

HealthLINK

YOUR CONNECTION TO HEALTH & WELLNESS

INSIDE: Valley Health's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. / Coping with anxiety disorders. / State-of-the-art care for carpal tunnel syndrome. / Innovations in urology surgery.

LEADING THE WAY

ADVANCED SCREENING, TECHNOLOGY AND TREATMENT FOR LUNG CANCER RESULT IN IMPROVED OUTCOMES AND FASTER RECOVERIES

 **ValleyHealth**
Healthier, together.

SUMMER 2020

WELCOME

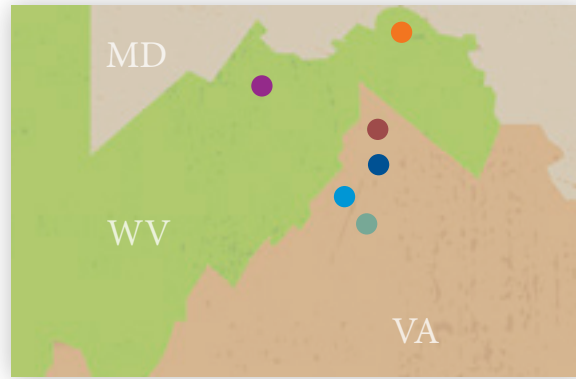
COMING TOGETHER

The hardships experienced by families and communities because of the COVID-19 pandemic are heartbreaking. We share the grief and sadness experienced by so many of our friends and neighbors, and especially mourn the passing of the hundreds of healthcare workers around the world—our friends, comrades and colleagues—who risked their lives to serve and care for the sick and suffering.

Even in these times of grief, we are also heartened to witness the many ways our community has come together ... even while remaining 6 feet apart. Many have donated medical supplies, hand-sewn masks and meals to Valley Health hospital teams; are giving generously to local food pantries; and have adopted the practices of social distancing and self-isolation to mitigate the spread of COVID.

By coming together, we are getting through the pandemic's daily challenges. Amid the uncertainties, it is comforting to know that the dedicated and exceptional Valley Health team is resilient and ready to provide the care our community needs.

On the cover: T. Glen Boudier, MD, interventional pulmonologist.



Valley Health is a not-for-profit system of hospitals, services and providers. For more information about the many ways we serve the health and wellness needs of the community, visit valleyhealthlink.com.

Valley Health System includes:

- Winchester Medical Center (Winchester, VA)
- Hampshire Memorial Hospital (Romney, WV)
- Page Memorial Hospital (Luray, VA)
- Shenandoah Memorial Hospital (Woodstock, VA)
- War Memorial Hospital (Berkeley Springs, WV)
- Warren Memorial Hospital (Front Royal, VA)

Additional locations and facilities:

- Outreach Lab Services
- Quick Care
- Rehabilitation Services (Inpatient and Outpatient)
- Urgent Care
- Valley Health Home Health | West Virginia
- Valley Health | Spring Mills
- Valley Health Surgery Center
- Valley Medical Transport
- Valley Pharmacy
- Valley Physician Enterprise
- Wellness & Fitness Centers

→ For more information, visit valleyhealthlink.com/locations.



Valley Health System

Serving Our Community by Improving Health

HealthLINK

The magazine of Valley Health System
Serving the northern Shenandoah Valley and surrounding areas in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland

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HealthLINK magazine is published three times a year. Its purpose is to provide health and wellness information to the community and to connect area residents with health-care experts within Valley Health System.

Contact marketingmail@valleyhealthlink.com or 540-536-5325 to be added to our mailing list; view *HealthLINK* online at valleyhealthlink.com/news.

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MARK NANTZ TO TAKE THE HELM AT VALLEY HEALTH

Mark Nantz, MHA, has been selected to serve as Valley Health System's new President and Chief Executive Officer, effective June 1. Following a nationwide search that included input from community, hospital and physician leaders, the Valley Health Board of Trustees chose Nantz as successor to the retiring President and CEO Mark H. Merrill, who served in this capacity for 11 years.

"Valley Health is well regarded for its clinical excellence and quality," stated Nantz. "I feel honored to have been selected, and look forward to leading the organization to its next level of success."

Nantz brings extensive experience in the healthcare industry to his new role at Valley Health, where he will lead over 6,000 employees as they serve a 14-county region in three states. During his 30-plus-year career, he has served in executive leadership roles with Bon Secours Mercy Health, Carolinas Healthcare System, and the audit practice at a Big 5 accounting firm. He is a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives and a certified public accountant. His professional accomplishments in health care include building advanced clinical programs, and successful physician and community partnerships, and improving patient satisfaction and the provision of quality care.

