

system will accomplish this annual task much more quickly.

Because payers make frequent adjustments to fee schedules, and because a practice may deal with dozens of payers, it's worth asking payers for contract clauses requiring the payer to provide at least 60 days' advance notice of any fee schedule change.

6. LEVERAGE PAYER CONTRACTS TO IMPROVE BILLING PERFORMANCE

To resolve the frustration of an insurer engaging in unfair payment tactics or creating inordinate delays, look to the contract. Shrewd negotiation during contract talks can make the document your ally. Ideally, the contract contains clauses that disallow bad insurer behavior — just as it will prohibit you or your practice from taking certain actions. Contracts with payers deal with many common issues, such as provider enrollment, take-backs and fee schedules. Keep tab on each payer's potential 'hassle factor' by creating a folder for each insurer. Staff can put copies of correspondence, notes and explanations of benefits revealing an underpayment or inappropriate denials into this folder. Retrieve the contents of these "hassle" folders to use at contract renewal to make sure frustrations with the payer are addressed.

7. INVOLVE PATIENTS

Because your medical practice bills the payer on behalf of its patients, it's only natural to ask for the patient's help when something goes wrong in that process. If, for example, a payer denies a claim based on insufficient information from a patient, contact the patient immediately to prompt him or her to respond. (One way to prevent these potential payments problems is to address the issue of information-based denials in the payer contract. For example, seek a contract clause allowing your practice to transfer financial responsibility for the service to the beneficiary — the patient — if the patient does not respond within 30 days to the payer's information request).

Copy patients on any appeal letters sent to payers for services that were rendered to them. Seeing this information will likely stir patients to pick up the phone and call their insurers. Of course, always send statements to patients when bills are their financial responsibility, and hold them accountable for payment.

8. PRIORITIZE

Billing office employees are generally detail-oriented. Therefore, they may lose sight of the big picture and need help prioritizing their work. Abandon alpha-based sorting as the primary work organizer. Instead, encourage staff to work insurance invoices and patient balances in hierarchical order. Set a floor amount for second-level appeals. A \$10 floor, for example, may reflect the cost point at which your practice ends up spending more on the secondary appeal process than the claim would be worth if paid.

Use tools to facilitate prioritization, such as creating an electronic calendar with ticklers enabled or, better still, integrate alerts for due dates of tasks or expected responses directly into the practice management system.

9. FOLLOW THROUGH

Whether it's an appeal letter or simply a patient's promise to pay off a balance, make sure to monitor the progress of pending issues. Set up electronic reminders — ticklers — for information requests and appeals. It's the only way you'll guarantee results. Furthermore, follow through when threatening to report a payer to the state insurance commissioner or turn a patient's delinquent account over to the collection agency. Don't bluff.



10. MONITOR PAYMENTS CLOSELY

Monitor key performance indicators by payer. At a minimum, for each payer, review the days in receivables outstanding, credits, aged trial balance and adjustments by category. Perform quality audits at least once a quarter by reviewing a number of accounts — say, 10 per physician — chosen at random.

Demand that payers provide the allowable amounts for codes your practice's physicians use most frequently. This information allows you to determine whether the insurers are living up to the terms of their contracts. To catch lower-than-contracted reimbursement, set up an automatic query in the practice management system to track each payer's allowables for filed claims. Lower-than contracted reimbursements are almost always due to the payer bundling charges, down-coding services or making other changes not called for in the contract. Flag every invoice for which the insurer reimburses 100 percent of the charge — that's a sure sign that the practice is charging less than the allowable it is due.

When a claim is paid, the payer reimburses the practice in the form of an allowable amount, often referred to as the "allowance." For each procedure code, the difference between the charge and the allowance is considered a contractual adjustment. The billing office makes this adjustment at the time of payment posting. The adjustment process breaks down when billers treat other types of adjustments as contractual adjustments. These non-contractual adjustments may include claims not paid because the charges were not submitted promptly by your practice, or a payer refusing to remit payment because you were late in submitting the enrollment paperwork for one of your new providers. Be sure billers handle contractual adjustments separately from non-contractual adjustments. Otherwise, what appears to be a glowing 100% collection rate is, in reality, much lower.

Keep these tips in mind as when look for ways to boost your practice's ability to collect the revenue it is due. Collecting revenue is the "revenue" in the revenue cycle. And remember: Improving management of the revenue cycle starts with staff. To make any of these 10 basic approaches work — or any other approaches, for that matter — you must hire motivated people and give them tools they need to do their jobs to continue that motivation. ↑

Tony Ryzinski is Senior Vice President of Marketing for the Sage Healthcare Division. For more information, visit www.sagehealth.com.

Insights on Successful Healthcare Professional Recruitment Outsourcing

By Brooke Filas



Physicians and Practice Managers wear many hats, but there are limits to how much any one person can do and do it successfully.

Outsourcing is a common practice in today's business world. Business's use outsourcing for a variety of reasons—to handle work overflows, receive specific expertise in an area such as recruiting for quality staff, or simply to have someone else take on the responsibilities that are taking up too much of their time and attention without having to incur the costs of hiring another employee.

When you choose to outsource the hiring process, the tedious and expensive tasks of writing and placing job postings, receiving and reviewing all the resumes to interviewing the candidates is handled by someone who is experienced in only that.

Using a recruiting agency drastically reduces your P & L by outsourcing the expensive costs involved in hiring new employees. Most clients on average save upwards of 40% of overhead costs.

Developing a successful long-term relationship with an outsourcing partner requires effort on both sides. It's important to treat it like a partnership, because that's what it really is. A vendor who supplies a vital service for your business is like part of your staff, so you should go through a similar interviewing and reference checking process before you "hire" them.

Ask your candidate firms for current and past clients who received services of a scope similar to what you're looking for. If possible, ask for clients similar to you to properly gauge how well the company understands your needs. ↑

Brooke Filas is president of Managed Healthcare Solutions. To discuss how rethinking the way you manage your hiring process can change your business, contact Managed Healthcare Solutions to arrange for a free cost analysis at 630-482-9089.

Don't Call Too Often



By Jane Lewis Volk

A recent decision in a federal court will leave many health care employers wondering: How much is too much?

The "how much" is how much employers can contact employees on leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

FMLA requires employers with 50 or more employees to provide up to 12 weeks a year of unpaid leave for an eligible employee's serious health condition or to care for a sick family member or new child.

While employers are permitted to contact employees on FMLA leave from time to time, a current court case raises the question of how often an employer can call an employee before it begins to interfere with the employee's right to take leave.

In the case in question, a hospital worker took 11 weeks of FMLA leave to have back surgery. While she was on leave, her supervisor called her every week to ask

when she was coming back to work. During one call, the employee asked her supervisor if her job was in jeopardy, to which the supervisor answered that the employee should return to work as soon as possible.

Some time after her return, the hospital fired the employee for theft. She sued, claiming that her discharge was discriminatory and that her employer had interfered with her FMLA rights by continually calling her at home. The court dismissed the discrimination claim since the matter of theft was unrelated to the employee's FMLA leave, but allowed the claim of interference with FMLA rights to go to trial.

Although the hospital argued that the employee had returned to work only after she had clearance from her doctor and therefore was not denied any of the FMLA benefits to which she was entitled, the court dismissed the argument on the basis that employees have a right not to be discouraged from exercising their FMLA rights. The weekly calls from the employee's supervisor could be interpreted as an attempt to pressure her to return to work and thereby chill her rights to take full leave or to ever utilize FMLA in the future.

The court's decision makes it clear that an employee does not have to be denied FMLA leave to have a viable interference charge. Simply discouraging an employee from exercising any part of his or her FMLA rights could amount to unlawful interference.

Whether or not the employee wins this particular case, all health care employers should be cautious when contacting employees on FMLA leave. While the FMLA clearly permits employers to require periodic reports of the employee's status and intent to return to work during leave, health care employers should be careful not to hound employees about their condition or expected date of return to work. Even well-intentioned questions about the employee's situation could be misconstrued as a form of intimidation, especially if made too often, potentially chilling the employee's rights under the FMLA.

So just how often is it reasonable for an employer to contact an employee on FMLA leave? The court case doesn't set a strict formula, but suggests that once a week is too often. What is clear is that health care employers should carefully monitor all communication with an employee taking FMLA leave to ensure that the employee is not contacted too frequently and that nothing is said that could be interpreted as an attempt to restrain the employee from exercising his or her full rights at that time or in the future. †

To contact Jane Lewis Volk of Meyer, Unkovic & Scott, email her at jlw@muslaw.com.



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Healthcare Construction: Top 10 Design Innovations Promote Healing and Increased Safety for Patients and Staff



By Janice A. Lott

Construction for the healthcare industry is very unique and must take into account a broad set of needs that extend far beyond a typical design project. Building a space designed to care for people requires innovations that help reduce stress, promote health and healing and have a strong focus on both patient and staff safety.

In the industry today, evidence-based design is critical. This type of design involves the research of similar work models to confirm credible data that influences the design process. This research gives those interested in renovating or creating new spaces evidence of both patient satisfaction and safety. The goal? To create a hospital that has a successful care-delivery process and focus on quality care, a solid system for employee safety and good staff support, spaces that are friendly for patients and their families and an environment that is green and ecologically sustainable.

Today, a number of trends are driving this focus on evidence-based design innovations, including this top ten list:

1.) Single-patient rooms. One patient per room is the most effective intervention against hospital -acquired infections. This will also increase patient satisfaction. Adding an extra 100 Sq. Ft. allows more room for the patient's family involvement and to stay overnight increasing moral for both patient and family members.

2.) Acuity adaptive patient rooms: This involves medical monitoring equipment that is built in to the patient's room, rather than requiring that the patient be transported around the hospital to the equipment. This helps avoid delays, errors, transfers, reduces the staff workload and increases patient satisfaction.

3.) Larger windows: If you're renovating or building a new space, larger windows and sky lights will increase natural light. This increase of lighting and views of the outdoors and nature have a true calming and healing effect on patients as well as staff.

4.) Wider bathroom doors: Larger doors, even double doors, can help reduce the risk of falls. This is where most falls occur. The larger size gives patients and staff more room to navigate and accommodate any equipment patients may need to take with them while using facilities, as well as additional help via staff.

5.) Indoor air quality: For patient and staff safety and comfort, it is important to specify materials and finishes that have low to zero Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOC's) found in paints, carpeting, foams, fabrics, etc. HEPA filtration is effective in removing harmful particles.

6.) Decentralized nurse's stations: In the past there has been one station in the middle, covering an entire floor. Decentralized stations allow nurses to see into patients rooms and respond to problems more quickly. This helps to reduce patient falls and allows nurses to spend more time in direct care.



7.) Hand hygiene: While this may seem obvious, having sinks in every patient room as well as other convenient points of care can reduce risk of infection and spread of bacteria.

8.) Task Lighting: Patient rooms should be equipped with task lighting preferably LED at a dedicated medication dispensing area. This helps clinicians read the medication labels and prescriptions more accurately thereby reducing errors when dispensing drugs.

9.) Noise reduction fixtures: General hospital noise is a common problem that increases stress, leads to sleep reduction and an overall slower patient recovery. To reduce noise, sound reducing ceiling tiles, carpeting where possible and sound-absorbing finishes can be utilized. Creating comfortable meeting spaces for conversations along common halls will decrease background noise. A sound masking, or white noise system, can be installed to make the spoken word indiscernible.

10.) Healing art and Gardens: Art that depicts calming views of nature in public and patient areas will help reduce anxiety and depression and improve the overall patient outcomes. Well designed indoor and outdoor gardens provide restorative contact for patients and staff. These added elements coincide with the use of positive distraction measures: art, calming music, interactive technology and gardens help distract patients and family from their time spent in the hospital. ↑

Janice A. Lott is the Principal Designer and partner of J.A. Lott Design & Associates located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has over 25 years of experience as a Medical and Commercial Diversified Interior Designer and Space Planner.

