CANCER, CONQUERED
Celebrating Life After Breast Cancer

Is It the Flu—or Lyme Disease?
The Truth About E-Cigarettes
in your words:

Don’t just take our word for it. Your neighbors share how Susquehanna Health is improving and saving lives, every day.

6 fast action for your heart
In the case of a heart attack, every second counts. Carefully coordinated care and minimally invasive procedures saved one Wellsboro resident’s life.

7 a new life after stroke
Devastated by a sudden stroke, Gerry, of Williamsport, shares how the rehabilitation services team helped him set goals and move forward.

8 extraordinary in the ordinary
For Barb, of McElhattan, a battle with breast cancer was filled with unexpected twists and turns. Today, she’s grateful to be living life cancer-free.

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How the patient-centered medical home model is transforming the way you receive medical care.

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YouTube.com/user/SusquehannaHealth

10,000 Steps
“I stay Susquehanna Healthy by walking every day at lunch, taking the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible and walking in the evenings when I get home from work. My goal is to take 10,000 steps a day, at least four times a week.”
—Sandy Niklaus-Eck, secretary, Human Resources Administration

Screening Smarts
“I stay Susquehanna Healthy by getting yearly mammograms because one saved my life.”
—Barbara Hemmendinger, LCSW, ACSW, associate director of Behavioral Sciences, Williamsport Family Medicine Residency

Fun, Games and Fitness
“During my lunch breaks, I often go outside or to our empty waiting room and work at improving my yo-yo skills and nailing new tricks. I challenge myself with a kendama, as well. It is an old Japanese toy that requires eye-hand coordination, determination and movement. I recently incorporated juggling into my hobbies and was quite surprised I was able to work up a sweat. I need to get up and move when I get the chance.”
—Tyler Benelli, outpatient therapist, Behavioral Health

SHARE YOUR STORY
What makes you #SusquehannaHealthy? Tell us about your health experience. Tag us when you’re exercising or cooking a healthy meal. Be sure to share your posts and photos with the hashtag #SusquehannaHealthy. You may see your story mentioned in an upcoming issue!

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on the cover:
Barb Fritz, with her niece, Alexis. Read Barb’s story on page 8.

PHOTOGRAPHY:
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Is It the Flu, Arthritis… or Lyme Disease?

Tiny ticks can carry this dangerous disease. Among U.S. states, Pennsylvania ranks high in the prevalence of Lyme.

While most tick bites are harmless, several species of ticks can cause serious diseases. One of the most common diseases is Lyme disease, a multistage, multisystem bacterial infection transmitted through a tick bite.

You might think you need to worry about Lyme disease only during the summer. April through October is considered “tick season,” but Lyme disease is a year-round problem.

TRICKY TO PINPOINT
How do you know whether you have Lyme disease? The list of possible symptoms is long, and symptoms can affect every part of the body. Lyme disease is difficult to diagnose because symptoms are not consistent and may imitate other conditions, such as the flu or rheumatoid arthritis, for example. Testing is generally done to eliminate other conditions and may be supported through blood and laboratory tests. However, these tests are not absolutely reliable for diagnosing Lyme disease. Diagnosis is usually based on symptoms and a history of a tick bite.

The primary symptom is a red rash that may resemble a “bulls-eye.” It can appear several days after infection—or not at all. In fact, it may not be present in as many as 30 percent of cases, or it can disappear then come back. Sometimes the rash can mimic skin problems such as hives, eczema, sunburn, poison ivy or flea bites. It might itch or feel hot, or it might not be felt at all.

Several days or weeks after a bite from an infected tick, you might experience flu-like symptoms, such as:

- Aches and pains in muscles and joints
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Low-grade fever and chills

Lyme disease in the earliest stage is usually treated with antibiotics for a few weeks. Left untreated, the disease can wreak havoc on the body. Neurological symptoms, including weakness and paralysis of the facial muscles (Bell’s palsy), arthritis, heart problems and vision impairment have all been associated with Lyme disease. It’s never too late to seek care.

GUARD AGAINST TICKS
The ticks responsible for spreading Lyme disease are tiny. These blood-sucking insects can be as small as poppy seeds. It is easy to mistake a tick that has hooked onto your skin for a freckle or speck of dirt. The key is to avoid ticks as best as you can. When you’re in or near woods, brush or long grasses, make sure to:

- Dress in light colors so that ticks stand out.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, pants and closed-toe shoes. Tuck your pants into your socks.
- Stick to the centers of trails.
- Apply an insect repellent containing at least 20 percent DEET to clothes and exposed skin.
- Check yourself, your children and your pets for ticks when you get home. Pay close attention to the scalp, ears, back of the neck, underarms, groin and backs of knees.

If you spot a tick, remove it immediately with fine-tipped tweezers. If a rash or other symptoms of Lyme occur, contact your doctor. Save the tick in a plastic bag so your doctor can test it for disease if necessary.

TICK TIP
If you spot a tick that has latched on to you, remove it right away. Contrary to popular belief, applying petroleum jelly or a hot match to a tick won’t make the insect detach itself. In fact, these tactics can increase your risk for infection by irritating the tick and stimulating it to release its disease-bearing saliva.

DON’T WAIT
Our infectious disease physicians can treat all types of infections that stem from bacteria, viruses and parasites, including Lyme disease. Contact your primary care provider if you think you may have symptoms of Lyme disease.
A HOME FOR YOUR CARE

A “medical home” isn’t a place; it’s a team working to improve your care.

