In compliance with the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Medical Staff and Hospital Bylaws, and the standards of The Joint Commission, each member of the hospital’s Allied Health Professional staff must be reapppointed a minimum of once every two years.

On January 1, 2009, this year’s biennial reappointment process will be put into motion when Reappointment Packets will be distributed to over 500 members of the Allied Health Professional staff. Each packet will contain the following items:

- An 11-page Application for Reappointment to the Allied Health Professional staff
- A copy of the individual’s current privilege sheet
- Activity summary and Continuing Education summary forms
- Supervising Physician(s) appraisal
- Peer appraisal(s)
- Nursing Administrator appraisal form (for Nurse Practitioners)
- A malpractice claims report
- A self-addressed return envelope
- A checklist to assist in completing the information

Although much of the information on the application is preprinted for each practitioner, it is of paramount importance that ALL the information is reviewed, changes made where necessary, and missing data completed. Before returning the application, the practitioner should review the checklist to make sure all the information is complete and all the required documents have been attached to the application.

Again this year, it is a requirement that all members of the Allied Health Professional staff receive annual Tuberculosis skin testing (PPD Mantoux). For those who have a history of a positive test, they must annually provide the date of screening by their private physicians for signs and symptoms of tuberculosis. Practitioners will self-report compliance through directed questions on the reappointment application. The following information will be requested: 1) the date of the test, 2) the results, 3) if corrective action was necessary, when the action took place, and 4) if a positive history, the date of screening by their private physician for signs and symptoms of tuberculosis. If the practitioner is unable to obtain PPD testing in the private practice setting, arrangements can be made through the hospital’s Employee Health Office during walk-in hours.

The deadline to return reappointment applications is January 21, 2009. Your prompt attention in facilitating the return of the application(s) is both requested and appreciated.

If you have any questions regarding the Allied Health Professional staff reappointment process, please contact the Medical Staff Services Office at 610-402-8900.
Annual Tuberculosis Skin Test Reminder

Since January 1, 2006, members of the Medical and Allied Health Professional staffs have been required to receive annual Tuberculosis skin testing (PPD Mantoux) and self-report compliance through directed questions on their initial and reappointment applications.

As part of the upcoming Allied Health Professional staff biennial reappointment, members of the Allied Health staff are reminded that they are required to obtain an annual PPD test.

Any member of the Allied Health Professional staff who is unable to obtain PPD testing in their private practice setting may arrange to have their PPD testing done through the hospital’s Employee Health Office during walk-in hours. For a list of walk-in hours, please contact the Employee Health Office at 610-402-8869.

MD Licenses to Expire on December 31

If the physicians in your practice have an MD license, please make sure they are renewed. Pennsylvania MD licenses will expire on December 31, 2008.

Renewal applications are usually mailed 60 to 90 days in advance of the expiration date to the last address of record provided by the licensee. If any of your physicians have moved since their last license renewal and if they have not yet received their renewal application, you may want to notify the Pennsylvania Department of State of their new address. Physicians can also renew their license on-line at:

https://www.mylicense.state.pa.us/Login.aspx

Don’t take the chance of having your physician’s license expire!

Please note – since Medical Staff Services now verifies licenses on-line, there is no need to send a copy of the license to Medical Staff Services when it is renewed.
What’s Your Ethnicity?

We’ll be asking our patients so we can deliver the most appropriate care to all

You can’t know what ails a patient without asking, “How are you feeling today?” The same is true about knowing a patient’s culture.

That’s why registrars in Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network’s emergency departments, diagnostic care areas, doctor’s offices and clinics are now asking patients a new question: “How do you describe yourself?” Registrars use a laminated sheet to help patients best identify their race and ethnicity. It’s one of six ongoing projects from the Cultural Awareness Implementation Team.

In the past, employees never asked a person’s race or ethnicity. It was instead determined by visual observation, but that wasn’t reliable. “By asking this question, we’ll get a more accurate view of the ethnic and racial makeup of the people we care for,” says community health director Judy Sabino. “Then we can use this information to individualize the care we deliver and see trends in care for entire communities.”

That’s important, because national trends show that the quality of care among people of different ethnic groups varies. A 2002 national report indicated that African-Americans were nearly twice as likely as Caucasians to report being treated with disrespect during health care visits, and Hispanics (regardless of language skills) were more likely than other patients to have difficulty communicating with their doctors.

The race and ethnicity information collected will be part of a patient’s permanent, confidential electronic medical record. Patients are asked the question just once, and do have the right to refuse to answer if they are uncomfortable with the question.

