

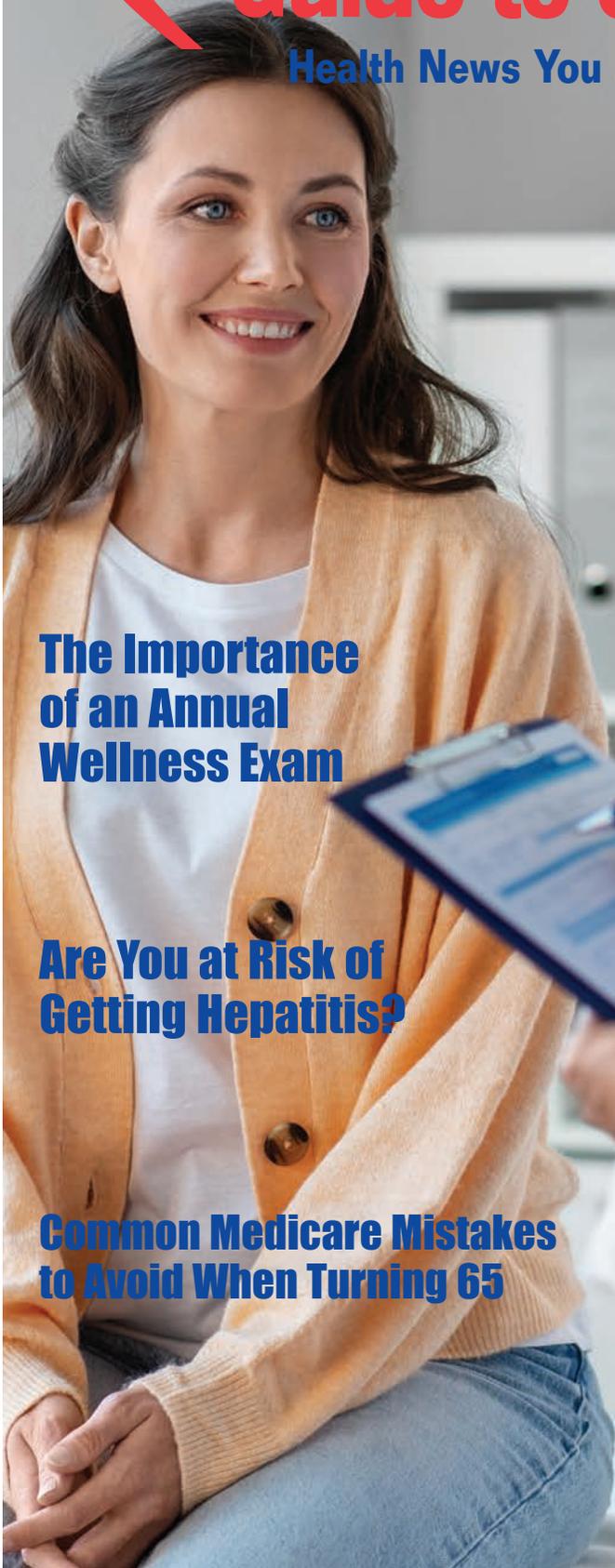


Western Pennsylvania

# Guide to Good Health

Health News You and Your Family Can Use

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SPRING 2023



**WHS  
Implements  
New Nursing  
Residency  
Program**

**Prostate Cancer Screening  
Can Detect Cancer Early  
Before Symptoms Show**

**Are You Due for a  
Colon Cancer  
Screening?**

**WHS Orthopedics  
Welcomes  
Mon Valley Native  
Donald Ravasio, DO**

**The Importance  
of an Annual  
Wellness Exam**

**Are You at Risk of  
Getting Hepatitis?**

**Common Medicare Mistakes  
to Avoid When Turning 65**

**Senior Guide**  
Senior Living Options, Home Care  
Senior Resources  
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# The Importance of an Annual Wellness Exam

By Andrew Wilson

**When is the last time you had a wellness exam? If you can't remember, it may be time to schedule one. While there are some similarities between a wellness exam and what patients commonly refer to as a "physical," there are also significant differences.**

"An annual wellness exam is more like a 50,000-foot view. It is a preventative exam where we might discuss how your health has been and, if it is good, how we can keep it that way through things like immunizations or scheduling for screening evaluations like a colonoscopy or mammogram," says Nicholas DiTullio, M.D., an internal medicine physician who practices with St. Clair Medical Group. "A physical is looking at specific problems that a patient might be having, like their blood pressure or their blood sugar levels."

Annual wellness visits are covered by Medicare without a copay, and almost all medical insurance plans will cover one wellness exam each year since these preventative exams can benefit patients of all ages.

Checking your height and weight, as well as reviewing all prescriptions, personal medical history and family history are common to both types of exams. During a wellness exam, however, a patient will be asked to complete a health risk assessment, which includes questions about their physical and emotional health.

"We also will review the functional status of our patients," said Dr. DiTullio. "Are there any changes in the past year? If there are noticeable changes, why is that?"

For example, a patient might admit to having trouble going upstairs recently. Dr. DiTullio says that the physician would then follow up with questions to determine whether that change is due to the patient having difficulty walking or because they get short of breath doing so. The answer will determine what course of action or treatment plan might be needed.

In addition to assessing physical functioning, the physician will also be looking for signs of memory loss, dementia, depression, anxiety, or stress. "During a wellness exam, we are looking at the patient's health as a whole and how to keep them healthy through preventative care," said Dr. DiTullio.



**"Regardless of how healthy a patient is – or thinks they are – a wellness exam can raise awareness of what it takes to remain in good health."**

*Dr. Nicholas DiTullio*

## Health Status



That may include a discussion of risk factors – things such as diet, tobacco or alcohol use, and exercise – and any lifestyle modifications that might be recommended by the physician. The success of the exam, however, begins with honest conversation. How does a doctor gain a patient's trust?

"It's different for each patient," said Dr. DiTullio. "Some of my patients have been with me for 20 years or more, so we've already established a level of trust. For new patients, it might take a little time."

A discussion of any dietary supplements a patient is taking might also be appropriate.

"I try to assess whether a supplement might be helping, hurting, or having no effect," said Dr. DiTullio. "Things like vitamins, Niacin, and Omega-3 have been shown to have a good effect on things like cholesterol. As long as they aren't doing any harm, I have no problem with a patient taking them."

All of this is fodder for conversation during the annual wellness exam. Regardless of how healthy a patient is – or thinks they are – a wellness exam can raise awareness of what it takes to remain in good health.

"It's an assessment patients should do every year," said Dr. DiTullio. "It's a preventative assessment we can use to keep you in good health."

Dr. DiTullio practices with St. Clair Medical Group Internal Medicine, one of St. Clair Health's premier community-based primary care medical practices. The team of physicians are board-certified to treat acute and chronic medical problems for patients 18 and older. They will discuss health care concerns and treatment plans to keep you healthy and can refer you to specialists when your care requires it.

To make an appointment with Dr. DiTullio or one of his physician colleagues, please call (412) 221-3377 or visit [stclair.org/internal-medicine](http://stclair.org/internal-medicine).



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# Are you at risk of getting Hepatitis?

By Lois Thomson

**Hepatitis is a disease of the liver caused by a virus, and the five kinds are simply known as A, B, C, D, and E.**

Hepatitis A usually goes away on its own with no serious problems. Hepatitis B is highly preventable, and about 95 percent of adults who are exposed can completely recover within 6 months without medication. Hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver failure and end-stage liver disease, and is a major cause of liver transplants in the United States. Hepatitis D occurs only among people who are infected with the Hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis E is mainly found in Africa, Asia and South America.

Hepatitis A, B, and C are contagious, but each one is spread differently. Type A will most likely come from contaminated food or water, or from close contact with a person or object that's infected.

The virus is found in blood and certain body fluids, and hepatitis B is spread when a person comes in contact with blood or body fluid from an infected person. This can happen by having sex with someone who is infected; sharing needles or other equipment when using drugs or if getting tattoos; or

even from an infected mother giving birth to her baby. Hepatitis C is spread in similar ways, but getting it from sex isn't as common.



## Symptoms

Symptoms of hepatitis include sudden nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea; pain or bloating in the stomach area; dark urine or gray-colored stool; unusual tiredness or weakness; low-grade fever; intense itching; loss of appetite; jaundice; low-grade fever; joint pain; or weight loss.

## Prevent infection

To prevent infection, those who have not been previously vaccinated should be vaccinated against hepatitis A and hepatitis B. There are no vaccines against hepatitis C, D and E, and there are no cures for hepatitis once it happens. Most cases of acute hepatitis will resolve themselves over time. If a person contracts the virus, medicines are available that can help fight it and slow its ability to damage the liver. Treatment focuses on preventing further damage, possibly reversing existing damage, and relieving symptoms.

# Get Vaccinated For Hepatitis!

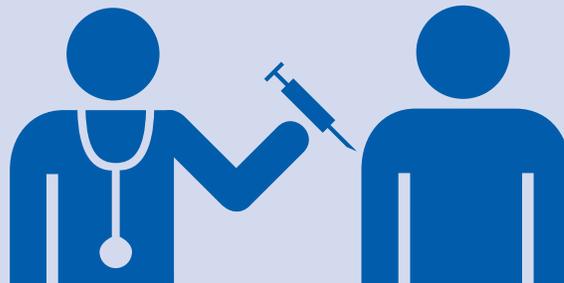
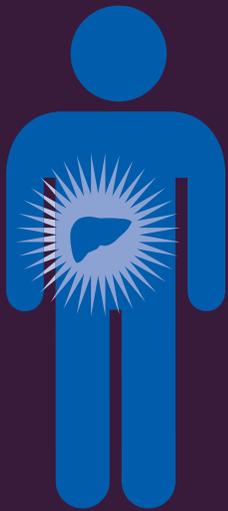
**Hepatitis A & B cases are rising in Allegheny County.**

**The best way to prevent hepatitis A and B is to get vaccinated.**

All adults ages 19-59 should be vaccinated against hepatitis B. All children less than 19 years of age should be vaccinated. While there is no vaccine for hepatitis C, it's important that people living with the infection get vaccinated for hepatitis A & B to protect their liver.

To learn more about hepatitis, visit: [www.cdc.gov/Hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/Hepatitis)

Make a hepatitis vaccine appointment at the Allegheny County Health Department  
**Immunizations Clinic at 412-578-8062.**





# Hearing Health

## Tinnitus: 'We're Training the Brain to Hear Other Sounds'

By Lois Thomson

Do you suffer from tinnitus? If so, you are not alone. The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders estimates that approximately 10 percent of the U.S. adult population — more than 25 million Americans — experiences some form of tinnitus.

Tinnitus is a common problem that occurs when a person experiences a ringing sensation or other noises in one or both of the ears. The noise isn't caused by an external sound, and other people usually can't hear it.

Michael J. Rametta, MS, owner of Rametta Audiology & Hearing Center, said there are varying degrees of tinnitus: approximately 5 million sufferers consider it to be burdensome, while 2 million find it to be debilitating. Rametta pointed out that while there are two schools of thought as to what causes the problem, "90 percent of people who have tinnitus have an underlying case of hearing loss."

One thought is that the brain is manufacturing the noises because there's an absence of sound as a result of the hearing loss. "That's one thought, that the brain is just creating it. The other is that — there are little hair cells in your inner ear that move when your ear receives sound waves, and the brain interprets these signals as sounds. These hair cells are straight up and down when you are born, but they can get bent as you age or are exposed to loud sounds on a regular basis." (He cited singer Huey Lewis and Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich as having hearing loss and tinnitus.) If the hair cells become bent, they can send random impulses to the brain, which can be interpreted as tinnitus.

While Rametta said there is no cure, approximately 88 percent



Michael Rametta, owner of Rametta Audiology & Hearing Aid Center, said tinnitus repeatedly ranks as the number one disability among returning military service members, just ahead of hearing loss. His company has been serving the Alle-Kiski Valley area for more than 60 years, and has offices in Squirrel Hill, Tarentum, and Vandergrift.

have been helped so that the tinnitus no longer seems to be there — and this may be done with hearing aids. Hearing aids can help by making other sounds louder and the tinnitus therefore less noticeable. For example, they may increase the sound of a background noise in your home, like the hum of a ceiling fan. If hearing aids make it easier for you to hear, it may be easier for your brain to ignore the tinnitus. As Rametta said, "Nobody can cure it, but I just deal with how we help it. We're training the brain to hear other sounds."

He added, "Some people have tinnitus but do not have enough hearing loss to justify a hearing aid. We do have a lower success rate when a person doesn't have hearing loss; in those cases it's probably 50 percent. The solution usually is wearing a very inexpensive hearing aid that has tinnitus technology built into it."



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# Prostate Cancer Screening Can Detect Cancer Early Before Symptoms Show

By Andrew Wilson

When you search the internet for symptoms of prostate cancer, you will find pretty much the same thing on every site:

- difficulty urinating,
- decreased force in the urine stream,
- blood in the urine or semen, and
- erectile dysfunction.

But there are two problems with that list. Each sign is usually caused by something else besides prostate cancer, and, if they are caused by prostate cancer, it could mean your prostate cancer is very advanced.

“What I tell my patients is that prostate cancer usually has no symptoms until it is advanced,” said Arthur Thomas, M.D., a board-certified urologist with St. Clair Medical Group. “It’s a disease that should be screened for. Like most cancers, the chances of a cure are very good when caught in an early stage, but the chances go way down if it advances to later stages.”

The same websites will say that prostate cancer is usually a very slow-moving form of cancer, which may cause some men to feel that “slow-moving” equates to “not serious.” That could be a fatal mistake. The American Cancer Society lists prostate cancer as the second leading cause of death for men in the United States, behind lung cancer and just ahead of colorectal cancer.

