

# HealthLINK

FALL 2023

YOUR CONNECTION TO HEALTH & WELLNESS

## INSIDE:

Annual wellness visits / The importance of advance care planning / Improved bedside connections / Men and breast cancer: one patient's story



## CIRCLE OF CARE

AT VALLEY HEALTH | CENTER FOR ORTHOPEDIC EXCELLENCE, MENTORS INSPIRE AND GUIDE A YOUNG SURGEON ON HIS CAREER PATH TO SUCCESS

# WELCOME

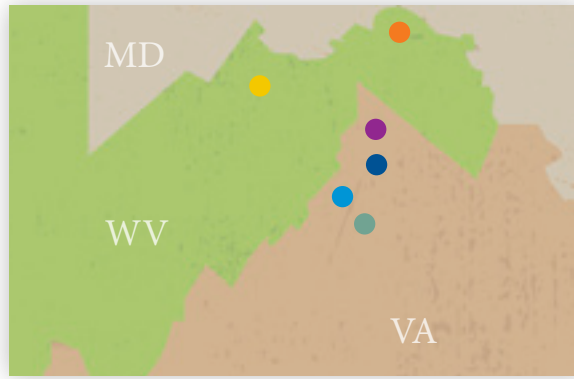
## THE POWER OF CONNECTION

Great health care is about making strong connections, whether that is a caregiver connecting with a patient, a provider connecting with their purpose of delivering exceptional care, or a patient connecting the dots in their own healthcare journey. At Valley Health, our enduring connections are what enable us to deliver the quality care that our patients deserve and trust.

In this issue, we highlight several strong healthcare connections. You'll read about the bond between a patient and his physician that recently led to the patient joining our healthcare team as an orthopedic surgeon. At Warren Memorial Hospital, the Bedside Connect program simultaneously connects patients with both their providers and loved ones through the TV monitor in their room. And then there's the story of a male patient who found a lump in his breast. Instead of ignoring the mass, he connected with physicians and was able to identify the early stages of breast cancer.

When we make connections such as these, we set ourselves up for success on our healthcare journey. At Valley Health, we are proud to create these vital connections to ensure you receive the care you need to stay healthy.

*On the cover: Joseph Cincinnati, DO, and Taylor Hockman, DO.*



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/community](http://valleyhealthlink.com/community).

### 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 services:

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

For more information, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/locations](http://valleyhealthlink.com/locations).



### Valley Health System

Serving Our Community by Improving Health

### HealthLINK

The magazine of Valley Health System

Serving the Northern Shenandoah Valley, the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and the surrounding areas

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The information contained in *HealthLINK* is not a substitute for professional medical care or counsel. If you have medical concerns, consult a medical professional. A list of physicians, specialists and other care providers is found at [valleyhealthlink.com/physicians](http://valleyhealthlink.com/physicians).

*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 healthcare experts within Valley Health System.

Contact [marketingmail@valleyhealthlink.com](mailto:marketingmail@valleyhealthlink.com) or 540-536-5325 to be added to our mailing list; view *HealthLINK* online at [valleyhealthlink.com/news](http://valleyhealthlink.com/news).

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## PAGE COUNTY'S FALL CLINIC OFFERS FREE HEALTH CARE

The Page County Remote Area Medical (RAM) clinic is scheduled for Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 at Luray High School at 243 Bulldog Drive in Luray, Virginia. The clinic is operational from approximately 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday.

RAM provides free medical, dental and vision care for the public without any documentation or identification requirements. The clinic serves the community by improving the health of those with the least access to these services. RAM encourages everyone who would like care, especially dental services, to arrive early.

The Page RAM is supported under a USDA grant by Page Memorial Hospital, the Page Free Clinic, Page County Public Schools, and other highly valued community partners.

For more information or to volunteer, visit [ramusa.org/clinic-schedule](https://ramusa.org/clinic-schedule).



Vision care is a key component of the RAM clinic.

Warren Memorial Hospital  
3 "A" Grades in a Row



Winchester Medical Center  
7th Straight "A" Grade



## VALLEY HEALTH EARNS HIGH SAFETY MARKS

Valley Health's two acute care hospitals—Winchester Medical Center (WMC) and Warren Memorial Hospital (WMH)—have again earned "A" Hospital Safety Grades from the Leapfrog Group, an independent, nonprofit national watchdog organization that grades hospitals on their achievements in protecting patients from harm in the hospital setting. The accomplishment represents WMC's seventh straight "A" rating and WMH's third in a row.

"Earning our seventh straight 'A' grade from the Leapfrog Group is truly an honor and reflects the dedication of our entire team at Winchester Medical Center," says Tonya Smith, president, WMC, and senior vice president of acute care for Valley Health. "Together, we are committed to a culture of safety that consistently prevents harm and ensures the well-being of our patients each and every day."

Warren Memorial Hospital Administrator Jennifer Coello said receiving the hospital's third consecutive "A" grade further affirms WMH staff's continued focus on patient safety. "Our caregivers are committed to providing safe, high-quality care for every patient, every time."

The Leapfrog Group assigns an "A," "B," "C," "D," or "F" grade to nearly 3,000 general acute care hospitals in the U.S. based on patient safety performance measures reflecting errors, injuries, accidents, and infections. Critical access hospitals, which include Valley Health's four other hospitals, do not receive grades.

## WINCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER LAUDED FOR HEART CARE

*Fortune* and the research analytics firm PINC AI™ have named Winchester Medical Center as one of the nation's top 50 cardiovascular hospitals for 2023. Those in the annual 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals study recorded significantly higher inpatient survival rates, fewer patients with complications, lower readmission rates, and lower patient costs.

The Heart & Vascular Center at Winchester Medical Center has also received the American College of Cardiology's NCDR Chest Pain—MI Registry Platinum Performance Achievement Award for 2023. WMC is one of only 262 hospitals nationwide to receive the honor.

The award recognizes the hospital's success implementing a higher standard of care for patients experiencing chest pain and heart attack and treating these patients according to standards outlined by the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association.



## VALLEY HEALTH ELEVATES SERVICES THROUGH NEW AIR-CARE PARTNERSHIP

A newly painted Valley Health aircraft has taken to the skies as the result of a partnership between Valley Health System and PHI Air Medical—two organizations committed to working together to provide lifesaving care for patients experiencing a medical or traumatic emergency.

"We are excited to take our collaboration with the region's leading medevac provider to new heights," says Brandon Truman, senior director of mobile integrated health care, Valley Health. "Through this new collaboration, Valley Health and PHI are aligning our goals and resources to better serve our community and to continue providing the care patients deserve."

PHI Air Medical's regional base of operations is at the Front Royal-Warren County Airport in Front Royal, Virginia. PHI provides the medical flight crew, pilots and maintenance personnel for the helicopter, which is imprinted with the Valley Health logo. The three-member flight crew will wear Valley Health-branded flight suits.

Although Valley Health and PHI have worked together in the past, the new partnership will enhance communication between the two entities and ultimately the service they provide. Through the collaboration, Valley Health and PHI will share clinical data to identify healthcare needs and trends, hold training opportunities between Valley Health and the PHI flight crew, and integrate PHI into Valley Health's Patient Logistics Center to better coordinate interfacility transportation.

# INNOVATIONS

## AT YOUR BEDSIDE

### Inpatient virtual care allows patients, their families and healthcare providers to meet—from wherever they might be

Imagine this: You are admitted as a patient at Warren Memorial Hospital. In addition to the patient-centered bedside care you have come to expect, you also receive a virtual visit from your healthcare team via your room's TV. Caregivers share your latest test results while your loved ones join in from the privacy of their home via smartphone, tablet or computer.

At Warren Memorial Hospital, this is now possible thanks to a new capability called Bedside Connect. Doctors, family members, specialists, and other care providers—no matter where they are—can simultaneously connect to a patient's in-room television to discuss the patient's care and medical needs.

### KEEPING PATIENTS—AND THEIR FAMILIES—IN THE LOOP

With a \$1.4 million grant from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Valley Health's goal is to significantly reduce the distance between patients, their families and their healthcare team. Bedside Connect enhances communication and coordination by keeping everyone involved

in the patient's care journey, while still providing physical care at the bedside. This hybrid approach reduces anxiety, builds trust, and ensures families and patients are well informed.

"Building trust is important," says Dolores Gehr, director of patient care services, chief nursing officer, Warren Memorial Hospital. "We have transparency by bringing the whole team together and bringing the family in."

### PROVIDING QUICKER ACCESS TO SPECIALISTS

Specialists aren't always on-site at the hospital. Now with Bedside Connect, they can schedule a virtual visit with a patient any time. "This means that our patients get to see and talk with a physician or member of their care team sooner," says Aubrey Presha, system director of telemedicine.

### AIMING FOR BETTER RECOVERY AT HOME

Bedside Connect helps patients and their family members understand the care needed at home by linking together the patient, their family, a preferred language interpreter, and a physician on the in-room TV. Instead of family calling the hospital to figure out what's going on with their loved one, providers can now schedule a video call with everyone. This blend of physical and virtual care enhances the patient's journey toward recovery.

### PROTECTING PATIENT PRIVACY

Patients are never recorded without their permission. The camera faces a wall until it's time for a video session. "The nurse will ask for permission to enter the room virtually," Gehr says. "Once consent is given, the camera rotates and faces the patient."

"This [technology] is not a replacement for any health-care provider," Gehr adds. "We still have that human touch at the bedside."

Valley Health has plans to offer Bedside Connect at all its hospitals.



Bedside Connect enhances communication among patients, care providers and loved ones.

## ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS

→ IN 2011, MEDICARE INTRODUCED THE ANNUAL WELLNESS VISIT (AWV) TO EXPAND COVERAGE OF PREVENTIVE HEALTH SERVICES TO OLDER ADULTS. AN AWV IS NOT A PHYSICAL. IT IS A WELLNESS VISIT WHERE YOU AND A MEMBER OF YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM DEVELOP AND UPDATE YOUR PERSONALIZED PLAN TO HELP PREVENT DISEASE AND DISABILITY. THEY MAY TAKE MEASUREMENTS SUCH AS HEIGHT, WEIGHT AND BLOOD PRESSURE; REVIEW PRESCRIPTIONS AND MEDICAL HISTORY; CONDUCT SCREENINGS; AND DISCUSS IMMUNIZATIONS.