The Cultural Awareness Implementation Team also has completed:

♦ A new on-line learning module in cultural awareness. It’s part of the annual core training requirements for all health network employees and can be found through eLearning on their SSO toolbar.

♦ A survey that will assess LVHHN employees’ level of cultural awareness. It will be available soon. All are encouraged to complete the survey.

For more information regarding this issue, please contact Charlotte Buckenmyer, RN, at 484-884-2213.
On September 12, Careworks Convenient Healthcare (Careworks), a Geisinger Health System Business operated through Geisinger Ventures, announced its collaboration with Lehigh Valley Health Network to operate two retail health clinics in Allentown and Schnecksville.

Careworks is a retail health clinic located inside the Allentown King’s Market at 365 S. Cedar Crest Boulevard and the Schnecksville Weis Market at 5020 Route 873. Careworks provides quick, convenient and affordable treatment for many minor, common illnesses and routine tests. Board-certified physician assistants and nurse practitioners treat minor illnesses and injuries such as bronchitis, ear infections, minor sprains and strains, flu symptoms, and pinkeye; provide various health screenings such as cholesterol testing and camp and sports physicals; administer immunizations; and perform laboratory tests. The clinics are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Careworks’ evening and weekend hours create a quality healthcare option when care is needed quickly, but a trip to the emergency department is unnecessary and an appointment with a primary care provider is unavailable. No appointment is necessary and there is little or no waiting time. A complete list of services and prices are posted on a menu board in the clinic. While patients can pay cash for services, Careworks also accepts many insurance plans including Valley Preferred and Capital Blue Cross.

LVHN’s close alignment with more than 400 area physicians enables Careworks to integrate retail health clinics into the local system of care. For patients with primary care providers affiliated with LVHN, this means enhanced continuity of care. Careworks utilizes an electronic medical record that allows all patient activity to be communicated back to the patient’s personal physician within 24 hours of the patient’s Careworks visit, enhancing the patient’s continuity of care. Additionally, Careworks will help interested patients find a primary care physician that is accepting new patients through LVHN’s physician referral line at 610-402-CARE.

Joseph A. Habig II, MD, medical liaison for Careworks in Allentown and Schnecksville, will be coordinating the relationship between Careworks and primary care practices. “I look forward to working with my colleagues to identify ways that Careworks can assist their busy practices with daily overflow support and after-hours and weekend coverage for low-acuity patients that do not need emergency care.” Dr. Habig said. “I am also excited about the possibility of using these Careworks locations to link the significant portion of our community that does not have a primary care physician with those physicians that are accepting new patients.”

Dr. Habig said close to 30 percent of patients that visit Careworks do not have primary care providers. “We hope to be able to compliment our already existing primary care network by connecting these patients with an appropriate medical home.”

If you have any questions or would like more information about how Careworks can work with your practice, please email Dr. Habig at joseph.habig@lvh.com.
Congratulations!

Joan Rissmiller, CMM, was recently chosen as the 2008 Medical Office Manager of the Year at the annual Professional Association of Health Care Office Management conference held in St. Louis, Mo. The national organization celebrated its 20th year anniversary. This prestigious award and recognition was a tribute to Joan for her many years of experience, service and commitment to the organization.

Joan is currently employed at Colon-Rectal Surgery Associates, PC, and has worked in medical office management for more than 20 years.

Medical Staff Suspension Calls

As stated in the Medical Staff Bylaws, timely completion of medical records is necessary for good patient care and compliance with licensing standards and other regulations. Failure to comply with the requirements will result in the suspension of the admitting, consultation and operating privileges of the Medical Staff member. However, the Medical Staff member shall be advised in advance of a deficiency in a chart. Warning of a delinquency shall occur 48 hours prior to suspension. These warnings are currently handled by the staff of Health Information Management on Mondays in the form of a phone call. Please note that this will be the only warning you will receive prior to suspension which will occur at 3 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Who’s New

Megan Jones, Office Manager
Maureen C. Persin, DO, PC
217 N. Broad Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018-5517
(610) 866-0466     Fax: (610) 866-1405

Ida Erlemann, Office Manager
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(610) 969-3070     Fax: (610) 969-3073
The Cancer Center at Lehigh Valley Hospital offers cancer risk and genetic assessment services for persons at risk for hereditary cancers. Members of this team have recently presented at Grand Rounds in Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Family Medicine, and Pediatrics. The most common theme to emerge from this series is the lack of awareness of the service. Therefore, the following information is provided to update you on the program, which is designed to aid you in recognizing and addressing hereditary cancer risk in your patients. The team of experts is also able to assist your patients and their families in coping with the possibility that genetically inherited syndromes will put them at increased risk for cancer.

