

# HealthLINK

WINTER 2025

YOUR CONNECTION TO HEALTH & WELLNESS

## HEARTS, MINDS, CONNECTIONS

VALLEY HEALTH'S STRONGER TOGETHER CAMPAIGN EXPANDS  
CRITICAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY

### INSIDE:

Breakthroughs in  
treating arrhythmias /  
Identifying the  
vital health needs of  
our community /  
New mental health  
crisis care unit



 **ValleyHealth**  
*Healthier, together.*

# WELCOME

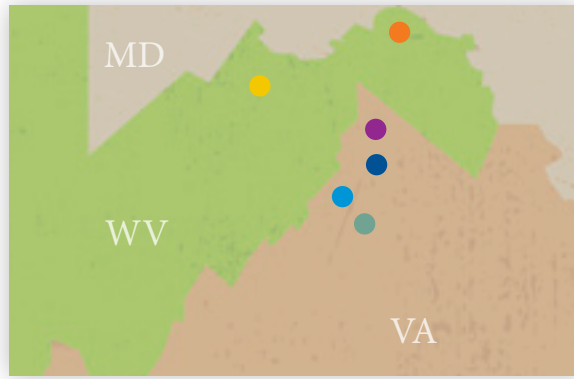
## STRONGER TOGETHER

In every issue of *HealthLINK*, we spotlight what makes Valley Health one of the best health care systems in the country, whether it is our advanced technology, compassionate caregivers or the expansion of our services in the region. But none of this would be possible without your support.

The partnerships we forge with community members and organizations help assure that our loved ones receive health care that is accessible, affordable and exceptional for all. In this issue, we highlight our Stronger Together campaign: *Hearts, Minds, Connections*. Through this campaign, we aim to raise money to improve and expand our cardiovascular, behavioral health and mobile unit services. With your support, we will be better able to help and serve our neighbors, friends and loved ones ... and you!

Also in this issue, you will find information about the services, providers and technology we offer at Valley Health hospitals and facilities. Learn about heart procedures that save lives and shorten recovery time, our new practices and providers, and the caregivers who go above and beyond in providing you the best patient experience.

*On the cover: cardiologist Daniel Alexander, DO; donor Gerald "J.J." Smith; Winchester Medical Center President Tonya Smith; and President and CEO Mark Nantz.*



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/community](http://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                                    | — Valley Health Home Health   West Virginia | — Valley Medical Transport   |
| — Outreach Lab Services                              | — Valley Health Medical Group               | — Valley Pharmacy            |
| — Rehabilitation Services (Inpatient and Outpatient) | — Valley Health   Spring Mills              | — Wellness & Fitness Centers |
| — Urgent Care and Urgent Care Express                | — Valley Health Surgery Center              | — Tri-State Surgical Center  |

For more information, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/locations](http://valleyhealthlink.com/locations).



### 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

#### Executive Management

- Mark Nantz, President and CEO
- Bob Amos, Chief Financial Officer
- Barbara Ballard, Chief Information Officer
- Jeffrey Feit, MD, Chief Population and Community Health Officer, Chief Medical Information Officer
- Nicolas C. Restrepo, MD, Quality and Patient Safety Officer
- Brad Rogers, Chief Operating Officer, Valley Health Medical Group, and Vice President, Valley Physician Enterprise
- Chris Rucker, Chief Strategy Officer and Chief of Staff
- Iyad Sabbagh, MD, Chief Physician Executive
- Elizabeth Savage, Chief Human Resource Officer
- Tonya Smith, Senior Vice President, Acute Care
- Walt Sowers, Chief Legal & Compliance Officer
- Theresa Trivette, DNP, Chief Nurse Executive

#### Hospital Leadership

- N. Travis Clark, Vice President, Operations, Page Memorial Hospital and Shenandoah Memorial Hospital
- Jennifer Coello, Vice President, Operations and Administrator, Warren Memorial Hospital
- Heather Sigel, Vice President, Operations, War Memorial Hospital and Hampshire Memorial Hospital
- Tonya Smith, President, Winchester Medical Center

The information contained in *HealthLINK* is not a substitute for professional medical care or counsel. If you have medical concerns, consult a medical professional. A list of physicians, specialists and other care providers is found at [valleyhealthlink.com/physicians](http://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 questions@valleyhealthlink.com or 540-536-5325 to be added to our mailing list; view *HealthLINK* online at [valleyhealthlink.com/news](http://valleyhealthlink.com/news).

