

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

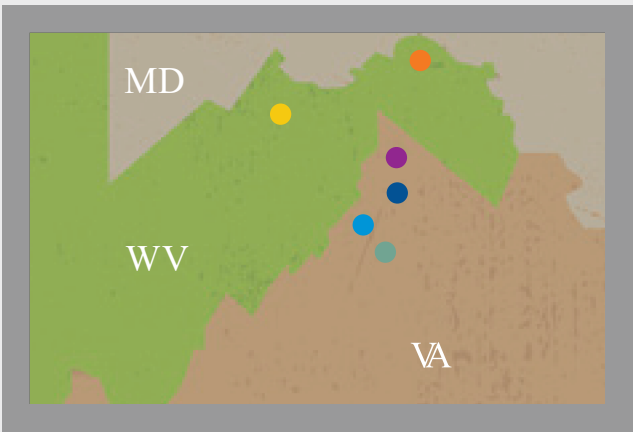
Valley Health is committed to supporting patients’ mental health as a critical part of overall wellness. This summer, to improve our care and the health of our community, we expanded our behavioral health services to treat children as young as five years old. Take a moment to learn how we’re addressing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

Valley Health Board Leadership

- Harry S. Smith, Chair, Board of Trustees
- N. Travis Clark, Vice President, Operations, Page Memorial Hospital

Executive Management

- Mark Nantz, President and CEO
- Jennifer Coello, Vice President, Operations and Administration

Executive Editor:

- Jeffrey Feit, MD, Chief Population and Community Health Officer, Chief Medical Information Officer
- Bob Amos, Chief Financial Officer
- Nicolas C. Restrepo, MD, Quality and Patient Safety Officer
- Brad Rogers, Chief Operating Officer, Valley Health
- Heather Sigel, Vice President, Operations, War Memorial Hospital and Hampshire Memorial Hospital
- Tonya Smith, President, Winchester Medical Center Medical Group
- Jeffrey Feit, MD, Chief Population and Community Health
- The information contained in *HealthLINK* is not a substitute

Contact questions@valleyhealthlink.com or 540-536-5325 to be added to our mailing list; Hospital and Shenandoah Memorial Hospital

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

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

Medical Editors:

Gregory Byrd, MD, Medical Director, Valley Health

Officer, Chief Medical Information Officer

Medical Group, and Vice President, Valley Physician Enterprise

- Chris Rucker, Chief Strategy Officer and Chief of Staff
- Elizabeth Savage, Chief Human Resource Officer
- Tonya Smith, Senior Vice President, Acute Care Officer
- Theresa Trivette, DNP, Chief Nurse Executive

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.

Nicolas C. Restrepo, MD, Quality & Patient Safety Officer
Kris Maddalena, Chief Nursing Officer, Winchester Medical Center – Iyad Sabbagh, MD, Chief Physician Executive
com/physicians.
Health and Wellness Writers: Sari Harrar, Deborah Kirk
Photography: Nick Matheson, Ginger Perry – Walt Sowers, Chief Legal & Compliance

Published by: Diablo Custom Publishing

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

Shenandoah Memorial and Page Memorial hospitals. Expansion to Winchester Memorial Hospital is planned for later this year, and Valley Health hopes to provide this program at an early possible to review the best options.

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. “When hospice is needed, Valley is proud to partner with Blue Ridge in providing the best care and best This year, the program expanded to include options for our patients.”

Not all individuals are eligible for this program, so it is important to engage with Valley Health’s Case Management for later this year, 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

HEALTHIER TOGETHER

Standing in what will soon become a community garden on the campus of CREW are (from left) Bryan Lloyd, Valley Health Foundations; David Ferguson, CREW Board of Directors; N. Travis Clark; Kim Cassford; and Jerry and Christine Jorgensen.



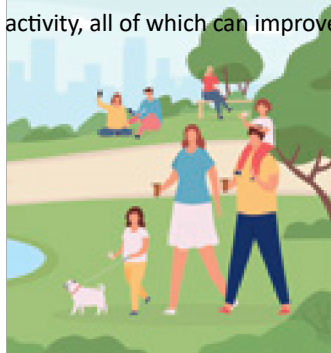
- **Location:** 33699 Old Valley Pike, Strasburg, Virginia
 - Physicians and APPs from Valley Health Shenandoah Memorial Hospital Family Medicine | Strasburg will move into this brand new, state-of-the-art facility.
- Coming soon:** In 2025, Valley Health Primary Care | Greenwood will open, bringing 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.