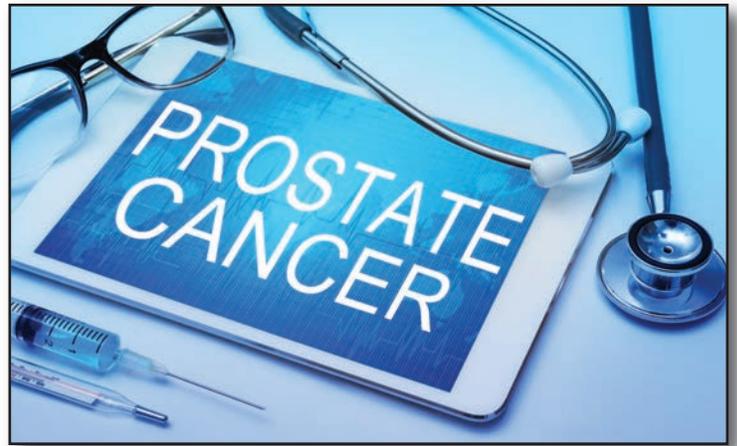
“That statement (slow-moving) might be true for the vast majority, but it may not be true for you,” cautioned Dr. Thomas. “For that reason, we do try to encourage every guy to get screened. If you are diagnosed with prostate cancer, it doesn’t always mean that you need treatment. In my opinion, some of the greatest advancements in prostate cancer have been in the encouragement of active surveillance for low-risk disease.”

“Most cancers we will find with a PSA blood test,” said Dr. Thomas. PSA stands for Prostate-Specific Antigen and measures the presence of a certain protein in the blood which, at elevated levels, can mean cancer. “There are other diagnostic tools that we may use before doing a biopsy, such as an MRI of the pelvis, and some other urine and blood tests, but they usually only provide additional information and may or may not change management beyond what the PSA already showed.”

All cancers are categorized by different stages. For prostate cancer, Stages I and II mean the cancer is localized to the prostate. Stage III means the cancer has started growing out of the prostate. Stage IV is when the cancer has spread to lymph nodes, other organs, or directly invaded a nearby organ.

In classifying prostate cancer, the American Urological Association breaks it down into risk stratification which helps to direct therapy. Low risk means the cancer is usually recommended to not proceed directly to treatment and instead to do active surveillance. The next stratus, intermediate risk, is broken down into two categories: favorable and unfavorable. Favorable behaves less aggressively than unfavorable, but both are usually recommended to have treatment such as surgery or radiation, unless the patient’s age or health dictates otherwise. High risk almost always requires treatment unless a patient has otherwise very advanced poor health or age.

Obviously, for Stage IV or high risk, the cancer is more difficult



**“It’s a disease that should be screened for. Like most cancers, the chances of a cure are very good when caught in an early stage, but the chances go way down if it advances to later stages.”**

*-Dr. Arthur Thomas*

to treat successfully, but Dr. Thomas offers some hope. “There have been advances in treatment and medical oncology that are able to hold even metastatic cancer at bay for many years.”

Dr. Thomas says if a man is healthy and under age 65, surgery may be the best course of treatment. Over age 65, the treatment may be surgery or radiation, possibly with a combination of hormonal therapy. There are also other treatment methods using ultrasound and freezing treatments that some physicians have used, but they are not usually the standard of care.

“The survival rates for prostate cancer are pretty good,” said Dr. Thomas. “The five-year survival rate for someone with low-risk cancer is 99 percent. If the cancer has metastasized, the five-year survival rate drops to 32 percent.”

That underscores the need for screening before any symptoms present. Still there is a psychological aspect to prostate cancer that must be overcome. Many men delay getting screened because they fear they will not be able to urinate as usual and/or they will not be able to be intimate with their partner any longer. Dr. Thomas has good news on both of these counts, too.

“After treatment, most guys are quickly able to regain urinary function,” he said. “Most are able to maintain intimacy, too, but they just have to work at it a little more.”

Dr. Thomas practices with St. Clair Medical Group Urology, one of St. Clair Health’s premier community-based specialty practices. The team of five highly-skilled physicians with multiple subspecialties are united in their mission to deliver unprecedented urologic care to the South Hills.

 To make an appointment with Dr. Thomas or learn more about the practice, please call **(412) 942-4100** or visit **stclair.org/scmg-urology**.

# Are You Due For A Colon Cancer Screening?

Colorectal cancer is highly treatable if caught in the early stages



March was National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, a time when we emphasize the importance of early detection and screening. Colorectal cancer is highly treatable if caught in the early stages.

Colon cancer remains the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States for both men and women, yet it is very preventable. Unfortunately, many people with colorectal cancer may experience no symptoms, which is why regular screenings are so important. Finding cancer early, when it's small and hasn't spread, often allows for more treatment options. It has been shown that the average person is at risk of developing

polyps beginning at 45 years of age; however, removing polyps during screening colonoscopies significantly reduces colon cancer development later in life. And, the only reliable way to detect polyps is through a screening colonoscopy.

Certain risk factors, such as a diet high in red and processed meats, obesity, smoking and lack of exercise can be attributed to certain cancers, although having risk factors does not necessarily mean that you will get the disease.

## Symptoms of colorectal cancer may include:

- **A persistent change in bowel habits, including diarrhea or constipation**
- **Rectal bleeding or blood in your stool**
- **Persistent abdominal discomfort, such as cramps, gas or pain**
- **A feeling that your bowel doesn't empty completely**
- **Weakness or fatigue**
- **Unexplained weight loss**

*Please discuss colorectal cancer screening with your physician. Heritage Valley cares about your health! For more information, visit [www.heritagevalley.org](http://www.heritagevalley.org)*



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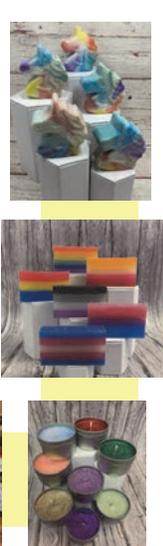


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# Spring Cleaning and Chronic Lung Disease

*The cleanliness of your home is a major factor in determining indoor air quality and maintaining good air quality is crucial to helping avoid COPD episodes and flare-ups.*

*Here are some tips that can help you prepare for “spring cleaning” and maybe make it easier to accomplish.*

## To minimize indoor air pollutants:

- Stick to a no-smoking policy in your home.
- Use powerful kitchen ventilation to minimize nitrogen dioxide and food particles.
- Regularly clean surfaces, furniture, and linens to minimize pet dander.
- Trade carpets for hardwood floors whenever possible.
- Always turn on the bathroom fan to reduce humidity.

## Cleaning tips:

- Make sure you are taking your controlling respiratory medications every day.
- Everyone has a mask these days. Using one while cleaning

couldn't hurt.

- Put all your cleaning products in one place such as a pail that you can easily carry from room to room.
- Don't overdo. Clean whatever you can and when you need a rest, take one. The rest of the stuff will still be there tomorrow.
- Keep your windows open for ventilation while cleaning.
- Use non-toxic cleaners that don't have a strong scent. Try this mixture: 1 tsp. liquid soap, one tsp. baking soda and one-quart warm water
- Use a damp cloth for dusting and spray water on the bottom of a broom to prevent dust and animal hairs from just spreading around the room.
- While cleaning, check for water leaks that can cause bacterial and mold growth such as in your shower area or basement a clean filter.
- Have a professional clean your air ducts.
- If you choose to hire a cleaning service, make sure to ask what type of cleaning products they use. They may cause more harm than good and might save you time but could cost you a trip to the ER.

While it may not be a pleasant task, hopefully these tips will make your next cleaning day a little easier to manage.

For more information, visit **Breathe Pennsylvania** at [www.breathepa.org](http://www.breathepa.org).

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## St. Clair Health to be Primary Clinical Training Site for Duquesne University College of Osteopathic Medicine Students

St. Clair Health announced a long-term agreement with Duquesne University to train the next generation of physicians in Southwestern Pennsylvania. This partnership comes at a critical time, when demand for health care only continues to intensify amid a shortage of physicians that is expected to continue for decades.

“Increasing the number of physicians in our health system and region has long been a top priority for St. Clair Health. The growing shortage of physicians, coupled with the aging population and global pandemic, accelerated the need for swift action,” says Amy Bunger, Ph.D., Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at St. Clair Health. “Two organizations with distinct Pittsburgh identities that contribute to the local community in a similar way are joining forces to take action now, so together, we can cooperatively champion our region's future healthcare providers.”

St. Clair Health will become a primary clinical training site for medical students attending the Duquesne University College of Osteopathic Medicine (DU-COM) beginning in 2026, when the first DU-COM class will be eligible to complete the clinical portion of their training during their third and fourth years of medical school.

# LONG COVID

## Robert Peirce & Associates, P.C.

A T T O R N E Y S   A T   L A W

### *New Data Shows Long COVID Keeping as Many as 4 Million People Out of Work*

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down forcing us to navigate a lasting impact on our lives. Science has made medical advances to get us through the pandemic, but challenges linger. Many people continue to suffer with severe symptoms. Post-COVID complications have put the medical community in uncharted waters, leaving those with long COVID symptoms searching not only for adequate medical care, but also resulting in the harsh reality that their symptoms have caused disability.

Long COVID can include a wide range of health problems:

- Tiredness or fatigue that interferes with daily life
- Symptoms get worse after physical or mental effort
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fast beating or pounding heart
- Ringing in ears
- Dizziness
- Difficulty concentrating



Like autoimmune disorders, long COVID is very difficult to diagnose and treat. The issue must be addressed by the medical community and the Social Security Administration. If you are experiencing long term symptoms of COVID-19 making it impossible for you to work you could be eligible for Social Security Disability Benefits. For more than 40 years, the law firm of **Robert Peirce & Associates, PC** has been helping individuals that can no longer work obtain the benefits they deserve. Barbara Manna, EDPNA has worked for **Robert Peirce & Associates** for over 30 years as an Accredited Disability Representative. “People are facing complex chronic illness after having COVID and we are here to help them determine if they have a case to file for disability,” said Manna.



Attorney Adrian DeGori has been helping clients file Social Security Disability claims at **Robert Peirce & Associates** for the past 10 years. “As of now, there is no clear path for people suffering from long-term medical conditions associated with COVID,” said DeGori. “Most people do not realize that if you are unable to work, for any reason, you may qualify for Disability Benefits.”

If you are experiencing symptoms of long COVID, let the legal team at **Robert Peirce & Associates** help you maneuver through the disability determination process. The overall goal is to win your case so you can receive the benefits you deserve. There is no fee unless we win your case. Let the dedicated Social Security Disability Team at **Robert Peirce & Associates** guide you through this process to make the strongest claim possible.

*To make a no obligation appointment, contact Adrian DeGori at 412-281-7229 or visit [www.peircelaw.com](http://www.peircelaw.com)*



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## WHS Orthopedics Welcomes Mon Valley Native Donald Ravasio, DO

By Andrew Wilson

**As an orthopedic surgeon, Donald Ravasio, D.O., follows a Golden Rule when it comes to patient care.**

“My approach to patient care is very simple. Treat your patients as if they are members of your family,” he said. “It is just something that I have felt inside me from very early on in my professional life. I just firmly believe that if you approach every single patient as if they were your brother, sister, aunt, uncle, or grandmother you will never err in your medical decision making.”

While the Mon Valley native and graduate of Mon Valley Catholic says he can't narrow it down to a single person or life event that instilled the ideal of treating every patient as he would a family member, he says his interest in health and medicine started at a young age.

“I had an unusual passion for human anatomy and how our bodies work. Getting into health care was just a natural fit to fuel that passion,” said Dr. Ravasio, who earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh and his medical degree from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. “The appeal of orthopedic surgery is directly related to that. There can't be anything better than being given the opportunity to fix a part of a body that the Good Lord created that has been broken or injured. It's the greatest profession anyone could have.”

He also credits a local chiropractor, Dr. John Wohar from Monessen, for fueling his passion for healthcare and treating patients. “Many people do not know that I was a chiropractor before I went back to medical school,” he said. “I am very proud of that aspect of my professional education.”

He is even more proud of his military service. After graduating from medical school, Dr. Ravasio served our country in the Medical Corps of the United States Army, where he had a lengthy deployment in Baghdad as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“I love God, Family, and Country,” he said. “I provided orthopedic trauma care at the 31st Combat Support Hospital. During that period, the 31st CSH was the busiest trauma hospital in the world. We did more orthopedic surgery during that period than at any other time since Vietnam. The battlefield injuries that I witnessed and provided care for during that time were some of the worst injuries that I have seen in my lifetime.”

The experience at the 31st CSH inspired one of his colleagues, Col. Gregory Kidwell, to write a book titled *The Come as You Are War: Stories of the Baghdad ER and the Stop the Bleeding 31st CSH*,



**“You will be provided with comprehensive orthopedic service whether it's for your arthritic knees, your rotator cuff in your shoulder, or your broken arm. Most importantly, you will be treated with compassion, dignity, and respect.”**

-Dr. Donald Ravasio

and Dr. Ravasio was honored to write the forward for the book.

“The lessons learned from that time of my career were profound and invaluable and have affected the way I practice in the civilian world to this day,” he said. “I go to work every day knowing that there is nothing that will walk through my office door that can't be managed in an appropriate fashion. Even during surgery, having done hundreds of surgeries in the most austere conditions in Baghdad, really allows me to just focus on the task at hand and accomplish what it is I need to do.”

Following his military service, Dr. Ravasio practiced at other western Pennsylvania hospitals for several years, but the opportunity to return to Washington County with Washington Health System was something that he jumped at.

“This is the most exciting reason for me to be coming back to Washington County to practice,” he said. “I love that I am being given the opportunity to reconnect with so many friends, neighbors, classmates, and former patients from my practice in Canonsburg while at the same time being able to provide them with the outstanding orthopedic care that they deserve.”

His spare time is mostly spent with his family. He and his wife Kristin have four children. The two oldest are in college at Arizona State and Loyola University in Chicago. The two youngest are in seventh and sixth grade and are active in

youth sports. “I like to think I am their biggest fan and I love watching them do their thing during their sporting activities.”

He says he hopes to enhance WHS Orthopedics by being a steady presence and bringing years of experience at providing high quality orthopedic non-surgical and surgical care to patients who need joint replacements, sports medicine, fracture care, and trauma. Above all, his message is a simple one.

