

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

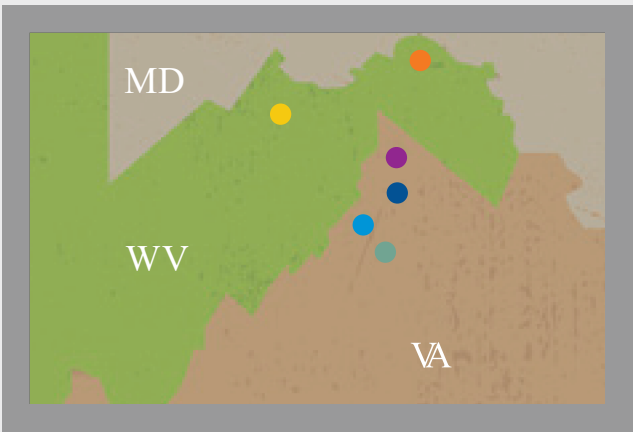
Valley Health is committed to supporting patients’ mental health as a critical part of overall wellness. This summer, to improve our care and the health of our community, we expanded our behavioral health services to treat children as young as five years old. Take a moment to learn how we’re addressing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

HealthLINKValley 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

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- N. Travis Clark, Vice President, Operations, Page Memorial Hospital

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- Jennifer Coello, Vice President, Operations and Administration

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- 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

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

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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.

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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 hospitals. transport. Hospice in the Hospital Health 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 Warren Memorial Hospital with Valley Health’s Case Management for later this year, and Valley Health hopes to provide this program at an early 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

HEALTHIER TOGETHER

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.

Hampshire Memorial
Hospital team members
(from left) Bill Chenoweth,
Battina Myers and Kari

Evans.

Providing quality behavioral health care when it is needed most is why Valley Health has partnered with Array Behavioral Care to provide on-demand telepsychiatry services in all six of its EDs. “Unfortunately, there aren’t enough psychiatric professionals to meet the growing demand, particularly in an emergency and especially in rural communities, which is why telepsychiatry is so invaluable,” says Karen Dorr, senior director of Behavioral Health Services at Valley Health. “We believe it is important to offer our patients face-to-face contact with a psychiatric professional 24/7.”

As Parsons explains, when a patient comes into the ED, the team follows behavioral health proto-

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS cols to determine if the patient is in need of a more in-depth psychiatric assessment. In those instances,

IMPROVING ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Having access to expert mental health services is a critical component of a person’s overall health. Yet many people living with mental health conditions throughout the U.S., are then able to see and speak mental illness face barriers, from access to appropriate care to the fear of experiencing prejudice or discrimination. Following the assessment,

the team contacts Array through a mobile device. The patient and the Array team, which consists of psychiatrists, therapists and mental health crisis coordinators, are then able to see and speak mental illness face directly with each other. Following the assessment, Array works with the ED care team to map out the

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, it is estimated best treatment plan, which can include transferring to that one in five American adults is living with mental illness. “All an inpatient facility or referral to an outpatient protocol often, by the time a person experiencing a mental health issue program and other community resources. arrives in our Emergency Department (ED), they are already at a “Using telepsychiatry is another example of how crisis point,” explains Chris Parsons, clinical manager of the Emergency Department at War Memorial Hospital. “And when you live fill a critical need,” says Dorr. “In doing so, we’re able in a rural community like we do, it can be extremely challenging to to decrease or eliminate unnecessary roadblocks and provide patients with immediate access to highly trained psychiat help expedite diagnosis and appropriate treatment for ric professionals.” some of our most vulnerable patients.”

“We believe it is important to offer our patients face-to-face contact with a psychiatric professional 24/7.” —KAREN DORR, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES AT VALLEY HEALTH

HOMETOWN HEALTH CARE

TOP 20 HONORS

Valley Health’s West Virginia hospitals earn high marks

Both Hampshire Memorial Hospital in Romney, West Virginia, and War

Memorial Hospital in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, are listed among the Top 20 Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) in the nation and are the only two hospitals in West Virginia to earn this distinction for 2024.

