

Winter/Spring 2021

# heart *to* heart

Your local guide to good health  
from Samaritan Health Services



**Albany woman returns  
to living life without  
pain medications**



## ● From the president

Doug Boysen, JD, MHA  
President/Chief Executive Officer

# Samaritan president reflects on unforgettable year, expresses thanks

*Compassion. Generosity. Teamwork.*

Throughout the unforgettable year of 2020, we saw countless examples of compassion, generosity and teamwork as we worked with many community partners to address the impact of COVID-19, as well as the wildfires that affected the entire state. As I write this message, these dual tragedies are still very top-of-mind, as are the many ways individuals and organizations have risen to the occasion in a time of great need.

In early September, wildfires came dangerously close to the recently-constructed Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City, prompting the decision to evacuate the facility and transfer all patients to Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital in Newport. An amazing team of Samaritan employees and first responders came together, transferring the nine patients in five PacWest ambulances in about an hour. Lincoln City-based Samaritan employees traveled to Newport to facilitate their patients' ongoing care, and other Samaritan employees ensured that North Lincoln's phones, computer systems and other equipment continued to operate from the Newport location. It was truly remarkable to see everyone working together with such dedication and expertise. Fortunately, the fire conditions eased and we were able to reopen the hospital three days later.

All this was taking place while dozens of our coastal employees were evacuating their own homes. At least a dozen of those employees lost their homes, while many others sustained serious fire damage.

Meanwhile, in the valley, nearby wildfires prompted various levels of evacuation alerts. While hundreds sheltered at the Linn County Expo Center in Albany, Samaritan employees helped establish a temporary medical clinic and volunteered their time to help those

in need. One of them, Emergency Nurse Clair Barnett, said of the experience, "I saw so many employees give their time selflessly, reflecting Samaritan's mission, vision and values. I have never been prouder to be a Samaritan employee."

Samaritan employees also volunteered at shelters and support centers in Benton and Lincoln counties.

This selflessness was exhibited by our employees throughout the year, as they contributed more than \$476,000 of the \$1.3 million that was donated to assist Samaritan employees affected by COVID-19 and the wildfires. Employees have also contributed to our Patient Assistance Fund and responded to emergent needs through our new Samaritan Emergency Relief Fund.

In turn, we experienced tremendous generosity and compassion from community members who brought food, sewed face masks, made financial donations and stood outside the hospital entrance to express their thanks to our employees as they cared for COVID-19 patients and others.

In so many ways, 2020 will be an unforgettable year — even as we might wish we could forget it. While the year brought tremendous challenge, sadness and loss, it also prompted so many to help and to serve. In ways, large and small, their acts of compassion, generosity and teamwork helped to sustain us and may someday cause us to reflect upon 2020 with renewed gratitude for the unbound capacity of the human spirit.

On behalf of all of us at Samaritan Health Services, thank you for all the ways that you continue to work with us to "Build Healthier Communities Together."

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## heart to heart

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### Letters to the editor

Please send your questions and comments to [feedback@samhealth.org](mailto:feedback@samhealth.org) or to:  
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Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital  
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**Photography note:** Several photos in this publication are stock photography and were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Photos taken by Samaritan were taken using social distancing precautions.

# New chief quality officer enhances focus on quality and safety

Samaritan Health Services has hired Chief Quality Officer Margaret Mikula, MD, who will lead Samaritan's continual efforts to achieve the highest levels of clinical quality, safety and patient experience.

While Samaritan is already recognized nationally for quality patient care, Dr. Mikula will work collaboratively with health care teams across Samaritan to further advance quality and safety initiatives.

"Despite the great work Samaritan already has in place, we know that harm sometimes happens in health care," said Dr. Mikula. "Patients unfortunately can be hurt during the course of their care. That is why it's our goal to achieve zero harm as it relates to patient and employee safety."

With many programs already in place, Samaritan will achieve the goal of zero harm by following best practices, safe processes and procedures to help recognize and reduce human errors that may lead to harm.

"You build a system where people can point out opportunities," Dr. Mikula said. "When people are comfortable speaking up, you can learn from everything. You still have human errors, but they are less likely to cause harm. You are able to take the feedback and rapidly adjust as necessary, so the same errors don't continue."

Dr. Mikula joined Samaritan in August. Previously, she served as vice president and chief quality officer for Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and Penn State Children's Hospital, as well as for Penn State Medical Group. Under her leadership, those organizations reduced serious harm events by 60%.

"Samaritan is well positioned for success in this effort and I am excited to help continue and reinforce the great work already in place," Dr. Mikula said.

**For more information about quality and safety at Samaritan Health Services, visit [samhealth.org/Quality](https://samhealth.org/Quality).**



**Chief Quality Officer Margaret Mikula, MD (right), is leading Samaritan's high reliability transformation.**



**Kristy Jessop, MD, participates in a virtual session of Schwartz Rounds, which address the emotional impact of caregiving.**

## Forums highlight compassion, human connection in health care

Doctors and nurses aren't the only caregivers patients encounter at Samaritan clinics and hospitals. At Samaritan, everyone is considered a caregiver.

In recognizing that caregivers need care too, Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis now offers Schwartz Rounds for all staff, joining a movement among health care organizations to prioritize compassion and not overlook the human connection.

Schwartz Rounds are events that focus on a case or a theme related to the emotional impact of patient care. The panels are facilitated so that care team members can share their experiences and discuss them with others.

The program was developed by the Schwartz Center in Boston and honors Ken Schwartz, a man who died from lung cancer. Schwartz wrote about his experience, reminding caregivers to stay in the moment with patients and how "the smallest acts of kindness" make "the unbearable bearable."

Kristy Jessop, MD, primary care medical director at Good Samaritan, is a member of the planning committee at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. Since the program began last winter, the rounds have been held regularly and have continued in a virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's been a way for our employees to come together, building a sense of community among the Samaritan workforce," Dr. Jessop said.

Dr. Jessop participated in Schwartz Rounds during her residency at Morristown Medical Center in New Jersey. She saw how it helped to break down barriers, giving people the confidence and a setting to speak openly about emotional experiences.

Patient care and particular cases are not discussed. Each themed session is an opportunity to keep building a culture of teamwork and practice Samaritan's values of passion, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence (PRIDE).

Timothy Eixenberger, DNP, vice president of patient care services at Good Samaritan, participates in Schwartz Rounds. He finds the rounds rejuvenating and thought-provoking and says they are already creating a positive impact.

"Care for the caregiver," Eixenberger said. "Such a simple idea that is so greatly needed."

**Learn about the mission, vision and values that set Samaritan apart at [samhealth.org/Mission](https://samhealth.org/Mission).**

# Samaritan hospitals honored for excellent patient experience and quality

The year 2020 was challenging in many ways, but Samaritan-affiliated hospitals were nonetheless recognized for delivering exemplary quality and patient experience.

Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center and Samaritan Albany General Hospital each received a 2020 Outstanding Patient Experience Award™ from Healthgrades®, which synthesizes data related to patient quality and safety. Award winners represent the top 15% of hospitals in the nation for overall patient experience. Only seven other Oregon hospitals received this award.

As part of its analysis, Healthgrades evaluated 3,346 hospitals that submitted at least 100 patient experience surveys to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) for admissions between April 2018 and March 2019. Healthgrades applied a scoring methodology for 10 patient experience measures, using data collected from the hospitals' own patient experience surveys.

These recognitions are in line with the ratings that Samaritan-affiliated hospitals receive directly from CMS, which rates all hospitals on a five-star scale. Samaritan Albany received a five-star rating earlier in 2020, while

Good Samaritan, Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital and Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City each received four out of five stars. Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital in Newport maintained its three-star rating.

Patient experience, readmission rates and safety of care are among the criteria that CMS uses to determine its ratings. All five Samaritan-affiliated hospitals had lower readmission rates than the national average and all had strong ratings in the areas of patient experience, safety of care and timeliness of care.

“Every member of our team has ownership for the patient experience,” said Doug Boysen, president and CEO of Samaritan. “These awards highlight the great work our team does, and I could not be prouder of the PRIDE values — passion, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence — they show in ensuring quality care and excellent service.”

**To see a list of other awards and recognitions Samaritan has received, visit [samhealth.org/ServiceExcellence](https://samhealth.org/ServiceExcellence).**



# Samaritan named Oregon's Healthiest Employer for seventh time

For the seventh time in eight years, Samaritan Health Services has been named Oregon's Healthiest Employer among organizations with more than 5,000 employees.

Healthiest Employers Inc. and the Portland Business Journal, which sponsors the Oregon awards, announced the honor in November.

Employee participation in wellness activities is high, with 78% of Samaritan employees taking part throughout 2020. Alyssa Wink, director of Wellness and Fitness for Samaritan, said the high engagement rate is a major accomplishment given that Samaritan employs nearly 6,000 individuals across a large three-county area.

“Our wellness program stands out because it is always evolving,” Wink said. “With support from our senior leadership and Samaritan's Wellness Council, we can keep well-being at the front of our employees' minds and encourage them to practice a variety of wellness aspects in their daily routines. We have integrated many aspects of our workplace wellness programs with our fitness and wellness centers and our self-funded health insurance plan, which has allowed us to do many unique things.”