“If you entrust me with your orthopedic care, you will be treated just like you would if you were my mom, my uncle, or my grandfather,” he said. “You will be provided with comprehensive orthopedic service whether it's for your arthritic knees, your rotator cuff in your shoulder, or your broken arm. Most importantly, you will be treated with compassion, dignity, and respect.”

Washington Health System Orthopedics and Sports Medicine is located at 95 Leonard Avenue in Washington, PA. Their Board-Certified Orthopedic Surgeons are highly skilled in general orthopedics with a subspecialty in sports medicine, knee, hip and shoulder surgery.



To find out more, please visit [whs.org/ortho](http://whs.org/ortho) or call (724) 206-0610.

## Your input is vital

# Westmoreland County Transit Authority Transit Development Plan

Westmoreland County Transit Authority strives to connect people to life. In order to better serve our communities, we have partnered with The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to create a Transit Development Plan (TDP). This plan will serve as a strategic blueprint for improvements to the transit service for Westmoreland County over the next several years.

Over the years, so much has changed in the County, including how people travel and how transit services are operated. The WCTA will be conducting this planning process to evaluate and update our services and transit network to respond to changes in demand.

### Send us your suggestions!

Your input is a vital part of planning these improvements. If you have any ideas, questions, or comments please feel free to send us an email at [customerservice@westmorelandtransit.com](mailto:customerservice@westmorelandtransit.com), fill out our online forms at <https://www.westmorelandtransit.com/about/contact-westmoreland-transit/>, or give us a call at (724) 834-9282.



WCTA will also be out in the community during the development of this plan, so if you see us stop by and say hello and share any of your thoughts or ideas. With your help we can ensure that Westmoreland County Transit Authority can continue to connect people to life!

# Happy Spring!

from your friends at

## Westmoreland County Transit Authority

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- Ages 65 + ride FREE



# Careers In Healthcare

## WHS Implements New Nursing Residency Program to Support First Year Nurses

By Andrew Wilson

Doctors complete residency training after graduating from medical school to give them experience in applying what they've learned to real life situations. A new program at Washington Health System (WHS) is applying the same concept to nursing.

"New physicians need support, so why wouldn't new nurses need support?" said Tiffany Reed, MSN, RN, an Education Specialist and the Nursing Residency Program coordinator at WHS. "The first year is the hardest for new nurses."

To support new nurses, WHS officially announced the implementation of a Nurse Residency program based on the Vizient and American Association of Colleges of Nursing (Vizient/AACN) Nurse Residency Program™.

"It's a transition-to-practice program," said Reed, who added that the program is open to nurses with less than one year experience. The residency program will meet monthly and will be comprised of four cohorts throughout 2023. The first cohort, which consists of nurses hired by WHS in January, February, and March, will begin in April.

Vizient/AACN, which, since 2002, has been providing more than 600 healthcare organizations with these programs and counts more than 200,000 nurses among its graduates, designed the curriculum that WHS will be using for the nursing residency, but Reed says WHS can modify it to fit their needs. The program is designed to give nurses confidence in their critical thinking and decision-making, as well as improve their communication skills.

"The ability to think critically is huge in healthcare," said Reed. "Nursing school teaches you how to be a nurse, but it doesn't teach you how to deal with difficult situations a new nurse might encounter."

For example, a nurse may have been taught how to perform a routine procedure like taking a patient's blood pressure in nursing school, but it can be challenging to take the blood pressure of someone who resists. So, what should a nurse facing such a situation do? Reed says that it begins with communication – communicating with the patient and with colleagues.

"Communication will be the topic of the first session in the residency program," said Reed, who is clear about who will be helped by improving communication skills. "The benefits of having a program like this are not only for graduate nurses but will be felt by other staff and by our patients."

In addition to classroom work, the nursing residents will be applying evidence-based practice to everything they do in the program.

"Part of the residency program will involve a project where the nurses will need to do research," said Reed. "The result of this research may be a performance improvement project which could change the way that nursing care is delivered at WHS."

One thing that the residency program is expected to help with is reducing staff turnover, which became particularly bad during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses were on the frontlines and had to deal daily with issues like chronic fatigue, stress, and anxiety while seeking to provide quality care for their patients.



This is the first cohort in WHS' nurse residency program.



Tiffany Reed

"COVID hit healthcare hard," said Reed. "It was a scary and traumatic time for everyone. Because COVID cases are slowing down, we are taking more time to focus on new nurses, providing them with support and resources necessary to excel in their careers."

Besides benefiting the nurses who participate in the program, Reed believes nursing colleagues and other healthcare staff will benefit from improved team dynamics and morale and increased efficiency and safety. Patients will also benefit because the program has been

shown to improve the quality of care at institutions that implement the residency program.

"Transitioning into the nursing profession is a challenge for new graduate nurses. They are asked to jump into difficult roles and expand their development quickly, leading to high turnover. We know that it takes a full year to grow their confidence, competence and engagement in the profession and the organization" said Evy Olson, Associate Vice President of Nursing Programs at Vizient. "We are pleased that WHS has made the commitment to support these nurses during their transition into practice and their professional development through a nurse residency program."

Employing more than 2,000 highly trained medical professionals, Washington Health System provides health care services centered at its flagship 260 licensed bed hospital in Washington, PA, and at more than 40 off-site locations throughout three counties. In addition, Washington Health System has diagnostic centers, outpatient care facilities, the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center, and hospice care, all seamlessly working together to provide excellent patient-and-family-centered care.

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# Addiction

## Alcohol Produces Short and Long Term Harmful Effects on Physical Health

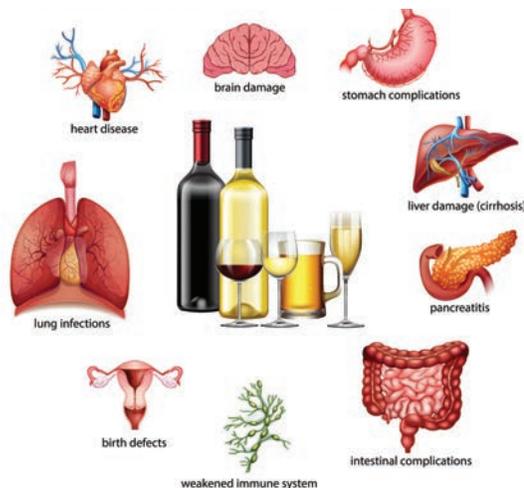
By Nancy Kennedy

**According to the CDC, excessive alcohol misuse is responsible for more than 140,000 deaths in the United States each year and it shortens the lives of those who die by an average of 26 years.**

Habitual drinking, in the form of occasional weekend binges or regular, long term alcohol abuse, jeopardizes physical health and longevity, significantly compromising quality of life. The health consequences of alcohol use are numerous and often devastating, leading to serious illness, disability and even death. Alcohol is being increasingly recognized as a direct cause of some diseases and a contributing factor in the development of others. It is listed as a carcinogen, an agent that is known to cause cancer, for cancer of the liver, colon, breast, rectum, esophagus and pharynx. In addition, alcohol can complicate existing medical conditions, interfere with medications and treatment and put drinkers at higher risk for injuries and premature death.

“Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a medical condition,” say the experts at Gateway Rehabilitation Center. “At Gateway Rehab our team offers a broad range of compassionate, individualized treatment programs to help persons who suffer with AUD. Alcohol is rapidly metabolized and reaches every organ in the body. Some of the harmful physical effects are immediate while others are cumulative and long term. Alcohol use disorder is a complex, progressive disease that is potentially lethal. It can produce intense suffering that may be physical, emotional or spiritual.”

Alcohol misuse significantly damages the gastrointestinal system, including the liver, pancreas and stomach. Cirrhosis is a condition in which the liver becomes fibrotic (scarred), interfering with its essential functions and producing excess abdominal fluid, internal bleeding and eventually liver failure. Even persons who drink



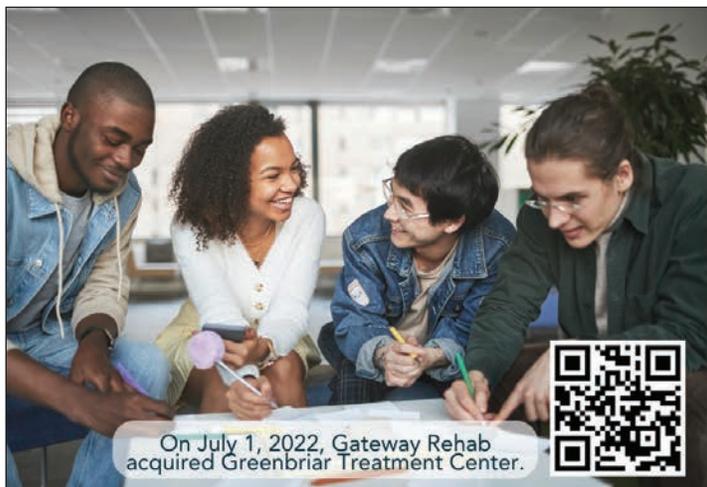
excessively now and then can develop gastritis, or stomach inflammation, gastric ulcers and pancreatitis – all of which are acute, painful conditions. Alcohol misuse can result in malabsorption, chronic diarrhea and interference with absorption of nutrients, resulting in malnutrition and anemia. In addition, alcohol may inhibit appetite, further impairing nutritional status, which inhibits healing and recovery from injuries, illnesses and surgery.

For the brain and nervous system, alcohol misuse is especially dangerous. Immediately, it may cause impaired reaction, judgment and coordination, leading to accidents. Long term, the effects include blackouts, short term memory loss, stroke and dementia. Alcohol-related brain damage is often irreversible.

Alcohol also has damaging effects on the cardiovascular system. It can cause hypertension and may weaken the heart muscle, increasing the risk of congestive heart failure. The reproductive system is vulnerable to alcohol in both males and females. One of the more recognized consequences of alcohol use in pregnancy is fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, an umbrella term to describe a range of effects on the developing fetus, including birth defects and developmental delay. Alcohol can be a factor in infertility and can bring about miscarriage and premature birth, which can result in severe, lifelong consequences to health and development.

Although the health consequences of excessive alcohol misuse are not often discussed, Gateway Rehab’s team of experts continue to advocate for stigma reduction around AUD and offer individualized, evidence-based treatment plans to help.

> For more information, visit [www.gatewayrehab.org](http://www.gatewayrehab.org) or call 1-800-472-1177.



On July 1, 2022, Gateway Rehab acquired Greenbriar Treatment Center.



Combining efforts creates an even stronger focus on the patients and families that need our help on their road to recovery

Gateway Rehab  
1-800-472-1177

Greenbriar  
1-800-637-4673

# Westmoreland Program Helps Address Substance Abuse Issues In Adolescents

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a proactive, non-punitive, multi-tiered framework of support that aims to identify needs, decrease substance use disorder, mobilize resources and increase supportive, treatment-based interventions via referral for the adolescent population.

SAP is utilized to identify and address usage before it progresses into a chronic, ongoing, life-long issue. According to treatment entry data, alcohol still remains the number one drug of choice and the reason why individuals seek treatment. Substance use disorder treatment is designed to help individuals stop or reduce harmful substance misuse, improve their health and social function and manage their risk of relapse. Research shows that treatment also improves individuals' productivity, health and overall quality of life, all things that are vital to adolescents' well-being.

The SAP framework is individualized and tailored to meet adolescents/students' specific needs. There are four phases to the SAP process:

1. Referral
  2. Team Planning
  3. Intervention and Recommendations
  4. Support and Follow-up
- SAP is designed to assist in



identifying issues including behavioral health, alcohol, tobacco, vaping and other drugs, which pose a barrier to a student's success and potential. The primary goal of SAP is to help students overcome these barriers so they may achieve, advance and remain in school.

SAP programming requires parental consent for student involvement. The student and family's private health information remains protected by Federal Law which states information can only be shared with a consent form.

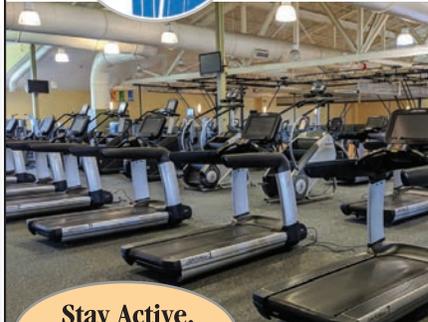
School-based, outpatient drug and alcohol services are funded by the Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission at NO COST to the parent or school.

 For additional information, contact **Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission at (724) 243-2220.**

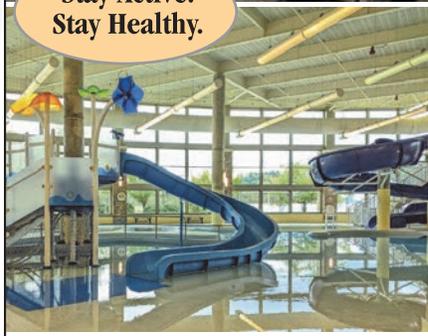


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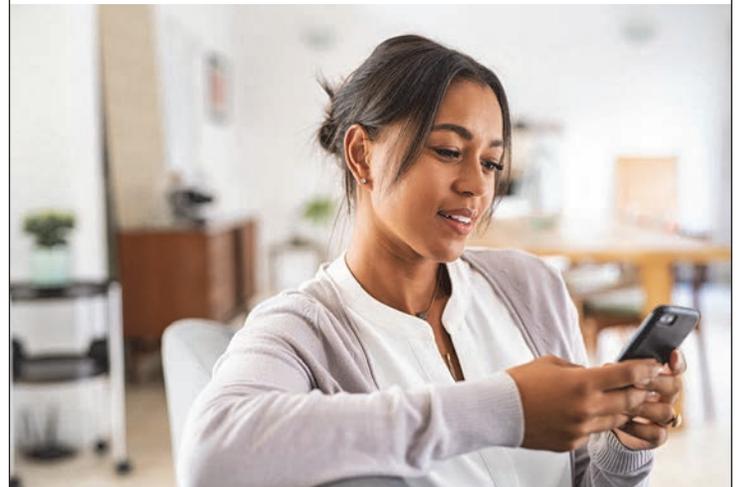
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## Service Satisfaction Among Hearing Aid Users

**When you think about hearing aid satisfaction among wearers - what important aspects do you think of? Cosmetics? Quality? Functionality? Service? Consumer satisfaction?**



**By Dr. Megan Myers-Aura, Au.D., CCC-A and Michelle Mitchell**

A study that was conducted by Sergei Kochkin researched the top factors that correlated with overall hearing instrument satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction is a judgment made by a person after he or she has purchased a product or service. Consumers reach their judgment by comparing their pre-purchase expectation with their post-purchase evaluation of the product and/or service experience.

