

# Heart Heart

Samaritan Health Services'  
guide to good health

Winter/Spring 2026

**Corvallis man's cough  
leads to uncertainty,  
strength and support**





Letter to the community  
**Marty Cahill, MBA**  
President/Chief Executive Officer

### Building a stronger future for local health care

This past October, Samaritan Health Services shared exciting news: we are joining MultiCare Health System, a mission-driven nonprofit based in Washington. With the affiliation agreement officially signed and regulatory filings now submitted, we are one step closer to a stronger, more sustainable future for health care across our region.

For decades, Samaritan has been guided by one mission: Building Healthier Communities Together. That mission continues as we look ahead to a future defined by growth, innovation and partnership. This affiliation represents a powerful investment in our people, facilities and communities — ensuring that exceptional care remains close to home for generations to come.

Through this affiliation, MultiCare will invest \$700 million over the next 10 years to strengthen care across our region. That includes plans to expand and modernize Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis — adding inpatient capacity, updating critical infrastructure and improving the patient experience. We will also enhance outpatient services, invest in technology and support recruitment of the physicians and staff our communities depend on.

Importantly, Samaritan will remain locally governed and community based. Decisions about our hospitals, clinics and community programs will continue to be made right here in the mid-Willamette Valley and on the central Oregon Coast. Every every dollar raised by our five Samaritan foundations will continue to support the hospitals and communities they serve.

Over the past few months, we've seen the incredible strength of our region — through seven community town halls and countless conversations, you've shared your hopes for local health care. With MultiCare, we're turning those hopes into action and building a future that's healthier, stronger and proudly local.

Visit [samhealth.org/Affiliation](https://samhealth.org/Affiliation) to learn more.

# Heart<sup>to</sup>Heart

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Share your thoughts with us.  
Send 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

Samaritan Health Plans

Samaritan Lebanon  
Community Hospital

Samaritan Medical Group

Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital

Samaritan Pacific  
Communities Hospital

SamFit

### Contributors

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

### Design

Candice Buchanan  
Karl Maasdam Photography

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**On the cover:** Shawn Cole was supported by his wife Melissa McNulty during his recovery. Read his story on page 2.

# Trust the process

## Corvallis man's cough leads to uncertainty, strength and support

**W**hen a cough persisted for months without explanation, 40-year-old physical therapist Shawn Cole, encouraged by his wife Melissa McNulty, sought care at SamCare Express. Preliminary tests were ordered, and a chest X-ray and subsequent CT scan revealed a large mass in the lower lobe of Cole's right lung.

Though he was healthy, fit, a nonsmoker and had no family history of cancer, malignancy could not be ruled out. Cole's care team – Amie Keys, FNP, and pulmonologists Austin Loranger, MD, and Tomer Pelleg, DO – ordered more tests including a PET scan, bronchoscopy (a procedure to obtain a sample of the mass), bloodwork and pulmonary function tests. The bronchoscopy was inconclusive, bloodwork suggested an uncommon autoimmune disorder and the PET scan revealed a cancer concern.

Without a clear diagnosis, Cole and his wife wrestled with what to do next.

"Apart from the cough, I felt I was fine. That is what made it so hard," Cole said. "We could wait and monitor the mass with repeat imaging. Waiting, however, carried substantial risk – if cancerous, it could spread and prove devastating."

Cole decided to follow medical advice and get the mass removed as soon as possible.

Under the counsel and care of cardiothoracic surgeon Rabin Gerrah, MD, Cole underwent an open thoracotomy to remove the section of lung housing the mass. Understanding this to be an invasive surgery which involved cutting muscle and separating the ribs, Cole and his wife knew the road to recovery would be long and difficult.



"We were determined and put our medical knowledge to use," Cole said. "We researched and worked collaboratively with my care team and colleagues to maximize recovery."

According to Cole, this included optimizing nutrition, understanding medication use and developing a rehabilitation plan. Cole and McNulty, who also is a physical therapist, used their expertise to assess Cole's endurance, mobility and strength before surgery to guide his rehabilitation after surgery.

Surgery proved successful in removing the mass.

Four days later Cole and his wife were enjoying some "sunshine therapy" in Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center's healing garden.

"Dr. Gerrah approached with a smile on his face and told us he tested the mass, and it wasn't cancer," Cole said. "Mel and I both cried. It was the best news we could have gotten."

The next day Cole returned home. With the help of his wife, family and friends, including his neighbor Nathan Robinson, who is also a nurse, he began the rehabilitative process. Six weeks later, Cole was walking more than 30 minutes, performing light resistance training and attending physical therapy to address his remaining rib pain. He continues to work with his care team to determine the cause of the mass.

"There were so many ups and downs, but we advocated for ourselves and trusted the process," Cole said.

"As a Samaritan employee, I understand our mission and values. I feel fortunate to have received this level of care from people I trust."

