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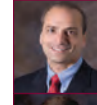
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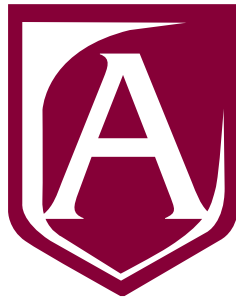


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**A S H O S P I T A L . N E T**



# Rametta Audiology & Hearing Treats Patients Like Family

By Lois Thomson

Michael J. Rametta, MS, explained how clients are treated from the very beginning at Rametta Audiology & Hearing Center – like family. When meeting with a customer, "I pretend I'm talking with a family member. The first half hour you're with us has nothing to do with hearing aids. First we do a hearing test to check your ears, your hearing, your ear drums. We want to make sure there's not a reason to send you to a doctor for some problem."

If a hearing aid is needed, the client can be assured of receiving products using the latest technology. Rametta said one of the latest advances is the ability to recharge batteries, which can be especially beneficial for people who have poor dexterity. "Now they can just remove the hearing aids and put them in the charger, and the next day they're ready to go."

From a technology standpoint, hearing aids are helping people hear better than ever when there's background noise. "We don't eliminate all the noise, but we found a way to filter the environment properly." Rametta said our ears don't have noise-filtering technology, but a younger person having a conversation in a bar or restaurant can hear sounds the right way because the brain is able to filter what we want to hear from what we don't. "So if we get today's hearing aids programmed correctly, we can put them in the ear in the manner that the brain can do what it's supposed to do – filter out the noise you don't want to hear. We've been working on it for years but we finally have fast-enough processors built into the hearing aids to make them successful."

All of this is done with personalized care. Rametta said, "I'm the third generation in my family (his grandfather founded in the company in 1958) so there's a lot of experience learning how to care for people with hearing aids. New technology comes every year and you go to classes for that, but learning how to look for what the person needs and them not knowing how to say it – you get that from watching the previous generation."


He said learning about a person's

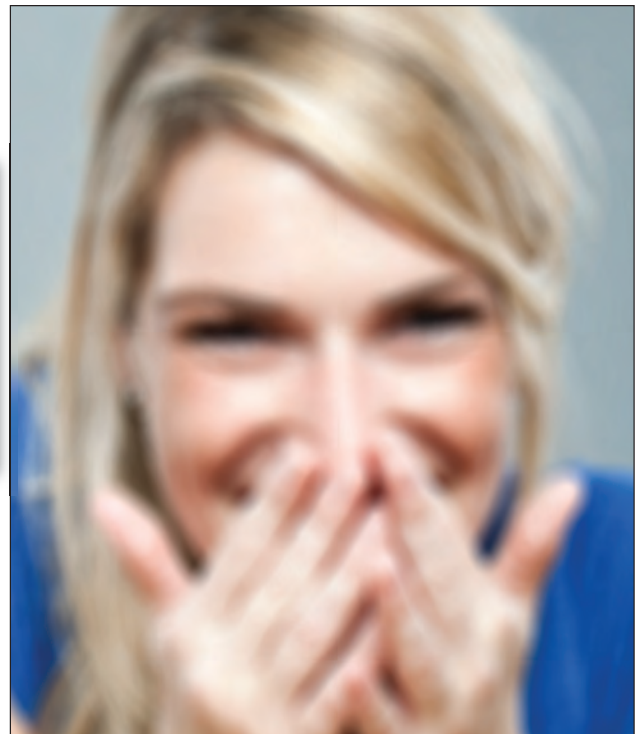


Michael J. Rametta

**Rametta Audiology & Hearing Aid Center, serving the Alle-Kiski Valley area for more than 60 years, has offices in Squirrel Hill, Tarentum, and Vandergrift. Michael Rametta, who joined the practice in 1997 and became the owner in 2003, said he "came into this industry at absolutely the perfect time. We weren't using computers yet, so I've seen us going from using little eyeglass screwdrivers to make an adjustment, to literally making changes on the computer. We can make the changes on the computer and send them to the person's smartphone, and the smartphone will upload them to the hearing aid."**

environment and everyday life is also important. "Almost any hearing aid can meet your hearing needs, but we have to pick the one that meets your social, economic and dexterity needs. Not everybody needs those super-expensive hearing aids and all that technology. They're great for the right person, but some people just need simple, high-quality, good functionality, without all the bells and whistles."

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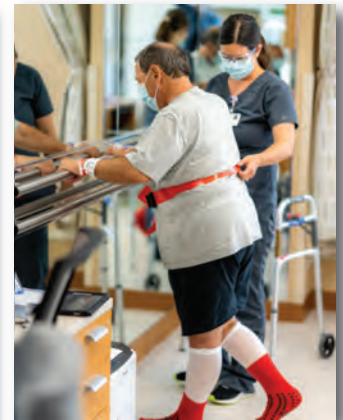
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# Bone & Joint Health

## Road to Recovery: ST. CLAIR HEALTH ORTHOPEDIC REHABILITATION



Dr. Shaka Walker



By Kevin Brown

***Most people will experience pain in one or more joints during their lifetime. Whether from an injury or wear and tear, such pain can cause great discomfort and limit daily activities. While surgery may eventually be necessary, it's not always the first course of treatment according to Dr. Shaka Walker, an orthopedic surgeon who practices with St. Clair Medical Group – Orthopedic Surgery. Dr. Walker is board-certified in orthopedic surgery and sports medicine.***

“If you have an ache or a pain or an injury, don't be shy or nervous about coming in to see a surgeon with the thought that our first choice is to offer you surgery,” Dr. Walker explains. “The physicians at St. Clair Health take a more holistic approach. The goal is to get the patient better by the least invasive means that we can offer. And so, the most common treatment is going to be some form of exercises that you can either do on your own or in physical therapy.”

St. Clair Health offers world-class inpatient and outpatient orthopedic services through its Center for Orthopedic Care, including orthopedic rehabilitation. Its physical and occupational therapy programs include expertise in improving movement, strength and function; Individualized treatment programs; post-surgical recovery; and treatment for existing conditions and issues.

While Dr. Walker treats a variety of orthopedic patients, he specializes in shoulders and knees. “With the shoulders, initially, the focus is on range of motion,” he says. “Either through an exercise program you do on your own or working with a physical therapist, it's establishing all of the planes of motion that you need to be functional, as well as building strength in the large and small muscle groups. Most people I see who have a shoulder problem have muscles that are not in proper balance because of damage to one or more of those muscles.”

“Problems in the knee can be due to a torn meniscus or worn-out cartilage, but you may also have issues with tendons that are inflamed or damaged. Additionally, you can get pain in the knee because of weakness in the hip muscles. Those tend to cause knee pain because they take the knee out of balance. And so, exercises to strengthen those core muscles are typically part of any rehab program for the knee,” he says.

Dr. Walker notes that home-based exercises can be offered to patients to strengthen certain muscle groups, while physical therapists may provide treatments like cold treatments, ultrasound, and transcutaneous

electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) that are designed to reduce inflammation. “Those will reduce the symptoms, but the majority of what we talk about in orthopedic rehabilitation are therapeutic exercises, whether it's a home-based program or something that you do with a therapist and supervision,” he notes.

“Exercises that we recommend to help people get better are the first line of treatment before we start talking about injections or surgeries,” Dr. Walker says. “Most problems can be treated with a tailored program of home exercises and physical therapy, though some people actually need surgery.”

“In sports medicine, you're working with some people who would classify themselves as athletes and others who would not. However, everyone has the same basic goal, which is to maintain or improve their level of activity. And that's the main focus of rehabilitation. It's improving their functions so they can achieve the things they want to do from an activity standpoint. A lot of my work is evaluating patients to see where they're having problems and working to understand their goals so that I can create a program to help them get back to the level of function they desire,” he says.

Dr. Walker notes that, if surgery is needed, rehabilitation is an important part of post-surgery recovery. “After surgery, patients will be referred to a therapist to get exercises to help them fully recover. The operation or the surgery is only part of the treatment, as the rehabilitation after surgery is really what gets the patient back to a full level of functioning. It may be several weeks or months of rehabilitation in order for them to reach their best and final state,” he says.

An advantage at the St. Clair Health rehabilitation centers, according to Dr. Walker, is that patients are treated by the physical therapists. “Some places you go to for therapy, you may spend five or 10 minutes with the physical therapist and then be turned over to a physical therapy aide who will manage your care. If you go to one of the St. Clair Health facilities, most of the care is being directly delivered by the physical therapists. That is why surgeons refer patients there and why patients prefer to go there,” he notes.

In addition to a full range of orthopedic services, including orthopedic rehabilitation, St. Clair Health's Center for Orthopedic Care offers a variety of educational programs for patients with orthopedic conditions.



For more information, visit [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org) or call (412) 942-4000.



# Bone & Joint Health

## ADVANCED ORTHOPAEDICS AND REHABILITATION: Helping Young Athletes Get Back on Their Feet

By Daniel Casciato

*Young athletes often suffer from various types of foot injuries. These include sprains, fractures, tendonitis, and stress fractures. Some of these injuries can be prevented through proper training and conditioning.*

Athletes who participate in sports such as soccer, basketball, football, volleyball, tennis, track, and field should pay attention to their feet. The feet are the foundation of every athletic movement. They provide support during running, jumping, and other movements. If they aren't properly conditioned, they can cause injury.

"Heel pain is one injury we tend to see most often," says Dr. Sham Persaud, a Foot and Ankle Surgeon at Advanced Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation. "That's because young athletes are still going through puberty and haven't finished growing. There's a growth plate along the back part of the heel. While the rest of the body continues to grow, the tendons don't grow as quickly as the muscles do. As a result, young athletes get growing pains of that heel growth plate."

The second most common injury he tends to see are overuse injuries such as stress fractures of the foot. Stress fractures occur when a bone is stressed beyond its normal capacity. It usually occurs at the end of long bones (metatarsals) or on the side of the heel bone.

The best way to prevent this a foot injury is by strengthening the muscles that support your feet. This includes the calf muscle, Achilles tendon, and plantar fascia. You also need to strengthen your core muscles. A strong core helps stabilize your body while you perform any sport.

Another important thing to consider is footwear. Shoes with good arch supports help reduce strain on the foot. Your shoes should fit correctly. They shouldn't pinch the toes or create pressure points.

If you are injured during practice or a game, Dr. Persaud recommends adding ice to the injury.

"I always recommend ice over heat," he explains. "Heat will actually cause more inflammation and more swelling to the area which can lead to more discomfort where ice will decrease the swelling and make the patients more comfortable."

No matter the severity of the injury, never hesitate to have a physician examine that injury, notes Dr. Persaud.

"We all love winning and we all love being in the moment, but at the same time, there's always going to be other moments after that. So if your child has an injury, don't be afraid to get it checked out sooner rather than later because the majority of time, it's something that can be simple and fixed. However, injuries that linger are going to affect the patient throughout the season, as well as lead to potential bigger injuries that can prevent them from playing a sport for the whole season."

At Advanced Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation, they tend to treat foot injuries by getting radiographs of the foot and ankle, depending on where the injury is and how it occurred.

"Once we look at the radiographs, we sit and talk with the patient to hear exactly what happened, how it happened, where it happened, because a lot of that information gives us clues as to what exactly the injury is and what steps to take going forward," Dr. Persaud says. "We then conduct a physical exam where we test the bones, muscles, and ligaments. After we have all that information, we present a diagnosis and treatment plan. Generally, I like to be a team with my patients and offer multiple options if possible. Together, we will discuss the pros and cons of each option so they can make an educated decision on the best treatment course that will allow them to get back to what they enjoy doing as quickly as possible."



