

Fall 2022

heart *to* heart

Your local guide to good health
from Samaritan Health Services



**Breast cancer survivors look
to a future filled with hope**



From the president

Doug Boysen, JD, MHA
President/Chief Executive Officer

Samaritan working to address community health needs

You may wonder how we at Samaritan determine where to focus our community health efforts and investments.

Work is currently underway on one important component: the community health needs assessment that we conduct in our three-county region every three years. In addition to helping inform these important decisions, the assessment findings, along with the Community Benefit Plan Implementation Strategy, are shared annually as part of our Community Benefit reports to the State of Oregon and to the federal government.

Beginning this year, the assessment is being conducted as a collaboration between Samaritan, the health departments of Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties, InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization (IHN-CCO), Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians and United Way. The process includes collecting broad community feedback and summarizing the public health data to paint a picture of our region and its overall health status. The report will be completed by the end of 2022 and will be available at samhealth.org.

Based on the initial survey feedback, mental health services are — by far — viewed as the greatest unmet health need in the region. This is followed by concerns about housing costs and the need for additional primary care medical services. Here are just a few ways Samaritan is already working to address these needs:

- Behavioral health specialists are now co-located in many of our primary care clinics, making it easier for patients to access these vital services.
- Psychiatry is among the physician residency programs offered through Samaritan, providing the final component of clinical training and increasing the number of these much-needed physician specialists.

- Because mental health and substance use disorders often exist together, Samaritan is partnering with the Pacific Communities Health District, North Lincoln Health District and Lincoln County Health & Human Services to develop a residential treatment facility for substance use disorders in Newport. (Samaritan also operates another substance use disorder facility, a 16-bed residential program with additional outpatient services, located in Lebanon.)
- Increased use of telehealth and virtual visits are improving access to both mental health and primary care services. This allows us to further optimize our clinician availability to help address workforce shortages in our region and nationwide.
- Work is also underway to develop a new primary care and urgent care clinic in Sweet Home, with plans to open by the end of 2023. Also, an additional family medicine clinic and same-day care clinic will be opened as part of the new Oregon State University Student Health Center, presently under construction near OSU's Reser Stadium. That project is expected to be completed in mid-2023.

We look forward to sharing the results of our community health needs assessment in the coming months as we continue our efforts to Build Healthier Communities Together.

Sincerely,

Share your thoughts

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

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On the cover: *Breast cancer survivors Jeanette Campagna and Sonia Graham look to a future filled with hope and advocacy for individuals facing breast cancer. Read more on page 6.*

In this issue

Population health

- 2 Samaritan strives to help with community health needs
- 3 Health research collaborative invests in population health
- 4 New language and interpretation guides aim to reduce barriers
- 5 Influencing from within: Samaritan employees create community

Cancer

- 6 Breast cancer survivors look to a future filled with hope
- 8 Words to live by from breast cancer survivors
- 9 Early-stage lung cancer detection program launched
- 9 Quit smoking and take control of your life today
- 10 Don't procrastinate on prostate care
- 10 Immunotherapy, is it right for your cancer?
- 11 Delayed screenings during pandemic led to increased late-stage cancer
- 12 Music and art contribute to healing for cancer patients
- 12 Saturday ArtsCare workshops make a comeback

Prevention

- 13 Medical weight loss or surgery – which is right for you?
- 14 Avoid chronic inflammation to prevent disease
- 15 Oral hygiene improves overall health
- 16 Tips for a better, healthier night's sleep
- 17 Air-fried curry cauliflower, a healthy alternative
- 18 Joint replacement gets fishing guide back on the water
- 20 Know your risk factors and recognize the symptoms of vascular disease
- 21 Hormone therapy: Is it right for you?
- 22 Mother, daughter create health habits for life
- 23 Recognizing post-pandemic trauma in teens

Building healthier communities together

- 24 Shifting job market spurs innovation in work setting, arrangements
- 24 Samaritan welcomes new health care providers
- 26 Samaritan creates plan to help substance users during disaster
- 26 Starker Forests Inc. donates to Newport treatment and recovery project
- 27 Treatment center in Newport will help rebuild lives
- 28 Pilot project integrates oral health in hospitals

Keeping you healthy

- 29 Resources to keep you healthy



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Samaritan strives to help wit

Your health shouldn't depend on where you call home.

