



LVHN WEEKLY

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

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



LVHN to Remain In Network With Aetna Effective Immediately

LVHN and Aetna have reached an agreement.

[Read more →](#)

Update: Sodexo to Provide Food & Nutrition Services at All LVHN Locations

The transition will include LVHN locations in Allentown, Bethlehem, Hazleton, Schuylkill, Pocono and Dickson City.

[Read more →](#)



How to Protect Yourself and Your Family From Flu, RSV and COVID-19

Health care experts warn of a “triple-demic” with a high number of COVID-19, flu and RSV cases happening simultaneously.

[Read more →](#)



LVHN Receives \$1 Million for O-Arm® Imaging Technology at LVH–Muhlenberg

State Sen. Pat Browne announces state funding to replace existing equipment.

[Read more →](#)



Time Clock Updates Complete at LVHN Locations in the Lehigh Valley

Learn how new features will make clocking in and out more convenient.

[Read more →](#)



Stay in Your Lane: Use Designated Parking at LVH–Cedar Crest

Parking in colleague lots helps us deliver a better experience to our patients and guests.

[Read more →](#)



LVH–Hazleton and Northeast Gastroenterology Will Provide Comprehensive Services

The enhanced relationship will provide patients in the Greater Hazleton area improved access to comprehensive GI care.

[Read more →](#)



Pocono Record Awards Lehigh Valley Health Network Best of the Best

Congratulations to our colleagues for this well-earned recognition.

[Read more →](#)



Lehigh Valley Health Network Helps Honor Veterans in Local Veterans Day Ceremony

LVHN, VHP and the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce honored veterans in a ceremony at LVH–Hecktown Oaks.

[Read more →](#)



Deck the Halls! Participate in LVHN's Wreath Decorating Contest

Join the fun this holiday season and decorate a wreath.

[Read more →](#)



Partners in Caring: We Make it Personal

See how LVH–Hazleton colleagues create a personalized experience for patients and guests.

[Read more →](#)



Partner of the Month Award – November 2022

On his way to work, Michael Padden stopped to help a 90-year-old woman in distress on the side of the road.

[Read more →](#)



Read About 2022 Friends of Nursing Award Recipients

Nurses from LVH–Cedar Crest, LVH–Pocono, LVH–Hazleton and the Children's Cancer Center go above and beyond.

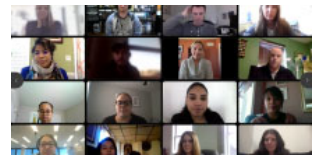
[Read more →](#)



Welcome New Colleagues Who Attended Connections Nov. 14

We have 196 new colleagues in the LVHN family.

[Read more →](#)



LVHN Physician Receives Federal Service Medal for Pandemic Response Actions

National Disaster Medical System recognizes Jonathan Goldner, DO, with COVID-19 Pandemic Civilian Service Medal.

[Read more →](#)



Crucial Conversations Classes Are Back

Sign up for a Crucial Conversations class now through organizational development.

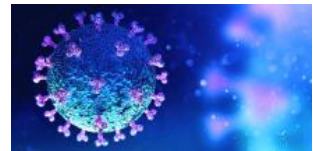
[Read more →](#)



Project ECHO: COVID-19 Therapeutics

Attend a presentation on Friday, Nov. 18, at noon.

[Read more →](#)



Gift Enhances Lehigh Valley Fleming Neuroscience Institute's Stimulation Program

LVHN Trustee Joel Hoffman's generosity will help patients with Parkinson's disease, other movement disorders.

[Read more →](#)



LVHN Offering Free Pediatric Flu Shot Clinics Throughout Region

Lehigh Valley Health Network has added additional pediatric flu shot clinics throughout the region.

[Read more →](#)



Considering Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids? Here's What You Should Know

Audiologist Jessica Jenkins, AuD, shares the pros and cons of these devices.

[Read more →](#)





LVHN to Remain In Network With Aetna Effective Immediately

LVHN and Aetna have reached an agreement.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, November 17, 2022

We are pleased to announce that LVHN, the region's leading health care network, and Aetna have reached an agreement that allows **Aetna patients to remain in network at LVHN**. The agreement is effective immediately.

Aetna is a critical partner to many health care networks, and we are happy to reach a good faith agreement that allows LVHN to continue providing the highest quality care to Aetna members.

We thank our patients for their understanding as LVHN and Aetna worked to resolve our differences. We appreciate Aetna's attention to the matter at the highest levels, allowing us to reach an agreement in the interest of the health and well-being of our community. LVHN looks forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with Aetna and to further enabling our patients' care at LVHN as we fulfill our mission to heal, comfort and care for our community.



Update: Sodexo to Provide Food & Nutrition Services at All LVHN Locations

The transition will include LVHN locations in Allentown, Bethlehem, Hazleton, Schuylkill, Pocono and Dickson City.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

**This message is from John Pierro,
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Lehigh Valley Health Network.**

Last week, we shared our decision to return to a partnership with Sodexo at our Lehigh Valley locations and continue discussion with Morrison in the north and northwest regions to evaluate a change in those regions. After further discussions and evaluation with Morrison, we have made the decision to transition to Sodexo network-wide at all LVHN locations.

LVHN colleagues who provide food & nutrition services at LVH–Hazleton, LVH–Schuylkill S. Jackson Street, LVH–Schuylkill E. Norwegian Street, LVH–Pocono and LVH–Dickson City will continue to be employed by LVHN. They will be managed by Sodexo.

Partners who provide food & nutrition services at LVH–Cedar Crest, LVH–17th Street, LVH–Muhlenberg, LVHN–Tilghman, LVH–Hecktown Oaks, LVHN–Mack Boulevard, LVH–Carbon, LVHN–1503 N. Cedar Crest and LVHN–Highland Avenue will be offered employment with Sodexo.

Sodexo will be onsite at all LVHN locations for the next four months understanding our patient population, culture and operations to propose the most comprehensive program, which will include the latest technology. During the transition, Sodexo will share information about changes in processes, procedures and services that will be implemented at all LVHN locations. The transition is anticipated to be complete in March 2023.

Crothall Healthcare, the partner who provides environmental services at LVHN, will continue to operate as is at all locations. Crothall partners will experience no changes.

Excellent care always matters at LVHN, and that includes giving colleagues, patients and guests the best possible experience at every touchpoint. Adding Sodexo as our network-wide food & nutrition services partner will help us achieve that goal. Thank you for embracing this opportunity and for all you do to deliver an unsurpassed experience.



How to Protect Yourself and Your Family From Flu, RSV and COVID-19

Health care experts warn of a “triple-demic” with a high number of COVID-19, flu and RSV cases happening simultaneously.