“We’re thrilled and honored to have the hard work and dedication of our team members recognized on a national level,” says Heather Sigel, vice president of operations for Hampshire Memorial and War Memorial hospitals. “Rural hospitals throughout the country face any number of challenges, and our hospitals are no different, whether it’s providing care to an aging population, assisting people with limited resources, or recruiting highly skilled professionals to live and work in rural communities.” Sigel attributes much of the two hospitals’ success to Valley Health’s commitment to ensure community members in rural areas don’t have to travel to larger, more urban areas to receive superior care at an affordable cost.

Each year, the Chartis Center for Rural Health completes a nationwide assessment of the more than 1,300 CAHs in the country using its Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX™ that looks at publicly available data in eight indices, including quality, outcomes, patient satisfaction and cost. Chartis uses the results to create its list of Top 100 CAHs in the country,



Hampshire Memorial Hospital (above) and War Memorial Hospital (right) are ranked among the Top 20 Critical Access Hospitals in the country.

on which all four of Valley Health's Critical Access Hospitals landed this year (both Hampshire Memorial and War Memorial in West Virginia, and Shenandoah Memorial and Page Memorial hospitals in Virginia). The National Rural Health Association then takes that elite list to determine and recognize the country's Top 20 CAHs.

"We recognize that our patients have choices when it comes to their medical care, and we don't take lightly our responsibility to provide superior care that is also highly personalized," explains Kari Evans, RN, director of patient care services and chief nursing officer at Hampshire Memorial. "These types of recognitions would never be possible without

the daily commitment and determination of our staff to offer this level of care to the communities we serve."

Echoing this sentiment is Samantha Smith, RN, director of patient care services and chief nursing officer at War Memorial. "We focus a great deal of our energy and resources on maintaining an engaged workforce so that when patients do come here for care, they can take comfort in knowing that they will be cared for in a safe and healing environment," says Smith. "We really are neighbors caring for our neighbors."

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

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."

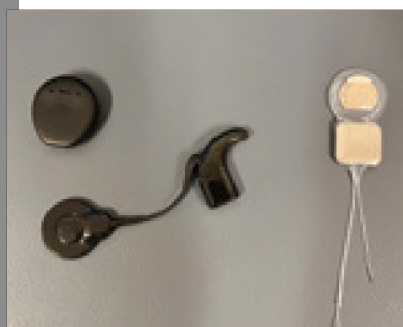
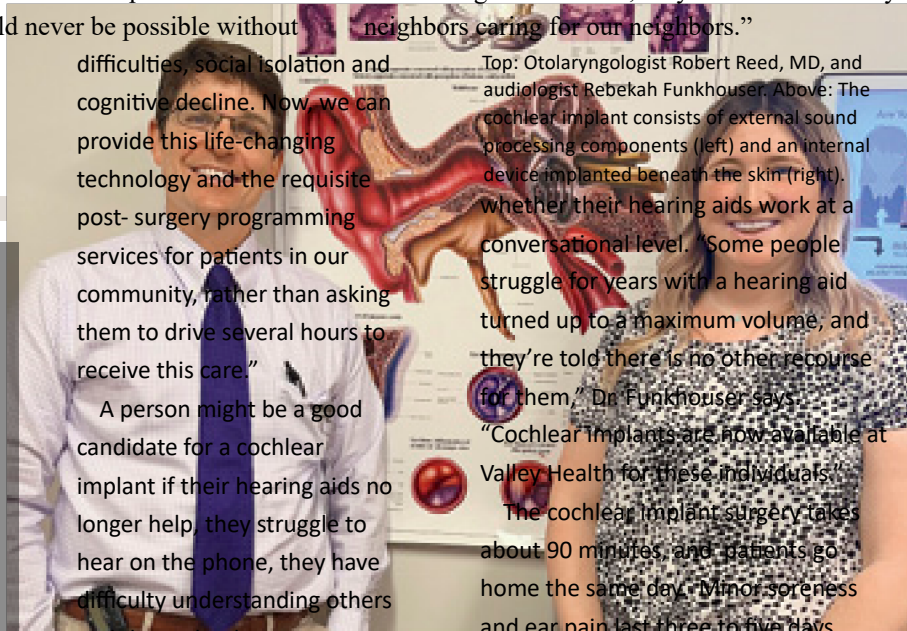
The cochlear implant surgery takes about 90 minutes, and patients go home the same day. Minor soreness and ear pain last three to five days.