**Executive Editor:** Rebecca Layne

#### Medical Editors:

- Gregory Byrd, MD, Medical Director, Valley Health Medical Group
- Jeffrey Feit, MD, Chief Population and Community Health Officer, Chief Medical Information Officer
- Nicolas C. Restrepo, MD, Quality and Patient Safety Officer
- Kris Maddalena, Chief Nursing Officer, Winchester Medical Center

**Health and Wellness Writers:** Sari Harrar, Deborah Kirk

**Photography:** Nick Matheson, Ginger Perry

**Published by:** Diablo Custom Publishing





N. Travis Clark

## CLARK SHINES BRIGHT WITH COMMUNITY STAR AWARD

N. Travis Clark, Valley Health vice president of operations at Page Memorial Hospital in Luray, Virginia, and Shenandoah Memorial Hospital in Woodstock, Virginia, has been honored with the prestigious Community Star award by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH). Clark is the sole health care executive in the commonwealth to receive this accolade this year.

The NOSORH Community Star Recognition Program, established in 2015 to coincide with National Rural Health Day (November 21), celebrates individuals and organizations making significant contributions to rural communities. Since its inception, over 300 health care leaders and organizations have been honored as Community Stars.

In an effort to address food insecurity challenges, Clark helped organize a number of community gardens on several Valley Health campuses in Page and Shenandoah counties that yielded over 7,000 pounds of produce last year. In addition, Clark was appointed to the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association's Rural Health Task Force with the aim of advancing rural health across the state. Recently, the task force submitted a report with recommendations to address such issues as behavioral and maternal health services, transportation, and workforce development.

"I am deeply honored to be a recipient of this award," says Clark. "It takes a team to advance rural health on a local, regional, state and national effort. No one knows that better than the dedicated men and women who come to work every day in our hospitals and provide the expert care that our communities deserve. I'm just thankful that I can be one of the voices that advocates for our families, friends and neighbors."

## HEALTHIER TOGETHER

### EMPATH UNIT OFFERS MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN A THERAPEUTIC SETTING

This fall, Valley Health opened the Valley Health Emergency, Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment, and Healing (EmPATH) unit. This new facility is the first of its kind in the Northern Shenandoah Valley, offering immediate mental health care in a therapeutic environment and setting a new standard for mental health crisis care.

Located at Winchester Medical Center, the EmPATH unit provides an alternative to the emergency room for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. As the first EmPATH unit in a hospital setting in Virginia that accepts direct patient walk-ins, it ensures timely and appropriate care in an environment designed to accommodate the needs of these patients.

"Meeting mental health needs is a top priority for Valley Health," says Mark Nantz, President and CEO of Valley Health. "The EmPATH unit represents a significant advancement in mental health care, offering a safe and supportive environment for those in crisis. It provides immediate assessment, treatment and healing, underscoring Valley Health's dedication to creating a comprehensive mental health crisis response system in the Northern Shenandoah Valley."



The Valley Health Emergency, Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment, and Healing (EmPATH) unit opened in October with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony.

VALLEY HEALTH RECOGNIZED ON *FORBES* LIST OF AMERICA'S BEST-IN-STATE EMPLOYERS 2024

Valley Health has been named one of America's Best-In-State Employers for 2024 by *Forbes* for our ongoing commitment to creating an outstanding workplace environment for our employees.

The *Forbes* list of America's Best-In-State Employers is based on an independent survey of some 160,000 U.S. employees working for companies with more than 500 employees. The evaluation was based on employees' willingness to recommend their employers to friends and family. The survey included questions about working conditions, salary, potential for development and company image.

"We are honored to be recognized by *Forbes* as one of the best employers,"

says Mark Nantz, President and CEO of Valley Health. "Our dedicated caregivers and leaders are the heart of our organization, and this award is a testament to their hard work and commitment. We strive to create a supportive workplace where every employee feels valued and empowered to serve our community, ensuring our patients

receive high-quality, compassionate care."

Valley Health's inclusion on this list highlights efforts to nurture a positive work culture, invest in employee development and prioritize work-life balance.



Sheridan Parker

TEEN'S PROJECT BENEFITS EXTENDED CARE RESIDENTS AND FAMILIES

When 17-year-old Sheridan Parker of Falling Waters, West Virginia, set out to complete her American Heritage Girls' Stars & Stripes Award, she turned to War Memorial Hospital with an ambitious idea: to design and remodel the patio at the hospital's Extended Care Facility.