Dr. Sham Persaud

While there are several places in the region to get foot injuries taken care of, Advanced Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation offers several advantages. "Like the young athletes that we treat, the majority of the practitioners here were athletes at one point or another," says Dr. Persaud. "We are compassionate and understand what it's like to go through injuries. Whether you're a youth athlete or a weekend warrior, we understand that patients enjoy what they like to do, and we try to get you back to it as soon as possible in a safe and effective manner. Finally, we all use the teamwork method where we all work as a team to get the best outcome."



For more information, visit [advancedorthopaedics.net](http://advancedorthopaedics.net).

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# Rehabilitation

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The staff take a multi-disciplinary approach to healing, which includes rehabilitation, therapy, education and counseling. Our approach will enable you to live life as fully as possible and restore as much independence as possible.

“We continue to be excited for the opportunity to make a greater impact in our community,” said Leah Laffey, CEO of Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sewickley. “Our care allows people to return



to their lives at their highest levels of function after a life-altering illness or injury. There is no greater reward than helping our patients regain function, strength and the confidence they need to move forward in their lives.”

The Encompass Health inpatient rehabilitation unit at Heritage Valley Kennedy cares for patients recovering from strokes and other neurological disorders, brain injuries, spinal cord injuries and complex orthopedic conditions. Patients receive three hours of intensive, individualized therapy five days a week in a hospital setting, along with 24-hour nursing care, access to advanced technologies and frequent visits by an attending physician. While at Heritage Valley Kennedy, you will be treated with dignity and respect by the entire staff.



To learn more about **Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sewickley at Heritage Valley Kennedy**, call (412) 749-2396 or visit [www.heritagevalley.org/services/acute-rehabilitation-unit](http://www.heritagevalley.org/services/acute-rehabilitation-unit).

## Rehabilitation, like dancing, works best when you choose the right partner.

After his wife suffered a stroke, Joe knew she needed the right rehabilitation to dance again. That’s why he did the research and chose Encompass Health, where an experienced team used personalized therapy and advanced technology to help Francine return to the life she loved.



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# Rehabilitation

## There's No Place Like Home After a Stroke



By Richard C. Senelick, MD

Judy Garland played Dorothy in the 1939 version of the "Wizard of Oz." She famously clicked the heels of her red shoes together and wished to return home to Kansas, her own bed and her Auntie Em and Uncle Henry. Researchers study "homesickness," its causes and how to deal with it. Homesickness is mentioned in both the Old and New Testament, and the Greek physician Hippocrates believed that homesickness was caused by an excess of black bile in the blood.

We all know of the child who goes off to camp or college and is overcome with a desire to return home. However, we are addressing something different here—the ability of a person to return to their home after a serious illness or stroke. In rehabilitation, we know that going back home is one of the most important things that a person thinks about after a stroke or serious illness.

### It's a Fact

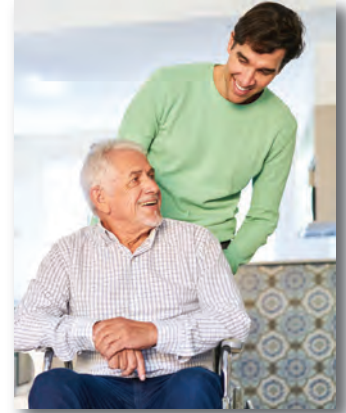
It is a fact that people who go to an inpatient rehabilitation hospital as opposed to a skilled nursing facility not only have better functional outcomes, but they also are much more likely to be discharged to their homes. If only they could click their heels and get there, but rehabilitation is challenging work. It takes the intensive therapy of an inpatient rehabilitation hospital to markedly improve the chances of someone going home. One study showed that you are three times more likely to be discharged home after going to an inpatient rehabilitation hospital after a stroke than if your therapy is done at a Skilled Nursing facility. The American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association a

formal guideline that stroke patients should go to an inpatient rehabilitation hospital as opposed to a skilled nursing facility (SNF). The patients have both better outcomes and are more likely to return home.

### Why is Being Home So Important?

You can travel the world and stay at the finest hotels, but there is truly "no place like home." It is interesting that people with dementia frequently repeat, "I want to go home." Home is special. Now, you or your loved one has had a stroke, and you want to get home. What makes home so comfortable?

- You get to wear your own clothes. Not just the ones your family brought to the hospital, but anything you want from your closet.
- You get to do what you want to do and make up a timetable that works for you.
- Within your diet restrictions, you get to eat what you want.
- Your favorite pillow and bed await you.
- There are the photos of your family on the walls and in frames on tables throughout your home.
- Who is happier to see each other? You or your pet?
- Your friends can visit and hugs never felt better.
- Home is a safe place that you know so well.



What makes home so comfortable?

### Getting Ready to Go Home

Being home will have its own challenges and there are numerous articles on getting one's home ready and particularly "fall proofing" it. My intent is to show the importance of getting home. Here are some suggestions to help you get your home ready.

- Is your home safe?
- Make up a new schedule. Get dressed in comfortable clothes every day.
- Arrange all your follow-up appointments before you leave the hospital.
- Get your prescriptions filled before you are discharged from the hospital.
- Do you have all the supplies you will need?
- Who do you call in an emergency?

There will be setbacks. We know that people do better and are happier at home. If you are a healthcare professional, you must be an advocate for your patient. Patients and families must insist on getting home.



**Dr. Richard C. Senelick** is a Neurologist in San Antonio, TX. He served as the Medical Director of **Encompass Rehabilitation Hospital** in San Antonio for 30 years.

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# Physical Therapy

## The difference that makes all the difference

What is the difference in physical therapy that makes all the difference?

By **Mason A. Tupta, PT, DPT, CMTPT/DN**

I began Direct Physiotherapy because I wanted to address an important problem in the field of physical therapy. A frequent complaint from patients is that they are not getting the personal attention they deserve. They're passed around from one therapist to another and told to perform various exercises without receiving the in-depth instruction, supervision, or the physical manipulation often required for a successful outcome to their specific needs.

At Direct Physiotherapy our patients experience direct hands-on physical therapy. They see the same doctor of physical therapy every visit along their path to recovery and while we prescribe exercises when appropriate, we also perform manual therapy when necessary.

Manual physical therapy is the highly skilled practice of hands-on treatment involving joint/spine mobilizations, soft tissue manipulation and nerve mobilizations. Today, many rehabilitation providers focus solely on exercise and neglect the importance of "hands on" manual therapy to address movement pathologies.

We provide these important techniques after a thorough and comprehensive assessment which enables us to identify the movement diagnosis contributing to the patient's pain, limited mobility, strength deficits, and functional impairments.

If your therapy needs are post-operative, we offer individualized programs for an array of orthopedic surgeries. You can expect an optimal outcome from your surgical procedure by our application of manual therapy techniques.

### One – On – One Personal Therapy

"That's the difference that makes all the difference."

### For The Athlete

Aside from treating injured athletes, we also offer injury protection programs designed to increase performance while decreasing the risk of injury. Pitching and Throwing programs, ACL tear prevention and running analysis are just a few of our athlete related programs. These preventative services for athletes statistically decrease the risk of injury by facilitating proper training in the off season.

### Dry Needling Services Also Available

We are one of the few Physical Therapy Clinics in the area certified to provide Dry Needling, also known as intramuscular stimulation. The treatment is designed to ease muscular and nerve pain in areas, such as the shoulders, neck, and feet.

We offer the treatment for many issues, including chronic and acute pain and musculoskeletal issues, such as pain caused by tight bands of muscle tissue called trigger points.

People often think that when they have referral pain, they have a problem with nerves or discs in their back. But many times, muscles can refer a lot of nerve-like symptoms, and dry needling is one of the treatments we use to address these issues.

There is significant research and evidence-based literature that supports dry needling for a broad spectrum of pain.

**Dr. Tupta** received a Doctorate degree from Duquesne University as well as a bachelor's degree in Health Science and Biology. He is also certified in Dry Needling or Trigger Point Therapy. Dr. Tupta is also undergoing continued studies in Manual Physical Therapy. For more information or to make an appointment, call (412) 207-7612 or visit [DirectPhysiotherapy.org](http://DirectPhysiotherapy.org).



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"The difference that makes all the difference."

Many rehabilitative providers focus solely on exercise but neglect the importance of hands-on manual therapy. Our patients experience direct, hands-on physical therapy – joint mobilizations, nerve glides, and soft tissue manipulation. When appropriate, therapeutic exercises are prescribed – always under the supervision of a doctor of physical therapy.

### POST OPERATIVE

Individualized therapy for an array of orthopedic surgeries. Manual therapy techniques in combination with supervised exercises result in optimal outcomes from your surgical procedures.

### SPORTS MEDICINE

Our preventative services statistically decrease the risk of injury by facilitating proper training in the off-season.

Services include: ACL Tear Prevention; Tendon Strengthening; Running analysis; Throwing & Pitching programs.

### DRY NEEDLING SERVICES

Dr. Tupta is one of few physical therapists in the area certified to provide this modern and effective treatment, easing muscular and nerve pain. In addition, dry needling may also improve flexibility and increase range of motion, which is why this method is often used to treat muscular trigger points, nerve pain, sports injuries, and fibromyalgia.

## Direct Physiotherapy

Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine



**Dr. Mason A. Tupta**  
PT, DPT, CMTPT / DN

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# Meet Amber Young, CRNP, Wound Care Specialist at WHS Wound and Skin Healing Center

By Andrew Wilson

**Amber Young, CRNP, has a thirst for knowledge, which has led her on a seemingly convoluted career journey, but she wouldn't have it any other way.**



"I have very much taken a non-traditional pathway to becoming a wound care specialist at Washington Health System (WHS)," said Young. "I've had wonderful experiences all along the way, and whether it was good or bad, I've learned something from it."

Born in Winnemucca, Nevada, and raised on the West Coast, Young married a farmer from western Pennsylvania and has lived here for the past 22 years, where she has raised their two daughters and considers this area her home. Over the course of those 22 years, she has been a teacher and a tour guide at Fallingwater, among other things.

"Because of my varied career path, I feel that I can find common ground with everyone," she says. "I'm very relatable and enjoy talking with my patients."

Young is a nurse practitioner (NP), which means that she earned her master's degree and has more than 500 hours of advanced training. While NPs in Pennsylvania do not have full practice authority rights (as they do in some states) and must work collaboratively with a physician, they do have the ability to diagnose and manage acute, chronic, and complex health problems.

Because of all the work required to become an NP, it would be neither fair nor accurate to describe her journey to NP as an accident, but she uses the word "stumbled" to describe her entry into nursing. It started one relaxed Sunday morning when she and her husband were reading the newspaper.

"He saw a job posting for a nurse educator that required a Master of Education and an LPN license. He asked me if I wanted to apply for the position since I was a teacher. I said, 'I do not have an LPN license,' and he replied, 'Well, what's stopping you?'"

That was all the encouragement that she needed because the very next day, she called a local trade school that offered LPN training and applied for the next class. Approximately, 2 months into the LPN program, one of her instructors, Debra Brow, asked why – with her education – she hadn't enrolled in an RN program instead of an LPN program.

"I thought I had to become an LPN before I could become an RN," said Young. Informed that she did not have to become an LPN first, she dropped out of the LPN program and enrolled in Wheeling Jesuit

*Introducing*

University's RN to BSN program. She completed all of her RN training at Wheeling Hospital and finished her degree in 18 months.

"I have to admit that obtaining my BSN in 18 months was the hardest degree I have obtained so far," she said. Of course, the path had a few more twists.

Sensing Young's aptitude for nursing, Dr. Gail Nickerson, one of her clinical nursing instructors, encouraged her to become a nurse practitioner, so Young applied for the NP program at Wheeling Jesuit.

"Looking back at my path of becoming a NP, I have had such great and wonderful people influencing and guiding me along my way," she said.

As an NP, Young can order, perform, supervise, and interpret diagnostic and laboratory tests, while initiating and managing treatments that includes prescribing medication and non-pharmacologic therapies. NPs also have the responsibility of coordinating care, counseling and educating individuals, families, groups, and communities while promoting positive health practices.

