

Fall/Winter 2024

heart *to* heart

Your local guide to good health
from Samaritan Health Services

A story of support
and celebration





From the president

Doug Boysen, JD, MHA
President/Chief Executive Officer

Most people in our area know that Samaritan’s mission is building healthier communities together. Over the years, we’ve been reminded that “healthy” looks different for each one of our neighbors. This issue of Heart to Heart offers tips on staying healthy and shares stories of healing that span multiple groups of people and locations throughout our communities.

For our youngest neighbors, our children, we are focused on prevention, early care and establishing healthy habits. Well-child checks are an important component of care for kids and teens as they head back to school to tackle another year of learning. Also, checks for preschool-age children are equally as important. Measuring developmental milestones and building healthy habits can make a lifetime of difference for toddlers that will help them excel at school and beyond.

For our adult neighbors, regular care and screenings become an important part of a health routine. Screenings can identify issues early when they are easier to treat and can result in better outcomes, as was the case for cancer survivor Donna Durbin. At Samaritan, we’re expanding our network of specialists and adding services like gynecologic oncology so people in our communities can receive the care they need closer to home when screenings do identify concerns.

For our older neighbors, staying fit and healthy as long as possible is key to enjoying this later season of life. In this issue, SamFit shares simple and effective exercises to maintain strength, Samaritan Health Plans provides tips to help identify the Medicare plan that is right for your needs, and Samaritan clinicians discuss how geriatric medicine services help support elders in our community.

For everyone, knowing the most efficient and effective place to get care for your particular health concern can help streamline your path to wellness. That’s why we’ve created a quick reference guide on our website (samhealth.org/WhereToGo) and are sharing updates about Samaritan Pharmacy locations near you.

Read on for tips to maximize your health and well-being.

To your health,

On the cover: Rob and Donna Durbin of Corvallis celebrate during a recent cancer survivors event. Read their story on page 4.

heart to heart

©2024 by Samaritan Health Services

samhealth.org

Share your thoughts

Please send your questions and comments to feedback@samhealth.org or to:

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

Samaritan Health Services

Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center
InterCommunity Health Plans
Samaritan Albany General Hospital
Samaritan Health Plans
Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital
Samaritan Medical Group
Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital
Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital
SamFit

Contributors

Amanda Anderson
Rebecca Barrett
Brian Brooks
Erin Crain
Leslie Fager
Mary Jo Kerlin
Jennifer Nitson
Kimberly Schauer
Evonne Walls
Stephanie Wiegman
Mark Ylen

Design

Candice Buchanan
Jeri Hauth
Grace Johnson
Karl Maasdam Photography
Jan Walsh



In this issue

Feature

- 2 Samaritan’s Geriatric Medicine program continues to grow
- 2 SamFit Tips: Build muscle to stay strong as you age
- 3 Veterans Outreach provides resources, advocacy

Cancer care

- 4 One couple’s cancer story of faith, support and celebration
- 6 Gynecologic cancer service offered by top talent at Samaritan
- 7 Trust your gut when it comes to your colon
- 8 Annual celebration is a reflection of hope

Your health

- 9 Annual well-child visits build a healthy future
- 10 New pharmacy to open in Lincoln City by end of 2024
- 11 Five must-haves for your medicine cabinet
- 12 Fueling a teen athlete
- 13 Explore your health insurance options during open enrollment

Building healthier communities together

- 14 Palliative care and hospice offer a continuum of support
- 15 Faith nursing brings care to non-traditional settings
- 16 Samaritan welcomes new health care providers
- 16 Need care now?
- 17 Resources to help you be well
- 17 Looking for ways to be healthier? Plan to attend the Healthier You Expo!



Read about the importance of early colon cancer screening. See page 7.



Help your teen get the right nutrients and be the best athlete they can be. See page 12.



Open enrollment is coming – get prepared with these considerations. See page 13.



Connect with Samaritan online

Scan me to learn more! Open the camera app on your smart phone or other device and scan the image to connect to more information at samhealth.org.



Find us on social media!

Samaritan's Geriatric Medicine program continues to grow



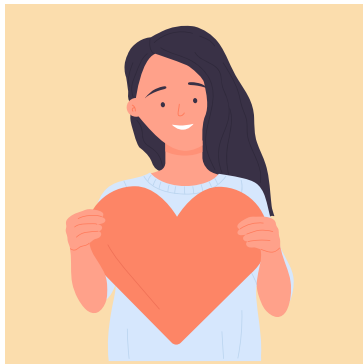
As people age, their health care needs change. Older people often have more complex medical issues and illnesses, and medications can affect them differently than younger adults.