After being hospitalized for an extremely painful bowel obstruction, Diane Walashunas, 53, became fearful. She went to the emergency room every time she felt abdominal discomfort. Belinda Gregory, a nurse navigator with Susquehanna Health, noticed Diane’s frequent emergency room visits. She reached out to Diane to offer extra support with managing her condition.

This coordinated care is just one example of how Susquehanna Health primary care practices have adopted the patient-centered medical home (PCMH) model of care.

A TEAM EFFORT

A “medical home” doesn’t refer to a specific place. PCMH improves access, quality and outcomes for patients by helping coordinate the complexities of care. The professionals of the medical home, which may include doctors, nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists and others, work as a team to coordinate a patient’s care in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, clinics and specialists’ offices.

It can help to think of PCMH as a football team. “The patient’s physician acts as a quarterback, providing oversight and direction on services with a team of advanced practice professionals, such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants,” explains Krysta Wagner, executive director for Susquehanna Health Medical Group. “PCMH helps patients have the best outcomes because someone is checking in to make sure they are taking their medication, went to that appointment with a specialist or did their home exercises.”

Susquehanna Health transitioned to the PCMH model over the past two years and recently earned a level III certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) following a rigorous review. PCMH is available to every patient in Lycoming and Clinton counties, regardless of whether they have insurance, and the care at each Susquehanna Health practice is evidence-based to ensure consistent high-quality care.

THE ROLE OF PRIMARY CARE

“PCMH helps people get engaged in their own health. They know they have a team to support them 24/7, starting at the primary care physician’s office,” says Krysta. “With the transformation over the last two years, we have a more proactive approach that helps patients get ahead of problems and be seen by the team at the right location before a dramatic step, like hospitalization, is needed.”

The primary care provider coordinates everything from acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) care to preventive and end-of-life care. For patients who don’t have many health issues, PCMH ensures they keep up with important screenings and routine vaccinations and examinations.

A HELPING HAND

Nurse navigators serve as important personal links between patients and the physician’s offices. They follow up regarding appointments, schedule tests, offer education and answer questions.

“If I have a concern, I call Belinda, and she makes sure I’m on track or helps me know which physician to see for my problems,” says Diane. “It really reduces worry for me. She knows my history, and I know she’s there to answer my questions and get me going in the right direction.”

Belinda followed up with Diane as she worked with her GI specialist to get the proper medications and to learn diet and exercise habits that would reduce her risk for developing a blockage. If something feels “off,” Diane calls Belinda, who asks questions about her symptoms and offers suggestions for relieving her discomfort. Belinda can also make appointments with Diane’s primary care doctor or GI specialist as needed. The result has been far fewer emergency room visits.

“It’s good to have Belinda on my side to help me with my care. I’m happy to stay out of the emergency room,” says Diane.

“Diane has many providers involved in her care,” says Belinda. “Through PCMH, Diane’s primary care physician provides a more defined channel for questions and keeps all of her providers on the same page.”

Nurse navigators follow up with patients who are discharged from the hospital to ensure everything is in place for the transition, including home care or outpatient rehabilitation, as needed. The nurse navigator also assists with referrals to community resources to give patients an advantage in recovery.

“We want to make sure that our patients continue on a path to good health after they’re discharged from the hospital. We’re providing the support they need to keep going in the right direction,” says Krysta.

PARTNERING FOR ACCOUNTABLE CARE

Due to the nature of Diane’s case, Belinda suggested that she have an additional resource: Nurse Care Manager Dee McGee, RN, BS, through the River Health Accountable Care Organization (ACO). An ACO includes groups of doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers who voluntarily give coordinated, high-quality care to Medicare patients. Susquehanna Health participates in the River Health ACO.

“For ACO patients, the nurse care manager can meet with the patient at home to do an assessment—for example, if the patient is confused about medications or experiencing side effects. That’s an additional feeling of security for patients,” explains Belinda.
THE MEDICAL HOME MODEL EXPLAINED

In the PCMH model, think of the medical home (usually your primary care provider’s office) as the central hub. Nurse navigators often serve as liaisons between the patients and their providers.

- Coordinates patient care between all providers
- Follows up with the patient
- Applies to all settings, from hospital to home
- Encourages the patient to be proactive
- Promotes the best possible outcomes

To become part of a medical home and find the right primary care physician for you, go to SusquehannaHealth.org/PrimaryCare.
Shirley Hebe, of Wellsboro, knew something was wrong when a walk to her mailbox made her feel like someone was tightening a rope around her chest. When the feeling didn’t go away, her son, Peter, thought it might be her heart. It was time to seek emergency care.

SWIFT ACTION

At the Soldiers + Sailors Memorial Hospital (SSMH) Emergency Department, Dr. Donald Shaw and his team quickly confirmed Shirley was having a heart attack. They called for a life flight helicopter to transport her to the Susquehanna Health Heart & Vascular Institute at Williamsport Regional Medical Center (WRMC) for a heart catheterization to restore blood flow through her heart.

With a heart attack, time is critical. A blockage in the arteries prevents nourishing blood from being delivered to organs and tissues and can result in permanent damage. When stormy summer skies grounded the helicopter, the emergency team enacted a different plan. In consultation with Dr. Donald Nardone at WRMC, they administered TPA, a clot-busting drug that could potentially begin clearing Shirley’s artery during the 50-minute ambulance ride.