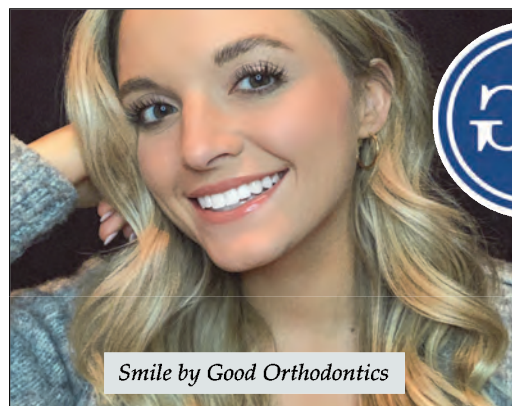
She initially was drawn to wound care while still in her LPN training at a skilled nursing facility. She observed an LPN wound care nurse taking care of a patient that a life-threatening stage IV pressure ulcer on his back.

"The patient was placed at the facility as a last resort for treatment," Young recalled. "This LPN was efficient, caring and dedicated when it came to her patients and providing wound care. I firmly believed she saved that patient's life through her skill, positive attitude, and knowledge of wound care. As a result, I carried that experience throughout my BSN and MSN program and training."

And when offered the opportunity to precept with Dr. Dennis Brown at the WHS Wound and Skin Healing Center last summer, she knew it would be a fantastic and unique opportunity that she has enthusiastically embraced.

"I would like for the Wound and Skin Care Center at WHS to provide a place of hope, reassurance and healing for my patients, their families and loved ones," Young said. "I think back to that LPN who did not give up on her patient that was left in the skilled nursing facility with no hope of recovery. Through her dedication, skill, and compassion, she not only increased his quality of life but was able to give him his life back. After a year and half at the facility he was able to go home and live his life."

> For more information about the **Washington Health System Wound and Skin Healing Center**, located at 228 Wellness Way in Washington, PA, visit [whs.org/woundandskin](http://whs.org/woundandskin) or call (724) 223-6903.



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# Amber Young Shares Proper Wound Care Advice

**Amber Young, CRNP, is in the right specialty area. She loves everything about wound care. Correction: everything about proper wound care.**

“Proper wound care can positively impact quality of life for my patients,” she said. “Inappropriate wound management based on tradition, rather than evidence, can result in impaired wound healing, increase pain, further the emotional distress/anxiety for patients and increase the total cost of treatment.”

Probably the biggest tradition associated with wound care is something that almost everyone has heard from their parents: take the bandage off and let the air get to it. Turns out the science doesn't agree.

“It was once believed that wounds would heal faster if allowed to dry out,” said Young. “Evidence now shows that dry wounds have an increased risk of infection, heal slower than moist

wounds and can become stuck in the inflammatory stage with repeated dressing removal. I am always reminding my family to leave the wound covered and keep that band-aid on!”

There are many factors to consider when evaluating and treating a patient's wounds. Everything from what caused the wound to how big it is, if it is infected, to whether there is good circulation for the wound and surrounding tissue.

Medical professionals refer to the cause of the wound as the “mechanism of onset,” which indicates if the wound is due to surgical intervention, traumatic in nature, or is the result of an underlying pathology.

Young says this becomes important because surgical wounds heal faster than traumatic ones and wounds due to underlying pathology often become chronic due to comorbidities, which occurs when two or more diseases or conditions are present in a patient.

Other factors that determine how quickly healing can occur include the size, shape, and depth of the wound. It seems obvious that in most cases larger wounds will heal more slowly than smaller or superficial ones, but circular

wounds close more slowly than square or rectangular ones.

Infection and the presence of foreign bodies in the wound can also impede wound healing, but Young says another tradition that can be dispensed with are antiseptics...one in particular.

“Don't use hydrogen peroxide,” she says. “It impedes wound healing by damaging new tissue. Antiseptics are very harsh and are best used for cleaning intact skin.”

Additionally, the presence of other diseases, particularly diseases that affect circulation, tissue perfusion and oxygenation, or result in incontinence, can negatively impact wound healing.

Also, a patient's age, nutrition, hydration, medications, and behavioral risk taking are all taken into account.

“For chronic wounds, there is more of a trial-and-error process to wound care,” Young said. “Wound care can be a puzzle and you have to look at the whole person.”

➤ For more information about the **Washington Health System Wound and Skin Healing Center**, located at 228 Wellness Way in Washington, PA, visit [whs.org/woundandskin](http://whs.org/woundandskin) or call (724) 223-6903.



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## The Use of Medications to Treat Substance Use Disorders

## Ask an EXPERT

**EXPERT:** Julia D’Alo, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Gateway Rehab



*A substance use disorder is a chronic medical condition. Effective evidence-based treatment models incorporate the use of medications to treat this disease. One of our region’s experts, Dr. Julia D’Alo, helps to answer important questions about these medications. Dr. D’Alo is a board-certified Addiction Medicine and Emergency Medicine specialist and serves as Chief Medical Officer at Gateway Rehab, a nonprofit addiction treatment provider who has served the Pittsburgh region for 50 years.*

**Q: What medications are available to treat substance use disorder?**

**A:** The Food and Drug Administration has approved three medications: Methadone, which reduces opioid cravings and withdrawal symptoms; Buprenorphine, which diminishes withdrawal symptoms and cravings to use opioids, and blocks the effects of other opioids; and Naltrexone, which treats both alcohol use disorder (AUD) and opioid use disorder (OUD), by blocking the euphoric and sedative effects of opioids.

**Q: Can someone overdose on these medications?**

**A:** As with any medication, there can be serious risks related to misuse. Overdose is unlikely if used as prescribed and not combined with other sedating substances such as alcohol or sedative medications.

**Q: Why is it difficult to find an inpatient treatment program to admit a patient prescribed Methadone?**

**A:** As opposed to Buprenorphine or Naltrexone, prescribing Methadone can only be provided in certified Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP). Not all treatment programs hold OTP certification. At Gateway Rehab, although we are not an OTP facility, we partner with Pinnacle Treatment Center in Aliquippa, who is OTP certified. This partnership allows us to admit and treat patients in need of detox and inpatient while maintaining Methadone use based on individual needs.

**Q: What does the acronym MOUD stand for?**

**A:** MOUD stands for Medications for Opioid Use Disorder

**Q: What is the recommended standard of care when prescribing MOUD?**

**A:** Utilization of MOUD should be provided as part of a comprehensive treatment plan that also includes therapeutic interventions. At Gateway Rehab, we proudly adhere to this standard of care. MOUD is offered in both inpatient and outpatient levels of care alongside behavioral health counseling. If behaviors, trauma and environmental factors are not addressed, that person is not receiving the best possible care. When treating the whole person, in body, mind and spirit, chances of sustained recovery are greater.

**Q: Is it safe to use these medications long-term?**

**A:** Like other medications used to treat other chronic medical conditions, long-term use is appropriate to support healthy maintenance. We use Buprenorphine and Naltrexone at Gateway Rehab as maintenance medications. A patient can start on these medications while in our inpatient care and continue them in outpatient care. MOUD are used for varying lengths of time, but we recommend patients remain on them for a minimum of one year and reassess with their medical provider on a yearly basis.

*Continued on following page.*



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**Q: What if someone receiving addiction treatment does not want to use medications?**

**A:** There is shared decision-making between the medical provider and the patient when choosing which medication may be a good fit for an individual. Some choose not to take medications. We encourage individualized treatment plans and are supportive of all roads to recovery.

**Q: Isn't the use of medications to treat substance use disorder just replacing one drug for another?**

**A:** This is a common misconception. Current medical literature demonstrates that Buprenorphine helps to stabilize the brain chemistry of people with OUD and does not lead to euphoria or respiratory depression. It allows individuals to focus on treatment, work, family, and long-term recovery because, for most, it eliminates withdrawal symptoms and cravings to use opioids. Many people with OUD who take their medication as prescribed report they can more easily maintain recovery.

**Q: Will the use of medication result in someone appearing intoxicated?**


**A:** Those who are stable on Buprenorphine appear no different than someone not on the medication. They do not display symptoms of substance misuse because they do not experience those symptoms. They function normally.

**Q: What is a common barrier for a patient prescribed MOUD?**

**A:** There is undeniably a stigma associated with MOUD, specifically Buprenorphine and Methadone because they are themselves opioids. Patients can experience shame with the use of medications because their peers may not consider them "in recovery." For those who do well on these medications, there is no shame in staying on a maintenance dose like other medications used to treat chronic diseases, like insulin. If someone has achieved behavioral changes, restored their life, gained employment, etc., their journey to recovery should be celebrated.

**Q: What if someone chooses to stop their medications?**

**A:** For those who choose to stop methadone or buprenorphine, there are safe ways to wean them. A patient should discuss this decision with their medical provider first. Buprenorphine and methadone should never be stopped abruptly as risk of returning to use of illicit opioids is very high. We also know that when someone returns to using, the risk of overdose is extremely high as a person's tolerance is much lower than it was prior to treatment. Also, the drug supply is heavily adulterated with illicitly manufactured fentanyl resulting in greater potency and likelihood of fatal overdose.

 To learn more about evidence-based addiction treatment available in your area, visit [gatewayrehab.org](http://gatewayrehab.org) or call (412) 604-8900.



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## Coffee Break with Judy's Java Joint

By Lois Thomson

While you're sitting around the table sometime enjoying a cup of coffee with family or friends, you might want to think about the many famous people who have done the same throughout the years. Going back centuries, when the brew was originally introduced to Europe, it was considered to be an "evil" drink. However, that changed when Pope Clement VIII in the late 1500s proclaimed, "Why, this Satan's drink is so delicious it would be a pity to let the infidels have exclusive use of it. We shall fool Satan by baptizing it and making it a truly Christian beverage."

Since that time, the famous and non-famous – Christian and non-Christian alike – have discovered the delicious drink. Here are a few who share your love of coffee:

**Honoré de Balzac** – it has been said of this French author that he had not blood, but coffee, running through his veins. He consumed as many as 50 cups a day and credited the beverage with producing his creative ideas.

**Voltaire** – like Balzac, this French writer and philosopher consumed between 40 and 50 cups of coffee per day, which he mixed with chocolate. Despite warnings from doctors that so much coffee was bad for his health, Voltaire died when he was 83 – much longer than the average lifespan in the 1700s.


**Theodore Roosevelt** – the 26th president, who supposedly drank a gallon of coffee each day, was credited with coming up with the phrase "Good to the last drop," adopted by Maxwell House Coffee as its slogan.

**Napoleon Bonaparte** – the French emperor began drinking just two cups a day, but as he became aware of its ability to invigorate him and keep him active, he increased his daily intake to 50 cups; many believe he wouldn't have achieved all he did without the benefits of caffeine.

**Thomas Jefferson** – the third president and author of the Declaration of Independence had coffee beans imported from the East and West Indies, and had his cellar at Monticello stocked with barrels of unroasted beans weighing up to 60 pounds.

**Johann Sebastian Bach** – one of the greatest composers of all time, loved coffee so much that he even wrote a short opera in 1732 called "The Coffee Cantata." It is about a young, spirited girl who simply loves coffee.

So if you like coffee you're in good company, and who knows, perhaps a few hundred years from now people will be reading about how frequently you and your companions sat around and filled your cups.

 Judy's Java Joint is a family-owned local coffee shop located in the Ruthfred Shopping Center, 3400 South Park Rd., Bethel Park. Enjoy our cozy shop to do work (free wi-fi), meet with friends or just relax with a great cup of coffee. We have everything you might be craving: gourmet coffee and tea, espresso drinks, smoothies, frappes, hot chocolate, chai tea, protein frappes, pastries and more! Mon-Fri 6:30 a.m.–2 p.m., Sat 8 a.m.–2 p.m.; 412-833-5282; [judysjava.com](http://judysjava.com)

# Women's Health

## St. Clair Health: A Lifetime of Women's Healthcare

By Kevin Brown

From daughter to mother and grandmother, a woman's life can have many stages. In each of these stages, she will have different healthcare needs. She deserves the very best care and St. Clair Health's obstetric and gynecologic services are there to meet those needs – for a lifetime.