“Samaritan’s Geriatric Medicine program was created to provide the best possible care to older adults,” said Maureen “Paulie” Bruns, MD, program medical director. “The program continues to grow.”

Since 2019, Samaritan’s Geriatric Medicine program has served patients in Linn County at facilities like the Oregon Veterans Home, Avamere and Mennonite Village, along with several memory care units and assisted living facilities. In early 2024, the team expanded its reach in the region to provide clinical care for residents of the 135-bed Corvallis Manor.

This expansion demonstrates the growing need for more focused care in our aging population. According to the 2020 census, people over age 65 account for at least 17% of the population in Benton County, 20% in Linn County and 30% in Lincoln County. The numbers continue to grow, and more than one-third of this population needs nursing home care.

“The Geriatric Medicine clinical team includes a geriatrician, physician and nurse practitioners seeing patients in their home facilities and working closely with facility staff and patients’ families to provide exceptional care,” said Dr. Bruns. “By providing this higher-level service in the facilities, our clinicians can tailor care to each patient’s unique needs.”



The Geriatric Medicine program also helps patients avoid unnecessary emergency department and hospital visits by assessing and treating their health care needs in their home facilities when appropriate.

“We work closely with primary care clinicians and hospital staff to coordinate patient care,” Dr. Bruns said.

Future goals of the Geriatric Medicine program include providing an outpatient memory care clinic, pre-surgery clinic, inpatient consults and falls assessments. Geriatric Medicine also continues to be a rotation for Samaritan’s Graduate Medical Education Family Medicine and Internal Medicine residency programs.

“We plan to continue to grow this program to help meet the health care needs of our aging population,” said Dr. Bruns.



Veterans Outreach provides resources, advocacy



Caring for patients at the Oregon Veterans' Home in Lebanon is just one way Samaritan strives to serve those who have served our country.

Samaritan Veterans Outreach provides military veterans and their families with resources, support and advocacy for optimal mental and physical health and social well-being.

The Veterans Outreach team helps eligible service members, veterans, dependents and survivors understand the health care benefits available to them. The team also assists with filing applications and establishing a health care team for eligible veterans and can help schedule clinic and specialty visits within Samaritan Health Services.

The We Honor Veterans program, in partnership with Samaritan Evergreen Hospice, helps provide for veterans’ unique needs at the end of life.

For more information about Samaritan’s Veterans Outreach program, visit samhealth.org/Veterans. To schedule an appointment, email veterans@samhealth.org or call 541-768-7800.



Build muscle to stay strong as you age

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries among older adults. Keeping your body strong and active can help prevent and manage sarcopenia – a progressive loss of muscle mass, quality and strength associated with aging.

Regular physical activity that includes strength training is considered one of the most effective strategies to ensure that muscle function is maintained as you age.

Try these strength training exercises that can be done at home, in the gym or at the park. Be mindful of knee pain or other joint pain when performing these exercises and make modifications as necessary.



1. Squats tone your legs, glutes (muscles of the buttocks and hips) and core muscles, and they help with balance and flexibility. Squat with your back against a wall and slide down as far as it is comfortable or do the squats over a chair as a safety precaution.



2. Lunges target a wide range of muscles and engage your core and abdominal muscles. Hold onto the wall or a piece of furniture for support.



3. Bicep curls build arm muscles and increase functional strength. If you don’t have weights, use water bottles, a milk jug or canned food.

4. Pushups build arm, chest and back muscles. Start by doing pushups on the wall or the back of a sofa.



Stronger muscles and joints lead to better balance, coordination and overall mobility, decreasing the risk of falls.

Are you looking for help or training advice? Visit SamFit.org to explore locations, classes and personal training options.

One couple's cancer story of faith, support and celebration

Navigating cancer is an individualized experience, much like a choose-your-own-adventure book. Each story starts the same — with a cancer diagnosis — but the chapters that follow can vary based on many factors.

For Rob and Donna Durbin of Corvallis, this chapter in their lives meant embracing their faith, cherishing connections, leaning into their personal support system and finding ways to celebrate by creating hope and encouragement for others.

Rob's chapter: Beacon of hope

"It was a win-win situation for me," Rob said after being diagnosed in 2012 with acute myeloid leukemia, a cancer of the blood and bone marrow. "If I live, I'm with my loved ones. If I die, I'm with my Lord and Savior."

Having been rushed to a hospital, then placed on a ventilator with a 10% chance of survival, it was Rob (and Donna's) belief that the steadfast care of the cancer team and their faith gave Rob peace to breathe again on his own.