An engaged community leader, Nantz volunteers in leadership roles with numerous organizations, including chambers of commerce, the American Heart Association, the March of Dimes, and organizations supporting the fine arts. He and his wife, Courtenay, will relocate to Winchester, Virginia. To learn more about Nantz's experience, visit

valleyhealthlink.com/Nantz.

A LEGACY FOR OUR REGION

Two new hospitals and numerous outpatient care practices and clinics in West Virginia. New or renovated and modernized hospitals in Page and Shenandoah counties. A state-of-the-art hospital now rising from the mountainside in Warren County. Renovations and construction at Winchester Medical Center, including the Valley Health Cancer Center, Surgery Center and Heart & Vascular Center. A team of over 600 physician specialists and hundreds of advanced practice clinicians, highly qualified nurses and other expert professionals. An electronic medical record system, surgical robots and other technology for advanced patient care. Medicaid expansion in Virginia, ensuring that over 300,000 residents now have access to care. Certifications and accolades from medical, nursing, business, and other organizations. An exceptional team that is trained and ready to respond to crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

These accomplishments—and others—are Mark H. Merrill's legacy to our region, as he retires this summer from his role as Valley Health System President and CEO.

"Mark's work has positively affected patients and families, co-workers and colleagues, physicians, friends and strangers," Joseph F. Silek Jr., chair of the VHS Board, recently stated. "I thank him for advancing our strategic initiatives, his values-based leadership, and his commitment to our region. On behalf of the Valley Health team and our wider community, I thank him for all he has done to make our community healthier, and wish him all the best as he begins his next chapter."



READY AND RESILIENT

VALLEY HEALTH TEAM MOBILIZES FOR COVID-19

While many in our region have followed mandates from local and state governments about self-quarantine and social distancing by taking to their homes to “flatten the curve” and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, this spring the entire Valley Health team mobilized to prepare for and treat COVID-19 patients. Our staff trains regularly for emergency and crisis events, such as mass casualty incidents; however, each situation is different and requires action that is innovative and situation-specific. The arrival of COVID in our community was no different.

1 LIMITING INTERACTION. COVID’s highly contagious nature informed Valley Health’s initial actions. As we prioritized the welfare of frail and elderly patients, medical leadership curtailed visitation at Valley Health’s six hospitals and three long-term care facilities. Community outreach events, classes, support groups, and other gatherings were canceled. Additionally, Valley Health rescheduled elective surgeries, nonessential screenings and tests, and many outpatient services to limit face-to-face interaction between staff, patients and visitors. Emergency surgery and treatment continued, with careful attention to isolating anyone with fever and respiratory problems.

2 RESPIRATORY CARE CLINICS ESTABLISHED. To isolate sick, potentially contagious COVID patients from others coming in for care, Valley Health opened four Respiratory Care Clinics in Winchester, Front Royal and Mt. Jackson, VA, and Martinsburg, WV, to serve individuals with respiratory symptoms. Clinic providers conducted thorough evaluations, including X-rays, for individuals who were referred after calling Valley Health’s respiratory call line, or completing a telehealth screening with their



personal provider or Urgent Care center staff. Patients with suspected coronavirus were referred for further testing, home quarantine or hospital admission.

3 SPECIALIZED UNITS AND STAFF. Valley Health developed a plan to centralize COVID care at Winchester Medical Center, establishing dedicated High Intensity Respiratory Units (HIRUs) to care for those with confirmed COVID-19, as well as patients awaiting test results. Specialized teams of critical care nurses, intensivists and respiratory therapists, wearing appropriate protective gear, treated patients in negative airflow rooms equipped with ventilators and other state-of-the-art equipment to ensure safe, quality care.

4 EXPANSION OF TELEHEALTH SERVICES. To ensure safe, quality care for all patients, Valley Health quickly implemented a new telehealth platform across its 50-plus Urgent Care, Family Medicine and specialty practices around the region, enabling patients to be “seen” from the comfort—and safety—of their own homes. (To learn more, visit valleyhealthlink.com/telehealth.) Other convenient curbside services followed, including prescription pick-up at Winchester Medical Center’s Valley Pharmacy and drive-thru Coumadin Clinic blood work and other services at Valley Health’s Chronic Disease Resource Center.

→ Visit valleyhealthlink.com/COVID for more information.

THOSE WHO HAVE A RESPIRATORY ILLNESS OR SYMPTOMS, OR THINK THEY’VE BEEN EXPOSED TO COVID-19, SHOULD CALL OUR RESPIRATORY CARE PHONE LINE, 540-536-0380, MONDAY-FRIDAY, 8 AM-8 PM AND SATURDAY, 9 AM-6 PM



Mask maker Elizabeth “Biz” O’Keefe, home-confined college student, was happy to have a constructive way to give back while social distancing.

