher | Janet Hart   | Coleen Neiffer | Beatris Rivas      | Kim Wechsler      |
| STAFF, LVH-CC | Heather Feese | Keary Hess   | Sue Nole       | Margaret Scheifele | Courtney Woodring |
|               | Tracey Grim   | Devon Hill   | Nikki Patten   | Angela Schwartz    |                   |

## A Closer Look: Corporate Compliance at LVHHN

### What does "corporate compliance" mean?

It refers to LVHHN's program of employee training and monitoring of activities governed by federal and state legislation. "It's the organization's commitment to do what is right," said Joseph Magee, director of internal audit.

### Why is compliance important at this time?

Regulators are stepping up efforts to ensure that health care institutions are "playing by the rules" to receive government reimbursement for patient care. "Just as parents want to be assured their children's tuition is spent on a reputable institution, the government wants to make certain that taxpayer funds are spent on quality care that is being rendered and appropriately billed," Magee said.

### What is included in LVHHN's corporate compliance program?

- ethical standards of behavior
- annual compliance training/education for employees
- monitor and audit of procedures
- a confidential compliance hotline for employees: 1-877-895-2905
- a compliance officer

"The program reinforces the need to keep employees better informed about the rules—ultimately, helping them to do their jobs better," Magee said.

### How does LVHHN benefit from a proactive compliance program?

"It demonstrates to the community a commitment to honesty and responsible corporate behavior, and provides early detection of problems before they

place LVHHN at greater financial risk," Magee said.

### Does corporate compliance matter to all activities at LVHHN?

Although it usually concentrates on medical records and billing, compliance is needed when government regulations or legal standards apply.

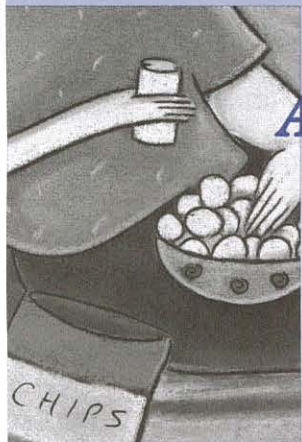
"Compliance requires the participation of every LVHHN employee," Magee said. "More staff in all areas are inquiring about whether certain activities are acceptable given complex regulations, and that's an indication our program is working." ■

by Mary Ann La Rock

LVHHN's Corporate Compliance Plan & Code of Ethical Behavior is in the administrative manual on the LVHHN Intranet, or call La Rock, LVHHN's compliance officer, at 610-402-1820.



# Get the Latest Issue of *Healthy You!*



## Are YOU eating under stress?

Learn how to change this potentially risky habit by reading about it in the March/April 2001 edition of *Healthy You*. Don't miss other topics such as:

- When Your Child Won't Behave
- New Treatments for Incontinence
- Do You Need a Second Opinion?
- Safe Snoozing
- Making Your Teen a Safe Driver

Call 610-402-CARE for your copy.

## LVHHN's New Physician Appointments



### J. Brian Straka, D.M.D.

#### DENTISTRY

Periodontics

Practice: Solo

Education & Residency:

Temple University School of Dentistry



### Philip M. Monteleone, M.D.

#### PEDIATRICS

Pediatric Subspecialties, Hematology/Medical Oncology

Practice: CHOP-Pediatric Hematology/Oncology

Education: Temple University School of Medicine

Residency: Medical College of Virginia

Fellowship: University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics

## Upcoming Events

Mark Your Calendar!

### ■ Weight Watchers at Work

LVH-Muhlenberg, starts **March 26**  
Mondays • 12:30 - 1:15 p.m.

2024 Lehigh St., starts **March 27**  
Tuesdays • 12:45 - 1:30 p.m.

17<sup>th</sup> & Chew, starts **March 27**  
Tuesdays • 5 - 5:45 p.m.

CC & I-78, starts **March 29**  
Thursdays • 5:30 - 6:15 p.m.

2166 S. 12th St., starts **March 30**  
Fridays • 11:15 a.m. - 12 p.m.

#### Registration deadline: **March 21**

Program minimums must be met for class to be held at separate locations. \$80 fee is reimbursed through Choice Plus; payable by check or cash only. Make checks payable to (please include location at which you will participate):

Healthy You Programs  
2166 S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Allentown, PA 18103

Check out the LVH and LVH-Muhlenberg Bulletin Board for program details!

### ■ An Evening of Artful Elegance

Friday, March 30

Preview: 6:30 p.m. • Auction: 7:30 p.m.

Brookside Country Club  
901 Willow Lane, Macungie

Cost: \$20/person, includes food, beverage and entertainment

Auction features 200 custom-framed watercolors, serigraphs, lithographs and etchings. A "Collector's Club Corner" features nationally and internationally known artists.

Call professional development, 610-402-1704.

### ■ Blood Donor Drive at LVH-CC

Thursday, April 19 • Morning hours TBA  
Monday, April 30 • 6 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

More than 63 donors gave blood at the February drive and received a free meal ticket, soda and chance to win a raffle ticket. *The need for blood never goes away!*

Call 610-402-8899 to schedule an appointment, or e-mail Kathleen.Mundt with questions. Look for more information on LVH List.

### ■ Spirit of Women

Women Mentoring Women:  
"Families" Helping "Families"

Tuesday, April 10 **Free!**  
5 - 9 p.m.

