

HEALTHLINK

YOUR CONNECTION TO HEALTH & WELLNESS / FALL 2025



INSIDE:

Valley Health's new fertility practice brings fresh hope

Introducing expert care at Valley Health Gastroenterology

Stronger Together donors support a future healing garden

20 Years of Fun

» VALLEY HEALTH'S CAMP FOLLOW THE LEADER CELEBRATES TWO DECADES OF HELPING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

 **ValleyHealth**

EXPERT CARE CLOSE TO HOME

At Valley Health, our goal is to make care easier and more accessible for our patients. This means expanding our services to meet the needs of not just a few, but of our entire community. By doing so, our patients and their families can remain close to home to receive expert care.

This summer, we opened our first gastroenterology clinic, treating everything from Crohn's disease to indigestion. Our goal is to decrease area wait times for gastro care while providing expertise that patients can trust. We also welcomed our first fertility practice. Patients who have a difficult time conceiving will no longer need to look for resources outside the community. We've brought the resources to them. In addition, we aim to make care easier with our new MyChart online scheduling, while creating a more enjoyable hospital stay through our innovative bedside reading program.

Thank you for taking the time to read *HealthLINK* and learn more about Valley Health. We are proud to serve you and your family and are grateful you have chosen us for your care.

On the cover: Attendees at Camp Follow the Leader explore a fire truck at this year's event.



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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- Heather Sigel, Vice President, Operations, War Memorial Hospital and Hampshire Memorial Hospital
- Tonya Smith, President, Winchester Medical Center

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.

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Recognition for Valley Health

Valley Health has been honored with two awards from *Newsweek*: America's Greatest Workplaces for Mental Well-Being and America's Greatest Workplaces in Health Care. In addition, Valley Health made *Forbes*' list of America's Best Employers by State. From fostering a culture of mental well-being to delivering outstanding care in the health care industry, these awards reflect Valley Health caregivers' contributions to making our organization an exceptional place to grow and thrive.

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.

- For more information about the many ways we serve the health and wellness needs of the community, visit valleyhealthlink.com/community.
- For location information, visit valleyhealthlink.com/locations.
- Contact questions@valleyhealthlink.com or 540-536-5325 to be added to our mailing list; view *HealthLink* online at valleyhealthlink.com/news.



SCHEDULING MADE EASY

Valley Health is making it easier than ever to schedule appointments online. With just a few simple clicks, you can find an appointment that fits your schedule through your MyChart patient portal. Online scheduling is available for new and established patients of Valley Health Primary Care, along with those needing mammograms. You can also schedule online with our Orthopedics and Gastroenterology practices.



To get started, log in via valleyhealthlink.com/mychart or through your My Valley Health mobile app and select "Schedule Appointment." Or scan the QR code at left.

Center for Orthopedic Excellence

The new Valley Health Center for Orthopedic Excellence opens this November at 1870



Amherst St., Suite 2B, in Winchester. Tariq A. Nayfeh, MD, is an orthopedic surgeon specializing in joint replacements, from minimally invasive procedures to complex revisions. Dr. Nayfeh was among the first in the

Baltimore-Washington, D.C., area to perform anterior hip replacements. To schedule an appointment, call **540-536-7790**.



Scheduling your Medicare Annual Wellness Visit

If you have had Medicare coverage for at least one year, you are eligible to receive an Annual Wellness Visit—this year and every year after. During this 45-minute visit, a provider will talk with you about your health and wellness needs, offer screenings and referrals for other care if needed, and check for any risk factors that may be of future concern. This visit allows you the opportunity to have a conversation with your provider about your health status and goals. Your care team will create a long-term plan to help you meet those goals and maximize your well-being. There is no patient co-pay for Annual Wellness Visits, and these will be at no cost to you. Schedule your visit today!



Enjoy a Good Book

Valley Health is the first hospital system to implement the Bedside Reading Digital program, offering patients complimentary access to a curated collection of ebooks and audiobooks during their stay. Accessible through bedsidereadingdigital.com, the service allows users to read or listen to one of our many available ebooks on any device while connected to Valley Health's WiFi throughout the system. The selection is updated regularly to keep content fresh. Even after discharge, patients can continue enjoying their downloaded titles anytime, anywhere.

