

HealthLINK

YOUR CONNECTION TO HEALTH & WELLNESS

FALL 2024

INSIDE:

Advanced thoracic
care/ Weight loss help
for teens/ All about
cochlear implants/
Spotlight on rectal
cancer care



COMPASSIONATE CARE FOR THE WHOLE PERSON

VALLEY HEALTH'S EXPERTS OFFER NEW MENTAL
AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

ValleyHealth
Healthier, together.

WELCOME

YOUR HOMETOWN HEALTH CARE

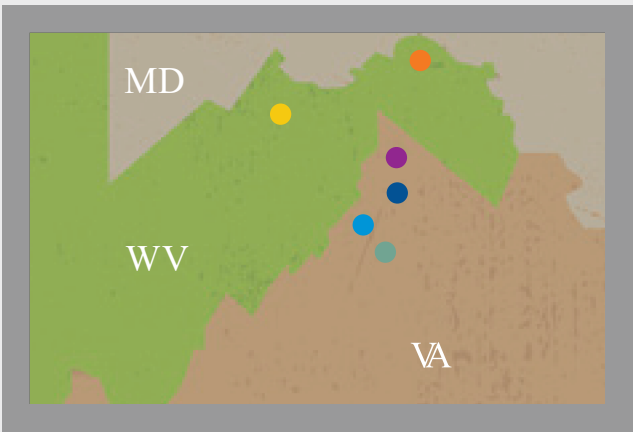
Valley Health is committed to supporting patients’ mental health as a critical part of overall wellness. This summer, to improve our care and the health of our community, we expanded our behavioral health services to treat children as young as five years old. Take a moment to learn how we’re addressing the behavioral health and substance use needs of patients of all ages.

We also hope you’ll find the article informative about our new thoracic surgeon. Patients receive the care they need for lung and esophageal cancer, along with other disorders like gastroesophageal reflux disease, closer to home, while at the hands of our skilled surgical team.

Because Valley Health understands the importance of hometown health care, we’ve included hyperlocal content in this issue of *HealthLINK* that more directly benefits you, including introducing both new and established providers in your region, celebrating your local hospital’s achievements, and updating you on the care you can expect to receive at your local facility.

As always, we remain proud to serve you and strive to make health care accessible, affordable and exceptional for all.

On the cover: Members of our expert Behavioral Health Services team.



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

valleyhealthlink.com/community

Valley Health System includes:

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

valleyhealthlink.com/locations

Health LINK 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

view *HealthLINK* online at valleyhealthlink.com/news.

Rebecca Layne – Barbara Ballard, Chief Information Officer for, Warren Memorial Hospital

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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. 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.

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HEALTHIER TOGETHER

HOSPICE IN THE HOSPITAL PROVIDES EASE AT END OF LIFE

Hospice in the Hospital began in 2020 as a collaboration between Valley Health's Winchester Medical Center and Blue Ridge Hospice. The program provides of-life support for eligible patients need more care than could be provided at home with hospice, but who are unable to take advantage of Blue Ridge Hospice's inpatient facility due to lack of

Page bed availability or being too unstable for transport. Hospice in the Hospital allows patients to transition directly from inpatient care to hospice care. This year, the program expanded to include

Shenandoah Memorial and Page Memorial hospitals. Expansion to Shenandoah Memorial Hospital is planned for later this year, and Valley Health hopes to provide this program at

Hampshire Memorial and War Memorial hospitals in the future.

"In keeping with our vision of care that is accessible, affordable and exceptional for all, Valley Health is proud to bring this care to our communities, allowing more patients to spend this time closer to home," says N. Travis

Clark, vice president, operations, and Shenandoah Memorial Hospital. "When hospice is needed, Valley is proud to partner with Blue Ridge Hospice in providing the best care and best options for our patients."

Not all individuals are eligible for this program, so it is important to engage with Valley Health's Case Management and Palliative Care teams as early as possible to review the best options.



VALLEY HEALTH EXPANDS PRIMARY CARE SERVICES

Valley Health is committed to enhancing health care accessibility through the expansion of our primary care services, with the addition of dozens of new physicians and advanced practice providers (APPs), new office spaces, and welcoming caregivers. Here is a snapshot of exciting new enhancements to come over the next two years in primary care:

Valley Health Primary Care | Jubal Early

- **Status:** Open
- **Location:** 519 W. Jubal Early Drive, Suite 301, Winchester, Virginia
- Valley Health has expanded care in Winchester with a new space and several new physicians. Formerly Valley Health Winchester Family Practice

located at 611 E. Jubal Early Drive in Winchester, the practice has undergone a name change and move and is accepting new patients.