Muhlenberg College, Moyer Hall

Whatever your family dynamics, there are women like you who understand. Through interactive sessions, explore issues that women face as singles, parents, divorcees, widows, caregivers for parents and more. Get expert advice on how to rejuvenate yourself and make the most of your appearance while you're doing it all!

Call 610-402-CARE to register and learn more about Spirit of Women events.

### ■ The Annual "Take Our Children to Work Day"

Thursday, April 26

A continental breakfast and short program will be presented at the Cedar Crest and Muhlenberg sites.

Additional information and applications are available from the Professional Development and Outcome Studies office, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, John & Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center or by calling 610-402-1704.

### ■ Do You Have Problems Sleeping?

The new **Sleep Disorders Center** at LVH-Muhlenberg can help!

Appointments available Monday through Thursday evenings.

Medical Director: Jeffrey Gould, M.D.

Coordinator: Denise R. Schuler  
pulmonary function technician

Night-shift polysomnographic

technologists: Kenneth Sloyer

Donna Senko

(both licensed respiratory personnel)

Call 610-402-CARE for more information.



## SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to the following employees on their March 2001 service anniversaries! Thank you for your continuing service to Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network.

#### Twenty-Five Years of Service

Barbara A. Bandle  
Cardiac Cath Lab  
Erin M. Brazil  
Burn Unit  
Mary F. Cramsey  
Radiology-Diagnostic  
Stephanie Genovese  
Respiratory Therapy  
Ruth S. German  
Post Anesthesia Care Unit  
Linda K. Houck  
Family Health Center  
Robin E. Kostolsky  
Vascular Lab  
Charlene E. Miller  
Medical Practice Center  
Stephen Sabo  
Plant Engineering  
Patricia A. Skrovanek  
Medical Staff Services  
Cathleen P. Storyr  
Radiology Administration  
Judith A. Young  
7B Medical/Surgical Unit

#### Twenty Years of Service

Robyn Collins  
GICU  
Bonnie L. Colver  
Plant Engineering  
Paulette Kay  
5C Medical/Surgical Unit  
Joan Leicht  
Computerized Tomography  
Diane C. Piscitelli  
College Heights OB/GYN  
Kathy Roth  
5B Medical/Surgical Unit  
Jeanette Rudderow  
Home Dialysis  
Darin Sawka  
Sterile Processing  
Sandra Smith  
Transitional Open Heart Unit  
Janet Watson  
Patient Transport Services  
Maryjane L. Zanders  
Human Resources Administration  
Patricia E. Zocco  
Heart Station

#### Fifteen Years of Service

Deborah A. Angstadt  
Transitional Open Heart Unit  
Iva W. Campbell  
4C Medical/Surgical Unit  
M. Cynthia Cressman  
Diagnostic Radiology-Bath  
Pamela Fallstich  
Emergency Department  
Jyl Francis  
Labor & Delivery  
Kathleen M. Galicki  
3C Staging/Monitored Unit  
Wade Huber  
Sterile Processing-17  
Gerrienne M. Keiser  
Human Resources Administration  
Eileen E. Kulp  
Open Heart Unit  
Roseann J. Laudenslager  
Cancer Program  
Beryl Loch  
3C Staging/Monitored Unit  
Barry M. Mitchneck  
Clinical Nursing Program

Denise Melvin  
Radiation Therapy-Muhlenberg  
Peggy A. Pearson  
Pre-op Staging  
David W. Schad  
Medical Library  
Diane Semmel  
Heart Station  
Randall S. Shelly  
Master Facilities Administration  
Mary A. Weierbach  
Diagnostic Care Center  
Jacaline P. Wolf  
LVH-Muhlenberg Float Pool  
Cathy Yeager  
Patient Care Svcs.-4S

#### Ten Years of Service

James Anderson  
ASU-PACU/OR  
Terry E. Druckenmiller  
HSMP Allentown Patient Services  
Theresa R. Glase  
Operating Room

Elyse M. Kernan  
Kidney Acquisition  
Gregory G. Kile  
Managed Care-G&A  
Paula J. Klass  
Case Management  
Mark Paul  
Patient Care Svcs.-4S  
Mary Rearden  
LVPX IDX Ops  
Antoinette M. Seyler  
Dental Clinic  
Lynn M. Schaeffer  
Radiology  
Aaron M. Snyder  
Security  
Brian Stello, M.D.  
Family Health Center  
Kimberly A. Wechsler  
Day Care Center  
Heather H. Xanthopoulos  
Vascu/Interventional Radiology

#### Five Years of Service

Jessica Cope  
Homecare MSO Central Intake  
Raymond Daniels  
7C Medical/Surgical Unit  
Sheryl Hawk  
Marketing/Public Affairs  
Bonnie L. Keeler  
Group Health Claims G&A  
Susan J. Kennedy  
Group Health Claims G&A  
Gisela Leck  
Partial Hospitalization  
Keri L. Peters  
Transitional Trauma Unit  
Kevin R. Rau  
Security  
Jack Riepensell  
Courier Services  
Angela E. Schafer  
Home Care-Skilled Nursing  
Catherine M. Schilling  
LVPX Billing

If you have news or a story idea for **CheckUp This Month**, send your suggestion by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for publication in the following month to Elysia Bruchok, public affairs, 1770 Bathgate, using interoffice mail or e-mail. **CheckUp This Month** is an employee publication of Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network's public affairs department. For additional information, call 484-884-4819.

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