Valley Health's Long-Term Care Services Earn High Marks



The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has awarded five stars—its highest mark—to War Memorial Hospital's Long-Term Care and four stars to Hampshire Memorial Hospital's Long-Term Care.

CMS developed its Five-Star Quality Rating System to help health care consumers, their families and caregivers compare nursing homes more easily and to provide valuable information to those

needing these specialized services. Facilities that have been awarded five stars are considered to have achieved higher than average quality. Ratings are based on results and data from health inspections, staffing (number of hours of direct care provided each day), and quality measures such as falls, pressure injuries and other risks.

“Our residents are always our primary focus,” says Shawna Athey, nursing director at War Memorial's Long-Term Care. “We really work well together as a team to make our facility as home-like as possible.” Athey adds that team members go above and beyond to engage residents and their families in order to bring meaning to their lives.

“We have made significant improvements at our long-term care program at Hampshire Memorial to provide the best possible environment for our residents,” notes Megan O'Dell, nursing director at Hampshire's Long-Term Care. “Receiving four stars from CMS validates that our efforts are working and inspires us to continue raising the bar.”

“I'm very proud of everything we have accomplished at War and Hampshire,” praises Heather Sigel, vice president of both hospitals. “Our communities are stronger and healthier because of the work we do every day.”

Is a Nuclear Cardiac Stress Test Right For You?

For the millions of Americans who have coronary heart disease, a nuclear cardiac stress test can make all the difference in getting their heart on the road to better health.

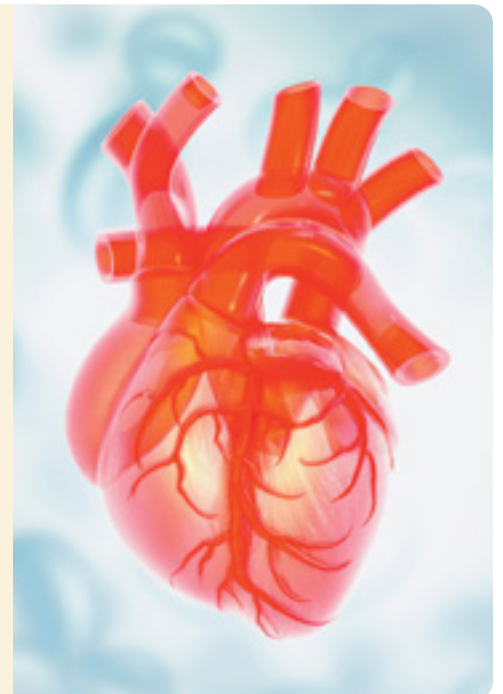
Nuclear cardiac stress tests use a small amount of radioactive material with medical imaging equipment to show how well your blood flows through your heart while at rest and during exercise. These tests identify areas of poor blood flow and help doctors diagnose certain heart conditions, such as coronary artery disease, heart failure and valve disease. It also allows them to check if previous heart procedures have improved blood flow.

Patients who might benefit from this type of testing include those with abnormal cardiac blood work, chest pain, high blood pressure, shortness of breath or a history of coronary artery disease.

We've Expanded Nuclear Cardiac Stress Testing to Better Meet Your Needs:

- War Memorial Hospital—offered Mondays and Tuesdays
 - Hampshire Memorial Hospital—offered Wednesdays and Thursdays
- Talk to your provider to see if a nuclear cardiac stress test is right for you.

To schedule an appointment at any Valley Health facility, call 855-724-3384.



WOUND CARE MATTERS

Given that the skin is the body's largest organ, it makes sense to take good care of it. Approximately 1 in 38 adults in the United States is dealing with a chronic wound, which is typically defined as an opening in your skin that won't heal. Whether the wound is a result of a disease like diabetes, a traumatic injury or other age-related issues, proper wound care can make all the difference in your overall health.

6.5 MILLION: THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS WHO ARE AFFECTED BY CHRONIC WOUNDS EACH YEAR, WHICH TRANSLATES INTO ABOUT 1 IN 38 ADULTS. DIFFERENT TYPES OF WOUNDS INCLUDE ABRASIONS, LACERATIONS, BURNS, SURGICAL INCISIONS, PRESSURE INJURIES, SKIN TEARS, ARTERIAL ULCERS AND VENOUS ULCERS.