The Stars & Stripes Award is the highest award attainable as an American Heritage Girl (AHG). For the project to be approved by AHG, it required a minimum of 100 community hours that involved planning, fundraising and supervising others. Perhaps most importantly, the project also had to make a lasting impact on the organization.

"My goal was to do something for the hospital that had never been done before and may not have been within its budget this year," explains Parker.

After conducting an extensive needs assessment, Parker set to work raising funds through community donations as well as a \$2,500 grant from the Valley Health War Memorial Hospital Development Committee. Renovations included constructing a 20-foot pavilion with a covered bench/swing area for shade, adding raised flower beds with new plants and pots, creating a play area, purchasing furniture and installing a privacy fence. Work was completed over the summer, and a dedication was held in October of last year.

"Not only were we deeply touched by Sheridan's proposal, but we were blown away at what she was able to accomplish," says Samantha Smith, chief nursing officer and director of patient care services at War. "Our residents and staff feel truly blessed to have people like Sheridan who support our mission to improve health by serving our community."





Battina Myers, RN, and Kari Evans, MSN, RN, with naloxone distribution boxes.

## HOSPITALS PARTNER WITH LOCAL AGENCIES TO TACKLE OPIOID OVERDOSE CRISIS

Over the past two decades, the United States has experienced a growing crisis of substance use disorders. With opioid-related overdoses reaching alarming levels, West Virginia continues to have one of the highest drug-related mortality rates in the nation.

Tackling this issue head on, Hampshire Memorial Hospital and War Memorial Hospital have partnered with local nonprofit organizations to provide free, no-judgment access to lifesaving naloxone, more popularly known as Narcan.

Working with Life or Drugs in Morgan County and the Potomac Highlands Guild in Hampshire County, both hospitals have installed NaloxBox dispensaries in the lobbies of their main entrances.

Naloxone is a proven antidote that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose when administered quickly. Yet many people feel hesitant to seek out this crucial medication due to societal stigma and misconceptions about its use. The NaloxBox initiative aims to eliminate these barriers by providing easy access to naloxone kits, which come with step-by-step instructions on how to use them, ensuring that anyone can respond swiftly and effectively in an emergency.

“By providing easy access to this lifesaving medication, we hope to empower individuals to act in critical moments and save lives,” says Kari Evans, chief nursing officer and director of patient care at Hampshire Memorial.

If you or someone you know is living with substance use challenges, Valley Health encourages you to reach out for support.

- National Hotline - **800-662-HELP (4357)**
- Narcotics Anonymous - **800-766-4442**
- Life or Drugs - **301-331-2916**
- Potomac Highlands Guild 24-Hour Crisis Hotline - **800-545-4357**

## HEALTHIER TOGETHER

### WEST VIRGINIA HOSPITALS RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR QUALITY AND PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Hampshire Memorial Hospital in Romney and War Memorial Hospital in Berkeley Springs were the recipients of a number of national awards and recognitions over the past year, the most recent of which was from the Chartis Center for Rural Health, which presented both hospitals with 2024 Performance Leadership Awards for Excellence in Quality, Outcomes and Patient Perspective.

The Performance Leadership Awards are based on results of the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX, which provides a comprehensive and objective framework for assessing how rural hospitals are performing.

“The Performance Leadership Awards capture the commitment, diligence and innovation with which America’s rural hospitals approach the delivery of care within their communities,” says Troy Brown, network consultant with the Chartis Center.

“We consider it a privilege to care for our patients and their families,” notes Heather Sigel, vice president of operations at both hospitals, “so we are truly honored to accept this recognition on behalf of all those we serve.” As Sigel explains, the entire health care team focuses on achieving the best possible outcomes for each patient, every time. “While this award validates our efforts in the areas of quality and outcomes, it is most meaningful to be recognized for our patient satisfaction, because our patients are why we are here.”



## NEXT-LEVEL VALVE REPLACEMENT

VALLEY HEALTH'S EXPERTS OFFER TRANSCATHETER AORTIC VALVE REPLACEMENT PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE PATIENTS' HEART HEALTH

In August, Stephen Sandretzky, 83, walked 4,000 steps the day after undergoing a minimally invasive transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) at Valley Health's Heart & Vascular Center in Winchester. During the replacement, interventional cardiologists performed a "valve-in-valve-in-valve" procedure, in which they placed a new aortic valve inside two older valves that were no longer functioning well.

Born with a congenital heart defect, Sandretzky's aortic valve was prone to becoming stiff, causing the heart to work under significant stress. His aortic valve had two leaflets, instead of three. The condition affects about one in 50 people, says Valley Health interventional cardiologist and structural heart specialist Aref A. Bin Abdulhak, MD.

