

HealthLINK

FALL 2022

YOUR CONNECTION TO HEALTH & WELLNESS

INSIDE:

Achieving freedom from seizures. / Innovations in reconstructive surgery. / How advanced practice providers enhance your health care.

THE POWER OF EXPERT TEAMWORK

PATIENTS BENEFIT WHEN SURGEONS COLLABORATE ON ROBOTIC-ASSISTED PROCEDURES

 **ValleyHealth**
Healthier, together.

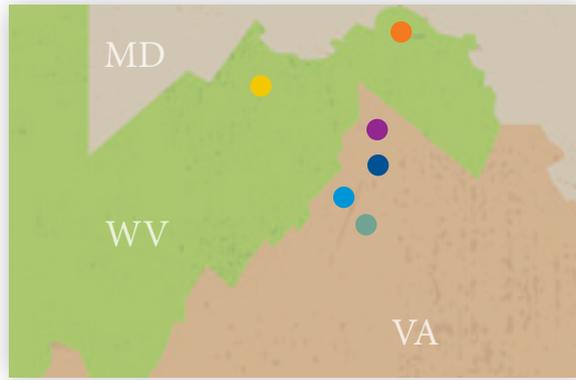
WELCOME

INSPIRING HOPE

Our vision at Valley Health is to inspire hope and promote health as the community's first—and best—choice for high-quality, safe and affordable care. The word hope is so important in health care. Hope manifests itself through comprehensive, evidence-based therapies; access to advanced treatment options; and a team of caregivers committed to helping each patient find the best path forward.

In the following pages, we profile state-of-the-art treatments that improve the patient experience and inspire hope. You'll meet surgeons passionate about the benefits of their robotic "assistants" that provide greater precision, faster recovery and healing, less pain, and overall improved patient experience. We offer an important article about breast prosthetics for women dealing with cancer and an inspirational story of one man's perseverance to achieve seizure freedom after years of epilepsy.

We believe hope and health care are intertwined, and we are not only hopeful you'll choose Valley Health when it comes to your healthcare needs, but that you will also find hope and healing in this issue of *HealthLINK*.



Valley Health is a not-for-profit system of hospitals, services and providers. For more information about the many ways we serve the health and wellness needs of the community, visit valleyhealthlink.com.

Valley Health System includes:

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

Additional locations and services:

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

For more information, visit valleyhealthlink.com/locations.



Valley Health System

Serving Our Community by Improving Health

HealthLINK

The magazine of Valley Health System
Serving the northern Shenandoah Valley and surrounding areas in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland

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- Peter Gallagher, Chief Financial Officer
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- Jennifer Coello, VP, Operations and Administrator, Warren Memorial Hospital
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The information contained in *HealthLINK* is not a substitute for professional medical care or counsel. If you have medical concerns, consult a medical professional. A list of physicians, specialists and other care providers is found at valleyhealthlink.com/physicians.

HealthLINK magazine is published three times a year. Its purpose is to provide health and wellness information to the community and to connect area residents with healthcare experts within Valley Health System.

Contact marketingmail@valleyhealthlink.com or 540-536-5325 to be added to our mailing list; view *HealthLINK* online at valleyhealthlink.com/news.

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VHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES WELCOMES NEW CHAIRMAN

The Valley Health System Board of Trustees recently recognized Harry S. Smith as its new chairman, while welcoming three new members.

Smith has been a Valley Health trustee for 11 years and also served 12 years on the Winchester Medical Center Board. A native of Winchester, Smith is currently the market president of United Bank of Winchester. He has served on the boards of a number of human service organizations, along with the Winchester City Council for two terms. As a member of the American Hospital Association's Regional Policy Board, Smith interacts with hospital system leaders in a six-state area.

"Harry has deep roots in this community, he knows our organization and the complexities of health care, and he understands how the board can help lead Valley Health to an even brighter future," says Valley Health President & CEO Mark Nantz.

Smith replaces former chairman Joseph F. Silek Jr., of Front Royal, who recently retired after 18 years on the board. Also



Former Board of Trustees chairman Joseph F. Silek Jr. and current chairman Harry S. Smith.

retiring is vice chairman Patrick Ireland, MD. Thomas T. Gilpin has assumed Ireland's role.

The three new board members are Jeff Boehm, president of Howard Shockey & Sons, Inc.; Julia Connell, vice president of Goldman Sachs Personal Financial Management; and Thomas Wise, MD, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon.



HEART & VASCULAR SERVICES HERALDED

The Valley Health Heart & Vascular Center at Winchester Medical Center (WMC) has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Comprehensive Cardiac Center Certification. Offered in collaboration with the American Heart Association, this is the premier cardiovascular certification awarded to hospitals that demonstrate high-quality care using evidence-based, guideline-driven treatment. The WMC program has been certified by The Joint Commission since 2019.

"Our team treats a wide range of conditions with a multidisciplinary approach, personalized care and innovative therapies," says Julie Miksit, RN, WMC vice president of operations and service lines. "This certification is a testament to the team's collaboration and commitment to quality of care and program excellence."

