

Spring/Summer 2021

heart *to* heart

Your local guide to good health
from Samaritan Health Services

**Hospital volunteer
experiences stroke,
finds comfort in
familiar faces**





● From the president

Doug Boysen, JD, MHA
President/Chief Executive Officer

Vaccination collaboration and a commitment to ‘zero harm’ within Samaritan

After nearly a year of intense focus on preventing and treating COVID-19, the new year brought promising vaccines and the challenge of vaccinating thousands of area residents against the virus — as quickly and safely as possible.

Several months later, I’m pleased to say the effort is progressing remarkably well — thanks to tremendous collaboration among state and local agencies and the dedication of countless individuals who have coordinated vaccine allocation and distribution, venue logistics, scheduling, staffing, record-keeping and so much more (See related story, page 12.). I have visited several of the vaccination events in our three-county region and it is impressive to see how efficiently they are running. The best news is that each passing day brings us closer to safely returning to many of the activities we have missed over the past year.

I urge you to schedule your own vaccination as soon as you are able. To learn more about the current effort and upcoming vaccination events near you, please visit samhealth.org/GetTheVaccine.

While this important work continues, we at Samaritan are also turning increased attention to how our organization

prevents and responds to safety and harm events involving our patients and our employees.

Health care is imperfect — and it can be dangerous. Sadly, patients are sometimes harmed at the hands of caregivers, and health care employees themselves experience injuries at higher rates than many other professions.

We don’t, however, have to accept this current state as OK. We as an organization can do better — and this year we are undertaking a major initiative to do better.

Samaritan has already made great strides to improve the safety of our patients and employees. To build on this effort, we have made the commitment to become a high reliability organization. This means becoming an ultra-safe place to work and receive care. It means working to achieve the only acceptable number when it comes to preventable patient and employee harm: ZERO. Our goal is to achieve zero preventable harm, zero injury and zero reliability failures.

Committing to zero means creating systems that protect against human errors. This includes having fail-safe processes that support the work we do, as well as talking about and learning

from any errors that occur and applying those lessons system-wide.

Though it might seem like an impossible task, it’s not. Other industries, such as aviation and nuclear energy, have done this work effectively. So, too, have health care organizations who have made the commitment to putting the right behaviors and check points in place to reduce preventable harm events.

Leading this initiative is Chief Quality Officer Margaret Mikula, MD, and her team. Dr. Mikula has helped other large health care organizations make this transition, and we are fortunate that she chose to join Samaritan last year.

While we’re just beginning our journey to becoming a high reliability organization, some best practices have already been put into place and we are making progress every day. I look forward to sharing with you how we’re doing as we increase our efforts toward building healthier communities together.

Sincerely,

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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 or to:
Julie Jones Manning
2300 NW Walnut Blvd.
Corvallis, OR 97330

President/CEO

Doug Boysen, JD, MHA

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
Wiley Creek Community

Contributors

Jason Amberg	Betsy Meidinger
Amanda Anderson	Jennifer Nitson
Rebecca Barrett	John Norris
Brian Brooks	Ian Rollins
Candice Buchanan	Sharon Schieber
Erin Causey	Tricia Schug
Duane Francis	Evonne Walls
Erin Gudge	Stephanie Wiegman
Jeri Hauth	Carson Wright
Mary Jo Kerlin	Karl Maasdam
Jeanne Krier	Photography
Mary Maberry	
Julie Jones Manning	

Photography note: Several photos in this publication are readily-accessible stock photography and were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Photos taken by Samaritan were taken using social distancing precautions.

Healthy workplaces foster happy workers, especially in a pandemic

If there ever was a time to focus on workplace wellness, it's now. The pressures of the coronavirus pandemic, combined with the normal stresses and strains at work, have made promoting a healthy work environment an even greater priority.

Organizations including Samaritan Health Services — seven-time winner of Oregon's Healthiest Employer award for organizations with more than 5,000 employees — are keeping well-being front-of-mind and encouraging employees and community members to practice wellness strategies in their daily lives.

Samaritan's own successful experience with worksite wellness also informs its work with other businesses that offer Samaritan Health Plans' health insurance to their employees.

"Our wellness program is always evolving," said Alyssa Wink, director of Wellness and Fitness for Samaritan.

In times of change and uncertainty, Samaritan's COVID-19 employee wellness response has magnified these efforts. For essential workers, including those in health care, the prolonged stress and distress can sometimes feel like a marathon.

"We are committed to supporting employees and their families during the unprecedented challenges facing us in response to the pandemic," said William Barish, MD, chief wellness officer for Samaritan.

The stress some health care workers are experiencing is unlike anything Dr. Barish has seen in the 40 years he has practiced medicine.

Samaritan's comprehensive approach to employee wellness includes personal support resources developed by its Well-Being Council. These resources have not only continued during the pandemic, but they have also expanded with virtual listening circles and fitness classes, and "care for the caregiver" sessions moving online for greater accessibility.

Another popular offering is the Headspace app. Employees receive a free subscription to the mindfulness program that teaches new strategies for stress, anxiety, sleep focus and fitness.

Additionally, mindfulness training that was initially offered only to clinicians has expanded to all employees. Kari Hart, a licensed clinical social worker and mindfulness-based stress reduction instructor, teaches people the skills to be present, calm and effective under stress (see related story, page 4).

In health care, where nearly 80% of workers are female, helping women to cope with stress and burnout has become a focus. As of February, nearly 3 million U.S. women had dropped out of the labor force in the past year.

"The additional demands are disproportionately affecting women," said Hart. "Women are four times more likely to leave the workforce than men."

Staying attuned to the aspects that contribute to health and well-being makes practical sense, as well. Businesses pay a high cost for ignoring workplace wellness with absenteeism, poor performance and lost productivity.

In a health care setting, improved workforce wellness is equated with reduced burnout.

"There is very good data to show that reducing burnout improves the patient experience and reduces medical errors," Dr. Barish said. "That's the payback for the community."

If you're interested in learning meditation, Samaritan's Well-Being Council recommends the Headspace app. A free version is available on the App Store and Google Play.

Learn more at [headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com).



Equity and inclusion matter at work, in the community

Belonging is about feeling comfortable being who you are, everywhere: at home, at your job, out and about. And that includes at the doctor's office.

Whether as a patient, health plan member, visitor or co-worker, everyone who walks through the doors of Samaritan Health Services deserves to feel welcome and treated with respect and dignity.

Demonstrating a commitment and responsibility to meeting its mission of "building healthier communities together," Samaritan completed its inaugural Equity & Inclusion Plan in 2020. The four-year plan was developed by Samaritan's Equity & Inclusion Council and outlines the steps to better understand and address issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, culture, socioeconomic status, language, sexual orientation, age, spirituality and literacy.

"We look forward to fostering an even more inclusive, respectful, equitable and responsive health care system," said Kevin Ewanchyna, MD, chief medical officer for Samaritan Health Plans and member of the Equity & Inclusion Council.

The plan reflects organizational values known as Samaritan PRIDE: Passion, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence.

"We recognize this work is ongoing, building on the foundation we are creating," Dr. Ewanchyna said.

Another part of Samaritan's commitment to creating an inclusive workplace is by taking the steps to be named a Military Friendly Employer again in 2021.

Samaritan also recognizes that work is one of the many aspects of wellness affecting a person's quality of life. In response to widespread calls for racial justice, Samaritan has held employee focus groups and forums for open dialogue. Additionally, Samaritan encourages employees, patients and community members to seek support when they need it.