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[Learn more about cardiothoracic surgery at samhealth.org/Heart.](https://samhealth.org/Heart)

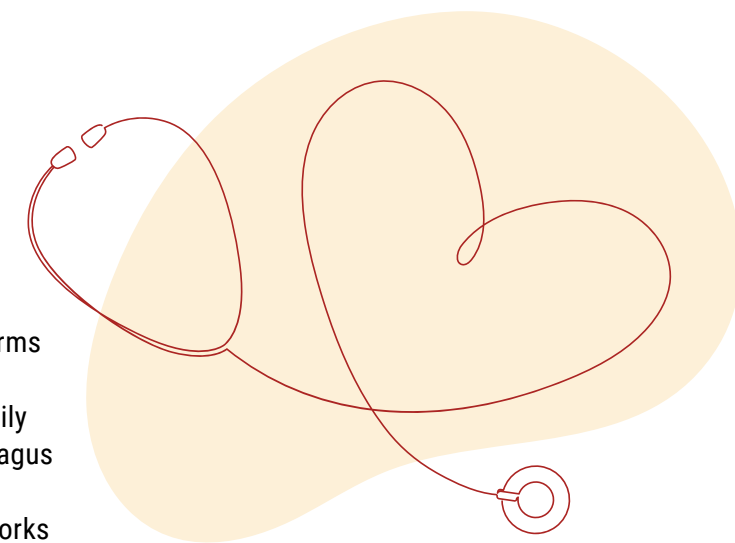
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Shawn Cole and his wife Melissa McNulty, who are both physical therapists, tracked his endurance, strength and mobility throughout his recovery.

## What is a cardiothoracic surgeon?

A cardiothoracic surgeon performs surgical procedures on organs within the chest cavity – primarily the heart, but also lungs, esophagus and surrounding structures. A cardiothoracic surgeon often works alongside cardiologists, pulmonologists, oncologists and radiologists to develop comprehensive treatment plans.



# Street medicine in action

## Mobile team offers medical care, compassion and connection on Albany's streets

Each week, Samaritan InterCommunity Health Clinic's Street Medicine team travels through Albany to provide medical care to people who are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

Armed with medical supplies, food and water, the team treats a variety of wounds and infections. They also help connect people to follow-up care at the clinic and assist with signing them up for Oregon Health Plan benefits.

**“It’s about meeting people where they are at, connecting with them and seeing their lives,” said Cosimo Storniolo, MD, one of three rotating providers on the team.**

Street medicine helps reduce emergency department visits by offering care in the field. It’s one way to reach people who wouldn’t otherwise visit Samaritan InterCommunity Health Clinic. On a recent outing the team treated a painful foot wound, prescribed antibiotics for skin sores and scheduled a clinic visit for someone needing an asthma inhaler refill.

“It’s critical to reach people who otherwise might not seek care, and who might be at risk of serious illness or infection,” Dr. Storniolo said.

The team includes medical providers, staff from Samaritan Treatment & Recovery Services, a community health worker and a medical assistant. They often partner with 2nd Chance Shelter to expand their reach and build trust.

Clinic Operations Manager Kari Storkson said many patients are hesitant to seek care due to past experiences. Though some individuals may be uncertain at first, the team’s friendly, attentive approach helps break down barriers.

“We’re building relationships so they feel safe,” Storkson said.

The clinic opened in 2024 and serves members of InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization in Albany and surrounding areas. In addition to medical care, patients can access behavioral health support, legal aid, peer support and even chronic disease classes. Staff are also able to help patients connect with resources for housing, food insecurity, mental health and substance use.



Dr. Cosimo Storniolo and Dana Harrington, a medical assistant apprentice, pack supplies for the Samaritan InterCommunity Health Clinic Street Medicine team ahead of an outing.

Located next to Samaritan Albany General Hospital, the clinic connects patients to essential services like lab testing and X-rays.

“We want patients to feel welcomed while trying to get them the resources they need,” Storkson said.

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

# Beware the silent threat

## Screening is essential to detect abdominal aortic aneurysm

Abdominal aortic aneurysm is a slow-developing and often symptomless condition that can be fatal if it ruptures. But what makes it dangerous?

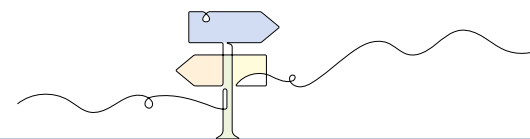
The aorta is the body’s largest artery, responsible for carrying blood from your heart through your chest and abdomen to your vital organs and legs. An aneurysm occurs when the wall of the abdominal aorta weakens. A weakened aortic wall causes it to enlarge. After reaching a certain size, the aorta is prone to bursting or rupturing, which in many situations can be fatal.

Approximately 200,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with abdominal aortic aneurysm each year — making it the 15th leading cause of death nationwide and 10th among men 55 or older.