New wellness activities in 2020 included:

- The Healthy Habits rewards program, which awards points to employees who completed preventive care activities such as annual physicals and cancer screenings.
- The COVID Wellness page on the [samhealth.org](https://samhealth.org) website, with tips for managing stress, local options for child care, crisis-response services and other information to assist in managing life during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Providing access for all staff to a mindfulness app, Headspace, designed to ease stress and foster healthy sleep.

“We have worked hard to create a culture of employee wellness,” said Doug Boysen, president and CEO of Samaritan. “Our Wellness Council takes a comprehensive approach to developing programs and services designed to engage our employees in achieving stronger health and well-being. Engagement is the critical first step to achieving health goals, and our employees

can choose from a wide variety of one-time and ongoing activities across the eight dimensions of wellness: emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social and spiritual. Their success stories are powerful and they help fuel our long-term commitment to this important work.”

Beyond the high engagement rate, Samaritan has received numerous positive comments from employees about the wellness programs. In particular, several employees mentioned the Headspace mindfulness app, through which they have learned new strategies to manage stress and sleep better after a long day.

“Our COVID-19 Employee Wellness response has magnified our wellness efforts during a time of change and uncertainty,” said William Barish, MD, chief wellness officer for Samaritan. “We are committed to supporting employees and their families during the unprecedented challenges facing us in health care in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.”



**SamFit Trainer Leigha Bickford gets in a coronavirus-era cardio workout. Samaritan employees' use of SamFit facilities continues to be a primary reason for the organization's continued employee health successes.**

# Star reviews are now part of Samaritan's online provider directory

Post-visit surveys administered by Press Ganey, a national research firm, are now being used to calculate star reviews for Samaritan Medical Group clinicians.

Many health care organizations share star reviews using the same approach. Now patients who are researching health care providers online can consider Samaritan clinicians with comparative data to help them make informed choices.

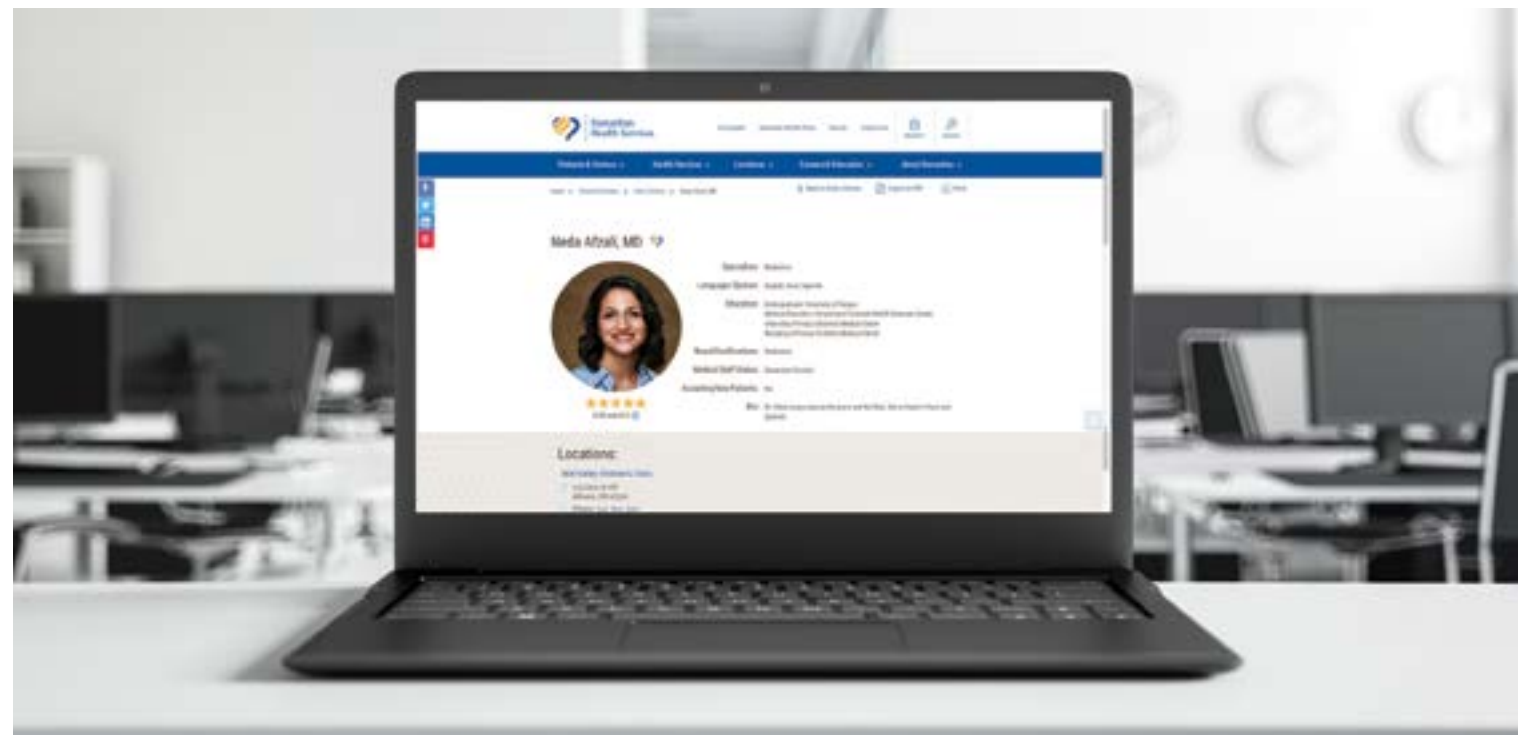
"I am excited to offer this level of transparency on our website for patients seeking a Samaritan Medical Group clinician," said Brad Wakefield, chief operating officer for Samaritan Medical Group. "By publishing our own survey data, we are ensuring that we have a statistically sound sample size and that feedback is acquired in a manner that is consistent and independent of whether the patient's experience may have been good or bad."

Only clinicians with at least 30 survey responses during a rolling 12-month period will have a published star review.

Clinicians who are in administrative roles and don't see patients, or who don't see enough patients during a certain period of time, will not have a star review. Providers who do not accept appointments or maintain a patient panel, such as hospital inpatient and urgent care providers, will be excluded. Also, resident physicians will be excluded as they are still in training and provide care in coordination with attending physicians.

Samaritan's star review score reflects an average of all responses to provider-related questions from the national Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems patient experience survey, which are included in the Press Ganey survey.

**To learn more about Samaritan's star reviews, visit [samhealth.org/StarReviews](https://samhealth.org/StarReviews).**



*Presented by Adult Nurse Practitioner Monica Thukral, Samaritan Heart Center*

When the weather cools and root vegetables have been harvested, we often make this dish at our house. It's simple to make and stores well.

*Prep time: 15 minutes. Servings: 6*

## Ingredients:

- 1 pound sweet potatoes or yams
- 1/2 pound potatoes
- 1/2 pound beets
- 1/2 pound turnips
- 1/2 pound carrots
- 1 onion
- Handful of garlic cloves
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Pinch of salt
- Pepper, fresh rosemary or thyme or oregano to taste

## Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Peel and cut the vegetables, all about the same size.
3. For the garlic, remove the skin and smash cloves with the side of your knife.
4. Coat all veggies and garlic with oil, salt and pepper and herbs.

5. Put in baking dish.
6. Bake for 15 minutes, stir and then cook for another 20 to 25 minutes.

You can substitute parsnips, fingerling potatoes or whatever root vegetable or squash you have. For protein you can add tofu chunks, garbanzo beans or serve as a side dish with roasted chicken breasts.

*Nutrition information: Calories: 240; total fat: 10g, 13% daily value (DV); saturated fat: 1.5g, 8% DV; trans fat: 0g; cholesterol: 0g; sodium: 180mg, 8% DV; total carbohydrate: 36g, 13% DV; dietary fiber: 6g, 21% DV; total sugars: 12g (added sugars 0g), 0% DV; protein: 4g; iron: 2 mg, 10% DV; potassium: 612 mg, 15% DV.*

**Find more recipes, including how-to videos, at [samhealth.org/RecipeMinute](https://samhealth.org/RecipeMinute).**



## Minimally invasive heart procedure keeps homesteader going strong

While preparing for surgery, Reita Patterson held onto her glasses because she wanted to see the new, state-of-the-art operating room where her transcatheter aortic valve replacement procedure would take place. She got a good look at the high-tech equipment that would help the surgery team guide and place her new heart valve and found it impressive. She also remembers a simple, comforting gesture.

“While they were getting things ready, the doctor brought me a warm blanket,” Patterson said. “I just felt so much at ease then.”

Even though the surgery happened in July of 2019, Interventional Cardiologist Edward Toggart, MD, remembered Patterson clearly more than a year later, in part because she was the first patient to get transcatheter aortic valve replacement, known as TAVR, at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis.

“Our heart team reviewed the results of Reita’s cardiac testing and recommended TAVR,” said Dr. Toggart. “She was aware we were close to launching our TAVR program at Good Sam. We offered and she accepted the opportunity to be our first patient. In July of 2019, after a three-year process led by our heart team, we were ready to go. We were honored and grateful for the trust Reita placed in our new program.”