"Finding ways to grow your skills and be satisfied and enriched at work is good for you," said Gail Worden-Acree, vice president of Human Resources for Samaritan and an Equity & Inclusion Council member. "We encourage everyone to develop their talents and confidence so they can reach their goals."



Learn more about the
Equity & Inclusion Plan at
samhealth.org/Equity.

Practice mindfulness to reduce stress, foster appreciation

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment. This means taking notice of sights, sounds, smells, thoughts and feelings, and appreciating all that is in front of you.

Being present allows us to take in the now. It helps to reduce fears and anxieties about things that have not happened yet and may never happen. It also keeps us from wishing things had been different. We can't change the past or predict the future; we only have the present.

Wes Sedlacek, Chaplain Services manager for Samaritan Albany General Hospital and Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital, suggests the following actions to keep your mind in the present:

Notice details. Focus on a pattern in the wood, count the petals on a flower or look at the back of your hand. What do you see?

Close your eyes and listen. What can you hear? Birds? People talking? Your heartbeat?

Walk slowly. Take a few steps and focus on your body as it moves. Do you feel the pressure of your weight on the ground? What does the ground feel like? What is around you?

Breathe. Close your eyes or stare at a wall while you slowly take deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Feel the air enter your lungs and notice how your chest expands. Make a point of fully emptying your lungs and slowly forcing all the air out. Repeat several times.

Give thanks. Being grateful for even the small things changes our perspective.

“Being present is truly a gift,” said Sedlacek. “Looking forward or backward can cause us to miss seeing what is right next to us and create unnecessary stress.”



Tips for an effective, ergonomic home workspace

If you are continuing to work or attend school remotely and haven't set up an ergonomic workspace yet, follow these steps to maximize your comfort and reduce physical stressors that contribute to injuries.

Forceful exertion, repetition and awkward or sustained postures are common factors that can cause discomfort and harm, according to Kim Schlessinger, adult care nurse practitioner, occupational health nurse and director of Samaritan's Employee Health & Safety Program.

"An ergonomic workspace not only reduces pain and injuries, it can boost your productivity," Schlessinger said.

Ergonomic basics

- Practice good posture. Whether you're on the couch, driving or at work in front of a screen, good body mechanics can keep you free from injury. Keep your head balanced above your shoulders with eyes level to avoid neck strain — no slouching forward or jutting your chin.
- At the computer, use a chair with high back support that can be adjusted to fit your height.
- Assess your home workspace. Is it time for a new chair, desk, keyboard or mouse?
- Support your lower back with lumbar support from a chair, a small pillow or rolled up towel. Your legs should be parallel to the floor, feet resting on the floor or a footrest.
- Stay centered and supported. Reclining in an easy chair or lying on the couch can put more pressure on your spine and neck. Pay attention when you lay down that

your head and neck aren't curled forward, which can strain the muscles. Reclining can put pressure on your low back — use a pillow for support if you need it.

- Counteract the effects of sitting. Stand up, stretch and readjust your posture every 15 minutes. Take a short walk every 30 minutes, even if it's just across the room. If you have a smart watch, set reminders to move. Use your lunch break for longer walks and "walk and talk" on your phone calls.

Learn how to improve your posture to relieve back and neck strain at [samhealth.org/Posture](https://www.samhealth.org/Posture).

Give your eyeballs a break!

That captivating, glowing screen that many of us stare at for hours on end, just inches from our faces, is making our eyes ache.

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, computer or tablet use doesn't necessarily damage our eyes, but it can create uncomfortable eyestrain and the accompanying symptoms of tiredness, redness or difficulty focusing.

You already know how important it is to use proper posture, reduce screen glare and to take frequent breaks to relax your back and shoulder muscles during computer use. Now, simply add the 20-20-20 rule to give your eyes a break, too: look away from the screen every 20 minutes and look at an object that is 20 feet away, for at least 20 seconds.

Also, it's helpful to blink often, use artificial tears, if needed, and prescription eyewear specifically for computer use.

Surgical robots benefit patients and medical team

Amanda Burns of Lebanon has had different types of minimally invasive surgery — she had her gallbladder removed laparoscopically, as well as robotic-assisted weight loss surgery.

To her, the differences were significant.

“I had a lot of pain when I had my gallbladder out, and I felt like I was down for longer than after my gastric bypass weight loss surgery,” said Burns. “After my gastric bypass surgery, it was hard to limit my activity because I felt so good. I was walking the halls of the hospital that same day.”

Donald Yarbrough, MD, from Samaritan Weight Management Institute, performed Burns’ gastric bypass procedure with a da Vinci surgical robot at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. The hospital, which has had a da Vinci robot since 2010, recently upgraded to a da Vinci Xi with an E-100 generator, which offers more technology to benefit the patient and health care team.

Good Samaritan and Samaritan Albany General Hospital are the only hospitals in the Willamette Valley with this level of surgical robotic technology.

The da Vinci surgical system allows for finer, more precise movements and smaller incisions. It reduces complications and risk of bleeding, resulting in a much shorter hospital stay. Many patients often go home within 24 hours.

“Besides a shorter hospital stay, patients benefit from robotic surgery primarily through less pain afterward and quicker recovery than other surgical techniques,” Dr. Yarbrough said.



The Xi is the most current robotic system, with advanced aspects of robotic technology to improve efficiency in the operating room, expanded application of robotic surgery and improved outcomes for patients.

“Besides weight loss surgeries, surgeons can use the da Vinci for hernia repairs and colorectal surgeries, as well as urologic and gynecologic procedures,” Dr. Yarbrough said.

To learn more about robotic-assisted surgery, visit samhealth.org/Robotics.

Albany hospital adds da Vinci robot, expands services

In early 2021, Samaritan Albany General Hospital brought its new da Vinci Xi surgical robot online, increasing Samaritan’s capacity to do more laparoscopic and minimally invasive surgeries for patients of the Willamette Valley.

“Robotic-assisted surgery is becoming more common,” said Paul Daskalos, DO, gynecologic surgeon and chairman of the board of directors at Samaritan Albany General Hospital. “It gives our patients more options with many benefits. Having these advanced tools helps us to provide exceptional care to our community.”

Six surgeons are currently trained on the da Vinci robot, and the hospital plans to train additional surgeons.

“We are pleased to be able to offer safer, more efficient procedures locally to our patients,” said April Jensen, DO, general surgeon.



The da Vinci robot operating room was funded by contributions to the Albany General Hospital Foundation. For more information about the foundation or to make a donation, contact Jennifer Stanaway at jstanaway@samhealth.org or visit samhealth.org/AGHF.

Minimally invasive surgery offers relief from compression fracture pain

Osteoporosis and the gradual thinning of the bones is a natural part of aging. Unfortunately, as the bones thin they also flatten, and the spine can start to develop a forward slump that puts increased pressure on weakening vertebrae. If there's too much pressure — maybe from a fall — the result can be a vertebral compression fracture. For those with advanced osteoporosis even a simple act like lifting or sneezing can cause injury.

In fact, compression fractures in the spine are the most common fracture linked to osteoporosis according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. These fractures will usually heal on their own, but occasionally people feel a lot of pain that can affect their quality of life.

“Compression fractures are often located at about the waist and make bending forward very painful,” said Wael Ghacham, MD, an orthopedic spine surgeon at Samaritan’s Brain & Spine Center, who specializes in minimally invasive spine surgery. “When you are trying to heal you should be limiting that bending and reaching movement, and it makes you realize how much you use your spine. Daily living tasks can be extremely difficult without a full range of motion.”