“We have a very good relationship with the team at SSMH and the area EMTs [emergency medical technicians], so we have worked through a variety of scenarios and have protocols in place to give patients the best treatment,” says Dr. Nardone.

CLEARING THE BLOCKAGE

When Shirley arrived at WRMC, the heart catheterization team was ready to begin her procedure. She had a 100 percent blockage in her left anterior descending artery, which supplies the largest amount of blood to the heart. Dr. Nardone removed the blockage and inserted a stent to keep the artery open.

Because she received TPA, which thins the blood, Dr. Nardone performed her heart catheterization through her wrist, rather than through her groin, to minimize bleeding. Wrist-access catheterization, called a radial cath, also reduces the time a patient must remain prone in bed following the procedure. Dr. Nardone has used this technique for years, but new equipment that makes radial caths easier to perform is making them more common.

EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Following the procedure, Shirley had just a small cut on her wrist and was surprised to hear that was all they needed to do. As part of her recovery, she participated in cardiac rehabilitation at SSMH with registered nurses Whitney Abbott and Tonya McNamara.

“Our cardiac rehabilitation program is standardized, so patients can participate at the location that's convenient for them,” Dr. Nardone explains. “The program not only improves patients’ physical tolerance for exercise, but there’s also education about heart disease and how to exercise. Socializing with others who are doing well is another benefit. Many patients are afraid to exercise after a heart attack, so this is a great, monitored way to help them gain confidence in their abilities,” he adds.

Shirley completed cardiac rehabilitation and continues to go to Williamsport for follow-up appointments every few months. The mother of four and grandmother to nine is thankful for the carefully coordinated care that helped save her life.

“One thing that still stands out to me is that I wasn’t afraid. It was only after I thought about things, about what could have happened, that fear really set in. I trusted that they all knew what they were doing—and that they were doing their very best for me,” Shirley says. “I’m so grateful to Susquehanna Health. I wouldn’t be here without them.”

Your HearT

in your words

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KNOW YOUR RISK

Find out if you are at risk for a heart attack. Watch our video at SusquehannaHealth.org/HeartRiskFactors.
To say Gerry Ayers, 52, of Williamsport, is driven to stay in good shape is an understatement. He plays and coaches tennis, swims, bicycles, runs or walks three miles daily, lifts weights and has three jobs that keep him on his feet. He also does not smoke or drink.

One night, Gerry experienced a stroke without warning. He woke up unable to move his left arm and quickly realized his entire left side was paralyzed. Doctors suspect a rare birth defect caused a blood vessel to burst in his brain.

After emergency treatment, Gerry spent nine days in the inpatient rehabilitation unit at Williamsport Regional Medical Center (WRMC). Specialists on the unit help victims of stroke, traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, as well as others with neurological and orthopedic conditions, rehabilitate and learn (or relearn) skills they need to function independently when they leave the hospital.

MAKING GOALS
Like many stroke patients, Gerry was initially depressed. “It’s common for stroke patients to feel knocked down. They go from being fine one day to not knowing if they’re ever going to be able to do the things they could do before,” says Michael Krall, psychological services associate. “For Gerry, who was very active and depended on that for his livelihood, thinking it might all be over was devastating.”

As with most strokes, the extent and length of his recovery could not be predicted, and Gerry was not happy with the sudden drop in his activity levels. Fortunately, his therapy included 30-minute sessions with Michael, which enabled Gerry to express his fears and set goals.

Neuropsychology specialists, Richard Landis, PhD, and Michael, are a vital part of the rehabilitation treatment team. They assess stroke and brain injury, patients’ memory and general cognitive status. They also help patients with their emotional struggles and assist the rehabilitation team with motivating patients.

“Michael Krall encouraged me to think about the future rather than dwell on what I had lost,” says Gerry. “I am a pretty competitive person, and he got me thinking that this is a new challenge; it’s me against myself.”

A NETWORK OF SUPPORT
The rehabilitation team tailors treatments, including physical and occupational therapy, to each patient’s needs. Knowing that Gerry was very driven, they accommodated him with more aggressive workouts, including letting him hit tennis balls in his room and taking him to the YMCA to exercise in the pool.

Another motivator for Gerry was the built-in support network of patients. By design, just about everyone eats breakfast together in the physical therapy area and that’s followed by a morning group exercise program led by the recreational therapist. This interaction, which includes a celebratory song for individuals when they’re discharged and visits from past patients, inspires many people to work harder to reach their goals.

As Gerry’s condition improved, he began pushing others to do their best. He likes to say, “The more you put into something, the more you will get out of it.”

BACK TO BUSINESS
Just six months after leaving the hospital, Gerry is almost completely recovered, with the exception of occasional fatigue in his left knee. Even so, he’s back to all of his activities, including coaching tennis and working as a valet. He also visits the rehabilitation unit with the hope of inspiring others to overcome their struggles.

GET THE FACTS
Learn about the signs of a stroke and your risk for a stroke at SusquehannaHealth.org/Stroke. For our stroke support group, see Page 14.
Extraordinary
IN THE ORDINARY

A journey through breast cancer gives a McElhatten resident a new outlook on life.