Patterson first learned about TAVR after echocardiograms showed problems with a valve in her heart. Her primary care provider recommended she talk with a cardiologist at Samaritan Heart Center about options including TAVR — a minimally invasive procedure to replace the narrowed valve.

“I did not want to consider open heart surgery,” Patterson said. “I did not want to have to go to Portland or anything. I wanted to be close to home.”

Patterson and her husband, Elton, moved to Philomath in 1956, and in 1966 they bought a parcel of land, cleared away the scrub oak and built the home where they raised their son and daughter and where they still live. She worked as a secretary at Philomath Elementary School for 24 years before retiring in 1994. She and Elton have stayed active, working on their home and their land in Philomath, on a place in Yuma, Arizona, and in recent years on a fishing cabin along the Siletz River near Lincoln City.

“It needed a lot of repairs,” Patterson said of the place on the Siletz. “It’s a repair in progress all the time. You fix something and the wind comes along and unfixes it for you. We both work just as hard being retired as we did working at our jobs.”

At age 87, Patterson jokes that she and her husband are also needing repairs as they get older, but as she started

experiencing symptoms of her heart valve condition — aortic stenosis — she just assumed it was because of her age.

“I’d be out in the yard and the house seemed further away than it used to,” she said. “I would get tired walking up stairs and would need to rest. I thought, OK, it’s my age and that’s the way it is.”

After Cardiothoracic Surgeon Edward Bender, MD, explained the TAVR procedure to her, she underwent a few more tests in the weeks before the surgery. She had moments where she was unsure whether she should have the procedure.

“I thought, it’s there, I’ll do it,” she said. “And I am so glad I did. The improvements were excellent. I was up and doing everything like I had done before. I had no big incisions or anything to worry about. No pain.”

In the past, open heart surgery was the only option for patients like Patterson with severe aortic stenosis. TAVR is safer for many older patients when major surgery could be prohibitively risky. The procedure is done using a long, thin, hollow tube called a catheter, usually inserted through a blood vessel in the groin. Using high-tech imaging equipment, the surgeons guide the catheter which carries a replacement valve to the heart’s damaged aortic valve. With TAVR, the patient can be under less anesthetic and the recovery time is much faster — patients are usually up and about the next day, and on their way home within three days.

“A patient who has had the TAVR procedure often starts feeling better immediately, because they now have a working aortic valve,” said Dr. Bender. “They’ll likely be breathing normally and have more energy for everyday activities.”

Dr. Bender, who came to Samaritan Heart Center through an affiliation with Stanford Health Care, was instrumental in bringing TAVR to Corvallis, and previously helped start a TAVR program at a hospital in Missouri.

“TAVR makes heart valve treatment available to more patients,” said Dr. Bender. “Symptoms improve, they feel a lot better and quality of life is improved. For patients who could not undergo open heart surgery, this is certainly a gift.”

Patterson agrees.

“It’s just so unbelievable what they can do,” she said. “I couldn’t have asked for anything better.”

**Samaritan Heart Center provides a wide range of advanced cardiology and cardiac surgery services. An affiliation with Stanford Health Care provides seamless access to even more life-saving cardiac procedures for local patients. For more information, visit [samhealth.org/Heart](https://samhealth.org/Heart) or call 888-263-6092.**

# New stroke protocols help save lives

Samaritan Stroke Services has launched a new process for when stroke patients arrive at Samaritan hospitals in Albany, Corvallis and Lebanon.

The new process was piloted first at Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital. The stroke care team was exploring ways to reduce the amount of time from when a patient with stroke symptoms first arrives at the hospital to when the patient is given the clot-busting drug alteplase, which helps restore blood flow to the brain. The new process worked so well in Lebanon that the hospitals in Albany and Corvallis soon followed their lead.

“The goal is to expedite care and mimic the workflow that is used when a patient arrives by ambulance,” said Stroke Care Coordinator Carrie Manley, RN.

When someone suspects they are having a stroke, it is best if they call 911, Manley said, because emergency medical technicians can help assess the situation on the way to the hospital.

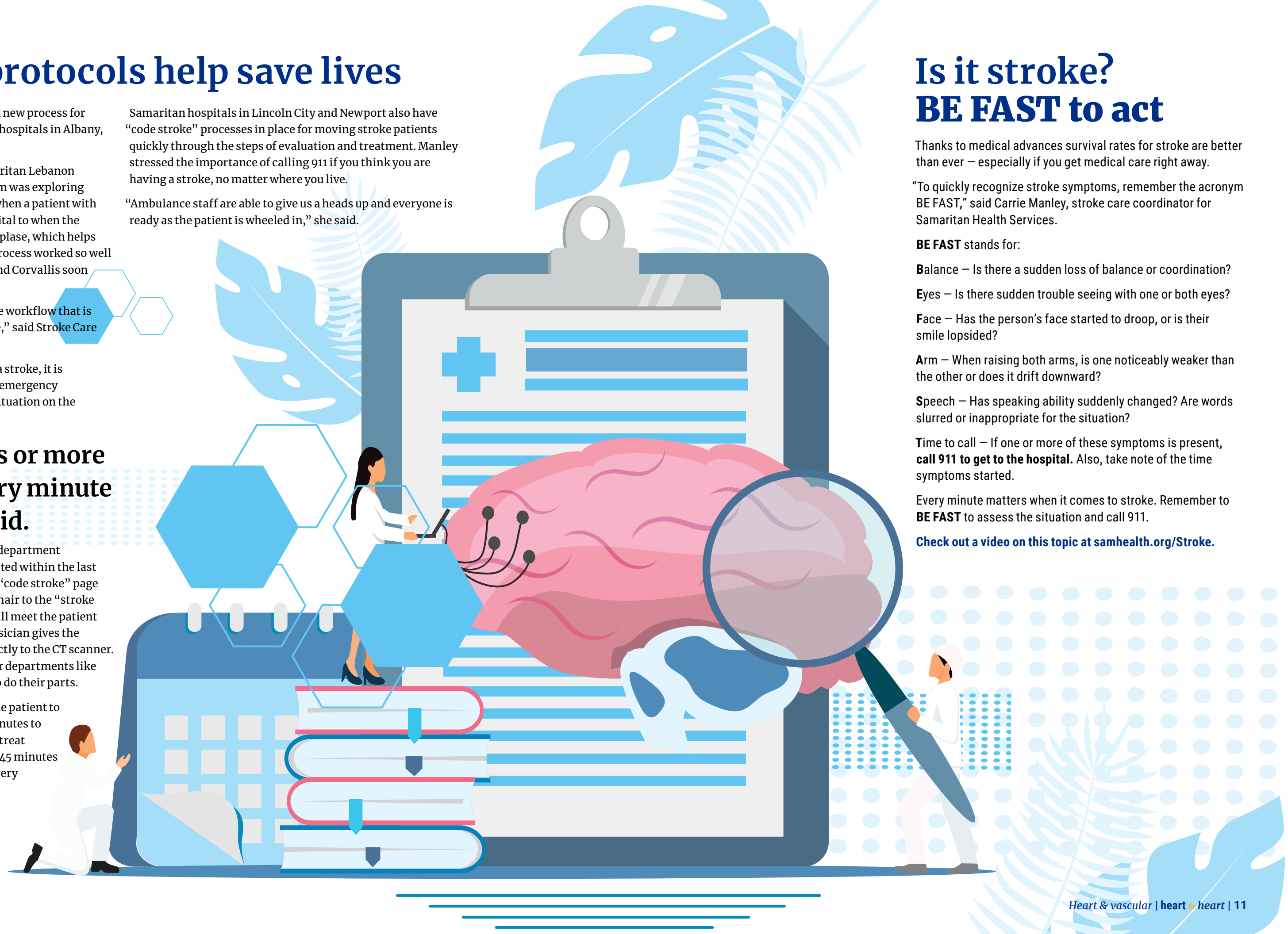
**“It saves 15 minutes or more at a time when every minute counts,” Manley said.**

Still, if a patient comes to the emergency department reporting stroke-like symptoms that started within the last three hours, it triggers the nurse to call a “code stroke” page overhead and take the patient in a wheelchair to the “stroke launch pad” area of the ED. A physician will meet the patient there for a quick evaluation. Once the physician gives the approval, the nurse takes the patient directly to the CT scanner. Meanwhile, the “code stroke” alerts other departments like pharmacy, lab and imaging to get ready to do their parts.

“Our data shows that if we stop and take the patient to an exam room first, it can add about 15 minutes to the process,” Manley said. “Our goal is to treat qualifying patients with alteplase within 45 minutes of arrival to the hospital. With a stroke, every minute counts.”

Samaritan hospitals in Lincoln City and Newport also have “code stroke” processes in place for moving stroke patients quickly through the steps of evaluation and treatment. Manley stressed the importance of calling 911 if you think you are having a stroke, no matter where you live.

“Ambulance staff are able to give us a heads up and everyone is ready as the patient is wheeled in,” she said.



## Is it stroke? **BE FAST to act**

Thanks to medical advances survival rates for stroke are better than ever – especially if you get medical care right away.