GROWING HEALTHIER TOGETHER

Thanks to a \$5,000 grant from the Shenandoah Memorial Hospital Foundation, a bounty of healthy foods like green beans, carrots, cabbage and radishes will be popping up at the new community garden being planned for the campus of the nonprofit organization CREW—Community Resources for Education and Wellness—located in Mt. Jackson, Virginia.

Studies show that in addition to providing nourishment, community gardens promote social interactions, emotional well-being and physical activity, all of which can improve a person's overall health.



TAKING STEPS TO A HEALTHIER TOMORROW

With generous support from the community and in partnership with the Page Memorial Hospital Foundation, a new outdoor walking option will soon be available on the campus of the hospital, located in Luray near the intersection of Memorial and Montvue drives.

The Centennial Trail, named to commemorate Page Memorial Hospital's upcoming 100th anniversary in 2028, will offer caregivers, patients, family members and the community a safe and simple way to incorporate more exercise into their day while reaping the many benefits nature has to offer.

The approximately 1,000-foot asphalt loop, which will be handicap accessible, will incorporate seating and picnic tables, a water feature, shade sail and lots of green space. Parking will be available on-site. In addition to the peaceful respite, the trail will serve as a tribute to our health



"This is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when a community comes together to work toward a common goal," notes Kim Cassford, executive director of CREW, an organization that collaborates with public and private organizations in the community to advance education and wellness. "This will go a long way toward addressing food insecurities that some of our most vulnerable populations face."

Two such community members who are leading the effort to create the garden are master gardeners Christine and Jerry Jorgensen of New Market. Based on their years of experience, they anticipate that the 40 x 60 garden will yield approximately 1,000 pounds of fresh produce each year. Plans include building a storage shed and greenhouse. If all goes as planned, the first harvest will take place this fall.

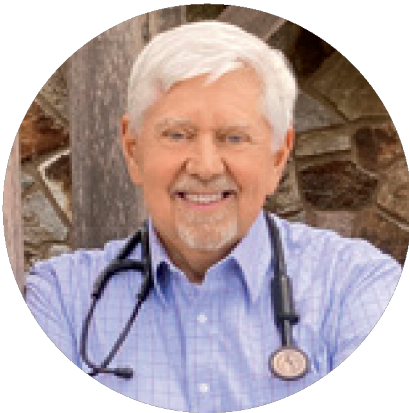
"As part of the region's leading health care system, not only do we deliver expert patient care, but we work with our community partners to help lessen the impact social needs can play on a patient's health status," says N. Travis Clark, vice president, operations, Page and Shenandoah Memorial hospitals. "We've had tremendous success with our community gardens located in Page County, and we're excited to assist with this latest effort where neighbors, friends and families can come together and literally reap the fruits of their labors." To learn more, visit valleyhealthlink.com/donate or crewva.org.

care heroes who served on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials anticipate a spring 2025 opening.

HOMETOWN HEALTH CARE

MEET OUR PHYSICIANS

Two highly experienced physicians discuss their decades of service to the community



Gregory Byrd, MD, Shenandoah Memorial Hospital

Dr. Gregory Byrd joined Shenandoah Memorial Hospital in 1995, and in the decades since has become a pillar of the community he serves. A native of Northern Virginia, he recalls how he made his decision to provide vital medical care in a rural setting. “I felt called to come to an underserved area where it can be more difficult to recruit doctors,” he says. “And, of course, the Shenandoah Valley is a beautiful place to live and work.”

As a primary care physician, Dr. Byrd tends to patients with diverse medical conditions, but a large part of his practice is helping patients manage chronic conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. He has also served in hospital leadership positions over the years, including as vice president of medical affairs; he is now the medical director for primary care in Shenandoah, Page and Warren counties.

Reflecting on his long career, in which he has cared for multiple generations of families, Dr. Byrd says, “It is critically important to never lose sight of the human being in front of you. My greatest joy is interacting with someone who is bringing a need to me, and then using my skills and experience to help them. That will always be what gets me out of bed in the morning.”



James Dale, DO, Page Memorial Hospital

A graduate of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. James Dale came to Luray in 1983 through the National Public Health Program, which had a two-year service commitment. Dr. Dale established a medical practice with the help of his wife, Denise, who served as the practice manager. “It was going really well,” Dr. Dale recalls, “so we decided not to leave.” He went on to become the Page County Medical Examiner, as well as a member of the Valley Health Board of Trustees. He also is a beloved neighbor, known to area residents as a dedicated basketball coach in his off hours.

