

Spring/Summer 2025

# heart *to* heart

Your local guide to good health  
from Samaritan Health Services

**Swift team action  
helps Sweet Home  
girl defeat sepsis**





## From the president

Doug Boysen, JD, MHA  
President/Chief Executive Officer

This letter to you comes with mixed emotions as I prepare to step down as president and chief executive officer of Samaritan Health Services.

I have been with the organization for 18 years and have been honored to serve as CEO for more than seven of those years. I care deeply about this organization and leaving is an extremely difficult decision. My rationale for leaving is simple: I am running out of steam. While I have given it my all as a leader, it has taken its toll on me and my family. It is time to step back and recenter myself.

As for the future of Samaritan, I know our Samaritan Board of Directors will find a tremendous CEO to lead the organization. I also know that the organization has never been about one person. The organization is comprised of more than 5,000 individuals who all care deeply about our patients and communities across Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties. It is an organization driven by its core values and that will not change.

As I am approaching a significant life change, I cannot help but reflect on my time at Samaritan. During my tenure as CEO, we have accomplished many great things. We have built two new hospitals at the Oregon Coast, opened up new primary care clinics across our service area, expanded our behavioral health services, implemented high reliability processes to reduce patient safety issues, and initiated many efforts to improve our culture.

There have also been a host of challenges. We have navigated a pandemic, dealt with wildfire threats, managed a serious national cyberattack, handled an IV solution shortage and, most recently, have been dealing with severe financial distress of the health care industry.

While there have been difficult issues to overcome, I have also experienced some of the best moments of my life working with the Samaritan team, community stakeholders and other partners of the organization. It has been an absolute privilege to be the CEO of Samaritan.

I have always believed Samaritan is a special organization. Those of you, from the coast to the Cascades, who are passionately engaged in our mission and support our important work are a tremendous part of what makes us so special. Thank you for your ongoing support.

To your health,

# heart to heart

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

### Share your thoughts

Please send your questions and comments to [feedback@samhealth.org](mailto:feedback@samhealth.org) or to:

Kimberly Schauer  
VP Marketing & Communications  
2300 NW Walnut Blvd.  
Corvallis, OR 97330

### Samaritan Health Services

Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center  
InterCommunity Health Plans  
Samaritan Albany General Hospital  
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Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital  
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### Contributors

Jason Amberg  
Amanda Anderson  
Erin Crain  
Leslie Fager  
Mary Jo Kerlin  
Jeanne Krier  
Jennifer Nitson  
Lauren Van Sickle  
Evonne Walls  
Mark Ylen

### Design

Candice Buchanan  
Jeri Hauth  
Karl Maasdam Photography

**On the cover:** *The aftereffects of sepsis may sideline Ava Murry's hopes of playing volleyball and cheerleading, but she's grateful for the protocol and people that saved her life.*

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# Swift team action helps Sweet Home girl defeat sepsis

The clock was ticking when a Sweet Home girl, Ava Murry, arrived at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis with severe leg pain. Thanks to one nurse's quick action and a cutting-edge protocol in the Emergency Department, Ava can tell the story about the day her life was saved.

Ava, who was 12 years old at the time, maintained a rigorous schedule, balancing cheerleading and volleyball.

"My leg hurt really bad, but we thought it was from normal activities," Ava recalled of the initial symptoms. Her family first suspected a pinched nerve or muscle strain, but the situation deteriorated rapidly. Within 24 hours, she could barely walk so her father drove her to the ER.

"I couldn't walk at all," Ava said. "They had to bring a wheelchair to get me into the hospital."

In the Emergency Department, Victoria Church, RN, immediately noticed Ava had signs of sepsis, a life-threatening condition that occurs when your body's response to an infection spirals out of control.

For more than two years, the Emergency Department at Good Samaritan has conducted intense staff training on its new code sepsis protocol. This protocol is unique in Oregon and has had a huge, positive impact on patient outcomes, according to program coordinator Brian Delmonaco, MD. The code sepsis protocol has been used more than four dozen times, helping the hospital earn a five-star rating for sepsis care and putting it on track to being recognized among the top 10% of hospitals nationwide for sepsis care.

"We have reached a statistically significant milestone," Dr. Delmonaco said. "Our patients who have a specialized sepsis care team typically recover better from their septic shock and have a higher chance of survival and shorter hospital stay."

When Ava arrived at the Emergency Department on that December evening in 2023, Church quickly followed the code sepsis protocol.

"She looked sick, and sepsis is drilled into our head — to always be on the alert for it," Church said. "It's tricky because she's a kiddo. A lot of sepsis guidelines are for adults. In the

ER, children's heart rates could be elevated because they're scared or in pain."

That evening, Ava's mother, Tammy Murry, was at work in the hospital as a labor and delivery nurse. Tammy rushed to be at her daughter's bedside. As a nurse herself, she recognized that her daughter's body was shutting down from a hidden infection. Medical tests revealed that Ava's sepsis was caused by multiple internal abscesses in her hip.

Thanks to Church's quick action, Ava received timely treatment and transportation to Randall Children's Hospital in Portland.

"I believe in my heart Ava made it to Randall's just in time," Tammy said. "It was the scariest day of my life. We thought it was just a pinched nerve ... she almost died."

"I remember a bunch of people, and then everyone was freaking out," Ava said of her last conscious moments before being intubated. She remained on a ventilator for four days.