“To quickly recognize stroke symptoms, remember the acronym BE FAST,” said Carrie Manley, stroke care coordinator for Samaritan Health Services.

**BE FAST** stands for:

**Balance** – Is there a sudden loss of balance or coordination?

**Eyes** – Is there sudden trouble seeing with one or both eyes?

**Face** – Has the person’s face started to droop, or is their smile lopsided?


**Arm** – When raising both arms, is one noticeably weaker than the other or does it drift downward?

**Speech** – Has speaking ability suddenly changed? Are words slurred or inappropriate for the situation?

**Time to call** – If one or more of these symptoms is present, **call 911 to get to the hospital**. Also, take note of the time symptoms started.

Every minute matters when it comes to stroke. Remember to **BE FAST** to assess the situation and call 911.

**Check out a video on this topic at [samhealth.org/Stroke](https://samhealth.org/Stroke).**

A man with glasses and a white face mask is playing a pinball machine in an arcade. He is wearing a dark t-shirt with a large white logo. The pinball machine is brightly lit with colorful lights. In the background, other arcade games and a neon sign are visible.

## Quick thinking, coordinated care result in great outcome after stroke

Mike Sparks of Albany suffered a stroke in 2016. When he had a second one in July 2020, he recognized the signs.

He knew that he should check things like his balance, if his face was drooping, if he was having trouble talking or if one or both of his arms was inexplicably weak.

“I had told my daughter that if I ever tried to raise my arms to check, I might be having a stroke,” he said.

He’d been resting after a rowdy water gun fight with his grandkids.

“We were going at it pretty good,” Sparks said. “I sat down in the shade to have some Gatorade and realized I couldn’t talk.”

He went into the house where his daughter Courtney Jackson was drying off granddaughter Tessa, and she could tell something was wrong when he could not answer questions.

“Finally, he stood up in front of me and put both arms up like a zombie,” said Courtney. “I said ‘Dad, do you think you’re having a stroke?’”

Answering was difficult.

“I could barely get out ‘Yeah,’ and nodded my head,” Sparks said.

At Samaritan Albany General Hospital the nurse in the Emergency Department recognized his symptoms and called a “code stroke” on the hospital’s overhead speaker system.

“They got him in a wheelchair and took him right back to do a scan,” said Jackson. “Then back to the ED room where he ‘face-timed’ with a doctor in Portland. Things went so smoothly.”

The physician in Portland was a neurologist with the Providence Brain and Spine Institute using two-way telestroke technology. Through a partnership with Samaritan hospitals, Providence stroke neurologists help assess patients with complex cases, view test results

and help guide treatment. Samaritan physicians can also communicate with the stroke neurologist over the phone and discuss the results of tests and patient history.

Sparks could see and hear what was going on around him, but he still had trouble talking.

“The doctor on the teled asked ‘Do you want the shot?’” Sparks said. “I could barely get out ‘Yeah,’ and nodded my head.”

Just over an hour from when his symptoms started, Sparks was given a special drug called alteplase that breaks up blood clots and restores blood flow to the brain.

“The goal is to give alteplase within three hours from when symptoms started,” said Stroke Care Coordinator Sarah Vincent, RN. “Because of the quick thinking and responses by Mike and his daughter, Courtney, and the smooth procedure at the hospital, we hit that target and Mike had a great outcome.”

Within about an hour of receiving the medicine, Sparks was talking again and when he left the hospital after two days, he could walk, talk and drive as usual.

Sparks is paying close attention to his health these days.

“I’m trying to eat better and go on walks,” he said. “I’m working on quitting smoking. That is going well.”

His advice is that everyone learn the symptoms of stroke and to think in advance about how you will check if you think a stroke is happening.

“Make sure people know the signs,” he said. “Do the tests — put out your arms, open your mouth, smile, move your tongue around. Get to a mirror and look for eye or face droopiness.”

**To learn about stroke symptoms and Samaritan Stroke Services, visit [samhealth.org/Stroke](https://samhealth.org/Stroke).**



## Boost your immunity with quality sleep

Have you noticed that when you get sick, you become tired — and sometimes when you are tired you get sick? This is because sleep plays a critical role in the functioning of the immune system.

Michael Stout, lead sleep technologist at Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital, explains why.

The immune system is a complex orchestration of hormones, proteins and chemicals that work together with the body's immune cells to attack invading pathogens. When people are deprived of sleep, there is a decrease in the availability of these helpful substances. This leaves them more vulnerable to each new bacteria and virus they encounter.

A person's internal biological clock, also known as the circadian rhythm, operates best when in a consistent sleep/wake routine. Any disruptions to this routine,

whether too little or too much sleep, can negatively impact the rhythm — and the immune system.

Stout said it is natural to want to sleep when hurt or sick. Sleep helps people grow and heal. So, how much sleep does one need? Everyone's needs are different but as a rule, age determines the quantity of sleep needed: infants need 12 to 17 hours, children 9 to 11 hours, teens 8 to 10 hours and adults 7 to 9 hours.

If you suspect that you or a loved one has a sleep disorder, it is most likely treatable and there are sleep specialists who can help. Your doctor can refer you to a specialist who can lead you to a path of better sleep.

**Learn more about Samaritan's sleep services at [samhealth.org/Sleep](https://samhealth.org/Sleep).**

## Confronting substance and opioid use disorder, one program at a time

Samaritan Health Services is working to address the substance and opioid use disorder crisis that plagues Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties. Since late 2017, Samaritan has received nearly \$2.5 million in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Health Resources and Services Administration to support this work.

Each grant has different objectives based on community need.

### East Linn County (grants awarded to Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital)

- Rural Health Care Opioid Program: Awarded \$747,243 to be used over three years (2018 - 2021). This program improved access to medication-assisted treatment and recovery-oriented resources. Through education, outreach and the distribution of naloxone (Narcan) rescue kits, the program helped to prevent opioid overdose and to reduce the shame and stigma of substance use disorder.
- Rural Health Care Services Outreach: Awarded \$599,921 to be used over three years (2018 – 2021). Trained specialists to support individuals with opioid use disorder and their families at critical opportunities for intervention. A large focus includes distributing Narcan kits in the community and training health care workers and family and friends of people at high risk about opioid use and intervention.

### Lincoln County (grant awarded to Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital)

- Bridges to Recovery Program: Awarded \$1 million to be used over three years (2019 – 2022). The project includes partnerships with Lincoln County Health and Human Services and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon. Together, implementation of opioid prevention, treatment and recovery services, as well as education platforms and partnership with community organizations to expand awareness, will be the primary focus areas.

### Tri-county area

- Rural Opioid Planning: Awarded \$200,000 to be used over 18 months, starting in September 2020. Stemming from a gap in services for people struggling with accessing care for substance use disorder due to COVID-19, the team will develop a comprehensive disaster response plan for Samaritan's rural tri-county region to address this need.

**Learn more about Samaritan's treatment and recovery services at [samhealth.org/Recovery](https://samhealth.org/Recovery).**

**Recovery works**  
**Break the opioid stigma**

[samhealth.org/RecoveryWorks](https://samhealth.org/RecoveryWorks)

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# Building *encouragement* together

Learn more about Ashley Grajczyk and watch her tell her story at [samhealth.org/AshleyG](https://samhealth.org/AshleyG).

## Albany woman returns to living life without pain medications

For Ashley Grajczyk, photography isn't just an art form or a business.

"It's about the subject, bringing out who the person is," said Grajczyk of Albany, who works part-time as a photographer. "What I love about photography is for the person to look at the photo and see that they're beautiful."

Grajczyk, 41, loves to bring the beauty and joy out of everything she does. Her previous life was one of pain and dependence on medications, and she is happy to keep that in her past.

Her journey began in her early 20s, when an abusive situation left her with severe back pain.

"I was a single mom, I was divorced and working hard just to keep up," she said. "I had horrible sciatic pain, and my doctor gave me some pain pills. He basically said, 'this is how you fix it.'"

Grajczyk kept pushing herself — she was managing a tuxedo shop and it was prom season. Finally, she pushed too hard and it caught up with her.

"I went out with some friends and I ended up dropping down to my knees because I'd lost all feeling from the waist down," she said. "I saw a lot of doctors and underwent a lot of tests. They finally diagnosed me with fibromyalgia, but they didn't do anything else but give me more pain medication."

Grajczyk estimates she ended up taking a high amount of opioid pain killers regularly, in addition to other muscle relaxers and anti-inflammatory medications.

"A lot of these medications had side effects, so I also had more meds to manage the side-effects," she said. "Then I was sent to pain management where I was put on methadone. I didn't know anything about it, so I took it like the other pills."

The methadone made everything a blur. She called her doctor who advised her to give it a few more days. She stayed on methadone for 13 months and has very little memory of that time period.

"Over the years, my doctors kept adding more medications," Grajczyk said. "I had a lot of emotional trauma, and I tried to fix everything with meds because I thought that was the correct thing to do."

One morning, she woke up and couldn't feel her legs. At that time, her doctor was Samaritan physician Brent Godek, MD.

"Dr. Godek admitted me to the hospital," she said. "They did a lot of tests and diagnosed me with conversion disorder — a neurological condition with no medical explanation — and sent

me to psychiatric care, and after three months of rehabilitation I could walk again."