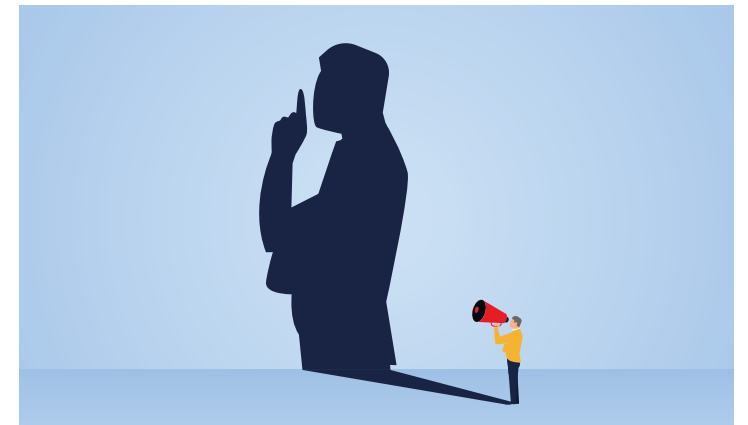
Risk factors include:

- Smoker or former smoker
- High blood pressure, atherosclerosis (hardening of arteries) or chronic lung disease
- Family history
- Men 65 years or older

If a close relative has had this condition, the risk increases by 12 times. In fact, 1 in 4 people who need treatment have an immediate family member with abdominal aortic aneurysm.



Samaritan General & Vascular Surgery – Corvallis specializes in preventive care and treatment for a wide range of vascular conditions. Find out more at [samhealth.org/Vascular](https://samhealth.org/Vascular).



### Know the signs

The symptoms are often silent, until the aneurysm gets large or ruptures. When symptoms do appear, you may experience:

- Sudden or severe pain in the abdomen or back
- Dizziness, lightheadedness or even a complete blackout, also known as syncope

If you experience symptoms and have a family history of abdominal aortic aneurysm, seek emergency care right away.

### Proactive measures matter

Early detection is the key. A simple, painless ultrasound screening can identify an aneurysm before it becomes dangerous. Screening is recommended for:

- Men aged 65 to 75 years who have smoked
- Men over 65 years with a family history
- Women with risk factors like smoking or family history

If caught early, repair has much lower risk than emergency surgery after a rupture.

Take the first step to control this potential life-threatening condition by:

- Quitting smoking
- Managing your blood pressure and cholesterol
- Learning your family history
- Talking with your doctor about screening

# Feeling SAD during winter?

## Seasonal affective disorder is more than just the winter blues!

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is a form of depression that typically emerges during the fall and winter months when daylight hours are shorter. It affects around 17 million Americans annually and is closely tied to reduced exposure to sunlight.

“SAD is a subtype of major depressive disorder,” said Anne Harrison, LCSW, with Samaritan Health Clinic – Newport. “It’s characterized by recurrent episodes of depression that happen in a seasonal pattern, generally when there is reduced exposure to natural sunlight.”

Less sunlight can confuse your body’s internal clock (called the circadian rhythm), lower your serotonin (a brain chemical that affects mood) and increase melatonin (a hormone that makes you sleepy). These changes can make you feel tired, sad or unmotivated.



### Signs of SAD

- Feeling sad or hopeless
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Eating more, especially carbohydrates
- Gaining weight
- Losing interest in hobbies
- Withdrawing from others
- Trouble thinking clearly

### Ways to feel better

**Get more light** – Spend time outside or near windows. Light therapy boxes can also help.

**Stay active** – Gentle exercise like walking or stretching boosts mood.

**Try relaxation techniques** – Yoga, tai chi, guided imagery and meditation can help reduce stress and anxiety.

**Eat healthy** – Choose foods rich in vitamin D and avoid too much sugar or alcohol.

**Keep a routine** – Wake up and go to bed at the same time, even on weekends. Plan enjoyable activities.

**Stay connected** – Call friends, visit family or join a group.

**Talk to a doctor** – They may suggest therapy, medication or vitamin D supplements.

“Cognitive behavioral therapy can be a powerful tool for managing seasonal depression,” Harrison said. “It helps individuals recognize and shift negative thought patterns tied to the season.”

### Helping a loved one

If someone you care about has SAD:

- Be kind and listen
- Invite them to do activities with you
- Help them keep a routine
- Encourage them to seek help

SAD is treatable and brighter days are possible. With the right support and tools, you can find joy during the colder months and feel more like yourself again.

Need a doctor? Call Samaritan’s Find A Doctor service at 800-863-5241 or go online to [samhealth.org/FindADoc](https://samhealth.org/FindADoc).

# You’re not just ‘getting old’

## You have the power to prevent chronic disease

“Inflammaging” – the chronic, low-grade inflammation that increases with age – was once considered an inevitable part of growing older. But new research shows that it’s largely driven by our modern lifestyles.

“Chronic inflammation is more a product of our lifestyle and environment, and there is much we can do to reduce inflammation and the diseases that can come with it,” said Sridhar Vijayasekaran, MD, with Samaritan Cardiology.

Over time, chronic inflammation can quietly damage tissues and organs, contributing to conditions like heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and Alzheimer’s. It’s often triggered by factors such as poor diet, stress, lack of exercise and exposure to environmental toxins.

“Habits like smoking, physical inactivity and unmanaged stress promote inflammation, cause damage to the body and accelerate aging,” Dr. Vijayasekaran said.