With the mindset of "let's do this," Rob spent the next 100 days in the hospital, underwent a bone marrow transplant, chemotherapy, blood transfusions and physical therapy after enduring a stroke. He was then able to attend his many follow-up visits close to home.

"My cancer diagnosis is only but a chapter in the larger story of my life," Rob said. "But it is in this chapter and from this illness that so much love surfaced and many connections were formed that may not have otherwise."

Now, 12 years later, Rob is living life like he did before his diagnosis — playing and coaching competitive racquetball, spending time with family and is soon to retire from his 39-year career as a dedicated and well-known rural postal carrier.

"God has given me a second chance and the opportunity to share with others that even when given a bleak prognosis that this disease can be survived," he said.



Donna's chapter: Encouragement for a healthier future

"My journey with cancer started at a young age when my mother was diagnosed with melanoma," Donna said. "Many, many years later my father also battled his own cancer diagnosis of the colon."

These early experiences with cancer left a lasting impression on Donna, so much so that she pursued a career in health care.

"Serving as a nurse for many years, I was able to funnel my passion for education and the importance of early cancer detection through screenings and annual checkups," she said.

Fast forward to 2021, when Donna's diligence and passion for taking an active role in one's own health and wellness proved its value.

"I went in for my annual mammogram and it was then that cancer was found — stage 1 breast cancer," Donna said.

Because the cancer was detected early it hadn't spread to any surrounding lymph nodes. Donna was able to have a lumpectomy followed by five rounds of radiation therapy.

"Setting aside time for an annual screening appointment may seem daunting but it sure beats the time needed to treat cancer if not caught early," Donna said.

Honor and celebrate, an annual tradition

Each year since 2013, Rob and Donna have joined other cancer survivors at the National Cancer Survivors Day event hosted by the Samaritan Cancer Program.

The Durbins shared that the event provides a mutual affirmation for them. One, to see the cancer team that cared for each of them and two, to show the team they are alive and well — that their work matters.

Both Rob and Donna expressed that their individual, yet connected, chapters with cancer are a tribute to their faith and their care teams, and a reminder to not take life for granted.

To learn more about cancer care at Samaritan, visit samhealth.org/Cancer.

Gynecologic cancer service offered by top talent at Samaritan



The Samaritan Cancer Program recently expanded its specialty services to include gynecologic oncology care through a collaboration with Providence Health — further advancing care options for patients diagnosed with cancers of the cervix, uterus or ovaries.

“This collaboration provides a vital service for patients in our community,” said Anne Webb, regional director of the Samaritan Cancer Program.

Gynecologic oncology care gives patients access to specialized surgery, follow-up care, surveillance and additional treatments as needed. Plus, keeping care close to home can help ease recovery by having the support systems nearby that are needed after a cancer diagnosis.

“Adding this service also meant bringing on top talent that is highly skilled and specialized in this field, which we have achieved with gynecologic oncologists Dr. Andrea Buras and Dr. Erica Takimoto,” Webb said.

Together, the two physicians and a team of support staff will manage cancerous and non-cancerous conditions of the female reproductive system. This may include minimally invasive surgeries, lymph node dissections and diagnostics, debulking, and risk reduction surgery for patients who are at high risk for developing gynecologic cancer. They can also prescribe further treatments such as chemotherapy.

The gynecologic oncology team will collaborate with other medical specialties including medical and radiation oncology, plus other care team members as needed to ensure comprehensive care.

“The addition of this service furthers our commitment to advancing cancer care for our community,” said Webb.

For more information about gynecologic oncology care at Samaritan, visit samhealth.org/Cancer.

Top-notch gynecologic oncologists join Samaritan



Andrea Buras, MD

Dr. Buras has a special interest in complex pelvic surgery, genetic conditions and HPV-related disease.

Erika Takimoto, DO

Dr. Takimoto specializes in robot-assisted pelvic surgery to treat cancer of the cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries, as well as vulvar and vaginal surgery.



Express your gratitude, *thank a health care worker*



Has a Samaritan employee left a lasting impression?

Express your gratitude for a Samaritan staff member who made an impact in your health care experience at samhealth.org/ShiningStar.

Trust your gut when it comes to your colon

“Just because you don’t have a family history of colon cancer, it doesn’t mean you are in the clear,” said Holli Howard-Carpenter of Monmouth.

It was spring of 2021 when the then 42-year-old college basketball coach started having stomach discomfort.