Access to health care, housing in safe neighborhoods, quality education and living-wage jobs have the power to improve health outcomes.

It's why each year Samaritan distributes Social Accountability grants to help local non-profits identify and remove obstacles, including poverty and discrimination that affect communities and underserved populations. In 2022, \$400,000 in Social Accountability grants were awarded.

Meanwhile, Samaritan programs, including the Homeless Resource Team, Samaritan Medical Group Geriatrics Medicine and Samaritan Care Hub, reach some of the most vulnerable people living in Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties.

"Access to health care presents a significant barrier in our region," said Kristy Jessop, MD, senior medical director of primary care for Samaritan Medical Group.

Samaritan's Population Health Services is using data to better understand community needs and address barriers, such as childcare, transportation, food or housing insecurity and other challenges.

"We have a long way to go, but I'm excited by our growth and initiatives," Dr. Jessop said.

Helping seniors live better

Medical advances have allowed people to live longer, and the geriatric population is growing. However, we're not necessarily living better, said Maureen Bruns, MD, with Samaritan Medical Group Geriatric Medicine.

"There are people who are almost chronically hospitalized," Dr. Bruns said.

Since 2015, a team of Samaritan geriatric specialists has ensured people living in residential facilities receive the best care without leaving home. Clinicians can respond around-the-clock to see patients in five senior residential facilities, including veterans, people recovering from serious illness or injury, those with memory conditions and people without family to look after them.

"Our patients are often very sick," Dr. Bruns said. "By having a dedicated geriatrics team, we can avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and transports."

Medical outreach extends care

People who are experiencing homelessness may be unable to do what they must to stay well. Those who have experienced trauma, are managing multiple health concerns or have complex diagnoses, such as diabetes or heart disease, and the elderly can be particularly at risk. Sometimes, people are hesitant to seek health care, including LGBTQ, black, indigenous and people of color.

Samaritan's Homeless Outreach Team is a dedicated group of nurses, social workers and community health workers. The team visits clients wherever they are living, in tents, in shelters, even in cars.

"We meet patients where they are, literally," said Social Worker Anita Earl, who leads the Homeless Outreach Team.

The team receives referrals from hospitals and clinics to help people find housing, receive food, supplemental nutrition and transportation assistance and attend medical appointments if people are hesitant to go alone.

"We connect people to resources and services," Earl said. "That can really make a difference in their lives."



h community health needs

Collaboration includes clinics

Samaritan primary care clinics are being redesigned to deliver care more effectively. This includes screening for risk factors known as the social determinants of health, these are non-medical issues which can impact a person's health.

This information is available to an individual's care team so they can help people solve problems, like what a person with diabetes can do if they don't have a refrigerator to store insulin.

Stephanie Maxon, vice president of clinic operations at Samaritan, said the goal is to help people stay healthy.

"We want to catch them between the walking well and rising risk," Maxon said.

That includes helping people avoid gaps in insurance coverage. Samaritan is becoming a community service partner with the Oregon Health Authority to sign up people directly for Medicaid insurance.

Samaritan has also added a new alcohol and drug counselor to meet with people newly diagnosed with substance use disorder. The counselor will contact people at the emergency department or clinics, informing them about services and resources available, and collaborating with primary care providers to establish a treatment plan.

"What we know is that people don't always follow up on their own behalf," Maxon said. "We can help them with this. We can do better."



Health research collaborative invests in population health

The InterCommunity Health Research Institute, established in early 2022, is a collaboration to leverage shared resources to evaluate and improve population health and health equity. The research institute, convened by InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization, includes community partners, key policymakers, researchers and health care system representatives.