Sandretzky received his first valve in 2006 in a hospital outside the region. When the valve began to fail, a second valve was installed inside it during a 2018 TAVR procedure at Valley Health. Sandretzky's third valve was installed this past summer after the second one began to fail.

Sandretzky's case is unusual, but aortic valve disease is not. It affects one in 20 older Americans, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For some,

it is life-threatening. "Patients with severe symptomatic aortic valve stenosis [narrowing] typically complain of shortness of breath and chest pain, and sometimes they pass out," says Dr. Bin Abdulhak, who performed Sandretzky's most recent TAVR. "It's a serious problem that can be fatal within two years for half of the people with it. When the valve is replaced, survival and symptoms improve."

In a TAVR procedure, a replacement valve is advanced to the heart through the patient's blood vessels and implanted inside the existing valve, rather than through open-heart surgery. "TAVR is at least as effective as open-heart surgery and safer for people considered at high or moderate risk of complications from open surgery," Dr. Bin Abdulhak says. Recovery is usually faster than with open surgery. TAVR valve-in-valve-in-valve procedures are also an option

when older replacement valves become stiff and leaky, he says. "People may think symptoms like chest pain and feeling out of breath are just due to aging, when it could be a valve issue. It's important to discuss it with your family doctor."

Sandretzky, a Winchester resident, jogged the Apple Blossom Valley Health 10K and completed the Loudoun Street Mile in Winchester in 2019, just a year after his first TAVR. He won the Apple Blossom 10K for his age group in 2023. He hopes to compete as a walker in both events this year and is undergoing cardiac rehab to rebuild strength and endurance.

Dr. Bin Abdulhak credits the training and experience of Valley Health's team and the health system's state-of-the-art technology—including the availability of three types of new replacement aortic valves—for Sandretzky's success. "I totally trust the people here," Sandretzky says. "It has been a great experience."

Visit [valleyhealthlink.com/AVC](https://valleyhealthlink.com/AVC) to learn more.



Stephen Sandretzky has resumed his active lifestyle, thanks to his TAVR procedure.

## IDENTIFYING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH NEEDS

VALLEY HEALTH'S COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROVIDES AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT PRIORITIES

Health issues affecting individuals and communities across our country are frequent stories in the news and in our social media feeds. However, it is important for Valley Health to understand the specific health needs that are most critical here in the Northern Shenandoah Valley and surrounding region.

Valley Health conducts Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) for each of our six hospitals to identify the health needs of the residents we serve. As part of the CHNA, Valley Health partners with the Virginia Department of Health, area nonprofit organizations, local government officials and other key community stakeholders to learn where gaps in services exist and to identify priorities for action.

The last CHNA was completed in 2022 and found consistent health priorities across our region: chronic disease and health behaviors; mental health and substance abuse; access to primary, preventive and clinical care; and social and economic factors that impact health. The Stronger Together capital campaign and Valley Health's grants to local nonprofit organizations are examples of Valley Health's response to the results of the 2022 CHNA.

Completed every three years, the 2025 CHNA began with the launch of a community health survey in November 2024. The survey included questions about health issues and behaviors, along with community-wide concerns such as economic stability, housing availability and transportation. The survey results will be supplemented with stakeholder interviews, community response sessions, and comparison with state and national data.

Once the health needs assessments are completed in July 2025, each Valley Health hospital will develop strategies addressing the identified needs. These strategies will be implemented over the next three years.

For more information about Valley Health's Community Health Needs Assessments, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/CHNA](https://valleyhealthlink.com/CHNA).



## VALLEY HEALTH GRANTS ADDRESS PRIORITY NEEDS

Ongoing support of area nonprofit organizations is guided by the results of the CHNA

Each year, Valley Health provides over \$1 million to area nonprofit organizations that address the critical health needs identified in the CHNA, including \$200,000 in Community Partnership Grants. Grant recipients are selected through a competitive application process that evaluates how their proposed projects align with Valley Health strategies and address needs identified in the CHNA.

Examples of organizations awarded Community Partnership Grants in 2024 include Horizon Goodwill Industries, Inc. (Winchester, VA), Winchester Area Temporary Transitional Shelter, Mountaineer Community Health Center, Inc. (Paw Paw, WV) and Bread of Life Food Pantry (Woodstock, VA).

Organizations receiving 2025 Community Partnership Grants will be announced in April.

For more information about Valley Health's commitment to our community, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/community](https://valleyhealthlink.com/community).