At that point, as she was about to turn 40, Dr. Godek told Grajczyk that he wanted to stop all her medications. She protested and sulked.

"I felt betrayed, because this was all I knew after 19 years," she said.

But Grajczyk had a strong connection with Dr. Godek, and he eased her off her medications.

"From my first appointment with Dr. Godek, I felt like he really listened to me," she said. "There were no charts, no computer, he just listened to me. If I'd had any other doctor, I don't think it would have worked to get me off my meds."

It took about four months, but Grajczyk successfully stopped all her medications under Dr. Godek's care. She has also learned more healthy ways to cope with pain and trauma.

"I learned that I was holding on to the pain, living in a constant state of fear," Grajczyk said. "It's like when you're driving and you see something coming at you. You tighten up and you swerve. It's the same with trauma — you're in pain and waiting for a wreck."

A few of her most powerful tools now are working out and diaphragmatic breathing, which engages the abdominal muscles with the lungs in breathing. She has gone from being house-bound due to pain, to working out for 30 minutes every day.

"When you're in that much pain and use meds to fix it, it's hard to consider walking around a store for groceries let alone doing a full workout," Grajczyk said. "I still have pain — everyone does — but it doesn't mean that something bad is coming. A lot of my life, I felt a small amount of pain, and it led to bigger pain because I was preparing for the worst."

Today, she is healthy enough that she could do photography full-time, but she is choosing to spend time with her family.

"I can be with my husband and my kids — they're 22, 12 and 9 — and I can be active with my family and friends," she said.

In addition to her family, friends and photography, she does pain management presentations with Dr. Godek.

"I've given the talk about seven times now," she said. "When you're in this journey, you're really guarded, so I just hope I can say something that comes through to people who need to hear it."

# Feeling lonely? What to do about it

Most everyone experiences loneliness sometimes. This is particularly true now when coronavirus-related distancing guidelines have limited face-to-face interactions and social gatherings. However, when we feel lonely more days than not, it can pose health risks.

According to the National Institute for Aging, “research has linked loneliness and social isolation to higher risks for physical and mental conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, depression, cognitive decline, Alzheimer’s disease and even death.”

“Loneliness affects people of all ages and for many reasons, some of which can be countered by new habits, while other situations may require professional help,” said Health Psychologist Sandra Minta, PsyD, with Samaritan Health Services.

“Situations like changing schools, divorce or death can prompt loneliness. While these shouldn’t be minimized, often we can counter this type of loneliness by reaching out to loved ones, connecting with friends at a previous school or engaging in a focused activity,” she said.

“But when loneliness originates from a lack of self-esteem or a belief that we aren’t worthy of meaningful connections, then it may be time to talk with a mental health professional,” said Dr. Minta.

First, try to understand what prompted your loneliness.

“Instead of trying to avoid or change the feeling, explore what’s causing it,” she said. “Did you previously enjoy time alone but not now? Do you feel lonely with friends? Understanding the reason can lead to solutions. Maybe we need to strengthen existing relationships or start new activities that give us a sense of purpose.”

## Talk with children about loneliness

“Children may know they feel sad but cannot identify it as loneliness,” said Dr. Minta. “Parents can help them learn to recognize loneliness and what to do about it. Together, list activities your child could do when feeling lonely, such as dancing to a favorite song or calling a friend. That list can empower them to know they have resources for coping.

“But if you feel your child is more than lonely and might be depressed, consider seeking a mental health specialist for help,” Dr. Minta said.

**To connect with a mental health professional, talk with your primary care provider or call Samaritan’s Find-A-Doctor line at 800-863-5241. If you need more immediate help, call the 24/7 Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255).**



## Follow these COVID-19 precautions to protect newborns

Welcoming a new baby is an exciting time and many parents are eager to share their little one with extended family. However, our world is still in the middle of a global pandemic and extra precautions are encouraged to protect newborns.

“A newborn’s immune system takes two to three months to mature,” said Robert Michael, MD, a pediatrician with Samaritan Lebanon Health Center. “While exposure to certain germs and viruses help build an infant’s immune system, we don’t yet know enough about COVID-19 and it is best to avoid potential exposure.”

Follow these practices to help protect your baby against the virus:

- Limit contact only to those who live in the same household. Offer to show baby through the window or during an online video session.
- Anyone handling baby should wash their hands frequently.
- Wear a face covering when you need to go out and are unable to maintain social distancing.
- Keep baby at home as much as possible. While you must attend doctor appointments, avoid public places like the grocery store. Have family members shop for you or take advantage of online shopping and grocery pickup.
- Frequently clean and sanitize high-touch surfaces, such as doorknobs and countertops.
- Call your pediatrician if baby starts to show any signs of illness.



**Robert Michael, MD, is accepting new patients at Samaritan Lebanon Health Center. He can be reached at 541-451-6282.**

## Ear infection? Now what?

Trying to soothe a fussy infant or crying toddler with an ear infection has kept many a parent up at night, counting the minutes until the doctor’s office or urgent care opens. However, a growing number of studies are showing that treatment may not be necessary for most ear infections.

“Research has shown that children who receive antibiotics and children who don’t receive antibiotics recover from an ear infection in about the same amount of time,” said Whitney Horsley, MD, from Mid-Valley Children’s Clinic. “We know that antibiotics can have long-term health effects so we try to reserve them for only the most persistent infections in older children.”

If you suspect your child has an ear infection, it’s still a good idea to contact a doctor. Infants or children with chronic ear infections may need an office visit. Also, because ear infection and infection from COVID-19 can show some of the same



symptoms, it is best to check in to see if your child should also be tested for coronavirus. Many clinics have an advice nurse who can help determine if your child needs to be seen right away, or if you can take care of them at home.

If your child has an ear infection, Dr. Horsley recommends the following steps:

1. For children ages 2 or older, an over-the-counter pain medication like ibuprofen or acetaminophen can help with discomfort. Ask your child’s doctor before using ear drops or essential oils in the ear canal.
2. Use a warm or cold compress to ease ear pain. Keep the temperature comfortable for your child, and use a thin towel to protect their skin.
3. Most ear infections start to improve after two or three days. If your child’s symptoms aren’t getting better, check back in with their doctor.



**Whitney Horsley, MD, is accepting new patients at Mid-Valley Children’s Clinic in Albany. She can be reached at 541-812-5111.**



# Find support for complex health issues

When facing a serious medical diagnosis, a hospitalization or symptoms that are limiting quality of life, help is available.

A care team specializing in improving quality of life for patients and their families is on hand at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis, Samaritan Albany General Hospital and Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital.

Additionally, outpatient palliative care is available to people with congestive heart failure who live in Linn County.

“Palliative services are appropriate for anyone who is experiencing the challenge of a serious illness,” said Katherine Steele, DO, a palliative care specialist.

The team includes clinicians who educate patients about their conditions and treatment options; nurses who assess symptoms and carry out care plans; social workers who can address psychological or social needs and find community resources; and chaplains for spiritual counseling.

“During visits, we get to know the patient, to understand their medical goals and create a care plan that aligns with these goals,” Dr. Steele said.

The team ensures that people understand the disease process, as well as treatment options. During a palliative consult, patients can discuss managing symptoms, such as pain, fatigue, shortness of breath. A care plan is created in collaboration with a primary care doctor and other specialists, and can be combined with curative treatment, including doctor visits, hospital stays and any prescribed medications.

“Our focus is helping the patient and the medical team to be on the same page. We want to ensure the patient understands their diagnosis, and the medical team understands the patient’s medical goals and concerns,” Dr. Steele said. “We empower patients to live with hope, resilience and dignity.”

**To learn more about palliative care for patients and families available through Samaritan Palliative Care, visit [samhealth.org/PalliativeCare](https://samhealth.org/PalliativeCare).**

# Tips offered for new Medicare members

Have you recently made the switch from your employer’s health plan to Medicare?

Things are a little different now, and here are a couple important things you should know right from the start:

## Understand your Explanation of Benefits

You receive a Medical Explanation of Benefits each time your providers process claims for visits, labs or other services. It’s an important reference for understanding your costs, those paid for by Medicare and those picked up by your insurance company.

Each month, you also receive a Pharmacy Explanation of Benefits. Even if you didn’t fill any prescriptions during a particular month, you’ll still receive this regular reminder of your annual out-of-pocket drug costs to date and how close you are to Medicare’s coverage gap.

If you don’t understand either of these documents — or have questions about the coverage gap — give your plan a call.

## Appoint an authorized representative

As a member, you have the right to name an authorized representative to make decisions regarding your Medicare benefits when you cannot do so. You can appoint one by having both you and your representative complete and sign



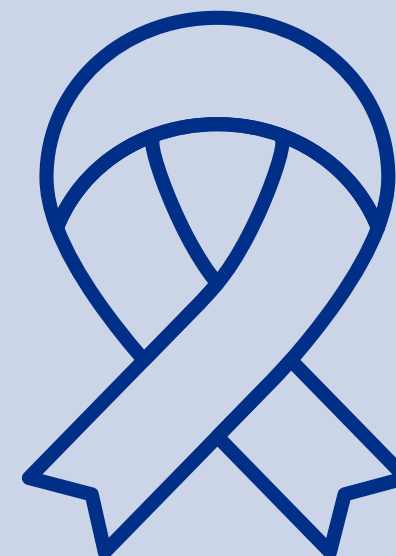
an Authorized Representative Form, which is available on your health plan website or by calling customer service.