First, she thought a change in diet and exercise would help. Symptoms improved but the issues returned. Several months later, she saw her primary care doctor who encouraged her to drink more water, eat more fiber and get physical therapy on her back. At a follow-up visit she was instructed to take a daily laxative and get a pelvic ultrasound.

By February 2022 the pain was unbearable. A friend recommended she go to the Emergency Department of Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center.

After several tests, an ED doctor informed Howard-Carpenter that she had metastatic stage 4 colorectal cancer. She immediately started chemotherapy .

“More and more younger patients are being diagnosed with colon cancer, with an even greater rise with women,” said Robert Davis, MD, with Samaritan Hematology & Oncology.

Three months after the emergency visit, Howard-Carpenter had surgery to remove one tumor.

“It was at this time the surgeon discovered the cancer had spread to my peritoneum, which unfortunately has a poor prognosis,” said Howard-Carpenter.

The peritoneum is a membrane that lines the inside of the abdomen and many organs.

“In younger patients, this type of cancer tends to be aggressive,” Dr. Davis said.

Howard-Carpenter continued with chemotherapy, followed by an additional surgery and more chemotherapy.

“I was discharged seven days after surgery, left with a nice scar and an ileostomy bag but had no evidence of the disease,” she said.



Above: Holli Howard-Carpenter said she has adopted the Finnish motto of *sisu* for her battle with colon cancer. The phrase can be translated as stoic determination, grit and sustained courage.

An ileostomy bag is worn on the outside of the body to collect stool and allow the colon to heal. In December 2023 while Howard-Carpenter was having her ileostomy reversed, the surgeons found the cancer had returned in her colon.

Now, more than two years after her initial diagnosis, Howard-Carpenter is undergoing another round of chemotherapy.

Looking back, Howard-Carpenter wishes she had been a better self-advocate when early symptoms started.

“Sometimes you just have to trust your gut,” said Howard-Carpenter. “Even when it seems difficult to have that conversation with your care team, never be afraid to speak up — you know your body best.”

People at average risk of colorectal cancer should start regular screening at age 45. Contact your provider to discuss your risks and appropriate screening options.

Annual celebration is a reflection of hope



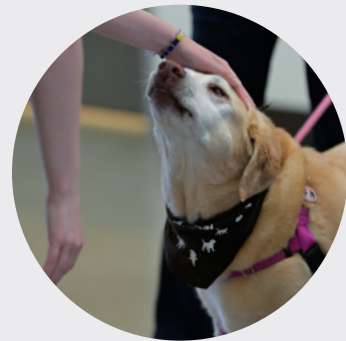
It was the first Sunday in June. Even the rain couldn't put a damper on a celebratory occasion for those attending the annual National Cancer Survivors Day events in Corvallis and Newport hosted by the Samaritan Cancer Program.

"This event is a true reflection of hope," said Anne Webb, regional director of the Samaritan Cancer Program. "Whether newly diagnosed or celebrating many years of being a cancer survivor, it represents hope and provides encouragement that this disease can be survived."

Between the two event locations, more than 200 people attended, representing cancer survivors, family, friends, volunteers, Samaritan cancer providers and leadership.

Guest speakers at the Corvallis event were Luhui Whitebear and Anastacia Pugh. In Newport, the guest speakers were Karen Shafer and Julie Switzer, herself a cancer survivor and a Samaritan employee.

"My sincere gratitude goes to our guest speakers," Webb said. "They all bravely shared their story and personal journey with cancer."



Attendees also heard from Samaritan cancer providers and leadership, or showed support had the opportunity to visit with a variety of cancer resource booths — including pet therapy, ArtsCare and so much more!

SAVE THE DATE



Plans for the 2025 National Cancer Survivors Day are already underway. Once finalized, information can be found at samhealth.org/CelebrateSurvivors.

Cancer survivors and their loved ones celebrated at Samaritan's recent Cancer Survivors Day events. They are (top from left): Mary Lou Martin, showcasing nine years of survivorship, with Holly Almond, MSN, FNP, of the Samaritan Cancer Program by her side; Julie Switzer; Angela Walker with partner Wesley Lewis; Serena and Savita; Charlene Wylie; Belen Smith, Roxanne Hadley and Dafne DeSautel; and pet therapy dog, too.

Annual well-child visits build a healthy future

Well-child visits are important for all children from birth to 18 years old. This visit allows the health care provider to track your child's development and growth to ensure they are reaching all the milestones recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Well-child visits serve to promote not only the physical well-being but also the developmental and psychosocial growth of infants, children and adolescents," said Courtney Kennison, pediatric nurse practitioner with Mid-Valley Children's Clinic.