1,525 NUMBER OF PATIENTS WHO RECEIVED EXPERT WOUND CARE SERVICES AT HAMPSHIRE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN 2024. SOME WOUNDS COMMONLY TREATED INCLUDE PRESSURE ULCERS, GANGRENOUS WOUNDS, TRAUMATIC WOUNDS, ABSCESSSES, BURNS, POSTSURGICAL WOUNDS, VENOUS LEG/DIABETIC/NEUROPATHIC ULCERS AND OTHER TYPES OF COMPLEX WOUNDS.



15% THE APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BODY WEIGHT THAT IS YOUR SKIN.

\$28.1 - \$96.8 BILLION

THE ANNUAL COST OF MANAGING CHRONIC WOUNDS IN THE UNITED STATES

To learn more or schedule an appointment, call Hampshire Memorial Hospital at **304-822-2115**. Advanced wound care, including hyperbaric medicine, is available through Valley Health Winchester Medical Center. To learn more or schedule an appointment, call **540-536-6547** or visit valleyhealthlink.com/woundcare.

BRINGING HELP AND HOPE TO THE COMMUNITY


A new Valley Health practice treats patients dealing with fertility challenges

For women, men and couples who have fertility concerns—including conception issues, recurrent pregnancy loss, fertility preservation and conditions that affect reproduction—advanced care is now available close to home. Valley Health Fertility opened this fall in Winchester. It is the hospital system's first independent medical practice focusing on this important need and the first of its kind in the region.

“With recent advances in medicine, we can overcome a large portion of fertility issues that in the past felt insurmountable,” says Trimble Spitzer, MD, a board-certified obstetrician/gynecologist and a specialist in reproductive endocrinology/infertility, who leads the new practice. “Women and couples can feel they’ve lost hope when they decide to see a physician for fertility issues. But there is real hope for many and often the underlying causes are very treatable.”

COMPASSION AND EXPERTISE

Dr. Spitzer has more than two decades of experience in fertility care and research. She retired as a colonel in the United States Air Force Medical Corps in August 2025. Her most recent clinical experience was as a



Trimble Spitzer, MD, supports patients at the new Valley Health Fertility practice in Winchester.

reproductive endocrinology/infertility provider at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. “Military families face the same fertility challenges as civilians,” she says. “My experiences working with active duty servicemembers and their families have well prepared me to serve families in the valley.”

An active professor at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Dr. Spitzer received her MD from Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Virginia, followed by an internship and residency training at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and fellowship training at the University of California, San Francisco.

Her philosophy of patient care is a combination of evidence-based medical care plus compassionate listening to each patient. “It’s important to take the time to really explore each person’s and couple’s desires, family goals and challenges,” she says.

REASONS TO SEEK FERTILITY CARE

About 15 percent of couples experience fertility challenges, Dr. Spitzer says. Among the medical conditions treated at Valley Health Fertility are:

Challenges conceiving: A woman aged 35 or younger with regular menstrual cycles should seek help if she has not become pregnant after trying for 12 months, according to Dr. Spitzer. “If you are older than 35, consider reaching out before 12 months,”

she says. “[If you are not having regular periods and/or not ovulating regularly], come in sooner rather than later.”

“You may be having difficulty becoming pregnant for the first time or have already been pregnant and are now having difficulty with additional pregnancies,” she says. “Talking to a subspecialist in [reproductive endocrinology and infertility] can help in both cases.” Dr. Spitzer also works with women who desire a pregnancy but do not have a male partner.

Recurrent pregnancy loss: “Just because you’ve had one, two, three or more pregnancy losses doesn’t mean hope is lost,” Dr. Spitzer says. “Hope amidst sadness and grief is very important. I feel honored to be part of women’s lives when they are going through this difficult time.”

Tests Dr. Spitzer may use to diagnose infertility issues include hysteroscopy (a minimally invasive procedure to look inside the uterus), pelvic ultrasound, saline infusion sonogram (using saline and sonography to see inside the uterus), tubal assessment hysterosalpingogram (a special X-ray procedure using dye to look at the uterus and fallopian tubes in cooperation with the Radiology Department) and semen analysis. “Men may have a low sperm count or low sperm motility and not know it,” she says. “If the analysis finds an area of concern, I work with a urologist to address those needs.”