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Future of Real Estate & Construction Trends in Health Care

Paris Companies Holds Ceremonial Groundbreaking for Expansion

Senator Joe Scarnati and DuBois city officials were among the guests that joined Paris Companies President/CEO David Stern at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the expansion of their DuBois Healthcare facility last month.

Two years ago, Paris broke ground for the 50,000-square-foot DuBois facility, and as a result of unprecedented growth, they will add an additional 14,000 square-feet to better accommodate the needs of their existing and future customers. "Having the need to expand our existing plant is a great problem to have. Our loyal, valued customer partnerships were the catalyst to embark on this new growth project," said Stern. The expansion of the facility not only marks a \$5 million investment in the company, but also into the community, as the 65 new jobs that are being created will have a positive economic impact on the area.

Paris Companies, Pennsylvania's largest independent linen rental provider has been a family-owned business for over 80 years, operates in four states and employs over 600. The healthcare division has been operating in DuBois since 1990.

For more information, visit www.parisco.com. 📌

L to R: Senator Joseph Scarnati; Paris Companies President/CEO, David Stern. (Back Row) L to R: Vice President of Healthcare, Randy Rosetti; CFO, Jason McCoy; Director of Engineering, Tom Walsh; Director of Human Resources, Lori Jesberger

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Consumer-Grade vs. Hospital Grade: How to Ensure Your Healthcare Facility Meets a High Standard of Safety and Satisfaction

By Dan Nathan

With television no longer being exclusive to the domestic home, and a larger focus being placed on the patient experience and satisfaction, many healthcare facilities are able to provide a much more “home-like” experience. But this leaves them asking the question: Is a healthcare grade television set really necessary?

HD display prices have dropped considerably over the past few years, making it attractive to incorporate this technology into a large scale facility. But with cost variances often favoring the consumer models, it would be easy for decisions to be swayed to purchase a consumer set, over a healthcare grade set. Hospital grade televisions are designed with specific features that consumer TVs cannot offer, making them safer for the patient and easier for clinician use. Compared to consumer sets, healthcare televisions are engineered and constructed with a different end user in mind. Manufacturers design healthcare grade HDTV sets specifically for use in the hospital setting and to withstand heavy wear and tear and long operating hours.

DESIGNED FOR PATIENT SAFETY

Healthcare grade televisions are developed specifically with the hospital and patient safety in mind. Sets must meet standards based on a product's construction and safety performance set forth by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc to even be sold in the market. Features such as rounded corners, touch panel membrane buttons, and the removal of enclosures on non-vertical surfaces provide a much safer patient care environment. Grounded plugs, lower allowed levels of leakage, an all pole power switch decrease the likelihood of shock.. Signaling and nurse call controls used with audio and video products must also meet additional reliability and safety criteria, while consumers grade products have no such requirement.

DESIGNED FOR OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

In addition to patient safety, healthcare grade televisions also provide operational features that make a hospital-wide deployment less labor intrusive. Cloning technology, universal pillow speaker interfaces, pillow speaker controls and front panel locking control functionality help ensure the hospital has an effective implementation. Most importantly, these sets have a warranty that covers hospital use, unlike consumer models. Some manufacturers even offer an on-site or exchange warranty, so if something does happen, patients are minimally impacted.

DESIGNED FOR PATIENT SATISFACTION

Clinicians want their patients to have a comforting experience, and patient satisfaction is of the utmost importance to many hospitals. Healthcare televisions aid in creating a more “home-like” atmosphere and experience as well as making a much more efficient workflow for clinicians. The pillow speaker interface all makes for an enjoyable patient experience by minimizing disturbances from other patients. Autosensing side inputs and dedicated input channels allow multiple sources of content from a variety of technologies to be displayed quickly and easily. In addition, many healthcare sets have Pro:Idiom™ enabled, without which



you would not be able to deliver HD cable channels in a MATV environment without a set top box at each set.

The reason has to do with encryption of cable channels, cable networks like ESPN, Disney and HGTV require protection of their HD signals as a part of their copyright standards. To decrypt these protected signals, every TV set must have either internal decryption, or a set-top box must be installed with the decryption. Pro:Idiom is the encryption standard used by DirecTV, Dish and more and more cable companies.

Consumer TVs do not have decryption built in because cable and satellite companies are going to put in a receiver box in your home. Hospitals typically do not put a box at every tv because of higher cost, poorer room aesthetics, difficult mounting issues, higher maintenance and theft among other reasons. To avoid the third party hardware and still deliver HD signals, many hospital televisions sets today have pro:idiom built into them.

Hospitals are extremely complicated working environments, and harbor many unique challenges. Healthcare grade televisions are built specifically to accommodate those intricacies. Consumer televisions can be very attractive from a pricing standpoint, but can also be huge liabilities and roadblocks to the facility. Healthcare televisions provide the feature set needed for hospitals, as well as an enhanced peace of mind. †

Dan Nathan, vice president and general manager at TeleHealth Services, (www.telehealth.com) has spent over 25 years in the hospital communications industry, working jointly with manufacturers to incorporate patient satisfaction solutions into healthcare facilities.



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Boy Scouts Aren't the Only Ones Who Should be Prepared

By Rafael J. Sciullo

It was the fall of 1996 and Don could see the signs more clearly. His dad, Jack, a congestive heart failure patient, was declining. He noticed the swelling in his dad's ankles, shortness of breath and other symptoms. Don knew the time was right to get hospice involved.



KDKA-TV's Mary Robb Jackson (center) joins Family Hospice VP of Development Maureen Haggarty and fundraising board chair Jon Allegretti at the Celebration of Life Wall kickoff event June 28.

Jack's doctor contacted our team at Family Hospice and Palliative Care and a care plan was developed. Don's father was more comfortable – and his symptoms were well managed for the next five months until his passing.

After the experience, Don told Family Hospice that he was grateful for the care his dad had received. In a letter to our staff, he expressed the lasting impression hos-

pice care made on him and his family – and how he knew that hospice was absolutely the right choice for his dad.

Fast-forward 15 years.

Don is now in his early 60s and is dealing with his own life-limiting illness. Close to a year ago, he was diagnosed with liver cancer – and his condition is worsening.

Don sat down with his wife, Linda, and talked about options.

"Remember what Family Hospice did for my dad?" Don asked.

"I want you to have that same level of care," Linda responded.

"Well," Don said, "I think it's time..."

Don is one of our patients who was truly prepared. Not only did his father's experience remain etched in his memory – he didn't hesitate to seek that same care when the time was right for him. And, he didn't give a second thought as to whether that care would still be available now.

This is a situation many of us may experience in one form or another: providing care for a parent, grandparent, or other loved one – and then years later, be faced with that same situation for ourselves, spouse or partner.

But how do non-profits like ours ensure the same level of care will be available

Making the Most of Life



in years to come – especially in light of changes coming to Medicare reimbursements in 2013? Family Hospice is already addressing that challenge with the Future Fund.

The purpose of the Future Fund is to ensure that the same quality services that Family Hospice offers you and your loved ones today are available 10, 20, and 30 years from now.

The Family Hospice Future Fund focuses on three prominent areas: Free Care: Uninsured persons, not yet eligible for Medicare or Medicaid who fall within the Federal Poverty Guidelines, receive free care. Capital Needs: Like any home, maintenance is needed to keep The Center for Compassionate Care, our 12-room Inpatient Unit in the South Hills, safe. The facility also has 2,000 square feet of unused space, which may someday expand into more inpatient beds and family bereavement offices. Education: Family Hospice's educational programs empower people to make informed choices about end-of-life care.

The Future Fund campaign featured a special event at our Center for Compassionate Care on June 28, when plans were unveiled for the Celebration of Life Wall. For a \$1,000 donation, the name of a deceased loved one will be permanently inscribed on a 20' x 6' granite wall on our campus. The Celebration of Life Wall will accommodate more than 1,000 names. Revenue generated from donations will benefit the Future Fund.

KDKA-TV's Mary Robb Jackson served as guest speaker at the event. She eloquently shared stories of her hospice experience with family and close friends.

These stories of hospice care – whether Mary Robb's, Don's or maybe someone you know – speak to the importance of being prepared. Family Hospice is taking steps for be prepared for our future. We encourage you to be prepared as well – have the conversation with your loved ones, friends and patients about advance care planning.

Thanks to your preparation – and ours - when the time comes, you will enjoy the same peace of mind experience by Don and Linda. †

Rafael J. Sciullo, MA, LCSW, MS, is President and CEO of Family Hospice and Palliative Care and Past Chairperson of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. He may be reached at rsciullo@familyhospice.com or (412) 572-8800. Family Hospice and Palliative Care serves nine counties in Western Pennsylvania. Its website is www.familyhospice.com.

Heritage Valley Health System Offers Cardiac CT Services



Cardiac computed tomography, or Cardiac CT, services are available for patients at Heritage Valley Beaver and Heritage Valley Sewickley. The service represents collaboration between the Heritage Valley Heart and Vascular Centers and Radiology departments to bring the most advanced technology to people in the community.

A Cardiac CT is a painless, non-invasive test that uses an x-ray machine to image the heart in order to reveal important structural abnormalities that may relate to disease. CT angiography is used to evaluate narrowing, or stenosis, of the coronary arteries. Heritage Valley uses 64-slice CT Scanners with the latest technology that includes reduced radiation dosages and high quality image acquisition and processing. Detailed evaluation of this digital data can enhance diagnosis and management strategies.

"Coronary Calcium Scanning evaluates the effects of cholesterol plaque on the coronary arteries that may not as yet have begun to develop significant narrowing or create symptoms. Calcium Scanning as well as cardiac computed tomographic angiography, or CCTA, have become important diagnostic tools and our team is excited to bring this advanced technology to our patients," said Dr. Stephen Tunick, cardiologist at the Heritage Valley Heart & Vascular Center. "This certainly will enhance the care we can provide."

Learn more at www.heritagevalley.org. †

New & Notable

Pitt Study Examines Environmental Risk Factors for Childhood Autism

The University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) has launched a multi-year study to help identify environmental and other factors that may put children at risk for developing conditions within the autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). The Study of Environmental Risk Factors for Childhood Autism is being conducted throughout southwestern Pennsylvania in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Washington and Westmoreland counties.

ASDs are a group of developmental disabilities that become evident early in a child's life and cause social, communication and behavioral challenges. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that approximately 1 in 110 children born in the United States had been diagnosed with ASDs and the rates in recent years have increased. The causes and contributing factors of ASDs are poorly understood, but genetic, environmental and biological factors are thought to be involved.

The research study involves the parents of 2- to 5-year-old children who have been diagnosed with ASD conditions, as well as the parents of children who do not have ASD conditions. Parents will be interviewed by telephone by trained GSPH staff and asked about residences, jobs, hobbies, medical conditions, medication use and other factors during the mother's pregnancy and the child's infancy. In addition, information on air pollution and other environmental exposures for each residential area will be obtained.

Researchers will then attempt to determine if there have been substantial differences in environmental and other exposures in children with an autism spectrum disorder compared to children without ASDs. Approximately 750 parents will be asked to participate in this study over the next three years. The study was funded by the Heinz Endowments.

For more information, visit www.childhoodautism.pitt.edu. †

WESTARM Therapy & Homecare Offers "Healthy Heart" Program at Pittsburgh Mills

WESTARM Therapy & Homecare of Lower Burrell, PA has begun to offer a Healthy



WESTARM Therapy & Homecare now offering Healthy Heart program at Pittsburgh Mills.

Heart program at their Pittsburgh Mills facility in Frazer, PA. The sessions will be held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 6:30am to 9:00am.

This Phase III cardiopulmonary program is designed for individuals recovering from a heart attack, heart surgery, or those prone to cardiac disease. Those prone to cardiac disease may fall into one or more of the following categories:

- High cholesterol and / or high triglycerides
- Hypertension
- Diabetes Mellitus
- Strong family history of coronary heart disease
- Cigarette smokers
- Obese individuals

The group exercise sessions include multi-station aerobic exercises. These sessions will be supervised by Maggie Saracco, an Exercise Physiologist specifically trained to work in cardiac exercise and prevention. Although participants will be exercising with many others who share similar needs, the program will be specifically designed for each individual.