In 2015, Dr. Dale’s practice joined Valley Health, where he continues serving much of the same community he has grown to know so well. Denise joined Valley Health, too, as director of rural health clinic regulations. There have been challenges along the way—such as managing care at Page Memorial during the COVID-19 pandemic—but, through it all, Dr. Dale is extremely pleased to have served the community and says the experience has been deeply rewarding. “I think you become a better doctor if you work

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 hearing loss can have learning

in a rural health setting," he says. "You get to know people very well, and you are doing something that is really making a difference."

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: WHAT 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: HOW CAN I HELP 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.

E 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.”

“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

E PERSON

Treatment for Adolescents and Families

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

LABORATORY TO THE POINT

→ WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH CARE, LABORATORY PROVIDING ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT PLANNING AND SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT AND ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES (LIKE DNA), LAB TESTS CAN HELP DETECT DISEASES SUCH AS

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.

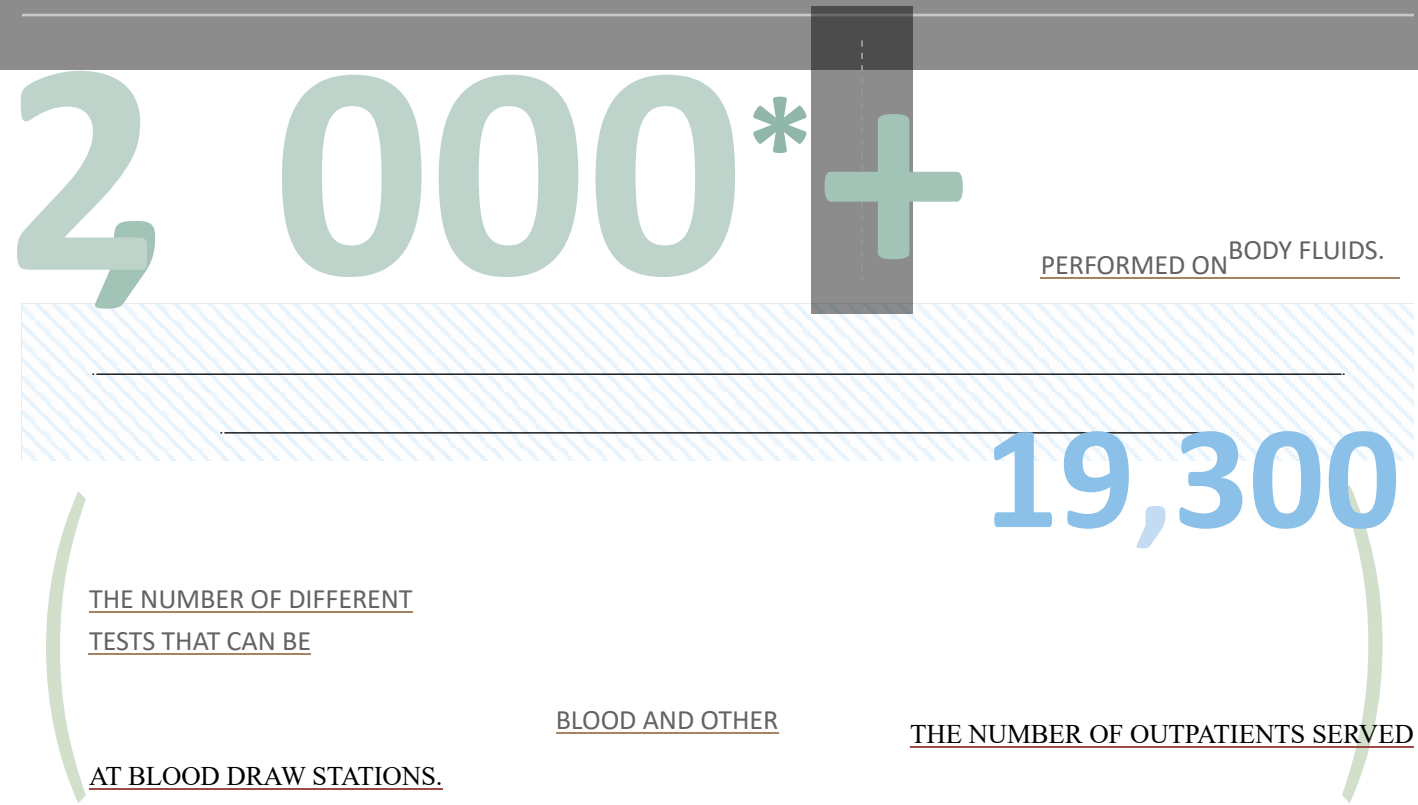
SERVICES: RIGHT

SERVICES PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN

PATIENT MONITORING. USING

POLYMERASE CHAIN REACTION TO AMPLIFY DIABETES AND CANCER, AS WELL

AS DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDICATIONS. AS WE LIKE TO SAY IN HEALTH CARE, WITHOUT THE LAB, YOU'RE JUST GUESSING. HERE ARE A FEW NUMBERS FROM THE LABS AT PAGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL (PMH) AND SHENANDOAH MEMORIAL HOSPITAL (SMH) IN 2023.



THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TESTS THAT CAN BE

AT BLOOD DRAW STATIONS.

BLOOD AND OTHER

THE NUMBER OF OUTPATIENTS SERVED

32 MEDICAL TECHNOLOGISTS, MEDICAL LAB TECHNICIANS, PHLEBOTOMISTS AND PATHOLOGISTS PERFORMED MORE THAN 247,000 TESTS.

70

THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL MEDICAL

%*

DECISIONS THAT ARE MADE BASED

ON LABORATORY RESULTS.

LAB PROFESSIONALS TEST AND PREPARE BLOOD PRODUCTS, INCLUDING PLATELETS AND PLASMA, THAT ARE THEN ADMINISTERED TO PATIENTS. IN THE PAST YEAR, SMH AND PMH LABS PREPARED 240 BLOOD PRODUCTS FOR ADMINISTRATION.

**Based on data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

A GIVING SPIRIT

THROUGH HIS GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE SMH FOUNDATION, BRUCE GRIFFIN IS BRIGHTENING THE LIVES OF PATIENTS IN NEED

April McClain-Clower, chief nursing officer at Shenandoah Memorial Hospital (SMH), first met Bruce Griffin by chance in a hallway at SMH. "I ran into Bruce, and he looked a little lost. I asked if I could help him find something." Neither of them knew then the years of friendship and support this seemingly insignificant interaction would inspire.

Griffin and his wife moved from Northern Virginia to Shenandoah County in 2016. A year later, he retired from a

storied career in software development. When McClain-Clower met Griffin, he had just lost his wife and had been trying to find the right people to help him with all the things that must occur after the death of a loved one. He went to SMH looking for help.

"I told him, the next time you need to know something, don't call around, just call me," McClain-Clower says. "Thinking about his situation—losing your spouse, your kids live out of state, and you're

IN THE COMMUNITY

still kind of new to an area—it just touched me. Helping Bruce was what we're all about."

Griffin did call McClain-Clower again, but this time it was to help others, much like she helped him. "Here I was with all this stuff—a mobility chair, medical supplies—and I'm not one to waste," he says. "I thought surely someone could use it, so I called April and learned about Ruth's Closet." The SMH Foundation has a fund that provides items to patients who either don't have them or can't afford them. After the loss of his wife, sharing what he had with others became a routine for Griffin. He would visit McClain-Clower with items for Ruth's Closet, and she'd invite him to hospital activities, like ice cream parties and Christmas lunch at SMH.

"I'm at an age where the IRS tells me I'm required to take money out. Well, if I don't need it, I'd like to help someone. So I do that."

—BRUCE GRIFFIN

"If I didn't know where I could take something, I called April," Griffin says. "She could match what I had with the right local organizations that might be able to use it." Many different organizations and causes have benefited from Griffin's generosity, including rural medicine, local schools, the Woodstock Fire Department and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Food pantries have been stocked thanks to his giving spirit.

Last year, when Griffin heard a story on NPR about a patient's medical debt, he called McClain-Clower. "I explained how Valley Health is a not-for-profit and still helps folks that can't pay," McClain-Clower says. "But we also have the SMH Foundation that goes further. It funds things like equipment for people without insurance and nonmedical needs that are essential for them to stay out of the hospital."

"I've been fortunate to have the retirement that I have, and now I'm at an age where the IRS tells me I'm required to take money out," Griffin says. "Well, if I don't need it, I'd

like to help someone. So I do that."

To learn more about our Foundations or how you can help, visit valleyhealthlink.com/giving.

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

Smaller incisions and better visualization make these surgeries safer and more precise than open surgery. ... 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.

—PERCIVAL BUENAVENTURA, MD

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:



Cardiothoracic surgeon
Percival Buenaventura, MD

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.



Valley Health System
P.O. Box 3340
Winchester, VA 22604

Follow us:

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 333
Winchester, VA

Here's to doing what you love.

At Valley Health, we want the people in our community to feel strong, healthy and capable of pursuing their passions – at work, at play, and at home. So, here's to doing what you love, and finding success doing it.

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

It's what **we** love doing most, treating you.

Here's to You!

ValleyHealth