Helping raise her niece, Alexis, is one of Barb Fritz’s greatest joys. The McElhatten resident cherishes every opportunity to help volunteer and participate in activities at Alexis’ school. The road that led back to this life wasn’t an easy one, however. After a difficult breast cancer journey, Barb is grateful to be cancer-free and able to do all the things she did before her diagnosis.

A SHOCKING DIAGNOSIS
At age 46, Barb was stunned to learn that a suspicious-looking lymph node, found in a mammogram at Susquehanna Health’s Kathryn Candor Lundy Breast Health Center, was positive for breast cancer. A pathology report following a lumpectomy (breast-conserving surgery to remove the lump), performed by Dr. Susan Branton, found that Barb had an aggressive breast cancer with a high risk for recurrence. The cancer was stage 3.

“I remember saying, ‘I’m just not prepared,’” says Barb. “It just didn’t compute. How could it be this bad?”

Dr. Branton was encouraging as she outlined Barb’s treatment recommendations, which included six months of aggressive therapy. “I was petrified through almost every step. I had to fake it a bit at times, but no matter what happened or how down I felt, the team always turned me around,” says Barb. “Someone could always comfort me or find a solution to my problem. They helped me mentally get around this yearlong battle.”
chemotherapy with medical oncologist Dr. Charles Agbemabiese, a second surgery to ensure clean margins, radiation treatments under the care of radiation oncologist Dr. David Nagel and, because her cancer was estrogen-receptive, taking medication to prevent recurrence.

Barb ultimately decided to trust her doctors at Susquehanna Health. “I didn’t want to be away from my home and family,” she says. “We made the decision to go to Susquehanna Health, and we never regretted it.”

**EASING CONCERNS**
The Cancer Center’s holistic approach appealed to Barb. When the road to healing brought unexpected twists and turns, that approach became more important. When she developed a painful condition that impaired her arm, she saw a physical therapist. When chemo-induced menopause triggered mood swings and hot flashes, she met with a Susquehanna Health OB/GYN. She even received a diagnosis and treatment for a pre-existing condition that threatened her overall mobility.

“I was petrified through almost every step. I had to fake it a bit at times, but no matter what happened or how down I felt, the team always turned me around,” says Barb. “Someone could always comfort me or find a solution to my problem. They helped me mentally get around this yearlong battle.”

Barb was most fearful of chemotherapy. After meeting with Dr. Agbemabiese, she peeked into the treatment area and was invited in for a tour by an oncology nurse. “She showed me everything, where the seats are, the televisions and just how inviting the room really is,” says Barb.

That visit, and her first chemotherapy session with a nurse who talked her through the procedure and set expectations, helped make it a more comfortable experience. The treatment was hard on her, but for every question or side effect, Karen, Dr. Agbemabiese’s oncology nurse, always responded the same day.

During her radiation treatments, which was part of her initial treatment plan, Barb began feeling better and stronger.

**FOLLOW-UP CARE**
As with many cancer patients, Barb feared the cancer returning post-treatment. Dr. Nagel eased her mind about recurrences by describing her aggressive cancer like a chronic condition—one that was becoming more treatable thanks to research. Through the Cancer Center’s survivorship program, Barb received a comprehensive overview of her treatments and met with a nutritionist.

Barb opted to participate in a clinical trial after the radiation therapy, so she had an additional year of treatment. She focused on rebuilding her strength through diet and exercise, especially working out in the pool. She also dipped her toes into volunteering at her niece’s school.

Now one year cancer-free, with the clinical trial recently completed, Barb is focused on staying strong and healthy. Grateful for the support of her husband, family and friends, and her Susquehanna Health team, she is immersing herself in all the “ordinary” things that she may have taken for granted prior to her diagnosis.

“When you go through something like this, you recognize that those moments—time spent with family and friends—are the ones that you want more of,” she says. “When I catch myself getting distracted by projects or old worries, I quickly remember what is most important.”

Even though it would require a full year of potentially taking another chemotherapy drug, Barb opted to participate.

“One had three really smart doctors [Drs. Branton, Agbemabiese and Nagel] telling me it could benefit me,” says Barb. “I also thought about the women who went before me, who had advanced cancer treatment with their participation, and I thought about my niece and others who might gain an even better outlook.”

At the beginning of Barb Fritz’s treatment, Sue Miller, the clinical trials research nurse at Susquehanna Health Cancer Center, told her she was eligible to participate in a study of a new treatment for aggressive cancers. This treatment could help prevent recurrence. Barb put that suggestion on the back burner until chemotherapy was behind her and she began feeling better.

“Many patients who participate in a trial are compelled to do it because of a family member or to improve standards for future generations,” says Sue. “In addition to possibly receiving a treatment that could help prevent recurrence, Barb also gained a research team, with me as the navigator to address any side effects or other issues.”

Barb was grateful that Sue could help address treatment side effects. Barb will continue to be monitored for up to 10 years as part of the trial. “That’s really good for the patient, because they’re never really out of surveillance. We’re keeping a watchful eye on their overall health and habits,” says Sue.
More and more people, including teens, are lighting up with electronic cigarettes—a habit called “vaping.” Unlike regular cigarettes, these devices deliver nicotine without all the smoke. But e-cigarettes could carry risks, especially for children.

“Children’s brains are much more susceptible to damage by substances like nicotine that cross the blood-brain barrier,” explains Dr. Russell Gombosi, Susquehanna Health pediatrician. “Currently, we lack research on the long-term health effects of smoking e-cigarettes to determine whether young brains can replace damaged cells or if there will be more permanent alterations.”