Initially started in collaboration with the Penn State Cancer Institute in 2001, the program has grown every year, and now has two full-time board-certified genetic counselors. The multidisciplinary team of specialists includes a medical oncologist, a surgical oncologist, gynecologic oncologists, a colon-rectal surgeon, genetic counselors, and a licensed clinical social worker, each of whom contributes to developing an individualized plan of care for the patient.

A cancer risk and genetic assessment includes:

- An assessment of **personal and family history of cancer**
- Education about **cancer risk factors** and sporadic vs. hereditary disease
- A **personalized risk assessment** for hereditary cancer syndrome(s)
- Description of the **benefits and limitations of genetic testing**
- **Recommendations** for cancer screening and risk-reduction plan
- A comprehensive **written report** to both the patient and referring physician
- Access to **consultation with a team physician** to further evaluate and discuss recommended screening and/or risk-reduction strategies
- Invitation to participate in available **research studies**

More than a single hereditary cancer syndrome may be considered when evaluating personal and family history. In addition, the interpretation and implications of genetic test results can be quite complex. National guidelines, including both the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and American Society of Clinical Oncology, recommend that patients be referred to a cancer genetics professional for education, assessment and appropriate informed consent prior to undergoing genetic testing.

For additional information or if you have questions about the Cancer Risk and Genetic Assessment Program, please call (610) 402-8787.
For the Calendar

2009 General Medical Staff Meetings

Please mark your calendar – the dates for the 2009 General Medical Staff meetings are as follows:

♦ Monday, March 9
♦ Monday, June 8
♦ Monday, September 14
♦ Monday, December 14

Meetings will begin at 6 p.m., and will be held in the Kasych Rooms 7 & 8 at Cedar Crest & I-78, and videoconferenced to Rooms C & D of the Educational Conference Center located on the first floor of the LVH-Muhlenberg Tower.

If you have any questions regarding General Medical Staff meetings, please contact Ruth Davis, Director, Medical Staff Services, at 610-402-8975.

2009 GLVIPA General Membership Meetings

The dates for the 2009 Greater Lehigh Valley Independent Practice Association (GLVIPA) General Membership meetings are as follows:

♦ Tuesday, March 24
♦ Monday, June 22
♦ Tuesday, September 22

All meetings are held at 6 p.m., in the hospital’s Auditorium at Cedar Crest & I-78, and teleconferenced to Room C of the Educational Conference Center located on the first floor of the LVH-Muhlenberg Tower.

The GLVIPA Annual Membership meeting will be held on Monday, January 26, 2009, at 6 p.m., in the Auditorium at Cedar Crest & I-78, and teleconferenced to Room C of the Educational Conference Center at LVH-Muhlenberg.

If you have any questions regarding the GLVIPA, please contact Eileen Hildenbrandt, Coordinator, GLVIPA, at 610-969-0423.

LVHHN and Grand View Hospital Collaborate to Open New Facility

On July 30, Grand View Hospital (GVH) and Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network (LVHHN) officials marked the opening of a collaborative facility – The Upper Bucks Health & Diagnostic Center.

The 38,063 square-foot center on Route 309 in Quakertown brings together primary and specialty care services offered by each hospital.

Employing about 70 employees, the new building will offer services that include: primary care for children and adults; obstetrics and gynecology services; spine, neurological and orthopedic care; physical and occupational therapy for adults and children; speech therapy for children; and specialty care consultations for diabetes and endocrinology, general surgery, pediatric surgery and surgical oncology. Digital radiology, ultrasound, bone densitometry, EKG and laboratory services are also available. MRI and digital mammography, as well as other specialty services, will join the line-up in the near future.
From the Editor:

Please help us keep our records accurate. If your office manager has changed, please call Janet Seifert in Medical Staff Services at (610) 402-8590.

FOCUS is published for the office staffs of physicians on the Medical Staff of Lehigh Valley Hospital. Articles for the next issue should be submitted by February 6, 2009, to Janet M. Seifert, Medical Staff Services, Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest & I-78, P.O. Box 689, Allentown, PA 18105-1556 or emailed to janet.seifert@lvh.com. For more information, please call Janet at (610) 402-8590.