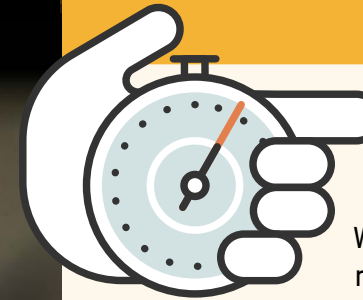
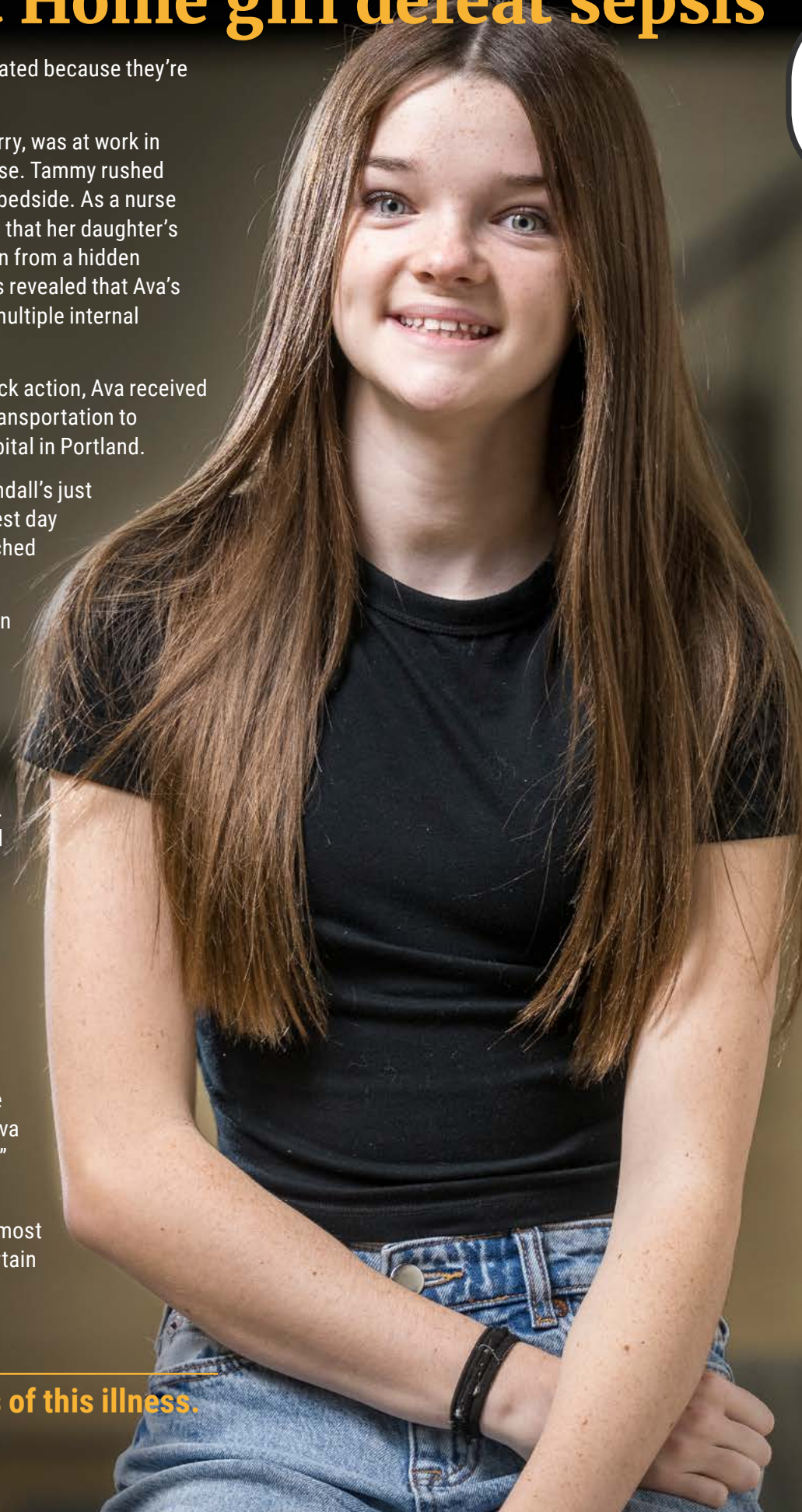
The toll on Ava's body was severe. "I lost so much muscle mass," she said. "I weighed 90 pounds and then dropped down to 82 pounds. It was crazy."

A follow-up MRI revealed a torn labrum in her hip, a result of weakening from the sepsis, and it threatens Ava's athletic future.

"The doctor said she could keep doing physical therapy, but no more high-impact sports," Tammy said. "The damage is so great that it is possible Ava may need a hip replacement by age 20."

Now 13, Ava continues to adapt to the effects of sepsis. "Right now, I can do most normal activities," she said, though certain physical activities remain off limits.

"It was the scariest day of my life. We thought it was just a pinched nerve ... she almost died."



## Understanding sepsis: A race against time

When an infection triggers the body's extreme defensive response, it can lead to a life-threatening condition called sepsis. This medical emergency affects more than 1.7 million Americans annually and requires immediate medical attention.

"Many people don't realize that sepsis can develop from something as common as a urinary tract infection or pneumonia," said Brian Delmonaco, MD, coordinator of Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center's code sepsis initiative. "The key is recognizing the warning signs early, as every hour of delayed treatment increases the risk of death."

The warning signs of sepsis include fever or very low body temperature, shaking or chills, rapid breathing, confusion or disorientation, extreme pain and decreased urination. A sepsis rash also may appear as small, dark red spots on the skin.

In addition to urinary tract infections and pneumonia, common conditions that can lead to sepsis include abdominal and skin infections. Sepsis also can develop from infected wounds or complications from surgery.

"I tell my patients that sepsis is a medical emergency — if you suspect it, don't wait," Dr. Delmonaco said. "Head to the nearest emergency room immediately. This isn't something that can wait until morning or for a regular doctor's appointment."

Those at highest risk include people over age 65, infants, pregnant people and individuals with weakened immune systems or chronic conditions like diabetes, cancer or kidney disease. However, sepsis can affect anyone.

"Time is absolutely critical with sepsis," Dr. Delmonaco said. "In the emergency room, we immediately begin a protocol that includes blood tests, antibiotics and IV fluids. Every minute counts."