SEW HELPFUL

We asked ... and the community came through! As the Valley Health team worked to conserve personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic, we reached out to our friends and neighbors in our effort to collect 10,000 hand-sewn masks. **The outpouring of support was remarkable, as many who were social distancing dusted off their sewing machines and got to work. At last count, over 20,000 masks had been donated!**

The work of hundreds of area residents, young and old, made the project a huge success. Retired Lynn Care Center director of nursing Ann Jenkins was one of the first to drop off her contribution of 300 masks, while Valley Health nurse Ashley Zelaski’s 8-year-old daughter, Brynna, hand-stitched masks, even taking care to choose material that matched nurses’ blue scrubs.

“These masks are in use today, protecting our caregivers and patients and helping us preserve and extend our supply of personal protective equipment,” notes project coordinator Jenny Grooms, interim executive director of Valley Health Foundation. “The outpouring of support that Valley Health received from the community has been both humbling and inspiring. We are so thankful for people’s willingness to help us double our community challenge goal.”

STROKE SPOTLIGHT

→ WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MEDICAL EMERGENCY

3 NUMBER OF HOURS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ONSET OF STROKE SYMPTOMS THAT **THROMBOLYTICS CAN BE USED TO COMBAT BLOOD CLOTS**. THROMBOLYTIC TPA CAN DRASTICALLY IMPROVE STROKE RECOVERY OUTCOMES, BUT MANY VICTIMS DO NOT ARRIVE AT THE HOSPITAL IN TIME TO RECEIVE THIS TREATMENT.

80%

OF STROKES
ARE PREVENTABLE.

600+
NUMBER OF **NEW OR RECURRENT STROKE PATIENTS** ADMITTED TO THE ADVANCED PRIMARY STROKE CENTER AT WINCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER EACH YEAR.

(795,000)
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF AMERICANS WHO EXPERIENCE STROKE EACH YEAR **(A STROKE OCCURS EVERY 40 SECONDS)**. ABOUT ONE-QUARTER OF ATTACKS ARE RECURRENT.

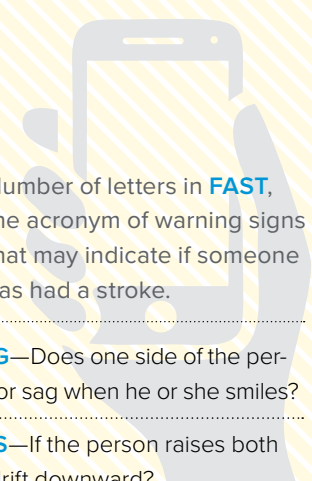
4 Number of letters in **FAST**, the acronym of warning signs that may indicate if someone has had a stroke.

FACE DROOPING—Does one side of the person's face droop or sag when he or she smiles?

ARM WEAKNESS—If the person raises both arms, does one drift downward?

SPEECH DIFFICULTY—Is the person slurring words when he or she speaks?

TIME TO CALL 911—Call immediately if the person is showing any of these signs.



→ Visit valleyhealthlink.com/stroke for more information on risk factors, diagnosis and treatment for stroke.
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

INNOVATION



ADVANCES IN UROLOGY SURGERY

Minimally invasive surgeries for a variety of urological conditions, including enlarged prostate, improve patient experience

At Winchester Medical Center (WMC), minimally invasive surgical techniques have transformed care for patients with enlarged prostate, prostate and kidney cancers, kidney stones, and other urological conditions.

“Over the past few years, there has been a trend toward minimally invasive approaches, for shorter recovery, less complications and better outcomes for patients overall, compared with open surgery,” says urologist Waleed A. Eisa, MD, who introduced minimally invasive robot-assisted urology treatment to WMC in 2018. Dr. Eisa and urologist Spencer Craven, MD, both perform robot-assisted surgeries for patients with a variety of urologic diseases, including urologic cancers and reconstructive procedures. “The robotic approach is the future of urology,” adds Dr. Eisa. “Our team continues to build a strong program in this area.”

Both laser and robotic technologies are used to treat benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), also known as enlarged prostate, which causes moderate to severe symptoms in roughly 1 in 3 men by the time they are 60 and becomes increasingly common with age. “As it progresses, men may have a lot of bother from frequent urination day and night,” says Dr. Craven. “Our goal is to improve quality of life without exposing patients to additional

risks or lengthy recoveries, and these surgical advances have revolutionized the patient’s experience.”

The robot-assisted technique requires a few tiny incisions in the abdomen to accommodate telescopes and ports, which provide a 3D view of the prostate, and surgical instruments attached to robotic arms. The surgeon controls and uses these instruments from a console. “There’s a huge difference between recovering from an incision that goes from above your belly button down to your pubis and recovering from a couple of 1-centimeter incisions across your abdomen,” says Dr. Craven. “I usually operate in the morning, and by evening, patients are walking around, starting to feel better, and generally go home within two days

after surgery.”