Learn more at www.west-armtherapy.com. ↑

New & Notable

Susan G. Komen for the Cure Awards Pitt Researchers More Than \$600,000 for Breast Cancer Studies

Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, the global leader of the breast cancer movement, awarded researchers at the University of Pittsburgh \$626,610 in grants for two breast-cancer related projects. The grants are part of Komen's Grants Program, which this year awarded \$55 million to 56 institutions across the country.

Solodane Ferrone, MD, PhD and Yangyang Wang, MD received \$180,000 for their investigation into *Combinatorial Immunotherapy for Triple-negative Breast Cancer* (TNBC). The initiative seeks novel treatment strategies for TNBC, an aggressive form of breast cancer that more frequently presents in premenopausal women and does not respond to treatment with hormonal therapies such as Tamoxifen.

Komen awarded Dror Lederman, PhD, a \$446,610 grant for his research *Breast Cancer Risk Stratification in Younger Women: A Combined Baseline Mammography and REIS-based Model*. This project seeks more efficient, accurate tools to detect breast cancers in younger women at an early stage and reduce false-positives by combining mammography with resonance-frequency electrical impedance spectroscopy (REIS).

"To see funds from Komen headquarters returned to the University of Pittsburgh is a testament to the life-changing work being done in our region to eradicate breast cancer," said Kathy Purcell, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure®. "The Komen Pittsburgh Affiliate is proud to contribute a portion of its resources each year to the Susan G. Komen Grants Program."

Each year, 75% of all money raised by the Komen Pittsburgh Affiliate supports breast cancer education, screening and treatment initiatives in the Affiliate's 30-county service area. The remaining 25% funds the national grant program. Since its inception in 1993, the Komen Pittsburgh Affiliate has contributed nearly \$6 million to Komen's National Grants Program.

Learn more at www.komenpittsburgh.org. ↑



Kathy Purcell

UPMC Enters China with Agreement to Provide Second-Opinion Pathology Consultations to KingMed Diagnostics

Marking its first medical services agreement in Asia, UPMC announced that it will provide remote, second-opinion pathology consultations to KingMed Diagnostics, the largest independent medical diagnostic laboratory in China.

Using equipment that scans glass pathology slides and stores and transmits the images electronically, KingMed will have the ability to seek second opinions on patient diagnoses from UPMC's pathologists through a secure, Web-based telepathology portal. The service is expected to start by late summer.



"This three-year agreement will provide patients served by KingMed with rapid access to UPMC's world-renowned pathologists, thereby helping to ensure the most accurate diagnoses of complex diseases," said George K. Michalopoulos, M.D., Ph.D., UPMC pathologist and professor and chairman of the Department of Pathology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. The department is the largest academic clinical organization of its kind, with 175 faculty members.

"KingMed is committed to offering the most comprehensive, highest-quality laboratory services in China," said Yaoming Liang, founder and CEO of KingMed Diagnostics. "This agreement with UPMC demonstrates that commitment and provides our patients with access to another source of pathology expertise that is not widely available in China."

Travis Tu, head of UPMC's new representative's office in Shanghai, noted that the KingMed deal is just the first of what UPMC hopes will be many agreements to provide an array of medical services throughout Asia. "UPMC's reputation for clinical excellence is attracting partners like KingMed that are committed to improving health care in Asia. At the same time, by leveraging our clinical successes in western Pennsylvania, UPMC is able to generate revenue that supports jobs and world-class health care and research at home."

UPMC's collaboration with KingMed also is expected to include training for pathologists from China in UPMC's Pittsburgh facilities and joint academic meetings as part of ongoing medical education in China.

In the future, KingMed may replace its telepathology platform with the digital pathology solutions being created by Omnyx, a joint venture between UPMC and GE Healthcare. Formed in 2008, Omnyx is digitizing slides and the corresponding workflow to improve collaboration, communication and efficiency. Omnyx is the first company ever formed by GE with an academic medical center.

Learn more at www.UPMC.com. ↑

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Highmark and West Penn Allegheny Health System Announce Plans to Pursue Affiliation

Highmark Inc. and the West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS) recently announced their intentions to pursue an affiliation aimed at maintaining the health system as a high-quality choice for health care services to millions of Western Pennsylvanians.

As part of the initial arrangement, Highmark is immediately providing a \$50 million grant to the WPAHS, enabling the health system to sustain and strengthen its West Penn and Forbes Regional hospitals while assuring the continued delivery of quality medical services by the entire system. Highmark is making a total financial commitment of up to \$475 million over four years, including \$75 million to fund scholarships for students attending medical schools affiliated with WPAHS, and to support other health professional education programs.



Kenneth R. Melani

The management and boards of directors of Highmark and WPAHS will continue discussions in the weeks ahead with the goal of finalizing a definitive agreement.

"Today is an important first step to ensuring the continued viability of the West Penn Allegheny Health System and a choice of health care services in our region," said Kenneth R. Melani, M.D., Highmark's president and chief executive officer. "For generations, the residents of our community and physicians have had broad choices in the health care marketplace," Dr. Melani said. "For consumers, we want to preserve their choices. For physicians and other health care providers, we want to ensure multiple patient referral options. This affiliation will help preserve those very options. In addition, the \$75 million that we will be contributing for scholarships for medical school students and other educational programs will

go a long way in addressing the shortage of physicians in the region, and help us retain highly trained doctors to serve our community."

"West Penn Allegheny has been recognized nationally for its leading doctors and nurses who provide high-quality, personalized care; however, there is no doubt that we have lacked the capital necessary to deliver on our full potential," said David L. McClenahan, West Penn Allegheny's chairman of the board. "We share a common goal with Highmark to focus on the patient experience, improve health care and ensure choice for both those seeking care and those seeking employment in the health care sector in our region. We look forward to finalizing our affiliation agreement in the weeks ahead."

McClenahan also announced a transition in the West Penn Allegheny leadership, stating, "Dr. Christopher Olivia will be leaving his role as President and CEO on June 28, 2011. He will be consulting with Highmark and assisting Dr. Melani in connection with the conclusion of this transaction and other strategic issues."

"Dr. Chris Olivia has been a valuable change agent for West Penn Allegheny. Since he arrived in 2008, Chris has been steadfast in his belief about a bright future for the System. He has led the organization through some difficult changes while laying groundwork for exciting developments such as the medical school partnership with Temple University School of Medicine," said McClenahan. "The board and the entire West Penn Allegheny Health System are grateful for Chris' vision and leadership that has brought us to this remarkable announcement." He also announced that Dianne Dismukes has been named President and CEO of WPAHS.

The proposed affiliation of Highmark and the West Penn Allegheny Health System is the first step in a broader Highmark effort to develop alternative health care options that offer high-quality care at a lower price and more coordinated and patient-driven delivery of medical care.

"It is critical to the economic and financial health of the community that Western Pennsylvanians have a choice of health care providers and that we preserve strong and valuable community institutions like the West Penn Allegheny Health System," Dr. Melani said. †



Christopher Olivia

Faith is daring the soul to go beyond what the eyes can see.

~ Author unknown

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but rather what lives within us.*



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that matters.*

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New & Notable

America's Biopharmaceutical Companies Are Helping To Fight Prescription Drug Abuse All Over America

Law enforcement collected 24,650 pounds of unused medicines from consumers at more than 400 sites in Pennsylvania and Delaware during the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's April 30 Pharmaceutical Take Back Day, DEA records show.

This year's amount far surpassed the 6,250 pounds collected in the two states during the first DEA Take Back Day last September.

Nationwide, more than 375,000 pounds of unused pills from residential medicine cabinets were dropped off at 5,361 sites in all 50 states. That's 188 tons collected April 30, on top of 121 tons last September.

America's biopharmaceutical research companies have helped to publicize the DEA programs "because by collecting unused medicines, we are helping to deter prescription drug abuse, which is a major problem in Pennsylvania and throughout the country," said Sharon Brigner, a deputy vice president at the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA). "The removal of unused drugs is vitally important considering 70 percent of the medicines abused by teenagers are taken from medicine cabinets at home."

Brigner, a weekend emergency room nurse who has treated victims of prescription abuse, noted that PhRMA also supports the unused drug take back efforts of the American Medicine Chest Challenge (AMCC) and co-sponsors the SMARxT Disposal program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the American Pharmacists Association.

The AMCC is a national campaign to raise awareness of prescription drug misuse among teenagers. Last November, it sponsored a one-day effort to safely dispose of unused and expired pills, working with communities in 36 states.

SMARxT (www.SMARxTdisposal.net) provides thorough, but simple steps for disposing of prescription medicines in household trash. "It's an easy, year-round way to eliminate a teenager's temptation to experiment with often devastating consequences," said Brigner, who works at a community hospital near her northern Virginia home.

"PhRMA has also developed educational programs aimed at teenagers and college students who abuse prescription drugs thinking they're somehow safer than cocaine and heroin," she said. "The fact is when medicines are used as prescribed, they save lives and enhance quality of life. When abused, they can be harmful."

Among its educational efforts, PhRMA has worked with www.drugfree.org, formerly known as the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Drugfree.org prepares parents to talk to their children about the dangers of abusing drugs, including prescription medications, and it offers comprehensive information on more than 40 commonly abused drugs.

"The time for action is now," said Brigner. "In 2009, about seven million Americans abused prescription pain and anxiety drugs, up 13 percent from 2008. And when the spotlight is put on teenagers, federal government data show abuse is on the rise, with 20 percent of teens saying they have used medications without a doctor's prescription."

The prescription drug abuse problem has become a major challenge for officials throughout Pennsylvania. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the regions in America most affected by prescription pain killer abuse include Philadelphia and the southwestern part of the state.

A paper published in the December 2010 issue of the Journal of Public Health Policy says the drug overdose death rate – with most of the fatalities the result of prescription overdoses – was 1.6 times higher in Pennsylvania when compared to New York in 2006.

Brigner, who has helped to develop PhRMA's anti-prescription drug abuse programs, says the industry "stands ready to work with Governor Corbett, legislators and other state officials. Too many young people are being robbed of the chance to achieve their potential because of their misuse of prescription medicines. We need to work together to raise greater awareness of the dangers involved, including overdosing and death, and we need to put an end to this crisis once and for all."

Learn more at www.phrma.org. †

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New & Notable

Allegheny General Hospital Launches Emergency Room HIV Testing Initiative

As the United States marks the 30th anniversary of the discovery of the HIV virus and AIDS, Allegheny General Hospital (AGH) has initiated a routine HIV screening program, making HIV testing available to nearly every patient seen in its Emergency Department.

Allegheny General has partnered with the Pennsylvania Expanded HIV Testing Initiative (PEHTI) in its mission to see that HIV testing becomes a standard part of health care, just like checking blood pressure.

"This is a nationwide effort that stems from the fact that although we are 30 years into the HIV/AIDS epidemic, incidence in the U.S. (60,000 new cases per year) has not decreased in 10 years," said Mobola Kukoyi, MPH, project coordinator for PEHTI.

"It is estimated that more than 1 million Americans are infected with HIV and one in every five are not aware of their infection. Thus, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has proposed a different way of approaching HIV testing."

By funding programs like PEHTI across the nation, the CDC hopes to identify new cases of HIV to help prevent the spread of the virus. It's also an effort that can decrease healthcare costs. With 40 percent of new HIV diagnoses progressing to full-blown AIDS within one year, early detection enables health care providers to start treatment sooner, when it is likely to be most effective and before patients become so sick that they require more costly interventions.

HIV information and screening was offered by the Emergency Department at AGH beginning in December. Hospital staff are refining the processes for the screenings with the goal of offering tests to every Emergency Department patient between the ages of 13 and 64, in compliance with guidelines issued by the CDC and, more recently, the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

The screening is a non-invasive swab of the upper and lower gums and patients are given a negative or "reactive" test result before they leave, according to Laura McNeil, RN, a nurse educator in the Emergency Department. Reactive tests don't necessarily indicate that a patient is positive for HIV, but that follow-up testing is needed.