LVHN Insider

Monday, November 14, 2022

COVID-19 has been the dominant virus over the last two years with fewer cases of other respiratory illnesses such as the [flu](#) and [respiratory syncytial virus](#) (RSV). Many health care

experts say this year could be different and warn of a “triple-demic” with a high number of [COVID-19](#), flu and RSV cases happening at the same time.

Several Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) infectious diseases experts took to Facebook Live to answer your questions about a potential “triple-demic” and what you can do to protect yourself and your family from respiratory viruses this winter. Here are some of the main takeaways.

What’s behind the surge in respiratory viruses?

According to [Timothy Friel, MD](#), Chair, Department of Medicine, LVHN, the spike in respiratory illnesses is because of a lack of immunity within the community. “We’ve seen so few cases of influenza and RSV over the last few years that our ability to develop an immune response has gone away a little bit. Unfortunately, these viruses are back with a vengeance. We are seeing a higher number of RSV cases earlier than ever before,” he says.

COVID is still in the mix

Friel says that the good news about COVID-19 is that cases have continued to decline and almost everyone has some type of immunity against the virus. However, new variants are circulating which are causing an expected increase in cases as we head into the winter.

We could see the worst flu season in over a decade

Health care experts predict how the flu will impact North America by how the virus impacts Australia and other countries in the Southern Hemisphere. This year, those countries saw much higher numbers of flu cases and an increase in hospitalizations among those over 65 and children under 4.

RSV is affecting older children and adults

RSV is a common respiratory illness that generally affects children under the age of 2, however, pediatric infectious diseases physician [Tibisay Villalobos, MD](#), with Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital, says this year they are seeing older children as well. “We have been admitting children of all ages, mostly infants because they are most vulnerable, to the hospital. A lot of older children with health issues like asthma or developmental issues also are getting really sick,” she says.

How can you protect your children from RSV?

Villalobos says that the same precautions used to prevent transmission of COVID-19 can be used to prevent RSV. “Encourage children to wash their hands, use their own eating utensils, and of course if they are older to wear a mask to school if they have been sick,” she says.

Testing for flu and COVID is key

Friel says they would like testing to be front and center on people's minds. "We have very good, effective treatments for influenza and COVID-19 that can change the course of illness and reduce the likelihood of severe disease and hopefully keep people out of the hospital. This medication can only be used if people test," Friel says.

Virtual care options

Friel advises the best way to determine whether you need to test or further treatment is to schedule a virtual visit. "Virtual visits are the quickest and most convenient way to be seen while you're sick, while protecting others from your illness. Your doctor can advise whether any testing may be necessary," he says. [Virtual visits](#) can be scheduled through LVHN's secure patient portal [MyLVHN.org](#) or through the MyLVHN app.

Best way to prevent flu and COVID-19

While there are effective treatment options for the flu and COVID-19, Terry Burger, RN, Administrator for Infection Control and Prevention, LVHN, stresses the importance of preventive measures. "We do have effective vaccines for both flu and COVID. I strongly, strongly encourage people to run, not walk, to get both of those vaccines. They take two weeks to work, and we are already into the season," she says.

The LVHN "Tripledemic" Town Hall

Missed it live? [Watch it on Facebook](#).

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

Lehigh Valley Health Network Receives \$1 Million for O-Arm® Imaging Technology at LVH–Muhlenberg

State Sen. Pat Browne announces state funding to replace existing equipment

By Brian Downs
November 11, 2022



Pennsylvania State Sen. Pat Browne of Lehigh County, with his sister, pediatric surgeon Marybeth Browne, MD, Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital, and Brian A. Nester, DO, MBA, President and Chief Executive Officer, LVHN



Brian A. Nester, DO, MBA, President and Chief Executive Officer, LVHN, with Pennsylvania State Senator Pat Browne of Lehigh County, at LVH-Muhlenberg event



Pennsylvania State Sen. Pat Browne of Lehigh County speaks at news conference concerning O-Arm technology funding



Neurosurgeon Walter Jean, MD, with Lehigh Valley Fleming Neuroscience Institute, speaks about the role of O-Arm technology in spinal surgeries



News conference at LVH-Muhlenberg concerning funding announcement for O-Arm technology that is used during spinal surgeries

Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Browne of Lehigh County on Friday announced \$1 million in state funding to replace vital imaging equipment at [Lehigh Valley Hospital \(LVH\)–Muhlenberg](#).

The funds allowed Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) to purchase a new Medtronic O-Arm imaging device for use in minimally invasive spinal surgery. It replaces an older unit no longer in service.

Prior to surgery, the O-Arm takes a 360-degree scan of the spine, providing 3D images allowing the surgeon to have enhanced and precise visualization of a patient’s anatomy. This gives a surgeon the most accurate anatomical road map possible for the precision insertion of medical hardware such as screws and rods.

“Funding like this allows us to spread resources even further in all areas of care,” said [Brian A. Nester, DO](#), MBA, President and Chief Executive Officer, LVHN. “We appreciate the support of Senator Browne and the commonwealth for leading-edge technology that supports the great work of doctors, nurses and other health professionals across the state.”

“We are fortunate to have outstanding health care partners, like Lehigh Valley Health Network, in our region,” Browne said. “This project is a prime example of LVHN’s dedication to remaining on the leading edge of medical technology, which has translated into better outcomes for the patients they care for. I am proud to support their efforts in advancing the care options available to our residents.”

LVHN surgeons performed more than 2,000 spinal surgeries last fiscal year across the health network, including nearly 1,200 at LVH–Muhlenberg and [LVH–Cedar Crest](#), where O-Arm units are located. “O-Arm imaging is an essential part of our success and great patient outcomes,” Nester said.



Time Clock Updates Complete at LVHN Locations in the Lehigh Valley

Learn how new features will make clocking in and out more convenient.

LVHN Insider

Monday, November 14, 2022

Over the summer, work began to update API time and attendance time clocks at LVHN locations throughout the Lehigh Valley. Those updates are now complete and colleagues now have a more convenient way to clock in and out.

Use a mobile app to conveniently clock in and out

Small wireless systems known as API Beacons (pictured below) are now located near time clocks. The process for clocking in and out has not changed, but these devices allow colleagues who have the API symplr Workforce app installed on their phone or mobile device to clock in or out while they are within 10 feet of the API Beacon.



Using the mobile app to clock in and clock out is optional. If you choose to use the app, follow these steps:

- Download the app [using these directions](#).
 - Stand within 10 feet of the API Beacon.
 - Log in to your account. Turn on Bluetooth and locations settings.
-



Stay in Your Lane: Use Designated Parking at LVH–Cedar Crest

Parking in colleague lots helps us deliver a better experience to our patients and guests.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Providing the best experience for patients and guests includes offering a convenient place to park close to their destination. That is why colleagues, including those visiting from other LVHN locations, should only park in spots designated for colleagues at LVH–Cedar Crest.