Valley Health Primary Care | Strasburg

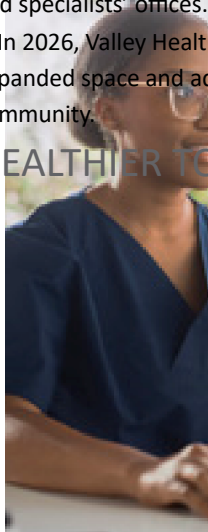
- **Status:** Opening Fall 2024
- **Location:** 33699 Old Valley Pike, Strasburg, Virginia

- Physicians and APPs from Valley Health Shenandoah Memorial Hospital Family Medicine | Strasburg will move into this brand new, state-of-the-art facility.

Coming soon: In 2025, Valley Health Primary Care | Greenwood will open, bringing physicians and APPs even closer to major areas of growth in Winchester and making it easier for residents who live on Winchester's east side to access care. Also that year, Valley Health Family Medicine | Ranson will move into a newly built facility that features support services such as lab and specialists' offices.

In 2026, Valley Health Family Medicine | Hedgesville will move into an expanded space and add new providers to help care for a growing community.

HEALTHIER TOGETHER



Valley Health is committed to providing the highest quality of care to our patients. We are proud to be a part of the Valley Health system, which is dedicated to improving the lives of our patients and the community.

RIGHT BY YOUR SIDE

THE BEDSIDE CONNECT PROGRAM BRINGS PATIENTS AND NURSES CLOSER TOGETHER

Since moving to its new location in 2021, Warren Memorial Hospital (WMH) has embraced innovative solutions to enhance patient care. One such advancement is the implementation of a virtual nursing platform called Bedside Connect. The hospital's use of the telemedicine technology is transforming both the patient and nursing experience in positive ways and is garnering attention from other health care systems across the U.S. and even as far away as Germany.

Nurses undergo specialized training to use Bedside Connect to monitor multiple patients from a specially equipped video monitoring station within

the hospital. These virtual nurses are an integral part of the patient's care team, complementing the in-person interactions of bedside nurses. WMH currently has 12 trained virtual nurses who strive to provide seamless coordination between virtual and in-person care.

The Bedside Connect platform has significantly lightened the administrative workload for nursing staff, allowing floor nurses to focus more of their time on direct patient care. Tasks like taking admission history, performing discharges and educating patients about medications can now be efficiently handled by a virtual nurse who communicates to patients via a monitor at their bedside. These changes allow bedside nurses to spend more time with their patients, providing hands-on, patient-centered care.

Bedside Connect goes beyond individual patient interactions. It also enables WMH staff to involve a patient's family, who can join conversations by video from remote locations across the United States. Conversations related to treatment plans, palliative care or other complex decisions can now benefit from the input of family members, which helps both patients and caregivers make the best choices for the patient's care.

Specialists at other Valley Health locations are also able to evaluate and treat patients at WMH using Bedside Connect cameras in patient rooms. For example, wound care specialists at Valley Health's Center for Advanced Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine use the ultra-high-resolution Bedside Connect cameras to evaluate patients in real time and provide treatment plans for their continued care. WMH staff can then provide the specialist's recommended equipment and supplies to begin the treatment plan immediately, resulting in more efficient care.

Overall, WMH's adoption of Bedside Connect has eased the administrative burden on nurses and allowed them to spend more time doing what matters most—caring for their patients. WMH continues to lead in health care innovation by utilizing a tool that prioritizes and enhances the patient experience in a digital age.