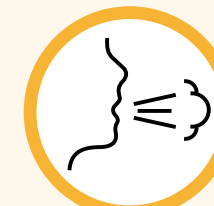
**If you suspect sepsis, call 911 or get to an emergency department immediately. Treatment typically involves hospitalization in the intensive care unit, where the required protocol can best be delivered. With prompt treatment, many people fully recover, though the recovery process may take weeks or months.**



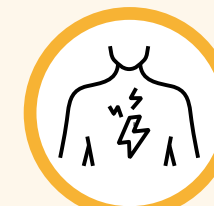
Fever/low body temp  
Shaking/chills



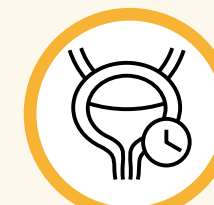
Confusion/  
disorientation



Rapid breathing



Extreme pain



Decreased urination



Sepsis rash

Search for "sepsis" at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) to learn more about signs and symptoms of this illness.

# Compassionate support: Navigating the cancer journey together



**C**ancer can be frightening and managing the details of treatment can feel overwhelming, but patients don't have to face it alone.

Nurse navigators Brandi Osborne, RN, and Julie Switzer, RN, with the Samaritan Cancer Program, offer compassionate, unwavering support to patients from the moment they receive a cancer diagnosis. Walking alongside, they help patients navigate treatment options, connect with essential resources, and provide comfort and emotional support.

"There are so many different specialties in cancer care: surgery, radiation, medical oncology, imaging, pathology and the list goes on," Switzer said. "That's where we step in – to help ease the burden by guiding patients through the complexities of the health care system so they can focus on what matters most, getting the care and support they need."

Osborne and Switzer also have another unique role as part of the broader cancer care team: being a patient's anchor.

"I tell patients, 'If you feel lost or are unsure of next steps, call me,'" Osborne said. "Many patients have shared that during tough moments, they knew they could reach out directly to me for guidance."

They also advocate for patients, ensuring their treatment plans are followed, helping them understand their options and speaking up for those who may feel unable to voice their concerns.

**Join us**

National Cancer Survivors Day is the first Sunday in June. The Samaritan Cancer Program will host two events on this day – Sunday, June 1 – from 1 to 3 p.m., in Corvallis and Newport.

**Visit [samhealth.org/CelebrateSurvivors](https://samhealth.org/CelebrateSurvivors) for details or tell us you'll join.**

**Photo above:** Julie Switzer, RN, (left) and Brandi Osborne, RN, walk together to a meeting to discuss cases and work through their approach to patient care. **Photo at right:** Nurse Navigators Brandi Osborne and Julie Switzer meet with Christina Lee, PA-C, who supports radiation oncology. **Photo top right:** Welcome Waggers volunteer and pet therapy handler Ann Dickerson, along with her partner Breeze, bring comfort to a patient.

"Many patients hesitate to speak up, whether it's about rescheduling an appointment out of fear it might delay their care or anticipating a difficult conversation," Osborne shared. "Because of the strong bond we build with our patients and their families, we often sense when it is crucial to step in and advocate for them."

Having gone through her own cancer journey, Switzer understands what patients may be feeling and emphasizes the value of having a navigator by their side.

"When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, a navigator became my 'anchor in the vortex.' Even though I'm a nurse, hearing my biopsy results was a shock. I didn't know what steps to take next," Switzer said. "My navigator helped me understand the pathology, treatment options and timeline, which allowed me to have focused conversations with my care team. Later, she empowered me to speak up when I had concerns. A year after my surgeries, she encouraged me to share my experience and help others facing the same diagnosis. That is what I get to do now."

With nurse navigators by their side, patients can find the strength and support to navigate their cancer journey with confidence.

**Learn more about cancer care at Samaritan at [samhealth.org/Cancer](https://samhealth.org/Cancer).**



**Delivering comfort, one paw at a time**

Pet therapy can be a powerful source of healing.

To offer patients a "paws" from the emotional and physical toll of cancer care, the Volunteer Services department at Samaritan teamed up with Welcome Waggers to bring pet therapy back to the cancer center.

As explained on the Welcome Waggers website, a pet therapy dog is trained to provide affection and comfort. They come in all sizes and breeds. Most of all, they are friendly, gentle and enjoy human contact.

"Before the pandemic, this service was offered regularly at the Pastega Regional Cancer Center," said Michelle Storrs, Volunteer Services coordinator at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. "Now, in the post-COVID era, frequent visits have safely resumed."

Jackson, Beckett and Breeze are always on the ready and excited to offer a warm, fluffy cuddle for any patient who needs one, said Facility Captain Natalie Daley with Welcome Waggers.

**Learn more about the pet therapy program online at [welcomewaggers.org](https://welcomewaggers.org).**

# Consistency is key with medications



**W**e've all heard the phrase: Follow your doctor's orders! Here's why it is so important to do so, especially with your prescribed medications.

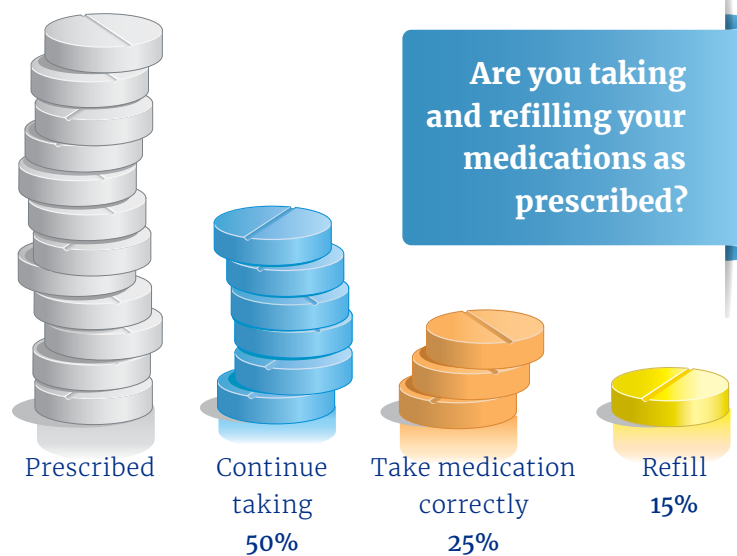
Consistently taking prescribed medications is crucial for effectively managing chronic conditions, leading to better overall health, reduced complications and improved quality of life. Taking drugs exactly as prescribed helps you maintain stable disease control and is a primary component of treatment success.