Warren Memorial Hospital (WMH) was also recently recognized by the American College of Cardiology for its demonstrated expertise and commitment in treating patients with chest pain. This is based on staff's ability to evaluate, diagnose and treat patients who may be experiencing a heart attack. WMH has been a fully accredited chest pain center since 2012.



War Memorial Hospital President Tom Kluge and Vice President Heather Sigel celebrate with employees.

WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL: 10 YEARS AT 1 HEALTHY WAY, 75 YEARS IN THE COMMUNITY

On April 28, 2012, the team at War Memorial Hospital began the delicate transfer of eight acute care/skilled nursing care patients and 16 extended care residents from the hospital to their new home a mile and a half away.

This April, War Memorial celebrated 10 years at its current location at 1 Healthy Way in Berkeley Springs and 75 years in the West Virginia community.

“It’s clear that this facility has played a major role in our ability to recruit and retain highly qualified professionals to come and work in Morgan County,” says Tom Kluge, hospital president and senior vice president of Valley Health’s four critical access hospitals. “Our mission for the next 10 years is to continue to build on our success and rise to meet the changing healthcare needs of our community.”

OVER THE PAST DECADE, WAR MEMORIAL HAS:

- Provided more than \$32 million in community benefit, which includes free and discounted care and initiatives to help increase access to health care and other services
- Increased the number of full-time jobs by more than 12% and paid more than \$97.5 million in salaries
- Had more than 80,000 visits to the Emergency Department
- Completed more than 3,000 surgical procedures
- Performed over 103,000 outpatient rehabilitation therapies, 131,000 medical imaging procedures and over 643,225 laboratory tests

EARNING AN ‘A’ FOR PATIENT SAFETY

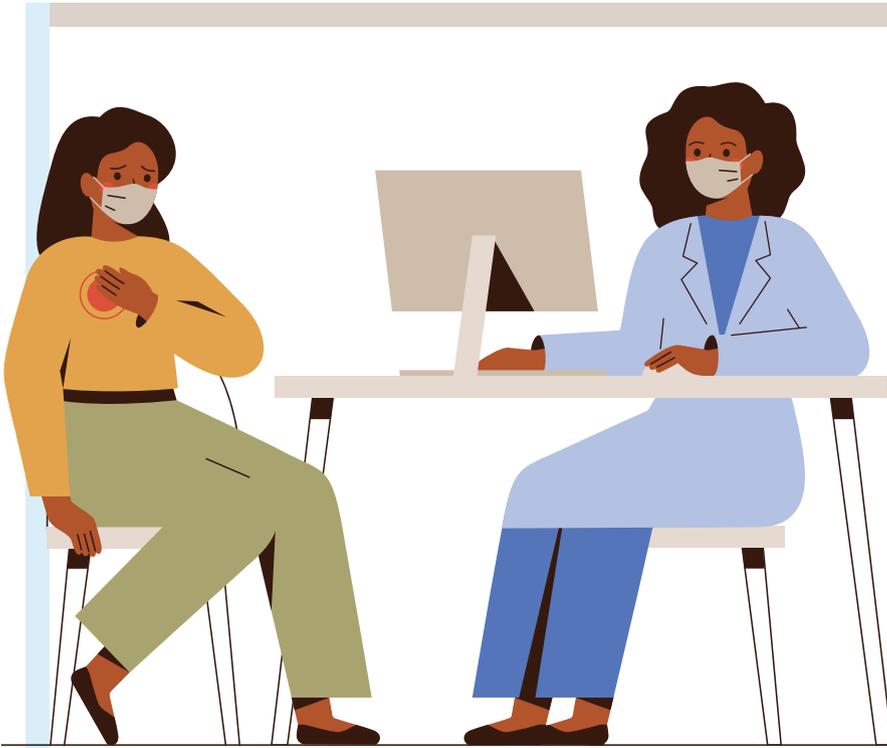
Winchester Medical Center (WMC) and Warren Memorial Hospital were each awarded an “A” Hospital Safety Grade by The Leapfrog Group, recognizing their achievements in protecting patients from harm in the hospital setting.

The Leapfrog Group, an independent, non-profit national watchdog organization, assigned an A, B, C, D, or F grade to nearly 3,000 general acute care hospitals across the country based on over 30 evidence-based patient safety performance measures reflecting errors, injuries, accidents, and infections. Valley Health’s two acute care hospitals were among only 42 in Virginia to receive an “A” for spring 2022. Leapfrog does not currently assign grades to critical access hospitals.

The spring 2022 ratings cycle also marks the fifth consecutive “A” grade for WMC. This distinction places WMC in elite company with only 14% of the U.S. hospitals graded this spring.



FOR THE LATEST HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEWS, VISIT THE *HEALTHLINK* BLOG AT [VALLEYHEALTHLINK.COM/NEWS](https://valleyhealthlink.com/news).