BY THE NUMBERS

- **36 inpatient rooms**, each outfitted with Bedside Connect technology
- **12 trained virtual nurses**

- **1 hour per day** on average is given back to each bedside nurse as a result of directing administrative tasks to a virtual nurse
- **200+ health care organizations** have either visited WMH or joined a virtual presentation to learn about Bedside Connect capabilities

Multispecialty Clinic | Commerce Avenue, about her passion for improving the lives of her patients.

patient autonomy first, and I respect their point of view and their decisions for their own body. I focus on maximizing the face-to-face time with a patient, and visits are not rushed. I try

HOMETOWN HEALTH CARE

MEET OUR PHYSICIANS

Get to know primary care physician Hager Salem, MD

At Valley Health, we believe it's important to inform our community of the services we provide and introduce you to the compassionate individuals administering this patient-centered care. We talked with Hager Salem, MD, a primary care physician at Valley Health

Q: WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE IN HEALTH CARE?

A: After completing medical school at Ross University School of Medicine, I did my internal medicine residency at Brooklyn Hospital in New York. I then worked as a nocturnist at Winchester Medical Center and Warren Memorial Hospital for two years. As a nocturnist, I was a hospitalist who saw sick patients who came to the hospital at night.

Q: WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN?

A: At the hospitals, I was seeing patients who were coming in sick and had no primary care provider. I was treating symptoms and illnesses that could have been prevented if the patient had a provider they regularly see. I also felt like what I was doing in the hospital was very limited because I would treat these patients, and then I would return them without any follow-up for primary care. I said to myself, "What can I do to prevent these patients from having to go to the emergency room?" This inspired me to become a primary care provider.

Q: WHY IS PRIMARY CARE IMPORTANT?

A: Primary care is important because it allows the patient to have someone who knows them, has a relationship with them, and someone they can trust with their health.

Q: WHY DID YOU JOIN VALLEY HEALTH?

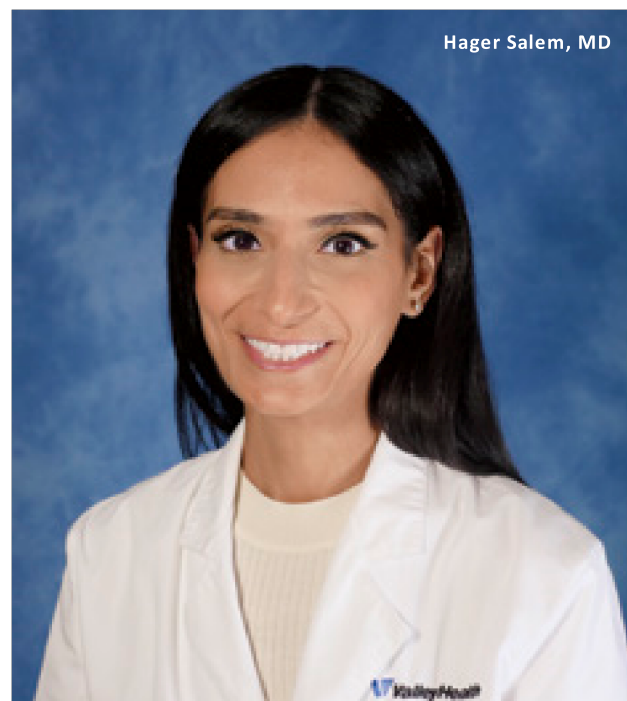
A: Valley Health is the type of health system you dream of. It's the health system you want to provide care for your own family, and I feel proud to be part of it. I live in Front Royal and feel like I have the chance to do good for the community.

Q: WHAT SHOULD YOUR PATIENTS KNOW ABOUT HOW YOU PROVIDE CARE?

A: Patients should know that I put them first. I put their values first, I put

to be as thorough as possible and encourage patients to come with a list of concerns. I make sure my patients have easy access to me, so I give them multiple ways to reach me, and I try to be quick with my responses. I focus on decreasing wait times in the waiting room. Because we have a lab in the same building, results come back within days. Patients will get a call from me or the medical assistant (usually within days) explaining

these results and our recommendations.



INNOVATIONS

DID YOU HEAR?

VALLEY HEALTH NOW OFFERS COCHLEAR IMPLANTS TO PATIENTS WITH HEARING LOSS

Prolonged noise exposure, aging and infection can damage the hair cells that enable hearing in a person's hearing organ, or cochlea. When this happens,

hearing loss can become severe enough that hearing aids no longer work.

A cochlear implant replaces the function of these damaged hair cells and allows people with profound hearing loss and complete deafness to hear again.

This spring, Valley Health began performing cochlear implants on adults.