Michelle L. Harvison, M.D., chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at St. Clair Health, recently spoke about meeting those needs. She practices with Advanced Women's Care of Pittsburgh, is board-certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and was named a Top Doctor by Pittsburgh Magazine in 2022.

### LIFE STAGE: Puberty

"When young women first start seeing us, it's generally in their teen years because they are having concerns with their periods," she said. "The most important thing for us to do with an often-scared young lady is to talk to her about what to expect with her periods, what's normal and what's not normal, and what options she has," she explained.

"The next step is when they want to become or have recently become sexually active. And so, it's important to talk about safe sex and what to be aware of, pregnancy prevention, and options," she said.

Mental health is another concern for young women, according to Dr. Harvison. "We talk to them about lifestyle changes and what we can do with therapy to avoid medications. St. Clair Health offers a wide range of therapy programs depending on the situation, as well as a very good psychiatric program," she said.

### LIFE STAGE: Reproductive Years

For many women, motherhood is a defining role in their lifetimes. "A lot of patients see us for preconception discussions or counseling and we talk about their risk factors, expectations for conception, what medications are safe, and what to avoid to help them navigate starting a family. Along with that are patients who have problems such as infertility or recurrent miscarriage," she noted.

St. Clair Hospital's Center for Women and Children offers a wide variety of educational programs for expectant parents including Baby Basics to prepare new parents for life with a baby, an eight-hour Childbirth Preparation class, a Family Birth Center Tour, as well as Labor and Delivery 1-2-3, Introduction to Breastfeeding, and Family and Friends: Infant/Child CPR. They also have a Lactation Center with an on-site lactation consultant.

When it comes time for the big event, St. Clair Hospital's Family Birth Center features private labor/delivery/recovery/postpartum (LDRP) rooms providing warm and comfortable settings for vaginal deliveries supported by state-of-the-art technology. Operating rooms are located in the unit for Cesarean section (C-section) deliveries. After a C-section, new mothers can recover with their babies in a private, monitored environment.

The Family Birth Center team includes board-certified obstetricians; a board-certified pediatrician on staff 24 hours a day; a Level II Special Care Nursery for infants who require extra care; and nurses who are spe-



**"St. Clair Hospital recently developed a really nice program where, when a woman goes for her screening mammogram, they calculate her risk for developing cancer. A woman with a 20 percent or greater risk of breast cancer is referred to the breast program."**

-Dr. Michelle L. Harvison

cially-trained in labor, delivery, and post-partum care.

Following motherhood, a woman's healthcare needs change. "In the theme of taking care of the whole woman for her whole life, we do a lot of primary care, treating anxiety and depression, helping women with weight loss - focusing on her entire well-being and not just her gynecological concerns," she explained.

### LIFE STAGE: Elder Years

"Menopause is interesting because it's not something that a lot of women talk about," Dr. Harvison said. "They don't really know what to expect, what are normal symptoms, what should be treated and what shouldn't. There are many symptoms that really impact the quality of life in a very negative way that we can treat."

In her senior years, it is important for a woman to continue to see her gynecologist to maintain her health. "With annual exams, we are doing breast exams to screen for breast cancer and making sure they're getting yearly mammograms. We're doing pelvic exams to screen for cervical and ovarian cancer. We talk to them about post-menopausal bleeding, which could be a sign of endometrial or uterine cancer. And we're making sure they're getting their bone densities regularly to screen for osteoporosis," she noted.

St. Clair Hospital's Breast Care Center offers education, early detection, treatment services, and the most advanced diagnostic imaging technology in an environment of comfort and convenience.

"St. Clair Hospital recently developed a really nice program where, when a woman goes for her screening mammogram, they calculate her risk for developing cancer," Dr. Harvison said.

"A woman with a 20 percent or greater risk of breast cancer is referred to the breast program.

If she has an extensive family history of breast, ovarian or colon cancers, then we will perform genetic testing so we can assess her lifetime risk and what interventions we need to do to decrease those risks."



From teen years to senior years, a woman can be assured that all her healthcare needs will be met at St. Clair Health. For more information about women's health services, contact **St. Clair Health** at (412) 942-4000 or visit [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org).



# Lupus: Primarily a Woman's Disease

By Nancy Kennedy

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune condition that can impact multiple organ systems and cause numerous complications. It affects far more women than men: 90% of persons with lupus are women, most of whom are young women in their childbearing years. Most cases of lupus, perhaps 70%, involve Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, or SLE. The CDC reports that over 200,000 Americans have SLE.

Lupus attacks the skin, joints, nervous system, kidneys, blood cells, heart and blood vessels. The early symptoms of lupus include fever, extreme fatigue, skin rashes, sensitivity to light and joint pain. Later symptoms may include swelling of the eyes and feet, hair loss, "brain fog," or cognitive dysfunction, and the unique "butterfly" rash on the face. Many women with lupus will go on to develop a secondary condition, Raynaud's Syndrome, which is a circulatory problem in which exposure to cold causes the blood vessels in the fingers and toes to constrict and reduce blood flow to such an extent that the digits turn blue or white. Unfortunately, these symptoms are common to other diseases as well, making the dia-

gnosis of lupus a challenge.

The exact cause of lupus is unknown but it is believed that it has a genetic basis and is triggered when the body's autoimmune system malfunctions – due to trauma, infection, exhaustion or medications. The result is that the immune system, the body's defense system, targets healthy tissues as if they are foreign, unhealthy invaders. Antibodies are released and these defenders damage the healthy tissue, often producing inflammation and pain.

Lupus can sometimes manifest in "flares" – periods when the symptoms worsen or new symptoms develop. Flares may necessitate a change in treatment or additional diagnostic studies. A flare can be triggered by an emotional crisis, infection, surgery, injury or major life change.

Lupus is more common in African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders.

## The Lupus Team

It is often necessary to involve multiple physician specialists in the care of a woman with lupus, as the disease affects so many different organs. In addition to her PCP, a woman with lupus will possibly need to see an autoimmune spe-

cialist called a rheumatologist or immunologist; a dermatologist for skin problems; an orthopedic specialist for joint problems, and others as needed. Kidney specialists, or nephrologists, may be consulted for kidney complications or other issues with the urinary tract. A physical therapist or occupational therapist may be helpful in dealing with mobility, muscle weakness, pain management and management of the activities of daily living. Dental care is important, particularly for women who are experiencing dry mouth syndrome, which can lead to enamel erosion, tooth decay and tooth loss; mouth sores are another frequent complication. The pharmacist is another member of the lupus care team, providing patient education and support.

## Treatment

Treating lupus is a matter of customizing care to each individual patient, because each case of lupus is as unique as the person who has it. NSAIDs, steroids, and ibuprofen are among the most frequently utilized tools in the lupus toolbox. These medications reduce inflammation and the subsequent pain.

Hydroxychloroquine, or Plaquenil, is often prescribed as a treat-



ment for lupus and other related auto-immune diseases; it can reduce antibody production and minimize organ damage. The lupus patient should learn all she can about her medications, comply with prescription regimen, and monitor side effects and report those to her PCP.

## Self Care

Persons with a chronic, incurable condition such as lupus must become advocates for themselves, learning as much as possible about their condition and treatment, and keeping track of symptoms, changes and problems. They should learn to regard the doctors as resources and expert advisors, while they themselves manage their symptoms as much as possible. Basic self-care measures such as healthy eating, regular exercise, adequate sleep and stress management can be enormously helpful in living successfully despite a diagnosis of lupus.

## Resources

Lupus Foundation of America – [www.lupus.org](http://www.lupus.org)

## Counseling Practice Specializing in Therapy for Moms Opens

By Hayley Wilds, LPC, CCTP

When I first embarked on my motherhood journey, I had no idea how much it would change my life. Not only because becoming a mom is such a major life transition, but also because of the way it would affect my career path.

My motherhood experiences have impacted me in profound ways. From the miscarriage loss of my first pregnancy at 15 weeks, to the incredible (yet traumatic) birth of my daughter over a year later, becoming a mom has been life changing.

Before I became a mom, I spent my career in community mental health working with parents and families, helping them tackle the hardest challenges life can dish out: trauma, loss, abuse, and serious mental health issues. I helped families manage conflict, crises, parenting challenges, and more. But it wasn't until I became a mom myself, and experienced the challenges firsthand, that I realized how much moms in particular need support. I found that after using the help of a therapist to get a handle on my own motherhood stuff, I became more equipped than ever to help other moms do the same.

I realized it was time for a career change.

After 20 years in the mental health field, I opened my own ther-

apy practice, the Center for Creative Counseling. I wanted a place where moms could get support from someone who completely gets the struggle, both personally and professionally.

At the Center for Creative Counseling, I specialize in therapy for moms who have dealt with some difficult things. Whether it's trauma, grief/loss, anxiety, family conflict, or parenting challenges, I offer services that can help. All services are conveniently offered online for residents of Pennsylvania. Services include individual therapy, art therapy, family therapy, and grief counseling. I offer a free consultation for anyone interested, just to make sure I'm a good fit for what you're looking for.



Hayley Wilds, LPC, CCTP, is a licensed professional counselor, trained art therapist, and certified family-based therapist. She has worked with parents, kids, and families for 20 years and specializes in therapy for moms, trauma, grief, and family conflict. Hayley is the owner of the **Center for Creative Counseling** in Pennsylvania. Visit [centerforcreativecounseling.com](http://centerforcreativecounseling.com) to learn more.



# Women's Health



## Health Challenges Common to Women

By Lois Thomson

*When it comes to health, women tend to experience more challenges and are more likely to be diagnosed with certain diseases than men. These generally fall into the category of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Nearly 50 percent of adults have a chronic illness, and 38 percent of women suffer from one or more chronic diseases, compared with 30 percent of men. In many cases, knowledge and awareness may be key for prevention.*

**Heart Disease.** Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women, and because women's symptoms may be more subtle than those in men, they may not be initially recognizable. For example, rather than experiencing severe pain in the chest, women may suffer from upper abdominal pain, lightheadedness, or fatigue. Becoming familiar with such symptoms may help to prevent a serious occurrence.

**Diabetes.** While diabetes, especially Type 2, is more common in men, it is women who often have complications that are more serious and can result in death. For example, diabetes increases the risk of heart disease by about four times in women, as opposed to two times in men, and women have worse consequences after suffering a heart attack. Women are also at higher risk of other complications, such as blindness, kidney disease, depression, and urinary tract infections. Additionally, they may transmit Type 2 to their offspring.

**Osteoporosis.** Women are more at risk of developing osteoporosis than men because the hormone changes that take place at menopause directly affect bone density. The hormone estrogen is essential for healthy bones, and after menopause, estrogen levels fall, which can lead to a rapid decrease in bone density. Women also have bones that are thinner and smaller than men's. Approximately 80 per-

cent of the 10 million Americans with osteoporosis are women. Getting enough calcium and vitamin D and eating a healthy diet can help improve bone health, as can exercise and avoiding smoking and drinking.

**Cancer.** Approximately 250,000 women in the United States die from cancer each year. Some types, such as breast, lung, colon, and skin cancer, are largely preventable, but raising awareness about symptoms and risk factors for early detection are vital.