"By taking prescriptions as your provider has recommended, you can prevent new or worsening health problems," said Miranda Miller, director of Samaritan's Value-Based Care department.

Megan Jones, director of Outpatient Pharmacies, added: "Receiving the appropriate dose of medication at the right time helps maintain therapeutic levels in your body."

According to Jones, a good medication routine is vital because every time drug levels fall out of range there is a chance of drug resistance or disease instability.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 50% of patients stop taking their medications within one year of being prescribed. Of the 50% who continue taking their medications, 25% take them correctly and only 15% will refill as prescribed.



Research has shown that not taking medications as prescribed leads to:

- Higher rates of hospital admissions.
- Increased illness and mortality.
- Poor health outcomes.
- Higher costs of care.

Patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension or congestive heart failure who take medications as prescribed are less likely to be hospitalized when compared to patients who don't adhere to medication prescriptions.

When discussing medication adherence with your health care provider or pharmacist, important questions to ask are:

- How often should I take the medication?
- How long will it take for this medication to start working?
- What strategies can I use to remember to take my medication?
- What if there are troubling side effects that make me not want to take the medication?

If you are symptom-free and don't feel like taking your medication anymore, or are having difficulty taking your medication as prescribed, talk with your provider or pharmacist. This may also be a good time to talk about possible drug interactions among the different prescribed medications you are taking.

"Pharmacists are happy to help you understand your medications," Jones said. "You can also call your primary care provider or leave a message on MyChart."

**Learn about the latest MyChart updates on page 9.**

# A hospital birth offers comfort and safety



Having a baby is a transformative experience, but labor and delivery can seem like a mysterious and scary venture. At Samaritan's hospital-based birthing centers, maternity care teams help parents transition from pregnancy to life with a newborn in a comfortable and supportive environment.

"I experienced anxiety when I was pregnant," said Ashley St. Germain, MD. "As an OB-GYN, the delivery process was less mysterious for me, but anxiety of the unknown is universal."

Having a birth plan helps. However, patients often are uneasy not knowing ahead of time how their bodies or babies will respond to the process. This lack of control can be challenging.



"For me, I wanted to receive prenatal care and deliver at the hospital where I work because I knew I was in a safe environment, with easy access to any necessary support services, and that my birth plan would be recognized," said Dr. St. Germain.

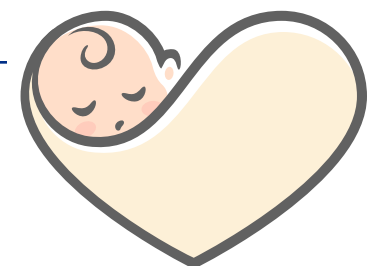
To help ease anxiety, Samaritan's birth centers provide evidence-based care in comfortable environments. Delivering a healthy

baby, maintaining mom's safety and helping parents feel empowered in their birthing experience is the goal.

Providers and care teams partner with patients to understand their birth plans. Even though patients are in a hospital, they can create their own personal experience by taking walks in healing gardens, laboring in a jacuzzi tub, listening to music, stretching to aid fetal position, and more. Exams and other interruptions, including fetal monitoring, may be limited according to parents' birthing plans. Samaritan's labor and postpartum rooms are designed with a cozy and warm aesthetic, helping families welcome their newest members in a comfortable and relaxed environment.

At a Samaritan hospital, patients have immediate access to tools and providers that can ensure safety if needs arise. This includes nurses, anesthesia providers, specialists in obstetrics and pediatrics, operating room staff, lactation consultants and physical therapists. Having these resources at the ready, even if not needed, provides peace of mind and allows patients and their partners to enjoy this life-changing experience.

**For more information about having a baby and getting connected with an OB-GYN, midwife or maternity care coordinator, see [samhealth.org/Baby](http://samhealth.org/Baby).**



**Photo above:** Dr. Ashley St. Germain holds an infant during a follow-up visit. **Photo top right:** The doctor discusses details of a birth plan with an expectant mother.

# Climate support is available for extreme weather

From snowstorms to freezing rain or heat waves, extreme weather can have a major impact on your health.

To reduce the health risks posed by severe weather, Oregon Health Authority offers climate support services to qualified Medicaid members on the Oregon Health Plan – including InterCommunity Health Network CCO members – to help ensure their safety and well-being.



## Supports offered include:

- **Portable heaters** to provide warmth during cold spells, preventing health issues related to low and freezing temperatures.
- **Portable power supplies** to keep medical devices such as ventilators operational during power outages, ensuring continuous medical support.
- **Mini refrigeration units** to store medications that require refrigeration, ensuring they remain effective.
- **Air conditioners** to combat heat-related illnesses during scorching summer months.
- **Air filtration devices** to protect against the harmful effects of wildfire smoke, ensuring clean, breathable air.

## Who qualifies for climate support

Climate support is a health-related social needs service, and Oregon's 1115 Medicaid waiver allows Oregon Health Plan to cover this service for eligible members facing certain life circumstances. IHN-CCO members may be eligible if they have a health condition that makes climate events challenging or dangerous, live in a place with electricity and can use the device safely.