Symptoms of chronic inflammation can include brain fog or memory issues, joint pain or stiffness, digestive problems like bloating or constipation, persistent fatigue or low energy, headaches, weight gain or difficulty losing weight.



The good news? You can take action to reduce inflammation and protect your health. Here are evidence-based steps to help prevent or reduce chronic inflammation:

**Get enough quality sleep** – Aim for seven to nine hours per night.

**Eat an anti-inflammatory diet** – The Mediterranean diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds and healthy fats like olive oil.

**Avoid processed and refined foods** – Limit fried foods, trans fats, added sugars and alcohol.

**Maintain a healthy weight** – Excess body fat can fuel inflammation.

**Exercise regularly** – Moderate activity like walking, swimming or cycling helps regulate immune responses.

**Stay hydrated** – Water supports cellular health and detoxification.

**Limit exposure to environmental toxins** – Choose safe household products, avoid air pollution when possible and do not smoke or vape.

**Manage stress** – Practices like mindfulness, yoga and deep breathing can lower stress hormones that trigger inflammation.

**Get regular dental cleanings** – Oral health is closely linked to systemic inflammation.

“Taking these steps to prevent chronic inflammation will help you avoid or manage chronic disease and maintain your best possible health,” Dr. Vijayasekaran said.

Talk with your health care provider about ways to reduce inflammation and learn more about the Mediterranean diet at [samhealth.org/Mediterranean](https://samhealth.org/Mediterranean).

# Smart spuds for brain and gut

## Discover how sweet potatoes nourish your gut, brain and overall well-being

**W**e all know that sweet potatoes are tasty, but have you ever wondered why they're so good for you? With its sweet flavor and vibrant colors — from bright orange to dark purple — this root vegetable is much more than a side dish. It's a key player in supporting your body's most vital systems.

"Sweet potatoes are one of the most nourishing foods you can add to your meal," said Jeana Van Dyke, RDN, LD, registered dietitian at Samaritan Albany General Hospital. "They're rich in fiber and antioxidants, which help support a healthy digestive system and protect brain function."

Let's start with the gut. Sweet potatoes have two kinds of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Together they keep your digestive system running smoothly. Soluble fiber helps regulate blood sugar and cholesterol, while insoluble fiber adds bulk to stool to help keep you regular.

Even more impressive, sweet potatoes act as a prebiotic, feeding the beneficial bacteria in your gut.

"This helps keep your microbiome balanced, which is important for digestion, immune function and even your mood," Van Dyke said.

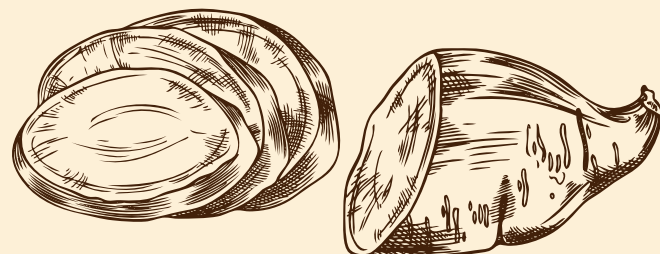
"When gut bacteria break down fiber, they make short-chain fatty acids. These help protect the lining of your intestine and may prevent problems like leaky gut."

Sweet potatoes also shine when it comes to brain health. Their bright orange color comes from beta-carotene, an antioxidant that the body converts into vitamin A. This nutrient can lower inflammation and protect against damage that can lead to memory loss.

To get the most nutrition, when you cook your sweet potatoes, keep the skin on and eat it. This adds extra fiber and vitamins. Just scrub them well before baking or roasting. Steaming is another great option as it preserves more vitamins than high-heat methods like frying.



**Next time you're planning a meal, consider adding sweet potatoes to the mix. Or better yet, try our Southwest Loaded Sweet Potato recipe at [samhealth.org/RecipeMinute](https://samhealth.org/RecipeMinute). Your gut and brain will thank you.**



# Reset and recharge your routines

## Rebuilding sleep, meal and exercise habits for a healthier you this year



As the calendar flips to a new year, many of us feel a renewed sense of motivation to improve our health.

Instead of chasing lofty resolutions, consider a more sustainable approach: re-establish your foundational routines around sleep, nutrition and movement. These three pillars of wellness are deeply interconnected and, when balanced, can dramatically enhance your energy, mood and overall quality of life.

"Small, consistent changes in daily routines can lead to big improvements in health," said Colette Whitney, MD, a family medicine physician with Samaritan Health Clinic – Newport. "It's not about perfection, it's about progress."

### Sleep: The cornerstone of wellness

After the holidays, sleep schedules often fall out of sync. Quality sleep supports immune function, mental clarity and emotional regulation.

"Sleep is when your body repairs itself, physically and mentally," Dr. Whitney explained. "Without it, even the best diet and exercise won't be enough."

Tips to reset your sleep routine:

- Set a consistent bedtime and wake-up time.
- Create a calming wind-down ritual.
- Limit screen use before bed.
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet.

### Meal planning: Fueling with intention

Planning meals helps you make intentional, nourishing choices.