**Alzheimer's.** According to the Alzheimer's Association, women over the age of 65 have nearly twice as much chance – one-in-6 as opposed to one-in-11 – of developing the disease as men. While research is being done to determine the cause, one reason could simply be that women generally live longer and therefore have more time to contract it. Another could be that women are twice as likely to suffer from depression as men. Researchers can trace depression to the shrinking of the hippocampus, which is the part of the brain responsible for memory function. The hippocampus is an important factor for memory formation in women, but not so much in men. Exercise can also play a key role. Women generally are less physically active than men, but studies indicate that women who were considered to have a high fitness level were nearly 90 percent less likely to develop dementia as those who were less fit.



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## URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

A urinary tract infection (UTI) is an infection that occurs in any part of your urinary system – the kidneys, ureters, bladder, or urethra. Symptoms of such an infection include:

- Persistent urge to urinate
- Burning feeling when urinating
- Passing frequent, small amounts of urine
- Urine that appears cloudy or is red-, bright pink-, or cola-colored, which is a sign of blood in the urine
- Strong-smelling urine

The most common cause of a UTI is bacteria, and women are more susceptible because the female anatomy contributes to the increased likelihood.

Antibiotics are the most common treatment for UTIs, and drinking lots of water can help flush the bacteria from your body. The infections may go away on their own, but the main danger of leaving them untreated is that they may spread from the bladder to the kidneys. If that happens, it can cause damage that will permanently decrease kidney function.

## Protect Yourself from Lyme Disease



Now that the warm months are here, it's wise to take extra caution to prevent contracting Lyme disease. Lyme disease is caused by bacteria that are spread by the black-legged, or deer, tick. (There are hundreds of types of ticks, but only a small amount carry the bacteria.) When an infected tick bites you, it can transfer bacteria under the skin, leading to infection. If not diagnosed or treated early, it can develop into a chronic illness and affect various systems in the body including the heart, joints, nerves, and skin. Ticks generally live in shady and moist areas around ground level, such as in lawns or gardens, or at the edge of woods. They are most prevalent late May through July. The best ways to prevent getting bites are to avoid these areas if possible, or wear protective clothing and use insect repellent. If you're in such an

area, check for ticks and if any are found, remove them immediately:

- Use tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible
- Pull up using steady, even pressure
- After removing the tick, clean the area – and don't forget your hands – with rubbing alcohol or soap and water
- Never crush the tick with your fingers
- You may save the tick to show your doctor who can identify the species and determine if it is carrying any of the bacteria

### Symptoms

The most common symptom of Lyme disease is a flat, circular rash that looks like a red bull's-eye on your body. Others include a headache, muscle aches, joint pain and swelling, fever, fatigue, or sleep disturbances.

### Treatment

The most common treatment is a 14 to 21 day prescription of antibiotics.



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# Medical Profile

## The Children's Home of Pittsburgh and Lemieux Family Center

*As staff is working hard at The Children's Home of Pittsburgh and Lemieux Family Center, the sound of laughing children penetrates the windows from the all-inclusive playground outside. All the employees take pause for a moment from their work and gaze out the windows with a smile on their face.*

The Children's Home of Pittsburgh and Lemieux Family Center is an incredibly unique and special place. Through four programs that are provided, children who have complex medical issues and some who face difficult social issues, get to just be kids at The Children's Home. It is wonderful to work in a place that has no expectations for the children that it cares for other than to experience the joys of being a child.

The Children's Home is an independent, nonprofit organization with a mission to promote the health and well-being of infants and children through services that establish and strengthen the family. Under its roof, there are 4 unique programs: Adoption and Permanency Services, Child's Way daycare, the Pediatric Specialty

Hospital, devoted to family teaching, and Pediatric VIEW, a program that cares for children who are diagnosed with cortical visual impairment. Although quite different, each of these programs nurtures the children and families that come through The Children's Home's doors.

### Adoption and Permanency Services

Adoption has expanded greatly since its inception more than 125 years ago. As a thriving full-service adoption agency it focuses on infant adoption and helping kids to find homes from foster care. The staff provides a full range of counseling services for birthmothers and adoptive families. The adoption and permanency program is broadening its expert-



ise, as staff trains families who are willing to learn to care for medically fragile children. The department's caring social workers and counselors are available 24/7 at (412) 736-2908. This close-knit group of professionals provide so much support for every component of the adoption process.

### Child's Way Daycare

Child's Way is a daycare for medically fragile children, housed within The Children's Home & Lemieux Family Center. Dually licensed as a day-care and health-care program we are qualified to take care of children ages birth to 21 who need 4 or more hours of nursing care per day. We are certified with 4 out of 4 Keystone STARS, providing critical early education alongside medical care. Every child thrives in an environment created to support their needs for growth and learning. Child's Way can adapt to the individual needs of the children it serves. The beautiful and determined children provide lessons to everyone through their determination to overcome any obstacles.

### Pediatric Specialty Hospital

The Children's Home's Pediatric Specialty Hospital is a 30-bed inpatient hospital that focuses on teaching the caregiver how to care for their medically fragile child at home. The nurse-to-patient ratio

is very low so that nurses can spend dedicated time with caregivers to teach and empower them to provide hands on care for their child. Most days you will find nurses, PCTs, nurse practitioners and clinicians, working with families and building certainty in the caregivers. Clinical care is provided in a hospital disguised like home so that care is less stressful, comfortable, and relaxed. In our home like setting, we watch caregivers flourish.

### Pediatric VIEW

The newest addition at The Children's Home is Pediatric VIEW. The Children's Home eagerly embraced a very important program called Pediatric VIEW in September 2021. This program cares for patients diagnosed with cortical visual impairment (CVI) which is a visual disfunction that occurs within the brain, not the eye. Within Pediatric VIEW, patients are provided with the tools they need to learn the world around them and to identify the objects that they see in their everyday life. The children served through Pediatric VIEW achieve great progress through the therapy and support provided through this service.

To learn more about the programs offered, visit [Childrenshomepg.org](http://Childrenshomepg.org).

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# Fall Fun at the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center

By Kevin Brown

The Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center (C&RC) at Boyce Mayview Park will have something for everyone this fall with an exciting lineup of special events. From September to November, the C&RC on Boyce Road will host a variety of family-fun activities, walks/runs, a Halloween "Color Crawl", Monster Hunt, and more.

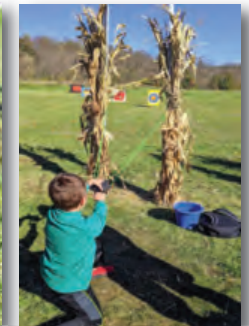
## RADical Day

RADical Day kicks off the season on September 22 and features family activities throughout Boyce Mayview Park. Held in conjunction with the annual three-week Allegheny Regional Asset District (ARAD) celebration known as RADical Days, this event is an annual thank-you to the public with tours and family activities. "RADical Day will go beyond our facility with events in the park like

a family art activity, toddler and preschool programming, and a tour of the C&RC," says Melissa Lindberg, Marketing/ Membership Services Supervisor for the C&RC.

## Halloween Color Crawl

On October 15, the C&RC will host the Halloween Color Crawl, a two-mile walk/run with a dash of colorful fun for all ages and fitness levels. According to Melissa, the walk/run is not timed. "Participants will just come and enjoy the walk/run either as a family or as individuals. What's different is they will run through color stations where they will be dusted with colored powder. Also, they will get treats and goodie bags since it's Halloween," she says.



## Monster Hunt

The Monster Hunt will round out the Halloween season on October 21. "This event is geared to our younger families and kids," Melissa notes. "Ages ten and under would enjoy it the most, but anyone is welcome. The Monster Hunt is a follow-along Halloween story. Participants should wear Halloween costumes or festive Halloween attire. They'll be given a storybook and treat bag at the beginning and will follow the story about the monsters that are hiding in the park. This is very family-friendly and is not meant to be scary. They will walk the paved trails of Boyce Mayview Park and look for cutouts of different monsters in the story and find where they're hiding. There will be treat stations along the way where they can trick or treat. After they find all the monsters on the trails, they will go to the park pavilion where we'll have crafts, photo ops, and music as a fun wrap-up," she explains.

up oversized slingshots for kids to launch apples at targets in the field." Free and open to the public. Pre-registration not necessary.

## Gratitude 5k

The Gratitude 5k will be the final event of the season on November 19. "The Gratitude 5k is for regular runners who want to get in a last-minute run before the weather gets too bad, as well as anyone who's interested in trying a 5k. It is very runner-friendly, particularly for new runners," Melissa says.

Along with the busy fall schedule of special events, the C&RC facilities will be open for regular activities such as fitness and aquatics. "The reason we offer the special events is for people who don't look to recreation as a day-to-day part of their lives to see that we're more than just a fitness center, basketball courts or a pool," Melissa says. "Even if you're not really naturally drawn to physical activities, there are other opportunities for you to enjoy the C&RC and Boyce Mayview Park."

## The Bounty at Boyce Mayview Park

The Bounty at Boyce Mayview Park will be held on November 5 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It's a fall celebration that is meant to be a passive, leisurely day in the park. "We bring in food trucks and set up tents and tables so people can enjoy food and sitting in the park," Melissa says. "We will also offer activities like an obstacle course for the kids, a petting zoo and a mini golf setup. We will do the apple slingshots where we set

Registration required for most special events. Some events have fees. More details will be announced at [www.twpusc.org/recreationcenter](http://www.twpusc.org/recreationcenter). Information also be available by calling (412) 221-1099. Visit [www.radworkshere.org](http://www.radworkshere.org) to learn more about the county-wide activities sponsored by ARAD during RADical Days.



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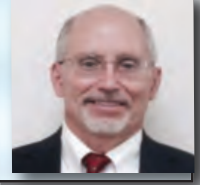
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## Careers In Healthcare - Nursing

# WHS School of Nursing Readies Students to Be High Quality Nurses

By Andrew Wilson

*The nursing profession in the 21st century is evolving rapidly, and no one is more aware and excited about that than the director of Washington Health System's (WHS) School of Nursing.*

"Nursing as I have known it is ever so changing," said Jamie Golden, MSN, RN, CNE, who in addition to being director of the School of Nursing is also director of WHS' staff education. "It is a constantly evolving profession, and that is creating tremendous opportunities for new nurses."

Some of the reason for the opportunities in nursing is a demographic shift. Baby Boomers have either reached or have begun reaching retirement age in the past decade, plus the COVID-19 pandemic created a "perfect storm" of sorts, which caused many nurses on the cusp of retirement to decide to retire. Consequently, more nurses are leaving the field than entering, and that creates more career opportunities.

"There are so many opportunities once your nursing license is attained," said Golden. "New nurses are able to move into specialty areas sooner than they would in previous decades."

She says technology is another factor greatly changing the nursing profession, as nurses are using new technologies to care for much sicker patients in ways that were unimaginable 10 or 20 years ago. This can be an advantage for the more tech savvy generations.

"The newer nurses coming into nursing have grown up with technology and have an advan-



**"To be a nurse requires compassion, patience, attention to detail, organization, and a willingness to be flexible."**

*-Jamie Golden*

tage as health care turns digital," Golden said.

Nurses today need to develop very precise critical thinking skills as this is part of the core in being successful in this field. In addition to critical thinking skills, Golden says nurses today need to be familiar with analytics and scientific reasoning, as well as being prepared to take courses pertaining to science, psychology, sociology, pharmacologic and physiologic/pathophysiologic topics of study.

One thing that hasn't changed and is still critical for success is the need for nurses to be compassionate, caring individuals. Golden describes nursing as science coupled with "the art of caring."

"To be a nurse requires compassion, patience, attention to detail, organization, and a willingness to be flexible," said Golden.

She says that WHS' School of Nursing provides personal attention to each student, which helps to ensure student success over the course of the 16-month RN-Diploma program.

Combining clinical experience with instruction in classrooms

and the simulation center, located in a building adjacent to the hospital, the incoming students are primarily non-traditional with an average age of 28. While that indicates many students are seeking to reboot a second career, she says new high school graduates are also enrolled and very successful.