A minimally invasive procedure called balloon kyphoplasty can help.

During the procedure, a small balloon is inserted into the compressed vertebra and filled with air to create space so the vertebra is similar in size to before the injury. The balloon is removed and the space is filled with a quick-drying bone cement to support the spine and stabilize the vertebra.

The surgery uses needles; no incisions are made and no stitches are needed afterward. This technique means that recovery time is short and most patients can resume normal activities within 48 hours.

The procedure works best on compression fractures that are less than eight weeks old and affect just one vertebra.

“Back pain can have a variety of causes as we age,” said Dr. Ghacham. “If you notice new pain, especially after an event like a fall, talk to your doctor soon to discuss your options.”

To schedule a consultation with Dr. Ghacham, call Samaritan Medical Group Brain & Spine Center – Corvallis at 541-768-4501.



Bunions: Treatment and prevention tips

If the joint that connects your big toe to your foot has a swollen, sore bump, you may have a bunion. It is a common deformity and may be hereditary.

However, bunions can also be caused by trauma or wearing certain types of shoes, specifically, tight or narrow shoes and high heels.

Similarly, too-tight shoes may also cause a painful lump at the base of your little toe, called a bunionette or tailor's bunion.

With a bunion, the position of the bones surrounding the base of your big toe becomes altered and more prominent. The overlying skin may get red or tender. Wearing certain shoes may be painful. As a bunion grows, it can result in worsening pain and difficulty walking. Your big toe may angle toward your second toe or cross under it.

In addition, the skin on the bottom of your foot may become thick and painful. Pressure from your big toe may force your second toe out of alignment, sometimes overlapping your third toe or the big toe.

An advanced bunion may make your foot look deformed, and if it gets too severe your pain may become chronic. You may even develop arthritis in your foot.

Minimize your chances of developing a bunion:

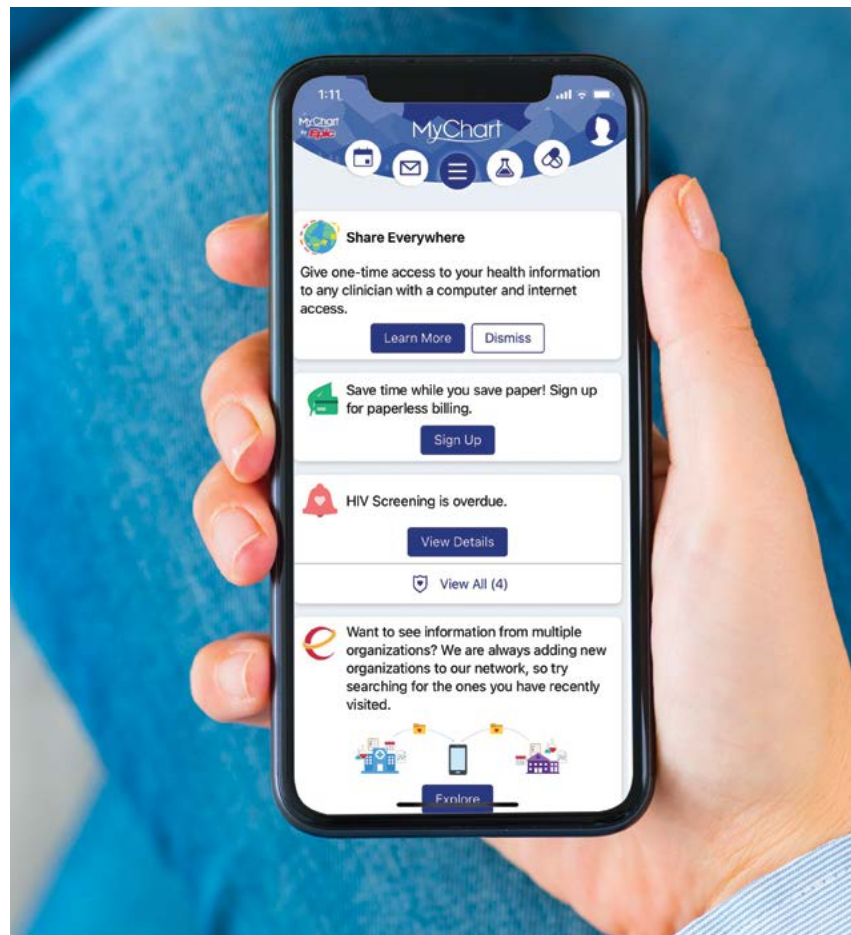
- Never wear shoes that crowd your toes or fit improperly.
- Choose shoes that conform to the shape of your feet.
- Choose shoes with comfortable insoles and wide toe boxes.
- Consider having your shoes stretched out professionally.
- Use protective pads to cushion the painful areas.

If your bunion causes you difficulty walking or chronic pain despite your shoe modifications, you may need surgery. Bunion surgery involves realigning the bones, ligaments and tendons of the foot to improve both pain and function.

Your surgeon can help you decide which surgical approach is right for you. Most bunion surgeries are outpatient procedures, and most patients can return to regular shoes in six to twelve weeks.



Jason Lin, MD, is a foot and ankle specialist with Samaritan Medical Group Orthopedics. Scan the QR code for videos from Dr. Lin about foot and ankle health.



Telemedicine or your doctor's office? *Choosing what is right for you*

By Morgan Bahm, family nurse practitioner, Samaritan Internal Medicine – Corvallis

Since the emergence of COVID-19, changes in federal regulations have allowed Samaritan doctors and patients to embrace telemedicine as a convenient way to meet a variety of health care needs. Using a computer or smartphone, telemedicine can be a good choice for conditions such as allergies, asthma, bronchitis, colds and flu, headache, rashes, insect bites, pink eye, urinary tract infection and more.

In addition to in-person visits, Samaritan clinics offer telemedicine, and most insurance plans cover these visits the same as they would for an in-office visit. Check with your health insurance provider to see if telemedicine is a covered benefit.

When you call to schedule a visit, you can ask if a telemedicine appointment would be right for you and your current health concerns.

Telemedicine should not replace all in-person visits. Your primary care provider can learn a lot about your health from seeing you face-to-face and some health care concerns require the doctor to see you and do a physical examination.

Symptoms such as pain in your abdomen, sudden swelling of a limb, sudden weight gain or a strange lump may require a visit to your doctor's office. And of course, if you have a life-threatening emergency, such as symptoms of a heart attack or stroke, call 911 immediately.

Though some visits for chronic disease management work well via telemedicine, if you have new or worsening symptoms you will likely need to see your doctor in person. The best rule of thumb is to ask which kind of visit will be right for you when you call to make your appointment.

Each doctor-patient relationship is unique — your doctor can help you decide whether you should come into the office or choose telemedicine.

MyChart: *Your health care dashboard*

MyChart is an easy and safe way for you to access your health information online. With the MyChart online patient portal, you can:

- View your appointments, medical history, medications and immunizations.
- Review visit information, including your care provider's notes, after an appointment.
- View vitals such as blood pressure, pulse, weight and body-mass index and see graphs of this information over time.
- View test results and see comparative graphs of past results.
- Use secure messaging to send non-urgent questions to your care team.
- Renew your prescriptions.
- Pay your bill.
- Schedule an appointment.

MyChart also offers E-Visits — fast, secure and convenient online appointments that connect you with a Samaritan Health Services clinician, with most visits taking place via messaging within the MyChart platform online. E-Visits can help you get care for non-urgent medical needs, such as headache, heartburn, urinary tract infection and more.