# STRONGER

# TOGETHER

➔ WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF DONORS LIKE GERALD “J.J.” SMITH, VALLEY HEALTH IS LEADING A TRANSFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BETTER SERVE OUR COMMUNITY’S HEALTH CARE NEEDS

Gerald “J.J.” Smith, 63, has lived most of his life in Winchester, and so have generations of his family. “My three children were born at Winchester Medical Center,” he says. “My grandparents and mother received care for heart disease and cancer there, too.”

Now, Smith is giving back to the community with a generous philanthropic gift to Valley Health’s Stronger Together fundraising campaign, which will help expand access to essential health services in the region. “I believe in the mission of Valley Health,” he says. “I think we have a great health system, with great people. It’s pretty impressive to have this in our community.”

Stronger Together aims to raise \$20 million by December 2026 to fund new space to enhance state-of-the-art cardiovascular technologies, expand mental health care for teens and adults, and equip mobile health vans to bring lifesaving screenings, vaccines and health care access directly to area residents.

As part of the campaign and thanks to Smith’s donation, Valley Health’s Heart & Vascular Center will be expanded and has been named the Clyde A. Smith Heart & Vascular Center in honor of Smith’s grandfather, founder of the family rendering business that grew to become Valley Proteins of Winchester. (The company was sold in 2022.) Access to advanced heart care close to home is important, says Smith, who is also a member of the Valley Health Board of Trustees. “My grandfather

had his first heart attack at age 39 and died from heart disease in his early 50s. I have no doubt he would have lived into his 70s with the kinds of treatments we have today.”

Contributions of any size to Stronger Together will improve care for patients and their families, friends and neighbors. “Not everyone can make a large gift,” Smith says. “But when many people make smaller gifts, the impact is the same. Health care improves for all of us.”

*stronger*  
TOGETHER

HEARTS • MINDS • CONNECTIONS



## HEARTS, MINDS, CONNECTIONS

As a not-for-profit health care system, Valley Health invests back into the community to address unmet health needs. But those resources alone cannot eliminate all gaps in care.

Stronger Together focuses on “Hearts, Minds, Connections”—top needs identified in Valley Health’s recent





Donor Gerald "J.J." Smith stands in front of the Heart & Vascular Center named in honor of his grandfather.

health needs assessment as well as in outreach by the health system's hospital foundations. Valley Health gathered information from over 2,000 people who live and work in the region, including community residents, members of faith-based organizations, health care providers, elected officials, health professionals and leadership from each of Valley Health's six hospitals.

Here's what to know about the exciting projects funded by Stronger Together that will improve the future of health care for those in the Northern Shenandoah Valley and surrounding regions.

#### ADVANCING CARE FOR HEART AND VASCULAR HEALTH

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for American men and women. Some cardiovascular conditions impact the region at rates higher than the national average. Atrial fibrillation (AFib) and other heart arrhythmias, for example, affect one in 18 Americans, but are even more prevalent in the Valley Health community as the area attracts a growing number of retirees.

The Stronger Together campaign will make possible the building of an additional procedure room at the Clyde A. Smith Heart & Vascular

Center to expand access to lifesaving and life-improving care. Existing procedure rooms will be updated to increase treatment options for AFib and other heart concerns. Treating AFib is important; the condition increases stroke risk fivefold. "Technology is rapidly changing," says Julie Miksit, RN, vice president of operations and service lines at Valley Health. "Our donors' gifts will help us improve access and provide new technology, helping us care for our patients in the Shenandoah Valley."

Valley Health already has a national reputation for excellence. In 2023, Winchester Medical Center was named a top 50 cardiovascular hospital by *Fortune* magazine and the information technology company PINC AI. Increased investment in the Clyde A. Smith Heart & Vascular Center will continue to attract prominent providers in the field.

"We are poised to be a heart and vascular center that makes a long-term impact on the cardiovascular health of the entire Shenandoah Valley," says cardiologist Daniel Alexander, DO, of Winchester Cardiology and Vascular

# STRONGER TOGETHER

Medicine. “With a program of this caliber, we are able to provide long-reaching care to both our northern and southern communities. Our goal is to treat complex cardiovascular conditions including valvular, coronary and electrical disorders; teach the new generation of cardiovascular specialists; and decrease the burden of cardiovascular disease in our region. We want a healthy population that is able to do the great things that folks in the Valley have always done.”