"Nursing can be an enriching career if sought out for the right reasons," said Golden, who sounded a word of caution as nurses' salaries have increased greatly in recent years. "If choosing this career path primarily for the money, you will probably be disillusioned and leave the profession within a short period of time."

For her own career, Golden says she has the best of both worlds. She comes from a family of both nurses and teachers, so this hybrid has been very enriching and rewarding. "I would certainly without a doubt choose this path all over again," she says.

"I am so fulfilled by being director of this school that has a great reputation for producing quality nurses," she said of the

school whose students continually exceed both the national and state average of first time NCLEX pass rates. "I am so proud of these students, and what we produce in the end is incredible. If I had the chance to choose my career path again, I would choose the same path."

The Washington Health System School of Nursing (WHSSN), recently ranked by Nursing Schools Almanac as second out of 15 of the Best Registered Nursing (RN) Diploma Programs in Pennsylvania, is a 16-month hospital-based RN Diploma program that is Pa. State Board approved, ACEN credentialed, and its accelerated curriculum leads to the eligibility of the graduate nurse to take the NCLEX exam for licensure as a registered nurse.

**> If interested in nursing, visit the Washington Health System School of Nursing website**

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Heart, Lung and Vascular  
Services  
Orthopedics and  
Neurosciences  
Surgical Services  
Women's Health Services

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Wellness Center  
Health & Fitness Center  
Corporate Wellness Services  
Spa Harmony  
Live Well Yoga & Pilates

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 With A Disability

## New VFI/TRPIL Facility Scheduled for Completion by Year-End

By Lois Thomson

With TRPIL's Capital Campaign in its final phase, renovations on the VFI/TRPIL building at 42 W. Maiden St. in Washington, Pa., are scheduled to be finished by the end of the year. When that happens, the two organizations – Voices for Independence and Transitional Paths to Independent Living – will be able to better serve more people.

As Steve Johnson, director of marketing for both VFI and TRPIL, said, "It will be a true Center for Independent Living that's full of life, where individuals with disabilities can thrive, with a wide variety of supports for them under one roof. If you have questions, if you have needs, we want to be your resource center, and we want it to be all in one place." Resources are currently divided between the new facility on Maiden St. and the old one on E. Beau St.

While fundraising for the campaign is ongoing, the organizations are continuing to hold events. The most recent fundraiser was the 7th Annual Walk\*Run\*Roll 5K held in May at Washington Wild Things Park. This was the first in-person 5K in three years, and Johnson said both that the turnout was good and more than one person with a disability participated. "We always ensure that both able-bodied people and individuals with disabilities are taking part in our events, side-by-side. It's important that everyone takes part together."

The next event will be the 2nd annual consumer picnic, Aug. 18 at the VFI/TRPIL program and community center. Johnson said a large turnout enjoyed last year's catered affair that included music by a DJ. "Tents were filled with people. It was impressive to see that for the first year, and we're looking forward to how many more can we serve this year."

While the picnic is just for VFI/TRPIL consumers, an upcoming event planned for the public is the 6th Annual Golf Outing at Lone Pine Country Club in Washington Sept. 12. "To be able to golf on Lone Pine Country Club's fantastic course while supporting agencies like ours is a big deal for everyone there." He said the turnout last summer was great, and they are expecting a repeat this year.



"Marcy, a consumer of TRPIL, had a great time participating in the 5K Walk\*Run\*Roll



Attendees relax at the VFI/TRPIL First Annual Consumer Picnic and Golf Outing from last year. The next event will be August 18th.

As Johnson stated, "Whether they are for the purpose of fundraising or of raising awareness, all events lead to the final phase of construction. It will be beneficial for consumers to have a 'one-stop' disability resource site at our new program and community center, without having to split time between receiving services from two different buildings that TRPIL currently occupies. Every bit of support helps get us closer to bringing these new, impactful services and activities to the disability community."

The projected cost to finish all work on the new VFI/TRPIL program and community center is \$2.5 million. When finished, it will feature an accessible training kitchen, where cooking classes will be offered for both consumers and their attendant caregivers. A fully accessible wellness center will also be available where people can take part in the adaptive fitness and workouts. The service is free, and people can train with dedicated staff that can also help them plan, make suggestions, and offer nutrition advice.

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

## Facing a Major Health Challenge? Now what?

Many people tend to take good health for granted, until something comes along to change that. Whether it's an accident, an injury, or debilitating illness, lives can be transformed in an instant. If that happens it's easy to feel sorry for ourselves, and that's all right – for a while. However, the faster you can let go of grieving, the quicker you can move on, overcome challenges, and enjoy a full life. Here are some tips to help:

- You've suffered a major loss, so don't try to ignore your feelings; allow yourself time to work through your grief, and understand that you will likely experience a roller coaster of emotions.
- Accept what has happened and let go of the past; it's not healthy to continue looking back and wishing things were different.
- Don't dwell on what you can no longer do; that can easily lead to depression. Focus on what you can do and how you can improve on

that. Take advantage of adaptive technologies and equipment that are available.

- Learn as much as you can about your disability: What is the prognosis? How much progress might you expect? Knowing what to expect will help you prepare yourself and make adjustments.
- Set realistic goals, but be patient. Don't try to do too much too soon. Every small step is considered to be an achievement.
- Seek things to do that give you purpose in your life. Consider doing volunteer work. Develop an interest in new hobbies or activities that bring you enjoyment. Find a way to give back to those who help you – perhaps sharing your knowledge on a certain subject, helping with research for a project, or even just being a good listener.
- Don't neglect other areas of your health, such as a proper diet and getting plenty of sleep.



**PathWays**  
Life Long Fulfillment

## Fostering Independence and Fulfilling Dreams

**By Kevin Brown**

**From its beginnings nearly 60 years ago in Washington County, PathWays today helps individuals in six southwestern Pennsylvania counties live independently and fulfill their dreams.**

Originally chartered as United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Washington County in 1964, the organization now known as PathWays continued to grow over the years to serve a broad range of individuals with disabilities. In 2009, PathWays was formed from UCP and today serves 1,600 individuals in Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.

PathWays operates a number of distinct programs serving children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism, along with their families. Their mission is summed up as lifelong fulfillment, helping individuals attain independence and reach their dreams.



*An individual in the Residential Program and her caregiver are out for a coffee.*

Under its Children's Services, PathWays offers Early Intervention Services to help children with developmental delays or diagnosed conditions reach their fullest potential. These strategies, provided at no cost in the home, are highly individualized and designed to enhance each child's learning and growing experiences.

PathWays also operates Rainbow's End Learning Centers, which are full-service day care centers for children of all abilities, providing educational supports as well as social and emotional skill-building in a safe, secure, and welcoming environment. Over the past 28 years, Rainbow's End Learning Centers have grown from a one-room day care of mixed age groups to two locations

with 11 different classrooms.

Your Child's Place, the third of the children's services offered by PathWays, is a specialized, pediatric child-care center for infants and children who need skilled nursing care while their parents or caregivers are at work or school. Staffed by registered nurses and child-care professionals, Your Child's Place is equipped to handle conditions that require constant or periodic medical treatment and the

*Continued on following page*

Every life has potential.  
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Since 1964, PathWays has continually innovated opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through cutting-edge programs, life long services, and individual attention, we empower people of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential.

We offer child, adult, and community services in six Southwestern PA counties. Learn more about how to participate by visiting [www.yourpathways.org](http://www.yourpathways.org).



**PathWays**  
Life Long Fulfillment

Contact us today at 724-229-0851  
or [info@yourpathways.org](mailto:info@yourpathways.org).





A direct support professional from the Adult Training Facility interacts with one of PathWays' individuals.

use of medical devices.

PathWays' adult services includes the Adult Training Facility (ATF). The ATF helps individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism contribute their talents to the community and enhance social, physical, emotional, and life skills. ATF offers a program called the Work of Heart where individuals learn job-related skills to help them build their employable skills, like problem solving.

Individuals at the Washington County ATF location volunteer for organizations such as the Meals-On-Wheels program, Washington County Food Bank, Christian Outreach, and others. At the Greene County ATF location, individuals volunteer for the Meals on Wheels program and Direct Results.

PathWays offers a residential program for



A child-care professional from the Rainbow's End Learning Center plays with some of the children in her classroom.

adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism to live a more fulfilling life. Its origin dates to 1975 with their first group home and now includes 11 homes in three counties. The residential program operates three distinct services: Licensed Community Homes, Supported Living and HUD Homes.

Licensed Community Homes allow individuals to live independently with 24-hour support staff who offer them a path toward what is essential and important in their life.

Supported Living offers a bridge between around-the-clock supports and independent living. It is a choice for an individual who

lives in their own home or apartment and desires some assistance in their life.

HUD Homes are fully handicapped-accessible homes that offer safety and comfort to people of all abilities.

Those in the residential homes are supported by professional staff who help them live independently.

Many residents not only receive housing services from PathWays, but also participate in PathWays' training programs during the day. Rounding out PathWays' services, Agency With Choice offers several community-based services that allow individuals to achieve more independence and live fulfilling lives. This includes options such as companion services, in-home and community supports, homemaker/chore services, supported employment opportunities, and more.

PathWays truly touches lives with their services and strives to help each individual live to their fullest potential. Their success is best described on their website: "At the end of the day, our true measure of success is seeing the pride and confidence we build in the people we serve."

> If you would like more information about **PathWays'** services, employment opportunities, or making a donation, visit [www.yourpathways.org](http://www.yourpathways.org) or call (724) 229-0851.



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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# Hearing

## How to Talk to a Loved One About Hearing Loss



By **Megan Myers-Auria, Au.D., CCC-A**

Have you ever had a hearing appointment scheduled and the office asked if you could bring your spouse or a loved one to the appointment and you wondered why? Hearing loss doesn't just affect the person with the loss, it also affects the whole family, friends, and anyone you come in contact with.

How does it affect others you may ask? From frustration with having to repeat conversations and misunderstood words, to the heartbreak of seeing someone you love withdraw and isolate themselves from activities and people because of their hearing loss. The negative effects of

hearing loss not only affect the person with hearing loss but also their loved ones close to them.

Let's start with the facts; a person with an untreated hearing loss can affect their quality of life in many ways. Oftentimes our friends and family members are helping by compensating without realizing. This can potentially cause the person to not seek help right away. Well intended efforts, such as repeating or "translating" to your spouse or family member what others are saying may be preventing your loved one from realizing how much communication they are actually missing out on. I often tell my patients and their loved ones, "You don't realize what you are missing because you are missing it." This truly resonates with them. Studies have linked untreated hearing loss to stress, depression, early onset dementia, social withdrawal, and isolation.

Did you know most people wait an average of 7 to 10 years before they decide to do something about their hearing loss? It's not healthy for them to wait and it can cause major strain on your relationship when you have to act as their ears for many years.

**Tips for Talking with Someone with Hearing Loss**

- **Choose a quiet location away from background noise. Face your loved one so your voice travels straight toward them and speak clearly.**
- **Pronouns count – use the word "I" instead of "YOU". I am concerned versus You never listen.**
- **Give positive benefits for hearing aids – you'll be able to hear your granddaughter when she calls on the phone.**
- **Hearing loss can also lead to other diseases such as dementia. People with hearing loss tend to withdraw from social settings and become depressed.**
- **Offer to have your hearing tested as well.**

How can you help? Talk to your loved ones about their hearing concerns. Gently remind them of their hearing loss every time you repeat or "translate" what someone is saying. Schedule and attend with them a hearing consultation done by a professional. Remind them they have nothing to lose and potentially everything to gain by seeing a hearing professional. Visit Swift Audiology at [www.swiftaudiology.com](http://www.swiftaudiology.com) to schedule a hearing evaluation today. Your loved one may benefit from our "no obligation, no cost" test drive. Just like when you put on glasses and realize how much better you can see, so it is with customized hearing aids.