These are just a few of the many ways MyChart can keep you informed about your health and help you reach your health care goals.

Sign up and learn more about other great features at samhealth.org/MyChart.



Building *assurance* together

Learn more about Cyndee Martin
and watch her tell her story at
samhealth.org/CyndeeM.

Hospital volunteer experiences stroke, finds comfort in familiar faces

Frightened, confused and feeling alone — even while surrounded by the emergency services team at Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital — Cyndee Martin was asked to make a quick decision that could potentially impact her health and even her life. She locked eyes with a nurse she recognized and found the strength and trust to decide.

Months later, Martin shared her praise for the small-town hospital with access to big-city services, which helped her to survive a stroke and begin a new phase of her life.

About eight years earlier, after a divorce, Martin relocated to the central Oregon Coast, living first in Lincoln City then moving to Newport. With extended family in the Willamette Valley and beyond, Cyndee began cultivating friendships locally, working a part-time retail job and exploring new activities.

One of these activities is volunteering at the Newport hospital.

“I had just started making this feel like my home and a lot of it has to do with the people that I’m associated with at the hospital,” Martin said with a smile. “It’s a great place to volunteer. The people are so wonderful, and we do a lot of things together.”

Martin was trained to work the front desk, assist in the Emergency Department, and to be a comforting presence for patients who have no family or friends with them in the hospital during the last days of their lives.

“I find so much joy in being a volunteer at the hospital. I’m around a great group of people and I go home feeling really fulfilled,” she said. “It’s a truly wonderful experience for me.”

Since the pandemic began in early 2020, volunteers were not allowed to serve in the hospital for many months, for their own safety.

“A lot of people found themselves a little lost because it’s such a big part of our lives,” Martin said.

However, Martin unexpectedly found herself back inside the hospital walls, a few months into the pandemic — this time as an emergency patient herself.

Martin recalled that frightening day: It was early on a Tuesday morning and she was reading her emails.

“I had a cup of coffee sitting there and I went to reach for my coffee with my left hand and my hand wouldn’t go to my cup,

so I called my mother. She in turn called my roommate and he called the ambulance, and they were there faster than — I don’t even know — I just turned around and they were there.”

Arriving by ambulance to the hospital, Martin said she was very confused and didn’t know what was happening to her.

“I thought I felt fine, but my body wasn’t working properly. I was surrounded by a team of doctors and nurses and they said that they thought I was having a stroke, so they got a neurologist on a camera (telehealth) and he confirmed what the ER physician had already diagnosed — that I was having a stroke,” she said.

A stroke happens when a blood clot stops or restricts the blood supply to the brain, causing brain cells to die. Quick medical action can reduce brain damage and other complications. Martin was asked if she wanted an injection of tPA, a clot-busting drug that could restore function.

In the blur of activity, Martin looked around and saw a familiar face, Emergency Department Nurse Rexanne Payne.

“I instantly felt safe, just eye to eye with Rex, and I told her, ‘I’m going to trust you because I’m scared, I don’t know what to do,’ and she never let go of my hand.”

Staff were able to get Martin’s son on the phone and everyone agreed to give Martin the injection within the “golden hour” of time, when medical intervention is critical to reducing stroke damage.

“Everyone worked so quickly to do all of this. Within about 30 or 45 minutes, my arm started working. I had control again,” she recalled. “Everyone did every step correctly and saved me from months of physical therapy. They’re wonderful.”

Martin is at risk for another stroke, so she continues to receive care from a “great team of doctors,” she said. “So, I’m just doing what they tell me to do and I feel great. I was up and running within a week.”

In replaying the events in her mind, Martin added: “Our hospital is a small, rural hospital which I think makes some people kind of leery. Well, I’ll tell you something. Through volunteering there and being a patient there, this is a group of extraordinary people who work as a team, who are caring. I feel so safe going there. I just feel really fortunate.”

Samaritan and county partners continue successful COVID-19 vaccination campaign

On Dec. 28, 2020, Pam Hayden made history as the first person Samaritan Health Services vaccinated for COVID-19.

Since Hayden received her first dose on Dec. 18, Samaritan has partnered with Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties to vaccinate community members, averaging 7,500 a week across the region. This includes health care workers in many settings, long-term care residents, educators, older adults and individuals at high risk for serious illness due to underlying health conditions.

All of the coronavirus vaccines currently available have been shown to be 100% effective in preventing hospitalization and death.

“These vaccines went through all the required testing steps to gain emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration,” said Adam Brady, MD, infectious disease specialist and chair of the Samaritan Coronavirus Task Force.

“The testing was completed much quicker than usual because we were in the middle of a pandemic, which led to more individuals willing to participate in the trials. And we had more than double the usual number of people participate in the trials.

“The vaccines were shown to be safe throughout the trials, with some side effects,” Dr. Brady continued. “I think their safety has been further proven by the millions of doses administered since last December, and I want to continue to highly encourage everyone to get the vaccine. This is one of our best tools to end this pandemic.”

More information about the COVID-19 vaccines can be found at samhealth.org/COVIDVaccine.

It takes a team effort to vaccinate individuals on a large scale, and Samaritan is recruiting medically trained volunteers to join the team. Learn more at samhealth.org/COVIDVolunteer.

“I wasn’t the least bit afraid of it, and I wanted to get the vaccine for myself and my family.”



Pam Hayden of Environmental Services is the first recipient of the COVID-19 vaccine at Samaritan Health Services.

“I’m so excited to get the vaccination. This means I can see my friends again and not live in fear of this virus.”



Bill Howden, RN, administers the COVID-19 vaccine to Barbara Longstreth of Corvallis.



Samaritan Athletic Medicine's Douglas Aukerman, MD, at an Oregon State University football practice.

Samaritan physicians, Oregon State athletics contribute to new COVID-19 research

People exposed to the coronavirus face a shorter quarantine period – four fewer days than when the outbreak began – based on research in which Samaritan specialists in athletic medicine and infectious disease participated.

The local tie to revised recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention involves Samaritan Athletic Medicine's Douglas Aukerman, MD, who also is Oregon State University's senior associate athletic director for sports medicine, and Infectious Disease Specialist Adam Brady, MD, chair of Samaritan's coronavirus task force.

Dr. Aukerman and Dr. Brady helped to establish safety protocols and guide data collection of COVID-19 test results of student-athletes at Oregon State and other Pac-12 Conference schools.

The findings, combined with those from other NCAA conferences, show there is limited risk for transmission after 10 days following exposure. The study also concluded that people are more likely to comply with a shorter quarantine.

Based on this and other research, the CDC in December shortened the recommended quarantine period to 10 days. The research has immediate and broad implications, helping student-athletes return to practice and competition, and allowing people to get back to work and society in a safe and timely manner.

"Decreasing the quarantine length will reduce the burden on communities," said Dr. Aukerman. "This research shows how we can do it safely."

Dr. Aukerman chairs the panel overseeing the Pac-12 Student-Athlete Health & Well-Being Initiative, including the conference's COVID-19 Medical Advisory Committee. He invited Dr. Brady and other health experts to participate in developing safety guidelines.

With the Pac-12's commitment to contact tracing, testing and quarantining of student-athletes, there was an opportunity to share testing data with the CDC. These efforts highlight the power of partnering together to improve public health measures.

"It has been a very rewarding experience," Dr. Brady said.

Dr. Brady and Dr. Aukerman continue to participate on the Pac-12 COVID-19 Medical Advisory Committee, and additional research findings are forthcoming.