THE IMPORTANCE OF WELLNESS VISITS

Don't miss out on your annual health tune-up

With the busy lives we lead—juggling deadlines, grocery shopping, your kid's soccer game—it can be tempting to skip that routine wellness check with your physician. If you're feeling good, you might think, why bother?

Here's why wellness checks are important: Proactive medicine is the best medicine. "Attending regular or annual wellness visits is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your loved ones," says Iyad Sabbagh, MD, chief physician executive at Valley Health. "It gives you and your provider a complete picture of your health and allows you to bring up any concerns you might have regarding your health."

Think of a wellness visit as a chance to touch base with your provider. He or she might ask you questions about your lifestyle such as your diet, how much you exercise, and whether you've been under extra stress. And if anything worries you—constant heartburn, lower back pain, restless

nights—you can chat about it. If you're experiencing incontinence or you've developed bad breath, for example, don't be shy about speaking up. Changes in your body could be due to overexertion or getting older, but they also could be signs of a more serious problem. Keep in mind that your provider has heard it all and is a partner in your journey to good health.

At a wellness visit, your provider will give you a general exam—take your blood pressure, check your lymph nodes, listen to your heart and lungs—to get a good picture of your overall health. You may be screened for cancer and other diseases such as heart disease and diabetes, depending on your age and medical history. Your healthcare team may recommend certain vaccines to get you up to date. Some health problems sneak up without symptoms, so regular wellness visits help you and your provider uncover potentially life-threatening health issues early, when they're easier to treat.

Wellness visits don't take much time and are usually covered by health insurance. Your provider might recommend a visit every couple of years or, if you're older or have a chronic health condition, annually. So schedule that appointment and mark your calendar. Besides checking for emerging health conditions, your provider can give you personalized advice. As Dr. Sabbagh says, "Staying on top of your health is the best way to be an advocate for yourself and to live a healthier life."

→ Visit valleyhealthlink.com/primarycare to learn more.

A FRESH LOOK AT RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

NEAL TOPHAM, MD, EXPLAINS HOW STATE-OF-THE-ART RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGICAL TECHNIQUES CAN GREATLY IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

You've survived cancer or a traumatic accident, but your body isn't the same. The surgery or radiation that saved your life may also have changed your appearance or left behind scars and wounds. Board-certified reconstructive surgeon Neal Topham, MD, who recently joined Valley Health from the renowned Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, can help with a full range of advanced reconstruction options including reconstructive microsurgery. "I customize reconstruction for each person, for the best outcome," he says. "People are much happier with results based on their body, their preferences and their treatment history."

Dr. Topham's primary focus at Valley Health is reconstruction after breast, skin, and head and neck cancers, as well as after trauma. A fellow of the American College of Surgeons, Dr. Topham is trained in reconstructive microsurgery and offers innovative free tissue transfer flap procedures used to rebuild areas of the body, such as reconstructing breast tissue after mastectomy.

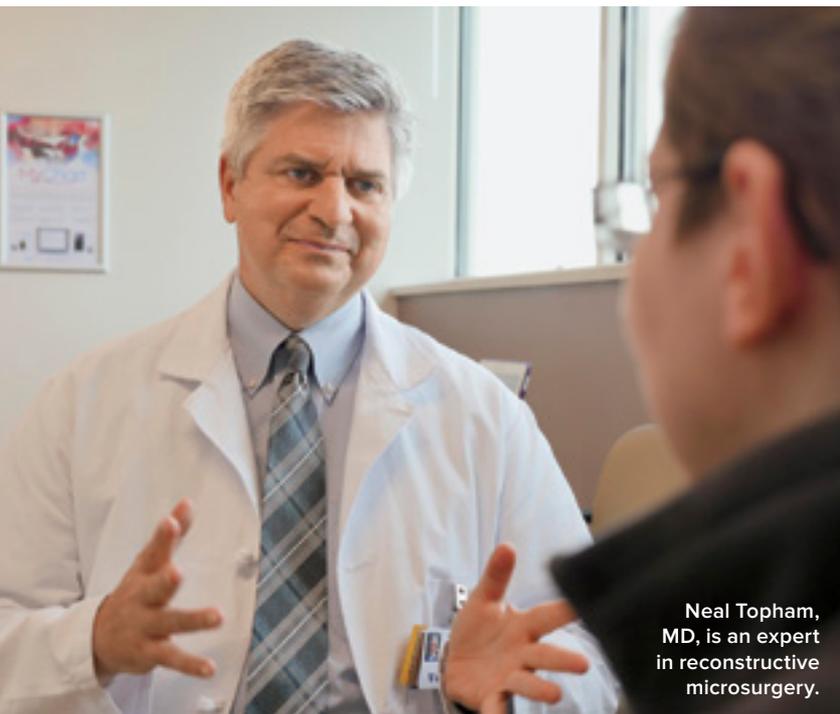
"This involves taking tissue from one part of the body, such as belly fat with its supply of blood vessels, and moving it to another part, such as the breast. I reattach blood vessels at the new location, and the tissue thrives," he explains. "It's a powerful tool."