## How to request services

To learn more about climate support and eligibility, IHN-CCO members may call the 211info Coordination Center at 503-468-5375 (TTY 866-698-6155 or 711), or email HRSN@211info.org. Open-card members may call 888-834-4304, or email ORHRSN@acentra.com.

Additional program information can be found at Oregon.gov and searching "OHP climate supports."

# Telemedicine or a same-day clinic: *How to decide*



Samaritan Health Services offers a spectrum of options for health care. With the availability and increasing popularity of telemedicine, some patients wonder how to decide when virtual care is a good option for their health care needs.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, virtual care – also called telemedicine – can be the right choice if you are experiencing a mild health concern and your primary care provider is not available for an appointment.

Telemedicine can be good for sinus problems, sore throat, colds, coughs and the flu, allergies, pink eye, urinary tract infection and more. Virtual appointments also can be good for managing chronic conditions or follow-up appointments if an in-person exam is not necessary.

For more pressing health concerns, or if you think you might need an X-ray or lab tests, a walk-in clinic or urgent care may be the better choice. If you are experiencing a serious illness or injury that may be life threatening, go to your nearest hospital emergency department. In many cases, such as with symptoms of heart attack and stroke, call 911 rather than trying to drive yourself or a loved one to the hospital.

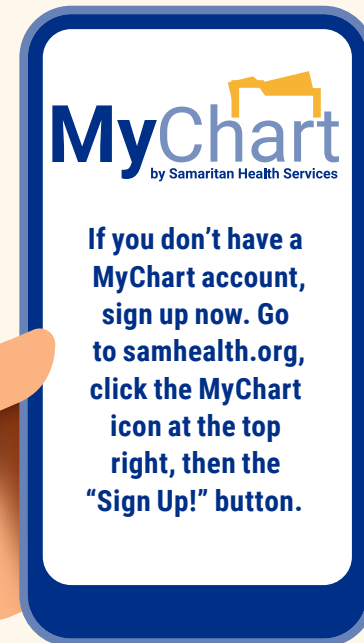
**Learn more about your options for safe and secure care at [samhealth.org/WhereToGo](https://samhealth.org/WhereToGo).**

# Connecting with care is easier with MyChart's newest features

MyChart's newest features make it easier for Samaritan patients, even those whose first language is Spanish, to interact with their health care team, make appointments and track their medical progress.

## New enhancements providing added convenience are:

- **Mammography scheduling.** Once you receive notification in MyChart that you're due for a screening mammogram, you can directly schedule an appointment online. This allows you to see the available times and dates in your preferred location and select one that's best for you.
- **Surgery updates.** You can request to have family and friends receive text updates on your surgery progress, including when it's completed, allowing those who are waiting to stay connected and informed on your procedure.
- **Pregnancy care companion.** Available for patients of any Samaritan OB-GYN clinic, this digital care plan helps track pregnancy milestones. From prenatal education to gestational development and breastfeeding preparation, this feature offers a trusted source for information.
- **Ahora disponible en español.** Seleccione "ver en español" en la esquina superior derecha de la página de inicio de sesión.



# The plate method: *A balanced approach to eating*



Losing weight doesn't have to be about restrictive dieting or counting calories. Instead, focusing on balanced nutrition and portion control can lead to sustainable weight loss and improved health.

The plate method is an easy-to-follow tool to help you eat healthier without overthinking. It emphasizes balance, portion control and nutrient-rich foods, making it an excellent strategy to shed a few pounds or improve eating habits.

## What is the plate method?

The plate method divides your plate into three sections: half for vegetables, one-quarter for lean protein and one-quarter for whole grains or starchy foods. This breakdown ensures you're consuming a mix of essential nutrients while managing portion sizes. A small serving of healthy fats and a glass of water or other low-calorie beverage complement the meal.

"By focusing on variety and nutrient density, the plate method helps control calorie intake without leaving you hungry or depriving you of essential nutrients," said Bonnie Cavanagh, registered dietitian with Samaritan Weight Management Institute. "This approach promotes long-term success and fosters healthier eating habits that are easier to maintain."

## Why the plate method works for weight loss

- **Portion control.** You can regulate portion sizes without tedious measuring or calorie counting. By dedicating half the plate to non-starchy vegetables, you fill up on high-fiber, low-calorie foods, leaving less room for calorie-dense options.
- **Balanced nutrition.** You'll consume a variety of food groups, providing the vitamins, minerals and macronutrients your body needs for energy and overall health. Balanced meals also stabilize blood sugar levels, reducing cravings and overeating.
- **Simplicity.** Unlike fad diets, this method doesn't involve complex rules. It can be applied to meals at home, restaurants and takeout, making it versatile and practical for real life.

## Tips for success with the plate method

- **Choose colorful vegetables.** Aim for a variety of vegetables to maximize nutrient intake. Dark leafy greens, carrots, bell peppers and broccoli are excellent options.
- **Opt for lean proteins.** Include sources like chicken, fish, tofu, eggs or legumes to keep you full and support muscle health.
- **Select whole grains.** Brown rice, quinoa or whole-grain pasta provide lasting energy and fiber.
- **Be mindful of fats.** Use healthy fats like olive oil, avocado or nuts sparingly to enhance flavor.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water throughout the day to support digestion and overall health.

## Consult a dietitian for personalized guidance

While the plate method is an excellent starting point, individual needs vary. Consulting a dietitian can help tailor this approach to your goals, preferences and health conditions.

"A dietitian can provide personalized advice, monitor your progress and suggest adjustments to optimize your weight loss journey," Cavanagh said. "They can also address underlying medical concerns or dietary restrictions, ensuring your plan is safe and effective."