Over-the-counter hearing aids have recently hit the shelves. Recent webinars have stressed the importance of educating patients to understand a critical difference between the over-the-counter hearing aids and the third-party administrators. What is missing from these two is the element of the hearing healthcare professional; and all of the services they provide. The third-party administrators include the use of our Audiologists in the fit and follow-up service;

they truly do not allow for an actual treatment plan to be implemented. In considering over the counter hearing aids, the hearing healthcare professional is taken out of the equation entirely. We at Swift Audiology do practice patient centered care, a hallmark of healthcare professionalism. Much of what we do and how we do it comes from the healthcare perspective.

The study conducted by Sergei Kochkin regarding consumer customer service satisfaction found that service skills of the hearing professional are a critical component in providing patients

with overall satisfaction with amplification. In other words, "getting it right" means more than matching a prescriptive fitting target or providing the patient with maximum hearing aid performance by means of fine-tuning and counseling. If the service is taken out of the equation whether it is from over-the-counter hearing aids or by the limited service of the third-party administrators, this can cause a lot of frustration from the hearing aid user towards hearing aids.

Licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, our hearing healthcare professionals are required to undergo specialized education and clinical time to qualify and be certified. Our Doctors of Audiology go through 8 years of schooling, numerous clinical rotations, on top of rigorous academic training and state exams.

They all must complete continuing education to ensure they are kept up to date with advancements of the field. Our hearing healthcare professionals stay on top of current research, best practices, and involvement in professional organizations. These factors, along with our experience, provides our patients with the best possible hearing healthcare.

At Swift Audiology, we provide patient centered care. In this approach, a patient's specific health needs and desired health outcomes are the driving force behind all health care decisions and quality measurements. Patients are partners with their hearing health care providers, and providers treat patients not only from a clinical perspective, but also from an emotional, mental, spiritual, social, and financial perspective. Our actions are directed from compassion and the desire to help others, as well as through evidence-based practice. This is the application of scientific facts, based upon research, to real-life situations.

In our case, we take our experience and education, augmenting that with emerging science to approach hearing loss with the most current, and best practices available. Providing our patients with a treatment plan is the implementation of patient centered care and evidence-based practice.

*Dr. Megan Myers-Aura is an Audiologist at Swift Audiology and Michelle Mitchell is an Insurance Specialist, Patient Liaison.*

**> Swift Audiology** provides hearing loss services, hearing protection, and medical hearing aid devices to patients at 3 convenient offices throughout the Pittsburgh region. For more information, visit [www.swiftaudiology.com](http://www.swiftaudiology.com), join us on Facebook at [facebook.com/swiftaudiology](https://www.facebook.com/swiftaudiology), or call (724) 726-4149.



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---

**When:** Friday, June 16, 2023  
 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

**For:** Individuals with COPD and a guest

**Where:** Gateway Clipper Fleet  
 350 W. Station Square Drive  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Cost:** \$15 per person  
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Registration opens on **April 1, 2023**.  
 Photo ID required for all attendees.  
 For more information, visit [www.breathpa.org](http://www.breathpa.org) or call 724.772.1750



# Make memories throughout the New Year.

If you were fortunate to have a grandmother like mine, you were truly blessed! My gram made me feel like the most special person in the world and was a true inspiration in my life. As a Hearing Healthcare Provider, I kept my grandmother wearing hearing aids for over 25 years, and she remained active, sharp, and clear minded.

**Debra Swift, BC-HIS**

Owner & Founder of Swift Audiology



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## The Community and Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park is the Heart of Upper St. Clair

Built in 2009, the Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park continues to be the heart of the community. It's a busy, bright, and bustling place with plenty to offer for everyone: classes, sports, swimming pools, workout spaces and social events. It's a place to learn and have fun, to celebrate, and to get healthy or stay healthy.

According to Melissa Lindberg, M.S., supervisor of marketing and membership, the Community & Recreation Center is much more than an activities center: it's a community gathering place, where families spend quality time together and friends enjoy each other's company. "The C&RC is a unique facility," she says. "It's a fitness and recreation center for all ages, from infants to older adults and everyone in between. It's very family-driven and family-friendly and is also a great place for adults and seniors. When you have a membership here, it's like having a personal playground. You can gather here with friends and family, and it's a wonderful place to meet people and make new friends."

Set within the 475 acres of beautiful and bucolic Boyce Mayview Park, the Community & Recreation Center is a 90,000 square foot facility that was designed to blend in with its surrounding natural environment. The building was constructed with numerous "green" elements and natural materials. The C&RC takes full advantage of its impressive setting, incorporating the park's trails and hills into its fitness programs and offering participants broad views of the forests and fields to perhaps inspire them as they exercise and play.

There are three main divisions to the C&RC: fitness, aquatics, and community programs, which encompass enrichment and sports programs, classes, and camps. The first floor contains two full size gymnasiums/basketball courts, a fitness area, two group exercise studios, one of which is focused on mind-body exercise such as yoga and Pilates, a playroom/babysitting area, and poolside party rooms. Fitness classes are offered in general aerobics, yoga, Pilates, cycling, boxing training, and many other forms of exercise. Located on the second floor are a cardio area, free weight and weight machine area, and a low-impact, 1/8-mile indoor walking track. All cardio equipment, including Expresso Bikes, offer individual television/multi-media screens and virtual trainers with a multitude of work out options. Seniors are accommodated with activities such as pickleball, game and card day, and various group exercise classes specifically geared toward boomer and senior age participants.

Aquatics is outstanding at the C&RC. With three pools to choose among, there is something for every-one: an indoor four-lane lap pool; an indoor leisure pool with a resistance channel, interactive water structure, whirlpool and zero depth entry; and a 28,000 square foot outdoor leisure pool that has special features to match any ability level. It also features a sandbox, two water slides, numerous lounge chairs and two outdoor covered pavilions. The indoor and



outdoor pools have handicapped lifts which are self-operated, and a zero-depth entry to the pool. There are even underwater benches for resting.

For children with special needs, the C&RC is a welcoming place. Every aspect is accessible and in compliance with ADA requirements. Across the parking lot, adults and children can visit a soft surface ballfield used by the Miracle League of the South Hills all-inclusive baseball program. There is also an all-access, inclusive playground, The Clubhouse, with lots of activities.

Currently, the Community & Recreation Center has over 10,000 members, and Lindberg hopes to see those numbers grow. "Over half of our members are Upper St. Clair residents, but we draw from all over the region. We encourage all interested people to come and participate; you don't have to live nearby. Annual and three-month membership are available; we also offer a daily admission pass for individuals."

For Lindberg, a busy mother of three young children who has a master's degree in exercise physiology, the C&RC is a terrific resource for families and for the entire community. "For me, it's greatly rewarding to see people experiencing this center with their families. Everyone is enjoying themselves and getting healthy! For many members, the center has become part of their daily life."

Upper St. Clair is renowned as a place of beautiful homes, excellent schools and gracious living, and the Community & Recreation Center further enhances the region's quality of life. Although a majority of members are from Upper St. Clair, the South Hills and southern Allegheny County, membership is open to people throughout the Greater Pittsburgh area and beyond.



For more information about facilities, classes and events, or to become a member, visit [www.twpusc.org/recreationcenter](http://www.twpusc.org/recreationcenter)

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# 4 Natural Remedies to Help Reduce Chronic Inflammation

By Lois Thomson

Chronic inflammation can be a root cause of any serious disease. Symptoms are expressed in a wide variety of ways, most notably through pain, and the result is an inordinate amount of pain medication being consumed in order to control it. Unfortunately, these medications often make things worse because they don't handle the cause. If you are dealing with chronic inflammation and pain, here are four of the best natural remedies:

**Aloe Vera** has long been considered to be one of the best healing plants known, and is used in treating burns, wounds, ulcers, infections, and parasites. Specifically, it can help:

- Ease inflammation and soothe arthritic pain
- Heal ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's disease, colitis, and other digestive disorders
- Improve physical performance, and recovery
- Reduce and reverse acid reflux
- Heal gum disease
- Reduce heart attacks and strokes

Many of **Turmeric's** benefits comes from its active ingredient, curcumin. As a result, turmeric has strong anti-inflammatory properties that can be helpful for a variety of issues:

- Helps improve digestion
- Eases arthritic pain and promotes flexibility

- Promotes healthy blood and liver function
- Slows and reverses onset of Alzheimer's disease

- Promotes heart health

**Astaxanthin** is known as the "King of Carotenoids." It is grown in fresh water using methods that encourage the algae to grow its own powerful medicines protecting it from oxidation, UV radiation, and other environmental stressors. It's not as powerful as other anti-inflammatory medicines, but it is one of the strongest in nature. Trials have shown that astaxanthin inhibits many of the known inflammation mediators, which eases inflammation and pain without side effects.

**Ginger** is rich in substances that are believed to be the reason why so many people with rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis have experienced reduced pain and improvements in movement after consuming it on a regular basis. One study reported that crude ginger extracts and derivatives could prevent joint inflammation. Another study found that ginger helped relieve neuropathic pain in rats.

While all of these remedies can dramatically help reduce inflammation, it is important to remember that chronic inflammation can stem from a digestive imbalance, and it would be more beneficial to remedy the root problems.



Dealing with incontinence can be difficult at any age, but helping a child with a disability learn to manage incontinence can be especially challenging.

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- Geisinger Family Health Plan
- UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
- Gateway Health Plan
- UPMC for You
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- PA Health and Wellness Community Health Choices

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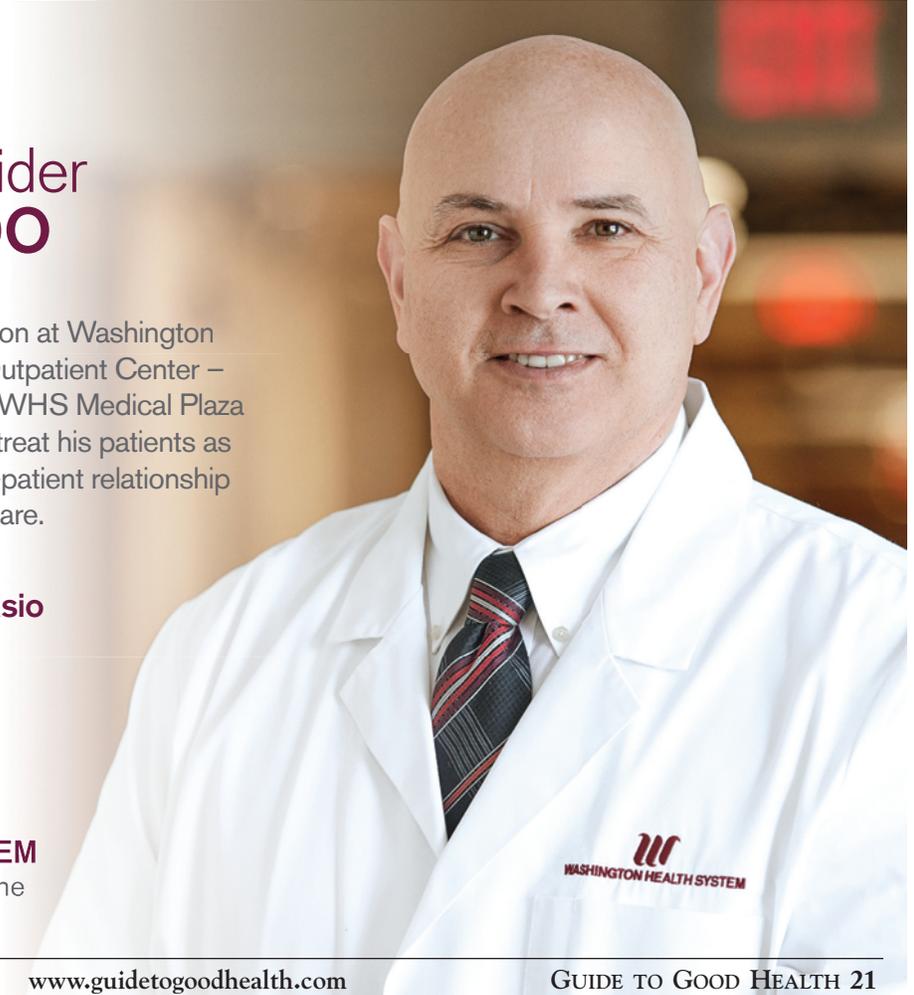
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**DOCTOR**



## Welcome New Provider **Donald Ravasio, DO**

Dr. Donald Ravasio, an orthopedic surgeon at Washington Health System, sees patients at WHS Outpatient Center – Neighbor Health in Washington and the WHS Medical Plaza in Peters Township. His philosophy is to treat his patients as family. He believes that a trusting doctor-patient relationship is essential to providing excellent healthcare.

To read his full bio visit [whs.org/Ravasio](https://whs.org/Ravasio)





## Our Primary Care Physicians

WPHO, a partnership of 275 local primary care and specialist physicians and the Washington Health System, was founded in 1994 to assure access and availability of high quality healthcare within our community for your benefit and convenience. Look for these local physicians and healthcare services in your health plan's provider network. That way, you can receive the quality care you need at a location close to home.

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Dan Alexander, MD

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Bruce Sharpnack, MD

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Jennifer L. Mungari, MD

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Michael Zanic, MD

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Rebecca L. Plute, MD

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Christa Malinak, MD

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# HOSPITAL ORGANIZATION PROVIDER NETWORK

## Our Specialist Physicians

We have offices conveniently located in the community.