Other areas of fertility care she provides include ovulation induction, intrauterine insemination and monitoring for in vitro

fertilization (IVF). “Instead of driving an hour or two away for ultrasounds and blood draws before IVF egg retrieval, a woman can have monitoring in Winchester,” Dr. Spitzer says. “We can work in cooperation with IVF centers to share information so that the need for travel is minimized.”

Dr. Spitzer also provides care for:

Endometriosis: The condition occurs when tissue that lines the uterus (endometrium) also grows outside it. “This can be very painful,” she says. “We have several ways to treat it, including with medication or surgery. This diagnosis can affect fertility. If you have endometriosis, it’s important to talk with a fertility subspecialist if you are having challenges becoming pregnant.”

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS): This hormone imbalance can interfere with ovulation and cause irregular menstrual periods, weight gain and acne; it also raises risk for diabetes and high blood pressure. “PCOS affects 15 to 25 percent of women,” Dr. Spitzer says. “These days, we have clear guidelines for diagnosing and treating it.”

Fertility preservation: Women and men may want to freeze their eggs or sperm before undergoing fertility-affecting treatments for cancer, sickle cell disease or some other conditions. Women may also want to freeze eggs to preserve fertility for a future pregnancy if they aren’t ready right now.

Please visit valleyhealthlink.com/fertility for more information.

“By adding a dedicated practice focused on reproductive medicine, we are empowering families in our community and providing access to advanced fertility care close to home. We’re extremely excited to broaden our offering of comprehensive women’s health services for patients in our community.”

—IYAD SABBAGH, MD, CHIEF PHYSICIAN EXECUTIVE OF VALLEY HEALTH

Twenty Years of Memories

Valley Health's Camp Follow the Leader reaches milestone with smiles and fun

In July, Valley Health's Camp Follow the Leader celebrated 20 years of bringing smiles to children with special needs.

Camp Follow the Leader is a weeklong summer day camp for kids ages 6-10 with physical, sensory, emotional, social and/or developmental challenges. Valley Health professional staff, including pediatric physical, occupational and speech therapists, volunteer to make sure every child's needs are met.

"The campers have unique needs that often make it challenging for them to attend a typical camp," says camp codirector Kate Von Schuch, supervisor of pediatric rehabilitation at Valley Health. "We make sure that Camp Follow the Leader is tailored to provide whatever assistance they may need for that day, and we help to adapt it each day if those needs change."

This year, the camp was held at Winchester Church of God. The event is funded by Valley Health Foundations and is open to children throughout the region. Registration is \$75, and scholarships are available.

"Kids have very little cost compared to a typical day camp," says codirector Emily Beckley, team leader of outpatient rehabilitation at Valley Health's Winchester Rehabilitation Center. "The Foundations do a wonderful job of making it accessible for kids with any need or financial situation."

During the week, each camper is paired with a high school or college-aged buddy. Campers may take field trips to locations such as the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum or remain on site to participate in

activities created and led by Shenandoah University occupational therapy students. Activities focus on fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and arts and crafts. Campers can make friendship bracelets, enjoy exercises and dance parties, and interact with animals provided by Faithful Hearts Horses & Friends.

"It's really nice and fun," said 9-year-old Erin Movius, who attended this year's camp. "I like how [the staff] help me and give me piggyback rides."

Making It Possible

- Valley Health Foundations
- Round Hill Fire and Rescue
- East Coast Gymnastics & Cheer
- Stonebrook Pool
- Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum
- Winchester Equipment Company
- Faithful Hearts Horses & Friends
- Winchester Fire and Rescue
- Frederick County Sheriff's Office
- Valley Medical Transport
- And many more

More than 500 children have participated in Camp Follow the Leader since its inception. Over the years, the event has grown to better accommodate the needs of all attendees, while introducing them to more innovative experiences, including a visit from a medical helicopter.

Cherylynn Shiley, a pediatric occupational therapist at Clarke County Public Schools, has volunteered at the camp for nearly 15 years. She says it's not only parents and campers who are appreciative of the event, but also the staff.

"When you watch the buddies and other volunteers working with the campers, and you hear them say they are looking forward to coming back next year, you can tell they really enjoy the experience," she says. "They form a bond with the campers and find it so rewarding to see them laugh and smile."

For more information, please visit valleyhealthlink.com/campfollowtheleader.

Kids at Camp Follow the Leader meet service animals, along with EMS and fire and law enforcement officials during the weeklong event.