Upon completion, the appointment and form are considered current only for a certain amount of time — in many cases, only one year. So mark this down as an important annual to-do.

Understanding your coverage and knowing your member rights will help you get the most out of your Medicare coverage now and in the years to come.

**Learn more about Medicare at [medicare.gov](https://medicare.gov).**

# Cancer care enhanced through collaboration with long-standing oncology group



In November 2020, Samaritan Health Services entered into an agreement with Oregon Oncology Specialists. The collaboration creates opportunities for engagement with hematology and oncology specialty physicians, as well as advanced practice providers, who will care for cancer patients in Samaritan’s tri-county region of Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties.

“Oregon Oncology Specialists is a long-standing oncology provider group in the region,” said Vice

President of Oncology Operations Barbara Croney. “This important collaboration will create additional access for medical oncology patients throughout Samaritan’s tri-county region, further enhancing the high-quality care that the Samaritan Cancer Program already provides to our communities.”

Like other collaborations Samaritan has with physician groups in other services throughout its health care system, Oregon Oncology Specialists will retain permanent clinicians to care for patients at each of Samaritan’s hematology and oncology clinics in Albany, Corvallis, Lebanon, Lincoln City and Newport.

**For more information about oncology services, visit [samhealth.org/Cancer](https://samhealth.org/Cancer).**

# Hobbies are good for you and your health

If you've been feeling busier and more stressed than normal, you may need a hobby. What if you're feeling a little lonely or at loose ends because life has become less organized and less predictable? Picking up a hobby could be good for you, too.

A study published in the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine* found that spending regular time on a hobby or leisure activity can help you feel better in the short term by managing negative stress and adding satisfaction and fulfillment to your days. The study reported that having a hobby has a positive impact on your overall health and can improve your daily function, lead to less severe disease outcomes and a longer life. The benefits grew for study participants who were involved in several leisure activities compared to those with only a few.

It doesn't matter what activity you choose, but find one (or more) that leaves you feeling calm, refreshed and invigorated. Consider whether you enjoy doing things that are creative, nature related, social, physical, spiritual, reflective or involve travel.

If your regular hobby is a little hard to do right now, try something new that you can do while social distancing. Exercise, online reading groups, puzzles, adult coloring books, cooking or a scenic drive all count as a hobby if it's something you enjoy and restores your sense of well-being. Set aside a little time every day and consider it an important way to take care of your health. Your mind and body will thank you for the pause from worry and responsibility.



# Losing weight: Why is it so tough?

Losing weight can be challenging. Understanding how diet and metabolism play a role when it comes to body weight is essential.

Erika La Vella, DO, bariatric and general surgeon at Samaritan Health Services, addresses key issues from her work with patients that influence weight loss.

## Restricting calories doesn't work

When restricting calories, the body adjusts by slowing down its metabolism. For instance, if a person wishes to lose weight and restricts their calories to 1,200 per day, initial weight loss is likely. However, the body's hormones will adjust, and that person will eventually only burn 1,200 calories a day — causing metabolism to slow and weight loss to level off.

## Eating more than you burn won't cut it

Certain life events can sometimes influence weight loss. For example, a vacation can trigger unhealthy eating and



drinking, a stressful event can prompt emotional eating and an injury can lead to weeks of inactivity.

When the body consumes more calories than its metabolism can burn, rapid weight gain can occur. Often the person who had great intentions of weight loss is now heavier than when they started their diet.

## Eating a healthy and balanced diet works

Before considering any weight loss treatment plan, it's essential to understand: your diet is what you eat every day. Eating a diet consisting of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes provides antioxidants and fiber, which regulate appetite and interact with gut bacteria for immune and chronic disease defense.

**Learn more on this topic and how to work with your metabolism; watch the video "Diet & Metabolism, Its Influence on Body Weight," by Dr. La Vella at [samhealth.org/bio/ELaVella](https://samhealth.org/bio/ELaVella).**

# Common food swaps to make your recipes healthier

Eating healthier doesn't mean giving up taste. Simple food swaps can yield big results over time. Experiment with flavors and textures to find what you and your family like best. The goal is to select choices that are lower in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats (saturated fats and trans fats), and adding in more vegetables and fruit when you can.

Here are some ideas to get started:

- Use mustard, not mayonnaise or dressings, on your sandwich.
- Use olive oil spray in your sauté pan instead of pouring from a bottle.
- Substitute mashed black beans for equal parts of flour in some recipes, such as brownies.
- Thin ribbons of cooked zucchini or spaghetti squash are good swaps for pasta in many recipes.
- Replace half the oil or butter in a baking recipe with unsweetened applesauce.
- Fat-free Greek yogurt is a good substitute for sour cream.
- Instead of salt, use fresh or dried herbs to enhance flavor.
- Lettuce leaves make excellent wraps, in place of tortillas.
- Rather than heavy cream, use evaporated milk.

**Find a variety of healthy recipes at [samhealth.org/RecipeMinute](https://samhealth.org/RecipeMinute).**



## Samaritan welcomes new health care providers



**Danielle Bertoni, MD, MPH**, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Breast Center – Corvallis. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Boston University School of Public Health and a medical degree from University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. She can be reached at **541-768-1252**.



**Cathleen Bruner, DO**, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine Resident Clinic – Lebanon. She earned a bachelor’s degree at University of Tampa and a medical degree at A.T. Still University. She can be reached at **541-451-6960**.



**Maureen “Paulie” Bruns, MD**, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Geriatric Medicine. She earned a bachelor’s degree at University of West Florida and a medical degree at Florida State University College of Medicine. She can be reached at **541-451-6413**.



**Craig Clark, MD**, has joined Samaritan Orthopedics & Podiatry – Newport. He earned a bachelor’s degree at Brigham Young University and a medical degree at University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine. He can be reached at **541-557-6477**.



**Olivia Danforth, MD**, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine – Geary Street. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Haveford College and a medical degree from Rush Medical College of Rush University. She can be reached at **541-812-5570**.



**JoAnna Elmquist, PhD**, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine – Geary Street. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Trinity University, as well as a master’s degree and doctoral degree in clinical psychology from University of Tennessee. She can be reached at **541-812-5570**.



**Stacie Fulcher, PA-C**, has joined Samaritan Hematology & Oncology Consultants – Corvallis. She earned a bachelor’s degree and a master’s in physician assistant studies from University of Nebraska Medical Center. She can be reached at **541-768-7722**.



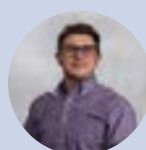
**Whitney Horsley, MD**, has joined Mid-Valley Children’s Clinic. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and a medical degree from Indiana University School of Medicine. She can be reached at **541-812-5111**.



**Preethi Ilangovan, MD**, has joined Samaritan Endocrinology. She earned a medical degree at Stanley Medical College and completed a fellowship at Harbor-University of California Los Angeles Medical Center. She can be reached at **541-768-7900**.



**Michael Kavur, DO**, has joined Samaritan Mental Health – Albany. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees at University Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine and a medical degree at College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific-Northwest. He can be reached at **541-812-7234**.



**Ben LaLiberte, PhD**, has joined Samaritan Lincoln City Medical Center. He earned bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology from Wayne State University. He can be reached at **541-994-9191**.



**Meghan Moorhead, MD**, has joined Samaritan Women’s Health Center in Lincoln City. She earned bachelor’s degrees at University of Hawaii at Manoa and University of Montana and a medical degree at University of Washington School of Medicine. She can be reached at **541-994-4440**.



**Erik Rueckert, DO**, has joined Samaritan Medical Clinics – North Albany. He earned a bachelor’s degree at University of Utah and a medical degree at College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific-Northwest. He can be reached at **541-812-5700**.



**Rosemary Schairer, FNP**, has joined Samaritan Internal Medicine – Corvallis and Samaritan Pediatrics. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Carleton College and bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing from University of Rochester. She can be reached at **541-768-5140**.

## Curious about laser hair removal?

Laser hair removal uses concentrated beams of light to treat areas of unwanted hair. Karin Olszewski, RN, of Samaritan Plastic, Reconstructive & Hand Surgery, answers the most common questions about this popular procedure.

### 1. It sounds too good to be true. Does laser hair removal really work?

For most people, yes! Hair must be dark for the treatment to work. Areas that have gray, white, red or blonde hair are not good candidates for treatment.

### 2. Is laser hair removal permanent?

Laser hair removal isn’t completely permanent, but it is significant. Some people return every year or so for a touch-up visit to eliminate any new growth, but it’s not usually necessary.

### 3. Does laser hair removal hurt?

The most common comment people make is that it feels like a rubber band snapping on your skin.

### 4. What areas of the body can I treat?

Any area with dark hair can be treated. Bikini lines, underarms, upper lips and legs are common treatment areas for women. Men often choose to treat the back, shoulder or neck hair.