Dr. Gombosi answers your frequently asked questions about e-cigarettes:

**Q** Who is using e-cigarettes?

The use of e-cigarettes has doubled since they became available in 2007. Tobacco smokers are heavy users. So, too, are adolescents, particularly middle and high school students. In fact, e-cigarettes have become their most popular form of smoking.

Flavorings—such as coffee, mint and fruit flavors—may tempt younger users to try these products.

**Q** Can e-cigarettes help smokers quit?

Proponents say that e-cigarettes may help smokers kick the habit. Their design and mode of nicotine delivery may make quitting easier. But research is mixed on how well they work as smoking cessation aids. If you are trying to quit smoking, talk with your doctor about other proven, safe ways to quit.

**Q** Are they safer than traditional cigarettes?

On the surface, e-cigarettes may seem safer than other forms of smoking. Users don’t inhale burning tobacco and its many toxic by-products. These include tar and other carcinogens. But you may still be exposing yourself to other harmful substances. At this time, the FDA does not regulate e-cigarettes. So, makers of these devices don’t have to follow any specific rules on safety or advertising. The inhaled vapor may contain chemicals like formaldehyde. Flavorings may hide possible toxins, and it’s unclear if the vapor puffed into the air puts nonsmokers at risk for health problems.

Also, people who use e-cigarettes are still taking in nicotine. It’s a very addictive substance. At high doses, nicotine can cause dizziness and vomiting. Those who refill their own cartridges are especially at risk for unsafe levels of the drug.

Perhaps even more concerning, young children have been poisoned after coming in contact with the nicotine-containing liquid. Teens who use e-cigarettes may become addicted to nicotine, and e-cigarettes can be a gateway to regular cigarettes and illegal drugs.

FOR HELP QUITTING SMOKING, please call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669). The Pennsylvania Department of Health offers 24/7 smoking cessation services to all Pennsylvanians.
Welcome, New Physicians

Heather Gerst, DO  
*Digestive Disease Center*  
(570) 321-3454

Susquehanna Health Digestive Disease Center welcomes Dr. Heather Gerst. Dr. Gerst earned her medical degree from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Erie and completed her fellowship in gastroenterology at Geisinger in Danville. Dr. Gerst is board certified in gastroenterology and will be providing follow-up care on a part-time basis in the Digestive Disease Center office.

Daria Keyser, DO  
*General Surgery*  
(570) 723-0716

Susquehanna Health General Surgery at Wellsboro welcomes Dr. Daria Keyser. Dr. Keyser earned her medical degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed her general surgery residency at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta.

Christina Nolan, DPM  
*Foot & Ankle Specialty Care*  
(570) 321-2020

Dr. Christina Nolan recently joined Susquehanna Health Foot & Ankle Specialty Care practice as a foot and ankle specialist. She joins the team of Dr. Zachary Ritter and Dr. Steven Hawley on the campus of Divine Providence Hospital. Dr. Nolan earned her medical degree from Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia and completed her residency at Temple University Hospital. She provides a wide range of services from general podiatry to treatment of more serious conditions and traumas of the foot and ankle.

Pius Ochieng, MD  
*Lung Center*  
(570) 321-3580

Susquehanna Health Lung Center welcomes Dr. Pius Ochieng. Dr. Ochieng completed his internal medicine residency at Queens Hospital Center in Jamaica, New York, and is board certified in pulmonology. He also completed a critical care fellowship at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt in New York.

Ashley Pence, DO  
*Pediatrics*  
(570) 321-2810

Susquehanna Health Pediatrics welcomes Dr. Ashley Pence. Dr. Pence earned her degree from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Erie and completed her pediatric residency through Michigan State University at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing.

Charu Sharma, MD  
*Cancer Center*  
(570) 326-8470

Susquehanna Health Cancer Center is proud to welcome Dr. Charu Sharma, radiation oncologist, to its cancer care team. She earned her medical degree at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and completed her residency in radiation oncology at Columbia University-New York Presbyterian Hospital, where she served as chief resident. Dr. Sharma also holds a master’s degree in nutritional science from the University of Connecticut.

**NEED A DOCTOR?**

Many Susquehanna Health physicians are accepting new patients. Call PhysicianFinder at 1-877-883-4789. We’re available to assist you 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
Caring for mind, body and being, Susquehanna Health Cancer Centers embrace a “whole person” approach to treatment. From diagnosis and treatment through survivorship, the Cancer Center at Divine Providence Hospital offers patients the highest clinical quality and most comprehensive practices close to home, a methodology officially recognized by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC). The CoC recognized the center with a three-year designation as the only comprehensive community cancer program in the region to receive full accreditation, with six commendations awarded for quality and outcome measures.

Accreditation highlights the full scope of quality cancer care Susquehanna Health offers, including:

❯ Prevention and early detection
❯ Access to clinical trials
❯ Continuous patient monitoring
❯ A team-focused approach to make treatment seamless
❯ Counseling and support
❯ Survivorship programs

The CoC accreditation program sets stringent quality of care standards for cancer programs. Accreditation is given only to facilities that have voluntarily committed to providing the highest level of care and that demonstrate a superior level of care during an on-site evaluation by a CoC physician.