The plate method is a straightforward, effective way to manage your weight while enjoying balanced, nutritious meals. By incorporating a variety of food groups and focusing on portion control, this method promotes sustainable habits for lifelong health. For additional support and customized guidance, consider working with a dietitian to ensure you achieve your goals in the healthiest way possible.

**Bonnie Cavanagh, RD, LD, is accepting new patients and can be reached at 541-768-4280.**

# Keep your summer fitness routine well rounded



As the weather changes, you may be tempted to get outside more for hiking, bicycling, walking, running and other outdoor activities. That's great! However, don't neglect your mindfulness and body awareness regimens.

SamFit offers yoga and Pilates classes that could enhance your overall health.

Jacqueline Welter, personal trainer at SamFit, explained that mindful movement practiced in these types of classes means focusing your full attention on your body's movements and breathing during exercise. Being mindful can enhance the enjoyment and benefits of physical activity.

"Adopting this mindset can lower stress and anxiety, which often contribute to cardiovascular issues or weight gain," Welter said. "Practicing mindfulness also helps to improve focus."

Body awareness can heighten your enjoyment of feeling good. It can provide the energy to move through yoga more easily or hold poses longer.

"Waking up alert and excited about the day ahead, you can respond to the constant signals your body sends about your state of being, helping you engage more fully with the world," she said.

To learn more about classes offered, visit [SamFit.org/Classes](https://www.samfit.org/classes).

 **Support the Whole You!**  
Fuel your mind and body.  
\$0 down, no dues until June 5.

Join by May 23, 2025.

Stop by your local SamFit during staffed hours to get started.



# Early summer smoothie

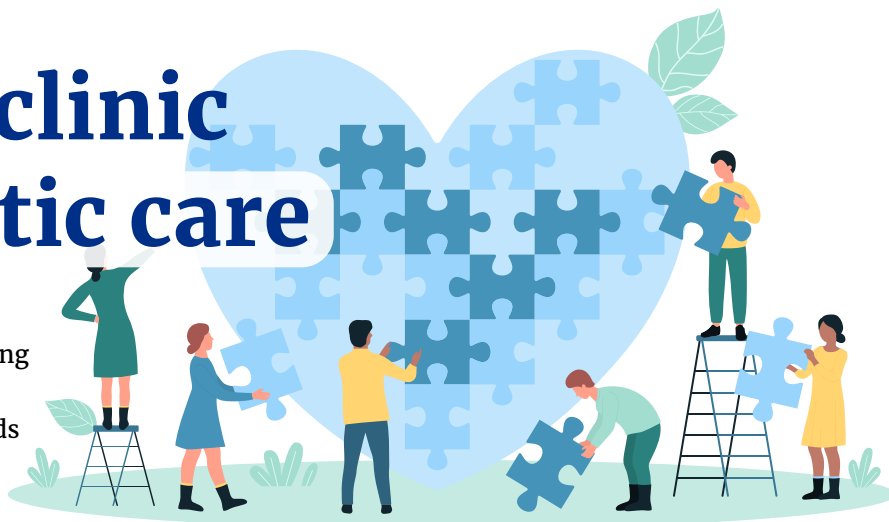
Enjoy this smoothie when cherries are in season, or year-round with cherries from your freezer. Cherries, avocado, almond butter and chia seeds all provide anti-inflammatory benefits, while spinach is rich in antioxidants. Add to that the probiotics in kefir and you'll have yourself a smoothie that is both delicious and nutritious!



Try the recipe by visiting [samhealth.org/RecipeMinute](https://www.samhealth.org/RecipeMinute) or scan the QR code.



# New Samaritan clinic focuses on holistic care



A recently opened medical clinic in Albany marks a significant step forward in health care delivery. Recognizing that many aspects of life affect health and well-being, the clinic takes a holistic approach to address the various needs of InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization members in Albany and surrounding areas.

## Holistic approach to health care

Samaritan InterCommunity Health Clinic leverages a variety of diverse resources to provide comprehensive, personalized services that meet the individual needs of patients covered by IHN-CCO. By adopting a community-centric model, the clinic aims to uplift and empower patients while increasing access to health care.

“Our team strives to meet people where they are and address a broad spectrum of needs in one location,” said Cosimo Storniolo, MD, a primary care doctor at Samaritan InterCommunity Health Clinic – Albany. “We know some patients face unique challenges such as housing instability, food insecurity, mental health issues and substance abuse, and we seek to provide or refer to services that can help patients in their lives improve their health and well-being.”

## Comprehensive services through community partnerships

The clinic partners with community organizations including shelters and legal aid to better understand and address the needs of all its patients, ensuring that no one is left behind. This multidisciplinary approach creates a welcoming, nonjudgmental environment where all patients feel safe and supported.

One of the clinic’s key strengths is its ability to facilitate smooth transitions between providers and resources. For instance, if a patient needs assistance with rent or utilities, a community health worker can be brought in to provide support. This coordinated approach helps patients achieve their health goals more effectively by ensuring they have access to necessary resources.

“At any one visit, we could imagine someone coming and maybe not needing the medical provider that day, but needing behavioral health or the pharmacist,” Dr. Storniolo said. “Some patients have spent two hours here, seeing three or four different people within the same visit.”

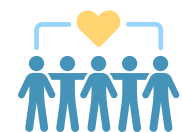
## Building strong patient-provider relationships

The clinic’s care model emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships between patients and providers. By understanding each patient’s circumstances and priorities, the clinic tailors its services to meet their specific needs. This flexible approach acknowledges that factors like housing and mental health are sometimes more pressing than medical issues and must be addressed to improve overall health outcomes.

“We strive to be incredibly open and welcoming, reducing barriers and making it a place for healing,” said Melissa McPherson, a nurse practitioner at Samaritan InterCommunity Health Clinic – Albany. “It’s about the patient and their needs, addressing what’s most important in that moment.”