The laser technique, called HoLEP (holmium laser enucleation of the prostate), is performed via telescope and removes excess tissue without ever making a skin incision. “We save the patient pain and the risk of wound infection and bleeding that comes with an incision,” says Dr. Eisa. “Most patients do very well after this operation.”

Adds Dr. Craven, “Patients are fortunate that state-of-the-art robot-assisted procedures are offered locally, because of the expert team and the advanced technology available in our operating rooms. Not every hospital has the technology and specialists needed to treat patients with all kinds of urologic conditions.”

→ For more information, visit valleyhealthlink.com.

Interventional pulmonologist T. Glen Boudier, MD, uses advanced technology such as ION robotic bronchoscopy to diagnose and treat lung cancer.



BEATING

THE ODDS

→ THANKS TO VALLEY HEALTH'S ADVANCED SCREENINGS AND TREATMENTS FOR LUNG CANCER, PATIENTS LIKE LEROY JOHNSON HAVE QUICKER RECOVERIES AND IMPROVED OUTCOMES

Leroy Johnson, 75, loves the thrill of betting on an exciting horse race. But when pneumonia brought him to Winchester Medical Center (WMC) in November, it wasn't by chance that doctors discovered this lifelong smoker also had lung cancer. Johnson's care began right away, led by Valley Health's nationally recognized, multidisciplinary lung cancer program team, which uses the region's most advanced testing and treatment options.

"Lung cancer is a scary diagnosis," Johnson says. "But I feel great. Everything's gone well. Thanks to everyone who helped me, I'm healthier and I feel strong. I've quit smoking. Breathing is easier. And my diabetes is in better control, too, because of the program."

Advanced, individualized care and peace of mind are the goals of the program, says Shalini Reddy, MD, medical director of thoracic surgery at Valley Health and a member of the Lung Nodule Clinic team. "Finding out you have lung cancer can be very stressful and confusing," she says. "Through our program, we are helping people at risk get screened sooner and diagnosed as early as possible so they can understand their options, feel supported and receive the therapies tailored for their cancer."

A TEAM APPROACH

Valley Health has a comprehensive and state-of-the-art program for the diagnosis and minimally invasive treatment of lung cancer, says interventional pulmonologist T. Glen Boudier, MD. A member of the Lung Nodule Clinic team, Dr.

Boudier uses high-tech approaches to better diagnose lung cancers and assist in their targeted treatment.

"The benefit of our approach is that you have a multidisciplinary team working on everything from screening, to diagnosis and treatment. Our goal is to catch and treat lung cancer at an earlier stage so we have the best chance for a good outcome and potential cure," Dr. Boudier says. "For the community, the program is also an opportunity to have all of a patient's needs related to lung nodules taken care of in one place. Patients may see two or three different specialists in one visit, rather than having multiple appointments. Their primary care doctor has a streamlined way to communicate with the program so patients receive care more quickly. And our clinic navigator helps with issues like finances, transportation and emotional support."

In November, the GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer designated Winchester Medical Center a Care Continuum Center of Excellence, in recognition of its patient-focused, multidisciplinary lung cancer care. WMC was the first hospital in Virginia to receive this honor.

LUNG CANCER PROGRAM

SCREENINGS AND TREATMENTS

A lung nodule is a small round or oval-shaped lung growth. While most are benign, about 15% are early cancers, according to the American Thoracic Society. Thanks to Valley Health's low-dose computed tomography (CT) lung screening program, available at all system hospitals, more people at high risk are receiving this scan that finds lung cancer earlier. Valley Health doctors also may find nodules during treatments for other conditions or, as in Johnson's case, may order a lung scan in a high-risk patient. "[Johnson's] pneumonia got better, but with his significant history of smoking, we ordered a follow-up CT chest scan to make sure there was nothing hiding in his lungs," says WMC pulmonologist Raju Bishwakarma Century, MD. That's when doctors found a nodule in his left lung.

For those with nodules, the clinic provides advanced diagnostic tests, including robot-assisted bronchoscopy using Intuitive Surgical's ION™ Endoluminal System, which helps doctors assess cancer in the far reaches of the lungs. Winchester Medical Center is the first facility in the mid-Atlantic region with the ION system, acquired in November 2019. Combined with endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS), ION robotic bronchoscopy allows for patients to get diagnosis and staging in one procedure. This technology is also used to accurately mark lung lesions for more targeted radiation therapy as well as surgery.