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Eugene Paluso, MD

Washington Ear, Nose & Throat, LLC  
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Cynthia Hatfield, DPM

Grossman Podiatry Center  
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Washington Health System  
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**Psychiatry**

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and Wellbeing  
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(724) 579-1075 Wash.  
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Bryan Lockmer, DO

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Medicine**

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Ziad Ismael, MD  
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Washington Health System  
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Ziad Fawaz, MD

**Radiology**

Greater Washington Radiologists, Inc.  
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Kevin Birnie, MD  
William Castro, MD  
William Conroy, MD  
Anthony Corsino, DO  
Joseph Di Pietro, MD  
William Downer, MD  
Michelle Kirshen, MD  
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**Transgender Medicine**

Central Outreach Wellness Center  
(724) 249-2517  
Kyle Duff, MD

**Sleep Medicine**

Sukhdev S. Grover and Associates  
(724) 627-2766  
Sukhdev S. Grover, MD  
Asad Khan, MD

WHS Center for Recovery &  
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(724) 579-1075 Wash.  
Richard O. Ajayi, MD

**Urology**

WHS Urology  
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Alexander Katich, DO

Timothy P. Weyrich, MD  
(724) 942-3963  
Timothy Weyrich, MD

**Vascular Surgery**

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**Wound Care**

Washington Health System  
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(724) 627-1600  
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Additional list of services at convenient locations in Washington & Greene Counties

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Medicine  
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Services  
Orthopedics and  
Neurosciences  
Surgical Services  
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Wilfred R. Cameron  
Wellness Center  
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Spa Harmony  
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**Medical Plaza - Wellness Way**

Outpatient Rehabilitation  
Physical Therapy  
Occupational Therapy  
Hand Clinic  
Speech Therapy  
Nutritional Services  
Wound and Skin Healing

**Outpatient Center - Neighbor  
Health**

Diabetes Education  
Family Medicine Center  
Laboratory  
Occupational Medicine  
Radiology

**Outpatient Center - Meadows  
Landing**

Women's Center  
Lab Services  
Tri-State Surgery Center

**Greenbriar Treatment Center**

Inpatient Drug and Alcohol  
Rehab Services

**Donnell House**

Hospice Care  
Palliative Medicine

**Strabane Trails of Washington**

Senior Independent Living

**Strabane Woods of Washington**

Senior Assisted Living

**Canonsburg**

Family Medicine Center -  
Canonsburg And Laboratory  
Services

**Cecil**

Outpatient Center - Cecil  
Family Medicine Center  
Diagnostic Center

**Peters Township**

Medical Plaza - Peters Township  
Children's Therapy Center  
Diagnostic Center

**Waynesburg**

Medical Plaza - Greene County  
Laboratory  
Radiology EKGs

**Greene Hospital**

Inpatient and outpatient services  
including:  
Cardiovascular Services  
Diagnostics  
Emergency Care

**Greene Plaza**

WHS Center for Mental  
Health and Wellbeing



# Living Well With A Disability

## Open your Heart and Home Become a Life Sharing Provider

You've probably heard of foster care services, where adults take in children in need of a home. But what you may not be familiar with is a similar service that originated in Pennsylvania in 1982, called Life Sharing.

Life Sharing is a service where every day households open their homes to adults with intellectual disabilities. Life Sharing provides adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to become part of a family, offering an ongoing sense of belonging, as well as day-to-day care. Life Sharing is an alternative to the community home service option.

A local nonprofit, Step By Step, is asking community members to consider opening their hearts and homes through their Life Sharing program.

Colleen and George Wilkes of Susquehanna did just that. In 2003, the Wilkes family temporarily opened their home to Margie, an adult with intellectual disabilities. However, when it was time for Margie to leave, the Wilkes family's 11-year-old son, Georgie, refused.

"Margie is a Wilkes now. She is family, she's one of us," said their son.

The Wilkes family then discovered the benefits of a permanent placement through Step By Step's Life Sharing program. 19 years later, Margie has lived happily with the Wilkes ever since.

Today, the family continues to take care of Margie in their home, and Margie provides a joy in the Wilkes' lives that cannot be reduced to words. Their bond is truly unique and special. Their love radiates through every word and embrace. It is clear; relationships are what make life worth living.

The Wilkes family urges others to consider sharing their lives through the program.

A Life Sharing sponsor can be a single adult, a couple, or a family unit, supporting up to two individuals in their home. Both non-biological and biological family members are eligible for the Life



(l-r) George Wilkes, Margie, and Colleen Wilkes. The Wilkes have been Life Sharing providers for Step By Step for the past 19 years!

Sharing program and the stipend for care that it provides.

Individuals who become a licensed Life Sharing sponsor receive a tax-free stipend to help offset costs, starting at \$2,850 for licensed homes.

Sandy Reina, Vacancy Coordinator at Step By Step shared: "Life Sharing is a wonderful program which unites adults with an intellectual disability and families. It gives people a family that may have never had one. Each family, individual and support staff have gained so much from the Life Sharing program. We invite you to increase your family by becoming part of ours."



For more information, contact **Sandy Reina** at **(570) 829-3477 ext. 7416** or visit **StepByStepUSA.com**

*Step By Step, Inc., is a private, non-profit corporation devoted to the provision of community support services to individuals with intellectual disabilities, mental health diagnoses, autism, and physical disabilities.*

*Established in 1977, the agency today provides services to over 2,000 individuals across Pennsylvania.*

**See our ad on page 8**

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# Living Well With A Disability

## Assistive Technology Program Provides Variety of Services

By Lois Thomson

"There are so many different elements to assistive technology, and we're excited to showcase to everyone what's available." Steve Johnson is director of marketing for Voices For Independence (VFI) in Erie and Transitional Paths to Independent Living (TRPIL) in Washington, Pa., and he talked about how TRPIL is helping to introduce clients to assistive technology (AT).

He said AT can be "any device that allows a person with a disability to live, work, or function more independently and effectively." It can be something relatively simple, like a mount on the side of a power wheelchair that allows the person to hold a phone; or something more intricate like smart home devices, that can be voice-activated and could be vital. "If someone is home alone and has a fall, they can have a smart device call for an ambulance."

Johnson said the state has a number of Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRCs), each requiring a license. TRPIL has the license and is the local ATRC for Washington, Greene, Fayette, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, and Somerset Counties. This means that TRPIL is the local outreach partner for TechOWL (Technology for Our Whole Lives), the commonwealth's Assistive Technology Act Program that is funded through state and federal grants. Michelle Rockwell, who previously worked with TRPIL, recently accepted the position of TRPIL's assistive technology specialist.

Johnson said services offered through TRPIL can be broken down into four categories:

**Public Awareness & Device Demonstrations** – Not only can TRPIL help locate



TRPIL provides its clients with many assistive technology devices promoting independence.

service providers and select devices that may help, but staff can also participate in conferences or expos to increase awareness of AT.

**Training & Technical Assistance** – TRPIL offers AT training and assistance to service providers in other fields so they, in turn, can better help people with disabilities – for example, assisting schools that are working with students who are transitioning into the workforce, or service organizations planning to discharge someone from a nursing home into the community.

**Funding Assistance** – TRPIL is aware of different resources that are available and is able to assist with funding to make sure red tape doesn't prevent someone from receiving the help they need. One way is through Pennsylvania Assistive Technical Foundation, which provides low- to no-interest loans for those who qualify.

**Assistive Technology Lending Library** – TRPIL also participates in a lending library, which allows individuals to try a device for free for a limited time to determine if that device can help them before it is purchased.



Voices for Independence and TRPIL are proud to announce their upcoming **8th Annual Walk\*Run\*Roll 5K**, which will take place at 9 a.m. Saturday, **May 20**, at the South Strabane Township Community Park. Online registrations are open now at [www.trpil.com](http://www.trpil.com). Registration/check-in will begin 8 a.m. the day of the event, followed by the 5K.

This event will support both VFI and TRPIL independent living programs, such as Home Modifications, the Wellness Center, and Assistive Technology. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

For more information, contact Joann Naser, chief development officer, at **724-223-5115** or by email at [jnaser@vficil.com](mailto:jnaser@vficil.com).

Individuals may even use the library to obtain a loaner device while their own is being repaired.

"We just want to get people in the front door to show them what we have, and hopefully link them to AT that will increase their independence and improve the quality of their lives."

For more information, call **724-223-5115** or visit [www.vficil.org](http://www.vficil.org).



## NOW HIRING CAREGIVERS!

Voices for Independence has been proudly serving Western PA for nearly 30 years, and we are now hiring caregivers in your area! In addition to a rewarding job with very competitive pay, we also offer:

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APPLY TODAY AT [WWW.VFICIL.ORG](http://WWW.VFICIL.ORG) | (724) 223-5115

# Opportunities for Activity Abound at The Woodlands

The advantages to keeping active are numerous for individuals of all ages and ability levels. The benefits can include an increase in strength and mobility, a boost to one's mood, improved brain functions, the reduction of stress and anxiety - which can also help decrease the risk of depression - and the opportunity for social engagement. Many methods to keep moving are all around us.

At The Woodlands, where children and adults with disability and chronic illness find the freedom and empowerment to experience programs that enrich their lives, we collaborate with two exceptional organizations to keep our participants active.

In the fall of 2022, The Woodlands began partnering with Open Up Pittsburgh to offer creative movement workshops. Open Up's mission is to teach mindfulness tools through movement practices and interactive arts. Located in the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Open Up focuses on providing avenues that increase an individual's sense of overall wellbeing.

"It has been a joy to introduce Open Up's programming to our Woodlands community in Wexford," said The Woodlands' Music and Arts Director, Kristen Link. "Their skilled instructors connect with our participants of all ages through a combination of adaptive yoga and dance techniques that unlock new levels of expression and communication. We look forward to continuing to build this meaningful partnership in the summer and fall of 2023." Megan Sicheri, Program Director for Open Up expressed how much their team "loves partnering with The Woodlands to bring movement + mindfulness to their audience. Both participants and staff are always so fun and easy to work with."

Another activity enjoyed by many constituents of The Woodlands is the game of golf. This sport certainly checks many of the benefits

boxes from health and wellness to providing social experiences. The Woodlands' campus includes an adapted, 9-hole, par-3 golf course specifically designed to provide children and adults with disabilities the opportunity to learn, play and appreciate the game of golf.

To expand upon this opportunity, The Woodlands actively partners with Gibsonia-based North Hills Golf Academy (NHGA) on the development of golf programming for individuals with disabilities of all ages. "We are so excited to be partnering with The Woodlands! Our priority at NHGA is to make golf more available to everyone, and we are thrilled that The Woodlands is able to work with us on furthering our mission with the adapted golf program. Golf is such a great sport to be involved in at any age and any ability level. We have been afforded amazing opportunities because of the sport, we only hope that everyone can enjoy it as much as we do," says NHGA owner, Sydney Smyers.

The Woodlands' mission is to enrich the lives of children and adults with disability and chronic illness by providing adapted therapeutic programs that support and strengthen the development of skills in socialization, creative expression, environmental awareness, recreation, and life skills at its fully accessible 52-acre campus in Wexford, PA.



> For more information regarding program opportunities, contact **Kristen Link** at [klink@woodlandsfoundation.org](mailto:klink@woodlandsfoundation.org).



## C A P A B L E

The Woodlands is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of children and adults with disability and chronic illness. Our fully accessible 52-acre campus provides year-round residential and non-residential programs for all ages.



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## The Right Plan and the Right Coverage Deborah Inskipt Provides Expert Help for Choosing the Best Health Insurance for You

By **Nancy Kennedy**

Selecting a health insurance plan is one of the most important decisions a person makes every year. This decision has enormous implications, impacting one's quality of medical care, health care costs and access to care. The right choice can deliver peace of mind and unexpected benefits. And yet, many people make this critical choice based on the wrong criteria, the wrong advice and the wrong information.

Getting the health insurance decision exactly right for her clients is the mission of Deborah Inskipt, a licensed insurance agent who serves clients throughout Western Pennsylvania. "Getting it right means finding a plan that best meets your individual medical needs and fits your personal budget," Inskipt says. "This major decision should be made with full consideration of all the options."

With decades of experience in human resources and health insurance, Inskipt has a wealth of knowledge of the insurance industry. With her exceptional expertise, she can capably steer her clients through the maze of health insurance options, including Medicare

options. "It's very important to go to an agent. If you are watching television and you see an ad for a health insurance plan, it will probably provide a phone number. But if you make that call, you are going to speak only to an agent for that insurance company. You will only learn about their plan, and it may not be the right one for you. I feel bad when people rush into something in this way, without exploring all the possibilities."

Inskipt is not associated with one health insurance company, but with many of the local carriers. "I'm knowledgeable about all the plans, the entire range of options plus the newest offerings. Some people believe that they can do this themselves but it's tough to do the research by yourself. It can be overwhelming. I've already done it and I know what all the possibilities are. I explore them with you, and consider your specific individual needs based on the information you provide. I can compare various plans for you, showing you the prices and plan details. I'll make recommendations for the right plan for your needs."

Inskipt explains that the most important factor in choosing health insurance is your prescriptions – not your physician. "What drives your health insurance plan is the prescriptions. You take your prescriptions every day; you don't see your doctor every day. Always select a plan that covers your prescriptions. This should be the priority."

Inskipt's services are customized, private and professional and there is no fee. She meets with clients at her office location in Robinson, or via a telephone or Zoom appointment. She will make a home visit if necessary. The appointment generally takes an hour or two, and consists of a review of all of your needs for healthcare coverage. Inskipt also can make recommendations for life, long term care, disability and small business insurance.

For Deborah Inskipt, her unwavering commitment is to always make certain that her client is protected. The right plan and the right coverage provide that protection. "Unanticipated things happen in life. You have to be prepared, because none of us knows what our lives are going to bring. It's important to work with an agent because I can help you determine the best coverage for you for your current needs, and also for future unexpected needs. Using an agent relieves much of the stress associated with health care coverage. Many of my clients are people who are about to retire; they are going into Medicare. I meet with them, get to know their needs and get them all set up so that they are ready to go when they turn 65. It brings them peace of mind."