Unlike flap procedures where the blood supply stays attached in its original place, free tissue transfer flaps allow Dr. Topham to shape tissue for a better fit and more natural look and feel—whether it's reconstructing a breast, rebuilding a tongue after treatment for a head or neck cancer, rebuilding jawbone and tissue after bone cancer, or replacing a swath of missing scalp tissue after skin cancer surgery. Dr. Topham also performs perineal and complex abdominal wall and chest wall reconstructions.

Free tissue transfer flap procedures can also repair and minimize the appearance of wounds that are uncomfortable or won't stay closed after a major surgery. "You want the cancer surgeon to do their best removing all of the cancer. You wouldn't ever compromise that," Dr. Topham explains. "A reconstructive surgeon takes over the job of choosing the best technique for closing the wound. Sometimes, direct closure isn't the best option because there may be too much tension on a wound. A flap would be better. I had a patient recently with a wound that wouldn't stay closed several years after mastectomy. After reconstruction, she was free to go out and enjoy life again. That's a powerful thing."

It's also never too late for reconstructive surgery, Dr. Topham adds. "If you weren't reconstructed after cancer treatment in the past or have a reconstruction you don't like," he says, "this is the time to take a fresh look."

→ Visit valleyhealthlink.com/Topham to learn more.



Neal Topham, MD, is an expert in reconstructive microsurgery.

INNOVATIONS



Wellspring offers a wide range of breast prostheses.

‘JUST RIGHT’ BREAST FORMS FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Valley Health’s experts help cancer patients find the most natural-looking—and comfortable—breast prostheses

After breast cancer surgery, the certified mastectomy fitters at Wellspring, Valley Health’s cancer resource center, help each woman find her “just right” breast prosthesis. That could be a fabric “puff,” a silicone or foam breast form, or a custom-made prosthesis designed for a perfect, personalized fit. “Our job is to make you look symmetrical and feel comfortable, natural and good about yourself,” says supervisor Mary Vorous. “We treat women with respect and compassion.”

Breast prostheses, also called forms, come in a wide range of sizes,

shapes, skin tones, and weights. There are types to wear while swimming or exercising, special-occasion forms that show off cleavage in a low-cut dress, forms that fit into a special pocket in a mastectomy bra, shapers that fill out your breasts after surgery, and types that attach directly to your chest.

“When we fit a woman for a breast prosthesis, you see the difference,” Vorous says. “You feel more like yourself, less self-conscious and more confident.” The right prosthesis can even help with balance. “Each breast can weigh equal to your original size,” she notes. “After a mastectomy, that could throw off your sense of balance. When you have a prosthesis that replaces that, you can stand taller and walk more confidently.”

Newly available at Wellspring: custom prostheses based on detailed measurements. “In the privacy of our fitting room, a fitter uses a camera attached to a computer tablet to take a three-dimensional scan of your chest wall,” Vorous says. “The picture is very detailed, including every curve and indentation, as well as your skin and nipple color. The scans are sent to a stylist who designs your prosthesis. It feels and looks real.”

Health insurance plans that cover mastectomy also cover post-mastectomy breast prostheses for one or both breasts and bras to hold the forms, as well as specialized bras and camisoles for the weeks and months immediately after surgery. Insurance also covers regular replacements. Private insurance may also cover custom prostheses. Medicare and Medicaid cover some breast prostheses as well (though at this time, not custom versions). As an accredited supplier, Wellspring can bill Medicare and private insurance. (You need a prescription from your doctor to do so.)

“Many women don’t realize their insurance will likely help cover the cost,” Vorous says. “They may live without [breast prostheses] or keep old ones longer than they need to.”

→ To learn more, contact Wellspring at **540-536-4981** or visit valleyhealthlink.com/Wellspring.



BREAKTHROU

IN ROBOTIC



Devin C. Flaherty, DO, and Shalini Reddy, MD, provide expert care using a dual-console robotic surgery system.

GHS

SURGERY

➔ INNOVATIONS IN ROBOTIC-ASSISTED SURGERY ALLOW SURGEONS TO COLLABORATE MORE EFFECTIVELY—AND HELP PATIENTS LIKE DANA LAFEVER HAVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES

“I’m having trouble swallowing,” Dana Lafever told his family doctor in early 2021. A biopsy revealed stage 2 esophageal cancer. After two months of chemotherapy and radiation, Lafever became one of the first to undergo state-of-the-art, dual-console robotic-assisted surgery at Winchester Medical Center (WMC) in June 2021.

Fellowship-trained Valley Health surgical oncologist Devin C. Flaherty, DO, PhD, removed lymph nodes, inserted a temporary feeding tube and reconstructed a new esophagus using part of Lafever’s stomach. Then Shalini Reddy, MD, medical director of thoracic surgery at Valley Health, removed the cancerous section of Lafever’s esophagus, pulled his new esophagus up into his chest and anchored it in place.