The research institute provides actionable evidence to inform community health investments and initiatives in Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties. It is creating an inclusive, collaborative environment that promotes curiosity, discovery and innovation through rigorous program evaluation and research in the following areas:

- Finding the best approaches to support the needs of the community.
- Providing academic rigor to health-related program evaluation and research.
- Strengthening community relationships and resources between diverse partners.
- Aligning resources and health education with the community.
- Facilitating diverse funding sources to support population health initiatives.

For more information about the InterCommunity Health Research Institute, please email [IHN-CCO at transformation@samhealth.org](mailto:IHN-CCO@samhealth.org).





New language and interpretation guides aim to reduce barriers

When a patient, visitor or member steps into a Samaritan facility, language should not be a barrier.

With new, improved and streamlined interpretation guides, that's now true across Samaritan, whether a person is checking in for a doctor's appointment, joining a SamFit gym, purchasing health insurance or staying as a guest at the Mario Pastega House.

"We're not just providing better access," said Laurie Simpson, director of Patient Experience & Engagement at Samaritan. "We're improving outcomes and building trust, which is what the community deserves."

According to U.S. Census data, for about 20% of the population, a language other than English is spoken at home. In Oregon, the most common foreign languages include Spanish, Russian, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) and Vietnamese.

Improving language access for people whose preferred language is not English is part of Samaritan's Equity & Inclusion Plan to foster an inclusive, respectful, equitable and responsive health system.

Guided by Samaritan's Equity & Inclusion Council, the plan outlines goals and steps to understand and address issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, culture, socioeconomic status, language, sexual orientation, age, spirituality and literacy.

"We're not just providing better language access," Simpson said. "We're improving safety and quality, which will allow our patients to become more engaged, which reduces errors."

Samaritan's Patient & Family Advisory Councils provided feedback and guidance when developing the new language and interpretation guides, said Janessa Thom, Samaritan's Patient-Family Engagement Coordinator.

Advisory councils are made up of community members who meet regularly to enhance customer service, improve patient satisfaction, provide feedback for health care providers and promote understanding between the health system and the community. Advisory council members saw an opportunity to make interpreting services more consistent and thorough.

All Samaritan registration staff are equipped with a guide outlining different languages for people to request interpretation services quickly and easily by simply pointing to their preferred language. People will receive a card to carry that identifies their preferred language that they can take to appointments to signal they need interpreting services.

"In the past, interpretation experiences varied by location," Thom said. "Now, every Samaritan facility uses the same guide to identify and greet people who speak a language other than English."

Samaritan's nine Patient & Family Advisory Councils are actively recruiting people to serve as patient advisors. To apply for a position, contact the Service Excellence Team at SHSServiceExcellence@samhealth.org. To learn more about Samaritan's Equity & Inclusion plan, visit samhealth.org/Equity.

Influencing from within: *Samaritan employees create community*

Samaritan employees are finding new ways to be their authentic selves, show up fully, find support and engage at work.

Newly formed employee resource groups promote and increase awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion within Samaritan. Based on results from employee surveys and forums set forth in Samaritan's Equity & Inclusion Plan, groups coalesced around four areas of shared interest, including employees of color, disability, LGBTQ and veterans. Other interests are also being explored for possible additional groups.

The groups are open to all employees and provide opportunities for networking, as well as personal and professional growth. So far, each group has chosen to use a shared leadership model. While they just started, leaders hope that by centering voices that are not always heard, they can bring about positive change.

One of the first outreach activities for the LGBTQ resource group for employees and allies was participating in Family Day activities in Lebanon as part of Pride Month in June.

Erin Crain, a digital marketing specialist who has worked at Samaritan for three years, is one of the co-leaders for the Pride Alliance group.

Crain wants to create a safe and supportive work environment and to bring awareness that Samaritan is a safe place for the LGBTQ community to seek care.

"The Pride Alliance employee resource group provides a safe space within Samaritan Health Services for staff to feel like they can be themselves," said Crain. "We're working towards initiatives to be more inclusive as an organization and to support the community."

She said participating in the employee resource group feels empowering.



Photo: Erin Crain warmly greets Lebanon Pride attendees at Samaritan's booth.

Breast cancer survivors look to a future filled with hope

It was a relationship that evolved in the most unconventional way.