Johnson was Dr. Boudier's first ION patient. "ION uses an ultra-thin robot-

EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES

Finding lung cancer early, even before a patient develops symptoms (such as coughing, wheezing, chest pain, and weight loss), can improve survival odds by 20%, according to Shalini Reddy, MD, medical director of thoracic surgery at Valley Health. Valley Health's low-dose computed tomography (CT) lung screening program offers annual scans for people at high risk for lung cancer at the health system's six hospitals.

Medicare, Medicaid and some private health insurance cover the cost of the yearly test for people at high risk for lung cancer. You may be eligible if you're age 55 to 80; are a current smoker or quit within the past 15 years; and have a history of smoking equivalent to one pack a day for 30 years, two packs a day for 15 years or a half-pack a day for 60 years. Winchester Medical Center offers financial assistance to individuals who meet the criteria. To learn more, ask your doctor or call the lung care navigator at 844-532-8669.

"Initially, lung cancer often continues to grow without any symptoms," says Valley Health pulmonologist Raju Bishwakarma Century, MD. "That's why early detection is so important. If you detect it early, it potentially can be cured."

ically controlled scope that can reach 80 to 90% of the way into the branches of the lungs," Dr. Boudier explains. "With a conventional scope, we can only go 20% of the way into airways in the lungs. Now, we can take tissue samples so that a cancer's stage can be better determined for more precise treatment."

Surgery is often the only treatment needed for Stage 1 lung cancer; for those whose cancer has spread to the lymph nodes and beyond, treatment may also include radiation and chemotherapy. At Valley Health, minimally invasive options for lung cancer include video-assisted surgery as well as robotic surgery using the da Vinci XI™ Surgical System. "Recovery is faster with minimally invasive surgery," Dr. Reddy says. "There is less pain and faster healing time, so people can get back to their lives or go on to chemotherapy sooner. The typical hospital stay is two to three days, compared to five to seven days for a conventional, open procedure. There are fewer infections, less pneumonia. People need less pain medication—usually just acetaminophen at home. They can return to work or go on to their other treatments in two to four weeks, compared to two to three months after an open surgery."

Johnson's cancer required surgery, in which Dr. Reddy removed part of Johnson's left lung in a minimally invasive procedure, followed by four rounds of chemotherapy. Along the way, Johnson experienced another aspect of the clinic's comprehensive care: an emphasis on overall good health. A pack-a-day smoker



From left: T. Glen Boudier, MD, interventional pulmonologist; Shalini Reddy, MD, medical director of thoracic surgery at Valley Health; pulmonologist Raju Bishwakarma Century, MD.



Thanks to the advanced care he received, Leroy Johnson has returned to favorite activities like spending time at the racetrack.

for most of his life, Johnson quit in December with the help of the program and the use of nicotine replacement patches and gum.

In addition, the program also helped him manage his diabetes. “My surgery was postponed at first because my blood sugar was high,” Johnson says. “I worked with a dietitian at Valley Health and had my insulin dose changed. I learned a lot about how to eat. Now I check food labels at the store, and my blood sugar’s better than it’s been in a long time.”

Of course, a cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatment can affect all aspects of a patient’s life. To help navigate the many issues that arise throughout their continuum of care, patients receiving lung cancer care at the Valley Health Cancer Center receive support from a navigator who can help ease the process. “The

“Recovery is faster with minimally invasive surgery. There is less pain and faster healing time, so people can get back to their lives or go on to chemotherapy sooner.”

—SHALINI REDDY, MD, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF THORACIC SURGERY

navigator can assist with financial issues, help finding nursing care, transportation, emotional support and more,” Dr. Reddy says. “Our navigator keeps in touch with our patients constantly to be sure they’re okay.”

THE ROAD TO SURVIVORSHIP

Once treatment ends, lung cancer survivors receive follow-up testing every four to six months for the first few years, followed by yearly checks, though Dr. Reddy notes “every patient’s follow-up schedule is different.”

For Johnson, that will mean finding time in a busy schedule. “I see my kids and grandchildren often,” he says. And in March he was back to enjoying some of his favorite pastimes: visiting casinos and watching horse races. “When they’re open, I go to the casinos and the racetrack just about every week,” he says. “I really like the slot machines—and those horses.” Thanks to Valley Health’s comprehensive lung care program, the odds are good that Johnson will enjoy these pastimes for years to come.

→ For more information, visit valleyhealthlink.com/lungcare.

SPOTLIGHT

A SPECIAL PLACE FOR HEART & VASCULAR CARE

Now open, Valley Health's new Heart & Vascular Center building expansion at Winchester Medical Center unites specialists and services for the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease under one roof.

The building connects directly to the Heart & Vascular Center lobby, providing convenient access to the Cardiac Catheterization Lab, Advanced Heart Failure Center, imaging, and other care services.



“We strive to provide the most advanced and comprehensive cardiovascular care, with superior outcomes ... and that's our promise to every patient who trusts us with their care.”