**12 MONTHS**

NUMBER OF MONTHS A PATIENT MUST BE ENROLLED IN MEDICARE BEFORE BEING ELIGIBLE FOR AN AWV

BY PRIORITIZING PREVENTIVE HEALTH, PATIENTS WHO GO TO THEIR AWV OFTEN SEE A REDUCTION IN FUTURE HEALTHCARE SPENDING

**100%**

THE PERCENT THAT MEDICARE PAYS FOR YOUR ANNUAL WELLNESS VISIT

AGE-APPROPRIATE PREVENTIVE SCREENINGS AND IMMUNIZATIONS INCREASED FROM 17% TO 42% IN THE 6 MONTHS FOLLOWING AN AWV, ACCORDING TO A STUDY BY THE NORTH CAROLINA INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE.

STUDIES SUGGEST PATIENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO VISIT THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR THE HOSPITAL IN THE YEAR FOLLOWING AN AWV

**65**

THE AGE PROVIDERS RECOMMEND STARTING YOUR ANNUAL MEDICARE WELLNESS VISITS

→ To learn more, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/primarycare](http://valleyhealthlink.com/primarycare).

## GETTING STARTED IN HEALTH CARE

If you're looking for a fulfilling and rewarding career, health care may be the right field for you!

There are many entry-level positions that can lead to growth opportunities and a successful career. Tabatha Dellinger and Alyssa White, Talent Acquisition partners at Valley Health, offer insights on how to begin your journey in health care.

**Q:** HOW CAN SOMEONE WITH LITTLE OR NO EXPERIENCE GET STARTED IN HEALTH CARE?

**A:** We would suggest visiting our careers website to view our current openings and applying for those that interest you. At that point, a recruiter may reach out to discuss your application and your goals and will help navigate you through the process. The recruitment team is here to help you throughout!

**Q:** WHAT ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?

**A:** To list some, we have a nutrition services team that makes and delivers meals; patient service representatives; house-keeping; medical assistants; phlebotomists, who draw patients' blood; transportation specialists, who assist patients within the hospital; public safety officers; administrative assistants; and Emergency Department techs. There are also positions for collecting specimens and cleaning and sterilizing surgical instruments. All these entry-level positions can lead to other positions in health care, depending on the education and experience you pursue.

**Q:** WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THESE JOBS?

**A:** Most of these positions require a GED or high school diploma. However, we have opportunities that do not require this level of education.

**Q:** WHAT PROGRAMS DOES VALLEY HEALTH OFFER?

**A:** Valley Health provides a 10-week

in-house EMT (emergency medical technician) program that trains individuals in providing essential emergency medical services and becoming certified EMTs.

We also offer a CNA (certified nursing assistant) program at Warren Memorial Hospital. Our unique program offers accepted students the opportunity to become paid Valley Health employees while training to become certified nursing assistants.

Valley Health also has a School of Medical Imaging, which has a two-year program to become a radiology technician. To apply, candidates must have an associate degree, but it does not need to be in medical imaging.

**Q:** WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS OF WORKING IN HEALTH CARE?

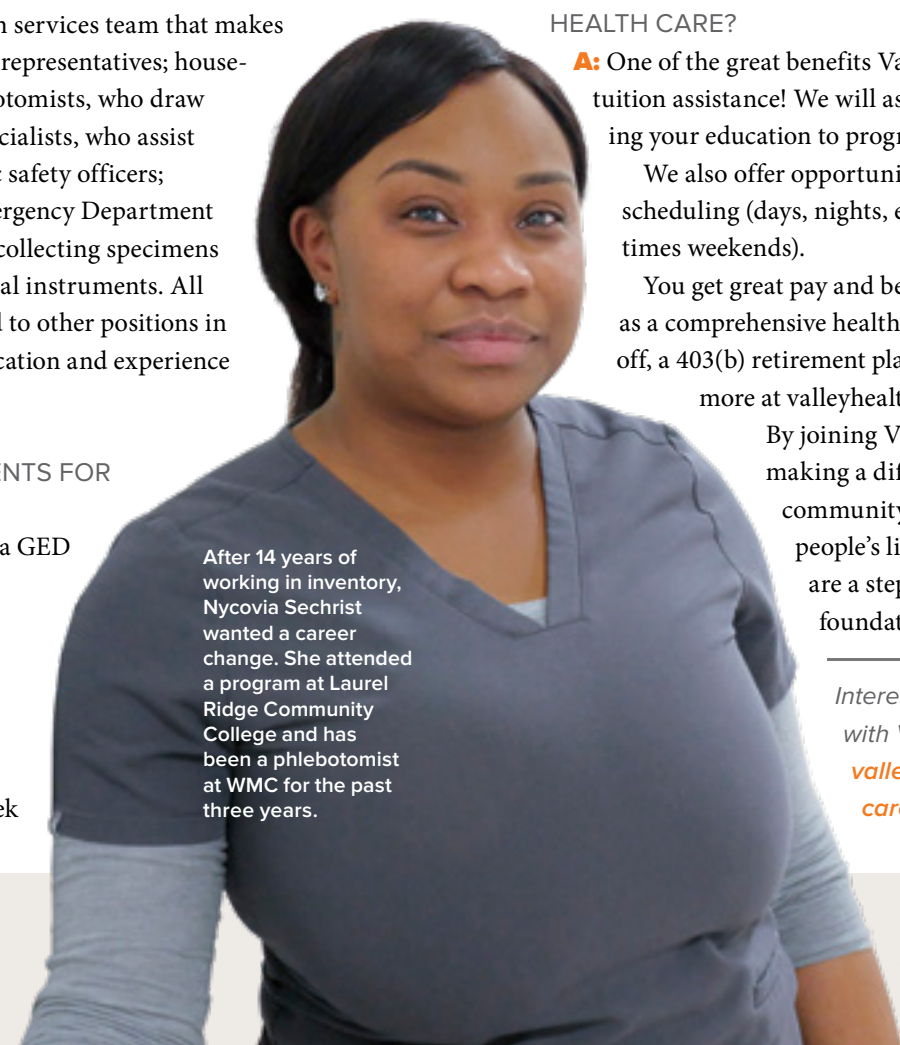
**A:** One of the great benefits Valley Health offers is tuition assistance! We will assist you in furthering your education to progress your career.