“This prestigious accreditation is a testament to Susquehanna Health’s commitment to exemplary patient care,” says Michelle Gaida, executive director of Cancer Services at Susquehanna Health. “Our comprehensive cancer centers utilize state-of-the-art services and equipment, as well as evidenced-based, patient-centered medical care to treat the whole person—all in one convenient location.”

New Hospitality Inn Opens in Williamsport

One unique and innovative way in which Susquehanna Health helps patients and families is by providing on-site, overnight accommodations. Since 1990, The Hospitality Inn has been a warm, welcoming service.

The new Hospitality Inn, located at 802 Campbell Street, Williamsport, opened its doors to guests in September. The Inn features a brand-new third floor with five rooms, including three deluxe rooms, one ADA-compliant room and one family suite. The new rooms are a reasonably priced and operated by Aramark. These rooms are decorated with a Little League Baseball theme, tied to the theme throughout the newly opened Little League lobby and lounge. All rooms have private baths and modern accommodations.

The fourth floor of the Hospitality Inn still includes 22 dormitory-style rooms. Seventeen of these rooms are complimentary and used for patients and families traveling long distances for our services. Five rooms are for Susquehanna Health medical students.

To learn more, call our Hospitality Inn reservation specialists at (570) 321-1000.

Save the Date for #GivingTuesday

DECEMBER 1, 2015

For the second year, Susquehanna Health will participate in #GivingTuesday, a national effort to transform how people think about and get involved during the giving season. Taking place the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday harnesses the power of social media to create a national focus dedicated to giving back during the holidays.

As part of this national movement, Susquehanna Health Foundation will be raising funds for the Susquehanna Health Cancer Center. As the demand for cancer care grows in our region, so does the need to continue to enhance our technology and grow our staff.

“Susquehanna Health is always looking for innovative ways to connect with our community and inspire giving,” said Sherry Watts, vice president, Susquehanna Health Foundation. “Through #GivingTuesday, we are offering donors the ability to give to the Cancer Center or a specific Susquehanna Health program or service close to their hearts.”

If you are interested in donating to Susquehanna Health on #GivingTuesday—or any day—please visit SusquehannaHealth.org/Donate or call (570) 320-7460.
HOLIDAY SHOPPING SOIRÉE
Get a jumpstart on your holiday shopping with Soldiers + Sailors Memorial Hospital Auxiliary’s annual Shopping Soirée! Dunham’s Department & Furniture Stores in Wellsboro will be open exclusively to ticket holders for the evening. Enjoy a 20 percent shopping discount, door prizes, hands-on craft and cooking demonstrations, delicious food, exciting entertainment and free gift-wrapping. Don’t miss this fun and festive event. For tickets and more information, please call (570) 723-0191.
Saturday, November 7
Dunham’s Department Store, Wellsboro

EVENT Spotlight:

Activities and Screenings
These events are held at The LifeCenter, Williamsport YMCA, 641 Walnut Street, unless otherwise specified. To schedule an appointment or register for a LifeCenter event, please call 1-877-883-4791.

Free! BLOOD PRESSURE, HEART RATE & OXYGEN CHECKS
High blood pressure is a silent killer. It has no symptoms. Have your blood pressure checked regularly. If you have high blood pressure, talk with your doctor.
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 am–7 pm
Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 9 am–5 pm

Free! CPR ANYTIME
Susquehanna Health’s LifeCenter is pleased to host the American Heart Association’s CPR Anytime program, presented by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. This hands-on program includes a free training kit with mini Annie doll, booklet and DVD to share with family and friends. Seating is limited.
Thursday, October 22 or December 17, 1:30 pm

OSTEOPOROSIS SCREENING
Get important information about your bone health that you can share with your doctor. This quick and painless ultrasound heel screening measures bone density level. $20.
Monday, October 26, 3–6:30 pm
Thursday, November 19, 11 am–4:30 pm

Free! HEARING SCREENING
Have your hearing checked by taking advantage of a free hearing screening provided by Susquehanna Health Audiology for all ages.
Wednesday, December 9, 1–3 pm

The LifeCenter: Now at the Williamsport YMCA!
susquehannahealth.org  |  13
Activities for Older Adults
These classes are held at The LifeCenter, Williamsport YMCA, 641 Walnut Street. Please pre-register on Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 am to noon, Lincoln Senior Center, (570) 323-3096. $15 for AARP Members, $20 for Non-Members. Prepayment is required. Mail payment to Lincoln Senior Center, 2138 Lincoln St., Williamsport, PA 17701.

AARP DRIVER SAFETY EIGHT-HOUR COURSE
If you are a driver older than age 50, register for this two-day course to help improve your safety while driving. Visit SusquehannaHealth.org for upcoming dates. 9 am–1 pm.

AARP DRIVER REFRESHER COURSE
This course is for individuals who have previously attended the two-day, eight-hour AARP Driver Safety Course and have proof that they attended that program. Tuesday, November 10, 9 am–1 pm

Childbirth Education
All classes are held in the Maple and Oak rooms of Susquehanna Tower at Williamsport Regional Medical Center unless otherwise specified. Register for the following classes by visiting SusquehannaHealth.org/Events. For information, please call (570) 321-2069.

Free! BABY CAFÉ
Expecting, new or experienced mothers are encouraged to join us at Baby Café. This group discussion gives moms an opportunity to meet and talk with other moms about their pregnancy and after-birth experiences while spending time out of the house. It’s a safe and relaxed, child-friendly environment, and a board-certified lactation consultant will facilitate the group. Exchange tips about breastfeeding, receive breastfeeding support and discuss parenting concerns with other moms. Mothers are encouraged to bring babies. Free weight checks for babies are also provided.