**Megan Myers-Auria** is Doctor of Audiology at **Swift Audiology**. The practice provides hearing loss services, hearing protection, and medical hearing aid devices to patients at 4 convenient offices throughout the Pittsburgh region. For more information, visit [swiftaudiology.com](http://swiftaudiology.com) or call **(412) 274-7285**.



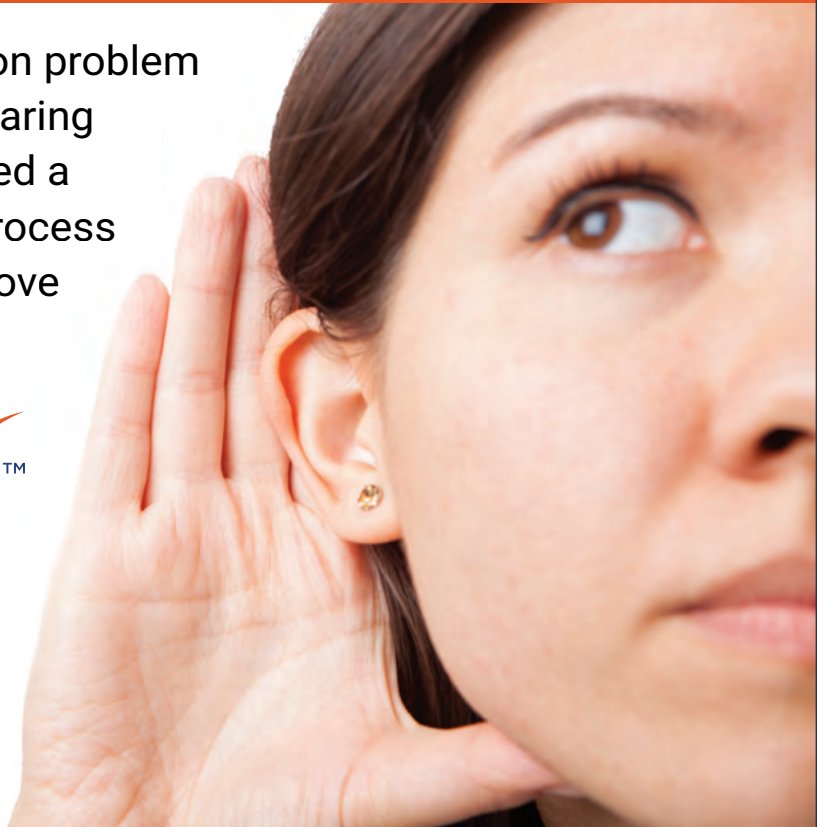
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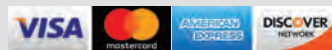


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# Senior Guide

## Staying Safe at Home with LIFE Pittsburgh

### What is LIFE Pittsburgh?

LIFE Pittsburgh is an all-inclusive, comprehensive program that helps seniors (55+) maintain their independence in the community through supportive services. The program is known nationally as PACE, Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. For over 21 years, LIFE Pittsburgh has been serving the elderly population in Allegheny County.

### What Does LIFE Pittsburgh Provide?

LIFE Pittsburgh is a nonprofit program that provides comprehensive and integrated care to seniors who may not otherwise be able to live independently at home. There is a coordinated plan of care that includes medical, social and daily living support. At LIFE Pittsburgh, older adults are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. They receive the very best care from dedicated geriatric care professionals without sacrificing their independence. Primary care and community services are provided through the Day Health Center and through the in-home program based on an individual's needs. The continuous coordination of care sets the LIFE program apart from any other care model, which ensures quality of life to its Participants.



### Who is Eligible for LIFE Pittsburgh?

Eligible participants are 55 years old or older, live in the designated service area, meet the state's medical requirements for nursing facility level of care, are able to live safely in the community, and be financially eligible as determined by the Allegheny County Assistance Office or be able to privately pay.

### LIFE During Uncertain Times

We are dedicated to continuing to provide care to keep our Participants safe and healthy during this time. While we are adapting our process, we are also committed to continuing to enroll new Participants into our program at this time, as we are a valuable resource to those that need our help.

### How Can I Learn More About LIFE?

To learn more about eligibility and/or the process of enrolling, please contact (412) 388-8050 TTY: 711 and ask for the Enrollment Department or visit [www.lifepittsburgh.org](http://www.lifepittsburgh.org).

Please reach out if you need extra support, we are here for you. Stay safe, stay well.

## YOU'RE SAFER AT HOME. YOU'RE SAFER... WITH LIFE.



LIFE Pittsburgh is an all-inclusive program for individuals 55+ who want to stay in their home, but need supportive services to do so. Our coordinated plan of care includes medical, social and daily living support. At LIFE Pittsburgh, seniors are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. LIFE Pittsburgh goes beyond simply "treating medical problems" to actually improving the quality of life for most of our Participants. There is no cost to receive LIFE Pittsburgh services for those who qualify.



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

412-388-8050 TTY:711





# DO YOU NEED HELP?

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- Are you struggling to **pay for your Part D prescription drugs or other healthcare costs?**
- Do you need help **understanding your coverage?**

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- **Extra Help Program** – which helps lower the cost of Part D prescription drug costs
- **Medicare Savings Programs** – which covers the payment of the Medicare Part B premium

**PA MEDI** can also help you understand your Medicare coverage, preventative benefits, and give you free, accurate, unbiased advice.

call **PA MEDI** at 412.661.1438  
or visit [wfspa.org/service/pamedi](https://wfspa.org/service/pamedi)

The Annual Open Enrollment Period is between 10/15 and 12/7, schedule an appointment with a **PA MEDI** Counselor.

*Effective July 1, 2021, APPRISE is now Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight, PA MEDI –Same Program, Same Services for Pennsylvania's Medicare Beneficiaries, now with a New Name. This project was supported, in part by grant number 2001PAMISH-00, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.*





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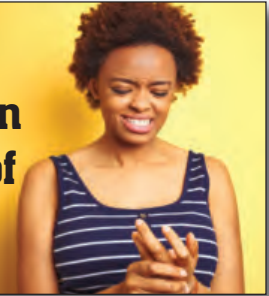
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## SENIOR HEALTH

**Did you know there are more than 100 types of arthritis? Here are the five most common:**

### 5 Most Common Types of Arthritis



**1. Osteoarthritis** – the most common form – is the "wear and tear" that happens when your joints are overused. It usually comes with age, but it can also come from joint injuries or obesity, which puts extra stress on your joints. This occurs when cartilage gradually breaks down, making movement painful.

**2. Rheumatoid Arthritis** is an autoimmune disease, which means the immune system attacks parts of the body, especially the joints. That leads to inflammation, which can cause severe joint damage if you don't treat it. Symptoms may include fatigue and loss of appetite.

**3. Psoriatic Arthritis** – people who have this condition have inflammation of the skin (psoriasis) and joints (arthritis). Psoriasis causes patchy, raised, red and white areas of inflamed skin with scales. As many as 30 percent of people with psoriasis will also get psoriatic arthritis.

**4. Gout** is a buildup of uric acid crystals in a joint, usually in the foot. This happens when your kidneys can't process the uric acid your body makes, or you're eating too many foods that raise uric acid levels. If attacks are left untreated, your joints and kidneys can be affected. Items to avoid if your uric acid is high include alcohol; red meat; lamb; pork; organ meats, such as liver or kidneys; and seafood, especially shellfish, such as shrimp and lobster.

**5. Lupus** is an autoimmune disease that can affect joints and numerous organs in your body. Doctors aren't sure what causes lupus, but something triggers your immune system to become distorted. Instead of attacking viruses and other invaders, it begins to cause inflammation and pain throughout your body – from joints, to organs, and even to the brain.

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## Hospice Helps Patients Remain at Home Instead of the Hospital



By **Evalisa McClure**

Facing a life-limiting diagnosis is rarely simple. When patients are ready to focus on comfort and quality of life, they may not want an expensive stay in the hospital or skilled nursing facility.

Hospice offers an alternative – particularly during COVID-19's heightened risks and restrictions.

Whether the patient has decided the side-effects of their current treatment plan outweigh its benefits, or their care provider has recommended end-of-life care, VITAS Healthcare makes transitioning to hospice care easy and safe for patients, families, caregivers, and physicians.

Hospice transitions begin with a team of specialists who confirm the patient's hospice eligibility with a short assessment. Questions are asked and answered, and VITAS supports the patient's and family's informed decisions about their preferences for end-of-life care. The patient's needs and goals come first, and reasonable efforts are made to care for the patient wherever they're most comfortable. In most cases, this means home.

The VITAS team – physician, nurse hospice aide, social worker, chap-

lain, and volunteer – then develops a personalized plan, including any equipment and supplies the patient may require. Patients leaving a hospital or skilled nursing facility can still benefit from any specialized medical equipment they may have used in their care facility—right from the comfort of their home. Medicines that improve quality of life are delivered as well.

At home, hospice patients receive day-to-day care from a family caregiver with plenty of assistance and training from the hospice team, either in-person or via telehealth. Each week, team members visit on a schedule designed to meet the patient's needs. Hospice patients also face fewer restrictions at home than in a facility, so families can work out a visitation plan that's best for them.

If symptoms flare up and additional support is needed, VITAS offers Intensive Comfort Care® with 24/7 support from a crisis nurse until symptoms are back under control. Even as levels of service change, Medicare or private insurance continues to cover the cost of care 100%.

Most patients with advanced illness want to be home near the end of life. VITAS has the expertise, resources, and personnel to make that happen.

**Evalisa McClure** is general manager for **VITAS Healthcare in Pittsburgh**. For more information about end-of-life care services, call the nation's leading provider at **(866) 759-6695** (available 24/7) or visit **VITAS.com**.

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## SENIOR LIVING

### Christian Housing Celebrates 50 Years of Safe, Affordable Housing for People in Need

by Andrew Wilson

*It takes dedication and commitment for any business to last 50 years, but there might be even more at work for Christian Housing, Inc.*



*Pete Flaherty (center), mayor of Pittsburgh in the 1970s, broke ground for St. Augustine Plaza in Lawrenceville, along with Sister Coleman Conroy (right) and an unidentified Sister of St. Francis and a student from St. Augustine School.*

“We have a commission from a Higher Power to take care of people in need,” said Daniel Barbusio, executive director of Christian Housing, Inc. “We have a commission to do God’s work.”

Christian Housing, Inc., is a non-profit corporation that gives assistance to individuals of limited income who are 62 or older or 18 years or older who have a mobility impairment and need a handicapped-accessible living space. To live in a unit at one of Christian Housing’s 15 community locations, total family income must fall within the established limits of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

“The mission began with the idea that it was possible to provide housing where people could live in a community environment comfortably, safely and with dignity,” said Barbusio.

In the early 1970s, Christian Housing grew out of the combined efforts of six people: two Pittsburgh businessmen, Frank and Edward Schneider, who first had the idea of transforming unused church properties into sites for low-income adult housing; Rev. Paul Kuppe, O.F.M. Cap., a member of the Franciscan Capuchins who at that time was serving at St. Augustine Parish in Lawrenceville; and Sister Coleman Conroy, O.S.F., and Sister Veronica Marie Phillips, O.S.F., two members of the community of the Sisters of St. Francis of Millvale, who were teachers at St. Augustine School.

“The two sisters went door-to-door to interview people in Lawrenceville and they discovered that there were many people living in homes that they could no longer afford to maintain. For some, it was a real struggle to survive,” said Barbusio. “That was the start of our mission. Our founders were determined to develop a place that our residents would be happy to call home.”

*Continued on following page*



## SENIOR LIVING



Celebrating Christian Housing's St. Augustine Plaza in 2017 are: (seated) Sister M. Coleman Conroy and (standing l to r.) Father Paul Kappa, Daniel K. Barbusio, Sister Mary Agnes Phillips, Sister Eileen Magill, Ralph A. Falbo.