Reference this map, which clearly labels parking lots for colleagues, as well as where physicians and residents can park. The map also marks designated parking spots for guests

Lot U/U2, Lot K, Lot B, Lot M, Lot J and levels 3, 4 and 5 in the 1250 parking deck are designated as “staff lots” and are reserved for colleagues. Two-hour parking is available on the

lower level of H parking deck for colleagues visiting LVH–Cedar Crest from other LVHN locations.



Shuttles are available at all staff lots from 6-10 a.m. and 2-8 p.m.

Barriers and chains are in place to block certain parking spots for safety reasons. Please do not move these barriers.

As a reminder, colleagues who do not observe parking rules will receive a warning the first time, after that a ticket and fine will be issued by the Salisbury Township Police Department. Colleagues who continually break parking rules will face disciplinary action.

Thank you for your cooperation and partnership to ensure patients and guests can easily find a parking spot and have the best possible experience at LVHN.



LVH–Hazleton and Northeast Gastroenterology Will Provide Comprehensive Services

The enhanced relationship will provide patients in the Greater Hazleton area improved access to comprehensive GI care.

LVHN Insider

Friday, November 11, 2022

LVH–Hazleton and Northeast Gastroenterology (NEGI)/Greater Hazleton Gastroenterology (GHG) announce an expanded affiliation which increases gastroenterology (GI) services to more patients in the Greater Hazleton area.

The enhanced relationship between LVH–Hazleton and NEGI will provide patients in the Greater Hazleton area improved access to comprehensive GI care, including procedures such as upper and

lower endoscopies, screening colonoscopies and management of GI conditions by board-certified GI physicians.

NEGI/GHG, a well-established gastroenterology practice and ambulatory surgery clinic, was opened three decades ago by Young-Kul Yoo, MD. A highly respected physician in our community and longstanding member of the LVH–Hazleton medical staff, Yoo is proud to be joined in practice by his son, Joseph Yoo, MD, and daughter-in-law Linda Yan, MD. All three doctors are board-certified and fellowship trained in gastroenterology.

“This collaboration strengthens our relationship with a tremendous GI team, which has provided exceptional specialty inpatient and outpatient care to LVH–Hazleton patients for many years,” says Terrence Purcell, President, LVHN Northwest Region and LVH–Hazleton. “Working together, we hope to provide greater ease and access to comprehensive GI care in the Greater Hazleton community.”

The expanded affiliation also will establish consistent service and quality care, enhance the efficient, effective and economic delivery of GI care, provide for uninterrupted 24/7 GI coverage, provide for more timely access to diagnosis and treatment through efficient scheduling and staffing of procedures and services, and improve the coordination of GI services with other services of LVH–Hazleton.

“Our team of highly skilled gastroenterologists and clinical and support staff welcomes this collaboration and opportunity to be the exclusive provider of GI services to LVH–Hazleton,” says Young-Kul Yoo. “We have been serving residents of our community with expert medical care for 30 years and look forward to this collaboration with LVH–Hazleton to provide even more access to lifesaving screenings and treatments.”

Young-Kul Yoo received his Doctor of Medicine at Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea, and completed his residency training in internal medicine at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio. His fellowship training in gastroenterology was completed at University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Young-Kul Yoo, MD, is certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Joseph Yoo received his undergraduate degree from Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pa., and his Doctor of Medicine at Temple University School of Medicine, Philadelphia. He completed both his residency in internal medicine and fellowship in gastroenterology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia. Joseph Yoo, MD, is certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Yan received her undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State University, State College, and her Doctor of Medicine from the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University. She also completed her residency training in internal medicine and fellowship in gastroenterology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. Yan is certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

NEGI/GHG is currently taking new appointments and is accepting insured, uninsured and medical assistance patients.



Pocono Record Awards Lehigh Valley Health Network Best of the Best

Congratulations to our colleagues for this well-earned recognition.

LVHN Insider

Friday, November 11, 2022

Congratulations to our colleagues in the Pocono region for being named the Pocono Record's Best of the Best in the following categories:

- Best Pediatrician: Sushil Mody, MD, LVPG Pediatrics–East Stroudsburg
- Best Cosmetic/Plastic Surgeon: Charles K. Herman, MD, LVPG Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
- Best Hospice: Monroe County Hospice House

Our colleagues work hard to deliver the high-quality care our patients expect and deserve, so this recognition is well-earned. Thank you to everyone who voted.

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

Lehigh Valley Health Network Helps Honor Veterans in Local Veterans Day Ceremony

By Hannah Ropp
November 14, 2022





Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), Valley Health Partners (VHP) and the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce honored veterans throughout the community in a ceremony at [Lehigh Valley Hospital \(LVH\)–Hecktown Oaks](#). During the event, nearly 50 veterans were recognized for their military service.

Speakers included [Brian A. Nester, DO, MBA](#), LVHN President and Chief Executive Officer, [Lou Puentes, President](#), LVH–Hecktown Oaks, [Tony Iannelli, President and CEO](#), Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, and [Veronica Gonzalez, CEO, VHP](#). The Easton Area High School marching band also performed.

[An expression of gratitude](#)

Gratitude was the theme of the event as speakers expressed their thanks and admiration for those who served in the military. Nester also reflected on his seven years as a member of the National Guard. “While my contributions were limited, I had the chance to meet some wonderful veterans, mostly from Vietnam. They have really impacted my life and how I have thought about medicine and our country. It was a wonderful experience,” Nester says.

Nester also spoke about the difference veterans continue to make once they bring their skills back to our community and recognized the 200 veterans currently employed at LVHN. “These are doctors and nurses and other health care professionals who are doing marvelous things every single day, and we are proud to have them,” he says.

In addition to expressing gratitude, Nester also spoke of the importance of providing veterans with quality health care that is suited to their needs. He also commended Valley Health Partners for helping veterans navigate the health care system and making sure veterans receive the care they deserve.

[A token of appreciation](#)

The program concluded with a token of appreciation to all veterans in attendance. Marine Corps veteran and chairman of the Veterans & Military Council of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, Andrew Lawler, presented each veteran with a VHP challenge coin.

He explained the challenge coin is a small coin or medallion that is military in nature bearing an organization's insignia or emblem and carried by the organization's members. While in practice they are usually presented by commanders for a special achievement, they also can be given for membership or contribution to an organization.



Deck the Halls! Participate in LVHN's Wreath Decorating Contest

Join the fun this holiday season and decorate a wreath.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

All LVHN departments are invited to participate in a network-wide wreath decorating contest this holiday season. To participate, simply put together a wreath using any safe materials you wish. Because there is no overall theme, be sure to make it personal – choose a theme or design that is meaningful to your department and create a design that is 100% unique. Remember to keep it family-friendly.