"It's a service that has not been available in the region until now," says Robert Reed, MD, a board-certified otolaryngologist at Valley Health Ear, Nose & Throat. "People living with severe

Q: WHAT ASPECT OF PATIENT CARE DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING?

A: When my patients get better. I don't take credit for it; I always put the credit on them. I want patients to know that they have it in them to be an advocate for themselves,

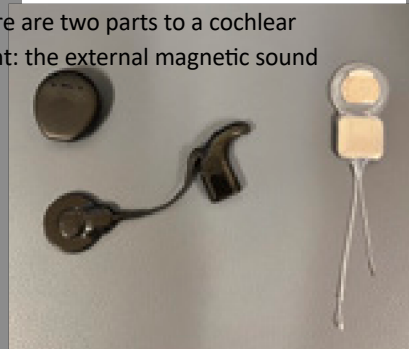
and medicine is just a tool to help you help yourself.

To learn more or to schedule an appointment with Dr. Salem, visit valleyhealthlink.com/Salem.

hearing loss can have learning difficulties, social isolation and cognitive decline. Now, we can provide this life-changing technology and the requisite post-surgery programming services for patients in our community, rather than asking them to drive several hours to receive this care."

A person might be a good candidate for a cochlear implant if their hearing aids no longer help, they struggle to hear on the phone, they have difficulty understanding others and they ask others to repeat themselves.

There are two parts to a cochlear implant: the external magnetic sound



processor that goes behind the ear and the implant that is surgically placed underneath the skin with electrodes that extend into the cochlea.

Undergoing a hearing exam is the first step in the implantation process. Valley Health audiologist Rebekah Funkhouser will test a person's understanding of speech and

Top: Otolaryngologist Robert Reed, MD, and audiologist Rebekah Funkhouser. Above: The cochlear implant consists of external sound processing components (left) and an internal device implanted beneath the skin (right). whether their hearing aids work at a conversational level. "Some people struggle for years with a hearing aid turned up to a maximum volume, and they're told there is no other recourse for them," Dr. Funkhouser says.

"Cochlear implants are now available at Valley Health for these individuals."

The cochlear implant surgery takes about 90 minutes, and patients go home the same day. Minor soreness and ear pain last three to five days. Implants are activated approximately

three weeks after surgery to allow for healing.

After activation, Dr. Funkhouser performs follow-up mapping where she programs the implant, measures sound levels and performs additional hearing tests. Patients can expect their hearing with the implant to slowly improve over the course of their first year as they

grow accustomed to hearing with the device.

For more information, call Valley Health Ear, Nose & Throat at 540-536-7290.

FAQs

WEIGHT LOSS HELP FOR TEENS

A new program at Valley Health supports adolescents struggling with being overweight or obese

The Valley Health Metabolic & Bariatric Program is offering its Adolescent Medical Weight Loss Program for teens ages 14 through 17 who struggle with being overweight or obese. Through the program, a team of nurse practitioners, dietitians and behavioral therapists help adolescents achieve a healthier weight and learn about making nutrition and lifestyle changes. Family Nurse Practitioner Rick Northcraft tells us more about the program.

Q: HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE PROGRAM?

A: Using the pediatric growth chart, children are considered overweight if their weight is between the 85th and 94th percentile. They are considered to be obese if they are above the 95th percentile. Early treatment is highly recommended. A weight loss of 5 to 10 percent will have a very positive impact on obesity-driven diseases.

Q: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS CHILDHOOD OBESITY?

A: Childhood obesity can lead to health problems like type 2 diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, fatty liver and other metabolic diseases. Teens with

obesity often have depression and low self-esteem. Adolescents affected by being overweight or obese often experience disease progression into adulthood. Our goal with the adolescent program is to guide each patient toward a sustainable, healthy lifestyle to minimize these health problems and prevent the progression of disease.

Q: HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

A: Weight loss is not necessarily a measure of success of the program. The goals in managing adolescent obesity are to develop healthy eating patterns that will carry into adulthood; improve overall health, quality of life and self-esteem; and prevent future health issues.

Participants meet monthly. There are six lessons with topics that include label reading, sugary drinks, healthier snacks and self-esteem. Patients are encouraged to follow up monthly. Medication therapy may be an option if appropriate. Dietitian support is available and encouraged. We have the capability to do metabolic testing, which helps determine specific caloric needs.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A PATIENT COMPLETES THE PROGRAM?