McNeil said any patients with a reactive result to the rapid HIV screening will receive a blood test and be referred to Allegheny General's Positive Health Clinic to receive their results and additional information and counseling.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health's epidemiological profiles identified Allegheny County as one of the highest-risk areas for HIV/AIDS in Pennsylvania, second only to Philadelphia County. Making HIV testing part of standard everyday procedures is critical to decreasing the number of cases that go undiagnosed.

"Over the years we've had so many people come through the Emergency Department and be diagnosed with late-stage AIDS," said Mary Gallagher, Positive Health Clinic manager. "In many cases, the people were involved in medical care, but nobody ever tested them for HIV."

Patients who decline to be tested will still receive information on HIV, the importance of screening and where tests are available.

"Even if we don't have an impact that day, the patient walks away with more information than they had," Gallagher said. "We want to drive home the message that if you're sexually active, you've got to get tested- period."

Learn more at www.wpahs.org. ↑

Cancer Caring Center and UPMC Passavant-Cranberry Launch Breast Cancer Support Group



Jane Klimasauskas

Together with the Cancer Caring Center, UPMC Passavant-Cranberry will offer a new Breast Cancer support group on the first and third Wednesday ay of every month from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, beginning August 3, 2011. The group will meet at the Breast Center Conference Room at Building #3 (3 St. Francis Way). Parking is free and refreshments will be provided.

Jane Klimasauskas, MSCP, LPC, will facilitate the group. Klimasauskas is the owner of Christine's Place Counseling Services in Zelienople, specializing in women-related issues.

Support groups provide a setting for survivors to share common experiences and concerns and to offer a social forum. Many studies have shown that an emotional healing can accelerate recovery. The Cancer Caring Center already

sponsors a General Support Group at this location but patients requested an additional group dedicated to breast cancer.

Since 1988, the Pittsburgh-based Cancer Caring Center has offered a wide variety of free supportive services for people dealing with cancer, including community groups at 16 locations, a telephone helpline, professional counseling and pet therapy and support for children.

Learn more at www.cancercaring.org. ↑

Healthcare Professionals in the News

Upper Allegheny Health System Adds News Corporate Staff Members

Upper Allegheny Health System (UAHS) announced the promotion of **Tina Hannahs**, **Christopher Howell** and **Penny Oyler** to new system-wide management roles.

Hannahs has been appointed Director of Revenue Cycle Management. In her new role, she is responsible for all revenue cycle activities at Upper Allegheny Health System's member hospitals Bradford Regional Medical Center and Olean General Hospital. She began working at Bradford Regional Medical Center as a computer operator in 1987. She later became a clerk in the billing office, and in 1994 was promoted to billing supervisor. Four years later, Hannahs became Patient Accounts Manager, and in 2001 she was appointed Director of Revenue Management at the hospital.

Howell has been appointed Director of Risk Management, and is now responsible for the oversight of an integrated, system-wide program of preventing, monitoring and controlling areas of potential liability exposure. The intent of the program is to enhance the safety of patients, visitors and employees and minimize potential financial loss to the organization through risk detection, evaluation and prevention. Howell began his career at Olean General Hospital in 2003 as a Respiratory Therapist. In 2006, he was appointed Manager of Cardiopulmonary and Sleep Services, and in 2010 he also became manager of the Center for Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine.

Oyler was appointed Director of Cardiopulmonary and Sleep Services for Bradford Regional Medical Center and Olean General Hospital. In her now role, she manages the Cardiopulmonary Departments and Sleep Centers at both hospitals. She joined Bradford Regional Medical Center in 2005 as the Director of Cardiopulmonary Services after serving as a Cardiopulmonary Manager and Program Director for Live Lite Bariatric Surgery Center.

For more information, visit www.uaahs.org. ↑

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Monongahela Valley Hospital Welcomes New Physicians and Staff Members

Monongahela Valley Hospital recently welcomed six new physicians to its medical staff in specialties ranging from family practice to nephrology. MVH's new physicians include:

Scott A. Cook, M.D., Department of Family Practice

Patrick J. Danaher, M.D., Department of Medicine, Ophthalmology

William T. DeCarbo, M.D., Department of Surgery, Podiatry

Daniel A. Iracki, M.D., Department of Medicine, Pulmonology and Internal Medicine

Mehrshid Kiazand, M.D., Department of Medicine, Internal Medicine

Ramya Sahasranamam, M.D., Department of Medicine, Nephrology

MVH also welcomed **Mohsen Isaac, M.D.**, director of radiation oncology at MVH, and clinical assistant professor at Temple University School of Medicine—one of the few physicians who utilizes an innovative technique to treat high-risk patients with early stage, non-small cell lung cancer.

Dr. Isaac has recorded proven success implanting low-dose radioactive iodine seeds permanently into the lungs of people with Stage 1 lung cancer. The treatment, which is primarily used on patients with limited heart/lung function, reduces recurrences. He recently presented his experience using this procedure at the American Brachytherapy Society's annual meeting in San Diego.

MVH's Charles L. and Rose Sweeney Melenzyer Pavilion and Regional Cancer Center provides the most up-to-date chemotherapy treatment, clinical trials and innovative therapies for people with all phases of cancer. As part of the Hospital's \$25 million expansion project, MVH is expanding its radiation therapy program to provide an even higher level of care.

MVH also recently established the Office of Fund Development which will begin its fundraising initiatives by directing the largest capital campaign in the history of the health system.

Sara Schumacher is the Vice President of Fund Development. In this role, she will oversee all fundraising activities including the Capital Campaign and the Annual Campaign. Schumacher has nearly a decade of health care fundraising experience. Prior to joining MVH, she was the development coordinator at Washington Hospital.

Jack Robinson is serving as the Director of the Capital Campaign and assisting Schumacher in planning and structuring the campaign. While making his home in the Mon Valley, Robinson served on the board of directors for Mon-Vale Resources, Inc. and the board of trustees for Monongahela Valley Hospital. Robinson retired as a senior vice president from PNC Bank and recently as the CEO of First Federal Savings Bank.

For more information, visit www.monvalleyhospital.com. ↑

WPAHS Welcomes Infectious Disease Specialist Dr. Supriya Narasimhan

West Penn Allegheny Health System recently welcomed **Supriya Narasimhan, MD**, to the Division of Infectious Disease where she will take an active role in infection prevention and control projects at Allegheny General Hospital (AGH) and lead a new infection prevention effort to be launched at Monongahela Valley Hospital (MVH).

Dr. Narasimhan will provide infectious disease consultation at both AGH and MVH, working with hospital staff to identify instances in which bacterial biofilms complicate the diagnosis and treatment of infections and studying those diseases at Allegheny Singer Research Institute's (ASRI) Center for Genomic Sciences.

Well respected nationally for its participation in leading medical research and contributions to the advancement of medicine, ASRI is the research arm of West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS) and has been managing and conducting research for 34 years.

Along with Dr. Weinbaum, Dr. Narasimhan joins AGH infectious disease physicians Drs. Nitin Bhanot, Sunil Bhat, Kevin Perez, Andrew Sahud, Edward Verdrem and Robert Volosky in carrying out infection control programs initiated as part of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Surgical Site Infection Prevention Collaborative. Through the collaborative, AGH has been working to prevent Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus and Central Line Associated Bacteremias. Continual improvement in hand hygiene is another focus of the group's work.

Dr. Narasimhan will chair Monongahela Valley Hospital's Infection Prevention and Control Committee and serve on the Hospital's Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, spearheading efforts to promote judicious antibiotic use.

She attended medical school in Mumbai, India and completed residency in internal medicine at the Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia followed by a fellowship in infectious diseases at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. Dr. Narasimhan recently completed a master's degree in clinical research through Baylor College of Medicine's Clinical Scientist Training Program, under the supervision of Dr. Rabi Darouiche, who leads an international consortium in the development of catheters and other medical devices that resist colonization by microbial biofilms and consequent infection. She is a member of the Infectious Diseases Society of America and the American Medical Association.

For more information, visit www.wpahs.org. ↑

Healthcare Professionals in the News

Physicians Elected to Lead Mount Nittany Physician Group

Mount Nittany Physician Group announced last month that **Anthony Cardell, M.D.** will serve as the Mount Nittany Physician Group's medical director and **Craig Collison, M.D.**, **Paul Guillard, M.D.**, and **Pete Roy III, M.D.**, have been elected as board members.

As the medical director, Dr. Cardell is currently meeting with each of the physicians to determine the specific goals and plans of the Physician Group. In his role, Dr. Cardell will implement and oversee the proposals created by the board members, in order to help bring the best medical care to the community and surrounding areas. The board members will meet monthly to review the activities of the Physician Group.

Board-certified in cardiovascular disease, Dr. Cardell graduated from and completed his residency at Temple University Medical School in Philadelphia, then finished his fellowship at Milton S. Hershey Medical Center in Hershey. Practicing cardiology in State College since 1995, he also serves as an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology at Penn State University.

A graduate of Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC, Dr. Collison completed his residency at Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital in Cleveland. He has been practicing medicine for 11 years, all in Centre County. Board-certified in pediatrics, the published author provides care at 141 Medical Park Lane, Bellefonte.

Dr. Guillard is a graduate of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. Dr. Guillard completed his internship, residency and fellowship at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown. He is board-certified in internal medicine and geriatric medicine by The American Board of Internal Medicine. He has been practicing in State College since 1997 and sees patients at the Guillard Medical Group at 905 University Drive, State College.

Dr. Roy, a graduate of The Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine Milton S. Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, completed his residency and fellowship at West Virginia University Medical Center in Morgantown, WV. Board-certified in neurology, Dr. Roy served as a clinical associate professor of medicine at Hershey Medical Center and an examiner for the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. He is a neurologist at 1850 East Park Avenue, State College.

For more information on the Mount Nittany Physician Group, please visit mountnittany.org. ↑

UPMC Horizon Welcomes Pulmonary and Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialists



Narayan Neupane

Narayan Neupane, MD, pulmonary medicine, has joined the UPMC Horizon Lung Center and UPMC Horizon's medical staff. Dr. Neupane earned his medical degree from the College of Medical Sciences – Nepal. He completed an internal medicine residency and a pulmonary medicine fellowship at Interfaith Medical Center, Brooklyn, N.Y. Dr. Neupane is a member of the American College of Chest Physicians and the American Thoracic Society. He is board-certified in internal medicine. He joins James Marcin, DO, in the UPMC Horizon Lung Center, 350 Sharon-New Castle Road, Farrell.

L. Wayne Hess, MD, a board-certified perinatologist with Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC, is now seeing patients at the Womancare Center of

UPMC Horizon. A perinatologist is an obstetrician who specializes in high-risk pregnancies and complications that may arise during pregnancy, including but not limited to gestational and pre-gestational diabetes, prior preterm birth, multiple fetuses, and fetal abnormalities. Dr. Hess earned his medical degree from Medical College of Virginia, Richmond, and completed an internship and obstetrics and gynecology residency at United States Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Va. He also completed a fellowship in maternal fetal medicine at the Naval Medical Command, Bethesda, Md., and Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. Because Dr. Hess provides consultations and condition management locally, women with high-risk pregnancies in the Mercer County area do not need to travel to Pittsburgh to see a maternal fetal medicine specialist.

For more information, visit www.UPMCHorizon.com. ↑



L. Wayne Hess

Dr. H. Martin Wrigley Welcomes Nurse Practitioner



Joseph D. Kollar

Dr. H. Martin Wrigley, recently welcomed **Joseph D. Kollar, CRNP** to his practice of Internal Medicine at Grove City Medical Center.

Most recently, Kollar provided care for the patients of Sharon Regional Health System Ear, Nose and Throat practice. Prior to advancing his education and professional training, Kollar provided registered nursing service at several local hospitals, primarily in the Emergency Room environment.