After your wreath is assembled, take a photo and email to Lisa Marie Halecky, Community and Media Relations Manager at LVH–Hazleton, at lisamarie_e.halecky@lvhn.org with the subject line “Wreath Decorating Contest.” Include the name of your department and location in your message so each wreath can be properly attributed.

Please have your wreath created and submitted by Dec. 9 for judging. All colleagues will have the opportunity to vote Dec. 16-23. The link to vote will be distributed Dec. 9. The top three departments will be selected and announced on Dec. 29. Images of the winning wreaths will also be shared on LVHN Insider and social media.

Happy decorating and good luck!

Partners in Caring: We Make it Personal

See how LVH–Hazleton colleagues create a personalized experience for patients and guests.

by LVHN Insider
Published 19 hours ago

<https://youtu.be/UxdsHlThukw>



Partner of the Month Award – November 2022

On his way to work, Michael Padden stopped to help a 90-year-old woman in distress on the side of the road.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, November 17, 2022

Michael Padden, Patient Care Coordinator, Operating Room, LVH–Cedar Crest

Michael Padden’s ability to “look and listen” saved an elderly woman in distress. While driving to work, Padden noticed the woman lying on the side of the road. He immediately pulled over to help. He parked his truck on the side of the road and stopped traffic to shield the woman from oncoming vehicles. She told him she was 90 years old and without a driver’s license. That’s why she was walking to the store, which was about three miles away. On her way, she lost her footing and fell, hitting her head and injuring herself. On top of that, she wasn’t dressed warmly for the chilly weather. Padden called 911 and stayed by the woman’s side until an ambulance arrived. “Michael demonstrated compassion for this helpless elderly woman, and instead of passing this opportunity by, he took the time to care for and protect this individual. He truly went above and beyond to ensure her safety,” says nominator Kathleen Law. “This is a fine example of an LVHN colleague, a true Partner in Caring, who also provided care and compassion to our community.”

Next Steps

Nominate a Partner of the Month.

Congratulate these Proud Partners Award recipients.

Megaly Muniz, Patient Transport, LVH–Muhlenberg

Muniz overheard a colleague choking on her lunch. Experiencing trouble breathing, the colleague began to panic. Muniz and a physician ushered her to the emergency department. Muniz collected her personal belongings and checked on her several times before leaving for the day. Muniz kept her cool during a very stressful situation while doing everything she could to prevent a worst-case scenario.

Robin Christman, Care Manager, Remote Patient Monitoring

Christman was working with a patient who was renting a single room and unable to afford food, medication or transportation. The patient often walked to a local shelter to eat. Christman reached out to several population health service organizations, securing much-needed assistance for this patient. Using a food delivery service and her own money, Christman had healthy meals delivered to the patient for one week.

Marysue Rother, RN, Care Navigator, Payor Based Care Coordination

Rother was working with a patient with serious heart problems. During one of the patient's hospital stays, Rother discovered he was not taking his medication because he couldn't afford it. Rother called the pharmacy to determine the total out-of-pocket cost for all 13 necessary drugs. She then tapped into the department's charity fund to get the medication paid for until a long-term solution could be put in place. Rother's diligent effort ensured this patient got life-saving treatment during his most vulnerable time.

Warren Furry Jr., Patient Care Coordinator, NICU, LVH–Cedar Crest

When a mom inadvertently left her breastmilk behind in the NICU, Furry went above and beyond to make sure she received it in a timely manner. The mom lived 90 miles away and could not pick it up in person. With the help of Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital President Anne Baum, Furry packaged three cartons of frozen breastmilk and sent it home to this very grateful, busy mom.

Kevin Cowell, DO, LVPG Family Medicine–Hecktown Oaks

When the department underwent staffing changes, Cowell made himself available to our patients whenever and wherever he was needed. He even made a house call to a homebound patient who lived several miles away. This extra effort ensured a seriously ill patient got the best possible in-person care. The patient and family were exceedingly grateful for his personal, caring touch.

Christine Lanasa, RN, Health Coach/BeneQUIT Specialist

Lanasa has a passion for helping colleagues reach their wellness goals. In her role, she motivates people to prioritize their health. Her positive, can-do spirit has helped hundreds of colleagues to manage stress, lose weight and increase physical activity. She leads the BeneQUIT tobacco cessation program and has been successful in helping colleagues quit tobacco use once and for all. She offers encouragement throughout the process, which includes connecting daily with colleagues to check on their progress.

Elizabeth “Betsie” Lewis, Administrative Partner, Emergency Department, LVH–Pocono

From providing an extra blanket to pointing guests in the right direction, Lewis goes the extra mile for our community. When a patient from behavioral health was in the emergency department for an extended period, Lewis made sure the patient was treated with compassion and respect. She

kept the patient in clean clothes and treated the visiting family members like her own. Lewis turned a very tense situation into a positive experience for the patient and family.

Read About 2022 Friends of Nursing Award Recipients

Nurses from LVH–Cedar Crest, LVH–Pocono, LVH–Hazleton and the Children’s Cancer Center go above and beyond.

LVHN Insider

Friday, November 11, 2022

Friends of Nursing recognizes and promotes excellence in nursing practice, nursing education and nursing research. On Sept. 28, colleagues gathered at the annual Friends of Nursing Awards Gala to hear stories of strength, honor award recipients and reflect on the incredible impact our nurses make each day.

Meet the colleagues recognized during this year’s celebration and follow the [nursing channel on LVHN Insider](#) for more stories of Friends of Nursing award recipients.



Alisa Circosta, RN, 6K, LVH–Cedar Crest

The Legal Services/Risk Management Award for Exemplary Care and Professionalism in a Critical and Challenging Situation

Donated by: Attorney and Mrs. Glenn Guanowsky

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged patient care services colleagues and tested their clinical skills, professionalism and compassion in unimaginable ways. It takes a special health care professional to navigate these difficult situations and Alisa Circosta, RN, provided exceptional care in a difficult situation. Alisa worked with LVHN’s legal services and risk management teams to manage the complex care of a patient who was nearing the end of life. She sought advice to help manage family dynamics and ensured her patient was able to pass away with peace and dignity. Circosta’s colleagues respect her and regard her as a leader, resource and friend.



Janell Souder, RN, 5K, LVH–Cedar Crest

The Medical-Surgical Nursing Award

Donated by: Frances R. Worman, RN

Janell Souder, RN, is a staunch supporter of professional excellence and nurse engagement. Janelle is an active member of multiple LVHN committees. She proudly serves as co-chair of the PRIME committee and is always seeking opportunities to help her peers elevate their professional status. Souder often serves in the role of charge RN and preceptor on 5K. Colleagues appreciate her passion for exceptional nursing, commitment to patient care and dedication to her 5K family. Janell also serves on the RN Engagement and RN Advisory network committees. She ensures colleagues are aware of the latest updates and empowers them with the information they need to feel supported. Janell is a great role model for nursing students as she exemplifies true commitment to Magnet® initiatives and LVHN's core values of collaboration, compassion, integrity and excellence.