### 5. Is it expensive?

A treatment series usually requires between four and six sessions, and sessions range from \$75 each for the upper lip or underarm to \$450 each for the full legs or back.

Call Samaritan Plastic, Reconstructive & Hand Surgery today, 541-768-4370.



**Sharyn Shepherd, FNP**, has joined Samaritan Hematology & Oncology Consultants – Corvallis. She earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees at University of Texas at Arlington. She can be reached at **541-768-4950**.



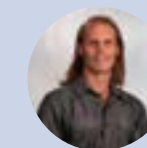
**Cassie Slade, DNP**, has joined the Cardiology Department at Samaritan Heart Center. She earned a bachelor’s degree at California State University and a doctoral degree at Augsburg University. She can be reached at **541-768-5205**.



**Alexandra Styke, DO**, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine – Geary Street. She earned a bachelor’s degree at University of Michigan and a medical degree at Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine. She can be reached at **541-812-5570**.



**Leonel Trujillo, DO**, has joined Albany OB/GYN. He earned a bachelor’s degree at George Fox University and a medical degree at Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine. He can be reached at **541-812-4850**.



**Michael Van Anrooy, MD**, has joined Samaritan Orthopedics & Podiatry – Newport. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Augustana College and a medical degree at Rush Medical College. He can be reached at **541-557-6477**.

## Need help finding a doctor?

Visit [samhealth.org/FindADoc](https://samhealth.org/FindADoc) or call **800-863-5241**.

# Community funding to improve

More than \$1 million in funding for the next round of Delivery System Transformation health care projects for 2021 has been awarded by InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization (IHN-CCO). Projects have been identified for their potential to positively impact the health outcomes of IHN-CCO members in Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties, and are intended to improve quality, cost and access to health care. Coordinated care organizations, or CCOs, provide health coverage for Oregon's Medicaid population.

## Pilot projects include:

**Community Doula Program, Heart of the Valley Birth and Beyond and Oregon State University** — This will expand the Community Doula Program from Corvallis and Albany into rural communities in eastern Linn and Lincoln counties. The thriving and sustainable program has reduced medical costs, while lowering the number of cesarean deliveries and increasing breastfeeding, which are important quality metrics with long-term positive health impacts for mothers. **Pilot funding: \$151,455**

**Healthy Homes Together, Albany Partnership for Housing and Community Development and Family Tree Relief Nursery** — Community partners will use traditional health workers to assist with housing services in Linn County. The aim is to address and impact healthy living practices within the housing sector. **Pilot funding: \$95,480**

**Hepatitis C Virus Outreach Screening and Treatment, Lincoln County Health and Human Services** — Lincoln County, in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon and Samaritan Infectious Disease, will implement a hepatitis C treatment protocol for primary care clinicians in Lincoln County and Siletz Indian community health clinics. Using outreach and health navigation peer support to promote access to treatment, this effort can cost-effectively reduce disease transmission and early deaths. **Pilot funding: \$39,404**

**Mental Health Home Clinic, Samaritan Health Services, C.H.A.N.C.E. Recovery and Linn County Public Health** — The Mental Health Home Clinic will provide a place for people in east Linn County who need to focus on mental/behavioral health and crisis needs while having medical needs met through this community partnership. Comprehensive treatment will be provided by an interdisciplinary team with improved communication for care transitions. **Pilot funding: \$149,155**

**ENLACES, Casa Latinos Unidos** — A traditional health worker program will be developed in Linn County to expand capacity for the organization to serve the most vulnerable Latinos, including essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional health workers help people in their community to bridge systematic barriers so that historically underserved and underrepresented populations can access medical care and other important resources and services. **Pilot funding: \$147,660**

# health outcomes announced

**CommCard Program, The Arc of Benton County** — A communication and accommodation program for people in Benton County with developmental disabilities and the health care professionals who serve them will be created. A lack of training for health care providers and communication deficits between providers and patients create barriers to accessing quality health care. Providers will receive training to increase awareness of developmental disabilities and learn tools to work through communication barriers and people with developmental disabilities will receive custom accommodation cards. **Pilot funding: \$24,998**

**Linn County Crisis Outreach Response, Family Assistance and Resource Center Group** — A mobile outreach vehicle and resource hub will address health inequities affecting the homeless population in Linn County, who currently has no services in this area. Homelessness is associated with shorter life expectancy, higher morbidity and greater use of acute hospital services. Through the hub, clients will be connected with community resource programs and partners, survival supplies, food, social service assistance and access to housing and shelter assistance. **Pilot funding: \$149,500**

**Culture of Supports, North End Senior Solutions** — A screening, training, intervention and referral process will be created in Lincoln County for IHN-CCO members and their health care providers. Using the social determinants of health, North End Senior Solutions will provide education, support and tools to members, creating a partnership-in-health relationship. **Pilot funding: \$75,438**

**Partnership for Oral Health, Capital Dental Care** — Traditional health workers will work in dental settings to improve access to oral health services and support IHN-CCO members who have dental anxiety and mental health issues. Workers will be trained to assist members with accessing their dental care network and can be available during dental treatment. An expanded practice dental hygienist will also be available to coordinate and provide clinical care at community organizations to reduce access issues. **Pilot funding: \$49,601**

**Disability Equity Center** — The community organization built by and for people with disabilities in Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties will develop basic programming, solidify its mission and vision, augment outreach and ensure long-term sustainability. The center seeks to become an innovative educational site for peer-to-peer programming on topics including disability and gender, sex, sexuality, work, education, family, housing access, health care and health navigation. The center will function as a disability resource repository to help people navigate the health support system. **Pilot funding: \$157,500**

**Learn more about newly funded and previously funded projects at [ihntogether.org/Transformation](https://ihntogether.org/Transformation).**



# When disaster strikes ...

## ... Samaritans support each other and their communities

### Lincoln County: Power outages, escalating wildfires result in hospital evacuation

On Sept. 9, the wildfires in Lincoln County forced the evacuation of hundreds of people — including patients and staff at Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital. With so many people displaced and the potential for homes to be destroyed by fire, Samaritan Health Services employees from throughout Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties quickly rallied to provide support to their fellow Samaritans and others in the community.

Even while the fires still burned, Samaritans mobilized to gather emergency supplies for displaced employees and community members.

Two vans were filled with emergency supplies and sack lunches, which arrived at the North Lincoln Hospital Foundation office by noon on Saturday, Sept. 12. This was supplemented by an outpouring of donations and surplus from other fire response initiatives.

Evacuees were encouraged to take as much as they needed: food products, fresh fruits and vegetables, clothing and shoes, toiletries, makeup, toys, bedding and more.

Although a shift in wind direction prevented the fire from advancing into Lincoln City, it came dangerously close. Fires could be seen burning in the hills east of the hospital, across Devils Lake, and 10 days after it began, it was still only 65% contained. It burned across 2,552 acres, destroying 293 homes and 22 other structures. Amazingly, there were no fatalities.

Even after evacuation levels were reduced, 30 Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital employees were still displaced from their homes while fire suppression and safety checks were made in the damaged neighborhoods. The homes of 12 employees were destroyed by fire and seven more were made uninhabitable.

### Wildfires and evacuations

This story began on Labor Day, Sept. 7. Windstorms on the central Oregon Coast are common but the winds that day were particularly fierce and unusual. Blowing from the east at a constant high velocity, they contained little humidity but enough force to topple good-sized trees. Much of north Lincoln County lost electrical power around 10 p.m. Many lay in bed awake, listening to the howling winds with trepidation.

The next morning, the community began to hear of two fires between the tiny communities of Otis and Rose Lodge. A home was lost to the fire. Then another. Firefighting crews had been dispatched, but most people in Lincoln City were not truly aware of what was happening in the steep hills and valleys just four miles to the east.

On Wednesday morning, Sept. 9, many residents awoke with power restored. The optimism brought by bright lights was quickly dampened when word came that hundreds along the Salmon River were being evacuated in a Level 3 “Go Now” alert. The two fires had merged. Soon, the densely populated neighborhoods within the northern boundaries of Lincoln City — including the one surrounding the new Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital — were also told to prepare for evacuation. Within a couple of hours, that level of urgency was raised to “Go Now.”

“Decision-making unfolded very quickly,” said Dr. Lesley Ogden, CEO for both Samaritan hospitals in Lincoln County. “With the approaching fire, worsening air quality and employees needing to evacuate from their homes, it became obvious that we would need to move patients out of the hospital — and that south was the only way to go. The patients were readied and Pacific West Ambulance quickly transported all nine inpatients to Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital in Newport.

### Hospitals supporting each other

Staff at Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital quickly obtained motel rooms for evacuating Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital employees even while their own hospital was becoming filled with emergency patients.

“Everyone in Newport worked hard to absorb the extra load with supplemental clinical, administrative and managerial help from Lincoln City staff,” Dr. Ogden said. “Challenges in Newport included displaced patients without discharge locations, an influx of fragile medical patients in the Emergency Department, equipment failures and staffing gaps. But we all pulled together to figure out solutions.”

In addition, Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis began reserving inpatient beds for transfers from the coast.