“I felt like all I had to do was keep going forward, one step at a time,” says Lafever, 65, a senior property management technician for a telecommunications company and a Fort Valley, Virginia, resident. “I trusted the doctors and the healthcare team. Instead of going through cycles of worry and fear, I thought every morning about going fishing when I recovered.”

NEXT-LEVEL ROBOTIC-ASSISTED SURGERY

The first hospital system in the region to use the latest-generation surgical robot, the da Vinci® Xi™ Surgical System, Valley Health added another significant advance in mid-2021 with the installation of a dual-console system in a WMC operating room. This gives two surgeons access at the same time to four robotic arms and magnified 3D HD imaging during a procedure.

“Surgeons can work together, such as one helping to hold or dissect tissues, or we can tag-team as we do with esophagectomy,” Dr. Reddy explains. Adds Dr. Flaherty, “What the console affords you is [that] the other surgeon

ROBOTIC SURGERY

can sit at the other console, see what you're seeing, point out things, or take over one of the arms and help. We call it a dual-surgeon case that's robotic-assisted."

First used in a total gastrectomy (removal of the stomach) procedure at Winchester Medical Center, a growing variety of robotic-assisted surgeries are or will be dual-console in the near future at Valley Health, they say. "It's very useful any time two surgeons want to operate in the same field," Dr. Reddy says. "This could be anywhere in the chest, abdomen or pelvis." Bariatric surgeons are also using the system, Dr. Flaherty says.

The advantages? Minimally invasive robotic-assisted surgery already has many benefits. Complex procedures can be performed with great precision through tiny incisions, resulting in less pain, bleeding, tissue damage, and scarring. Incisions may be smaller or fewer than with conventional open surgery. This can mean shorter hospital stays, lower risk for complications such as infection, and reduced need for narcotic pain medications, Dr. Flaherty explains. Adding dual-console capability allows two surgeons to share the tasks involved in a long, complex procedure and to collaborate and consult easily.

INSIDE A DUAL-CONSOLE ESOPHAGECTOMY

Esophagectomy is a good example of the benefits of a dual-console robotic-assisted procedure. Removing the esophagus—the tube that carries food from your mouth to stomach—is standard after rounds of



“Surgeons can work together, such as one helping to hold or dissect tissues, or we can tag-team. ... It's very useful any time two surgeons want to operate in the same field.”

—SHALINI REDDY, MD

chemotherapy and radiation for many cases of esophageal cancer, Dr. Reddy explains. “There is no screening test for esophageal cancer, so it is often diagnosed in later stages when people have symptoms such as difficulty swallowing and eating, a feeling that food is stuck in your throat, and weight loss.”

In the past, a conventional, open esophagectomy took seven to eight hours. It involved two large incisions—one across the abdomen to reach the stomach and another along the side of the chest to reach the esophagus, Dr. Reddy says. A patient's ribs were held open for hours with a metal retractor. “These patients had pain issues for years, some lifelong,” Dr. Reddy says. “With minimally invasive robotic-assisted surgery, it is not like that anymore. We make six small incisions in the abdomen and four in the chest.”

Surgeons can make very precise movements with the robotic arms, resulting in less trauma to surrounding tissue and minimal blood loss. As a result, Dr. Reddy says, “We can use different pain medications with fewer side effects so patients don't have to stay in bed for a day or two after an esophagectomy. The next morning, they're up, sitting in a chair and walking. That lowers risk for complications such as pneumonia and blood clots.” Dr. Flaherty adds, “We can also transition patients off narcotics quicker.”

But even robotic esophagectomy is a long and complicated procedure that can take six to seven hours. By “tag-teaming” to take the lead in different parts of the surgery and being on hand at the consoles to watch and assist, two surgeons can work together seamlessly with the dual-console system.



Orthopedic surgeon Max Lingamfelter, DO, with a knee replacement patient.

ROBOTIC KNEE REPLACEMENT

Orthopedic surgeons at Warren Memorial Hospital (WMH) in Front Royal, Virginia, and Winchester Medical Center (WMC) are using innovative technology to perform same-day total knee reconstructions with unparalleled precision. “Now, the surgeon constructs a solution specific for every patient prior to making any cuts on the bone,” says fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon Max Lingamfelter, DO, at WMC. “We can test-drive the knee on the screen to see how it will respond to the total knee implant and find the best possible solution for every patient.”

Software allows the surgeon to view structures within and around the knee joint and plan the procedure based on each person’s unique anatomy and situation, says fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon Mesfin Shibeshi, DO, at WMH. “I know exactly where the implant will be put,” he explains. This can reduce damage to soft tissue around the joint, preserve bone, reduce postsurgical pain (and the need for narcotic pain relievers), and shorten recovery time for some patients. It may also help knee replacement joints last longer, Dr. Shibeshi says.

This is the first time that orthopedic

surgeons at Valley Health are using robotics. The technology is also available for partial knee replacement and hip replacement.

Robot-assisted joint replacement is like conventional joint replacement in many ways: The surgeon removes the area damaged by arthritis, an injury or other conditions and replaces it with an artificial joint. Robotic technology allows surgeons to work with a high degree of accuracy during the procedure. “The surgeon is always in control,” Dr. Shibeshi says. “The robotic arm is a very stable precision extension of the surgeon’s hands. One of the most exciting things I hear is that patients are ready to go home a few hours later.”