"Dr. Aukerman and Dr. Brady are an asset to our student-athletes, coaches, the community and the Pac-12 Conference," said Scott Barnes, vice president and director of intercollegiate athletics at Oregon State. "Their leadership is helping to keep people safe from the coronavirus."

Gut-healing recipe: Green smoothie

By Bonnie Buckingham, registered dietitian, Samaritan Weight Management Institute

Soothe your stomach with this easy-to-make, energizing smoothie.

The chia, flax and hemp seeds pack a powerful nutritional boost to the digestive track by adding extra soluble fiber and feeding gut-friendly bacteria needed for proper digestion. Additionally, this trio adds plenty of heart-healthy omega-3 fats so you can drink it up without the guilt. The nutty crunch and texture added by the seeds will make this beverage feel and taste like a satisfying meal.

Try it for a quick, on-the-go breakfast that will set you on a healthy course for the day.

Prep time: 10 minutes. Servings: 1


Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups cold water
- 1 cup kale or spinach, chopped
- 1/4 avocado, peeled and pit removed
- 1/2 banana, frozen
- 1 1/2 teaspoon chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon ground flax seed
- 2 tablespoons hemp seeds
- 1 teaspoon raw honey

Instructions

1. Place all ingredients in your blender and blend until smooth.
2. Pour into a glass and enjoy!

*Nutrition information per serving based on listed ingredients:
Serving size: one 10-ounce serving; Calories: 376; Carbohydrates: 42 g; Protein: 11 g; Fiber: 10 g; Fat: 22 g.*



Find more recipes, including how-to videos, at samhealth.org/RecipeMinute.

Leaky gut? Help it heal with a healthy diet

You may have heard the term “leaky gut,” also referred by medical professionals as increased intestinal permeability. But what is it, how do you know if you have it and is it the culprit of your health issues?

“The gut is a complex system and we’re still learning how it influences health,” said Erika La Vella, DO, FASMBS, a surgeon from Samaritan Weight Management Institute. “Left untreated, a leaky gut can cause gastrointestinal conditions like irritable bowel syndrome, celiac disease and Crohn’s disease, among others.”

How does a leaky gut develop?

The walls of the intestines are made up of cells linked by tight junction proteins that act as gates to allow nutrients into the bloodstream. When those junctions are damaged, often by poor diet, stress and some medications, undigested food particles, bacteria and toxins can “leak” out causing increased inflammation.

Symptoms can include:

- Bloating and gas.
- Fatigue.
- Food sensitivities.
- Joint pain.
- Weight gain or weight loss.

Dr. La Vella notes that ultra-processed foods are a common problem — they are low in fiber, high in fat and often contain chemical additives, a combination that can harm healthy gut bacteria and damage tight junctions.

“But eating better can get you back on track,” said Dr. La Vella.

She recommends these tips to help manage symptoms and aid in healthy bacteria:

- Limit or avoid ultra-processed foods.
- Limit or avoid sugar, alcohol and saturated fat.
- Eat plenty of fiber.
- Eat fermented foods or cultured dairy like yogurt, kefir, miso and kimchi.
- Probiotic supplements can help too.

“If after a few weeks of making dietary changes, you have ongoing symptoms and are still concerned, talk to your doctor,” said Dr. La Vella. “There may be an underlying cause that needs to be treated.”

Learn more and watch videos by Erika La Vella, DO, FASMBS, about gut health and other weight loss topics at samhealth.org/bio/ELaVella.



Personal experience prompts Corvallis volunteer to help others

In the past, Castiel Darling enlisted the help of others when preparing to visit the doctor.

Darling (they/them), of Corvallis, is transgender and non-binary.

“I felt like I had to bring people with me to defend me and make sure that I was being treated the way that I deserve,” Darling said.

Darling is disabled, suffers from ongoing chronic illnesses and recently was diagnosed with diabetes. They couldn’t avoid medical care. So, despite facing discrimination and oppression in past medical visits, they kept searching for a doctor they could trust.

Darling has volunteered with the Gender Health and Community Network, an advocacy group of trans-affirmative providers serving as liaisons to increase access to health care and public services in Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties. That’s where Darling first heard about Olivia Danforth, MD, now a physician at Samaritan Family Medicine – Geary Street in Albany.

Maybe this time would be different, they hoped.

And it was.

“We’re going to take your health care into your hands and make sure that you’re a part of it,” Dr. Danforth assured Darling.

“It’s hard to put into words how affirming she is,” Darling said. “It feels like I am collaborating with her to meet my health needs. I’ve never felt like that with a doctor before.”

Having Dr. Danforth as their physician has been life changing. Darling is sharing their story about what it means to have a clinician who understands their needs with compassion.

Dr. Danforth’s clinical interests include LGBT health and gender-affirming care. Foremost, she wants every patient to feel safe.

“One of the most powerful things I can offer is being someone patients can trust, no matter what they have going on in their lives,” Dr. Danforth said.

Darling received hormone replacement therapy and gender-affirming surgery.

“Without Dr. Danforth, I don’t think I would have tried. It wouldn’t have been attainable for me,” Darling said. “She championed the idea that I could take control of my health.”

After quitting physical therapy after a bad experience, Darling has started going again to a different provider after a nudge and referral from Dr. Danforth.

“I gave it another shot and was able to find a really affirming physical therapist,” Darling said.

Having Dr. Danforth as their physician seems “miraculous.”

“I have control over my health,” they said.

With their newfound acceptance, Darling has become a greater advocate for the transgender community, volunteering with organizations that provide local connections and resources. Darling said that when trans people they know have a negative medical experience, they quit going to the doctor. Many are not getting the medical services they need.

That’s why Darling volunteers to help transgender people find compassionate care. Darling and their partner, Elijah Stucki (they/them), are involved with the Mid-Willamette Trans Support Network. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis, Darling’s faith community, was crucial in developing the Trans Support Network, which provides safe spaces for transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people to gather, as well as public education. And Darling plans to participate in Samaritan’s new LGBTQIA2S+ Patient Advisory Council that is forming (see story on page 18).

“Trans people are just people,” Darling said. “They want and need health care just like everyone else.”

**Learn more about Castiel Darling
and watch them tell their story at
samhealth.org/CastielD.**



Building
respect
together

Patient and family advisory council forms for LGBTQIA2S+

Building on the success of Samaritan’s Patient Advisory Councils that help to enhance services, a new group is forming this summer.

An LGBTQIA2S+ advisory council will collaborate with other groups to support and cultivate an inclusive, patient-centered environment. LGBTQIA2S+ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit and the other affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify. The council will also guide initiatives to treat all people with respect and dignity, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

“The goal is to bring patient and family voices into our care design improvement work and improve patient care at Samaritan,” said Tasha Pendley, patient-family engagement coordinator.

Patient advisory councils are part of Samaritan’s ongoing efforts to advance patient satisfaction. They provide feedback to clinicians and foster a better understanding of health care among patients and the community.

The idea for the new council grew from the work of an advisory council focus group that was consulted about using preferred names on hospital bracelets.

“The conversation was so fruitful, we wanted to expand on that, to extend and make it in-depth,” said Pendley. “People have provided such great feedback. That’s why I’m so excited.”

To apply for a patient advisor position, contact the Service Excellence Team at SHSServiceExcellence@samhealth.org.





Precision Wellness, a medical weight management program, now offered

Earlier this year, Samaritan Weight Management Institute in Corvallis launched Precision Wellness, an evidence-based, 16-week lifestyle change program.