A: Obesity is a chronic disease that requires chronic management; therefore, patients may need to follow up for an extended period. Treatment guidelines recommend 26 or more hours of patient and family counseling over a period of three to 12 months.



Q: TO WHAT IT MEANS AS A PARENT?

A: We strongly encourage parental involvement in the program and your child's weight-loss journey. The key for parents when discussing their child's weight is to maintain a nonjudgmental attitude and promote positivity. A child's identity is not in the number on the scale.

Q: IS THIS PROGRAM COVERED BY INSURANCE?

A: The program is covered by most insurance plans.

Contact your insurance company if you have questions.

To learn more, call **540-536-0010** or visit valleyhealthlink.com/adolescentprogram.

CARING FOR TH

→ VALLEY HEALTH OFFERS NEW MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, TEENS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Valley Health has expanded its mental health services to include new care options for children and teens living with anxiety, depression, substance use challenges and other

behavioral health concerns.

The new services include counseling for youth, outpatient psychiatric appointments with medication management, and after-school intensive outpatient programs for teens. "Our goal is to offer early intervention and treatment to children, adolescents and their families before more severe consequences or the progression of a mental health condition occur," says Diane Ricci, a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) and director of Outpatient Behavioral Health Services at Valley Health.

This is good news for local families who have faced obstacles when seeking mental health care for their children. "The pandemic shone a light on our children and their mental health struggles and reduced the stigma associated with seeking support," Ricci notes, "but the lack of providers in our community was a crisis before that." Waiting lists,

insurance barriers and the need to travel out of the area to reach providers made navigating mental health care difficult, she says.

Valley Health's new mental health options for youth "allow our community members to stay in the community to access the care they need when they need it," says Karen Dorr, DNP, senior director of Behavioral Health Services at Valley Health. "Valley Health recognizes that caring for our patients is about caring for the whole person—not just medical needs but also behavioral health needs."

WHOL

“Young people and their families have somewhere safe to go to address mental health and substance use issues,” says Tiffany Markwood, LCSW, manager of Outpatient Mental Health Programs at Valley Health. “By making mental health a priority, Valley Health is

reducing the stigma around it. It is just as important as any other kind of health care.”

A SPECTRUM OF CARE

The new services for children and adolescents are available at 337 Westside Station Drive in Winchester, close to Winchester Medical Center. All services accept health insurance. “We can complete a cost estimate to let people know what their financial responsibility will be,” Ricci says.

The program also helps families connect with Winchester Medical Center’s patient assistance program to see whether they qualify for financial assistance.

“By making mental health a priority, Valley Health is reducing the stigma around it. It is just as important as any other kind of health care.”

—TIFFANY MARKWOOD, LCSW, MANAGER OF OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

NEW SERVICES INCLUDE:

- **Outpatient mental health counseling for individuals and their families.** Available for children and teens ages 5 to 17, counseling is provided by board-approved licensed mental health professionals that include licensed professional counselors, licensed clinical social workers, residents in counseling and supervisees in social work. Sessions may be weekly or more often, and the number of sessions will depend on a patient’s individual needs, says Amanda Dondero, LCSW, supervisor of Outpatient Child and Adolescent Mental Health Programs at Valley Health. Before the expansion, counseling was limited to teens ages 14 to 17. “Family therapy is also available,” she says. “A big goal is helping young people build coping skills and techniques to recognize and regulate their emotions.”

- **Outpatient substance use and co-occurring counseling for teens and their families.** This program is available to teens ages 12 to 17 currently residing in Winchester or Frederick County, Virginia, who are actively using or at risk of using substances and who show mental health symptoms. This program utilizes the CATALIST model

(Community-based Assessment and

Treatment for Adolescents and Families

E PERSON

ing and

assessment, individual therapy, to Launch Interventions for Substances and Trauma). It offers thorough screen-

individual peer coaching sessions, case management services and a weekly youth recovery group. Services are

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

individualized and based on the youth's risk level. "We have developed a strong partnership with our local school systems and community partners, allowing us to provide services in the schools and community to prevent any barriers to treatment, including transportation and readiness to change. Because of this, we have reached youth that might otherwise not seek treatment," says Whitney Maddox, manager of Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Programs at Valley Health.