We also offer opportunities with flexible scheduling (days, nights, evenings, and sometimes weekends).

You get great pay and benefits as well, such as a comprehensive health plan, paid time off, a 403(b) retirement plan, and more. Learn more at [valleyhealthbenefits.com](http://valleyhealthbenefits.com).

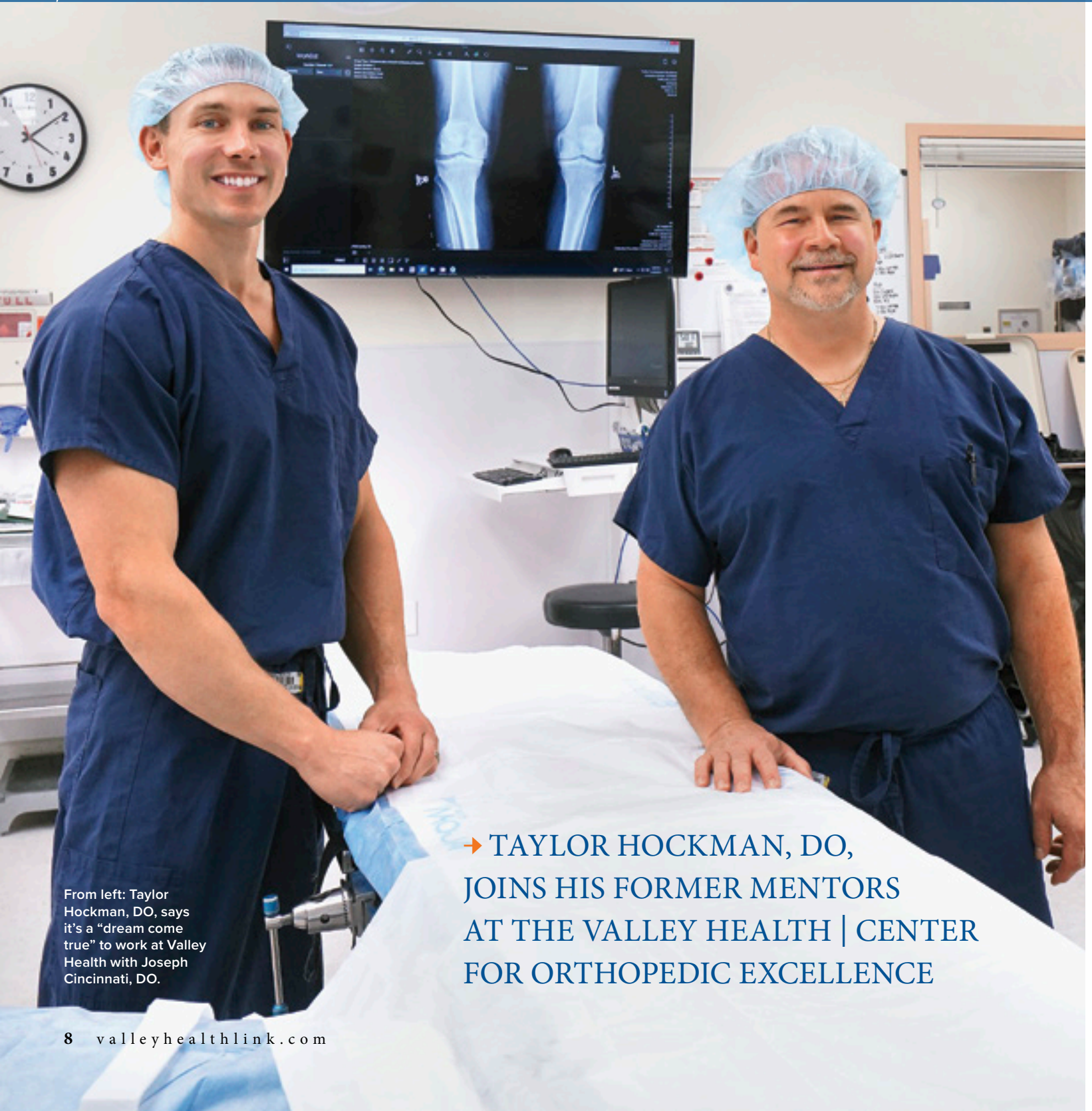
By joining Valley Health, you're making a difference in your community and changing people's lives. These careers are a stepping stone and a foundation for your future.