Sonia Graham and Jeanette Campagna had a casual friendship and business connection through the Newport Chamber of Commerce.

Their relationship quickly turned into a support system and a lasting bond as the two women fought their individual battles with breast cancer.

Graham had discovered a large lump in her left breast during a routine self-exam in February 2020. The following month, an aggressive form of breast cancer was confirmed (see related story on page 8).

“I remember it like yesterday,” said Graham. “It was March 26, 2020.”

Campagna had received her own breast cancer diagnosis a few months prior in November 2019 following a routine mammogram.

Still adjusting to her own breast cancer diagnosis and weighing her next steps for care (see related story on page 8), Campagna still remembers the call from Graham.

“I was taken by surprise when Sonia called me and shared the news about her diagnosis — it hadn’t been talked about during other interactions we had,” said Campagna.

Campagna was a sounding board and offered a wealth of knowledge as Graham began her own fight against cancer.

“We talked and texted frequently; it was a priority that we check in with each other,” both Graham and Campagna said. “Having each other to lean on helped get us through.”

Fast forward to early 2021. Graham is officially in remission and Campagna proudly celebrated being one year cancer-free.

Shortly after reaching these milestones, the two women decided they wanted to help women struggling with breast cancer in their community.

“We talked about getting involved with an already-established breast cancer awareness walk,” said Graham. “But it was important to us we support local, both the women impacted by breast cancer and our community that surrounded us with compassion throughout our fight.”

Then in April, Graham received a call from Campagna — her words exactly, “We are doing this! We will create our own breast cancer awareness walk.”

Despite Graham’s initial apprehension, Campagna’s experience with developing similar events along with their shared passion, quickly turned any concerns into excitement.

The two women met at Nana’s Irish Pub, a favorite of theirs in Nye Beach. It was then that their idea blossomed to reality and into an event they would host later that year at Newport High School on Oct. 9, 2021 — Coast Busters Walk.

The day of the event was more successful than either Graham or Campagna imagined.

“More than 100 people showed — including my son who traveled all the way from Washington D.C.,” said Campagna.

“It also raised over \$14,000,” said Graham. “These funds will go back to our community that supported us whole-heartedly so that we may help women struggling with breast cancer.”

Neither Graham nor Campagna had plans to make the Coast Busters Walk an annual event. But, after the success of the first and the community’s request to keep it going, that is what it became, with the second annual event scheduled to occur on Oct. 1, 2022, at Newport High School.

Elated with the community’s response, the women shared their vision for the event in years to come.

“One day our goal is to be known as the co-founders of the Coast Busters Walk and to be able to hand the reins over to someone else — so we can just be participants,” Graham and Campagna said with a smile.

Graham and Campagna expressed their gratitude to title sponsor NextHome Picket Fence Realty, not only for their sponsorship but also for the thoughtful medallions they prepared for participants, as well as the many other sponsors of the 2021 event.

Upholding their promise to keep the Coast Busters Walk proceeds local, Graham and Campagna worked with the Pacific Communities Health District Foundation to allocate monies toward the Women’s Cancer Fund.

Learn more about the upcoming Coast Busters Walk for breast cancer, at CoastBustersWalk.com.

Building *hope* together



Coast Busters Walk 
October 9, 2021

 Jeanette Campagna

Thanks for this opportunity to proudly raise awareness
our community and to provide faith, courage, confidence,
and hopefulness for all women who have been affected
by breast cancer



Coast Busters Walk 
October 9, 2021

 Sonia Graham

Thanks for this opportunity to proudly raise awareness
in our community and to provide faith, courage, confidence,
and hopefulness for all women who have been affected
by breast cancer

Lap Counter Medallion 

Get inspired!

From breast cancer to building hope, watch Graham and Campagna share their stories at samhealth.org/SoniaJeanette.



Words to live by from breast cancer survivors

Cancer-free and loving life!

“Never take life for granted — you only have one!” said Jeanette Campagna, 57, of Florence, when asked how cancer changed her outlook on life.