- **Outpatient psychiatric care, including medication prescribing and management.** The program recently welcomed Megan Borkon, MD, a board-certified psychiatrist who specializes in child and adolescent psychiatry. The addition of Dr. Borkon means families have improved access to ongoing psychiatric care for conditions such as anxiety and depression. "Families typically need to navigate a variety of local agencies to have their child's mental health needs met," Dr. Borkon says. "For the first time in this area, we'll be able to offer families a more comprehensive experience, one that meets their acute and long-term needs."

- **Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOPs) for teens with mental health and/or substance use challenges.** For teens ages 12 to 17, these programs meet for two hours a day after school, three to five days a week, typically for six to 18 weeks. The programs are set to begin this fall, when board-certified psychiatrist Olga Demina, MD, a child and adolescent psychiatry specialist, joins the Valley Health staff.

Participants receive individual counseling, group therapy and family therapy. Those in the IOP also work with a trained peer recovery coach who provides lived experience for additional support. Parents can also participate in coaching sessions to learn new skills for supporting their child.

"One of the great things is that adolescents can get the level of care they need with minimal disruption of their daily life," says Dondero. "If someone in outpatient counseling



Director Diane Ricci and Supervisor Amanda Dondero in the new behavioral health services building off Amherst Street.

NEW MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS UNIT FOR ADULTS

Valley Health has also expanded its behavioral health services for adults.

The new Winchester Medical Center EmPATH (Emergency Psychiatry Assessment, Treatment and Healing) Unit offers immediate behavioral health care to adults ages 18 and older in the region who are experiencing a mental health crisis. “The unit provides a therapeutic space where patients are cared for by our behavioral health nursing staff, meet with therapists and peer specialists, and are assessed by behavioral health providers,” says Karen Dorr, senior director of Behavioral Health Services at Valley Health. The unit is located between the Emergency Department and the North Tower entrance at Winchester Medical Center.

Also for the adult population, Valley Health has plans to expand traditional outpatient medication management and therapy services, increase the number of mental health intensive outpatient groups, and add substance use intensive outpatient services.

faces a difficult situation and is struggling, they can move into the intensive outpatient program. If someone in the intensive program stabilizes and is doing well, they can move to outpatient counseling.”

The IOPs will also be open to teens as a step-down option after hospitalization for a mental health or substance use concern or to prevent a higher level of care, which may include residential treatment or hospitalization.

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF YOUTH

Young people encountered new mental health challenges during the pandemic. For many, the needs continue today. “We’re seeing a lot of concerns across the board,” says Maddox. “There has been an increase in anxiety and depression. We are also working with high rates of trauma and significant substance use.”

Losing regular, in-person connections with classmates, teachers, friends and adults during the pandemic was stressful and cut off normal channels for processing thoughts and feelings, Maddox says. “The pandemic pointed out that you can’t always rely on others to support you in the way you envisioned it.” Before the pandemic, a teen or preteen might have spent time with a friend talking things out. But without that friend time, some youth lacked the skills for managing their emotions. “That left kids overwhelmed and alone,” she adds.

Younger children face the same needs, Dondero says. “It can be anxiety, family relationships, behavioral issues, trauma, depression. Our young kids go through the same things that older kids go through, but the way they handle it can present in different ways such as acting out and

tantrums. There’s a need not being met, and our work is to figure out what that need is. We then support families as they support their children.”

Meanwhile, Ricci says, the need for early intervention in substance use cases is necessary. “The CDC reports drug overdoses in adolescents ages 12 through 18 increased 200 percent from 2020 to 2021 and remained elevated well into 2022. More than four in 10 adolescents who died from an overdose had a history of mental health conditions. These data emphasize that this continues to be an issue that needs to be

“ There’s a need not being met, and our work is to figure out what that need is. We then support families as they support their children. ”

—AMANDA DONDERO, LCSW, SUPERVISOR OF

OUTPATIENT CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

BY THE NUMBERS

A TOP 100 HOSPITAL IN

→ WARREN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL (WMH) CONTINUES TO EARNING A SPOT THIS YEAR ON THE TOP 100 RURAL AND CHARTIS CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH. SINCE OUR NEW 2021, WE’VE EXPANDED OUR RESOURCES AND ENHANCED NEEDS, ALL WHILE MAINTAINING SUPERIOR PATIENT CARE,

WARREN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL RECEIVED ITS 5TH
“A” GRADE FROM
OVERALL
PERFORMANCE IN KEEPING PATIENTS SAFE FROM
HARM AND MEDICAL ERRORS.

addressed by our community, to shed some light on the post-pandemic state of teen overdose and mental health crises.”