A generous donation from Steve and Terri Cluss will establish a peaceful garden for Valley Health patients.



A GARDEN FOR HEALING

Gift from a local couple creates a welcoming space at future Behavioral Health Pavilion

Steve and Terri Cluss have supported the Valley Health Foundations for nearly 20 years, championing initiatives that improve the health of the local community.

Their most profound gift yet will benefit Valley Health’s new Behavioral Health Pavilion, set to expand mental health care for teens and adults starting in 2026 on the Winchester Medical Center campus. This gift is part of the Stronger Together campaign, an effort led by the Valley Health Foundations to raise funds and increase access to vital mental health services across the region.

The Cluss family moved to Winchester in 1997. Over time, they witnessed the growing impact of substance use and mental health challenges in the community. That concern became deeply personal when one of their

children was diagnosed in high school with both a substance use disorder and a behavioral disorder.

At the time, few, if any, local resources existed to support families like theirs. Ultimately, Steve and Terri made the difficult decision to send their teenager to a wilderness intervention program, followed by a therapeutic high school for young people struggling with addiction and mental health issues.

“That experience made us think about those who don’t have the same options,” says Terri. “We had resources, but what about all the people who don’t?”

Determined to make a difference, the Clusses became advocates for change. Terri served in board roles at Shenandoah University, while Steve joined the Valley

Health Board of Trustees and helped launch the Northern Shenandoah Valley Substance Use Coalition—a grassroots response to the region’s rising overdose rates. Together, they’ve worked tirelessly to elevate awareness and action around addiction and mental health.

Their gift will fund the creation of an entry garden at the Valley Health Behavioral Health Pavilion. This new space will offer a peaceful, welcoming environment for patients and families seeking care. “Winchester has given our family so much over the years,” says Steve. “We’re honored to be in a position to give back in a way that helps others.”

Jenny Grooms, executive director of Valley Health Foundations, says the Clusses have given something “truly special.” “Their kindness will transform lives in our community, making local treatment possible. They’ve done something incredible for people who’ll never be able to repay them, and we’re beyond grateful,” she says.

For Terri, the donation reflects a strong belief in the strength of the community. “I’m so proud of the work Valley Health is doing,” she shares. “When you think about community health, the hospital naturally comes to mind. This is such a vibrant place—when there’s a need, people step up. It’s a healthy community because we truly care for one another. Why wouldn’t you want to be part of that?”

The Stronger Together campaign has already reached \$17.5 million of its \$20 million goal. To support the campaign, scan the QR code, visit valleyhealthlink.com/stronger, or



complete and return the enclosed envelope. For more information on Valley Health Foundations, call 540-536-6939 or email jgrooms@valleyhealthlink.com.

BUILDING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

A NEW GASTROENTEROLOGY PRACTICE BRINGS WORLD-CLASS
CARE TO VALLEY HEALTH



The care team at Valley Health Gastroenterology includes, from left, Medical Director Dale C. Holly, MD, MHCDS; nurse practitioner Colleen Nappi, DNP, FNP-C; and gastroenterologist Abdullahi M. Musa, MD, FACP.

Valley Health Gastroenterology—Valley Health’s first system-owned specialty medical practice focused on digestive disorders—opened its doors in September in Winchester, delivering comprehensive and advanced care to area residents with gastrointestinal conditions and concerns.

“Our mission is to provide world-class, patient-centered care to the citizens of the Northern Shenandoah Valley,” says Dale C. Holly, MD, MHCDS, a board-certified gastroenterologist and the newly appointed

medical director at Valley Health Gastroenterology. “Our vision is to bring unprecedented medical care that’s clinically excellent, technologically innovative and always centered on the needs of our patients.”

Expanding access to specialized care like gastroenterology is a vital step in Valley Health’s mission to improve the health of the community.

“By opening a Valley Health clinic, we’re ensuring that patients

across the region receive timely, expert care for digestive health—close to home,” says Iyad Sabbagh, MD, chief physician executive of Valley Health. “This investment reflects our commitment to clinical excellence, patient-centered service and the long-term well-being of those we serve.”