Wednesdays, October 21, November 4 & 18, December 2 & 16, 5:30–6:30 pm
The LifeCenter at Williamsport YMCA

Free! TOUR THE BIRTHPLACE
Take a 30-minute tour of The Birthplace at Williamsport Regional Medical Center, including labor and delivery, postpartum rooms and the nursery. Attendees participate when they are between 32 and 36 weeks pregnant.

Wednesday, October 28, November 25 or December 23, 8–8:30 pm
Wednesday, November 11 or December 9, 11–11:30 am

CHILD/BIRTH CLASSES
Gain a sense of trust in your body’s ability to give birth. Partners will find out how to help you through labor with touch and words. Learn about pain relief and tour The Birthplace. Bring two bed pillows and an exercise mat or comforter to class. $40 per couple.

Four-Week Series:
Wednesdays, November 4–25, 7–9 pm

BREASTFEEDING CLASS
This one-session class will provide information to help decide if breastfeeding is right for you. Learn easy steps to begin breastfeeding and the important role fathers play in breastfeeding. Breastfeeding and returning to work or school is possible. Find out how to pump and store breast milk. Dads are welcome to attend. $10.

Thursday, November 5 or December 3, 6–8:30 pm

SIBLING CLASS
In this one-hour class, children ages 3 to 8 learn how a baby acts, how to hold a baby and ways to be involved. If your child has obvious symptoms of a cold, cough or other illness, please call to reschedule. $10 per family.

Thursday, November 12, 6–7:30 pm

Free! BREASTFEEDING & RETURNING TO WORK/SCHOOL
This one-session class is for moms who plan to return to work or school and would like to continue to provide breast milk to their babies. Mothers will learn about preparing for maternity leave, current legislation that protects breastfeeding moms, pumping and storage guidelines, breast pumps and other pumping equipment. Protecting the breastfeeding relationship and milk supply will also be reviewed. Moms are welcome to bring babies to the class. It’s best to attend a few weeks before you return to work. Expectant moms are encouraged to first attend the basic Breastfeeding Class.

Thursday, November 19, 6:30–8 pm

SATURDAY CHILDBIRTH CLASSES
This one-day course will help you understand labor and be less nervous about giving birth. Fathers and partners will learn ways to help mom through labor with touch and words. Learn about pain relief and tour The Birthplace. $40 per couple.

Saturday, November 21 or December 19, 9 am–4 pm

Free! BOOT CAMP FOR NEW DADS
Dads-to-be, learn practical tips. Get the straight talk on helping your partner through birth, calming baby and baby when they cry and dealing with in-laws. Expectant fathers or fathers with new babies are welcome.

Tuesday, November 24, 7–9 pm
Elm Room, Susquehanna Tower, Williamsport Regional Medical Center

HAPPIEST BABY ON THE BLOCK
Learn an easy way to soothe your baby and help him or her sleep longer. Expectant and new parents, grandparents and child care providers welcome. $25.

Thursday, December 17, 6:30–8 pm

Fitness and Nutrition
These consultations are held at The LifeCenter, Williamsport YMCA, 641 Walnut Street. Please call 1-877-883-4791 for an appointment.

CUSTOMIZED NUTRITION PLAN FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT
Meet with our health educator and receive an individualized report of the calories your body uses each day, your percent body fat and a sample daily menu of an eating plan that promotes healthy eating and a healthy weight. This plan is not appropriate for individuals with diabetes or other special dietary needs. You may have water, but no food, caffeine or exercise is permitted for four hours prior to testing. $40.

MANAGE YOUR CHOLESTEROL
Learn about cholesterol, recommended levels, factors that cause high cholesterol and ways to manage it with lifestyle changes. $30.

PERCENT BODY FAT ASSESSMENT
Have your body fat measured by bioelectric impedance. During this process, electrodes are placed on your feet and hands to measure the resistance to the electrical signal as it travels through body fat and muscle. This signal cannot be felt. After the test, you may review your results with our health educator. You may have water, but no food, caffeine or exercise is permitted for four hours prior to testing. $25.

Support Groups
BEREAVEMENT
First Wednesday of each month, 1–2:30 pm
Third Wednesday of each month, 6–7:30 pm
Third Floor near The Gatehouse, Divine Providence Hospital
For information, please call (570) 320-7691.

HEARTWORKS GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
Tuesdays, October 27, November 10 & 24, December 8 & 22, January 12 & 26, 6–7:30 pm
For information, please call (570) 320-7641.

STROKE AND HEAD INJURY SURVIVOR SUPPORT GROUP
Fourth Tuesdays of each month, 2–3:30 pm
Williamsport Regional Medical Center, West Entrance
For information, please call (570) 321-2656.
**LIVING WITH DIABETES GROUP**
First Wednesday of each month, 5 pm
The cafeteria at Divine Providence Hospital
For information, please call (570) 326-8410.

**PELVIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUP**
Meet other women who live with endometriosis, interstitial cystitis and other pelvic pain conditions.
Fourth Thursday of each month, 6–7:30 pm
Costello Center Physical Therapy at Divine Providence Hospital Campus
Registration appreciated. Please call (570) 320-7470.