REACHING OUT

Outpatient providers treat more than 100 kids and teens

each week, and the intensive outpatient mental health and substance use programs have space for 10 in each group.

“We are supporting patient access through quick response times and a comprehensive intake process while providing experts in child and adolescent psychiatry,” Ricci says. “Each provider is dedicated to helping young people heal and always leads with empathy and compassion to support steps toward recovery and a bright,

fulfilling future.”

Parents, physicians, schools and youth can call 540536-4881 to find out more about these services. To learn more, visit valleyhealthlink.com/behavioralhealth.

THE NATION

DEMONSTRATE ITS HIGH QUALITY OF CARE, COMMUNITY HOSPITALS LIST FROM THE WARREN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL OPENED IN OUR SERVICES TO MEET OUR COMMUNITY’S SAFETY AND EXPERIENCE.

STRAIGHT
THE LEAPFROG GROUP FOR ITS
PREVENTABLE

GROWTH IN IMAGING SERVICES SINCE THE **%** MORE THAN 48,000 DIAGNOSTIC



18

OPENING OF THE NEW HOSPITAL. THERE WERE

PROCEDURES PERFORMED AT WMH IN 2023.

OUR 4-STAR RATING FROM THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES IS BASED ON VARIOUS HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE MEASURES, INCLUDING PATIENT OUTCOMES,

38

SAFETY AND PATIENT EXPERIENCE.



%

36

ARE PRIVATE

AND OUTFITTED WITH GROWTH IN ANNUAL DEDICATED TO

THE NUMBER OF INPATIENT BEDS, SURGICAL CASES. 12 OF WHICH ARE

CRITICAL CARE. ALL INPATIENT ROOMS

THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY.

SINCE OPENING OUR NEW HOSPITAL, WE HAVE SEEN 23% GROWTH IN PATIENT ADMISSIONS AND 15% GROWTH IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED) VISITS.

Aerial photo of
Warren Memorial
Hospital.



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

VALLEY HEALTH IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING WARREN COUNTY, FRONT ROYAL COMMUNITY THROUGH FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, LOCAL CAREGIVERS AND THE EXPANSION OF CARE

Valley Health makes significant contributions within Warren County and Front Royal. From providing defibrillators in public schools and funding for local agencies to educating the next generation of health care providers, our contributions within Warren County exceeded \$12.5 million in 2023, the most recent IRS reporting year. These collaborations directly support our mission to serve our community by improving health. They include:

- **\$250,000**
to support mission-critical community organizations like St. Luke Community Clinic, Healthy Families NSV & Warren, and Wheels for Wellness.
- **\$11.5 million**
dedicated to covering the cost of care and treatment for those who are unable to pay or are underinsured. Each week of the year,

Valley Health provides approximately **\$250,000** in free or subsidized care in Warren County.

- **\$700,000**
to fund health professions education, including community health education groups like diabetes prevention, along with education and clinical contact hours for students pursuing certifications and degrees in various health professions.

THE GROWTH OF HOMETOWN HEALTH CARE

In 2019, before the new Warren Memorial Hospital construction, there were 49 credentialed physicians representing 18 specialties that were affiliated with the hospital. Those numbers have risen to 269 physicians representing 29 specialties today.

In addition, 434 Warren County residents are employed by Valley Health System. From the Emergency Department to the Pharmacy, the operating room to the rehab gym, members of our talented team bring care and compassion to their work every day—always cognizant of the part they play in serving our community by improving health.

SPOTLIGHT

ADVANCED THORACIC CARE

Cardiothoracic surgeon Percival Buenaventura, MD, provides lifesaving care to patients with lung cancer, esophageal cancer and other conditions of the thorax

Valley Health's board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon Percival Buenaventura, MD, specializes in procedures that treat lung cancer, hiatal hernias, gastroesophageal reflux (severe, chronic heartburn) and other benign and malignant conditions of the thorax—the area of the body “below the neck and above the bottom of the ribcage,” he explains. Fellowship-trained in minimally invasive surgery as well as in cardiothoracic and general surgery, Dr. Buenaventura performs most procedures with minimally invasive techniques such as robotic surgery and video-assisted thoracic surgery.