## A MENTAL HEALTH CENTER AND LIFE-CHANGING CARE NETWORK

Mental health emerged as the highest-priority health need across all of Valley Health’s service areas. Adults and young people alike need help with depression, anxiety, stress, substance use disorders, relationship issues and other concerns. Valley Health is already expanding services in these areas, and Stronger Together will add new dimensions and new accessibility, so that care is convenient and closer to home.

“Everyone in this community is impacted by behavioral health,” says Karen Dorr, DNP, senior director of Behavioral Health Services at Valley Health. “When you make a gift to Stronger Together, you’re helping everyone—adults, kids, schools, law enforcement. It’s huge. It ripples out into the community.”

The campaign will fund construction of Valley Health’s mental health center. This freestanding facility on the Winchester Medical Center campus will be a place to heal, thrive and restore relationships for individuals and others in their life. It will house new youth programs that protect and support mental health and provide treatment for substance use disorders, including intensive outpatient programs that provide young people with ongoing support as they transition back home after inpatient care. The center will also expand adult mental

“Everyone in this community is impacted by behavioral health. When you make a gift to Stronger Together, you’re helping everyone—adults, kids, schools, law enforcement. It’s huge. It ripples out into the community.” —KAREN DORR, DNP, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES AT VALLEY HEALTH

health services, including treatment of substance use disorders, which will decrease the need for social services interventions and reduce fatal overdoses. Stronger Together will establish a digital health center that puts contact with Valley Health mental health providers at the fingertips of community medical practices so people can receive prompt mental health care.

“We hope to move into more areas of care,” says psychiatrist Louis Nardelli, DO, of Valley Behavioral Health. “People with anxiety, depression, stress or who feel overwhelmed will have access to providers who can help. I hope the center can extend beyond that and help with preventive mental health care through screening and psychological education. We are also going to develop a geriatric program for older adults, including memory care. And if a person is diagnosed with a medical condition that they have difficulty coping with, the center will be a resource for them, too. The vision is that it will be a center for hope, a center for resilience.”

## MOBILE HEALTH CARE THAT COMES TO YOU

If you’re busy with work and family, lack transportation, or live far from health services, getting regular medical care can be a major challenge. Too often, people delay or skip health screenings, vaccines and other vital services as a result—and that can lead to the discovery of medical conditions in more advanced stages and the need for more intensive treatment and emergency department visits.

One solution to this challenge is health care that travels to your community, church, school or place of work.

Currently, less than 50% of eligible women in the community get their annual screening mammogram. Stronger Together will fund mobile health vans that bring preventive services, including mammograms, out to the communities. “We know that mammograms save lives. But a significant number of women are not getting their mammogram every year,” says Christopher Nieman, MD, of Winchester Radiologists. “If we catch even one incidence of breast cancer with mobile mammography when it is early and treatable with a good outcome, that is one life saved.”

Many people in the region live 30 to 40 minutes away from their primary care provider and over an hour away from a specialist. Mobile health units will have telehealth





From left: Valley Health CEO and President Mark Nantz; Senior Vice President, Acute Care, and Winchester Medical Center President Tonya Smith; donor Gerald “J.J.” Smith; and Valley Health Foundations Executive Director Jenny Grooms next to a portrait of Clyde Smith.

capability and a nurse or other practitioner trained in telehealth onboard, so patients can see their primary care practitioner or specialist via telehealth without making a long drive or missing too much time away from work or home.

Onboard the van, a practitioner trained to facilitate a telehealth appointment will provide the necessary medical care, such as drawing blood for testing, conducting a physical or neurological exam or positioning equipment so the doctor on-screen can see inside a patient’s ear or hear their heartbeat. “By bringing care to patients, we help them be healthier in the long run,” says Jeffrey Feit, MD, chief population health officer and chief medical information officer for Valley Health.

## HOW TO GIVE

Healthier lives and healthier communities are easier to achieve when a community works together. To date, Stronger Together is off to a successful start, raising \$16.7 million from foundational donors like Smith. The mental health center and mobile mammography van have also received transformational gifts whose stories will be shared soon. The \$3 million to be raised in the next two years will achieve the campaign goal and ensure that these crucial services become reality.

“Our Foundations connect resources to mission, much like we did when making the freestanding Cancer Center possible in our community,” says Jenny Grooms, executive director of Valley Health Foundations. “Every dollar to Stronger Together is a contribution to your community. It’s a courageous ask—and I am humbled and grateful for those that raised their hand and said they want to be part of the solution to our community’s greatest needs.”