Kollar completed his studies and earned his Master of Science in Nursing degree with a concentration on the Family Nurse Practitioner in a combined program offered collaboratively through Clarion, Edinboro and Slippery Rock Universities in 2008.

In response to the emerging physician shortage, the role of mid-level practitioners, such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants is growing in importance. However, this trend began after Kollar had already begun to pursue his certification as a nurse practitioner. "I wanted to be able to reach out and help more people in more ways," he said. Considering the continually expanding opportunities in his new chosen career path, Kollar said "I'm as surprised as anyone at the growth in this profession."

Kollar lives in Pulaski, with his wife, Dinia and children, Nick, 14, Camryn, 7 and Logan, 4.

Dr. Wrigley's office is located in Suite 107 of Grove City Medical Center's Medical Office Building. For more information, call 724-458-8460. ↑

Healthcare Professionals in the News

Mario Browne Joins Pitt as Director of Health Sciences Diversity

Mario C. Browne, M.P.H., C.H.E.S., a public health administrator who has extensive experience in promoting minority health and wellness, will join the University of Pittsburgh's Schools of the Health Sciences as the director of health sciences diversity on July 5.

Throughout his career, Browne's interests have been in translating research and theory into practice and empowering communities and individuals to eliminate health disparities.

Browne had been a public health administrator in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the Allegheny County Health Department. From 2002 to 2009, he was a project director and community health coordinator for the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Minority Health (CMH), where he coordinated the nationally recognized *Take a Health Professional to the People Day*, a local initiative based on a national campaign that encouraged people to take their loved ones to see a doctor. Browne also served as the CMH liaison to the University of Pittsburgh's Health Sciences community, and community-based organizations, where he was responsible for community outreach, education and health promotion. He also coordinated the "Underground Railroad Bicycle Route" and formed the Pittsburgh Major Taylor Cycling Club, both of which encouraged African-Americans to use cycling as a means to get physically active.

A Pittsburgh native, Browne earned bachelors' degrees in biology and medical technology from Salem International University and a master's of public health from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health. He also is an alumnus of the *Emerging Leaders in Public Health Scholars* program at UNC Chapel Hill.

For more information, visit www.health.pitt.edu. ↑

New Hires at Conemaugh Health System

The Conemaugh Health System Recently announced the following additions to its staff:



Celine Gisbert

Dr. Celine Gisbert, Conemaugh Physician Group, was named Medical Director of Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center's Corporate Care Services. Board Certified by the Association of American Family Physicians, Dr. Gisbert has a Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy and received her Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines. She completed her Family Practice Residency at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center and currently works as a physician at Conemaugh's MedWELL Urgent Care where she will continue to see patients. She will serve as the Medical Review Officer for Conemaugh.

Adewale A. Olalere, MD, board certified in pulmonary, Sleep and internal medicine is back serving as an Attending

Physician for Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. Dr. Olalere attended medical school at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and completed his residency in the Department of Medicine at Harlem Hospital of the Columbia University Hospitals in New York City where he also completed a fellowship in pulmonary Medicine. Dr. Olalere is board certified in pulmonary and sleep medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He is a member of the American Thoracic Society, American College of Chest Physicians, American Medical Association and Nigerian Medical Association. Specializing in diseases of the lungs and sleep disorders, Dr. Olalere completed research in the prevalence of undiagnosed COPD while at Harlem Hospital. Dr. Olalere worked at Conemaugh Memorial back in 2005 and 2006 and at UPMC Lee Regional from 2002-2005. Dr. Olalere and his wife live in the Johnstown region with their two children.



Adewale A. Olalere

The Conemaugh Physician Group welcomed **Sarah S. Warehime, MD**, to the Portage Health Center. Dr. Warehime is board certified in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics and comes to the Portage Health Center from the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania, where she served as Clinical Faculty and Associate Professor. A Magna Cum Laude graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College and West Virginia School of Medicine, Dr. Warehime completed her Internal Medicine and Pediatrics Residency at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center where she served as Chief Resident for the Departments of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics. She relocated to the region with her fiancée who is an Ebensburg native.

Cambria Somerset Radiology and Nuclear Medicine, Inc. is welcomes **Dr. Samir Kodsi** to the team of radiologists



Sarah S. Warehime



Samir Kodsi

She joins the Cambria Somerset Radiology and Nuclear Medicine, Inc. practice and will provide Musculoskeletal and General Radiology services for patients. A Western Pennsylvania native, Dr. Cacek is a graduate of Lock Haven University and the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) where she received the Dean's Award for Highest Scholastic Excellence. Dr. Cacek completed a Traditional Rotating Osteopathic Internship at the University Hospitals Health Systems: Richmond Heights Hospital in Richmond Heights, Ohio, and a Diagnostic Radiology Residency at Kettering Medical Center Network: Grandview Hospital in Dayton, Ohio, where she served as Co-Chief Resident. Most recently Dr. Cacek completed a Musculoskeletal Radiology Fellowship at the West Penn Allegheny Health System in Pittsburgh.

serving patients at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. Dr. Kodsi is board certified by the American Board of Radiology. He obtained an undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland and a Masters in Forensic Sciences from The George Washington University in Washington D.C. He is a graduate of the University of Vermont College of Medicine and completed a Transitional Internship at Christiana Hospital in Newark, Delaware, followed by a Diagnostic Radiology Residency at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. Michelle Lee Cacek joined the Radiology team at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. Dr. Cacek is board certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Radiology (AOBR).



Michelle Lee Cacek

Finally, Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center and the Conemaugh Physician Group welcomed **James Lieb, DO**, to the Medical Oncology team. Dr. Lieb is the former Staff Hematologist / Medical Oncologist and Department Chief at Blair Medical Oncology in Altoona, PA. Dr. Lieb attended medical school at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his Internal Medicine Residency at Temple University and Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. A Hematology and Oncology Fellowship followed at The Western Pennsylvania Hospital in Pittsburgh, PA.

Dr. Lieb is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, the American Board for Internal Medicine for Medical Oncology and Hematology, and the National Board of Osteopathic Examiners. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association, Phi Sigma Gamma Osteopathic Medical Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology and American Osteopathic Association.



James Lieb

For more information, visit www.conemaugh.org. ↑

Director Named to the Adult Congenital Heart Disease Center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute



Stephen Cook

Stephen Cook, M.D., has been named director of the Adult Congenital Heart Disease (ACHD) Center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute (HVI).

Dr. Cook comes to Children's Hospital and the HVI from Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, where he served as assistant professor of pediatrics and internal medicine and director of non-invasive imaging and research for the Adolescent and Young Adult Congenital Heart Disease Program.

He brings to the center extensive experience in serving adolescents and adults with congenital heart disease as a board-certified physician in four specialties: adult and pediatric cardiology, internal medicine and pediatrics. He is an expert in the transition of care of patients with congenital heart disease from adolescence to adulthood. Other areas of expertise are non-invasive cardiac imaging, including echocardiography, cardiovascular magnetic resonance imaging, and cardiac computed tomography in adults with congenital heart disease.

For more information, visit www.upmc.com. ↑

IRETA Founder Transitions to New Role

Michael T. Flaherty, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist and founder and executive director of the Institute for Research, Education and Training in the Addictions (IRETA) for the past twelve years, has announced that he is stepping down from that role to focus more directly on the clinical development of recovery focused models of care in substance use, co-occurring disorders and mental health. He will continue to work with IRETA as a senior consultant.

Since 1999, Pittsburgh-based IRETA grew from its origins within Pittsburgh's St. Francis Health System and its Institute for Psychiatry and Addictions, to steadily develop into a recognized regional, state, national and international resource to improve policies, research, education, prevention, intervention and treatment of the illness of addiction and develop best practices to achieve and sustain recovery. Dr. Flaherty will continue to work in the field collaborating with others to build more refined models of care and measures that can enhance an individual's opportunity to attain and sustain recovery.



Peter F. Luongo

In introducing Dr. Flaherty's successor, IRETA board chair Rev. James Simms said, "IRETA will be in good hands" under the leadership of the new executive director **Peter F. Luongo, Ph.D., LCSW-C**, who will assume his new post on August 1.

Dr. Luongo brings more than 30 years of experience working with consumer and advisory groups, elected officials, and other administrators in the planning, implementation and administration of substance abuse, mental health, juvenile justice, criminal justice and public health services on state and local levels. He has experience in federal and state public policy development, implementation and oversight, developing innovative public/private program partnerships that link social, medical and behavioral health services

and solve complex policy and operational issues.

He is currently the managing director of his own health management and applied research practice in Germantown, Maryland. He previously was director of the State of Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration, with responsibility for planning and implementing the public substance abuse prevention, intervention and treatment system. Dr. Luongo also has served in various capacities in the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Addiction,

Victim, and Mental Health Services in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Dr. Luongo holds bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology from the Catholic University of America and a Ph.D. in social work from the University of Maryland. He has been a faculty associate at the Johns Hopkins University and was recognized with their Excellence in Teaching

Award. Dr. Luongo was named Maryland's 2008 Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers.

For more information, visit www.ireta.org. ↑

Healthcare Professionals in the News

Altoona Regional Health System Announces New Hires



Shirah Shore

Shirah Shore, M.D., has joined the Altoona Regional Health System Medical Staff in the department of Pediatrics and Newborns (Pediatric Cardiology). She practices with Geisinger Medical Center, Danville. She is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and Pediatric Cardiology. Dr. Shore received her medical degree from Medical College of Virginia, Richmond. She completed her residency training at University of Maryland, Baltimore, and her fellowship at Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati.

Wilhelmina P. Cruz-Vetrano, M.D., also joined the medical staff as medical director of the department of Laboratory Services. She is practicing with Pathology Associates of Blair County and is board certified by

the American Board of Pathology. She received her medical degree and completed her internship at Far Eastern University, Philippines. Dr. Cruz-Vetrano completed her residency training at SUNY-Health Science Center, Brooklyn, N.Y., and her fellowship at North Shore University Hospital, Manhasset, N.Y.

Brian Duclos of Altoona accepted the position of chief CRNA (certified registered nurse anesthetist) for Lexington Anesthesia Associates, an affiliate of Altoona Regional Health System. In this capacity, Duclos will continue his clinical duties while also being responsible for the overall administrative and daily operations of the anesthesia departments at Altoona Regional's two hospital campuses and surgery center. Prior to his appointment, Duclos served as a staff CRNA with Lexington Anesthesia for five years. He formerly served as clinical manager of post-anesthesia care unit/outpatient services at Altoona Regional's 7th Avenue Campus for four years. He received his Master of Science degree from Excelsa Health School of Anesthesia in 2005.



Wilhelmina P. Cruz-Vetrano



Pawan K. Gupta

Altoona Regional Health System also announced that **Pawan K. Gupta, M.D., FACP**, a member of the Altoona Regional Health System Medical Staff and chief of the clinical service of Nephrology, has been named medical director of U.S. Renal Care Altoona, 200 E. Chestnut Ave., Altoona. Dr. Gupta is board certified in Internal Medicine and Nephrology (kidney diseases) by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He received his medical degree from RNT Medical College, Udaipur, Rajasthan. He did his internal medicine residencies at Ravindra Nath Tagore Medical College in India and at Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh. He did his Nephrology fellowship training at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and at St. Luke's -Roosevelt Hospital Center, New York City. He is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians.

Finally, **Lindsay McCahan** of Altoona was recently named Perioperative Materials Manager for the Supply Chain department at Altoona Regional Health System. She is responsible for making sure all Surgical Services areas have sufficient and correct supplies and inventories at all times. The Surgical Suite on the Altoona Hospital Campus has 12 operating rooms, the Surgical Suite on the 7th Avenue Campus has four operating rooms and the Surgery Center has six operating rooms. Her responsibilities include the supervision of one buyer and two perioperative support assistants. The surgical areas exchange over \$1 million in inventories each month.

McCahan was hired as buyer for the Supply Chain in February 2007 and was promoted to perioperative support assistant in 2008. Two years later, she assumed the role of ISS/Capital Equipment & Contract Administrator. She is a graduate of Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Policy and Administration.