Located next to Samaritan Albany General Hospital, the clinic benefits from its proximity to essential services such as a laboratory and X-rays. This convenient location also allows for easy referrals from the Emergency Department, helping patients establish ongoing care with a primary care provider.

“My message to patients is if you have experienced difficulties with health care, I want you to try out our clinic,” said McPherson. “We understand that life happens, and we are not going to turn you away. You are always welcome here.”



To learn more, visit [samhealth.org/InterCommunityClinic](http://samhealth.org/InterCommunityClinic).

# Project Healthy Smile increases access to dental care



Sometimes getting children to go to the dentist can be as difficult as, well, pulling teeth! But, not at the free dental clinic tucked away inside the Boys & Girls Club of Albany.

There, a program called Project Healthy Smile aims to create a positive dental experience in a comfortable and familiar environment, encouraging a lifetime of healthy dental habits. The program helps increase dental access in the community. It also provides a training ground for dental assisting students.

The project is a collaboration between the Boys & Girls Club of Albany and Practical Dental Assisting of Oregon. It is partially supported by social accountability funding from Samaritan Albany General Hospital and Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital.

“I think a big misconception is that coming to the dentist is scary. One of my all-time goals is to make sure that kiddos don’t have a bad experience. I think teeth are cool and it’s a very important part of our systemic health,” Hultberg said.

“I think teeth are cool and it’s a very important part of our systemic health.”

The clinic is open to children and teens ages 3 to 18 whose families may not have the resources to seek dental care. It offers the complete spectrum of care found in a fully functional dental clinic.

While the rest of the Boys & Girls Club may be buzzing with recreational and educational activities, the dental clinic is a hidden gem, with two operatories, X-ray processing area and full laboratory. Dental clinics are held five to seven times a month, by appointment.

## Teaching future dental assistants

A vital part of Project Healthy Smile is the partnership with Practical Dental Assisting of Oregon, which brings dental assisting interns into the clinic. To date, 13 students have trained at the club’s dental clinic, experiencing a hands-on, workforce environment.

“Training dental assisting students is a really big passion of mine because schools are only meeting about 8% of the need,” Hultberg said. “We’re able to give them a hands-on experience to complement the school’s lecture-style education, really setting them up for success. It’s been fun to see.”

Hultberg relayed a patient story, with permission, that illustrates the impact of Project Healthy Smile.

“When we first met him, he had extensive dental needs such as needing crowns on his front teeth. We’ve been working on his restorations every month and every time we see him, he just opens up more and he’s smiling,” Hultberg said. “Seeing this and his mom’s reaction is the reason why we do this. She was so emotional and just so thankful – and that’s why we do what we do. This is a soul-fulfilling opportunity for us.”



Dental Assistant Leann Ortiz examines a young patient.

## Making dental care cool

Raquel Hultberg is an expanded functions dental assistant, the dental clinic coordinator – and enthusiastic supporter of all things related to dental and oral health.

Send an email to [raquel.hultberg@bgc-albany.org](mailto:raquel.hultberg@bgc-albany.org) or call her at 541-926-6666, ext. 202, to learn more.

# Businesses and individuals generously support Samaritan Foundations

Samaritan Foundations is pleased to honor the donors who support Samaritan's mission of building healthier communities together.

Samaritan Foundations has five separate foundations, one at each Samaritan-affiliated hospital in Albany, Corvallis, Lebanon, Lincoln City and Newport. Each foundation plays an important role in meeting the health care needs of their community by funding facilities, equipment, services, education and compassionate care.

This important work cannot happen without generous support from businesses and individuals.

In 2024, local business donors — who are called Samaritan PRIDE Partners — generously gave more than \$582,000! This clearly shows that PRIDE Partners share Samaritan's values of passion, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence.

"The support from our corporate partners through the PRIDE Partner Program is playing a pivotal role in increasing access to local health care, inspiring hope and building community across Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties," said Taylor Gilmour, vice president of Samaritan Foundations. "These generous donors are not only helping to ensure that quality care is accessible to all, but they are also leaving a lasting legacy of generosity that will continue to uplift and support the health and well-being of our communities for years to come."

In addition to honoring business donors, Samaritan Foundations give special recognition to individual donors through its giving societies:

- **President's Society.** Honors those who give a minimum of \$25,000 annually or \$50,000 cumulatively over a lifetime.
- **Partners in Health Society.** Honors those who give between \$5,000 and \$24,999 annually.
- **Samaritan Society.** Honors those who give \$1,000 to \$4,999 annually.
- **Legacy Society.** Honors those who have included one or more of the Samaritan Foundations in their estate plans.

Donors may designate their gift to a specific fund or ask that it be used where most needed. The funds support a wide range of vital services and programs, including cancer care, cardiac care, scholarships, hospice, patient support, treatment services and many more. Some funds are specific to a community, while others serve a broader population.

Visit [samhealth.org/Giving](https://samhealth.org/Giving) for lists of business, annual, lifetime and legacy donors, and to see what funds are available to support in your community.

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# Recognizing our PRIDE Partners

## Philanthropist Plus — (\$100,000+)



## President's Leadership — (\$25,000+)



\*Arnerich Massena, Inc. | \*C.P. Carlson Builders, Inc. | \*Financial Freedom WMG, LLC  
\*Newport Fishermen's Wives

## Health Heroes — (\$10,000+)



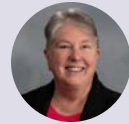
\*M & P Authentic Thai Cuisine | \*The Point Restaurant | \*VIP Hospitality Group

## Community Champions — (\$5,000+)

Consumers Power, Inc. | Dala's Blue Angels | Gerding Builders, LLC | HUB International  
KeyBank of Oregon | Oregon State Credit Union | Pacific Power | Western University of Health Sciences  
Western University of Health Sciences, COMP-Northwest | Willamette Valley Bank

\*Indicates multi-year pledge payments.  
(Donor list reflects gifts made from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024.)