*Interested in a career with Valley Health? Visit [valleyhealthlink.com/careers](http://valleyhealthlink.com/careers).*



After 14 years of working in inventory, Nycovia Sechrist wanted a career change. She attended a program at Laurel Ridge Community College and has been a phlebotomist at WMC for the past three years.

# COMING FULL



From left: Taylor Hockman, DO, says it's a "dream come true" to work at Valley Health with Joseph Cincinnati, DO.

→ TAYLOR HOCKMAN, DO, JOINS HIS FORMER MENTORS AT THE VALLEY HEALTH | CENTER FOR ORTHOPEDIC EXCELLENCE



# CIRCLE

**A**T age 12, Taylor Hockman fell hard and fractured his wrist during a basketball game in the backyard of his family's Martinsburg, West Virginia, home. "I played a lot of sports. I was really scared this would be a life-changing injury," he says. "I had emergency surgery that day. I remember [orthopedic surgeon] Dr. Joseph Cincinnati coming into the room and giving me a sense of calm and confidence."

The reassuring encounter and high quality of care inspired him, at age 12, to make a career choice. "That day, I knew I wanted to do something in medicine," he says. In July, 21 years after his surgery, Dr. Hockman, DO, joined Dr. Cincinnati, DO, at Valley Health | Center for Orthopedic Excellence in Martinsburg as a general orthopedic surgeon.

"It's a dream come true," says Dr. Hockman, who recently completed a five-year residency in orthopedic surgery through the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine. "I idolized what Dr. Cincinnati built in his practice and in our area through good work and caring about patients. He and the surgeons in the practice not only treated my later sports injuries, they also mentored and guided me in high school, college and medical school. I'm excited and honored to come back and serve the community where I grew up."

Dr. Cincinnati remembers the scared young boy from that day long ago but says at the time he had no idea that one meeting would make such a big impression on him. But later, when Hockman spent time in

**"I idolized what Dr. Cincinnati built in his practice and in our area through good work and caring about patients. ... I'm excited and honored to come back and serve the community where I grew up."**

—TAYLOR HOCKMAN, DO

the practice during high school, his interest and enthusiasm for orthopedic surgery became clear. "Dr. Hockman is going to fit in perfectly with our group," Dr. Cincinnati says. "Patients will see that. The community will see that. It's a family atmosphere that our patients love."

## A TRADITION OF EXPERTISE AND COMPASSION

Started by Dr. Cincinnati and orthopedic surgeon Troy Foster, DO, in 1999, Valley Health | Center for Orthopedic Excellence is the largest and most established orthopedic practice in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. Dr. Hockman joins a team of four surgeons and one physician assistant—including John Buschman, DO; Thomas Knutson Jr., DO; and Tedric Lolis, PA—in providing personalized, advanced orthopedic care for residents of Martinsburg, Charles Town, Kearneysville, and surrounding areas including Hagerstown, Maryland.

"Our practice is unique in now having five general orthopedic surgeons," Dr. Hockman says. "We all have broad and diverse training that allows us to provide exceptional care for the entire family and the entire community. We build relationships over generations." The wide range of medical services offered by the center includes adult and pediatric fracture care, total knee and hip replacement, partial knee replacement, sports medicine, rotator cuff repair, reverse shoulder replacement, and foot and ankle procedures, with many surgeries performed using minimally invasive arthroscopic techniques when appropriate.

The well-known Tavern Road practice "provides a broad spectrum of care for young children through older adults," Dr. Cincinnati says. "We have over 60,000 patient charts, ranging from as young as 18 months old up to 101 years old. And we have families where we've helped the parents, their children and their grandchildren through the years." Satisfied patients sometimes send pictures to the center celebrating their post-procedure return to the lives and activities they love. "I have a photo in my office of a whole family sitting in a hot tub on vacation in Mexico," Dr. Cincinnati says. "Every one of them had a knee replacement that I performed!"

That picture shows Michael Manor, 68, of Martinsburg with friends and family members relaxing on vacation in Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico. All had knee replacements performed by Dr. Cincinnati and the orthopedic center staff, he says. "Dr. Cincinnati has done two knee replacements for me—plus repair of my first knee replacement, which I had done for my 50th birthday," says Manor, who owns A&A

## ORTHOPEDICS

Pools and Supplies in Martinsburg. “It was only supposed to last 10 years, but it lasted 17. New replacements last at least 25 years now.” Manor had osteoarthritis of the knees. “Before my knee replacement, I was limping around and falling down,” he says. “Now I can run heavy machinery and pour concrete at work; take vacations; and enjoy everything we do at our house on the river, from going out on a four-wheeler to jet-skiing.”

Manor also had a reverse shoulder replacement on his left shoulder performed by Dr. Buschman. During the procedure the ball and socket parts of the joint are reversed for increased mobility. He plans to have his right shoulder joint replaced this winter. “I’ve torn up my joints throughout my life,” he says. “But Dr. Cincinnati and the orthopedics center are magnificent. Their work is excellent. The doctors and staff are kind, caring and explain everything. I’ve recommended them to relatives, friends and other business owners in town.”

Manor regained mobility quickly after joint replacement. “I was climbing stairs the day after my knee replacement,” he says. “Starting physical therapy right after the procedure gives you the best recovery.