For more information, visit www.altoonaregional.com. ↑



Lindsay McCahan

Healthcare Professionals in the News

Baptist Homes Society Announces New President & CEO



Alvin W. Allison

Baptist Homes Society’s Board of Directors announced that it has selected **Alvin W. Allison** as the new President & CEO of the 101-year-old, not-for profit, faith-based organization, effective July 1, 2011.

According to Becky Surma, Chair of the Baptist Homes Society Board of Directors, “Al has demonstrated his leadership abilities as the interim President and Chief Executive Officer for the past six months while continuing his responsibilities as Providence Point’s Executive Director. His knowledge and experience in the ever-changing business of senior care, his commitment to “always putting residents first,” and his dedication to Baptist Homes Society’s mission brought him to the forefront as our candidate.”

Prior to serving as Interim President and CEO, Al served as the Executive Director of Providence Point from 2009 to present. Previously, Al served as Chief Operating Officer of Baptist Homes Society and as Executive Administrator of Baptist Homes. Before coming to Baptist Homes Society in 2007, Al held the position of Health Center Administrator of the Washington County Health Center and served as Associate Administrator and Interim Chief Executive Officer at Brownsville General Hospital.

For more information, visit www.baptisthomes.org.

HONOR ROLL

Oncology Nursing Society Receives Awards for Publishing Excellence

The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) was recently honored with several awards for its publishing excellence. Among the awards are Association Media and Publishing’s EXCEL Awards. A Bronze Award for Technical Books was awarded for *Cancer Basics*, edited by Julia Eggert, PhD, APRN-BC, AOCN®. An EXCEL Silver Award in the Journals, Feature Article category went to “Prolonged Grief Disorder,” by Lizel Craig published in the July 2010 issue of the *Oncology Nursing Forum*.

A Bronze Award in the Best Peer-Reviewed Journal category from the American Society of Healthcare Publication Editors went to the ONS journal *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*.

Communications Concepts, Inc. awarded an APEX Award to *Help Wanted: Caregiver*, by Laura J. Pinchot in the One-of-a-Kind – Health & Medical Publications category. A second APEX award went to *Genetics and Genomics in Oncology Nursing Practice*, edited by Kathleen A. Calzone, MSN, RN, APNG, FAAN, Agnes Masny, MSN, MPH, BS, RN, CRNP, and Jean Jenkins, PhD, RN, FAAN, in the Books & eBooks category.

The ONS Publications Department is a full-service publisher of resources designed to assist professional nurses and other members of the healthcare team to develop a foundation of knowledge about cancer care. Publications include the *Oncology Nursing Forum* and *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, as well as award-winning books, monographs, guidelines, standards, and other resources for the cancer care community. ONS also publishes books that have a broader consumer appeal for patients, caregivers, and nurses under the Hygeia Media imprint. ONS currently carries 80 active titles and published 9 new books in 2010.

ONS is a professional organization of more than 35,000 registered nurses and other healthcare professionals committed to excellence in oncology nursing and to leading the transformation of cancer care by initiating and actively supporting educational, legislative, and public awareness efforts to improve the care of people with cancer. ONS provides nurses and healthcare professionals with access to the highest quality educational programs, cancer care resources, research opportunities, and networks for peer support.

Learn more at www.ons.org.



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LECOM Faculty and Staff Members Honored at LECOM Awards Banquet



Lynn McGrath

Lynn McGrath, M.S.N., C.R.N.P., has been honored by the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) for her commitment and service to the college and its students with the 2011 LECOM Distinguished Citizen Award. The award is presented to a member of the LECOM family who has made significant contributions to the college in meeting the goals required to prepare the next generation of primary health care professionals.

McGrath has been affiliated with LECOM for 16 years and has been a full-time employee since 2007. She is Director of the Sensitive Patient Examination Commitment (SPEC) Program. She lectures on women's health issues, stress management, hypnosis, and self care. She also ensures that student immunization files are complete.

McGrath received her nurse practitioner certification at the University of Pennsylvania and her M.S.N. at Hahnemann University in Philadelphia. Before coming to LECOM, she spent four years working in family practice clinics and 16 years as an OB/GYN nurse practitioner.

Alice L. Puzarowki of Erie has received the LECOM Outstanding Service Award for 2011. The award is presented to a member of the LECOM family who has unselfishly assisted others in the overall betterment of the college and the promotion of the mission of LECOM.

Puzarowski has worked at LECOM as the Bookstore Manager since October 2008. She aims to provide excellent customer service for LECOM students searching for the right books, study guides, and research materials. Puzarowski is a graduate of Penn State Erie and Mercyhurst Preparatory School in Erie, Pa.



Alice L. Puzarowki

Kim Moscatello, Ph.D., of Fairview, Pa., received the LECOM John M. and Silvia Ferretti Award for Distinguished Teaching. The award is presented to a member of the clinical or preclinical faculty for outstanding service in stimulating and guiding the intellectual development of students at the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Dr. Moscatello has been at LECOM for eight years. She is an associate professor of microbiology and immunology and is the Director of the Independent Study Pathway. Dr. Moscatello received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from Louisiana State University Health Science Center – Shreveport and her Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn University.



Kim Moscatello

Theodore Makoske, M.D., of Millcreek also received the LECOM John M. and Silvia Ferretti Award for Distinguished Teaching. Dr. Makoske has been at LECOM since 2007. He is an Assistant Professor of Anatomy, Director of History and Physical Examination, and Assistant Director of the Independent Study Pathway. He serves as the faculty advisor for the Student Government Association and the Student Osteopathic Surgical Association. Dr. Makoske is a graduate of Texas A & M College of Medicine.

All of the awards were presented during the LECOM Awards Banquet and Luncheon May 27 at the Bel-Aire Clarion Hotel & Conference Center in Erie, Pa.

Learn more at www.lecom.edu. ↑



Theodore Makoske

HONOR ROLL

Nobel Laureate Receives Porter Prize from Pitt's Graduate School of Public Health



Françoise Barré-Sinoussi

Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, Ph.D., a virologist who accepted the Nobel Prize in Medicine for research that led to the identification of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), is the 2011 recipient of the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health's (GSPH) Porter Prize in recognition of her outstanding achievements promoting health and preventing disease through her many contributions to HIV/AIDS research.

GSPH bestowed the award on Dr. Barré-Sinoussi after she delivered a scientific lecture on the diverse host responses to HIV and simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) infection and a community lecture on the global benefit of multidisciplinary science in researching HIV.

Dr. Barré-Sinoussi is the director of the Regulation of Retroviral Infections Unit at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, has been a researcher of retrovirology since the 1970s. She and Professor Luc Montagnier received the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2008 for their discovery of HIV, which stemmed from Barré-Sinoussi's 1983 publication that reported the discovery of a retrovirus in a patient at risk for AIDS. In 1988, she began leading a laboratory at the Institut Pasteur and initiated research programs on viral and host determinants of HIV/AIDS pathogenesis. Between 1988 and 1998, Barré-Sinoussi worked with collaborative programs on HIV vaccine research. Today her team is focused on regulations of HIV/SIV infection.

Along with her research activities, Barré-Sinoussi has been involved in the integration of HIV/AIDS research and outreach in countries of limited resources through the Institut Pasteur International Network and has worked with organizations such as the National Agency for AIDS Research in France and the World Health Organization. She is president of the Scientific Committee of the National Agency for AIDS and Viral Hepatitis Research (ANRS) and heads the ANRS site in South East Asia.

Barré-Sinoussi is author and co-author of 249 original publications and more than 120 articles in book reviews. She has been a speaker at more than 300 international meetings and conferences and is a member of a number of scientific committees in France and elsewhere, including those of several International AIDS Conferences. In June 2006, Barré-Sinoussi was elected as an International AIDS Society Governing Council member in the European Region. She has received more than 10 national or international awards and was awarded doctor honoris causa from a number of universities. In February 2009, she was elected a member of the French Academy of Science. In 2012, Barré-Sinoussi will be the president of the International AIDS Society.

For more information, visit www.publichealth.pitt.edu. ↑

National LLS Honors WPAHS' Dr. James Rossetti

James Rossetti, DO, Associate Director of the Cell Transplantation Program at West Penn Hospital, has been honored with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Chairman's Citation, given to individuals whose outstanding accomplishments show significant dedication and commitment to their chapter are deserving of national recognition.

Dr. Rossetti's passion is to develop better treatment regimens for patients with acute myelogenous leukemia and myelodysplasia, and those needing blood or bone marrow transplantation. Some of his research has resulted in significantly better outcomes for individuals with AML, which is typically an aggressive disease. He has spoken widely at the state and local levels in support of adult stem cells, while explaining the moral and scientific problems associated with embryonic stem cell research.

Since its inception in 1990, the Western Pennsylvania Hospital's Cell Transplantation Program has been nationally recognized as a leader in the treatment of patients with acute and chronic leukemias, myelodysplastic syndromes, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, myeloma and related disorders.

For more information, visit www.wpahs.org. ↑



James Rossetti

Society for Vascular Surgery Presents Fellowship to Pitt Professor

The Society for Vascular Surgery presented the E. J. Wylie Traveling Fellowship to **Rabih A. Chaer, MD**, of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine during the Vascular Annual Meeting® held June 16-18, 2011 in Chicago.

Dr. Chaer is an Assistant Professor of Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He plans to travel to vascular centers in Europe and study multi-disciplinary and advanced endovascular interventions for limb salvage and critical limb ischemia.

The \$12,000 award provides financial assistance for a Society for Vascular Surgery fellow to travel domestically and internationally to established vascular centers to share professional expertise. The exchange of information can stimulate academic inspiration, promote international exchange, and foster development of fraternal fellowship in vascular surgery. These objectives enhance the development of the fellow's career in vascular surgery.

For more information, visit www.VascularWeb.org. ↑

Altoona Regional Health System Announces Recent Retirements



Judy DeStefano

retired June 30 with 21 years of service. Masic was hired by then Mercy Hospital in 1990 and worked in the Rehabilitation unit until she transferred to the Sleep Lab when it opened in 1996. She resides in Altoona.



Christine Bossi

Windber Hospital, formed the Pennsylvania Black Lung Coalition. The coalition, which Bossi serves as program director, operates three clinics, in Altoona, Windber and eastern Pennsylvania.

Mary Aungst, supply technician with the Supply Chain department on the 7th Avenue Campus, retired recently with 29 years of service. On April 20, 1982, Aungst was hired by then Mercy Hospital as a child development aide for the child care center. When the day care closed in 1987, she transferred to the Operating Room and became a surgical aide. Later, surgical aides were transferred to Materiel Management, which was later renamed Supply Chain. She resides in Altoona.

For more information, visit www.altoonaregional.org. ↑

Judy DeStefano, a nuclear medicine technologist in the Imaging Services department at Altoona Regional Health System, retired April 30 with 41 years of service. DeStefano was hired as a technologist in Radiology at the former Altoona Hospital in 1968 upon graduation from the Altoona Hospital School of Radiology. The Altoona resident is a registered technologist in Diagnostic Radiology and certified in Nuclear Medicine. During her career, she received additional cross-training to work in the Nuclear Medicine and Ultrasound areas. During her years of service, she was recognized as an "Employee of the Month."

Mary Masic, medical secretary in the Altoona Regional Institute for Sleep Medicine,



Mary Masic

Christine Bossi, R.N., coordinator of Outpatient Pulmonary Rehabilitation and Pennsylvania Black Lung Program and registered nurse with Pulmonary and Hyperbaric Medicine, retired July 1 with 18 ½ years of service. Bossi was hired by the former Altoona Hospital on Dec. 21, 1992, as coordinator of Outpatient Pulmonary Rehabilitation and the Department of Health Coal Worker Respiratory Disease Program. In 2001, she began working in Hyperbaric Medicine when that service opened. In 2002, Altoona Regional obtained its own grant to provide services to black lung patients and, working with



Mary Aungst

HONOR ROLL

Linda Siminerio of University of Pittsburgh Diabetes Institute Receives Outstanding Educator in Diabetes Award

Linda M. Siminerio, R.N., Ph.D., C.D.E., executive director of the University of Pittsburgh Diabetes Institute, received the American Diabetes Association's (ADA) prestigious Outstanding Educator in Diabetes Award at the association's 71st Scientific Sessions in San Diego last month.