"Nutrition isn't just about calories — it's information for your body," Dr. Whitney said. "What you eat affects everything from mood to immunity."

Strategies to simplify meal planning:

- Choose three to four core meals to rotate weekly.
- Prep ingredients in batches.
- Include colorful, balanced foods.
- Stay hydrated.

### Exercise: Moving toward strength

Exercise boosts mood, reduces stress and supports long-term health.

"Movement is medicine," Dr. Whitney said. "Even a short walk can lift your spirits and improve your health."

Ways to reintroduce exercise:

- Start with 20 minutes a day.
- Schedule workouts like appointments.
- Try new activities.
- Find a workout buddy.

### The ripple effect of routine

When sleep, nutrition and exercise are aligned, they create a ripple effect that touches every part of your life.

"Wellness isn't a quick fix — it's a lifestyle," Dr. Whitney said. "Consistency is the key to lasting change."

**Reset your routine with the Precision Wellness program. Learn more at [samhealth.org/PrecisionWellness](https://samhealth.org/PrecisionWellness).**

# “You got this”

## Sweet Home woman works with care team to control diabetes

When Shelli Baxter was first diagnosed with diabetes at age 54, she was devastated.

“It runs in my family — but hearing it from my doctor in Brownsville hit hard,” she recalled. “I was upset. But I told myself, ‘I got this. I can do this. I’m a human being. I can do things that are good for me.’”

When Baxter first met with Heidi Womack, RN, a certified diabetes care and education specialist, her A1C was 11.2. Just two months later, it had jumped to over 14. Diet and exercise weren’t enough and oral medications made her sick. She started insulin therapy and used a continuous glucose monitor to see how food and activity affected her blood sugar.

“Once my blood sugars came down, I could exercise more and make dietary changes to lower them even further,” Baxter said. “I’ve learned to control stress which helps keep my blood pressure down too.”

“Shelli has worked extremely hard and has a great attitude,” Womack said.

Now, at age 57, Baxter is at the cusp of her A1C being below 7, in the normal range.

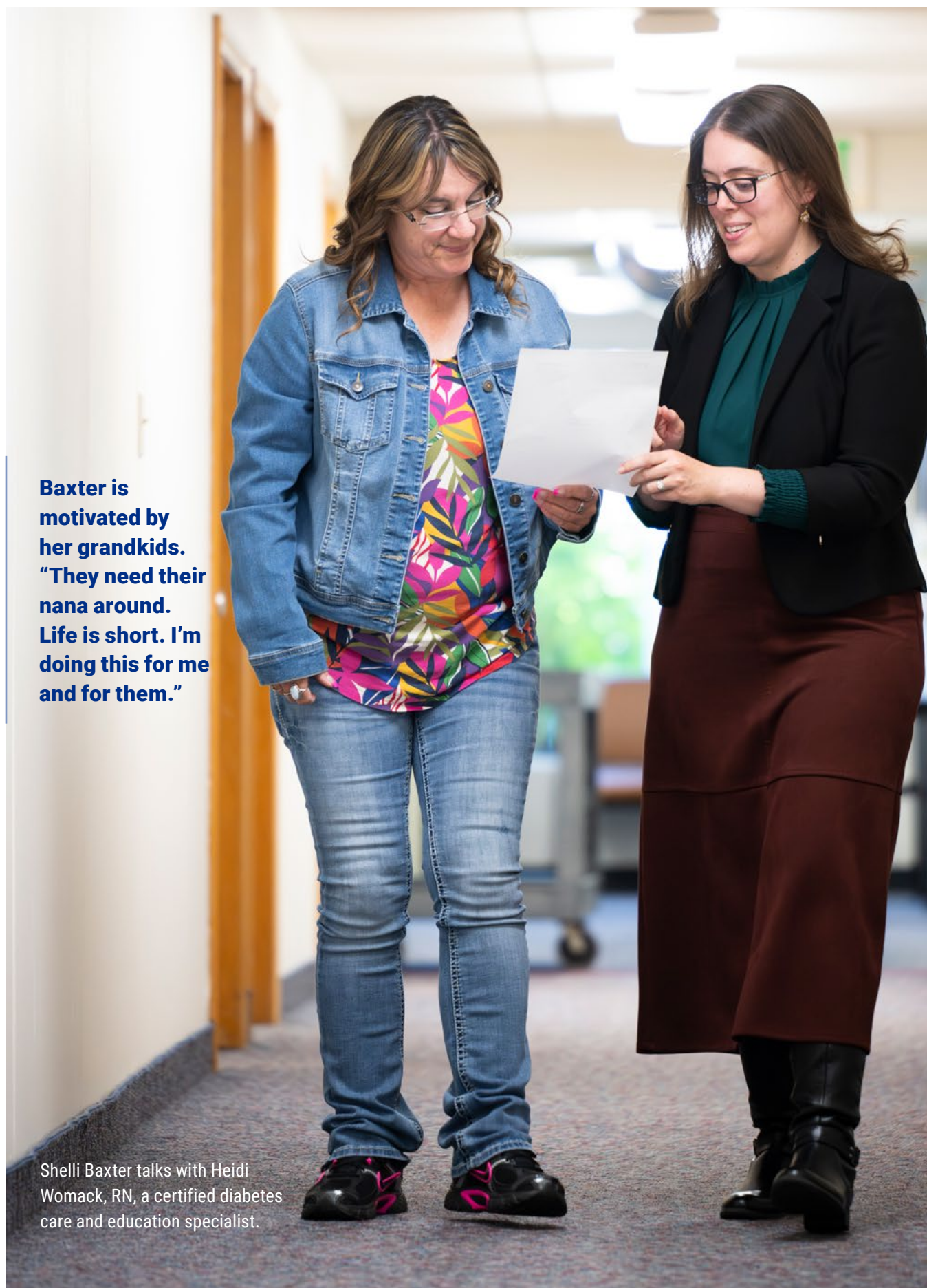
“I’ve lost weight, feel good and am exercising more,” she said. “I watch what I eat. Whether diabetic or not, it’s good for you.”