"Medical providers recommend routine well-child visits starting at birth because preventive health care decreases the occurrence of preventable illness and chronic disease while improving overall quality of life," Kennison said.

Monitoring all aspects of your child's health over time may help the provider detect any possible concerns or patterns they might otherwise miss. Early detection of potential problems is the best way to help your child succeed. If your child does fall behind developmentally there are services such as early intervention that can help them get back on track. Some children just need a little extra help to reach their milestones.

"These annual well-child visits provide an opportunity for the medical provider, caregivers and child to collaboratively identify your child's strengths, address

physical and behavioral concerns, and consider the need for specialty health care services, if required," Kennison said.

This visit is a time for the parent or caregiver to learn the best ways to help their child grow and learn, so they stay on track with their peers. It is a positive and safe space to ask the pediatrician any questions, bring up concerns or challenges, and share successes.

Call your child's provider to schedule their well-care visit.



New pharmacy to **OPEN** in Lincoln City by end of 2024

Medications are a vital part of health care. When retail pharmacies close — especially in rural areas with fewer options — it can have a negative impact on overall community health.

This is why Samaritan Health Services is stepping in to fill the gaps.

Samaritan opened retail pharmacies in Corvallis in 2023 and in Sweet Home in 2024. A third new retail pharmacy is scheduled to open by the end of 2024 in Building 5 on the campus of Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City.

“Having access to a pharmacy for medicines is crucial to ensure optimal patient care, medication safety and improved health outcomes,” said Megan Jones, director of Outpatient Pharmacies for Samaritan. “With our mission of building healthier communities together it just made sense that we open community pharmacies to help our patients and others avoid a disruption to their pharmaceutical care.”

Samaritan retail pharmacies are open to the public. Access is also made easy — from walk-in service, to drive-up windows, curbside delivery or free prescription mailing within Oregon (may vary by location).

In addition to filling prescriptions, Samaritan Pharmacy services include vaccinations, medication therapy management, sharps disposal and drug take-back bins. Pharmacists can prescribe birth control, naloxone and emergency insulin refills. The pharmacies also offer translation services for prescription labels, medication guides and medication counseling.

Prescription refills are also convenient through the Samaritan MyChart patient portal, which allows for refill requests from a personal computer or mobile app.

If there is trouble affording medications, Samaritan’s medication assistance program may be able to help.

Not currently using a Samaritan Pharmacy? Transferring is easy. Just call a pharmacy location near you and a staff member will help you out. For a list of locations, visit samhealth.org/Pharmacy.

Five must-haves for your medicine cabinet

A well-stocked medicine cabinet cannot replace a trip to the doctor, but it can be a lifesaver for handling minor aches, pains and everyday mishaps at home. Equipping your medicine cabinet with these five essential over-the-counter items will help you be prepared to treat a range of common ailments until you can get back to feeling your best, said Thoms Myers, pharmacy supervisor at Samaritan Pharmacy – 30th Street.

“It’s important to have a well-supplied medicine cabinet for minor needs,” Myers said. “Other helpful items to consider keeping on hand are bandages, tweezers and a thermometer. It’s also important to go through your medicine cabinet at least once a year to check expiration dates and replace outdated medications as needed.”

1. Antihistamines for allergies.

Allergic reactions can occur without warning and having an antihistamine on hand can provide quick relief. Medications like diphenhydramine (Benadryl) and loratadine (Claritin) are effective in reducing allergy symptoms from hay fever, as well as the pain and itching caused by insect bites and hives. Don’t forget to get a non-drowsy option that’s ideal for daytime use.

2. Topical antibiotic.

Minor cuts, scrapes and burns are a part of life, especially in households with children. Applying a small amount of antibiotic ointment (Neosporin) helps prevent infections by killing surface bacteria and can promote faster healing. Apply an adhesive bandage over the injury to keep it clean and the ointment in place.

3. Hydrocortisone cream.

Hydrocortisone cream can be useful for treating a variety of skin irritations. It can quickly and effectively reduce itching, redness and swelling caused by insect bites, rashes, eczema and other minor allergic reactions. A small tube of 1% hydrocortisone is typically sufficient and is available in a variety of formulations such as cream, lotion, gel or ointment.



4. Indigestion relief antacid.

Digestive issues such as heartburn, indigestion and acid reflux can strike at any time. Having antacid on hand (Tums, Rolaids, Maalox) can offer fast relief and help calm your stomach as a short-term solution.

5. Pain relief and fever reducer.

Aches, pains and fevers are common occurrences for all ages. Having medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) can provide much-needed relief for headaches, muscle aches and minor arthritis.