Anyone who is a candidate for knee or hip replacement is a candidate for a robot-assisted reconstruction, he adds. “It is especially useful in complex cases such as significant arthritis with joint damage or previous soft-tissue surgery, such as to repair an ACL tear, with significant bone loss. These complicated cases that require a lot of adjustments have worked very well. We’ve been very happy with the results.”

“I TRUST THEM ALL”

After Lafever’s surgery, a feeding tube allowed his esophagus and digestive system to recover. He gradually reintroduced liquids, soups, puddings, and soft foods under the guidance of Valley Health registered dietitian Athena Hall, RD. “My stomach used to be the size of a purse and now it’s the size of a banana. I have to be careful about what I eat, but I still need to take in enough calories and protein every day,” Lafever says.

His team at Valley Health provided the best of care every step of the way, from his first biopsy through chemo and radiation to surgery and recovery—and now, as he receives a course of regular immunotherapy infusions that reduce the risk of cancer recurrence. “I trust them all,” he says. “Dr. Reddy and Dr. Flaherty said they’d work together and put me back together, and they did.”

Last August, three months after his procedure, Lafever joined old friends at a lodge in southern Virginia to “catch big fish and have a great time together, the way we have for years.” He’s returned to his job, and he’s finished remodeling the century-old Fort Valley farmhouse where his wife, Diane, grew up. The couple moved in this spring. When guests tour the house, the conversation is about this family treasure, not Lafever’s cancer experience.

“Throughout my treatments, I gave thanks for every single person on my healthcare team,” Lafever says. “You can’t feel fear or sadness or loss when you’re feeling grateful. That was my main medicine.”

→ To learn more, visit valleyhealthlink.com/robotics.

SPOTLIGHT

DISCOVERING THE KEYS TO SEIZURE FREEDOM

Richard Davis' success with epilepsy treatment allows him to navigate his life—and the open road

Richard Davis, 79, had his first seizure—a grand mal seizure—at the age of 26 while living in New York City. Doctors didn't know what caused it, but they determined it was not genetic.

Davis' seizures took off from there, taking place every two to three weeks. Eventually they began happening every day—sometimes up to 12 times, with each lasting from 20 seconds to a minute. Davis would often flail his arms and legs and make loud noises during these episodes, but he never remembered the event afterward.

The seizures became so debilitating that Davis lost his driver's license; countless relationships; and many jobs, including the business he started with his wife, Judi. It got so bad that when his 16-year-old son was diagnosed with leukemia and needed a bone marrow transplant, doctors told Davis he would be unable to give him his marrow because of all the seizure medications he was on.

“My seizures tore up my life completely,” he says. “Epilepsy completely took over my world.”

THE JOURNEY TO SEIZURE FREEDOM

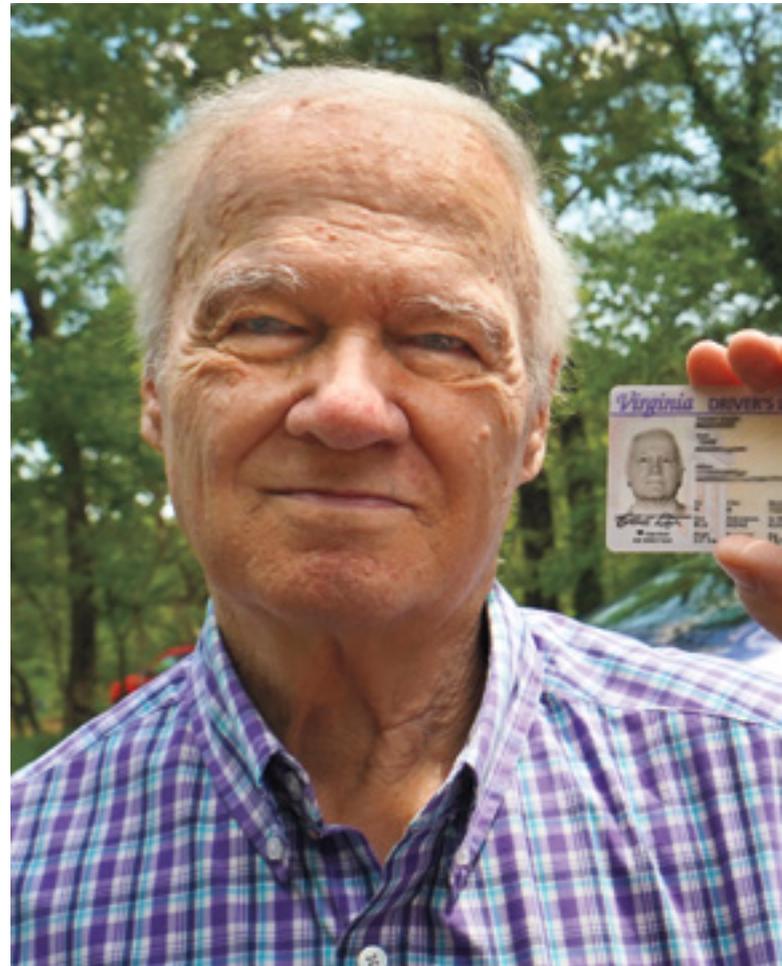
Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that causes unusual sensations, behaviors and seizures—ranging from faraway stares to fits or convulsions. Sometimes people are born with the condition, while others, like Davis, get it later in life. Epilepsy can result in stress, social isolation, financial burden, negative moods, and loss of independence and cognitive ability.