# Samaritan *welcomes* new health care providers



**Lynn Athens, MD**, has joined Samaritan Coastal Clinic. She specializes in family medicine.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/lathens.](https://samhealth.org/bio/lathens)



**Gregory Carozza, DO**, has joined Samaritan Coastal Clinic. He specializes in orthopedic surgery and orthopedics.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/gcarozza.](https://samhealth.org/bio/gcarozza)



**Blake Corcoran, MD**, has joined Samaritan Specialty Clinic – Lebanon. He specializes in sports medicine.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/bcorcoran.](https://samhealth.org/bio/bcorcoran)



**Audrey Drake, FNP**, has joined Samaritan Hematology & Oncology Consultants.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/adrake.](https://samhealth.org/bio/adrake)



**Karen DuBois, FNP**, has joined Samaritan Hematology & Oncology.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/kdubois.](https://samhealth.org/bio/kdubois)



**Amanda Eckersley, DNP**, has joined Samaritan Hematology & Oncology Consultants.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/aeckersley.](https://samhealth.org/bio/aeckersley)



**Danni Ewing, PsyD**, has joined Samaritan Health Center – Lebanon Medical Plaza. Her specialty is psychology.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/dewing.](https://samhealth.org/bio/dewing)



**Carlie Falk, PA-C**, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Hand to Shoulder Orthopedics – Corvallis.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/cfalk.](https://samhealth.org/bio/cfalk)



**Katelynne Knight, CNM, DNP**, has joined Samaritan Obstetrics, Gynecology & Midwifery.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/kknight.](https://samhealth.org/bio/kknight)



**Galena Kolchugina, MD**, has joined Samaritan Pediatrics.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/galenak.](https://samhealth.org/bio/galenak)



**Emily McKalip, PA-C**, has joined Samaritan Breast, Reconstruction & Surgical Oncology. She assists with plastic and reconstructive surgery.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/emckalip.](https://samhealth.org/bio/emckalip)



**Patrick Osgood, MD**, has joined Samaritan Orthopedics & Podiatry – Newport.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/posgood.](https://samhealth.org/bio/posgood)



**Mark Rowley, MD**, has joined Samaritan Orthopedics & Podiatry – Newport.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/markrowley.](https://samhealth.org/bio/markrowley)



**Daniel Stenger, PA-C**, has joined Samaritan Occupational Medicine – Albany.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/dastenger.](https://samhealth.org/bio/dastenger)



**Cassie Whittier, MD**, has joined Samaritan Health Center – Newport. She specializes in family medicine.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/cwhittier.](https://samhealth.org/bio/cwhittier)

## Gastroenterology group joins Samaritan



Samaritan Health Services is pleased to welcome an established gastroenterology group that offers a full spectrum of services related to the digestive system and gastrointestinal tract.

On April 1, Mid-Valley Gastroenterology joined Samaritan and was renamed Samaritan Gastroenterology – Corvallis. The clinic’s address and contact information will remain the same, and the care provided to patients during the transition should be seamless.

The collaboration between Samaritan and this well-respected medical group will ensure continued patient access to vital care. While the clinic focuses on a full spectrum of services, its role in supporting early detection of colon cancer is foundational to a healthy community and essential to Samaritan’s mission.

Some common diseases that can be diagnosed and treated include irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn’s disease, GERD, gallstones and diverticulitis, to name a few.

### Learn more about the gastroenterology team joining Samaritan online:

- Chad A. Morse, MD, at [samhealth.org/bio/cmorse](https://samhealth.org/bio/cmorse).
- Greg D. Schwartz, MD, at [samhealth.org/bio/gschwartz](https://samhealth.org/bio/gschwartz).
- Matthew M. Walton, MD, at [samhealth.org/bio/mattheww](https://samhealth.org/bio/mattheww).
- Lisa R. Araneta, PA-C, at [samhealth.org/bio/lananeta](https://samhealth.org/bio/lananeta).
- Dean Crowell, PA-C, at [samhealth.org/bio/dcrowell](https://samhealth.org/bio/dcrowell).
- Dena M. Hulting, PA-C, at [samhealth.org/bio/dhulting](https://samhealth.org/bio/dhulting).
- Mary K. Reed, PA-C, at [samhealth.org/bio/mreed](https://samhealth.org/bio/mreed).



## Resources to help you be well

### Classes and support

Samaritan offers a variety of support groups, classes and seminars to help you lead a healthier life.

Topics include: cancer, diabetes, heart health, childbirth, parenting, grief, living well with chronic conditions and more.

To see a current list of events, visit [samhealth.org/Classes](https://samhealth.org/Classes).

### Keeping you informed

Get health and wellness information delivered to your inbox.

Sign up for Samaritan’s e-newsletters, or manage your current e-newsletter preferences, at [samhealth.org/Subscribe](https://samhealth.org/Subscribe).



### Be a patient advisor

Join a Patient and Family Advisory Council at your local Samaritan hospital and help patient satisfaction, provide feedback and promote a better understanding of health care among patients and the community.



To learn more, email [SHSServiceExcellence@samhealth.org](mailto:SHSServiceExcellence@samhealth.org) or scan the QR code to fill out an application.

### Thank a health care worker

Has a Samaritan employee made an impact on your health care experience?

Express your gratitude at [samhealth.org/ShiningStar](https://samhealth.org/ShiningStar).



Breeze is a 12-year-old whippet and lifelong service dog with Welcome Wagners. She can often be found comforting patients at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center or the Pastega Regional Cancer Center. *Read more on page 5.*



**Samaritan  
Health Services**

*You can unsubscribe from Heart to Heart or Samaritan e-newsletters by sending your name, address or email address to [SamaritanHealthServices@samhealth.org](mailto:SamaritanHealthServices@samhealth.org).*