“By working together, we can touch the lives of everyone in our community,” adds Mark Nantz, President and CEO of Valley Health. “From youth struggling with mental health, to adults dealing with heart disease, to a woman who cannot miss work to get a mammogram. No gift is too small, and every donation is essential in helping Valley Health continue to address crucial health needs in our community.”

*To support the campaign or learn more, please visit  
[valleyhealthlink.com/stronger](http://valleyhealthlink.com/stronger).*

# GETTING A CLEAR PICTURE OF YOUR HEALTH

➔ MEDICAL IMAGING HAS COME A LONG WAY IN HELPING HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS DIAGNOSE, MONITOR AND TREAT A VARIETY OF MEDICAL CONDITIONS, INCLUDING THE EARLY DETECTION OF DISEASES, DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE TREATMENT PLANS AND MONITORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THOSE PLANS. IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT FOR THE MORE THAN 35 MEDICAL IMAGING TECHNOLOGISTS AND ASSOCIATES WHO WORK AT HAMPSHIRE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AND WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT IT'S WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE THAT COUNTS.

1895

THE YEAR THAT GERMAN PHYSICIST  
WILHELM CONRAD RÖNTGEN CAPTURED  
THE FIRST EVER X-RAY PICTURE USING  
HIS WIFE'S HAND. TODAY, NEARLY 150  
MILLION X-RAY PROCEDURES ARE  
PERFORMED IN THE U.S. EACH YEAR!

37,906

THE NUMBER OF MEDICAL IMAGING PROCEDURES  
PERFORMED AT HMH AND WAR IN 2023.

(16,576

PATIENTS TURNED  
TO HMH AND WAR FOR  
THEIR MEDICAL  
IMAGING NEEDS IN 2023.

THERE ARE NINE MEDICAL IMAGING MODALITIES AVAILABLE AT HAMPSHIRE AND WAR. THESE ARE: BONE DENSITY, ECHOCARDIOGRAM, CT (COMPUTER TOMOGRAPHY) SCAN, FLUOROSCOPY, MAMMOGRAPHY (INCLUDING 3D), MRI, NUCLEAR MEDICINE, ULTRASOUND AND X-RAY.

1,000+

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROCEDURES THAT CAN BE  
PERFORMED ACROSS ALL MEDICAL IMAGING MODALITIES.

AN MRI MAGNET IS 140,000  
TIMES STRONGER THAN THE  
EARTH'S GRAVITATIONAL PULL.



# LIVE & LEARN



## VIRTUAL VISITS FOR URGENT CARE

**With the My Valley Health mobile app, Urgent Care is just a click away**

Valley Health Urgent Care virtual visits are a convenient way to see a provider from home when you have minor symptoms or illness. You can make an appointment with our online Urgent Care providers for non-emergent, common illnesses and conditions from the comfort of your own home.

### Examples of symptoms we treat:

- Skin rashes and bug bites
- Scratchy or sore throat
- Poison ivy
- Congestion
- Pink eye
- Nausea
- Cold Symptoms
- Fever

Virtual visits are for patients age 5 and older and are a self-pay service, which means insurance is not accepted. All visits are a flat fee of \$59.

Starting a virtual visit is easy. Visit [vhurgentcare.com](http://vhurgentcare.com) or click Virtual Urgent Care from your My Valley Health mobile app.

Follow the prompts to start an Urgent Care virtual visit. You will be asked to enter some basic information like name, email, mobile phone

number and address. That way, when it is time for your appointment, we can send you a reminder to check in and begin your appointment.

Once you have entered your information, you can choose the appointment time that works for your schedule. Five minutes before your appointment time, you will receive a text message and an email with the link to begin checking in. This is where you will enter your payment information and fill out a little bit of your health history so that our providers can give you the best possible care.

During your virtual visit with one of our providers, you may be directed to one of our Valley Health Urgent Care locations if you need additional evaluation, testing or treatment.

Your provider will evaluate, diagnose and treat your symptoms during your virtual visit and will send any prescribed medications to your pharmacy of choice.

After your virtual visit, a summary and your visit notes will appear in your MyChart account.

Let us help you feel better faster.



**Scan this QR code to get started with a virtual visit.**

*Learn how to receive non-emergent care from the comfort of home.*



**Scan this QR code to download the My Valley Health app and enhance your health care journey.**

*The My Valley Health mobile app\* allows easy access to MyChart and other health care resources on the go.*

*\*Available to download on Apple and Google mobile devices.*

# SPOTLIGHT



## A NEW OPTION FOR TREATING ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

**Pulsed field ablation reduces risks and brings success to patients with arrhythmias**

Electrophysiologists at Winchester Medical Center are among the first in the region to offer a new treatment option to patients with atrial fibrillation (AFib), a heart condition that results in an abnormal heart rhythm and carries the risk of stroke, heart failure and blood clots.