The starting point to treating epilepsy is with medication.

“Always, the goal is to obtain seizure freedom with the least invasive, lowest-risk intervention,” says epileptologist Paul Lyons, MD, who founded the Virginia Comprehensive Epilepsy Program at Winchester Medical Center with neurosurgeon Lee Selznick, MD. “We evaluate the risk of disease burden versus the risk of treatment and the benefit of intervention.”

According to Dr. Lyons, once an individual with epilepsy fails two appropriate seizure medications, the likelihood of seizure freedom with other medications is only 1% to 5%.

In 2012, when Davis had his first appointment with Dr. Lyons, he had



already failed seven seizure medications and was ready to try almost anything. He wanted seizure freedom not only for himself, but for his wife, Judi, who had remained loyally by his side through it all. “I didn't want her to go through my seizures anymore,” he says.

Through a decades-long partnership with Dr. Lyons and Dr. Selznick, chief of Neurosurgery at Winchester Medical Center, Davis underwent 12 to 15 interventions, including dietary changes; several new medications; vagus nerve stimulation (VNS), which involves the use of an implanted device to stimulate the vagus nerve with electrical impulses; and intracranial monitoring followed by a procedure in which Dr. Selznick removed several areas in his brain causing seizures.



After successful epilepsy treatments, Richard Davis was finally able to obtain his driver's license—and his dream car.

The treatments have been a success: Davis' last seizure was on April 19, 2021.

"The last time I saw him as a patient, he was counting down the days until he could get his driver's license and buy his dream car," Dr. Selznick recalls. "This kind of life-changing

surgery is the most rewarding thing I do as a neurosurgeon."

Dr. Lyons says the treatment for epilepsy is never one-size-fits-all, and what worked for Davis might not be what others are ready for or need on their journey to seizure freedom.

"The right treatment for any patient with epilepsy is really what the person decides to do, based on where they are in their life, their level of support, and what they are willing to accept in terms of risk," Dr. Lyons says. "We take the person where they are and put before them the available options. It's not just a medical or surgical journey. It's really a personal journey and a spiritual journey of perseverance."

THE KEYS TO FREEDOM

After waiting for 42 long years, Davis was finally able to get his driver's license and immediately got behind the wheel on March 8, 2022, after purchasing a blue 2018 Jaguar. Now, he finds every excuse to drive—and he often takes the long way. Since March he's driven more than 2,800 miles.

"I just want to get out and go," he says. "Forty-two years without a license ... you have no idea."

He enjoys offering rides to the people whom he used to rely on to escort him places, and he likes taking roads he's never been on before. He's thankful for his loving wife, along with the relationship he has built with Valley Health and Dr. Lyons and Dr. Selznick. He's currently on four epilepsy medications and sees Dr. Lyons yearly.

"Dr. Lyons is the finest neurologist, and we are so very, very fortunate to have met him and Dr. Selznick," Davis says.

Dr. Lyons says cases like that of Davis reinforce why he became a doctor.

"Mr. Davis' course was unusual. He was able to persevere through his 70s and never gave up. He's inspired me personally and professionally. He's kind of a home run."

→ For more information, visit valleyhealthlink.com/epilepsysupport.

“It's not just a medical or surgical journey. It's really a personal journey and a spiritual journey of perseverance.” —PAUL LYONS, MD

VALLEY HEALTH FOUNDATIONS: GAME-CHANGING SUPPORT IN 2021

→ EACH OF OUR SIX VALLEY HEALTH HOSPITALS HAS A FOUNDATION OR DEVELOPMENT FUND THAT SUPPORTS OUR HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS. OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS, MILLIONS OF DOLLARS HAVE BEEN RAISED THROUGH THE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES.

\$1.1 MILLION+

TOTAL OF 122 GRANTS THAT WERE
AWARDED BY THE FOUNDATIONS

231 DONORS WERE PRESIDENT'S
SOCIETY SUPPORTERS, GIVING AN
ANNUAL DONATION OF **\$1,000**
OR MORE

THE FOUNDATIONS PROVIDED **105 HOTEL VOUCHERS** FOR
OUR PATIENTS IN 2021.