I was working between physical therapy sessions for my shoulder.”

The practice has expanded and evolved to continue providing advanced care to the growing number of residents in the Eastern Panhandle. In 2004, the center’s orthopedic surgeons opened a multispecialty outpatient surgical center next door called the Tri-State Surgical Center. It achieved full certification for Advanced Joint Replacement with Distinction from the Accreditation Commission for Health Care. The surgical center offers convenient, state-of-the-art outpatient services in orthopedics (including knee and hip replacement). “Ninety percent of our orthopedic procedures are performed there,” Dr. Cincinnati says.

Meanwhile, other physicians at the surgical center perform same-day outpatient procedures in gastroenterology (upper and lower endoscopy), ophthalmology (including cataract surgery), podiatry, pain management, wound



Dr. Cincinnati and Dr. Hockman at Valley Health | Center for Orthopedic Excellence in Martinsburg.

“We want to help our patients feel better and move better, so we’ll continue to seek out safe and effective care innovations that will advance that goal.” —JOSEPH CINCINNATI, DO

care, and general surgery (including biopsies). These surgical teams include board-certified and board-eligible physicians and a highly trained staff of registered nurses specializing in preoperative and postoperative patient care, along with operating room nurses, surgical assistants, instrument personnel, and receptionists. “We want to help our patients feel better and move better, so we’ll continue to seek out safe and effective care innovations that will advance that goal,” Dr. Cincinnati says.

#### FROM SPORTS INJURIES TO MENTORING

Sports medicine is one important focus at the orthopedic center, which provides services to patients from elite athletes to everyday walkers and exercise fans. It also serves the area’s Hedgesville, Martinsburg, Musselman, and Spring Mills high schools. During his athletic career at Hedgesville High School, Hockman played football, basketball and baseball and competed in the long jump and triple jump. A few years after his wrist fracture, he found himself back at the orthopedic center. “Between playing sports and being one of three boys in the family, my wrist wasn’t my only injury,” Dr. Hockman says. “I had a broken collarbone and a broken ankle later on, treated by Dr. Cincinnati and Dr. Foster.”

Procedures to repair Hockman’s fractures were highly successful. He was a varsity player in four sports, participated twice in NCAA playoffs, and set six track and field records as an undergraduate at Washington & Jefferson College in Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, Hockman’s interest in orthopedics grew during high school, when he shadowed surgeons at the orthopedic center. “The first surgery I observed in high school was a total knee replacement,” he recalls. “I remember how awesome that experience was. I went home and said, ‘This is what I want to do for the rest of my life!’”

That high level of interest impressed Dr. Cincinnati. “Taylor really paid attention,” he says. “He was intensely interested in pretty much everything we did. That tells you a lot right there. When someone shows

that kind of interest, we give them more to do, whether it’s a high school or college student shadowing us or a medical student doing an internship.”

The two stayed in touch as Hockman graduated from college and prepared to start at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM) in Lewisburg, West Virginia. During medical school, an internship in orthopedics brought Hockman back to the practice in Martinsburg. He graduated first in his class in 2018 from WVSOM and secured a competitive residency in Ohio. “Taylor wrote his own ticket,” Dr. Cincinnati says. “If you’re not in the top 10 in your class, you won’t even be considered for an orthopedics residency. He worked hard.”

“I didn’t do it alone,” Dr. Hockman adds. “I couldn’t have done it without the guidance of the surgeons at the center. Knowing what the end goal was—to be part of this orthopedic practice, in this community—was the driving force that kept me in the library late on Saturday and Sunday nights.”

The center’s surgeons have plenty in common when it comes to medical training. Both Dr. Cincinnati and Dr. Foster are graduates of WVSOM. “Dr. Foster and I met the first day of medical school and have been friends ever since,” Dr. Cincinnati says. “We did our residencies together in Ohio, then came to work in Martinsburg in 1998 and planned to open a practice.” Dr. Knutson and Dr. Buschman also completed their residencies through Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine, where Dr. Hockman just finished up. “A general orthopedic surgery residency covers all 11 subspecialties of orthopedics—we get training in all,” Dr. Cincinnati says. “From a training perspective, it’s an absolutely wonderful, well-rounded experience that prepares us to care for a whole community’s orthopedic needs.”

Dr. Hockman isn’t the only member of his family who practices medicine with Valley Health. His wife, Corissa Hockman, DO, is a pediatric hospitalist at Winchester Medical Center, providing care for children admitted to the hospital. The couple welcomed their first child this summer. “Corissa has been fully embraced by the community here, and she feels privileged to already have taken care of so many people,” Dr. Hockman says. “We’re looking forward to raising our family here.”

To learn more, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/ortho](https://valleyhealthlink.com/ortho).

# SPOTLIGHT

## MALE BREAST CANCER: A PATIENT'S JOURNEY

While it is much less common in men than women, breast cancer can affect both—and early detection and expert care help patients like Jon Hof have the best outcomes

On vacation in 2022, Jon Hof noticed a marble-like lump in his right breast. “It felt like an olive and was the size of a dime in diameter,” says the 77-year-old from Wardensville, West Virginia.