Fueling a teen athlete

Fueling a teen athlete isn't just about satisfying hunger. It's about providing a growing body with the essential nutrients it needs to excel, recover and stay healthy. Whether your teen is training for a championship game, a regional tournament or simply aiming to improve their personal best, the importance of nutrition cannot be overstated.

"As a sports medicine physician, I often talk about the importance of fueling and hydration with my patients," said Alana Ryan, DO, with Samaritan Athletic Medicine. "It supports the overall health of the athlete, reduces injury and allows the athlete to perform at their best."

The building blocks of performance

At the core of any athlete's diet are the three macronutrients: protein, carbohydrates and fats. Each plays a vital role in fueling performance and supporting overall health.

- 1. Protein:** Often called the building blocks of muscle, protein is essential for repairing and rebuilding tissue damaged during intense training sessions. Teen athletes should aim to include a source of lean protein with every meal, such as chicken, fish, eggs, beans or tofu.
- 2. Carbohydrates:** Carbs are the body's primary source of fuel, particularly during high-intensity activities. Complex carbohydrates, found in whole grains, fruits and vegetables, provide a steady release of energy, sustaining athletes through long practices and competitions.
- 3. Fats:** Despite their bad reputation, fats are crucial for hormone regulation, energy storage and nutrient absorption. Healthy fats, like those found in nuts, seeds, avocados and olive oil, should be incorporated into a teen athlete's diet in moderation.

"Aim to fuel the body with whole foods, as opposed to supplements," Dr. Ryan said. "For those struggling to meet their fueling needs, a supplement may be helpful in addition to regular meals and snacks throughout the day."

Hydration: the unsung hero

While protein, carbs and fats often steal the spotlight, hydration is the unsung hero of athletic performance. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, cramping and decreased cognitive function, hindering an athlete's ability to perform at their highest level.

Encourage teen athletes to drink plenty of water throughout the day, especially before, during and after exercise. For longer workouts or intense training sessions, sports drinks containing electrolytes can help replenish lost fluids and minerals.

The bottom line

Proper nutrition is the cornerstone of athletic success for teen athletes. By fueling their bodies with the right balance of protein, carbohydrates, fats and fluids, they can optimize performance, support recovery and reduce the risk of injury. With dedication both on and off the field, the sky's the limit for these young competitors as they chase their dreams and strive for greatness.

Alana Ryan, DO, can be reached at Samaritan Medical Group Orthopedics – Corvallis at 541-768-4810.

Explore your health insurance options during open enrollment

Every fall, Medicare recipients and those on employer health insurance plans have an opportunity to review and change their insurance plans or coverage options.

If you've been thinking about making changes to your coverage for next year, here are some things you should consider:

- **Look at your total annual out-of-pocket costs.** Premiums only tell part of the story. Be sure to include monthly premiums, copays, coinsurance and deductibles when deciding which plan offers the most value for your needs. Plans with a maximum out-of-pocket benefit also offer a set limit on your total annual out-of-pocket spending, providing additional peace of mind and another way to manage costs.
- **Check the provider network.** Make sure your current doctors, hospitals and other important providers are considered as in-network providers, offering you the best cost-shares available.
- **Review your prescription drug coverage.** While drugs may be added or removed from your plan's formulary (the list of covered drugs) throughout the year, most changes in drug coverage happen on Jan. 1. Drug tiers, copays and the list of drugs covered by your plan may change from year to year. New restrictions or limitations may also apply. It's important to be aware of anything that may adversely affect your coverage.
- **Look for changes in coverage for working partners and children.** If you are on an employer health plan, review any increases in the employee premium contributions for spousal or dependent coverage. Also look for any new surcharges your plan may be adding to cover spouses eligible for other insurance through their workplace. These surcharges can exceed \$100 per month, above and beyond the premium contributions, so it's something to watch for.

Your employer should keep you informed about your plan's changes for the coming year, how to enroll and your enrollment period.

Mark your calendar for Medicare open enrollment – Oct. 15

Whether enrolled in an Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage or Medicare Supplement plan, Medicare recipients can take advantage of this period each year — Oct. 15 through Dec. 7 — to switch to a new health plan or add to their existing Medicare insurance coverage for the following year.

Original Medicare covers a lot, but it doesn't cover everything. Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans often include extra coverage and benefits for hearing, vision, chiropractic, fitness memberships and more.

Original Medicare and Medicare Supplement plans do not include coverage for prescription drugs, so you may need to purchase a separate Part D prescription drug plan. Medicare Advantage plans, however, often include prescription drug coverage without a separate premium.