**Cancer Support**
These group meetings are held at the Susquehanna Health Cancer Center (ground floor entrance), Divine Providence Hospital. For more information, please call (570) 320-7877.

**LOOK GOOD... FEEL BETTER PROGRAM**
This free workshop for women in cancer treatment shows women how to address any changes in hair and skin that may occur during treatment. For more information, please call 1-800-227-2345.
First Monday of every other month, 11 am

**BRIDGING THE GAP**
The American Lung Association’s Bridging the Gap is a support group for people with lung disease, featuring support from registered respiratory therapists and topical guest speakers. For information, please call (570) 320-7877.
Third Thursday of each month, 6:30 pm

**PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT**
Men who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer discuss concerns and share experiences.
First Wednesday of each month, 6 pm

**Childbirth Education**

**EXPECTANT PARENTS CLASSES**
A series of six classes addressing common questions and concerns of expecting parents is offered throughout the year. Topics include physical and emotional changes during pregnancy, labor/delivery (featuring a tour of SSMH’s OB Unit), techniques for enhancing comfort during pregnancy/labor, C-section delivery, breastfeeding, understanding and caring for your newborn and what to expect after birth.
Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7–8:30 pm
For information, please call (570) 723-0375

**Support Groups and Programs**

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP**
Susquehanna Health Home Care & Hospice in Tioga County provides a monthly grief support group.
Fourth Tuesday of each month, 10:30 am–noon
For information, please call (570) 723-0760.

**COPING WITH CANCER**
All those affected by cancer are invited to attend this support group, which addresses a variety of topics related to cancer and its treatment. Attendees are encouraged to bring loved ones and caregivers.
Third Wednesday of each month, 6:30 pm
For information, please call (570) 723-0485.

**BEETTER BREATHERS**
The American Lung Association’s Better Breathers is a support group for people with lung disease, featuring support from registered respiratory therapists and topical guest speakers. No registration is necessary.
Third Thursday of each month, 6:30 pm
For information, please call (570) 723-0194.

**LOOK GOOD... FEEL BETTER PROGRAM**
This free workshop for women in cancer treatment shows women how to address any changes in hair and skin that may occur during treatment.
Offered several times per year, 10 am–noon
For information, registration and dates, visit the American Cancer Society online at Cancer.org.

**Auxiliary Events**
The mission of SSMH Auxiliary is to improve the quality of healthcare provided to our patients through fundraising and service. A portion of the proceeds from the following events supports the Auxiliary and will be held at Soldiers + Sailors Memorial Hospital unless otherwise noted. For times and information, please call (570) 723-0191.

**HOLIDAY SHOPPING SOIRÉE**
See Event Spotlight, Page 13.
Saturday, November 7
For tickets, please call (570) 723-0191.

**SSMH BOOK FAIR**
Take advantage of fantastic discounts on hundreds of books and gifts, featuring popular novels, cookbooks, brainteasers, biographies and children’s books.
Thursday and Friday, November 12–13

**AFTER THE HOLIDAYS RUMMAGE SALE**
Find or share your treasure for a great cause. Donations of gently used goods/housewares accepted prior to the event.
Friday, January 15, 8 am–5 pm and Saturday, January 16, 8 am–2 pm
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Wellsboro
PUMPKIN CURRY SOUP

You may think of pairing pumpkin with traditional fall spices like nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves, but curry powder also brings out its flavor.

INGREDIENTS
1 tbsp. butter
1 cup finely chopped onion
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 cup diced celery
1 tsp. curry powder
¼ tsp. ground coriander
¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
3 cups water
1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
1 32-oz. can pumpkin puree
1 cup fat-free half-and-half

DIRECTIONS
Melt butter in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic and celery. Cook for three to five minutes or until tender. Stir in curry powder, coriander and crushed red pepper. Cook for one minute. Add water and broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; cook, stirring occasionally, for 15 to 20 minutes to develop flavors. Stir in pumpkin and half-and-half; cook for five minutes or until heated through. Transfer mixture to food processor or blender (in batches, if necessary). Cover and blend until creamy. Serve warm or reheat to desired temperature. Garnish with a dollop of sour cream and chives.

Note: Soup may be prepared a day ahead. Cool to room temperature after adding pumpkin and half-and-half. Cover and refrigerate. Just before serving, blend then reheat to serving temperature, but do not boil.

PER SERVING
Serves four. Each serving contains about 180 calories, 5 g fat (1 g saturated fat), no cholesterol, 105 mg sodium, 30 g carbohydrate, 11 g fiber, 14 g sugar and 8 g protein.

The Perks of Pumpkin

The ancient Aztecs prized pumpkins for their nutritional and medicinal qualities. Your favorite pumpkin pie or latte may not qualify as a health food, but pumpkin itself has nutritional perks that should encourage you to haul it from the porch into the kitchen. Low-calorie, fat-free pumpkin provides:

- **Vitamin A**—important for good eyesight as well as heart, lung and kidney health
- **Fiber**, which improves digestive health, lowers your cholesterol and reduces your risk for heart disease, diabetes and some cancers
- **Vitamin C**—an antioxidant that boosts your immunity, protects your cells from damage and helps wounds heal
- **Potassium**, a mineral your body needs to contract your muscles, maintain your fluid balance and protect your bone health

Whether you're carving or cooking fresh pumpkin, don't discard the seeds. The seeds also abound in nutrients. Roast them for about a half hour in a 325-degree oven for a quick, guilt-free snack.