Encouraged by his wife, Sherri, Hof scheduled an appointment with his primary care provider. Although the doctor thought it was likely a cyst, she advised him to see a breast surgeon.

One biopsy later and Hof learned he had stage 1 breast cancer—a diagnosis that took him and his wife by complete surprise.

“I never knew a man with breast cancer,” Sherri says. “I knew it was possible, but I didn’t think it was probable.”

Hof was in disbelief. “It was overwhelming to me,” he says. “To be a male and to have breast cancer ... it compromised my feeling of masculinity.”

### HOF'S HEALTHCARE JOURNEY

Ken Mason, MD, a breast surgeon at the Valley Health Breast Center, recalls the noticeable mass on Hof's chest. Since the mass was soft and smooth (most cancers are gritty and hard), Dr. Mason at first believed it was a sebaceous cyst. But the biopsy told a different story: Hof had a 19 mm cancerous tumor.

While most women are able to catch their cancer in the early stages because they get mammograms and have a general awareness of breast cancer, men often present with more advanced, palpable breast masses.

“Invariably, men with breast cancer are always more advanced when they come in because they don’t suspect they have breast cancer,” says Dr. Mason. “So they don’t come in until the mass is large.”

Luckily, Hof's cancer was still stage 1. He underwent a mastectomy, during which Dr. Mason removed the tumor and the skin around it down to the pectoral muscle. Surgery left Hof with a scar and a hollow cavity in his chest.

Yusuf Akpolat, MD, a fellowship-trained breast radiologist at Valley Health, is an expert in breast imagery. He says breast imaging for men is very different than for women. Men don't have as much breast tissue, which makes it more challenging to perform a mammogram. However, because the male tissue is all fat, it's easier to see through and determine if a mass is present.



Jon Hof received expert care for his breast cancer, which was diagnosed at an early stage.



Richard Ingram, MD, a medical oncologist at Shenandoah Oncology who treated Hof post-surgery, says most men with breast cancer get mastectomies, in which all breast tissue is removed. This is because they don't have enough tissue, like women do, for wound healing or cosmetic procedures post-surgery.

Dr. Ingram reviewed Hof's pathology and recommended an Oncotype DX test, which predicts how likely breast cancer is to return after surgery and the benefit of receiving chemotherapy. Hof was in the low-risk category, which meant he was not predicted to benefit from chemotherapy post-surgery.

"Jon has a very good prognosis," Dr. Ingram says. "He caught his cancer at an early stage, he had successful surgery, and his Oncotype score was low."

For the next five years, Hof will take daily tamoxifen, a medication that blocks the effect of estrogen in breast tissue by blocking the estrogen receptor. He will also visit Dr. Ingram twice a year. "It was a hard maturing process," Hof says about his experience. "You don't think you can mature when you get older, but you can. My advice would be not to turn away from your diagnosis. As much as you fear it, don't turn away."

#### BREAST CANCER IN MEN

While 1 in 8 women in the U.S. will get breast cancer in their lifetime, only 1 in 800 men will experience the disease, says Dr. Mason. In his 40 years as a surgeon, he has treated 30 men with breast cancer. "It's an awkward situation for a man," Dr. Mason explains. "Most men are embarrassed, and most don't think they can get it."

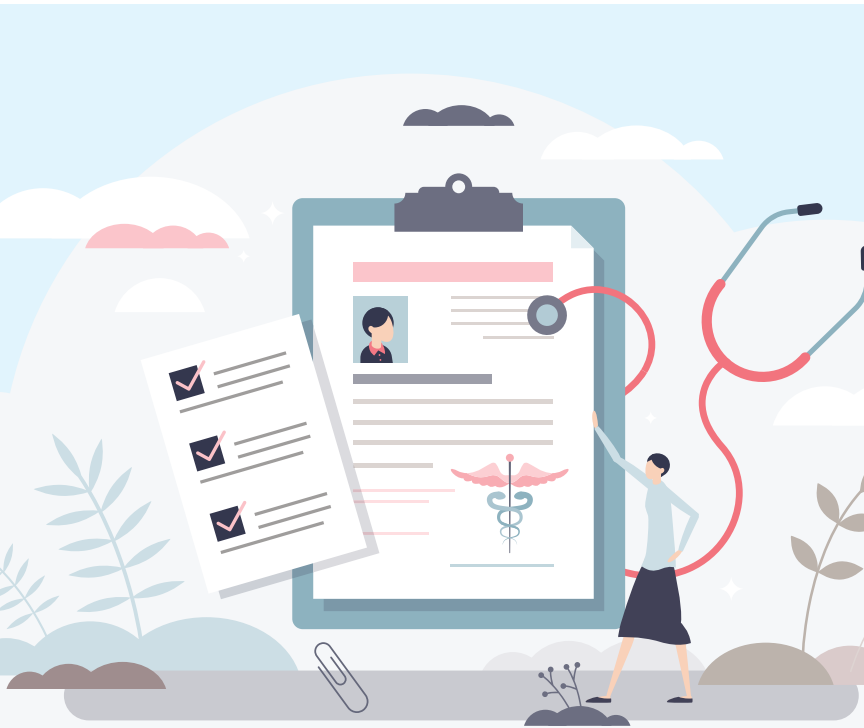
Although the risk is low, men still need to remain vigilant of their breast health. "If you are a man and you feel a lump in your chest wall, armpit or in your lymph nodes, or if you experience any skin changes around the breast, seek relatively quick medical attention," Dr. Ingram says. "You don't need to be alarmed, but you shouldn't dismiss or ignore it."