“Roughly 40% of adults in the U.S. are obese,” said Katy Brown, DO, an endocrinologist for Samaritan Weight Management Institute. “Precision Wellness will focus on lifestyle changes designed to improve metabolic health parameters, including high blood pressure, prediabetes, diabetes, cholesterol and many other health implications that arise or are exacerbated by excess weight.”

Until now, Samaritan Weight Management Institute has primarily offered patients surgical weight loss options, such as gastric bypass and vertical sleeve gastrectomy.

“Our surgical weight loss program is fantastic,” Dr. Brown said. “For a variety of reasons though, surgery isn’t always the right option for every person we see.”

Precision Wellness will be led by the clinic’s experts who specialize in the field of obesity. The program will give

patients the skills needed to gain optimal health and well-being, with a focus on nutrition, physical activity, mindfulness, sleep, hormones and metabolic optimization.

Patients will meet virtually each week for 16 weeks. The program will include physical activity sessions at SamFit – Corvallis, healthy recipes, support groups and more.

“Our goal is to give patients another option to help them reach optimal health,” said Dr. Brown.

Individuals can self-enroll or be referred by their doctor to Samaritan Weight Management Institute. Available openings are limited, and advance registration is required. Candidates must be 18 years of age or older with a BMI of 30 or greater.

A deposit of \$449 is required to enroll, with two additional payments of \$375 due at week four and eight of the program.

For program start dates or to get more information, contact Samaritan Weight Management Institute at 541-768-4280.



Good Samaritans and series of fortunate events

In October 2020, Amanda Rose-Monroe, CMA, was arriving to work at SamCare Express in Corvallis when she met the day's first patient outside the clinic, an elderly woman arriving early for a flu shot.

The patient was let in and vaccinated before Rose-Monroe had time to officially open the door for business. As she waved goodbye to the patient, she saw a flash — a mattress delivery truck was careening across the curb and into the clinic parking lot.

"I remember thinking, 'He's not stopping'," she said.

Just then, the driver, Doug Ackland of Albany, slammed into the elderly patient's car, knocking her into the bushes and shoving her car into another parking space. Rose-Monroe called for Hank Wright, PA, who was at his computer.

He and Rose-Monroe rushed to help their flu shot patient.

"Amazingly, she had not been hit. She was alert and able to stand, so we made a triage decision that she was OK," Wright said.

Jorja Opoien, clinic office specialist, brought her into the clinic to call her husband while others attended to Ackland.

Slumped against the driver-side door, Ackland was unconscious. When Wright got to him via the passenger-side door, he had a weak pulse. Wright, a newly arrived police officer and a bystander worked to cut Ackland's seat

belt and remove him from the truck. By the time they got him to the sidewalk, Ackland was in cardiac arrest.

Trained as a paramedic and emergency room clinician, Wright assumed the role of delegating and keeping everyone calm. Rose-Monroe began chest compressions and Addie Mata, CMA, from nearby Samaritan Urology, connected him to the automated external defibrillator. After the AED administered the shock, Rose-Monroe and Wright continued compressions until EMTs arrived to take over.

Ackland only remembers leaving a customer's house, driving down Circle Boulevard and then waking up in the hospital. But he knows the quick action of the clinic team saved him.

"It was the right place to crash because they knew what to do," he said later. "They had to act fast, and they did."

Rose-Monroe said her CPR training just kicked in.

"I've been a medical assistant for 11 years and have never given CPR outside a class. You take that class every two years and hope you'll remember what to do when needed," she said. "I'm so glad I had the tools and knowledge to help."

Ackland is glad, too.

"I'm so grateful to them, I don't even have the words for how much it means to me," he said. "A million thanks to them. They're the ones who saved my life."

After Ackland arrived at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, his doctors discovered severe blockages in his arteries that required triple bypass





save man's life

surgery. Also, while there, he was diagnosed with leukemia, a disease he hadn't known he had. Now on the road to recovery, he has nothing but praise for his health care team.

"From start to finish, I had exceptional care," he said.

Back at the clinic, after the ambulance had left, clinic staff surveyed the scene. They noted the fire hydrant, which had taken the truck's impact, had been flung some 75 feet from its street-side location to just outside the clinic door. When debriefing, they marveled at how remarkable the whole situation had been.

"It's one of those things you just have to stand back and wonder about," Wright said. "Here's this guy who goes unconscious while driving, smashes into a medical place that had just opened for the day and misses hitting a woman by about six inches. She's OK and he's OK. And then, while he's in the hospital, he's diagnosed with a medical issue he didn't know he had, but now that he knows, he has a chance to prolong his life.

"All these things coming together ... it just makes you wonder," he said.

Photo above, from left to right:

*Amanda Rose-Monroe, SamCare Express – Corvallis;
Jorja Opoien, SamCare Express – Corvallis;
Doug Ackland, patient; Hank Wright, SamCare Express – Corvallis; Addie Mata, Samaritan Urology*

Photo on page 20: *Debbie and Doug Ackland of Albany*



Consider incorporating midwifery into birth plan

There are so many things to consider when you find out you are pregnant. One of these is whether to use the services of a midwife.

A certified nurse midwife offers education, support and advocacy for your birth plan. Midwives view birth as a healthy, normal process with intervention only if needed. Even for a high-risk pregnancy that requires a doctor's care or the wish for a pain-blocking epidural as soon as possible, you can still work with a midwife to create a birth plan to have the labor experience you want.

Birth plans are reviewed in the clinic before labor begins to discuss what is most important to you and your family. You might discuss requests not offered at your birthing location or practices that might not be safe for your unique situation. This process is done in a caring, positive environment so you will feel comfortable making choices based on evidence-based suggestions.

Midwives encourage laboring moms to eat, drink, walk, dance, move, laugh, cry, shower and rest, as they wish. When it is time to push, they can use any position that feels best. Delayed cord clamping and skin-to-skin contact are routine. Postpartum requests will also be incorporated.

"When my patients are in labor, my goal is to offer as much, or as little, labor support as is wanted," said Nadia Graves, CNM, with Samaritan Lebanon Health Center. "Sometimes birth plans change, and I want to make sure patients know why the changes are suggested. They should feel in control, empowered and respected during the birthing process."

For more information about midwifery, or to find a provider, visit samhealth.org/Midwifery.

New equipment and technology advance treatment for cancer patients

Nearly everyone is touched by cancer at some point in their life – whether the individual being diagnosed or a loved one. And when it comes to choosing where to go for cancer care, having access to the most advanced technology in treatment is often a factor.

In spring of 2021, the Samaritan Cancer Program in Corvallis became the first location in Oregon to acquire a new linear accelerator, the Varian Truebeam® Edge™, offering the most advanced radiation therapy treatment for cancer patients.

“The Edge offers high-precision radiosurgery, a form of radiation therapy, which is a non-invasive alternative to traditional surgery – essentially no incision is needed,” said Elizabeth Shiner, medical physicist in the Radiation Oncology department at Samaritan Health Services. “The technology improves the accuracy and treatment of tumors that are often difficult to treat surgically, such as tumors in the brain, lung, spine, prostate or elsewhere.”

The Edge’s treatment planning software gets smarter with each use, offering improved tumor tracking and in real-time,

which helps to potentially minimize radiation to surrounding healthy tissue.