### Reopening evacuated hospital

Once they realized that the fire was no longer advancing into Lincoln City, administrators began working with the Oregon Health Authority to reopen Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital as quickly as possible. This required determining that all systems were operational, that the building was safe and clean to occupy, that there was consistent electrical service and adequate staffing to once again offer continuous 24-hour coverage.

The hospital reopened with emergency services at 7 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 12, and full hospital and clinic services on Monday, Sept. 14.

### Benton and Linn County: Preparedness efforts initiated while many employees volunteer to help others

Emergency Room Nurse Clair Barnett had just completed a night shift at Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital on Tuesday, Sept. 8, when she reached for her phone to check for messages and alerts about the growing wildfires. A message on Facebook announcing a shelter was being set up at the Linn County Fairgrounds caught her attention so she decided

to stop by on her way home to offer medical services. Barnett was asked to come back the next day.

She arrived Wednesday morning to three medical students standing behind a table labeled “medical station.” They had a laptop and a general plan to offer medical attention to anyone who walked in, but there were no medical supplies, medications or resources. Barnett and the students spent the next 21 hours making calls, collecting supplies, coordinating volunteers and organizing the medical area.

Over the next week, more than 50 employees responded to the call for help to care for more than 600 evacuees. Samaritan provided oxygen tanks, inhalers, over-the-counter medications and a large variety of other medical supplies and services. Non-clinical employees along with certified nursing assistants, registered nurses, doctors and licensed therapists, offered time and support to those experiencing crisis.

Many people left their homes in a hurry without time to grab medications and other essentials. Many developed breathing problems and allergies. Some had become too weak to stand or use the bathroom without assistance.

“Our station became much more than just medical,” said Barnett. “We made rounds four times a day to see what people needed and what we could do to ease the trauma they were experiencing. We went door-to-door in the community letting residents know it was free to stay at the fairgrounds. We became a refuge. We acted as Samaritans and I have never been prouder to be part of an organization or community.”

Across the valley at the Benton County Fairgrounds, many more evacuees, volunteers and Samaritan staff were gathering to accomplish the same goals: safety, security, help, comfort and medical attention. Kim Sather, associate vice president for Samaritan’s Information Systems department, joined many others in taking six-hour shifts to help serve food, accept donations, hand out supplies and direct traffic.

*... continued on next page*



**Staff from Samaritan Foundations and Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital coordinated picking up donations and delivering them to Lincoln City for employees and community members. Pictured, from left, are Darrel Kau, Marty Cahill, Katie McLain, Ryan Combs and Taylor Gilmour**

... continued from previous page

“It was amazing to see the community come together the way they did,” said Sather. “I cannot imagine having to leave my home and everything behind, not knowing if or when it’ll ever be seen again. But just as they always do, neighbors, friends, businesses, organizations, individuals and Samaritans showed up. It is a strong community and we will continue to prevail together.”



**Smoke fills the air at Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital**

While Samaritan’s services in Lincoln City were impacted by power outages, staff evacuating their own homes and the evacuation of Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital, Samaritan Wiley Creek Community in Sweet Home was also preparing to evacuate its assisted living residents. Although the area remained at a Level 1 “Be Ready” alert for the duration of the threat, plans were being made to get residents to safety should Level 2 “Get Set” be activated. Every resident was instructed to pack an overnight bag and be ready to leave should the need arise.

“We had planned to evacuate the Wiley Creek Community at a Level 2 alert so we would have more than enough time to calmly get the residents to safety,” said Ryan Combs, COO for Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital. “Our team worked quickly and diligently to ensure all needs of the residents could be met away from the facility.”

Evacuation plans included moving residents to Best Western PREMIER™ Boulder Falls Inn in Lebanon. A truck had been loaded and staged for easy access with supplies.

“We are extremely lucky and thankful we never had to activate our plan,” said Combs. “But now we are more than prepared for any future evacuation events. I am very thankful to the army of planners for their quick and resourceful efforts.”



**Samaritan staff set up emergency supplies outside the North Lincoln Hospital Foundation building.**

# Samaritan names Ignite Award winners

The Ignite Award is Samaritan’s highest recognition of outstanding employees who demonstrate Samaritan PRIDE (passion, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence) in their work every day.

The award was established in addition to the Shining Star award program, as part of Samaritan’s commitment to recognize and appreciate outstanding employees. All Shining Star recipients are considered for the Ignite Award, and the Employee Engagement committee decides every three months which Shining Star employees rise to the Ignite level.

Samaritan has honored seven employees with the prestigious Ignite Award through the first nine months of 2020.

Ignite winners also:

- Go “above and beyond” assigned job duties.
- Proactively interact with patients, visitors and/or coworkers.
- Represent Samaritan in an exemplary manner through engaging with community partners, serving on various boards/committees or other means.

**Ignite award recipients in 2020:**



**Kathy Davis, RN  
Samaritan Albany General Hospital**



**David Gray, Samaritan Pacific  
Communities Hospital**



**Sadie Peterson  
Samaritan Health Plans Operations**



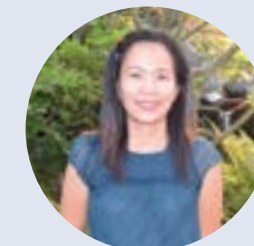
**Christine Gartner, RN  
Samaritan Cardiology**



**Cheryl Landis, RN, Samaritan Lebanon  
Community Hospital**



**Sheri Phillips, MLS  
Good Samaritan Regional  
Medical Center**



**Quyen Merbs  
Elm Street Pharmacy**

## Samaritan continues tradition of hiring, assisting veterans

Samaritan has expanded on its services to veterans accessing health care, and the organization continues to be recognized for its veterans' hiring practices.

Veterans Outreach Representative Kyle Hatch and his team of work study students assist veterans with compensation and pension claims, education, vocational rehabilitation and employment, survivor claims, health care, burial benefits and other needs. Hatch himself is accredited to represent a veteran, service-member, dependent or survivor before the U.S.



Veterans Administration. He is authorized to assist claimants in the preparation, presentation and prosecution of VA benefit claims.

For the fifth straight year, Samaritan Health Services has received the Military Friendly Employer designation due to its commitment to hire and train veterans throughout the organization. The designation is based partly on an assessment of the organization's ability to meet thresholds for applicants, new-hire retention, employee turnover and promotion and advancement of veterans and military employees.

## Virtual racers raise nearly \$30,000

In the spring of 2020, the Samaritan employees who were avid runners realized the summer race season would look dramatically different that year. Because of the safety measures in place for COVID-19, they would not be racing through large crowds or crossing finish lines at festival-like events around the state. Instead, they would be training with close friends and family, and participating in virtual races.

Inspired by these committed runners, Samaritan Foundations created the inaugural Walk Run Roll, a virtual community race. In this new format, participants from around the three-county region (and beyond!) would be able to join the fun at their convenience.

The event featured a virtual 5K, 10K and half marathon to raise funds for the Samaritan Foundations Patient Support Program. The race attracted 328 participants who raised nearly \$30,000.

The Patient Support Program serves residents of Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties who have demonstrated a financial need for equal access to care. In 2019, the program distributed more than \$45,000 in assistance to 486 community members for help with expenses such as medical bills, transportation, prescriptions, nutritional supplements and groceries.

**Samaritan Walk Run Roll participants (top to bottom): John Norris; Meredith Mann, MD, with sons, Graham and Bennett; Jane Myrick**

Racers enjoyed the event so much, the 2021 virtual event is already scheduled; mark your calendar for the 2nd annual Samaritan Walk Run Roll virtual race on Sept. 10 to 20. It's never too early to start planning your route.



## Keeping you healthy



Due to COVID-19, in-person classes, seminars and support groups are limited. Virtual offerings continue to increase.

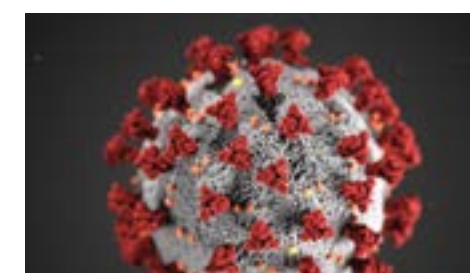
To see the most current list of events, visit [samhealth.org/Classes](http://samhealth.org/Classes).

## Parenting resources



Prepared parents. Healthy families.

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



## COVID-19 updates

Find the latest information on COVID-19 including visitor restrictions, testing procedures, vaccinations and more at [samhealth.org/Coronavirus](http://samhealth.org/Coronavirus).

## Keeping you informed

Sign up for Samaritan's e-newsletters by visiting [samhealth.org/Subscribe](http://samhealth.org/Subscribe).



**To Your Health**  
Get monthly health and wellness tips and updates on classes and events.



**Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies seminars**  
Receive information on free health education seminars offered by Samaritan.



**Samaritan Plastic, Reconstructive & Hand Surgery specials**  
Get beauty tips and learn about our cosmetic specials and events.

# Building *wellness* together



Philomath homesteader and Samaritan Heart Center patient Reita Patterson and her husband of 66 years, Elton. Read Reita's story on page 8.



Samaritan  
Health Services