ADVANCED, EVIDENCE-BASED GASTROENTEROLOGY

At Valley Health Gastroenterology, Dr. Holly is joined by Abdullahi M. Musa, MD, FACP, a board-certified gastroenterologist specializing in advanced endoscopy, and nurse practitioner Colleen Nappi, DNP, FNP-C. Together, they diagnose, treat and manage digestive-system conditions including acid reflux/gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), chronic constipation, gallbladder infections, pancreatitis, peptic ulcers, inflammatory bowel disease (including Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis), acute hepatitis A, acute and chronic hepatitis B and C, and fatty liver disease.

These and other digestive system conditions can cause symptoms that may start out as subtle findings but are worth checking with a gastroenterologist. “Symptoms that may be signs of a gastrointestinal disorder include chronic nausea, pain, a change in appetite or in bowel habits, waking up coughing, and choking at night or just feeling off-kilter and not like your normal self,” Dr. Holly says. “These could be early warnings for acid reflux, peptic ulcer disease, gallstones, liver disease, pancreatitis or something else. We listen as patients describe their symptoms and their personal and family health history to help make a diagnosis.” According to Dr. Holly, the best clinical advice he received from medical school came from one of his professors who said, “Ninety percent of all medical diagnoses reside in the medical history, so listen intently to your patients.”

Patients may come to the practice through a referral from their primary care provider or, depending on insurance coverage, may be able to make an appointment themselves.

“Our philosophy is to build a healthier community by bringing top-notch gastrointestinal services, including advanced endoscopic procedures, right here to Winchester,” says Dr. Musa. “The cornerstone is listening to patients, respecting and understanding their priorities so we can decide together on the right care plan for them.”

The practice provides screening and diagnostic procedures including upper endoscopy to evaluate the upper GI tract and colonoscopies to detect colorectal cancer and prevent it by removing precancerous polyps. Dr. Musa performs state-of-the-art, minimally invasive advanced endoscopic procedures including endoscopic ultrasound to examine and obtain tissue samples that aid the diagnosis of cancers of the esophagus, stomach, pancreas and duodenum. Dr. Musa also uses advanced endoscopic techniques such as endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) to detect and treat problems in the pancreatic and bile ducts.

“In the past, surgeons had to work through incisions in the skin, but now we have advanced endoscopy alternatives,” Dr. Musa says. “There

Dr. Dale Holly prioritizes patient-centered care.



“Gastroenterologists have a keen understanding of how psychology affects gut health. ... Managing day-to-day stress and addressing depression and anxiety should be part of holistic care. That could mean trying yoga or a meditation app like Calm or meeting with a counselor. The goal is to mitigate stress and anxiety in the best way for everyone.”

—DALE C. HOLLY, MD, MHCDS, MEDICAL DIRECTOR AT VALLEY HEALTH GASTROENTEROLOGY

GET CHECKED FOR COLON CANCER

Colon cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, yet one in three adults aren't up to date with potentially life-saving screenings. The American Cancer Society recommends colon cancer screening for most adults starting at age 45. They advise screening for those younger than 45 if they have a family or personal history of colon cancer, certain types of colon polyps, inflammatory bowel disease, or those who have had radiation to their abdomen or pelvis for cancer treatment. Screening options include stool-based tests as well as a sigmoidoscopy (an exam of the lower part of your large colon) or a colonoscopy. A colonoscopy not only spots cancers and precancerous growths, but can also prevent colon cancer after your gastroenterologist removes polyps (growths) during the procedure.

"Colorectal cancer is preventable in most cases, but we're seeing more and more people under age 50 diagnosed with advanced disease," says Dr. Holly. "Cancer survival is all about timing. If you catch colorectal cancer in early stages, it is much more treatable than it is in late stages. That's why screening is so important."

is no need to cut through the skin. Instead of big surgeries, we use tiny cameras and special tools [inserted through the mouth or rectum] to diagnose and treat problems. For patients, this means less pain, less recovery time, and a quicker return to work and to everyday life. We are bringing these procedures to Valley Health."

In addition to evidence-based medical treatments, Dr. Holly says the practice will recommend research-based lifestyle and mental health strategies to help ease symptoms of digestive disorders like acid reflux, inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome. "We have to approach health care holistically," he says. "We can't rely only on pharmaceuticals. When you combine medications as needed with treating the whole person, you get the best results."

For example, Dr. Holly notes that in addition to acid-reducing medications, he might suggest lifestyle changes that help reduce acid reflux. "We will look at what you are eating, how much and at what time," he says. "A heavy, fatty meal at 9 p.m. could slow digestion and worsen reflux at night when you're trying to sleep. Alcohol, tobacco and caffeine also increase incidence of reflux. Personal choices can make a difference."