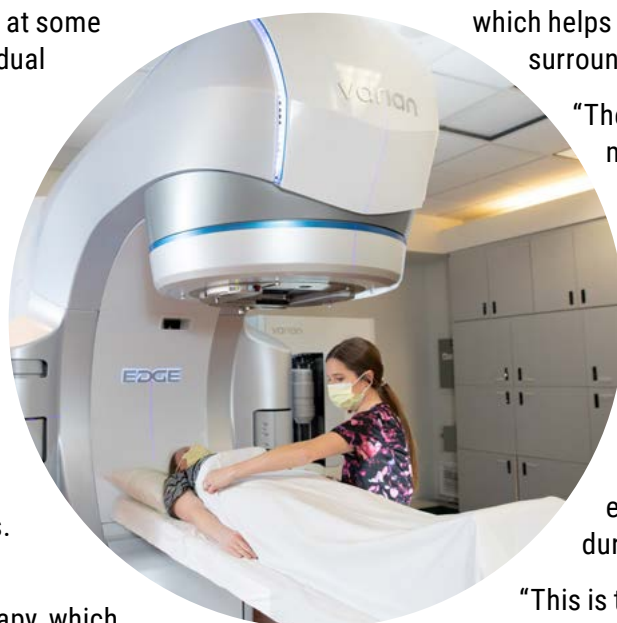
“The more information we ‘feed the machine,’ the better each dose calculation and algorithm becomes for each patient’s treatment needs,” said Shiner.

Another technology feature of the new linear accelerator is its surface-guided imaging system. This helps the care team to consistently and correctly position each patient on the radiation table during their treatment session.

“This is top-of-the-line technology, and I’m more than excited for our health care organization to have taken this step to further enhance an already great program,” said Shiner. “This allows us to provide the best treatment possible to our patients, helping keep them close to home for their cancer care needs.”

For more about cancer services, visit samhealth.org/Cancer.

Above: Radiation Therapist Edin Hines prepares a patient for treatment with the new linear accelerator at Samaritan Radiation Oncology in Corvallis.



You're a cancer survivor, we honor you

From the moment of diagnosis, you become a cancer survivor.

The first Sunday of June is National Cancer Survivors Day — a day that is celebrated around the globe. This day honors people living with a history of cancer, celebrates their milestones and recognizes those who have supported them along the way.

While the COVID-19 pandemic limits our ability to gather physically in celebration, we are still connected.

The Samaritan Cancer Program is truly honored and grateful to be part of your cancer care team and continues to be amazed by the courage and strength of our cancer survivors.

Visit samhealth.org/CelebrateSurvivors for inspiring words from the Samaritan cancer care team about the patients they are honored to care for every day.



Community health and housing initiative helps hundreds of residents

A friendly greeting can go a long way to making someone's struggles a little easier.

That's why Kara Cuevas, a community health worker with DevNW, starts with kindness in every conversation with residents of affordable housing units in Benton and Linn counties.

"It's an intrinsic ability that everyone has inside them to help others," Cuevas said.

It was also the impetus for integrating health and housing services by DevNW, a local non-profit housing authority.

In 2016, DevNW became the first community development organization in Corvallis to use housing as a platform to deliver health services through funding from InterCommunity Health Network's Delivery System Transformation Committee. The project showcases an innovative solution encouraged by funding from the region's coordinated care organization.

In its first year, the Health & Housing Planning Initiative resulted in more than 700 health and service referrals, intervention and prevention of nearly 100 evictions and health programming for 600 residents.

Based on this success, the program was operationalized and continues with two community health workers, including Cuevas. She relates to the residents she helps with issues such as completing enrollment documents, distributing food and other donations and assisting with scheduling medical appointments.

"I'm a single mother," she said. "I have a lot of the same life experience as the residents."

That makes it easy for her to come along beside them to help problem-solve. She also relies on a network of organizations she's familiar with through her community health worker training.

Cuevas seeks to help people feel self-sufficient, engaged in their health and sustained in their housing. She teaches them it's okay to seek out support and rely on others.

"You can do this," Cuevas said. "I can show you the way."

To learn more about DevNW's Health Worker & Resident Services Program, visit devnw.org/go/healthnavigation. To learn more about other IHN-CCO supported pilots, visit IHNtogether.org.



Above: Susan James with Linn Benton Food Share (left) and Kara Cuevas, health navigator with DevNW (right), unload food boxes with donated meals outside the Julian Hotel, an affordable housing residence in Downtown Corvallis. Distributing food and other donations is one of the ways the health navigators assist residents through the Health & Housing Initiative.

Samaritan welcomes new



James Barlow, MD, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Pulmonology – Corvallis. He earned a bachelor’s degree at Xavier University and a medical degree at University of Kentucky College of Medicine. He completed residency training at Virginia Mason Medical Center and a fellowship at Oregon Health & Science University. He can be reached at **541-768-1261**.



Helen Beaman, LCSW, has joined Samaritan Depoe Bay Clinic. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Oregon State University and completed a master’s degree in social work at University of Southern California. She can be reached by calling **541-765-3265**.



Carey Belcher, FNP, has joined Samaritan Palliative Care. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Bradley University and a master’s degree at Indiana Wesleyan University. She can be reached at **541-812-5020**.



Skotti Church, MD, has joined Samaritan Internal Medicine – Corvallis. She earned a bachelor’s degree at University of Colorado, Boulder. She earned a medical degree and completed a fellowship at University of Colorado School of Medicine. She completed residency training at University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. She can be reached by calling **541-768-5140**.



Eliza Cooley, CNM, has joined Samaritan Obstetrics & Gynecology – Corvallis. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Mount Holyoke College and completed a master’s degree at Yale School of Nursing. She can be reached at **541-768-5300**.



Richard Davis, MD, has joined Samaritan Orthopedics & Podiatry – Newport and Samaritan Coastal Clinic. He earned a bachelor’s degree at Southern Oregon University and a medical degree at St. Louis University School of Medicine. He completed residency training at Indiana University Medical Center. He can be reached at **541-557-6477**.



Stephen Hallas, DO, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine Resident Clinic. He earned a bachelor’s degree at Bates College and a medical degree at College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific Northwest. He completed residency training at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. He can be reached at **541-768-5142**.



Jesse Heuer, DO, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine – Geary Street. He earned a bachelor’s degree at Utica College and a medical degree at University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed residency training at Rapid City Regional Hospital. He can be reached at **541-812-5570**.



Jordan Johnson, PA-C, has joined Samaritan Urology – Corvallis. He earned a bachelor’s degree at Eastern Washington University and a master’s in physician assistant studies at Idaho State University. He can be reached at **541-768-5486**.



James Knight, MD, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Pulmonology – Corvallis. He earned a bachelor’s degree at University of Louisiana Monroe and a medical degree at Saba University School of Medicine. He completed residency training at University of Louisville School of Medicine and a fellowship at University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. He can be reached at **541-768-1261**.



Terri Nicely, MD, has joined Samaritan Mental Health – Circle Blvd. She earned a bachelor’s degree at University of Pittsburgh and a medical degree from Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine. She completed residency training, an internship and fellowship at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center. She can be reached at **541-768-1221**.

health care providers



Rachael Postman, DNP, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine Resident Clinic. She earned a bachelor's degree at Evergreen State College. She completed bachelor's, master's and doctor of nursing degrees at Oregon Health & Science University School of Nursing. She can be reached at **541-768-5142**.



Brandyn Reinhart, PA-C, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Hand to Shoulder Orthopedics – Corvallis. He earned a bachelor's degree at Ohio Northern University and a master's in physician assistant studies at Chatham University. He can be reached at **541-768-6300**.



Shellie Russell-Skerski, MD, has joined Samaritan Health Center – Newport. She earned a bachelor's degree at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a medical degree at Medical College of Wisconsin School of Medicine. She completed residency training at University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. She can be reached at **541-265-8816**.