Sandra Gentile, Cancer Center Infusion, LVH–Pocono

The Edward and Anne Davis Award for Excellence as a Nurse Preceptor

Donated by: Mr. Edward and Mrs. Anne Davis, M.Ed., BS, RN

While the infusion unit at LVH–Pocono Cancer Center has experienced much growth in recent years, the one constant has been the calming, empathetic presence Sandra Gentile, RN. In her role as a preceptor for new nurses, she finds every opportunity to develop orientees. Colleagues say Gentile provides supervision and guidance without hovering. She often requests to be paired with

nurses after they complete orientation so she can serve as a “guide on the side,” developing confidence in every novice nurse.



Rachel Barletta-Scarcella, RN, Patient Care Services, LVH–Hazleton

The Fleming Award for Exemplary Performance Associated with the Nurse Residency Program

Donated by: The Fleming Trust established by Richard and Peggy Fleming

Rachel Barletta-Scarcella, RN, has supported LVHN’s Nurse Residency Program in her role as a Professional Development Specialist and through her work as a Patient Care Specialist at LVH–Hazleton campus. Rachel has facilitated several evidence-based practice projects for the nurse residency program and guides each nurse resident to assure they have the resources and support to ensure success.

“My most important role is to give nurse residents more confidence at the bedside,” says Barletta-Scarcella. “I help new nurses integrate the best evidence into patient care.



Eileen Wasson, RN, TNICU, LVH–Cedar Crest

The Josephine Ritz, RN, Nursing Award for Excellence in Patient and Family Engagement

Donated by: The Josephine Mitchell Ritz Endowment Fund

Eileen Wasson, RN, demonstrates her commitment to patients and families in many ways at LVHN. Wasson has co-authored several children’s books to teach young children about hospitals,

doctors and nurses. She participates in the American Academy of Critical Care Nurses Clinical Scene Investigator Academy, developing evidence-based care for patients with delirium.

Wasson also chairs unit-based committees and has been nominated numerous times for a DAISY award, which demonstrates a deep connection between Wasson and her patients and families.

“After you meet Eileen, she is impossible to forget,” says a family member of a patient under Wasson’s care.



Kimberly Zayas, RN, Children’s Cancer Center

The M.G. Asnani, MD, Award for Excellence in Pediatric Nursing

Donated by: The Michelle Asnani, MD, Endowment, established by Mr. Gul Asani

Kimberly Zayas, RN, is a champion for the nursing profession. She is an active member of the network Professional Excellence Council. In this role, she leads committee initiatives and supports network volunteer efforts. Zayas worked with leaders to prepare stories for Magnet surveyors during Lehigh Valley Hospital’s fifth Magnet redesignation site visit. She takes pride in her numerous contributions to professional nursing practice and was the first of her department to pursue PRIME recognition. She has been instrumental in helping her unit obtain resources for Certified Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurse certification and has succeeded in mentoring her unit to achieve a 100% specialty certification rate.



Welcome New Colleagues Who Attended Connections Nov. 14

We have 196 new colleagues in the LVHN family.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

Sandra Abouafech, LVPG Neurology - 1250 Cedar Crest

Jennifer Acevedo, Rehab Svcs at LVH-M

Yanice Acevedo, LVPG Endocrinology 1243CC

Sarah Aladin, PCS Observation Support

Lynetchie Alexis, Emergency Room - Norwegian

Ivan Alvarado, 5K Medical/Surgical Unit

Gabrielle Alvira, Ed Registration

Adrian Anatalio, LVH Rehab Cetronia Rd

Urcinia Arias, Nursing Float Pool

Alyssa Arnone, Radiology-Diagnostic - Cc

Jiselle Aviles, 5K Medical/Surgical Unit

Miykal Baldeo, Registration

Jessica Balletta, Psych Eval/OP Services

Alexis Barker, LVPG-H ORTHOPEDICS - HWC

Alex-Zee Barry, LVPG OB/GYN Pond Road

Brandon Bencal, Hazleton EMS Operations

Andrew Berner, LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine - Muhlenberg

Lisa Bisbing, Emergency Department Carbon

Memduha Bobiak, 6B Medical/Surgical Unit

Ryan Bosch, CT Scan

Francis Braconaro, LVPG-L IM Carbon County

Rebecca Brenner, Population Health

Andrew Bresnan, Clinical Service Video Monitor

Angela Brill, Operating Room

Stefany Brito Silvestre, LVPG Family Med Emmaus

Koryn Brown, Precertification Dept

Alison Bruce, LVPG - Trauma Surgery Muhlenberg

Christian Buddle, Patient Transport Services

Kiara Bueno Morillo, LVPG OB/GYN 1245SCC

Katie Capelli, Patient Transport Services

Nicole Carrasquillo, Tech Aide Float
Lori Catanzaro, LV Orthopedic Institute
Yvonne Chapoloko, Nursing Float Pool
Mollee Chorba, LVPG-H PEDIATRICS - BROAD ST
Nicole Clavell, Patient Access Center
Kaitlyn Coiro, IRF CC Therapy
Alison Collado Estevez, Clinical Service Video Monitor
Kenneth Collins, Av & Media Services
Alice Confer, LVPG-L Ortho Hausman Rd
Ann Marie Coombe, LVPG Family Med Emmaus
Kelsey Coughlin, LVPG Urology
Joanne Cui, MHC INPATIENT PSYCHIATRY
Sherri Czankner, STERILE PROCESSING
Anna Dailey, Float Nursing
Betsy Daly, Healthworks Allentown
Katrina Davidow, LVPG-L Express Care Pennsburg
Margarita De Leon, Accounts Payable
Marika Desanctis, Rehab at Arena
Ileen Diaz, Dietary
Christopher Dickert, 5B TRANSITIONAL TRAUMA UNIT
Dondeana Dickey, ICU
Heather Diehl, Primary Care Addiction Med Hub
Jessica DiFranco, Ed Registration
Laura Dohm, LVPG Cardiology - Muhlenberg
Christina Dougherty, 6KS Inpatient Rehab Facility
Kyrstin Duffield, LVPG ENT Muhlenberg
Hailieann Duffy, LVPG Cardiology Muhl
Lanchi Duong, LVPG-L Hospital Medicine - Hecktown Oaks
Susan Eaton, 5B TRANSITIONAL TRAUMA UNIT
Eric Erickson, Social Services
Shannon Fenstermacher, 5K Medical/Surgical Unit