The award is presented to an individual who demonstrates significant contributions to the understanding of diabetes education, has spent many years of effort in the field, and has benefited recipients of education.

Dr. Siminerio, who also is associate professor in the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing at the University of Pittsburgh, has been a pioneer in the field of diabetes education. She was one of the first pediatric diabetes educators in the United States and has helped to establish 46 American Diabetes Association-recognized diabetes self-management programs throughout Pennsylvania. She has been a leader in the Pennsylvania Chronic Care Commission, whose efforts are aimed at improving services to people with diabetes.

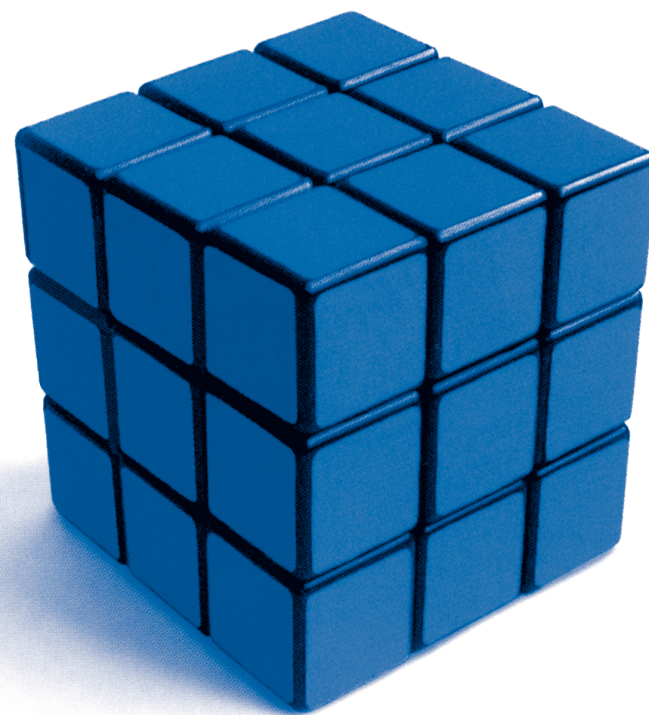
She is the author of numerous books and scientific publications in her field and is the author of the National Standards for Diabetes Education and the International Diabetes Standards and Curriculum. She has also served as senior vice president for the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and served as chair of the IDF World Congress in 2009. She was the editor-in-chief of *Diabetes Forecast*, and a past president of Health Care and Education for the American Diabetes Association.

For more information, visit www.upmc.edu. ↑



Linda Siminerio

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Highmark Receives NCQA Distinction in Multicultural Health Care

Highmark Inc. is the first Blue Cross Blue Shield Plan to receive a Distinction in Multicultural Health Care (MHC) by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). Highmark is recognized for its Commercial HMO and Medicare Advantage HMO products offered under subsidiary company, Keystone Health Plan West (KHPW). This distinction exemplifies Highmark's leadership in working to improve health care for all Americans.

NCQA initiated the Distinction in MHC Program to recognize health plans, wellness, disease management and managed behavioral health organizations in their ability to address the health care needs of minority populations through the use of an evidence-based set of requirements. The standards measured to receive the NCQA MHC Distinction included direct and indirect collection and analysis of race/ethnicity and language data from members and practitioners; monitoring of access and availability of language services; practitioner network cultural responsiveness; culturally and linguistically appropriate service programs and reducing health care disparities.

Highmark's Keystone Health Plan West Commercial HMO and Medicare Advantage HMO initiative accomplishments included positively designating health care disparities reduction as a strategic goal; successfully collecting and analyzing race, ethnicity and language data and implementing a program to address disparities in heart disease and diabetes for the African-American population of its member base.

For more information, visit www.highmark.com. ↑

Sharon Regional Installs New Heart/Vascular Suite

Sharon Regional Health System has upgraded its cardiac catheterization labs through the installation of a new \$1 million cardiac/vascular diagnostic and interventional suite within its Heart and Vascular Institute. The new system is fully digital and enables physicians to capture and view images of a patient's vascular system while also decreasing a patient's radiation exposure.

The result is a faster and more accurate diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of cardiac and vascular conditions through procedures such as diagnostic catheterizations, stenting, and balloon angioplasty. These minimally invasive procedures treat a number of clinical problems including heart disease, blocked heart vessels, carotid artery disease, abdominal aortic aneurysms, and other peripheral vascular disorders. These catheter-based procedures are designed to reduce some of the risks and recovery time inherent in traditional surgical approaches. Among the many benefits of catheter-based interventions are shorter hospital stays, reduced recovery time without the pain of a large incision, and less visible surgical scarring.



Ronnie Mignella, M.D., interventional cardiologist and medical director of the cath lab, in Sharon Regional's new Cardiac/Vascular Diagnostic and Interventional Suite along with Shirelle Moreland, RTR (CV), cath lab tech (center) and Annette DiCristofaro, R.N., cath lab nurse.

"Both our patients and clinical staff will benefit from the speed and excellent image accuracy of this new system," explained Ronnie Mignella, M.D., interventional cardiologist and medical director of the cardiac catheterization lab. "It will allow our interventional cardiologists and vascular surgeons to complete a variety of diagnostic and interventional procedures saving the patients the risks and prolonged recovery associated with traditional surgery."

The new system will further enhance Sharon Regional's ability to rapidly treat patients suffering from heart attacks due to partial or full blockages of heart vessels. Sharon Regional is the only hospital in Mercer County that offers emergency angioplasty 24 hours a day/7 days a week so heart attack patients can quickly receive the help they need without waiting to be stabilized and transferred to another out-of-town facility.

"Interventional x-ray technology is a vital component in the future of medicine," said Richard Fabian, vice president of diagnostic imaging, Philips Medical Systems, North America. "We are happy that the Philips Allura system is offering specialists at Sharon Regional Health System a new level of quality and detail in the clinical images that help them to offer patients safe and effective alternatives to major surgery."

For more information, visit www.sharonregional.com. 📌

DuBois Regional Medical Center Attested for Stage 1 of Meaningful Use

On June 22, the DuBois Regional Medical Center (DRMC), including Brookville Hospital (critical access hospital subsidiary) reported that it has successfully attested for stage 1 of the Meaningful Use (Medicare and Medicaid) requirements of the HITECH Act of 2009. DRMC/BH uses the *Cerner Millennium*® application suite for its inpatient electronic medical records (EMR) system and is the first hospital in Pennsylvania using their systems to attest for Meaningful Use.

"We are very pleased to see the results of our investments in EMR technology that improve the quality and safety of the care that is delivered at both DRMC and Brookville Hospital. These tools allow physicians and clinicians to make more informed decisions at the point-of-care for the benefit of the patients that were not possible before in a paper based environment," said Tom Johnson, Assistant Vice President of MIS.

In addition, both hospitals have been awarded Stage 6 of the EMR adoption model by Health Information Management and Systems Society (HIMSS). HIMSS identifies and scores hospitals using an eight step scale (0 to 7 stages) that charts the path to a fully paperless environment.

Learn more at www.drmc.org. 📌



Tom Johnson

Around the Region

Forbes Regional Hospital Offers Palliative Care Program

Beginning in July, Forbes Regional Hospital will offer a palliative care consultation service to physicians, nurses, patients and families. Palliative care services focus on improving the quality of life of people facing serious and chronic illness. Patients can receive palliative care throughout their illness trajectory, even while receiving life-prolonging treatments.

Supporting this program is a full-time nurse practitioner, Terry Hurley, CRNP, who will be available to assist both inpatients and home bound patients with pain and symptom management, care team coordination and communication. Another aspect of Ms. Hurley's job is to help patients determine their health care goals. "Palliative care is different for every patient," says Ms. Hurley. "I work closely with patients to provide them with information regarding their care options, and then we formulate a plan individualized to them and their wishes." She works closely with all members of a patient's care team including physicians, nurses, social workers, therapists and others.

Many patients receiving palliative care choose to be at home says Hurley. "They want to be at home where they are comfortable versus receiving aggressive care or treatments in a hospital setting."

Studies have shown that patients who receive palliative care actually live longer than patients with chronic illnesses and diseases who do not receive palliative care. "Several studies show that palliative care consults help patients' quality of life," said Randy Hebert, MD, Medical Director of Forbes Hospice. In addition to benefiting patients, palliative care programs benefit hospitals. "Hospitals that have palliative care programs experience decreased costs, since patients are choosing to be at home to receive care," said Dr. Hebert. "We are able to decrease costs while improving patient outcomes."

Since palliative care also focuses on communication between patients and their care teams, patients' care tends to be better managed and to involve fewer high-level services such as stays in the intensive care unit. Patients are also better transitioned to home or hospice care, which decreases the rate of hospital readmissions.

In addition to Forbes Regional, within the West Penn Allegheny Health System, Allegheny General Hospital offers a palliative care consultation service.

To learn more about the program at Forbes Regional, contact 412-398-8454. 📌

Millcreek Community Hospital Increases in Size

The region's only hospital-based transitional care unit (TCU), part of the LECOM Institute for Successful Aging, increased in size from 14 to 24 beds at Millcreek Community Hospital (MCH). The new unit opened for patients on Monday, June 6.

The LECOM Institute for Successful Aging also expanded its Acute Care for the Elderly (ACE) unit from 8 to 14 beds at MCH.

The TCU and ACE are unique to the region and offer benefits to patients and the community that can be summarized as "better care at less cost," said James Y. Lin, D.O. Dr. Lin is a fellowship-trained geriatrician and the Institute's director as well as the vice president for Senior Services and Adult Living at Millcreek Community Hospital.

"Transitional care units improve care by helping elderly patients recover more fully after their release from acute-care units following surgery or hospitalization for serious illness," he explained. "Research shows that TCU and ACE units can reduce readmissions and future hospitalizations. Patients receive care from a multidisciplinary team of health professionals as well as a complete geriatric assessment so we can initiate preventive measures and greatly improve their level of functioning. Our goal is to restore or enhance their previous level of independence."

Millcreek Community Hospital's TCU is the region's only sub-acute rehabilitation unit located in a hospital with 24-hour physician coverage and immediate access to lab, X-ray and other ancillary services, said geriatrician Danielle M. Hansen, D.O.

"More older patients are being treated in general adult health care facilities that are not prepared with specialized staff or accommodations to handle the multiple and often inter-related mental and physical health problems of this age group," said Dr. Hansen. "Millcreek Community Hospital is unique in this region in offering three specialized senior services – the TCU, ACE unit and senior behavioral health – all complementing each other under one roof."

Added hospital president Mary L. Eckert, "The senior population is increasing in this region and we're pleased to be able to meet their needs." She noted that long-term care beds at Millcreek Community Hospital and its adjoining Millcreek Manor skilled nursing facility have increased to 74 for a total of 218 beds on the overall hospital campus. 📌

Bradford Regional Medical Center and Olean General Hospital Implement Hand Hygiene Initiative

Bradford Regional Medical Center (BRMC) and Olean General Hospital (OGH), member hospitals of Upper Allegheny Health System, have launched a comprehensive Hand Hygiene Initiative (HHI), which is supported by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and designed to reduce the number of infections acquired in the healthcare setting.

“Our health system is committed to taking meaningful steps to prevent healthcare associated infections,” said Timothy J. Finan, president and CEO of Upper Allegheny Health System and member hospitals Bradford Regional Medical Center and Olean General Hospital. “This Hand Hygiene Initiative is a reflection of our continuing effort to provide high quality care and ensure the safest possible environment for our patients.”