There is immense satisfaction, Inskipt says, in steering people to improved health care coverage that enhances the quality of their lives. "I help people all day long. I find plans for them that get them much better coverage and reduced costs. The solution to finding the best care is to have the right plan and the right coverage."

And the right health insurance agent: Deborah Inskipt.

➤ For an appointment with **Deborah Inskipt**, call (412) 694-2424 or (724) 777-4152, or send email to [dinskipt@healthmarkets.com](mailto:dinskipt@healthmarkets.com)

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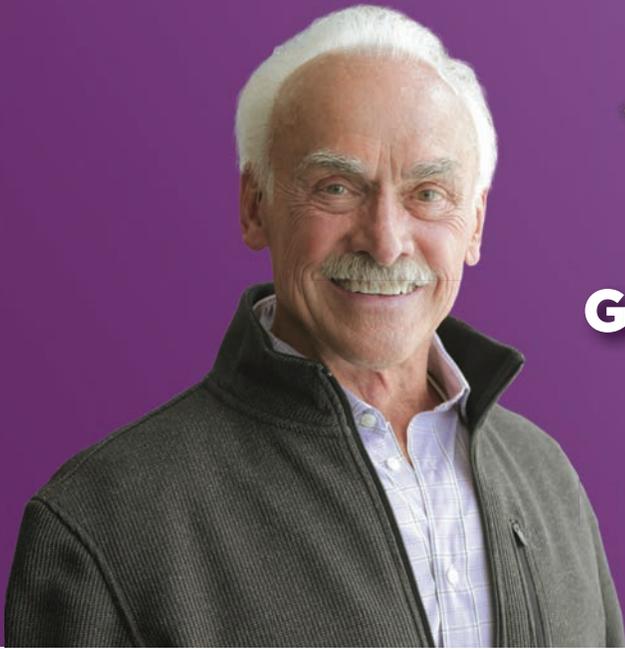
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## Common Medicare Mistakes to Avoid When Turning 65

By *Crystal Manning*

Recently, I have worked with clients that have made costly mistakes with their Medicare insurance, simply because they were unaware of penalties or other potential traps with Medicare laws. In fairness, there's no disputing that Medicare particulars are sometimes complicated and overwhelming. However, let's discuss some common (and costly) mistakes you can easily avoid.

Timing is especially important when it comes to enrolling in Medicare. As you approach 65, you will want to enroll during what the government calls your initial enrollment period (IEP). This seven-month period goes from three months before the month in which you turn 65 until three months after.

If you have received Social Security or Railroad Retirement Board benefits for at least four months prior to turning 65, the government will often automatically enroll you in Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) and Medicare Part B (medical insurance) at age 65—with your Medicare card/instructions typically arriving in the mail three months prior to your 65th birthday. The late-enrollment penalty for Part B is 10% for each year you did not have Part B and lasts for as long as you have Medicare. You must pick up Part B when you are no longer working, or you are a dependent of someone who is no longer working.

All other eligible seniors have a seven-month enrollment window to sign-up for Medicare. You can apply for benefits online or over the phone. If you miss your initial enrollment period, you can sign up during the Medicare General Enrollment Period (January 1-March 31, annually) and your coverage will start on July 1st.

If your spouse is not 65, then

they will have to find coverage elsewhere—through an employer, COBRA plan, or a policy sold on the Health Insurance Marketplace. If your spouse has not turned 65, they may qualify under certain conditions. Anyone who receives disability benefits from Social Security for 24 months or has an end-stage renal disease (ESRD) or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also qualifies for Medicare.

Not having the right Medicare coverage is another potentially costly mistake. While Medicare Part A is usually free, Parts B, C, and D all require a monthly premium. Most people should get at least Part B so that they have coverage for doctor visits and outpatient care. The standard premium for Part B coverage is \$164.90 for 2023, (based on income two years prior) which is deducted from your monthly Social Security benefit. There is also an annual deductible of \$226 for 2023 for Part B coverage. If you do not receive a monthly check from social security, you will receive a quarterly bill.

Choosing the right Medicare plan can be confusing. The type of Medicare coverage you choose depends on factors such as your health care needs, the insurance your doctors accept, where you live, whether you travel often and your financial situation.

It is best to discuss your needs with a licensed Medicare Advisor. If a Medicare Supplement plan (also known as a Medigap policy) is right for you, keep in mind that insurers who offer such policies cannot deny you coverage or charge you more for any preexisting condition when you first enroll in Medicare. However, adding a Medigap policy outside of your initial seven-month enrollment period may cost you more overall; even worse, insurers can deny you coverage

*Continued on following page*

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# Health Insurance

Continued from previous page

based on your health status.

While Medicare Part D is optional, if you go without prescription drug coverage for more than 62 consecutive days after you are first eligible, you will need to pay a late enrollment penalty once you do in fact enroll. This penalty is permanent and depends on how long you lacked Part D or credible prescription coverage. So please remember to sign up for a prescription drug plan, even though you may not be taking prescriptions.

Even when you have job-based insurance, some employers, depending on their size, can designate Medicare as your primary health coverage when you turn 65. And if you have retiree coverage or COBRA, those are considered secondary coverage. Check with your Medicare advisor to be sure you are making the correct decisions for you. Check if you are contributing to an HSA.

To qualify for an HSA, you cannot have any health insurance other than your HSA-eligible HDHP. Since Medicare Part A and/or B is considered another type of health insurance, enrolling would make you ineligible.

If you have reached the age to enroll in Medicare but want to stay eligible for HSA benefits, you have the option to delay Medicare enrollment. However, this decision will also delay your ability to collect Social Security retirement benefits. If you are already receiving Social Security benefits when you become eligible for Medicare, you are automatically enrolled in Medicare Part A; it is important to note that you cannot decline Part A while collecting Social

Security benefits. To be eligible for an HSA, you need to delay Social Security benefits, thereby allowing you to decline Medicare Part A.

If you decide to enroll in Medicare after delaying it, you should stop contributing to your HSA at least six months in advance. Otherwise, you may be hit with a tax penalty because Part A of Medicare provides six months of retroactive coverage upon enrollment.

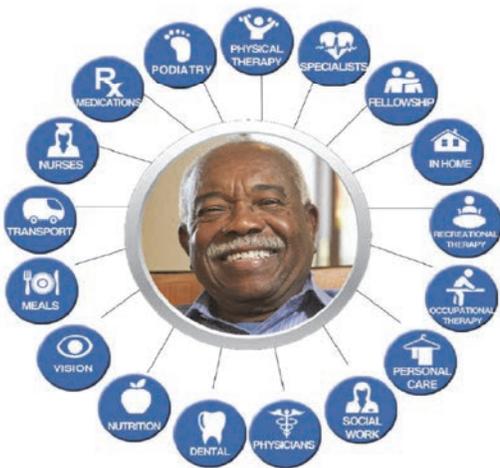
Other misconceptions on Medicare are that many people incorrectly assume Medicare covers long-term care. The truth is that it does not, except in limited circumstances. Medicare plans cover skilled nursing care with certain conditions, but the patient must be receiving Physical therapy.

Although Medicare plans cover many of the medical costs for its enrollees, you need to be prepared for sometimes substantial out-of-pocket costs if they apply. Understanding Premiums, Deductibles, co-pays, co-insurance and out of pocket maximum can help you make an educated decision on the plan that is right for you.

One last concern for many is the cost of Medicare or Medicare plans. If you have a limited income, you may be able to get assistance with your health costs through certain programs. Extra Help is a federal program that helps pay for some to most of the costs of Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. Contact your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

> Contact **Crystal Manning**, Licensed Medicare advisor, for a free one-to-one consultation at [crystalmanning33@gmail.com](mailto:crystalmanning33@gmail.com) or (412) 716-4942 to avoid any mistakes with Medicare.

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## Health Tips for Seniors



**Your Brain Needs Lots of Water!**

Good hydration is an essential element of health for all ages, but for older adults it is especially important. The human body is 60% water, and that water is necessary for the body's organ systems to conduct all of its functions. The brain is particularly sensitive to hydration levels – dehydration can actually shrink the brain and can be a factor in both depression and dementia. Without adequate water, the brain's neurotransmitters are inefficient, and this means that mood and cognition are affected.

Unfortunately, dehydration is a problem for many older adults; it is estimated that 28% of older adults are chronically dehydrated. Dehydration is one of the most common reasons for ER visits and hospital admissions. There are several reasons for this: avoiding beverages because of mobility issues that make going to the bathroom difficult; use of diuretics that drain fluid; anxiety about incontinence; drinking coffee and alcohol; and failing to recognize signs of dehydration.

Symptoms of dehydration include headache, dizziness, fatigue, dry mouth and constipation. If you are well hydrated, your urine will be pale yellow, or even colorless. Drink enough so that you have to empty your bladder every three hours during the day.

In a recent study, people who drank 5 or more glasses of water per day had a lower risk of depression and anxiety.

Food is also a source of water. Watery foods include watermelon, cucumbers, citrus fruits, and berries.

## Foods That Are Laxatives

Constipation is a common problem that affects an estimated 20 percent of the population. It has a variety of causes, but it's often the result of the slow movement of food through the digestive system. This may be the result of dehydration, a poor diet, medications, illness, aging, diseases affecting the nervous system, or mental disorders.

Remedies for constipation typically include laxatives, stool softeners, and fiber supplements. The recommended daily dietary fiber intake is 25 to 30 grams from food, not supplements. However, the average intake among adults is about 15 grams per day. Fortunately, certain delicious foods can help relieve constipation by adding bulk, softening stool, decreasing transit time, and increasing stool frequency.

**Apples** are a good source of fiber, with one small apple providing 3.6 grams of fiber.

Four **prunes** contain 2 grams of fiber and about 7 percent of your daily requirements for vitamin A and potassium. Prunes also contain sorbitol, a type of sugar alcohol that your body poorly digests. It helps alleviate constipation by drawing water into the intestines, stimulating a bowel movement.

**Kiwi**, with 2 grams, is especially high in fiber. Kiwi has been shown to promote movement in the digestive tract, helping induce bowel movements.

**Pears** are high in fiber. One medium pear contains 6 grams of fiber, meeting about 16 percent and 25 percent of men's and women's daily fiber needs, respectively.

Both **rhubarb's** fiber content and natural laxative properties encourage regularity. Each stalk of rhubarb includes 1 gram of fiber, which is mostly bulk-promoting insoluble fiber.

Research shows that **artichokes** have a prebiotic effect, which can be beneficial for gut health and maintaining regularity. Prebiotics are a special type of fiber that works by feeding the good bacteria found in your colon, helping optimize your digestive health.

**Figs**, especially dried figs, are an excellent way to get more fiber into your diet to encourage regular bowel movements.

In addition to providing a host of vitamins and minerals, **sweet potatoes** contain a good amount of fiber – 4 grams – that can help increase regularity.

**Beans, peas, and lentils** — also known as pulses — are one of the cheapest, fiber-packed food groups you can include in your diet. For example, 1 cup of cooked navy beans, the type used for baked beans, contains an amazing 19.1 grams of fiber. Black beans average 7.5 grams per cooked one-half cup, and one-half cup of cooked lentils has 7.8 grams of fiber, meeting 31 percent of your daily needs.

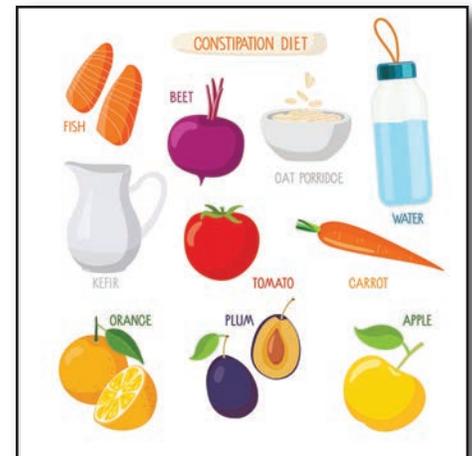
**Avocados** aren't just tasty on toast or in guacamole; they're full of nutrients and can help with constipation. One cup of sliced avocado contains 10 grams of fiber.

**Citrus fruits like oranges, grapefruits, and mandarins** are a refreshing snack and a good source of fiber. One orange contains 3.7 grams, while one grapefruit contains almost 5 grams of fiber, equaling 20 percent of your daily needs.

**Greens such as spinach, Brussels sprouts, and broccoli** are not only rich in fiber but are also great sources of folate and vitamins C and K. These greens help add bulk and weight to stools, which makes them easier to pass through the gut.

Two slices of **whole grain rye bread** contain 3.7 grams of dietary fiber; research indicates that rye bread is more effective at relieving constipation than wheat bread or laxatives.

**Popcorn** can also be a healthy snack any time, as long as you don't cover it with salt and butter. And it's also loaded with fiber.





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# Emerald Home Health Care Offers Steps to Explore When Elderly May Need More Care

By Andrew Wilson

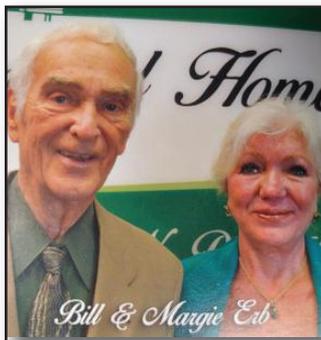
**For many people, sometimes the anticipation of a joyful celebration turns instead to concerns about the well-being of elderly relatives or friends.**

“Our elderly are precious and proud people from generations that were very strong and independent,” said Dana Derosky, R.N., the clinical director of Emerald Home Health Care. “They just don't like to ask for help because they don't want to inconvenience anyone.”

The difference can be particularly noticeable if it has been some time since the last visit with that person. While it may seem easy to dismiss those concerns as “just my imagination” or maybe not wanting to cause a fuss, it may be worth asking some additional questions.

Derosky says that there are subtle things that can alert you that there may be an issue like wearing the same clothes for several days, weight loss, and sudden confusion.