Stress, depression and anxiety can also play roles in conditions like inflammatory bowel disease, he says. "Gastroenterologists have a keen understanding of how psychology affects gut health. No, it is not 'all in your head.' There's a connection. Managing day-to-day stress and addressing depression and anxiety should be part of holistic care. That could mean trying yoga or a meditation app like Calm or meeting with a counselor. The goal is to mitigate stress and anxiety in the best way for everyone."



Dr. Abdullahi Musa and staff at the new Valley Health Gastroenterology offer a welcoming environment and expert care.

TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, COMPASSION

Dr. Holly comes to Valley Health from Atlanta, Georgia, where he was a partner at Atlanta Gastroenterology Associates for over 25 years and section chief of gastroenterology at Piedmont Atlanta Hospital. A graduate of the University of Arkansas College of Medicine in Little Rock, Arkansas, he completed his residency and internship at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, followed by a fellowship in gastroenterology and hepatology at Saint Louis University School of Medicine in Saint Louis, Missouri. Dr. Holly also has a Master of Health Care Delivery Science from Dartmouth College. He is a diplomate of the American Subspecialty Board of Gastroenterology and a member of the American College of Gastroenterology, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy and the American Gastroenterological Association.

“I consider myself a general GI practitioner,” Dr. Holly says. “My goals at Valley Health are to build a strong gastrointestinal division with centers of excellence in advanced endoscopy, general GI, hepatology and inflammatory bowel disease and to have a world-class clinical nutrition program. I want to enhance accessibility to health care in our community by strengthening relationships with nonprofits and other community groups to address all the reasons people cannot access great health care—whether it’s insurance or transportation or income. Making people feel welcome, wanted and cared for is a major piece of what I want to build. It is my belief that the most important investment resides in the investment of human capital.”

Dr. Musa received his medical degree from Red Sea University in Port Sudan, Sudan, and completed his residency in internal medicine and fellowship in gastroenterology at Howard University Hospital in Washington, D.C. Following his time in D.C., Dr. Musa specialized in advanced endoscopy through a dedicated fellowship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, Arkansas. He has also served as an internal medicine hospitalist at Inova Alexandria Hospital in Alexandria, Virginia; Mary Washington Hospital in Fredericksburg, Virginia; and St. Mary’s Medical Center in Huntington, West Virginia. He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians.

“I’ve had exceptional training in internal medicine, in a wide variety of gastrointestinal diseases and in advanced endoscopy,” Dr. Musa says. “As part of Valley Health Gastroenterology, I bring a high level of expertise to our patients. We have an amazing team and a state-of-the-art endoscopy suite at Winchester Medical Center. People who used to travel two hours away for advanced endoscopic procedures can now have access to these services right here.”

Valley Health Gastroenterology is located at 1870 Amherst St., Suite 3D, in Winchester. Call 540-536-5840 to schedule appointments.



Dr. Abdullahi Musa provides advanced procedures in Winchester Medical Center’s state-of-the-art endoscopy suite.

“In the past, surgeons had to work through incisions in the skin, but now we have advanced endoscopy alternatives. There is no need to cut through the skin. ... For patients, this means less pain, less recovery time and a quicker return to work and to everyday life. We are bringing these procedures to Valley Health.”

—ABDULLAHI M. MUSA, MD, FACP

WHEN TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Valley Health provides stroke patients with state-of-the-art care

Every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a stroke. A leading cause of death and disability, stroke commonly occurs when a vessel supplying blood to the brain is blocked. This condition, known as an ischemic stroke, accounts for 87 percent of stroke cases and must be treated urgently.

In fact, patients experiencing an ischemic stroke have the best outcome if diagnosed within three hours of the onset of symptoms.

“Time is of the essence,” says Habibullah Ziayee, MD, a fellowship-trained interventional neurologist with Valley Health Neurology. “If someone is having facial droop or speech difficulty, or one side of their body becomes severely weakened or paralyzed, then brain tissue is at risk. It is essential to know the warning signs [see the sidebar] and get immediate care.”

UNDERSTANDING RISK FACTORS

Educating patients about risk factors is key to reducing the likelihood of stroke, Dr. Ziayee says.