74 TAXI OR TRANSPORTATION VOUCHERS
AND **GAS CARDS** WERE DISTRIBUTED TO
PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

\$65,300

TOTAL OF 26 SCHOLARSHIPS THAT WERE GIVEN
TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

1,355

NUMBER OF DONORS THAT RAISED
MORE THAN **\$2.3 MILLION** IN SUPPORT
OF VALLEY HEALTH PROGRAMS

→ Interested in supporting Valley Health? Visit valleyhealthlink.com/giving.

ALL ABOUT ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDERS

Learn how these important members of your medical team enhance patient care

Advanced practice providers (APPs) play key roles in the delivery of quality health care. Susan S. Warriner, DNP, NP-C, Valley Health Medical Group director, Advanced Practice Providers, explains how they have become increasingly valuable members of the healthcare ecosystem.

Q: WHAT ARE APPS?

A: APPs are healthcare professionals who have received advanced education and training in the evaluation and management of patient conditions. Traditionally, they are physician assistants (PAs) and advanced practice registered nurses, including certified nurse practitioners (NPs), certified nurse midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), neonatal nurse practitioners (NNPs), and clinical nurse specialists (CNSs).

Q: WHAT TRAINING DO THEY RECEIVE?

A: PAs typically begin their career with a bachelor's degree focused on medical sciences. They then enroll in a physician assistant training program that runs two to three years, earning a master's degree. Once a PA graduates, they take a certification exam and obtain their state license to practice. NPs start out as registered nurses and proceed to a master's degree training program. Once they graduate, they must also take a certifying exam and apply for state licensure. Both PAs and NPs must maintain their certifications and licensure throughout their careers in order to practice.

Q: HOW DO APPS WORK WITH PHYSICIANS?

A: APPs are trained to care for patients with a great deal of autonomy, meaning they are prepared to evaluate and manage patients within the

scope of their training. At Valley Health, our APPs enter into a collaborative practice relationship with one or more team physicians who are available to discuss complex patient care needs. This complementary approach provides an exceptional healthcare experience to our patients.

Q: WHERE DO APPS WORK AT VALLEY HEALTH?

A: We have 170-plus employed APPs, which does not include additional APPs who are affiliated with Valley Health as leased, contracted and credentialed providers. Not only do APPs have a strong presence in primary care throughout Valley Health, they are also found across the entire spectrum of specialty services that we provide.

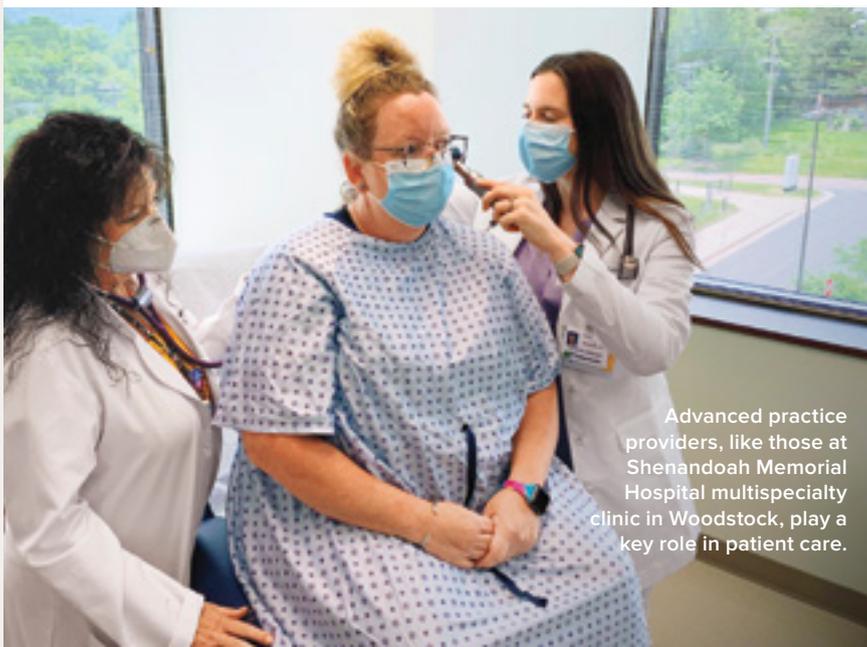
Q: HOW DO APPS ENHANCE PATIENT CARE?

A: APPs enhance patient care by allowing more time with the patient, which promotes a positive experience. They have expertise in patient education and a clinical background that complements the physicians with whom they work. APPs can be found in roles where there is a need for advanced patient-focused care and education, which not only improves access to care, but allows their physician colleagues to focus on more complex patient care needs.

Q: WILL WE SEE MORE APPS IN THE FUTURE?

A: Yes. The Association of American Medical Colleges projects a shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034. With an expanding and aging patient population, APPs are playing increasingly valuable roles. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021 updates, the job outlook is estimated to improve 45% for NPs and 31% for PAs by 2030. So this will continue to be a desirable occupation for aspiring healthcare professionals.

→ To find a Valley Health physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner, visit valleyhealthlink.com/find-a-doctor.



Advanced practice providers, like those at Shenandoah Memorial Hospital multispecialty clinic in Woodstock, play a key role in patient care.



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