— BASEL RAMLAWI, MD, CARDIOTHORACIC SURGEON AND CHAIR, HEART & VASCULAR CENTER

→ For more information, visit valleyhealthlink.com/heart.





Three practices under one roof:

- Winchester Cardiology and Vascular Medicine | Valley Health
- Valley Health Cardiothoracic Surgeons
- Valley Health Vascular Surgeons

Advanced Valve & Aortic Center provides a full range of treatment options for heart valve and aortic disease.

Laboratory Services Draw Station

Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation: Medically supervised exercise programs to help those with heart and lung disease rebuild their strength and stamina.

Enhanced External Counter Pulsation (EECP) Clinic

IN GOOD HANDS

→ VALLEY HEALTH OFFERS STATE-OF-THE-ART CARE FOR CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

A common cause of hand pain, carpal tunnel syndrome is often misunderstood, says Valley Health orthopedic surgeon Benjamin Sandberg, MD. “People associate it with wrist pain, but you actually feel pain in your thumb, index and middle fingers,” he explains. “Other conditions can be the source of pain in other parts of your hand. Getting a good diagnosis is important so you receive the right treatment for pain relief and to prevent permanent damage.” Here’s an overview of what you need to know.


THE BIG SQUEEZE: Carpal tunnel syndrome occurs when the median nerve gets pressed or squeezed as it passes through a channel in your wrist called the carpal tunnel. The median nerve controls muscles at the base of your thumb as well as the ability to feel sensation in your thumb and first two fingers.

BEYOND PAIN: Dr. Sandberg says the major symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome are tingling and numbness in your thumb, index and middle finger. “The pain may wake you up at night and it may feel the way it does when your foot falls asleep, then ‘wakes up’ with a tingling feeling,” he says. “Painful tingling is the first symptom. Numbness all the time could be more advanced

progression. Some people with advanced carpal tunnel may have difficulty with fine motor tasks such as picking up a coin or button. This occurs when carpal tunnel syndrome advances.”

WHO’S AT RISK: Women are three times more likely than men to develop it, perhaps because a woman’s carpal tunnel is built differently than a man’s. Risk can also rise during pregnancy. But other risk factors that affect men

as well as women include aging; type 2 diabetes; inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis; repetitive motion tasks (such as assembly line work); and regularly using hand tools that vibrate and put strong pressure on your palm, like jackhammers and power drills. “Computer and keyboard use was thought to cause it, but research hasn’t definitively shown that that is the case,” he says.



Orthopedic surgeon Benjamin Sandberg, MD, is an expert on treating patients with carpal tunnel syndrome.



WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR: If you have hand or wrist pain that wakes you up at night, it's worth trying out a wrist brace (available online and at drugstores). "A brace holds your wrist straight. A bent or flexed position contributes to compressing or 'pinching' the nerve, so a brace can help you sleep better," Dr. Sandberg says. "But you should still see a doctor about your symptoms. A correct diagnosis is critical so you get the correct treatment. It's a common misconception that all wrist and hand pain are carpal tunnel."

MAKING THE DIAGNOSIS: Diagnosing carpal tunnel syndrome may involve tests of nerve activity, and in-office tests for numbness, pain, and signs of muscle weakness and shrinking. Ultrasound and X-rays are used to rule out other conditions such as arthritis.

TREATMENTS: Dr. Sandberg, who chose orthopedic surgery as his medical specialty because it combined his love of biology and mechanics (he's still tinkering with a 1980 Triumph TR7 sports car that his father worked on decades ago), says he often recommends a steroid injection before discussing surgery. "The idea is to get anti-inflammatory

medication in and around the carpal tunnel. Many people feel relief in a couple of days. Relief also confirms the diagnosis so we know we're treating the right condition." If symptoms return, surgery can be a permanent fix, he says.

The procedure, called carpal tunnel release surgery, reduces pressure on the median nerve by cutting a wrist ligament at the base of the hand. The ligament grows back together but leaves more room for the nerve. "It is highly effective," Dr. Sandberg says. "I most often recommend a 'mini open procedure.' This involves a local numbing medication only—there is no sedation, so you can eat breakfast beforehand and take all your regular medications. Recovery is quick. It's performed as an outpatient procedure. The surgery itself takes five to seven minutes. It leaves a small incision, closed up with two to three stitches." For some people, Dr. Sandberg recommends endoscopic surgery involving small incisions and tools with a video camera attached. "This option requires sedation, but it may be better for someone who has to put a lot of pressure on their palms, for getting out of a wheelchair, for example."