“Smaller incisions and better visualization make these surgeries safer and more precise than open surgery,” he says. “Patients feel less pain afterward. Recovery is shorter and easier. There is less downtime. Instead of being in bed for weeks, you’re up and out and back to your normal life.”

General thoracic surgery takes care of a wide range of conditions but does not include the heart and blood vessels, says Dr. Buenaventura. Much of his work focuses on lung cancer—the second-most common cancer in both men and women in the U.S. and the leading cause of cancer deaths.

“Half of my work involves cancer of the lungs and esophagus—the tube that carries food from the mouth to the stomach,” he says. “And 95 percent of that is lung cancer.” Surgery can be an effective treatment option for early stage lung cancer and, when appropriate, can offer higher survival rates than other treatments, according to the American Lung Association. Surgery can involve removal of a small section of the lung or an entire lung.

“About 20 percent of lung cancers can be treated for a cure,” Dr. Buenaventura says. “That’s why the earlier you catch lung cancer, the higher the likelihood of curing it.”

Smoking is a major risk factor for lung cancer. Screening with a low-dose



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computed tomography (CT) scan can find lung cancer in its earliest, most treatable stages for smokers at high risk. But just 7 percent of Virginia residents and 5 percent of West Virginia residents who are at high risk for lung cancer take advantage of yearly low-dose CT screenings. “This is an easy, painless and safe five-minute test, but many people are not aware of it,” Dr. Buenaventura says.

Low-dose CT screening for lung cancer is available at all Valley Health hospital imaging locations and

Winchester Imaging. It is recommended for current and former smokers ages 50 to 80 with a 20 pack-year history. That means you now or in the past smoked one pack a day for at least 20 years, or more packs for a shorter time, such as two packs a day for 10 years.

Whether or not you have smoked, talk to your doctor right away if you have symptoms that could be an early warning sign for lung cancer such as a chronic cough, coughing blood and/or unexplained weight loss. “Nonsmokers can also develop lung cancer, particularly older, postmenopausal women,” Dr. Buenaventura notes.

Dr. Buenaventura’s cardiothoracic surgery practice at Valley Health also treats these conditions:

Hiatal hernia: This occurs when the natural opening in the diaphragm—the thin sheet of muscle separating the chest and abdomen—widens, often with age, allowing the stomach to push upward. “You may not have symptoms, but hiatal hernias get bigger with age and raise the risk for serious complications like loss of blood flow to the stomach,” he says. Early warning signs for a hiatal hernia include acid reflux, heartburn and burping. In more severe cases, you may have trouble swallowing, feel full quickly when you eat, and have stomach or chest pain. Surgery puts the stomach back in place, repairs the diaphragm and may include repairs to the valve at the top of the stomach to reduce reflux.

Gastroesophageal disease/acid reflux: Chronic acid reflux can be caused by a weakening of the lower esophageal sphincter, a valve at the top of the stomach that’s supposed to prevent stomach acid from backwashing into the esophagus. “Heartburn medications make stomach fluid less acidic, but they don’t solve the fundamental problem,” Dr. Buenaventura says. A procedure called fundoplication reinforces a weakened valve. “If you have ongoing reflux or have used medications for five years to ease it, it’s a good idea to talk to your family doctor,” he says. “Nobody knows if there are long-term consequences of taking medications for reflux for a very long time.”

Other conditions: Dr. Buenaventura also performs surgeries that relieve hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating); thoracic outlet syndrome (pressure on nerves and blood vessels near the collarbone); fibrosis (scarring) of the lungs and masses in the lungs and chest; and diseases and conditions that affect the

covering of the lungs, the area between the lungs and the chest wall.

For more information, visit valleyhealthlink.com/VHCS. If you want to learn more about low-dose lung CT screenings, ask your doctor or call the Valley Health nurse lung navigator at **844-532-8669**. More information about lowdose lung CT is also available at valleyhealthlink.com/LDCT.



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And here's to having a nationally ranked health system right in your own backyard — delivering care you will only find in the Valley.

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