Andrew Ferdock, Dept. Of Emergency Medicine
Gemma Fozzard, Patient Access Center
Amber Fuschetto, Psych Rehab and Case Mgmt
Jennifer Gabriesheski, LVPG-L Admin Steamtown
Brooke Gasper, Rehab Svcs at LVH-M
Valerie Gearl, LVPG-P NPPM Primary Care
Parveen Gill, Psych Eval/OP Services
Kelsey Glennen, VHP Practice Engagement
Semyon Glukhoy, LVAS LVH - Cedar Crest
Patricia Gonzalez, LVPG Family Med Moselem Spring
Lydia Gordon, Patient Transport Services
Danielle Green, LVPS 17th
Margie Grube, Home Care - Skilled Nursing
David Gudishvili, LVAS LVH - Cedar Crest
Melanie Hann, Registration
Elizabeth Haring, Bed Management
Techla Harrison, Grounds / Housekeeping
Tonya Helton, OutPt Reg Float Pool East
Ashley Henritzzy, Cat Scanning
Yazmarie Hernandez-Vazquez, Clinical Services Observation
Gabriella Hivner, Rehab Services Acute Care
Mary Hontz, Upper Bucks Health & Diagnostic
Laura Horodyski, LVPG Urology-Steamtown
Michelle Ibarra, Patient Access Ctr Scheduling
Mallary Ide, LVPG-L Clinical Imaging
Maria Inman, Grounds / Housekeeping
Omar Inman, Grounds / Housekeeping
Denisette Irizarry, Dept. Of Emergency Medicine
Kalin Jackson, BH 1
Heather Jobrey, Housekeeping
Sienna Jones, CT Scan

Guillermo Juarez, PEC-MSK Service Line Sched
Neil Khare, EMERGENCY MEDICINE HAZLETON
Jean Kirk, Strategic Operations
David Klepacki, SECURITY
Kristin Konapelsky, Cancer Ctr Multi-Purpose Area
Shelby Krauss, LVPG Family Med/Peds Hamburg
Mariah Kuhn, Patient Access Center
Nitin Kumar, LVPG-H PEDIATRICS - BROAD ST
Victoria Laird, LVH-CH OPERATING ROOM ALLEN
Ralph Landis, Courier Services
Deanna Laureti, Mother Baby Unit
Katrina Lepre, LVPG-L Breast Care - Steamtown
Noah Lockwood, SPORTS PERF-2030 HIGHLAND
Amy Lomerson, LVPG-L Allergy Steamtown
Brienne Maluda, LVPG Obstetrics and Gynecology - Pond Road
Helen Marino, Patient Access Center
Destiny Matias, Esu Health Services
Jonathan Mcbreen, LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine - Cedar Crest
Makenzie Mcneal, 7K Orthopedics
Hope Meixell, Human Resources Administration
Courtney Melvin, IRF LVH-M
Pat Merkel, Stress Lab Hwc
Gregory Mertz, Fac Mgmt - LVH-Muhlenberg
Shaina Middleton, LVPG-P Pediatrics-E Stroudsbur
Christine Mills, LVHP Acute Care Therapy
Johnnay Mims, PCS Observation Support
Emely Minaya, LVPS 17th
Dionicia Mitchell, LVPG Urology
Gerard Moore. Jr, Cat Scanning
Barbara Morrison, School Of Nursing
Haylee Muller, Radiology-Diagnostic - Cc

Valencia Murphy, 6B Medical/Surgical Unit
Valencia Murphy, 6B Medical/Surgical Unit
Karen Neely, Psych Rehab and Case Mgmt
Katherine Novak, LVPF Family Med Moselem Spring
Alysson Oberwanowicz, LVPF-P Obstetrics and Gynecology
Kaylyn Okken, LVPF PEDIATRIC EXPRESS CARE - PALMER
Stephanie Oyola, LVPF Urology
Meeta Pancholi, LVPF-S Orthopedics and Sports Medicine-Mauch Chunk Street
Hernani Pantinople, LVHP Acute Care Therapy
Lori Pavlick, Hematology Oncology Clinic -CC
Jodi Pennick, 6C Medical/Surgical Unit
LAURE PIERRE, 6T Med/Surg
Ashley Polanco Roa, Nursing Float Pool
Joanna Quizhpi, CC Outpatient Registration
Corinna Rancourt, LVPF-S S Fam Med Schuyl Med Pl
Emilia Redmond, CT
Timothy Reitz, LVPF-L Urology Steamtown
Denene Richardson, 6KS Inpatient Rehab Facility
Hanna Roberts, LVPF Family Med 3080HAMIL
Elizabeth Rodriguez, 7B Medical Surgical Unit
Leonard Rollins, Risk Adjustment Coding
Steven Romero Sr, Emergency Department
Christy Rosa, LVPF OB/GYN 17th St
Kayla Rosica, Ip Rehab Facility
Sally Ryder, Employee Health Service
Yanelle Santana, Float Pool
Abigail Santiago, LVPF Plastic Csmte Surg1243SCC
Courtney Schwartz, Patient Access Center
Erin Sebia, Payroll
Thomas Shearn, Emergency Room - Norwegian
Kendall Shelly, Inpt Rehab SVC-CC

Hailie Shertzer, ED PROVIDERS

Nancy Signorovitch, Emergency Dept Registration

Samantha Singh, Patient Accounting

Andrew Sion, LVPG-L Ortho 1621CC

Christina Snyder, Employee Assistance Program

Crystal Snyder, Emergency Department Carbon

Ralph Snyder, Security

Tracy Snyder, EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Christopher Snyder, LVPG-L Orthopedics - 1621 Cedar Crest

Gary Ernest Snyder Jr., EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Parish Spradley, Tech Aide Float

Megan Steele, CC Outpatient Registration

Heather Stoddard, LVPG-L ENT Steamtown

Tammy Straub, Perioperative Services

Jessica Stubbs, LVPG-P Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery - Pocono

Jacqueline Suarez, LVPG-L Express Care Airport Rd

Hannah Supplee, ED PROVIDERS

Desiree Swiatkowski, 2B (PCU)

Paul Tanski, Grounds / Housekeeping

Dante Terry, Info Svcs Customer Service

Santy Thomas, LVPG OB/GYN Valley Ctr Pkwy

Claudine Titus, LVPG PulmonaryCritCare Med1250

Shannon Trout, Payor Based Care Cordination

Chidimma Udeh, IRF LVH-M

Brittany Valdez, Patient Access Center

Liliana Vargas, Dietary

Brianna Vasquez, LVPG Fam Med/Peds Cetronia Rd

Desteny Vazquez, Pharmacy

Leswin Vera, 3A IPCU

Mona Viramgama, Pharmacy

Taisha Walker Franqui, LVPG Peripheral Vascular Sur

Natasha Wassum, Neuroscience
Meghan Weber, LVPG Physiatry Muhl
Lisa Whitehead, PACU
Mackenzie Wilkin, Physical Therapy Hwc
Kay Wilkinson, Neonatal ICU
Deshonia Williams, Emergency Service - CC
Melissa Withelder, MRI - Carbon
Erika Zamudio, Housekeeping
Stacy Zaslow, Women's Specialty Float Pool
Shelley Zell, LVPG Family Med Emmaus
Kayla Zona, Med Surg 1B