Currently, approximately 90,000 hospital patients die nationwide each year as a result of healthcare-associated infections. Proper hygiene practices can go a long way in preventing the spread of infection. This new initiative is aimed at promoting a change in culture that stresses the importance of hand hygiene, with the ultimate goal of saving lives.

As healthcare workers are often exposed to infectious bacteria, and can obtain thousands of bacteria by completing simple tasks such as taking a pulse or blood pressure, this initiative stresses the importance of washing hands before entering and exiting patient rooms at the hospital. In order to reduce the risk of infection, hospital officials are focusing on promoting daily practices for employees, patients and visitors. Patients are encouraged to ask visitors, nurses and physicians that enter their rooms if they’ve washed their hands before coming in.

“The healthcare associated infection rates at Bradford Regional Medical Center fall well below the national average,” said Terrie O’Brien, RN, Infection Control Practitioner at Bradford Regional Medical Center. “We’ve instituted this Hand Hygiene Initiative to lower these rates even further. Simply put, hand hygiene saves lives and this initiative allows us to pursue our goal of completely eliminating the risk of healthcare associated infections at our facilities.”



Bradford Regional Medical Center Registered Nurse Sue Myers (left) and Infection Control Practitioner Terrie O'Brien, RN (right) demonstrate the proper application of hand sanitizer as part of Bradford Regional Medical Center's Hand Hygiene Initiative.

Hand sanitizer dispensers are located throughout the hospital, including each patient room, outside of each elevator, and throughout every main hallway. Hospital officials are actively monitoring hand hygiene compliance, and have created numerous educational materials, which are available throughout each facility, to promote the initiative.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is an independent, not-for-profit-organization focused on motivating and building the will for change, identifying and testing new models of care in partnership with both patients and health care professionals, and ensuring the broadest possible adoption of best practices and effective innovations.

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Around the Region

Kane McKeesport's "Garden of Reflection" Offers Tranquility

The Kane Regional Center in McKeesport's "Garden of Reflection" wasn't built in a day. In fact, seven years of planning, fund-raising and hard-work led to the creation of this tranquil haven for residents, their family members and staff at Kane McKeesport.



"Alleluia, alleluia. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it," said Kane McKeesport Chaplain Sister T.J. Gaines during the official dedication of the Garden of Reflection on June 1. "This is a real haven. The view is wonderful and it is very relaxing."

Sister T.J. was one of those people instrumental in making the Garden of Reflection a reality. The garden features rows of flowers and trees along the walkways. Several benches are placed in spots where residents may sit and take in the picturesque setting. Three fountain sculptures and a pergola also accentuate the garden. But perhaps the biggest highlight is the inclusion of a special swing that can accommodate a wheelchair.

Kane Executive Director Dennis Biondo was among those who spoke at the dedication. "This has been in the works for quite a while," Biondo said of the garden. "It really looks great to me and I'm sure the residents will put it to good use for many years to come."

Kane McKeesport Administrator Charlene Flaherty praised all those who helped in the planning and creation of the garden, stating, "Everyone involved did a wonderful job."

The Rev. Francis Z. Jurewicz blessed the fountains and the garden. Resident Mary Gross also spoke and presented plaques to Environmental Services Manager Andy Geffert and volunteer George Branick for their dedication to the project. Additional plaques recognizing various contributors were unveiled, with those honoring the Edwin R. Crawford Estate Trust Fund, the Charles F. Peters Foundation, and the McKeesport Hospital Foundation.

Sharon Sisley provided musical entertainment with her rendition of the songs, "In the Garden" and "Amazing Grace." Vitas Innovative Hospice donated an angel garden sculpture, and the Kane Family Council donated a butterfly bush.

Planning for the Garden of Reflection began seven years ago. Multiple fund-raisers were held to benefit the project. The wheelchair accessible swing was the first item purchased for the garden, and as more funds arrived, more items were acquired.

"The Garden of Reflection will offer our residents, their families and our staff a special place to take in the beauty of the flowers, trees, sculptures and fountains," Flaherty said. "We appreciate all the hard work and dedication that went into the planning, fund-raising and creation of this haven."

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Established in 1893, The Children's Home of Pittsburgh is an independent non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote the health and well-being of infants and children through services which establish and strengthen the family. The Children's Home has three programs: a licensed infant Adoption program, Child's Way® day care for medically fragile children, birth to age 8, and a 24-bed Pediatric Specialty Hospital, providing acute care for children ages birth to 21, transitioning from hospital to home. Additionally, our Family Living Area provides families with amenities to help make our hospital feel more like home, allowing them to stay overnight with their child. For more information, visit www.childrenshomepgh.org.

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ChildrensHomePgh>
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PRESBYTERIAN SENIORCARE

As this region's premiere provider of living and care options for older adults, Presbyterian SeniorCare offers a wide variety of employment opportunities - all with competitive wages and comprehensive benefits - at multiple locations throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania. As part of its philosophy of Human Resources, PSC strives to develop a rewarding work environment that is rich in interdepartmental cooperation and that recognizes the value of each individual employee.

Human Resources Department
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412-828-5600
825 South Mail Street, Washington, PA 15301
724-222-4300

ST. BARNABAS HEALTH SYSTEM

RNs, LPNs, Home Care Companions, Personal Care, Attendants, Hospice Aides, Dietary Aides
St. Barnabas Health System frequently has job openings at its three retirement communities, two assisted living facilities, two nursing homes, and an outpatient medical center that includes general medicine, rehab therapy, a dental practice, home care and hospice. Campuses are located in Gibsonsia, Allegheny County, and Valencia, Butler County. Enjoy great pay and benefits in the fantastic suburban setting. Both campuses are a convenient drive from the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Routes 8, 19 and 228, and Interstates 79 and 279. Contact Margaret Horton, Executive Director of Human Resources, St. Barnabas Health System, 5830 Meridian Road, Gibsonsia, PA 15044. 724-444-JOBS; mhorton@stbarnabashealthsystem.com. www.stbarnabashealthsystem.com.

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For over a century, Asbury Heights, operated by United Methodist Services for the Aging, has been providing high-quality compassionate care to older adults in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Asbury Heights is a faith-based, non-profit charitable organization located in Mt. Lebanon. Through various accommodations, services and amenities, the needs of independent living residents can be met. For residents requiring more care, the continuing care community also offers assisted living, nursing and rehabilitative care and Alzheimer's specialty care. The Health and Wellness Center is headed by a board certified, fellowship trained geriatrician. Residents may be treated by on-site specialists or retain their own physicians. Rehabilitative therapies are also available on-site. A variety of payment options are available to fit individual financial situations. The application process is very quick and easy and does not obligate the applicant in any way.

For more information, please contact Joan Mitchell for independent living; Michele Bruschi for Nursing Admissions; or Lisa Powell for Assisted Living at 412-341-1030. Visit our website at www.asburyheights.org.

BAPTIST HOMES SOCIETY

Baptist Homes Society, a not-for-profit organization operating two continuing care retirement communities in Pittsburgh's South Hills region, has served older adults of all faiths for more than 100 years. Baptist Homes, nestled on a quiet hillside in Mt. Lebanon, serves nearly 300 seniors. Providence Point, a beautiful 32-acre site in Scott Township, has the capacity to serve more than 500 older adults. Each campus has a unique identity and environment yet both provide a full continuum of care, including independent living, personal care, memory support, rehabilitation therapies, skilled nursing, and hospice care. Baptist Homes Society is Medicare and Medicaid certified. Within our two communities, you'll find a the lifestyle and level of care to meet your senior living needs. To arrange a personal tour at either campus, contact: Sue Lauer, Community Liaison, 412-572-8308 or email slauer@baptisthomes.org.

Or visit us at Baptist Homes
489 Castle Shannon Blvd., Mt. Lebanon.
(www.baptisthomes.org).
Providence Point:
500 Providence Point Blvd., Scott Twp
(www.providencepoint.org)

KANE REGIONAL CENTERS

Allegheny County's four Kane Regional Centers provide residential skilled nursing care and rehabilitation for short-term and long-term needs. The centers -- located in Glen Hazel, McKeesport, Ross Township and Scott Township -- offer 24-hour skilled nursing care, hospice and respite care, Alzheimer's memory care, recreational therapy and social services. Visit www.kanecare.com or call 412.422.6800.

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PRESBYTERIAN SENIORCARE

A regional network of living and care options for older adults throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. Services and facilities include skilled and intermediate nursing care, rehabilitation, personal care, specialty Alzheimer's care, adult day care, home health care, senior condominiums, low-income and supportive rental housing. For more information:

Presbyterian SeniorCare - Oakmont
1215 Hulton Road, Oakmont, PA 15139
412-828-5600
Presbyterian SeniorCare - Washington
825 South Main Street, Washington, PA 15301
724-222-4300

ST. BARNABAS HEALTH SYSTEM

Regardless of what lifestyle option a senior needs, St. Barnabas Health System has a variety of choices to fulfill that need. Independent living options include The Village at St. Barnabas apartments, The Woodlands at St. Barnabas and White Tail Ridge carriage homes, and The Washington Place at St. Barnabas efficiency apartments. Assisted living is available at The Arbors at St. Barnabas in Gibsonsia and Valencia. Twenty-four hour skilled care is provided at St. Barnabas Nursing Home and Valencia Woods at St. Barnabas. St. Barnabas Medical Center is an outpatient facility that includes physicians, chiropractors, dentists, rehabilitation therapists, home care and hospice. The system's charitable arm, St. Barnabas Charities, conducts extensive fundraising activities, including operating the Kean Theatre and Rudolph Auto Repair. St. Barnabas' campuses are located in Gibsonsia, Allegheny County, and Valencia, Butler County. For more information, call 724-443-0700 or visit www.stbarnabashealthsystem.com.

WESTMORELAND MANOR

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Contact information:
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875 Greentree Road, Building 3 Suite 325,
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
Phone: 412-922-3435, 800-999-5178/
Fax: 412-920-2740
www.lovingcareagency.com

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PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Allegheny County Health Department serves the 1.3 million residents of Allegheny County and is dedicated to promoting individual and community wellness; preventing injury, illness, disability and premature death; and protecting the public from the harmful effects of biological, chemical and physical hazards within the environment. Services are available through the following programs: Air Quality, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention; Chronic Disease Prevention; Environmental Toxins/Pollution Prevention; Food Safety; Housing/Community Environment; Infectious Disease Control; Injury Prevention; Maternal and Child Health; Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition; Plumbing; Public Drinking Water; Recycling; Sexually Transmitted Diseases/AIDS/HIV; Three Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Project; Tobacco Free Allegheny; Traffic Safety; Tuberculosis; and Waste Management. Bruce W. Dixon, MD, Director.

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REHABILITATION

THE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE

The Hospital at the Children's Institute, located in Squirrel Hill, provides inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services for children and young adults. Outpatient services are also provided through satellite facilities in Bridgeville, Irwin and Wexford. In addition, The Day School at The Children's Institute offers educational services to children, ages 2-21, who are challenged by autism, cerebral palsy or neurological impairment. Project STAR at The Children's Institute, a social services component, coordinates adoptions, foster care and intensive family support for children with special needs.
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Health Care Event & Meeting Guide

Southwestern Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders 32nd Annual Educational Conference

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September 1-2, 2011

Register online at www.lite.org or email info@lite.org

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Hartwood Acres

September 10

For details, www.familyhouse.org

Canonsburg General Hospital's 27th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament

Valley Brook Country Club

September 12

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Lupus Loop

Great Lawn, North Shore

October 1

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Salt Lake City, Utah

October 1-6

Exhibit Dates October 2-5

Register online at www.ahima.org

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Marriott Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel, Chicago, IL

October 26-28

Visit www.healthcaredevelopmentconference.com for more information

10th Annual Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Symposium

Sister M. Ferdinand Auditorium, UPMC Mercy

October 29, 9am-1:30pm

To register, call 412.232.5815 or email parishnurse@mercy.pmhs.org

PFCC VisionQuest Workshop

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November 4

UPMC Shadyside, Pittsburgh, PA

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