“With early onset of dementia, the obvious signs like forgetfulness are helpful, but sometimes they just don't connect body cues like hunger and thirst as a trigger to eat and drink,” Derosky explains. “This will often manifest in unexplained weight loss, even though they say they eat when they are hungry. They will not remember to keep water handy to sip on and will end up dehydrated, which can lead to physical problems with blood pressure and urination, but also con-



fusion. Confusion is sometimes also an indicator of an infection.”

So what should you do if you find yourself believing that a loved one needs additional help to be healthy and safe? She recommends starting with the primary care physician (PCP). Most doctors have agencies that they have worked with and trust to do a thorough, comprehensive evaluation.

“It is a fine line to walk because you want them to have that right to self-determination, but you also want them safe and protected,” said Derosky. “Involve them in the decisions as early as you can even before they show any signs of needed help.”

She added that while home health agencies cannot self-refer, most are willing to answer your questions when you call and can point you in the right direction. All counties also have Area on Aging contacts that provide resources for our aging population such as transportation, in-home direct care workers through waiver services, and lists of Meals on Wheels providers, to name just a few of the available services.

Emerald Home Health Care, a small family-owned home health and home care company founded in 1996 by Bill and Margaret Erb, began business as a franchise of Nursefinders, a large, national company. The Erbs wanted a company with that family feel, and renamed it as Emerald Home Health, a nod toward the “Wizard of Oz” phrase that “there's no place like home.” In addition to the standard home health care, which is short-term nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, social work and home health aides, Emerald has private duty nursing services and home care direct care workers for longer term care and treatment.

If some sort of short-term or longer-term care is needed, Derosky recommends asking for recommendations from the PCP as well as friends and family who have been in a similar situation.

“The best thing to do first is the PCP as well as to ask friends and neighbors about their experiences with home health care, and home care,” she said. “A good clinician who gave exceptional care will be remembered.”

Emerald also encourages people to use “Home Health Compare” ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)), a website provided by Medicare, where you can compare agencies side by side for their scores in various categories, such as how well they heal wounds, how well they manage pain, how well they did at getting patients mobile again and other typical issues that may require special attention.

Because it can be tough to think of all the questions that one might want to ask when looking for a home health agency, Derosky recommends starting with the following:

- Are you well staffed where I live?
- What services do you offer?
- Do you accept my insurance, and will there be a copay?
- What do I do if I need help after business hours?

“The really great home health, and home care companies don't set out to be the leader, they set out to make a difference,” Derosky says. “It's never about the agency, it is about the patient. We want to be that kind of agency, patient first always. We listen to our patients' and clients' needs and adjust accordingly, we want them to be a part of their plan to get well and we want to make a difference in their lives.”

**Emerald Home Health** provides in-home personal care. Let us help you take care of the people you love. Emerald Home Health services Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. For more information, visit [www.emeraldhomehealthofficial.com](http://www.emeraldhomehealthofficial.com), email [info@emeraldhomehealthcare.com](mailto:info@emeraldhomehealthcare.com), or call (412) 429-5880.

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## What Life Enrichment Looks Like in a Memory Care Community

Families who need assistance with the care of a loved one who is living with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia are relying on memory care communities for support.

Anthology of McCandless in Pittsburgh, PA, designed its Virtue Memory Care Neighborhood to help residents thrive in mind, body and spirit. Daily programming is customized around each resident, offering flexible schedules and activities designed to instill meaning, assurance and purpose. Families are welcome to visit and join in activities in the memory care neighborhood. Caregivers engage with you and your loved one to learn all they can about family history, careers, hobbies and values, playing a key role in helping ensure that residents' lives remain vibrant and meaningful.

Anthology of McCandless provides social, cultural and recreational activities, including art and music programs for memory recall through musical events, self-expression and a personalized digital jukebox. A multitude of on-site activities, such as yoga classes, crafts and mindfulness programs, are all part of the robust calendar of events. With on-site amenities like a fitness center and an enrichment program for relaxation through essential oils, aroma-



therapy, healing touch and pet therapy, residents feel relaxed and happy.

Even the dining experience is designed for familiarity by creating the residents' favorite foods in an appealing way. Three daily gourmet meals supervised by a registered dietician and prepared by in-house chefs are a highlight of residents' days. The social interaction that takes place in the community's restaurant-style dining room fosters a sense of belonging and encourages residents to engage with their neighbors, which helps

improve emotional health.

Highly certified caregivers at Anthology of McCandless receive rigorous, specialized training in dementia care, plus additional mandatory training each year. Families feel peace of mind knowing their loved ones are receiving seamless care for moderate to late-stage dementia, including care for behaviors such as wandering and exit-seeking.

Offering both personal care and memory care, Anthology of McCandless is continually evolving to deliver an aspirational lifestyle.



For more information, call **Anthology of McCandless** at **(412) 336-8371** or visit **www.AnthologyMcCandless.com**.



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[www.hacp.org](http://www.hacp.org)



*Beautiful Senior Apartments Near You!*  
*"More than just a place to live!"*

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Carson Retirement Residence</b><br/>2850 East Carson Street<br/>Pittsburgh, PA 15203<br/><b>412-481-0700</b></p>    | <p><b>Munhall Retirement Residence</b><br/>1000 Andrew Street<br/>Munhall, PA 15120<br/><b>412-462-3200</b></p>        | <p><b>South Hills Retirement Residence</b><br/>125 Ruth Street<br/>Pittsburgh, PA 15211<br/><b>412-481-8100</b></p> |
| <p><b>Carnegie Retirement Residence</b><br/>200 Railroad Avenue<br/>Carnegie, PA 15106<br/><b>412-276-0102</b></p>        | <p><b>Plum Retirement Residence</b><br/>620 Repp Road<br/>New Kensington, PA 15068<br/><b>724-339-2925</b></p>         | <p><b>Summit Retirement Residence</b><br/>125 South Sixth Street<br/>Duquesne, PA 15110<br/><b>412-466-7755</b></p> |
| <p><b>Emerald Hills Retirement Residence</b><br/>5785 Saltsburg Road<br/>Penn Hills, PA 15147<br/><b>412-793-3339</b></p> | <p><b>Retirement Residence of Glassport</b><br/>220 Erie Ave.<br/>Glassport, PA 15045<br/><b>412-999-1051</b></p>      | <p><b>The Oaks Retirement Residence</b><br/>2967 Jacks Run Road<br/>White Oak, PA 15131<br/><b>412-675-0412</b></p> |
| <p><b>Morningside Crossing</b><br/>1808 Jancey Street<br/>Pittsburgh, PA 15206<br/><b>412-441-1140</b></p>                | <p><b>Ross Hill Retirement Residence</b><br/>7500 Ross Park Drive<br/>Pittsburgh, PA 15237<br/><b>412-847-0161</b></p> | <p><b>Woodcrest Retirement Residence</b><br/>1502 Woodcrest Ave.<br/>Moon, PA 15108<br/><b>412-264-0918</b></p>     |



[www.cmshousing.com](http://www.cmshousing.com)  
TDD (800) 545-1833



## Personal Care Is Personal

*Choosing where you want to live, especially when you're considering personal care, is a complex decision, one in which you weigh many factors, big and small, tangible and intangible.*

When Bill Baker, 93, retired from his job as a chemical engineer at Merck, he discovered he had an uncanny knack for a traditional art form — woodcarving. A friend had dragged him along to a carving demonstration and he was quickly engaged in learning, and ultimately mastering, the new skill. Before long, he became a woodcarving teacher at Oglebay Woodcarvers' Guild in Wheeling, WV.

There is a lot of joy and satisfaction in creating something beautiful with just your hands and a few tools. For Bill, who had been a drummer in a local band, in addition to his career as an engineer, carving was a relaxing —quiet— pastime. He appreciated the skill and high level of craftsmanship required for woodcarving and enjoyed creating art as well as practical items.

When it came time for Bill to look at personal care options, he wanted a place where he could continue his hobby, a place where he and his woodworking tools were welcome. At Presbyterian



Resident Bill Baker continues his woodcarving hobby at Westminster Place.

SeniorCare Network, the staff at Westminster Place personal care community understood how important this pastime was to Bill. They made sure he could keep creating his cheery holiday characters and other charming works.

Soon after moving in, he found a fellow woodcarver and kindred spirit in Tana Pierro. Tana, an occupational therapy doctoral student from Pitt, was spending five weeks at Presbyterian SeniorCare Network as part of her studies. Together they created a shadow-box featuring his woodcarving and other interests to be hung outside his door.

The personal care community that's physically, emotionally and spiritually right for you or your loved one is the one that considers the

needs of the whole person—hobbies and all!

> To learn more about personal care options for your loved one, visit **Presbyterian SeniorCare Network** online at [www.srcare.org/assisted-living-pittsburgh](http://www.srcare.org/assisted-living-pittsburgh).

- Head and Foot Adjustable
- Adjustable Leg Height



**Adjustable Bed with Firm or Plush Innerspring Mattress**

Twin X-Long or Queen **\$1099** + tax

**Catnapper POWER LIFT CHAIR**

- Sturdy arms
- Full Lay-Out comfort
- 350 lb capacity

Starting at **\$899** + tax

**FREE delivery**

**FREE setup**



**401 East 8th Avenue • Homestead, PA 15120**  
**412.462.7858**  
[www.SleepPittsburgh.com](http://www.SleepPittsburgh.com)



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Apartments



1 Bedroom.....	\$1,190
1 Bedroom with Den....	\$1,295
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths....	\$1,350

**All utilities included!**

**2022 Apartment Excellence Award Winner**

- Huge floor plans with sunken living rooms and large bay windows
- Controlled access buildings with intercom
- Easy access showers available in two bedroom units
- Convenient to bus, trolley, and 3,000 acre county park

**Brightwood Plaza Apartments**

4940 Brightwood Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102  
 Office (412) 831-9454 • Fax (412) 831-5733  
 Email: [brightwoodplaza@verizon.net](mailto:brightwoodplaza@verizon.net)



# Celebrating 50 years of independent living with dignity



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CHRISTIAN HOUSING, INC.



For 50 years, Christian Housing has provided safe, comfortable, community living for adult seniors and for persons with disabilities.

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Our 15 facilities offer a variety of community services that meet the well-being and financial needs of our residents.



**Alverno Apartments**  
98 Hawthorne Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15209  
412.821.7080



**Beechview Manor**  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15216  
412.571.2999



**Creedmoor Court**  
1050 Creedmoor Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15226  
412.344.1540



**St. Augustine Plaza**  
230 Thirty-Sixth Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15201  
412.683.6155



**Sto-Rox Plaza**  
731 Chartiers Avenue  
McKees Rocks, PA 15136  
412.331.4112



**Alexis Manor**  
10100 Old Perry Hwy  
Wexford, PA 15090  
724.935.7411



**Germaine Harbor**  
100 Germaine Drive  
Bethel Park, PA 15102  
412.833.9818



**John Paul Plaza**  
1005 Herron Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
412.683.5850



**St. Joseph Terrace**  
45 Plum Street  
Weedville, PA 15868  
814.787.8772



**St. Ambrose Manor**  
1235 Yetta Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
412.322.2111



**Leo Meyer Manor**  
1015 Church Avenue  
McKees Rocks, PA 15136  
412.331.8000



**Gilbert Straub Plaza**  
620 Reamer Avenue  
S. Greensburg, PA 15601  
724.832.2280



**Clairvaux Commons**  
100 Clairvaux Drive  
Indiana, PA 15701  
724.349.2920



**Fox Township Manor**  
108 Irishtown Road  
Kersey, PA 15846  
814.885.6855



**St. Thomas More Manor**  
1000 Oxford Drive  
Bethel Park, PA 15102  
412.833.2410

We invite you to join us and experience the enriched joy of Senior Living.

*Experience  
All the Comforts  
of Home!*

Christian Housing, Inc.  
3898 Old William Penn Highway  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Visit our website at [www.christian-housing.org](http://www.christian-housing.org) or call (412) 646-5193



# SENIOR RESOURCES



## HEARING

### **Rametta Audiology & Hearing Aid Center**

Tarentum - 724-604-4006  
Vandergrift - 724-571-2224  
Squirrel Hill - 412-422-8006

### **Swift Audiology**

Allison Park 412-219-7158  
North Hills 412-218-0426  
South Hills 412-219-9758  
Washington 724-731-1885  
www.swiftaudiology.com

## HOME CARE

### **Emerald Home Health**

412-429-5880  
emeraldhomhealthofficial.com

### **LIFE Pittsburgh**

412-388-8050  
www.lifeinpittsburgh.org

## INCONTINENCE

### **Tri-Medical**

800-541-0734  
www.trimedonline.com

## MEDICARE/INSURANCE

### **Crystal A. Manning, Licensed Medicare Advisor**

412-716-4942  
crystalmanning33@gmail.com

### **Deborah Inskipt**

412-694-2424 or 724-777-4152  
dinskipt@healthmarkets.com

### **UPMC Health Plan Medicare Advantage Programs**

1-844-443-7927  
TTY: 1-800-361-2629  
upmchealthplan.com/medicare

## SENIOR LIVING

### **Anthology of McCandless**

Personal Care | Memory Care  
8651 Carey Lane, Pittsburgh, PA  
412-336-8371  
AnthologyMcCandless.com  
*You want the best for your loved one and so do we. Join us to get a glimpse of how we empower connections and practice smart compassion.*

### **Brightwood Plaza Apartments**

4940 Brightwood Rd, Bethel Park  
412-831-9454  
brightwoodplaza@verizon.net

### **Christian Housing, Inc**

412-646-5193  
www.christian-housing.org  
*Safe, comfortable, community living for adult seniors and persons with disabilities at 15 facilities throughout Pittsburgh area, as well as Greensburg, Elk County and Indiana, PA.*

### **CMS Housing**

800-545-1833 • www.cmshousing.com

### **Heritage Valley Senior Living**

412-331-6139  
https://www.heritagevalley.org/  
services/senior-living/  
*Independent Living; Personal Care, Memory Care*

### **Housing Authority City of Pittsburgh**

412-456-5000 • www.hacp.org  
*Offers seniors safe housing and a high quality of life. Amenities such as security cameras, appliances, digital literacy services, Tenet Council events and more.*