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

LVHN Physician Receives Federal Service Medal for Actions in Nation's Pandemic Response

National Disaster Medical System recognizes Jonathan Goldner, DO, with COVID-19 Pandemic Civilian Service Medal

By Carmella Mataloni
November 8, 2022



[Jonathan Goldner, DO](#), Associate Chief Medical Officer at [Lehigh Valley Hospital \(LVH\)–Pocono](#), has been awarded the Federal COVID-19 Pandemic Civilian Service Medal for his exemplary service to the nation as part of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) during the federal medical response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Goldner is a medical officer for NDMS, which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services. The federal program supports communities with medical care during disasters or public health emergencies at the request of states.

The medal is awarded under the authority of the U.S. Surgeon General to civilians who deployed for 30 consecutive or 60 cumulative days to provide medical care. During the recent NDMS Training Summit in Indianapolis, Goldner was recognized for his selfless commitment to public health.

“I thought I had seen it all until COVID-19 came into our world,” Goldner said. “My experience with the virus started on March 9, 2020, as a member of the NDMS. I was deployed to California, where the cruise ship Grand Princess docked for two weeks in Oakland. Initially, we had been told there were just 21 patients. The reality was there were hundreds. I spent two weeks in full isolation gear, and it became obvious our world had changed.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic strained our country’s health care system and medical personnel for almost three years,” said NDMS Director Michael Smith. “Dr. Goldner and his NDMS colleagues served as a lifeline to hundreds of hospitals and long-term care facilities by providing temporary relief to staff, adding bed capacity, and improving outcomes for COVID-19 patients. This medal is reflective of his selfless commitment to the public health and medical needs of our residents.”

Goldner has been a medical officer with the NDMS since 2014 and has held key physician leadership roles at LVH–Pocono.

Most recently, Goldner was named Chief Medical Officer of LVH–Pocono, which took effect Nov. 1, 2022.

In addition to his many accolades, Goldner has authored articles and is a co-author for the current Society of Critical Care Medicine Guidelines for Admission, Discharge and Triage in Critical Care Units, and has received numerous awards.



Crucial Conversations Classes Are Back

Sign up for a Crucial Conversations class now through organizational development.

Brianna Mccauley

Monday, November 14, 2022

Relationships are strengthened over time, but it only takes a moment to wound them. Crucial Conversations provides tools to help us carefully navigate those defining moments that shape our lives and relationships.

What makes a conversation crucial? It is when the stakes are high, opinions vary and emotions run strong. This session provides an understanding of the critical concepts and skills which help in respectfully and successfully steering tense conversations. Discover and practice these skills to turn stressful situations into positive moments.

Please use the links below to sign up for a session!

Tuesday, Dec. 6, 10:-11:30 a.m., Webex, register [HERE](#)

Wednesday, Jan. 11, 10-11:30 a.m., LVHN-Winchester Road, 4th floor, register [HERE](#)

Thursday, Feb., 16, 10-11:30 a.m., Webex, register [HERE](#)

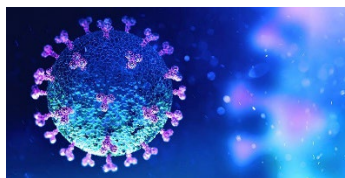
Monday, March 6, 10-11:30 a.m., Webex, register [HERE](#)

Wednesday, April 5, 10-11:30 a.m., Webex, register [HERE](#)

Wednesday, May 10, 1011:30 a.m., Webex, register [HERE](#)

Thursday, June 22, 10-11:30 a.m., Webex, register [HERE](#)

Make sure to visit the organizational development intranet [site](#) for resources to support your growth and development.



Project ECHO: COVID-19 Therapeutics

Attend a presentation on Friday, Nov. 18, at noon.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, November 10, 2022

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

Join us for COVID-19 Therapeutics presented by Amy Slenker, MD.

When: Friday, Nov. 18, at noon.

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

Register using this link: <https://redcap.lvh.com/redcap/surveys/?s=3EXNXECK9>

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

1. Recognize which patients meet criteria for outpatient COVID-19 treatment.
2. Describe the outpatient treatment options available for COVID-19 patients.
3. Discuss common prescribing questions about outpatient COVID-19 treatments.

Participants are encouraged to submit questions in advance regarding COVID-19 therapeutics by emailing Tara Fritch at tara.fritch@lvhn.org or Michelle Haughney at michelle.haughney@lvhn.org.

All patient information submitted should be de-identified for HIPAA compliance.

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

Gift Enhances Lehigh Valley Fleming Neuroscience Institute's Deep Brain Stimulation Program

LVHN Trustee Joel Hoffman's generosity will help patients with Parkinson's disease, other movement disorders

By Jamie Stover
November 16, 2022



A substantial gift from Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) Board of Trustees member Joel Hoffman will help LVHN grow its deep brain stimulation program and expand comprehensive neurological and neurosurgical care for the treatment of movement disorders, including Parkinson's disease.

In recognition of his gift, the deep brain stimulation program at Lehigh Valley Fleming Neuroscience Institute has been named the Hoffman Family Deep Brain Stimulation Program.

Hoffman, an Allentown native and Dieruff High School and Temple University graduate, has been an LVHN trustee since 2019. He is a retired senior vice president and chief analytics officer for Optum, a pharmacy benefit manager and health care provider, part of UnitedHealth Group.

Hoffman's gift will allow LVHN to enhance its program in several ways, including the provision of a dedicated nursing resource to provide navigation services to seamlessly guide patients through world-class movement disorders care. The gift also will support a clinical research coordinator and allow for new equipment and technology, staff education, and more – all to assist patients enrolled in the Deep Brain Stimulation Program.

“Joel's selfless generosity will elevate LVHN's Deep Brain Stimulation Program and allow us to provide even more comprehensive care for those with Parkinson's disease as well as other conditions, including essential tremor and dystonia,” said [Steven Lewis, MD](#), Physician-in-Chief of [Lehigh Valley Fleming Neuroscience Institute](#) and Chief of Neurology at LVHN.

Hoffman, who has Parkinson's disease, benefitted from deep brain stimulation he received in Phoenix about five years ago and said it “truly dialed back the clock” on his symptoms.

“LVHN and the people of the Lehigh Valley are family, and it is important to me that ‘family’ be able to access comprehensive care for movement disorders so they may benefit from the same treatments I have been so lucky to receive,” said Hoffman.