Amara Schrager, LCSW, has joined Samaritan Mental Health – Circle Blvd. She earned a bachelor's degree at University of California, Santa Cruz and master's degrees in public health and social work at University of California, Los Angeles. She can be reached at **541-768-1221**.



Kelsey Terland, MD, has joined Samaritan Palliative Care. She earned a bachelor's degree at University of Portland and a medical degree at University of Washington School of Medicine. She completed residency training at Family Medicine Residency of Idaho and a fellowship at Providence Alaska Medical Center. She can be reached at **541-812-5020**.



Jaimie Yung, MD, has joined Samaritan Mental Health – Corvallis. She earned a bachelor's degree at University of California, Berkeley, and a medical degree from Tufts University School of Medicine. She completed residency training at Harvard South Shore. She can be reached by calling **541-768-5235**.

Need help finding a health care provider?

Visit samhealth.org/FindADoc or call 800-863-5241.



Samaritan partners with other nonprofits to improve community health



Seniors in Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties have counted on assistance for many years from the Senior Corps program, offered through the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG). Through Senior Corps, seniors can learn about Medicare options, tax preparation, homebound assistance, opportunities to tutor children and much more

Samaritan Health Services is a longtime partner with the council's senior programs. All three of Samaritan's Social Accountability committees, one based in each county, awarded a total of \$20,000 in grant funding to OCWCOG senior services for 2021.

"Studies have shown that Senior Corps volunteers are healthier, less depressed and less socially isolated than those who did not serve," said Alicia Lucke, Senior Corps program supervisor. "The Samaritan grants allow us to continue to offer these opportunities to senior volunteers so that they can serve both youth and homebound seniors in our region in a meaningful and cost-effective way."

Samaritan's three Social Accountability committees awarded \$339,807 for 2021 to a total of 33 organizations throughout Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties.

The committees include employees and board members at each Samaritan-affiliated hospital. Funded programs address unmet needs of underserved populations and improve overall community health.

Social Accountability grants are part of the larger Samaritan community benefit program, which encompasses the

Above: Alicia Lucke, Senior Corps program manager, and program volunteer Diane Van Orden prepare bags of food that Van Orden will take to homebound seniors in Linn County.

organization's efforts to build healthier communities together by providing direct and in-kind support for services such as health screenings, health professions education, health research and community health activities.

Community benefit also encompasses the charity care that Samaritan provides to low-income patients.

To be eligible for funding, programs must:

- Focus on unmet needs in underserved populations.
- Be collaborative, involving partnerships with Samaritan or other local community organizations.
- Be located in and provide services within Benton, Lincoln and/or Linn counties.
- Focus on prevention, with an emphasis on improving the health status in the community that includes equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Focus on a specific program or project within the agency or organization.
- Use quality indicators to measure progress and report results, and share these indicators widely to attract more resources.
- Plan for self-sufficiency.
- Be fiscally responsible.

Learn more about Samaritan's community benefit activities at samhealth.org/Impact.

The following agencies received Social Accountability grants for 2021:

Benton County

- ABC House.
- Benton County Drug Treatment Court.
- Benton County Habitat for Humanity.
- CASA – Voices For Children.
- Corvallis Drop-In Center.
- Corvallis Environmental Center.
- Faith, Hope and Charity Inc.
- Home Life.
- Jackson Street Youth Services.
- Old Mill Center for Children and Families.
- Options Pregnancy Resource Centers.
- Oregon Cascades West Council of Government – Meals on Wheels.
- Senior Corps of Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties.
- Stone Soup Corvallis Inc.
- Vina Moses.
- We Care.

Lincoln County

- Coastal Range Food Bank.
- Food Share of Lincoln County.
- Family Promise.
- Hearts with a Mission.
- Lincoln County School District – Job Opportunities for Youth – JOY Project.
- Neighbors for Kids.
- Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments – Meals on Wheels.
- Samaritan House.
- Senior Corps of Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties.

Linn County

- ABC House.
- Boys & Girls Club of Albany.
- Faith, Hope and Charity Inc.
- Family Tree Relief Nursery.
- Fish of Albany.
- Fish of Lebanon.
- Jackson Street Youth Services.
- Lebanon Basic Services.
- OBRIA Medical Clinics/Pregnancy Alternatives Center.
- Oregon Cascades West Council of Government – Meals on Wheels.
- Senior Corps of Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties.
- St. Vincent de Paul – Lebanon.
- Sweet Home Emergency Ministries.
- Sweet Home Pregnancy Care Center.
- Volunteer Caregivers.



Good Sam rewrites the book on surgical processes

The number of things that could delay a surgery could fill a book. Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center is working to toss that book out and develop the most efficient, highest quality process for its surgical teams.

“We’re implementing national best practices to improve services to our patients, staff and surgeons,” said Tim Eixenberger, vice president of Patient Services for the hospital. “We want cases to start on time, reduce room turnover time and instill confidence and trust with the patients we serve. We are working to update our surgeons’ preference cards, so the supplies and instrumentation they want are in place at the right time and right locations. This will reduce waste and enhance quality and safety for our patients and higher satisfaction for our surgeons and staff.”

These efforts so far have led to a 30% increase in open times for surgeons to schedule cases. In addition, the cancellation of cases is down to 2%, compared to the national average of 5%.

Michelle Mitchell, nurse manager for the hospital’s surgical services, said the new scheduling processes will lead to more predictability for her staff.

“They’ll know they will be able to go home on time, they’ll have room continuity with the same surgeon in the same room all day, so they’ll be able to plan their days out better,” Mitchell said. “With the improved scheduling, the patients should have a better experience all the way until they go home.”

Nicholas Tedesco, MD, Samaritan Medical Group Orthopedics, said the improvements will allow Samaritan to serve more patients in a timely fashion as well.

“This will cut down on delays and cancellations, which will ultimately benefit the whole community,” he said.

Business donors support health care as PRIDE Partners

PRIDE Partners are generous business donors who support Samaritan’s values of passion, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence. PRIDE Partners donated more than \$400,000 in 2020 to support the Samaritan Emergency Relief Fund, Patient Support, Employee Emergency Fund and equipment needs at hospitals and clinics throughout Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties.

“Community partnership is one of our top strategic priorities at Samaritan,” said Doug Boysen, president/CEO of Samaritan Health Services. “When I reflect on the commitment our PRIDE Partners are making through their contributions to the Samaritan Foundations I am filled with gratitude. A special thanks to all of these businesses for investing in building healthier communities together.”

Health Heroes (\$10,000+)



Community Champions (\$5,000+)

- | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
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| C & K Market, Inc. | Northwestern Mutual –
The Drago Financial Group | Tec Laboratories |
| Corvallis School District 509J/
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| Dorman Construction, Inc. | Pacific West Ambulance | Willamette Dental Group |
| Gerding Builders, LLC | See’s Candies, Inc. | |

(Donor list reflects contributions made from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2020)

For a complete listing of all of our PRIDE Partners and more information about the program, please visit samhealth.org/CorporateGiving.

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.

Parenting resources



Prepared parents. Healthy families.

pollywogfamily.org



COVID-19 updates

Find the latest information on COVID-19 including visitor restrictions, testing procedures, vaccinations and more at samhealth.org/Coronavirus.



Keeping you informed

Sign up for Samaritan's e-newsletters by visiting 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 *healthier tomorrows* together

I GOT
MY COVID-19
VACCINE!



Learn more about
community vaccination
efforts on page 12.



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