### **Westmoreland Manor / Eagle Tree Apartments**

2480 S Grande Blvd, Greensburg  
724-830-4000

## SENIOR SERVICES

### **Community Life**

1-866-419-1693 www.commlife.org

### **LIFE Pittsburgh**

412-388-8050  
www.lifeinpittsburgh.org

## SKILLED NURSING & REHABILITATION

### **Presbyterian SeniorCare**

1-888-448-5779  
SrCare.org

### **Wesley Family Services**

412-345-7420 or 724-205-6282  
wfsa.org

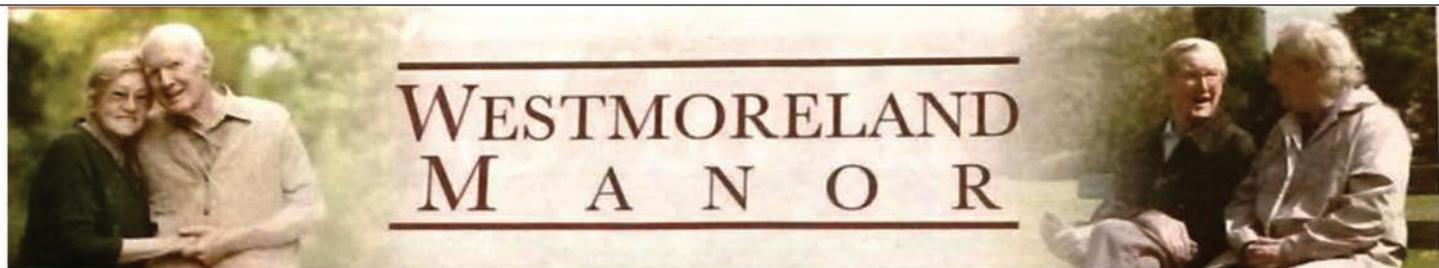
### **Westmoreland Manor**

724-830-4022  
www.westmorelandmanor.org

## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

### **Westmoreland Transit**

1 (800) 221-9282  
*Door-to-door service to older adults 65+ and people with disabilities. Older Adults 65+ ride FREE, Commuter service to Pittsburgh*



## A Nurturing Environment for Rehabilitation and Long Term Care

### **Offering 24/7 Skilled Nursing Care**

- Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapies
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- Respite and Hospice Care
- Surgical Recovery

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**2480 South Grande Boulevard, Greensburg, PA 15601**

**www.westmorelandmanor.org**

**We also offer the Eagle Tree  
Independent Living Apartments  
in a Protective Environment**





# HERITAGE VALLEY SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

**Heritage Valley Senior Living Community (formerly The Willows) offers seniors a choice of living accommodations with Independent Living, Personal Care, and Memory Care.**

**412.331.6139**



**30 - 32 Heckel Road • Kennedy Twp., PA 15136**  
**[heritagevalley.org/services/senior-living/](https://heritagevalley.org/services/senior-living/)**

# Healthcare DIRECTORY



In order to choose a health professional who is right for you, you need information. The following guide is a good place to start.

## **ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

**Gateway Rehab**  
1-800-472-1177  
gatewayrehab.org

**Westmoreland Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.**  
724-243-2220  
www.wedacinc.org

## **ATTORNEYS**

**Robert Peirce & Associates, P.C.**  
412-281-7229  
www.peircelaw.com

## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADULT**

**Heritage Valley Adult Behavioral Health**  
Beaver 724-773-4525  
Heritage Valley Adult Behavioral Health Unit – Kennedy 412-847-7510  
Heritage Valley Geriatric Behavioral Health Unit – Kennedy 412-777-6420  
Staunton Clinic Outpatient Services 412-749-7330 or 412-749-7341  
www.heritagevalley.org/services/behavioral-health

## **CARDIOVASCULAR**

**Heritage Valley Health System**  
724-773-4502  
HVMG Health & Vascular Center– Beaver  
HVMG Heart & Vascular Center – Calcutta/East Liverpool  
HVMG Heart & Vascular Center – Ellwood City  
HVMG Heart & Vascular – Kennedy 412-777-4386  
HVMG Heart & Vascular Center – Leetsdale  
John “Tito” Francona Heart & Vascular Center - Beaver  
www.heritagevalley.org/services/cardiology/  
www.heritagevalley.org/services/arteriovascular-services/

**St. Clair Health Cardiovascular Services**  
412-942-4000  
stclair.org/cardiovascularservices

**WHS Cardiovascular Care**  
724-225-6500  
whs.org/cardiovascularcare

## **CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE**

**Chatham University**  
Online MBA Program  
chatham.edu/onlineMBA

## **CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE**

**Washington Health System School of Nursing**  
whs.org/schoolofnursing  
724-223-3167

## **DENTAL**

**Chips Dental Associates**  
724-443-5710  
ChipsDental.com

## **DISABILITY RESOURCES**

**Step By Step, Inc.**  
570-829-3477 ext. 7416  
StepByStepUSA.com  
*Step By Step's Life Sharing Program is a service where every day households open their homes to adults with intellectual disabilities. Life Sharing provides adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to become part of a family, offering an ongoing sense of belonging, as well as day-to-day care. Life Sharing is an alternative to the community home service option.*

**The Woodlands**  
724-935-6533  
mywoodlands.org  
*The Woodlands is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of children and adults with disability and chronic illness. Our fully accessible 52-acre campus provides year-round residential and non-residential programs for all ages.*

## **FLU VACCINATION**

**Allegheny County Health Department**  
425 1st Ave, 4th Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15219 412-578-8062  
*For more information, visit AlleghenyCounty.US/Influenza*

## **HEALTH INSURANCE**

**Deborah Inskipt**  
412-694-2424 or 724-777-4152  
dinskipt@healthmarkets.com

## **HEALTH, WELLNESS AND FITNESS CENTERS**

**The Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park**  
412-221-1099  
www.twpusc.org/crc/cre-home

**WHS Wilfred R Cameron Wellness Center**  
724-225-WELL  
wrcameronwellness.org

## **HEPATITIS VACCINE**

**Allegheny County Health Department Immunization Clinic**  
412-578-8062

## **HOSPITALS**

**Advanced Surgical Hospital**  
724-884-0710 • www.ashospital.net  
*Orthopedic Surgery Hospital  
Onsite MRI and PT/OT Services*

**Heritage Valley Health System**  
HeritageValley.org • 1-877-771-4847  
Heritage Valley Beaver 724-728-7000  
Heritage Valley Kennedy 412-777-6161  
Heritage Valley Sewickley 412-741-6600

**St. Clair Health**  
412-942-4000 • stclair.org

**WHS Washington Hospital**  
724-225-7000 • www.whs.org

## **IMAGING**

**St. Clair Health Medical Imaging Services**  
*Offered at outpatient centers in Mt. Lebanon, Bethel Park, and Peters Township*  
412-942-8150  
stclair.org/medicalimaging

## **MASSAGE THERAPY**

**Honor Your Body**  
412-212-0231  
www.honoryourbodywellness.com

## **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

**Sleep Pittsburgh**  
Lift Chairs • Mattresses • Beds  
412-462-7858  
www.SleepPittsburgh.com

## **ORTHOPEDECS**

**Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation**  
1-800-828-CAST (2278)  
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

**Heritage Valley Orthopedics**  
Heritage Valley Beaver 724-775-4242  
Heritage Valley Kennedy 412-787-7582  
Heritage Valley Sewickley 412-262-7800  
www.heritagevalley.org/services/orthopedics/

**St. Clair Health Center for Orthopedics**  
412-942-4000  
stclair.org/centerfororthopedics

## **ORTHOPEDECS**

**WHS Orthopedics and Sport Medicine**  
724-206-0610 • whsdocs.org

## **ORTHODONTICS**

**Good Orthodontics**  
Washington 724-225-1114  
Mount Lebanon 412-344-4663  
Pleasant Hills 412-655-4660

## **PEDIATRICS**

**WHS Washington Pediatrics**  
724-250-6001 • www.whs.org

## **PHYSICAL THERAPY**

**Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers**  
McMurray, Bethel Park, Cecil  
724-941-7070  
www.fyzical.com

**WHS Outpatient Rehabilitation**  
724-250-6280 • whs.org/rehab

## **PHYSICIANS**

**Heritage Valley Robinson Township Medical Neighborhood**  
HeritageValley.org  
*Home to a variety of services and physician practices.*

**HVMG Park Manor Medical Associates**

2201 Park Manor Blvd  
412-749-6920 • HeritageValley.org  
*Same Day Sick Visits, Self scheduling at cms.hvms.org/carelink/*

**St. Clair Health St. Clair Medical Group Network**  
physicians.stclair.org

**Washington Physician Hospital Organization Provider Network**  
whs.org  
See pages 21-24

## **REHABILITATION**

**Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation**  
1-800-828-CAST (2278)  
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

## **SLEEP DISORDERS**

**Breathe Pennsylvania**  
724-772-1750  
breathepa.org



wesley family services

**Older adult services at Wesley Family Services, we offer support to seniors in the community. We coordinate volunteer caregiving, care management, and provide support for better understanding medicare.**

**Older Adult Programs include:**

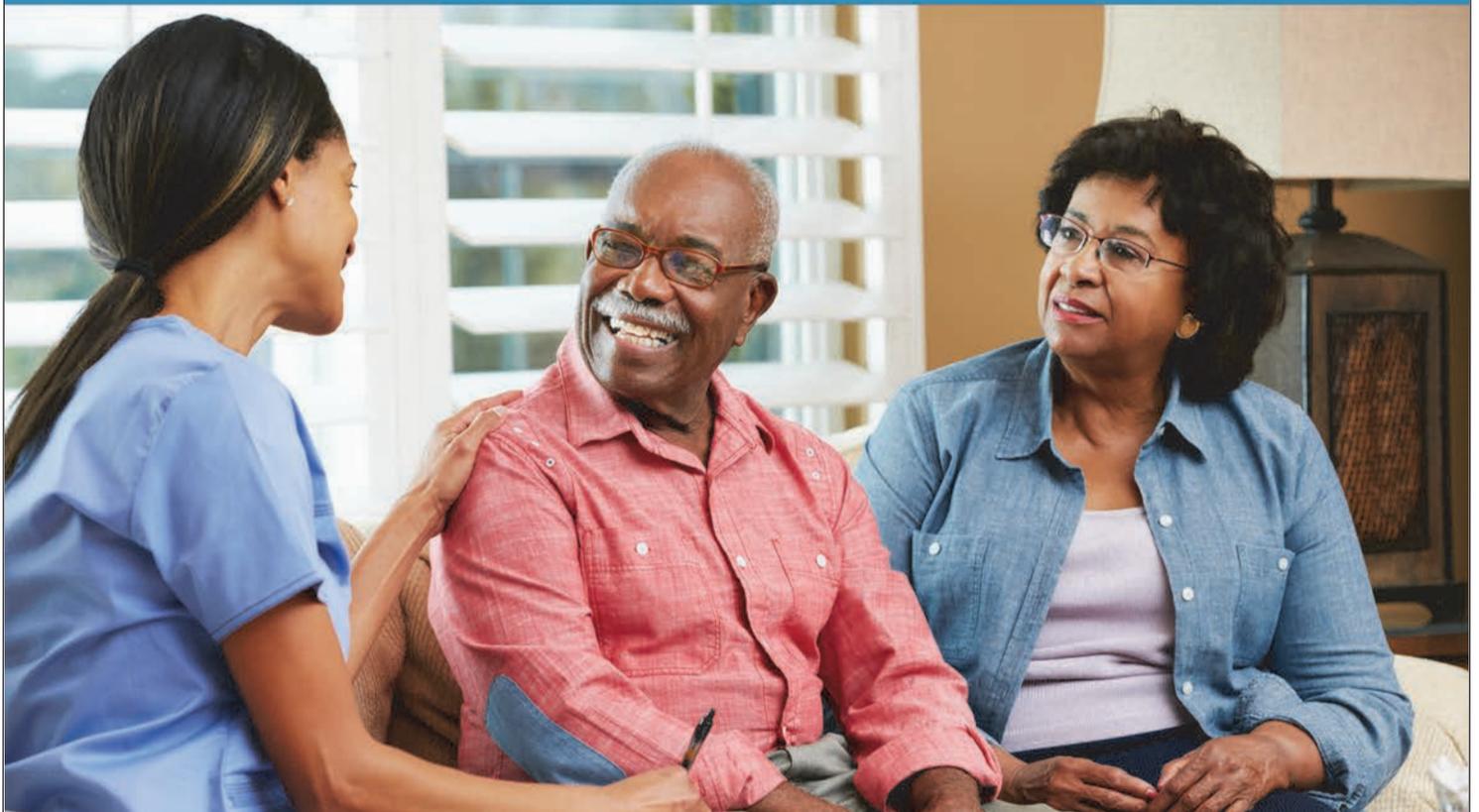
- Options Care Management
- PA MEDI (formerly APPRISE)
- Senior Day Program for Adults with IDD
- In Service of Seniors & Open Your Heart to a Senior

For more information or to volunteer visit: [wfspa.org](http://wfspa.org)

Allegheny County Call: 412-345-7420 or Email: [ISOS@wfspa.org](mailto:ISOS@wfspa.org)

Westmoreland County Call: 724-205-6282 or Email : [OYHS@wfspa.org](mailto:OYHS@wfspa.org)

For Options Care Management, call AAA at [1-412-350-5460](tel:1-412-350-5460)





# Personal.

# Best.

## What are you striving for today?

At St. Clair Health, our care teams are driven by a passion to provide world-class, patient-focused care to our neighbors in and around the Pittsburgh Region. That's why we've recruited even more nationally recognized doctors and invested in state-of-the-art diagnostic and surgical technology to support them. So no matter how far you push yourself to achieve, you never have to go far to receive the personalized health care you deserve.



MAYO CLINIC  
CARE NETWORK  
Member



St. Clair  
Health

[stclair.org](http://stclair.org)

Expert care from people who care.