LVHN Offering Free Pediatric Flu Shot Clinics Throughout Region

Lehigh Valley Health Network has added additional pediatric flu shot clinics throughout the region.

LVHN Insider

Friday, November 11, 2022

Cases of influenza are already rising throughout the area. You can protect your child with a free flu shot at one of Lehigh Valley Health Network's (LVHN) pediatric flu shot clinics. The vaccine

is available to children over the age of 6 months. No appointment is needed. Masks are still required at all LVHN health care facilities.

“One of the best ways to protect yourself and your children from influenza is to get vaccinated. Early data suggest that this year’s flu vaccine should be protective against the predominant circulating influenza strains,” says pediatrician Debra Carter, MD, Executive Vice Chair, Pediatrics, LVHN.

Those with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, regardless of symptoms, should postpone getting a flu shot until they have met the criteria to discontinue isolation. This protects health care professionals and others who are receiving their flu shot from contracting COVID-19.

Why get the flu shot?

Although the flu has been largely overshadowed by COVID-19 in recent years, Terry Burger, RN, LVHN Administrator for Infection Control and Prevention, says public health officials expect to see more flu cases than in the last few years.

“Anyone can get the flu. Based on the rising number of flu cases this early in the season, across the nation and right here in Pennsylvania, we know this is going to be a severe flu season,” Burger says.

According to pediatric infectious diseases physician Tibusay Villalobos, MD, with Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital, the flu vaccine is especially important for children under 3 and those children with medical conditions. “The practices we were using to prevent COVID-19 were very effective in preventing the flu and other respiratory illnesses as well. Now there is a whole group of older children who have not been exposed to the flu, so it’s important to get them vaccinated. Getting older children vaccinated will also protect younger siblings,” she says.

Flu shot clinic schedule

LVHN is offering several pediatric walk-in flu shot clinics. You do not need to be an LVHN patient, and no appointment is necessary. There also will be a limited supply of adult vaccines and vaccines for those 65 and older.

Sunday, Nov. 13

8 a.m.-noon

Health Center at Fogelsville

First Floor Conference Room

1431 Nursery St.

Fogelsville, Pa.

Monday, Nov. 14

3-6 p.m.

Health Center at Trexlertown

Conference Room
6900 Hamilton Blvd.
Trexlertown, Pa.

Monday, Nov. 14

3-6 p.m.
Health Center at Palmer Township
First Floor Conference Rooms
3701 Corriere Road
Easton, Pa.

Tuesday, Nov. 15

3-7 p.m.
Lehigh Valley Hospital–17th Street
Cafeteria, First Floor
1627 W. Chew St.
Allentown, Pa.

Wednesday, Nov. 16

3-6 p.m.
Suite 4
Health Center at Richland Township
320 West Pumping Station Road
Quakertown, Pa.

Sunday, Nov. 20

8 a.m.-noon
Health Center at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Carbon
First Floor Conference Rooms
2226 Blakeslee Blvd. Drive East
Lehigh, Pa.

Wednesday, Nov. 23

10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Health Center at Trexlertown
Conference Room
6900 Hamilton Blvd.
Trexlertown, Pa.

Additional dates and locations are being added. For those updates, stay tuned to LVHN social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as well as the LVHN blog at LVHN.org/healthy-you.

HEALTH TIP

Considering Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids? Here's What You Should Know

Audiologist Jessica Jenkins, AuD, shares the pros and cons of these devices

By Maggie Wurst



There's been a lot of buzz surrounding the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s recent ruling on over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids, which has made it possible for adults 18 and older to buy certain products in stores and online without a prescription.

While these products are a safe option for certain adults with mild to moderate hearing loss, there are important things to consider before purchasing these devices. Audiologist [Jessica Jenkins, AuD](#), with LVPG Ear, Nose and Throat, shares what everyone should know about this latest development.

Pros and cons of OTC hearing aids

OTC hearing aids are easily accessible, with many large retail chains already offering them both in stores and online (or planning to). On average, OTC options also tend to be cheaper than prescription devices (which often aren't covered by health insurance policies), making hearing aids accessible for more people than ever before.

"OTC devices may be a good option for certain adults with minor hearing difficulties, but there are some downsides that you should be aware of before buying them," Jenkins says.

OTC hearing aids are specifically meant for adults with mild to moderate hearing loss. However, without getting a professional hearing test done before purchase, it can be difficult to tell if you will truly benefit from them.

"While the FDA requires labeling on these devices that explains what mild to moderate hearing loss sounds like, it can still be difficult to determine the level of your hearing impairment and if you will get any benefit from an OTC product," Jenkins says. "In addition, without evaluation from an ear, nose and throat specialist and audiologist, there's no way to know if your hearing loss is being caused by a condition that should be treated with medications or surgery. If that's the case, OTC products won't fix the underlying issue or make much difference in your hearing."

There also will not be hands-on support for your OTC hearing aids, which will leave you on your own to figure out how to use them and make sure they fit properly.

“When you purchase hearing aids from an audiologist, a custom fitting appointment and training sessions on how to insert, use, and care for them are included in the price. Unfortunately, with OTC devices, that support isn’t part of the package,” Jenkins says. “In addition, with prescription hearing aids, we are able to tailor the devices to each person’s specific hearing needs and update them as their hearing changes over the years. OTC options may allow for some basic adjusting, but nothing tailored to your specific hearing loss.”

Recommendations from an audiologist

If you are considering OTC hearing aids, Jenkins recommends getting a diagnostic hearing test to make sure your hearing impairment isn’t more serious than mild or moderate and that it isn’t being caused by a treatable condition. Even though it’s not required for OTC purchase, it will put you on the right track for your specific hearing needs.

“If you are experiencing a problem with your hearing, these initial consultations and tests are often covered by health insurance plans,” Jenkins says.

Even if you do have mild to moderate hearing loss and qualify for the OTC option, Jenkins still recommends discussing the pros and cons of prescription hearing aids with your audiologist.

“Some people find out their health insurance policy covers more than they thought, or they qualify for assistance through Pennsylvania’s Office of Vocational Rehabilitation,” Jenkins says. “If you are someone who might benefit from an OTC device, we will make sure you know that’s an option during our discussion, too.”

If you do decide on the OTC route, Jenkins recommends purchasing devices with a trial or exchange period as well as a warranty. She also recommends looking for devices that are adjustable to the shape of your ear and don’t completely block your natural hearing while they are in. Also, before purchasing a device, be sure to check its packaging to make sure it has been FDA approved as an OTC hearing aid.

“If you try OTC hearing aids and they just aren’t working for you, you can always make an appointment with an ENT specialist or audiologist as your next step,” Jenkins says. “We will fully evaluate your hearing loss, and if needed, support you throughout your prescription hearing aid journey.”