Symptoms of AFib include heart palpitations, shortness of breath, extreme fatigue and chest pain. The condition results in about 158,000 deaths each year in

the U.S. and causes about one in seven strokes, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Risk factors include obesity, smoking, high blood pressure, advancing age, heart failure and diabetes.

Depending on the individual patient's needs, treatment for AFib may involve lifestyle changes, medications or a procedure called an ablation. The electrophysiologists at Winchester Medical Center (WMC) perform minimally invasive ablations using catheters inserted through vessels in the leg. Ablation techniques have traditionally used heat or cold energy to disable the heart cells that are the source of the electrical abnormality, thereby restoring a regular heartbeat.





Members of the Winchester Medical Center electrophysiology team, including Todd Teigeler, MD (center); Emmanuel Ekanem, MD (front row, second from right); and Daniel Alexander, DO (far right).

Valley Health is one of the first in the region to implement pulsed field ablation for arrhythmia management.

Pulsed field ablation, or PFA, is a recent FDA-approved technology that uses ultrarapid electrical pulses, rather than thermal energy, to better target myocardial tissue. During PFA, electrical pulses lasting a nanosecond to a microsecond disable cardiac cells, resulting in a safer procedure and more protection for surrounding tissue.

“Having done AFib ablation for the past 15 years, I have seen evolutionary changes that have improved the efficacy, safety and durability of the procedure,” says Daniel Alexander, DO, chairman of the Winchester

Medical Center Electrophysiology Clinical Council. “Pulsed field ablation is the newest energy-delivery device, improving on the safety profile for AFib ablation that will help us treat this condition for a greater number of patients, safely and effectively.”

The electrophysiology team at WMC has used PFA to treat patients with AFib, resulting in shorter procedure times and less time under anesthesia. Most importantly, the precision of this new nonthermal ablation technology allows electrophysiologists to use tightly controlled pulsed electrical fields to target the exact cardiac cells they wish to treat, with reduced risk of injury to surrounding cardiac tissue.

Valley Health electrophysiologist Todd Teigeler, MD, participated in PFA clinical trials and received additional training on the new technology before Valley Health’s first case in June 2024. Since then, Valley Health electrophysiologists have successfully performed multiple cases a week.

“We have been watching the evolution of the science and clinical performance of PFA for years leading up to the first application at Winchester Medical Center,” Teigeler says. “There was remarkable coordination between the doctors, the leadership at Valley Health and industry partners to make this leading-edge technology available to our community as soon as the superior safety profile was validated and received FDA approval. The dedicated team of Valley Health nurses and techs completed specific training on this modality, so that by the time of the first pulsed field ablation case, everyone knew what to do.”

Emmanuel Ekanem, MD, a cardiac electrophysiologist with Winchester Cardiology and Vascular Medicine | Valley Health, played an important role in establishing the safety profile for the new technology, serving as the lead investigator in clinical research of PFA in patients with AFib. Dr. Ekanem is the lead author of a 2024 paper published in the prestigious journal *Nature Medicine* that studies the safety of pulsed field ablation in more than 17,000 patients with atrial fibrillation across Europe.

The advent of pulsed field ablation, he says, is a testament to medical innovation spanning preclinical studies, randomized controlled trials and one of the most comprehensive multinational registries demonstrating its safety in real-world practice.

“The prevalence of atrial fibrillation continues to increase with significant impact on the quality of life and clinical outcomes of our patients,” Dr. Ekanem says. “This represents a major advancement in the treatment of atrial fibrillation. We are excited for the opportunity to use this leading-edge technology to continue to deliver world-class care to our patients in the region.”

For more information, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/winchester-cardiology](https://valleyhealthlink.com/winchester-cardiology).



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

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

Follow us:



# Stronger TOGETHER

HEARTS • MINDS • CONNECTIONS



At Valley Health, our vision is a healthy community where care is affordable, accessible and exceptional for all. You can be part of this effort by supporting the Stronger Together capital campaign. Your donation will help us improve and expand mental health care, cardiovascular services, and mobile screenings. Your generosity to the Stronger Together campaign impacts the lives of your family, friends and community.

**To support or learn more, visit  
[valleyhealthlink.com/stronger](https://valleyhealthlink.com/stronger).**

 **ValleyHealth**  
Foundations