“Patients at risk for ischemic stroke are also those who are prone to heart attack,” he explains. “They may have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and/or uncontrolled hypertension. Smoking is also a risk factor, so we encourage patients to take precautions to manage concerning health conditions.”

TOP-QUALITY TREATMENT

At Valley Health, patients experiencing



Habibullah Ziayee, MD

a stroke receive world-class care, thanks to Dr. Ziayee and his team. In most cases, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel bring a patient to one of the system’s hospitals, where a well-established protocol is initiated. Typically, a computerized tomography (CT) scan is ordered to see if the patient has experienced a hemorrhagic stroke—a brain bleed caused when a

weakened blood vessel ruptures. A CT angiogram indicates if there is blockage in the blood vessels, indicating an ischemic stroke. Additionally, the medical team assesses if the patient is a candidate for clot-busting medications, also known as thrombolytic agents, which must be administered quickly to be most effective. If an acute stroke is diagnosed, patients throughout the health system are often transferred to Winchester Medical Center for advanced care.

When Dr. Ziayee and his colleagues determine that intervention is needed, they can perform a mechanical thrombectomy—an innovative procedure that removes blockages with the use of catheters. “Basically, we insert a catheter in the groin or wrist and advance it up to the clot,” he says. “We can then suction the clot out of the brain and restore blood flow.”

Above all, Dr. Ziayee emphasizes that stroke diagnosis, treatment and recovery require a collaborative approach. “We are fortunate to have outstanding clinicians, nurses, staff and educators here at Valley Health,” he says. “The best stroke care is always a team effort.”

Visit valleyhealthlink.com/stroke for more information.

B.E.F.A.S.T. ACTION

If you think someone may be having a stroke, consider B.E.F.A.S.T. and do the following test:

B—Balance: Look for signs of sudden loss of balance or coordination.

E—Eyes: Find out if the person is experiencing vision loss or blurring.

F—Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A—Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S—Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

T—Time: If you see any of these signs, call 911 right away.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Project Engage Helps Patients on Road to Recovery

A new program connects participants with support and resources for substance use disorder

Like all journeys, the road to recovery for those living with substance use disorder begins with the first step. And thanks to a grant provided by the West Virginia Office of Drug Control Policy, both Hampshire Memorial Hospital and War Memorial Hospital now have resources to help patients find the right path for long-term recovery.

Through Project Engage, both hospitals have developed a coordinated program—staffed by uniquely trained peer recovery support specialists (PRSS)—with the goal of connecting patients who have a substance use disorder to critical resources, whether that’s an inpatient treatment program, outpatient counseling, detoxification or harm-reducing tools like free take-home naloxone kits.

“We meet the patients where they are, whether in the Emergency Department or in our inpatient unit,” explains Emma Winn, PRSS, who has been hired as the substance use coordinator for both hospitals. “Our mission is to eliminate as many barriers to recovery as possible, whether that’s transportation, education, or researching and coordinating referrals to the most appropriate services.”



One tool that is used to help identify patients who may be at risk for substance use disorder is SBIRT: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. Based on the results of the SBIRT assessment, a peer recovery coach provides appropriate services, including following up with patients after discharge.

Since beginning the program earlier this year, Winn has worked with dozens of patients and has been successful in getting a number of them admitted into inpatient programs, while others have been referred to resources in their communities. The

program recently expanded to include two additional peer recovery support specialists. As part of the certification process in West Virginia, a PRSS has to have personal experience with substance use and be in a prolonged period of recovery. It’s this personal experience, Winn says, that allows them to connect with individuals on a deeper level and offer more empathy and understanding. “I’ve been that patient in a hospital bed, so I know firsthand the devastating impacts substance use can have on your life,” she says.

Studies show that patients who have been assisted by a PRSS have significantly improved recovery outcomes, including higher rates of initiating treatment, lower program dropout rates, greater success in rejoining the community after treatment, and reduced relapse rates.

“I greatly appreciate that Valley Health has taken a chance on someone who is in recovery to start a recovery program, and I hope to be a valuable advocate for both the hospital and the communities we serve,” Winn adds.

“Our mission is to eliminate as many barriers to recovery as possible, whether that’s transportation, education, or researching and coordinating referrals to the most appropriate services.” —EMMA WINN, PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALIST

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