“I work with great folks at Safeway who are part of my support system,” she said. Her husband Denis embraces her healthy eating which includes lots of salads and veggies. “I could eat other things, but I know myself. If I start on bread, I’ll want more,” she said.

“I drink lots of water, but I do like my Diet Pepsi and coffee now and then,” Baxter added.

**Baxter is motivated by her grandkids. “They need their nana around. Life is short. I’m doing this for me and for them.”**

Shelli Baxter talks with Heidi Womack, RN, a certified diabetes care and education specialist.



According to Womack, it is easy to feel overwhelmed when you have a chronic condition. “Shelli focuses on what she does each day and that adds up to great outcomes.”

“We’re a team,” Baxter said of Womack. “She tells me, ‘You’re doing great, Shelli. You got this.’ We laugh and talk at every visit.”

Baxter doesn’t drive, but she makes sure to keep all her appointments. She goes to the gym, uses the treadmill and bike, and listens to music while she works out.

Baxter’s health is stable — her kidneys and feet are in good shape. She gets her eyes checked annually, takes a statin to manage cholesterol, and keeps up with blood pressure and lab tests. She’s reduced her insulin dose and may be able to stop taking it soon.

Her advice: “If you or a family member has diabetes, stand by them. Think positive. It’s a struggle, but we’re all in this together. You got this.”

## Recommended diabetes health checks

Diabetes occurs when your blood sugar is too high — a result of pancreas dysfunction. To monitor your health, stay on top of these tests:

- A1C: Blood test for blood sugar (every three or six months).
- ACR (albumin to creatinine ratio): Urine test for kidney function (yearly).
- Dilated eye exam: (every year or two).
- eGFR (estimated glomerular filtration rate): Blood test for kidney function (yearly).
- Lipid panel: Blood test for cholesterol (frequency varies).

Other tests your provider may recommend may include ankle-brachial index (checks blood flow to legs/feet), blood pressure, bone density scan and body mass index.



Learn more about these health checks at [diabetes.org](https://diabetes.org).

# Turning loss into action

## The power of saving lives through blood donation

Every drop of donated blood carries the potential to save a life. For Megan Hosmer, that truth became deeply personal after the loss of her stepdaughter, Ava, in 2019.

“I was afraid of donating blood for most of my life,” Hosmer said. “But watching what Ava went through — how often she needed transfusions during cancer treatment — made me realize I could do something and make a difference.”

Hosmer, a quality and accreditation administrator for the Graduate Medical Education program at Samaritan Health Services, started donating blood when Marion County resident Larry McCool and his therapy llama, Caesar, hosted a blood drive in honor of Ava.

“She loved animals and had a special connection with Caesar,” Hosmer said. “Their bond inspired Larry to create Caesar’s Heroes and host several blood drives each year.”

### Why blood donation matters

Many people associate blood donation with trauma or emergency surgery, but the need is far broader. Blood is essential for a wide range of medical situations, including cancer, burns, organ transplants, childbirth, liver failure, sickle cell disease and anemia.

“You don’t realize how many conditions require blood,” Hosmer said. “Ava couldn’t leave the hospital until her numbers were up, and that meant constant transfusions.”

According to the American Red Cross, someone in the U.S. needs blood every two seconds (that’s about 100 people in the time it takes to read this article), yet only a small percentage of eligible donors give blood regularly. This gap between supply and demand can lead to shortages and put lives at risk.



Ava Hosmer had a special connection with Caesar the therapy llama.

### Tracking the journey

A unique aspect of donating blood is tracking its path. Through the American Red Cross app, donors can follow their blood’s journey from donation to testing and delivery.

“Most of my blood has stayed along the West Coast between California and Washington,” Hosmer said. “I was excited when I saw it delivered locally to Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis.”

Hosmer said seeing her blood go to the hospital where she works was pretty special. “Someone in our community is getting my blood to help them through cancer, trauma or surgery. It’s community helping community.”

### The power of year-round giving

National Blood Donor Month was established in January 1970 to address the decline of blood donations during winter months. While January is a great time to start or renew your commitment to donating, the impact is greatest when donors give throughout the year.