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 age 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: 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.

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 USING AN ASSORTMENT OF SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT AND CHAIN REACTION TO AMPLIFY DNA), LAB TESTS CAN

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 PLANNING AND PATIENT MONITORING.

ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES (LIKE POLYMERASE HELP DETECT DISEASES SUCH AS 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 HAMPSHIRE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL (HMH) AND WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN 2023.

2,000*

PERFORMED ON BODY FLUIDS.

18,500+

THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT
TESTS THAT CAN BE

AT BLOOD DRAW STATIONS.

BLOOD AND OTHER

THE NUMBER OF OUTPATIENTS SERVED

20 MEDICAL TECHNOLOGISTS, MEDICAL LAB TECHNICIANS, PHLEBOTOMISTS AND
PATHOLOGISTS PERFORMED MORE THAN 157,000 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, HMH AND WAR MEMORIAL LABS PREPARED 205 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 still kind of new to an area—it just touched me. Helping Bruce was what we're all about."

IN THE COMMUNITY

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."

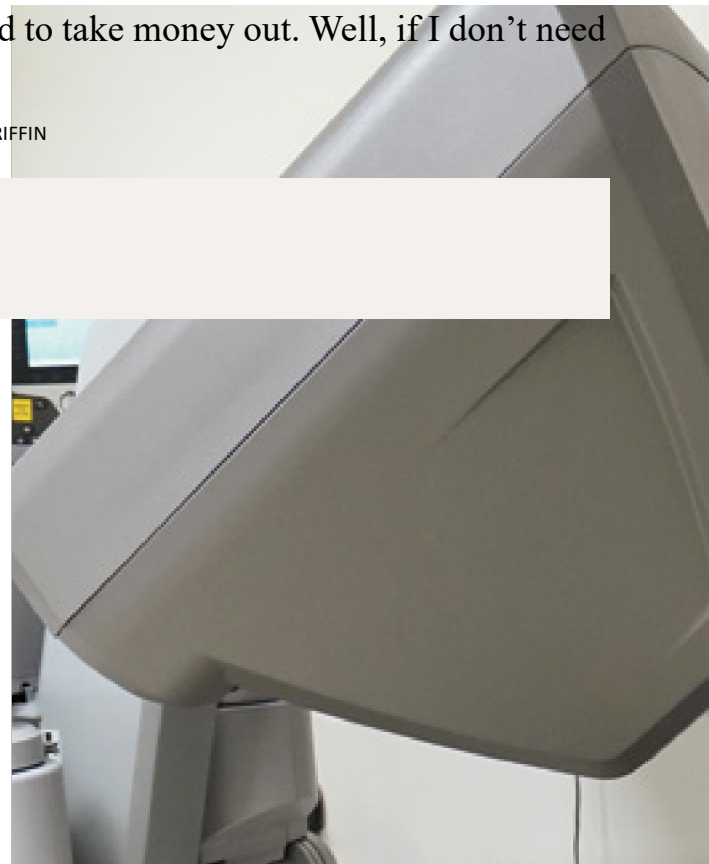
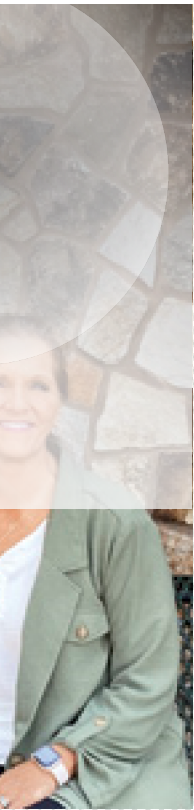
Each of Valley Health's six hospitals has a Foundation that supports projects in our community. To learn more about our Foundations or how you can help, visit valleyhealthlink.com/giving.

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

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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:



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.



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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!

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