Most people can return to everyday activities such as writing and typing in a few days, but resuming more intensive or heavy activities takes longer. Dr. Sandberg checks patients' progress two weeks later. "Most patients are 'cured' after surgery. If there's stiffness or scarring, physical therapy can help. For most, after surgery the condition never comes back."

“A correct diagnosis is critical so you get the correct treatment. It's a common misconception that all wrist and hand pain are carpal tunnel.”

—ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON BENJAMIN SANDBERG, MD

→ For more information, visit valleyhealthlink.com.

COPING WITH ANXIETY

How to recognize the difference between everyday worries and a debilitating anxiety disorder

Everyone worries—that’s just human, especially when having to cope with life-changing disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. But excessive anxiety can affect your quality of life. About one-third of people experience some sort of anxiety disorder in their lifetime. Thomas Cardwell, MD, a board-certified psychiatrist at Shenandoah Memorial Hospital, sheds light on this all-too-common condition—and what can be done about it.

Q: HOW DOES GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER DIFFER FROM EVERYDAY WORRY?

A: Anxiety is part of life. It’s often appropriate to be anxious, and there’s an evolutionary reason for that—to motivate us to change a situation that’s dangerous. Someone standing on the edge of a cliff taking a selfie *should* experience anxiety since that is nature’s way of alerting us to be careful.

But you can have too much anxiety. With generalized anxiety disorder, someone has more days than not where they’re significantly anxious. Of course, it’s possible to have anxiety more days than not if you have a real-world problem and are struggling. The question to discuss with your care



provider is if the anxiety is greater than it should be and whether it’s difficult to control the worry.

Q: HOW DOES GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER DIFFER FROM PANIC ATTACKS?

A: Panic resembles fear. Your fight-or-flight mechanism takes over. If a tiger is chasing you, you’ll have what seems like a panic attack, except it’s reasonable. When you start having a panic attack in the grocery store, for example, that’s a physiologic anxiety overload response that’s not appropriate for the situation.

Q: WHEN SHOULD SOMEONE SEEK HELP?

A: See your primary care provider (PCP) if you’re restless and keyed up, fatigued, have trouble concentrating, are irritable, have muscle tension, or experience sleep disturbance. Basically, when the anxiety impacts your life, your work, your relationships, or your well-being, it’s time to seek help. Your PCP can suggest concrete things you might do to help reduce your anxiousness, or refer you to a specialist if warranted. It can also be helpful to talk with a friend, family member or someone else in your support system.

Q: HOW IS ANXIETY TREATED?

A: Exercise, improved nutrition and meditation may help some people. Those who are highly anxious may benefit from medications and therapy. Occasionally people are hospitalized, but that is infrequent.

Anxiety robs you of the energy that you could apply to something that you enjoy. With medical and/or other treatments, people learn how to manage their anxiety, and then they can get back to leading a full and rewarding life.

→ *The COVID pandemic has caused great uncertainty, and you may be struggling with health, family, financial, social, or other challenges. Visit valleyhealthlink.com/behavioralhealth to learn about resources available for anxiety and other mental health challenges.*

VALLEY HEALTH HOSPITALS ARE 'STARS' IN CMS QUALITY RATINGS



Valley Health superstars: Care providers at War Memorial Hospital are proud of the team's 5-Star rating from CMS.

Valley Health hospitals and home health agencies have earned high marks in the latest quality assessment of more than 4,500 hospitals nationwide by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). **Big shoutouts to Page Memorial and War Memorial for earning the highest 5-Star rating! Fewer than 10% of the hospitals assessed by CMS received a 5-Star rating.**

Shenandoah Memorial Hospital, Warren Memorial Hospital and Winchester Medical Center received 4-Star ratings, and Hampshire Memorial Hospital, in its first-ever CMS assessment, received a 3-Star rating. The CMS Star Ratings represent how satisfied Medicare beneficiaries are with their inpatient and outpatient health care, looking at 64 different measures in seven categories of quality, including effectiveness of care, efficient use of medical imaging, mortality, patient experience, readmissions, safety of care, and timeliness of care.

OUTPATIENT INFUSION NOW AVAILABLE AT WARREN MEMORIAL

With the opening of its Outpatient Infusion and Vascular Access Services, Warren Memorial Hospital is making it more convenient for patients who need transfusions or placement of a catheter or IV line. Common examples of IV infusions now available at Warren Memorial include antibiotic therapy, immunotherapy and rehydration, while vascular access services include midline placement and peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) insertion. To learn more, visit valleyhealthlink.com/wmh.



Matthew Johnson, MSN, RN, clinical coordinator of WMH's Outpatient Infusion and Vascular Access Services, uses ultrasound-guided technology during a vascular access procedure.