How you can help:

- Schedule regular donations. Whole blood can be donated every 56 days, and platelets every seven days.
- Encourage others to donate. Invite friends, family and co-workers to join you.
- Host blood drives. Partner with local businesses to organize donation events.

Donating blood is one of the easiest and most generous acts a person can do, and Hosmer’s story is a reminder that whether you donate once a year or once a month, your contribution matters.

“Your blood can change someone’s day or their life,” Hosmer said. “Next time you see a blood drive, consider stopping by. You might be the reason someone gets to go home from the hospital.”

**Donating is free and takes about an hour. To find a blood donation center or blood drive near you, go to [redcrossblood.org/Give](https://redcrossblood.org/Give).**

# Samaritan welcomes new health care providers



**Heather Allen, PsyD**, has joined Samaritan Health Clinic – West Devils Lake. She specializes in psychology.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/hallen.](https://samhealth.org/bio/hallen)



**Victoria Allsup, MD**, has joined Samaritan Lebanon Health Center. She specializes in pediatrics.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/vallsup.](https://samhealth.org/bio/vallsup)



**Everett Barnes, DO**, has joined Samaritan HeartSpring Wellness Clinic. He specializes in family medicine and osteopathic manipulative therapy.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/ebarnes.](https://samhealth.org/bio/ebarnes)



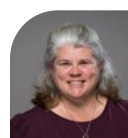
**Kristina "Katie" Barnes, DO**, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Family Medicine – Ninth St.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/kristinab.](https://samhealth.org/bio/kristinab)



**Courtney Chason, DO**, has joined Samaritan Internal Medicine – Corvallis.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/cchason.](https://samhealth.org/bio/cchason)



**Nina Clark, DO**, has joined Samaritan Health Clinic – Newport. She specializes in family medicine.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/nclark.](https://samhealth.org/bio/nclark)



**Kimberly Cradock, MD**, has joined Samaritan Breast, Reconstruction & Surgical Oncology. She specializes in breast surgery.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/kcradock.](https://samhealth.org/bio/kcradock)



**Jordan Gemelas, MD**, has joined Samaritan Health Clinic – Lebanon Medical Plaza. He specializes in family medicine.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/jgemelas.](https://samhealth.org/bio/jgemelas)



**Jordyn Gerlach, DNP**, has joined Samaritan Health Clinic – Lebanon Medical Plaza. She specializes in family medicine.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/jgerlach.](https://samhealth.org/bio/jgerlach)



**Ashley Howell, DO**, has joined Samaritan General Surgery – Newport.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/ahowell.](https://samhealth.org/bio/ahowell)



**Xiaotian "Daisy" Hu, PhD**, has joined Samaritan Neuropsychology – Albany. She specializes in psychology.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/xhu.](https://samhealth.org/bio/xhu)



**Susan MacDowell, PA-C**, has joined Samaritan Urology - Lincoln City.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/smacdowell.](https://samhealth.org/bio/smacdowell)



**Miranda Markesteyn, PA-C**, has joined Samaritan Cardiothoracic Surgery – Corvallis.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/mmarkestey.](https://samhealth.org/bio/mmarkestey)



**Sean McCoy, FNP**, has joined Samaritan Evergreen Hospice. He specializes in hospice and palliative medicine.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/smccoy.](https://samhealth.org/bio/smccoy)



**Kristina Skalski, FNP**, has joined Samaritan General & Vascular Surgery – Corvallis.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/kskalski.](https://samhealth.org/bio/kskalski)



**Hailey "Madison" Sosebee, PA-C**, has joined Samaritan Cardiothoracic Surgery – Corvallis.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/hsosebee.](https://samhealth.org/bio/hsosebee)



**Lauren Stull, MD**, has joined Samaritan Albany General Hospital Behavioral Health – Pleasant View.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/lstull.](https://samhealth.org/bio/lstull)



**Ryan Tucker, DO**, has joined Mid-Valley Children's Clinic.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/rtucker.](https://samhealth.org/bio/rtucker)



**Jessica Vega, PA-C**, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Orthopedics – Albany.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/jesvega.](https://samhealth.org/bio/jesvega)



**Rachel Wakefield, PsyD**, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Family Medicine – Ninth St. She specializes in psychology.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/rwakefield.](https://samhealth.org/bio/rwakefield)



**Melissa Whitman, DO**, has joined Samaritan Infectious Disease – Corvallis.  
[Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/mewhitman.](https://samhealth.org/bio/mewhitman)

Looking for a health care provider? Visit [samhealth.org/FindADoc](https://samhealth.org/FindADoc) to find one who is right for you.



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## Helpful Samaritan hints



**Med records.** Requesting your medical records just got easier, with a convenient and secure online request portal. Get all the details at [samhealth.org/MedicalRecords](https://samhealth.org/MedicalRecords). Still need help? Patients can call 610-994-7500 or send an email to [requestinformation@mrocorp.com](mailto:requestinformation@mrocorp.com).