Your application must be received by your chosen health plan by the end of Medicare's open enrollment period on Saturday, Dec. 7.

Samaritan Health Plans offers Medicare Advantage plans to residents of Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties.

Unsure of which Medicare plan to choose?

An insurance agent can help you make sense of your options and choose a plan based on your specific health care and coverage needs. Samaritan Health Plans partners with nearly 200 knowledgeable, licensed agents — most of whom are local with offices right here in our communities.

Find out which insurance plans Samaritan Health Services contracts with by visiting samhealth.org/InsuranceBilling.

**Need help?
Consult with
an agent.**



Palliative care and hospice offer a continuum of support

Support for patients facing a serious illness is available through hospice and palliative care. Both services focus on the relief of symptoms, but what is the difference between the two?

“I think of palliative care and hospice as a continuum,” said Kelsey Terland, MD, medical director for Samaritan Palliative Care.

When a patient is still pursuing life-prolonging interventions, palliative care can assist at any stage of illness and in coordination with other treatments.

Hospice is designed for people who are likely in the last six months of their life, and for whom aggressive medical treatments are no longer wanted or helpful.

“In hospice, we help manage a patient’s symptoms, optimize comfort and address psychosocial concerns near the end of a patient’s life,” said Emily Looney, MD, medical director for Samaritan Evergreen Hospice.

Palliative care prioritizes patient goals

Palliative care serves as an extra layer of support for patients living with serious illness.

“It focuses on supporting the best possible quality of life while a patient is receiving treatment,” said Dr. Terland.

Palliative care can help to relieve the symptoms and stress for patients and their caregivers. Visits with patients often last much longer than a traditional doctor’s visit.

“We hear a lot of gratitude,” Dr. Terland said. “Patients and families appreciate the time that we take with them during a stressful time in their life.”

Palliative care can be involved at any stage of illness and is available alongside other treatments. It does not prevent curative treatments from being offered, as appropriate.

“Many patients receiving palliative care desire all possible life-prolonging interventions,” Dr. Terland said.

Families of patients receiving palliative care need a good understanding of their loved one’s illness, treatment plan and prognosis. There are common misperceptions about palliative care. It is important to know that if someone is being seen by palliative care, it does not necessarily mean they want limitations on certain treatments.

“We can help facilitate conversations between patients and their caregivers so that everyone is on the same page regarding goals and priorities,” she said.

Hospice uses an interdisciplinary approach

With hospice, a care team comes to support a patient in their home so they can avoid hospitalizations and office visits.

Hospice is an interdisciplinary team:

- Nurses collaborate with physician and nurse practitioners to manage symptoms.
- Hospice aides provide personal care, such as help with bathing.
- Social workers coordinate caregiving and resources, provide counseling and intervene in a crisis.
- Chaplains offer spiritual support.
- Bereavement counselors are available for families for 13 months after a patient has died.

“Patients and families love the personalized attention of hospice and the convenience of a team that flexes to meet their needs,” Dr. Looney said.

One of the most frequent comments hospice staff hear is that people wish they had involved hospice sooner.

“Hospice neither hastens nor delays death,” Dr. Looney said. “Involving hospice is not giving up, but rather shifting the goals and priorities for a patient’s medical care.”

No matter where a person is on their journey with a serious illness, support and resources are available. To learn more about Samaritan Palliative Care call 541-812-5020. To find out more about Samaritan Evergreen Hospice call 541-812-4662.



Faith nursing brings care to non-traditional settings

A drugstore blood pressure check station was once as commonplace as cookies during fellowship in houses of worship.

Beginning in 2012 as part of health care reform in Oregon, traditional health workers became the focus for assisting people in getting services and care to support their health and well-being. But, with fewer faith community nurses, a gap in care for the elderly and other vulnerable populations grew, especially in rural areas.

Now, Faith Community Health Network is reviving this specialized nursing practice, bringing health care to diverse groups in nontraditional settings.

“It’s a matter of health equity,” said Deb Fell-Carlson, RN, executive director of Faith Community Health Network.

With pilot funding provided by the InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization, nurses and other volunteers are once again receiving guidance and support so they can assess the needs in their faith communities and attend to them in culturally appropriate ways.

What does a faith community nurse do?

Faith community nursing focuses on physical and spiritual health and well-being within the context of a person’s faith tradition. These specialized nurses have additional training to assess, plan, intervene and evaluate spiritual, emotional and social needs.