Continued from previous page

Working with developer Ralph Falbo, ground was broken nearly 50 years ago on the first location, St. Augustine Plaza in Lawrenceville, which opened in 1976. Mr Falbo's partnership with Christian Housing was key in developing 21 more sites around the city of Pittsburgh, as well as in Greensburg, Elk County, and Indiana, Pa.

"We ensure that our buildings are well-maintained, and as beautiful as can be," said Barbusio. "At all of our locations, we want to create a community where seniors can live comfortably, feel safe, but not feel isolated."

Barbusio says that building a sense of community is important for Christian Housing. Elderly and/or disabled people can be more vulnerable to a number of issues when they are alone. Certainly, they can be more at risk of being victims of fraud or crime, but there's also emergency response in the event of a health problem.

"All of our buildings are medic-alert buildings where residents can summon help by pulling a cord or pushing a button, but, more importantly, we've discovered that our residents never feel like they are isolated. Somebody is next door and they're looking out for you," he said.

Barbusio says that he has seen first-hand how comfortable the residents are in their respective communities. Residents feel at home and love visiting with others in neighboring units. They can do this because all of the buildings are secure entries, so no one off the street can simply gain access by opening a door. In addition, all of the buildings have Christian Housing staff working on site. Barbusio says they look for staff with a heart for caring.

"We want people who demonstrate care and compassion for seniors and those with disabilities," he said. "We can teach someone how to do the job, but we can't teach kindness and compassion if someone doesn't have it to begin with."

The staff of Christian Housing is a unique group of individuals, both laypersons and religious, who believe in the mission, which began 50 years ago, continues today, and has expanded throughout western Pennsylvania and beyond.

"We continue to maintain our mission to provide, decent, safe, affordable, and sanitary housing with respect, dignity, and compassion," Barbusio said.

> With fifteen communities in the greater Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area, including Greensburg, Elk County, and Indiana, Christian Housing provides HUD-subsidized housing for senior and disabled adults. For more information, visit [www.christian-housing.org](http://www.christian-housing.org) or call (412) 646-5193.

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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.”

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If possible, encourage the person to assist in making the decision by discussing it and going over all options. Make several visits to the facility that is under consideration so you have more than just one impression. And when the move is made, do as much as possible to make the new residence look like home.

The types of services seniors need most should be thought through before making a decision. Consider, for example, what is in place with regard to the following: a clean, safe, organized environment; personal care standards; mobility resources; transportation opportunities; assistance with medications; nutrition advice.

#### Don't hesitate to ask questions of the facility itself. Learn as much as you can about:

- What is done to help welcome a new resident?
- What kind of training does the staff undergo for new residents, to make sure all needs are met?
- How many residents are in the facility?
- Does the facility have staff on-site 24/7?
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### 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 / HOSPICE

### Emerald Home Health

412-429-5880  
emeraldhomehealthofficial.com

### Gallagher Home Care Services and Gallagher Home Health Services

412-279-7800 • www.Gallagherhhs.com

### Seniors Helping Seniors of Southwestern PA

412-944-2470 • www.swpaSeniorCare.com

### VITAS Healthcare

800-723-3233 • VITAS.com

# SENIOR RESOURCES



## INCONTINENCE

Tri-Medical  
800-541-0734 • www.trimedonline.com

## MEDICARE/INSURANCE

Ron Reinfeld  
412-795-8948  
Working with ALL your Major Providers.

## PA MEDI

412-661-1438  
wfspa.org/service/pamedi

### UPMC Health Plan – Medicare Advantage Program

1-844-300-9394  
upmchealthplan.com/medicare

## SENIOR LIVING

Baptist Senior Family  
Baptist Homes 412-563-6550  
Providence Point 412-489-3560  
BaptistSeniorFamily.org

### Brightwood Plaza Apartments

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

## SENIOR LIVING

Christian Housing, Inc  
412-646-5193 • www.christian-housing.org

### 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

412-961-1651 • 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.

### Quemahoning Towers

814-467-5041 or 814-467-5423  
klivengood@shms-actionhousing.org

## RESPITE CARE

Seniors Helping Seniors of Southwestern PA

412-944-2470  
www.swpaSeniorCare.com

## SENIOR SERVICES

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

### LIFE Pittsburgh

412-388-8050  
www.life pittsburgh.org

### Seniors Helping Seniors of Southwestern PA

412-944-2470  
www.swpaSeniorCare.com

## SKILLED NURSING & REHABILITATION

### ProMedica

412-498-9375 • www.promedica.org  
ProMedica Bethel Park 412-831-6050  
ProMedica Greentree 412-344-7744  
ProMedica Monroeville 412-856-7071  
ProMedica North Hills 412-369-9955  
ProMedica Peters Twp 724-941-3080  
ProMedica Pittsburgh 412-665-2400  
ProMedica Shadyside 412-362-3500  
ProMedica Whitehall 412-884-3500

## SUPPORT GROUPS

VITAS Healthcare Family and Caregiver Support

800-723-3233  
VITAS.com

  
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Gallagher Hospice provides our patients and families with physical, emotional, and spiritual support.

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412-279-4255  
www.gallagherhospice.com

  
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- \*Mental Health Nursing
- \*Physical Therapy
- \*Occupational Therapy
- \*Speech Therapy
- \*Social Services
- \*Home Health Aides

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412-279-7800  
www.gallagherhhs.com



  
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Companions - Escort to Appointments  
Medication Management - Homemaking  
Private Duty Nursing or Home Health Aides  
Insurances Accepted  
Private Pay - Long Term Care  
Worker's Compensation

Care can be Provided in Hours, Visits or Shifts

412-279-2257

# 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

## **ADOPTION/FOSTER CARE**

### **Children's Home & Lemieux Family Center**

412-441-4884  
www.childrenshomepgh.org

## **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/cardiovascular-services/

### **St. Clair Health**

412-942-4000 • www.stclair.org

### **WHS Cardiovascular Care**

724-225-6500  
whs.org/cardiovascularcare

## **DENTAL/DENTAL IMPLANTS**

### **Chips Dental Associates**

Your Hybrid Certified Doctor  
Timothy Chips, DMD  
724-443-5710  
ChipsDental.com

### **Valley Brook Dental**

Joseph L. Gurecka, DMD  
724-942-8982  
valleybrookdental.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

## **HOSPITALS**

### **Advanced Surgical Hospital**

724-884-0710 • www.ashospital.net  
A Physician Owned Hospital  
Orthopedic Surgery Hospital  
5x Winner Guardian of Excellence, Patient Satisfaction (Press Ganey)  
Awarded Outstanding Patient Experience 6 Consecutive Years (Healthgrades). Onsite MRI and PT/OT Services

### **Heritage Valley Health System**

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

### **St. Clair Health**

412-942-4000 • www.stclair.org

### **WHS Washington Hospital**

724-225-7000 • www.whs.org

## **IMAGING**

### **St. Clair Health Diagnostic Imaging Services**

www.stclair.org  
Diagnostic imaging services at the I; St. Clair Outpatient Center – Bethel Park and the St. Clair Outpatient Center - Peters Township; and MRI Center on Broughton Road.

## **INCONTINENCE**

### **Tri-Medical**

800-541-0734 www.trimedonline.com

## **HEALTH INSURANCE**

### **Ron Reinfeld**

412-795-8948

## **MASSAGE THERAPY**

### **Honor Your Body**

412-212-0231  
www.honoryourbodywellness.com

## **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

### **Eagle Medical Equipment**

724-218-1051 - eaglemedical.us  
**Sleep Pittsburgh**  
Lift Chairs  
412-462-7858  
www.SleepPittsburgh.com  
Mental Health & Wellness

## **ORTHOPEDICS**

### **Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation**

1-800-828-CAST (2278)  
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

### **St. Clair Hospital Center for Orthopedics**

412-942-4000 - stclair.org

### **WHS Orthopaedics and Sport Medicine**

724-206-0610 • whsdocs.org

### **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/

## **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**

### **WHS Outpatient Rehabilitation**

724-250-6280  
whs.org/rehab

### **Direct Physiotherapy**

Dr. Mason A. Tupta  
412-207-7612  
DirectPhysiotherapy.org

## **PHYSICIANS**

### **Heritage Valley Robinson Township Medical Neighborhood**

HeritageValley.org  
Home to a variety of services and physician practices.

## **PHYSICIANS**

### **HVMG Park Manor Medical Associates**

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

### **St. Clair Medical Services**

www.stclair.org

### **Washington Physician Hospital Organization Provider Network**

whs.org

## **REHABILITATION**

### **Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation**

1-800-828-CAST (2278)  
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

### **Encompass Health**

THE TRUSTED CHOICE  
encompasshealth.com/  
pittsburghrehab  
Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Harmarville  
320 Guys Run Road • Pittsburgh, PA 15238  
877-937-7342  
Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sewickley  
351 Camp Meeting Road • Sewickley, PA 15143  
412-749-2396  
Encompass Health Sewickley at Heritage Valley Kennedy  
25 Heckel Road, 5th Floor  
McKees Rocks, PA 15136 • 412-749-2396

### **ProMedica**

www.promedica.org  
ProMedica Bethel Park 412-831-6050  
ProMedica Greentree 412-344-7744  
ProMedica Monroeville 412-856-7071  
ProMedica North Hills 412-369-9955  
ProMedica Peters Twp 724-941-3080  
ProMedica Pittsburgh 412-665-2400  
ProMedica Shadyside 412-362-3500  
ProMedica Whitehall 412-884-3500

## **SCHOOL OF NURSING**

### **Washington Health System School of Nursing**

whs.org/schoolofnursing  
724) 223-3167  
Call today to register to attend an Information Session held monthly.



# Employment Opportunities



**BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER!** Ask about our sign-on bonuses for select positions!

[APPLY TODAY!  
CareersAtSrCare.org](https://www.careersatsr.org)

## Retired and Looking for Meaningful Part-time Work?

By C.J. Girod, President  
Seniors Helping Seniors of Southwestern PA

If you've recently retired or simply have some extra time on your hands and are looking for a rewarding way to help others, Seniors Helping Seniors® may be just what you are searching for. We believe seniors can help each other age more gracefully, happily, and productively, and seniors who provide care and companionship benefit just as much as the seniors who receive it.

Our caregivers/companions are free to determine when and where they work, including the days of the week, time of day, shift duration, total number of hours per week, and how many miles they are willing to commute, as well as the types of work they are willing to do. We provide a wide array of services, from companionship, meal preparation, light housekeeping, transportation, personal care, medication reminders, dementia and Alzheimer's care, respite care, pet care, yard work, and home maintenance.

In addition to serving clients in their homes, our caregivers/companions work with clients who live in independent living and assisted living communities, providing companionship and transportation/escort services to doctor appointments, funerals, veterinarian appointments for their pets, and other more enjoyable outings, such as out to breakfast, lunch, or dinner, shopping, movies, libraries, museums, and parks. In serving our clients, our primary goals are to assist them so they can safely live their lives the way they want to live them, and help them enjoy their lives to the fullest.

### Don't have a background in healthcare?

Please don't let that be a concern. All the services we provide are non-medical in nature, the majority of which you have learned through your own life experiences. We also offer training and our care manager, a retired nurse, is always there to provide guidance as needed.

Our service area currently includes southern Allegheny, Washington, and Greene Counties.

**If you live in or near these areas and are interested in joining our team or simply want to learn more, please don't hesitate to contact us at (412) 944-2470 or via email at [Info@swpaSeniorCare.com](mailto:Info@swpaSeniorCare.com).**

You can also complete our contact form at [www.swpaSeniorCare.com/contact](http://www.swpaSeniorCare.com/contact).

*We look forward to hearing from you!*



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Shaka M. Walker, M.D.

Watson Health  
100 Top Hospitals\*

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CARE NETWORK  
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Health

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

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