**The name's not the same!** You may have noticed that the name of your favorite Samaritan clinic has changed. No worries – that's part of a larger effort for consistency among the 80-plus health clinics throughout our three-county service area. Only the names are changing, and not the exceptional health care services our patients have come to rely on.



**MyChart features.** Samaritan's online patient portal called MyChart has a ton of helpful features. Just log on and look around!

- You'll find the new Symptom Checker that can guide you to the right care for what's ailing you.
- You can schedule an appointment with your primary care provider, without having to make a phone call.
- Want to go green? Check out the options for paperless billing and receiving text messages.
- If you see doctors outside of the Samaritan system, did you know you can link your account to other places where you have health information?
- Don't have a MyChart account? You can easily create one by going online to [mychart.samhealth.org](https://mychart.samhealth.org).

# Blooming kindness and care

## How one provider cultivates healing at Samaritan



**W**hen Family Nurse Practitioner Karen DuBois joined Samaritan, she brought more than decades of hematology and oncology experience — she also brought a garden full of compassion.

About eight years ago, DuBois found herself at a crossroads in her work as an advanced oncology certified nurse practitioner.

“The patients I see are often uncertain of their prognosis and no one looks forward to meeting with an oncologist or hearing difficult news,” she said. “I wanted to do something where people are happy to see you. I wanted to make people smile.”

DuBois decided to combine her two passions, flowers and caring for patients. She began growing flowers from seed and cultivating blooms for both their beauty and healing.

“I bring a bouquet for each patient I see during flower season,” she said. “It is healing for me, and it makes people smile, especially on their worst days.”



Her floral gifts have become a quiet but powerful extension of her care. From June through November, patients, nurses and front desk staff receive vibrant arrangements, often consisting of dahlias, DuBois’s personal favorite.

For DuBois, pictured above with some of her beautiful blooms, these moments of connection extend far beyond the flowers.

“When you care for a patient facing a cancer diagnosis or blood disorder, you walk alongside them and their families for months, sometimes years,” she said. “It is through these relationships that I gain a greater understanding of my patients’ needs beyond their disease.”

The opportunity to create those deeper connections is what drew DuBois to Samaritan.

“Here, we treat more than just the disease, we care for the whole person,” she said.

### Caring beyond the clinic

DuBois hosted her first plant sale at her home in Newport. She met her goal of \$1,000 and proceeds went to Pacific Communities Health District Foundation’s CAN Cancer Fund.

“My patients are often affected by financial burdens beyond treatment costs,” she said. “Proceeds from my plant sale support non-medical expenses, like helping pay the power bill or buy groceries.”

### Finding balance

“Life is busy,” DuBois said. “We all need to just stop and smell the flowers and pause to live in the moment.”

**Learn more about DuBois and her approach to patient care, at [samhealth.org/bio/kdubois](https://samhealth.org/bio/kdubois).**

# Wellness resources



### Classes and support

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

**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).**

### 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).**

### Be a patient advisor



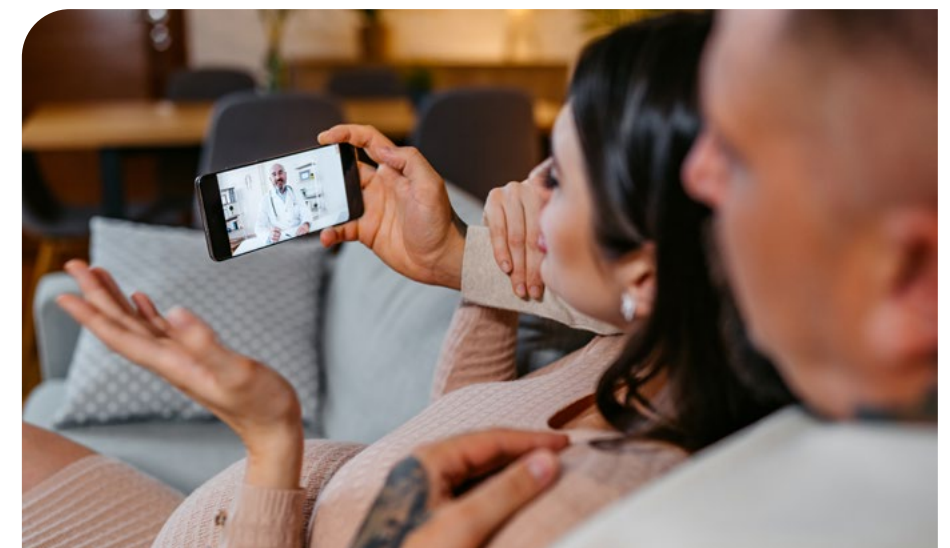
Join a Patient and Family Advisory Council at your local Samaritan hospital and help patient satisfaction, provide feedback and promote a better understanding of health care among patients and the community.

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

## Need care now?

Samaritan Health Services offers a variety of virtual and in-person options to get care for minor illnesses and injuries when your primary care provider is not available.

**To see which option is right for your immediate needs, visit [samhealth.org/WhereToGo](https://samhealth.org/WhereToGo).**





Sweet Home grandmother Shelli Baxter found her motivation to control diabetes. Read her story on page 10.



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