Faith community nurses are in a unique position of trust to reach people of different races, ages, faith traditions and socioeconomic levels, Fell-Carlson explained.

They assess their community’s needs using surveys, focus groups, informal conversations and observation. Then they apply their findings to conduct screenings, events and even office hours for individual consultation.

Become a faith community nurse or volunteer

Faith Community Health Network is sponsoring a six-session online training course beginning on Monday, Nov. 11. Licensed registered nurses and others interested in health ministry from all faith traditions or without a faith tradition are welcome.

The cost is \$325 and includes educational materials. Limited scholarships are available upon request. For details and to register, visit faithcommunityhealthnetwork.org/Foundations.



From left: Executive Director Deb Fell-Carlson, RN; Health Minister Susan Freeman; Education and Event Coordinator Tawni Pfaff, RN; and Outreach Volunteer Kimberlee Sorci of the Faith Community Health Network.

The pilot program has been shown to increase health literacy and participation in health activities not only within a faith community, but also the broader community, she said.

Typically, faith community nurses are not direct caregivers in the traditional sense, yet they offer many important services: spiritual support for the homebound and isolated, creating care plans for people with chronic conditions, sharing their health knowledge with faith leaders and community members, accompanying people to appointments, conducting home visits after an emergency or hospital stay, helping to coordinate and communicate during a person’s transition in care and even offering end-of-life support.

Fell-Carlson represents the Faith Community Health Network on the IHN-CCO’s Delivery System Transformation committee, a group of more than 70 community partners working to improve health care in Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties. All pilot projects are selected from a competitive request for proposals process.

Fell-Carlson explained that when she retired from paid nursing, her faith compelled her to continue her vocation as a volunteer and leader.

“When a door opens, my job is to walk through it,” she said.

Samaritan *welcomes* new health care providers



Neda Afzali, MD, has joined Mid-Valley Children's Clinic in Albany. She specializes in pediatrics.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/nafzali.



Alexandra Bernal, PhD, has joined Samaritan Mental Health – Corvallis. She specializes in adult psychology.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/abernal.



Hadjer Bounama, DO, has joined Main Street Family Medicine in Lebanon, as a family medicine physician.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/hbounama.



Andrea Buras, MD, has joined Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center Gynecologic Oncology. She specializes in gynecologic oncology.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/aburas.



Sarah Crowe May, DO, has joined Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital Medical Clinic – Sweet Home. She specializes in family medicine.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/scrowe.



Rea May Danao, MSN, FNP, has joined Samaritan Hematology & Oncology Consultants – Newport. She sees patients with all types of cancer and blood disorders.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/rdanao.



Sonia Hasbun, DO, has joined Samaritan Cardiology – Corvallis. She specializes in cardiovascular disease.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/shasbun.



Courtney Kennison, PNP, has joined Mid-Valley Children's Clinic. She specializes in pediatrics.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/ckennison.



Heather Lovelace, DNP, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Orthopedics – Albany. She is a nurse practitioner who specializes in orthopedics.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/hlovelace.



Tiffany Roberts, FNP, has joined Samaritan Lincoln City Medical Center. She specializes in family medicine.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/tiroberts.



Mark Shaieb, MD, has joined Samaritan Coastal Clinic. He specializes in orthopedic surgery and orthopedics.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/mshaieb.



Erica Takimoto, DO, has joined Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center Gynecologic Oncology. She specializes in gynecologic oncology.
Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/etakimoto.



Need care now?

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

To see which option is right for your immediate needs, visit samhealth.org/WhereToGo.

Resources to help you be well



Classes and support

Samaritan Health Services offers a wide variety of support groups, health education classes and seminars to help community members find the support and gain the knowledge they need to live a healthier life.

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

To see the most current list of events, visit samhealth.org/Classes.



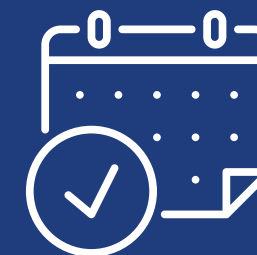
Keeping you informed

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.

Looking for ways to be healthier? *Plan to attend the Healthier You Expo!*



Saturday, Oct. 19 | 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. | Center for Health Education in Newport

This free tradeshow-style event will feature activities, education, information and giveaways. Learn more at samhealth.org/GetHealthy.



From left: Cynthia Davis, Samaritan lymphedema specialist, and Karen Wohlwend, six-year cancer survivor, snuggle with Caesar the No Drama Llama at the recent cancer survivors event in Corvallis.

Read more about Cancer Survivors Day on page 8.



**Samaritan
Health Services**