Dr. Mason encourages anyone who feels a mass in their breast to see their primary care doctor or visit the breast center. A mammogram, ultrasound and/or biopsy can shed light on whether the lump is cancerous or benign.

"Men need to have a higher level of suspicion than they do," he says. "Most think they can't get breast cancer. They ignore it. I wish we had more awareness about it so that men come in with a mass of 5 mm and not 19 mm. Your chance of survival is much better with a smaller mass."

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*In addition to Dr. Mason and Dr. Ingram, Valley Health is proud to offer the exceptional services of breast surgeon Anita Minghini, MD; plastic surgeon Neal Topham, MD; and the other members of the multidisciplinary breast team. Visit [valleyhealthlink.com/breastcancer](https://valleyhealthlink.com/breastcancer) to learn more.*



## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

### THE IMPORTANCE OF DETERMINING YOUR HEALTHCARE WISHES

Advance care planning is the process of preparing for future medical care, particularly if you become seriously ill and/or unable to communicate your wishes.

Yet, just 1 in 5 adults has a medical power of attorney—a responsible adult who will be your voice if you cannot speak for yourself in a medical emergency or during a serious health issue. “Taking these steps in advance care planning is important for everyone age 18 and older,” says James K. VanKirk, MD, a board-certified palliative care specialist at Winchester Medical Center and Warren Memorial Hospital. “It’s not complicated. You do not need a lawyer. And Valley Health can help.”

#### **Advance care planning has two parts:**

- The first is choosing your medical power of attorney (POA), also called a medical agent or healthcare proxy. “This can be an adult relative or close friend,” Dr. VanKirk explains. “Having a medical

POA who knows your wishes takes a burden off your loved ones in a crisis.” There’s less doubt and confusion and more certainty you’re receiving the care you want. Once your medical POA agrees, it’s important to fill out a document naming them as such and have it witnessed by two unrelated adults (for Virginia residents) or witnessed and notarized (for West Virginia residents). “Give the original document to your medical POA. Give copies to your family and your doctors and have it included in your electronic medical record,” Dr. VanKirk suggests. “Make sure your family knows who you have named.”

- The second part is making your values and wishes about medical care known to your medical POA and your loved ones. This can be spelled out in a living will or advance directive, “but the important part is having conversations about it,” Dr. VanKirk says. “Since every single medical situation is different, I encourage people to think not about specific treatments but about the quality of life they would like to have. You may be OK with being bed-bound provided you can see family and watch your favorite sports teams. Or you may feel life isn’t worth living if you can’t continue the activities you love. How much treatment are you willing to undergo? What limits are you willing to live with? This will change over your lifetime, so it’s important to have this conversation every year.”

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*Find medical power of attorney and advance directive forms on the Valley Health website at [valleyhealthlink.com/advancecareplanning](https://valleyhealthlink.com/advancecareplanning). Valley Health also has a team of retired healthcare practitioners ready to give presentations about advance care planning to local organizations and assist individuals in the process. For more information about goals-of-care conversations, call the Palliative Care office at Winchester Medical Center at **540-536-5404**.*

## COMING SOON: NEW VALLEY HEALTH MOBILE APP, MYCHART EXPERIENCE

Learn how we are improving patient access to vital healthcare information and advance planning resources

Valley Health is committed to providing you the information you need—when and where you need it. This November comes with some exciting updates for our patients, staff and community.

Beginning on Nov. 4, 2023, Valley Health will roll out a new version of **MyChart**. MyChart is a free, easy and secure way to view portions of your personal health information and communicate with members of your Valley Health healthcare team.

We know that your health record is vital to your well-being. Customized to the needs of our Valley Health patients, the updated MyChart will make it easier for you to access your medications, test results, upcoming appointments, medical bills, price estimates, and more from a computer or mobile device. Users will be able to use their current login to access the new version of MyChart.

**Valley Health MyChart will also offer enhanced resources for advance care planning, including the following:**

- **Conversation Starter Guides** can help patients talk with the important people in their lives about their wishes for care through the end of life.
- **Plan Your LifeSpan** helps patients, families and caregivers plan for health events such as hospitalizations, falls and memory loss that may happen as people get older.
- **Advance Directive Forms** are available on the Valley Health website for residents of Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland and will be referenced in MyChart.

- **Five Wishes**, a national advance care program, will be linkable within MyChart, as will palliative care and hospice resources.

Valley Health is also rolling out a new systemwide **Valley Health mobile app**, which will be available in November for download in app stores. With a simple click, you can gain convenient, secure access to your MyChart account; make an appointment with Urgent Care; or find a provider or service that fits your needs.

With an updated version of MyChart and a new Valley Health mobile app, you'll be able to enhance your health-care journey by easily accessing information with just a few clicks of a button.

To learn more, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/mychart](https://valleyhealthlink.com/mychart).





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# Here's to the Valley. And all who call it home.

Here's to all of us who call this region home. We share something special – the vistas, the way of life and definitely the people. We believe our well-being is connected here and that the strength of our community begins with health. The health of people like you.

*Here's to You!*



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