CAC Chair Diane Kearns (right) connects with a local resident at the Community Wellness Festival in February.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Valley Health's Community Advisory Council is a conduit of information and support

“How are we doing?” That’s the question Valley Health Board and staff leaders ask regularly as they interact with patients, and with representatives of local government; educational institutions; volunteer groups; and nonprofit organizations and agencies. Staying connected and learning about the health and wellness needs of our community help Valley Health better serve and care for patients and prepare for the future.

One dedicated group has been especially important in building bridges and communication channels between Valley Health and those in our region: the Community Advisory Council (CAC). Established in 2016 when Valley Health consolidated its hospital-based governance structure into a system-based board, former board members and other concerned residents volunteered to serve on the Council, stepping up to advocate for the needs of localities. They also take time to connect with area residents, getting out and about at local events, asking questions and listening to concerns.

“All of the CAC members are deeply involved in their communities,” notes Diane Kearns, chair of the Council. “The breadth and depth of the experiences of the CAC members provides Valley Health with a good ‘conduit’ for information to flow both to Valley Health as the community’s voice and back to the communities as Valley Health’s response.”

In addition to guiding Valley Health’s region-wide, triennial Community Health Needs Assessment, the charge of the Council was expanded in 2019 when it was tasked with overseeing the Community Health Impact Grants application and award processes that will provide financial support to 22 local nonprofits. These local organizations partner with Valley Health to address health problems, such as barriers to care (transportation or lack of insurance, for example) and chronic disease prevention.

By participating in the grant-making process, the CAC ensures local needs are front and center as funds are allocated to nonprofit partners. The Council also worked with Valley Health staff to streamline the application process, improving both accountability and efficiency by creating a multiyear funding and reporting cycle.

“By allocating Valley Health’s resources over three years instead of just one and reducing the number of community health focal points, the new grant procedure provides more certainty and longevity to the recipients, which should increase the success of their programs and improve our residents’ health,” notes Kearns.

The good work of the CAC helps ensure we are “Healthier, Together,” and we thank this team for their volunteer service.

Visit valleyhealthlink.com/CAC for more information.



Valley Health staff Karen Doane, nurse educator, and Courtney Miller, health educator, share wellness tips with *Valley Today* host Janet Michael.

IN THE COMMUNITY

WINC and Chris and Rosie at iHeart Shenandoah Country/Q102 are by phone.

Janet Michael, host of *The Valley Today* on The River 95.3, has interviewed Valley Health leaders, including CEO Merrill. During a recent conversation, they discussed COVID mortality rates and the importance of listening to and following the advice of experts and scientists. Merrill also praised the dedication of the Valley Health staff, applauding their work educating the public, mitigating the spread of COVID, and responding to patients who present with the disease. "I am inspired by them," he added.

Michael was engaging Valley Health experts in lively health and wellness conversation well before the COVID virus arrived in our region. On the third Thursday of each month at noon on *The Valley Today*, she asks questions ... and our team members provide answers. If you miss the live show, interviews with our physicians, nurses, therapists, social workers, and others on topics that help you lead a healthier lifestyle are available on demand at theriver953.com/valleyhealthpodcast.

TAKING TO THE AIRWAVES TO PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH

Valley Health clinicians and administrators are typically found in our hospitals, practices and clinics. Now, thanks to "healthy" partnerships with area media, our team members regularly get in front of a microphone or computer for radio interviews, sharing current information and helpful tips on weight loss, cancer care, diabetes management—and more recently, how to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March, President and CEO Mark H. Merrill and VP of Population Health Jeff Feit, MD, visited the 92.5 WINC FM studio for an informative interview with Barry Lee and Katie G., sharing reliable information about COVID-19 and the steps local residents could take to prevent the spread of the highly contagious coronavirus. Subsequent weekly updates with

FOR THE LATEST HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEWS, VISIT THE HEALTHLINK BLOG AT VALLEYHEALTHLINK.COM/NEWS.



Valley Health salutes our **6,000+ employees.**

Heroes on the front line, caring for our community.

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We're in this together.

Valley Health is Now Open in Spring Mills

At Valley Health | Spring Mills, you will find board-certified physicians and health care providers that offer a wide range of services, all under one roof.

Our building is open, but for everyone's safety, and to lessen the spread of COVID-19, we are offering virtual appointments for the following providers:

Panhandle Cardiology and Vascular Medicine
304-264-9485

Valley Health Multispecialty Clinic | Spring Mills
681-247-1280

Matthew J. Borkon, MD – Vascular Surgery
James M Carrier, MD FACS – General Surgery
Patrick L. Wagner, MD, FACS – Surgical Oncology
Fadi Makari, MD – General Surgery

Valley Health Urgent Care
Visit vhurgentcare.com to check-in online.

To learn more about this location, hours and services, visit valleyhealthlink.com/springmills.

120 Campus Dr.,
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