In November 2019, Campagna was diagnosed with clinical stage 1 estrogen positive breast cancer, an invasive ductal carcinoma.

“Depending on the diagnosis, there can be a variety of treatment options and decisions to be made about cancer care,” said Campagna. “It can be overwhelming.”

Further biopsy determined that three of the four tumors in various quadrants of the breast were positive, leaving Campagna with only one option, a total left breast mastectomy.

Feeling a sense of relief about the mastectomy, Campagna then made the decision to have breast reconstructive surgery.

“I felt like I got hit by a truck,” said Campagna. “Fortunately, the care team at Samaritan Plastics, Reconstructive & Hand Surgery were so wonderful and caring.”

Despite the trying circumstances Campagna faced in her cancer journey, including a frozen shoulder requiring rehabilitation, she is thankful for so much.

“My husband, John, was my rock throughout this entire experience. His support, and that of my son, Tanner, network of friends and community, helped me get through,” Campagna said.

Campagna is now approaching three years of survivorship and proudly celebrates being cancer-free.

Stronger, more confident and crushing cancer!

“You have cancer, cancer doesn’t have you!” are but a few words of advice Sonia Graham, 55, of Newport, has for those touched by cancer.

Diagnosed in March 2020 with clinical stage 2 left breast cancer, an invasive lobular cancer that had metastasized to the lymph node at the time of diagnosis, Graham went through the full gamut of treatment, including 16 rounds of chemotherapy to help shrink the tumor, followed by a lumpectomy and then a complete lymph node dissection.

When cancer was still detected during a follow-up biopsy, radiation therapy — 33 rounds — was the next recommended course of treatment.

Living in Depoe Bay at the time and not eager to make the daily drive to the Samaritan Pastega Regional Cancer Center in Corvallis, Graham opted to stay at the Mario Pastega House during her radiation therapy treatments — a resource she heard about from her social worker.

Today, Graham is now well into remission and approaching two years of survivorship.

Grateful for her husband Jim of 30 years, network of friends, cancer treatment options and care team, Graham shares her outlook on life.

“This experience changed me,” said Graham. “I am more confident, willing to take chances and just feel like I’m living life with a greater purpose now.”

Read more about how Sonia Graham and Jeanette Campagna are working together to give back to the community on page 6.

Above left to right: John and Jeanette Campagna and Jim and Sonia Graham enjoy a beautiful day at the coast.

Early-stage lung cancer detection program launched

Samaritan recently rolled out the first phase of its lung cancer screening program.

“Early-stage lung cancer screening programs have really only evolved in the last 10 years and up to this point, have primarily been led by larger institutions,” said Clinical Research Manager Anthony Franklin, with Samaritan Research & Quality Department.

Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in both men and women and is the leading cause of U.S. cancer death.

“Often lung cancer goes undetected until symptoms present, which means it has reached a more advanced stage, making it harder to treat,” said Vanessa Mizak, FNP, with Samaritan Medical Group Pulmonology – Corvallis and lead practitioner for the lung cancer screening program. “That is why the lung cancer screening program may benefit higher-risk patients that are not yet showing signs or symptoms.”

Many factors are considered before screening begins such as age and smoking history. Patients must be 50 to 77 years old and have 20 or more years of smoking history and either be a current smoker or have quit within the past 15 years.

Once evaluated, eligible patients receive a low-dose CT scan. Based on the results, a follow-up care plan is created.

“I have received a lot of positive response from my patients – many saying ‘OK, let’s get it done!’”

Some patients may be a bit averse but that doesn’t mean the conversation stops.

“I continue to broach the topic of smoking and reiterate the importance of screenings and how they save lives,” said Mizak. “Because at the end of the day, it’s about taking care of the community, being honest about smoking and the health benefits of quitting.”

If you think you meet the criteria for this program, talk to your provider about getting a referral to Vanessa Mizak, FNP, or James Knight, MD, with Samaritan Medical Group Pulmonology – Corvallis.

Quit smoking and take control of your life today

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death. But there is good news — quitting is possible!

Fact: There are more former smokers than current smokers.

While quitting is tough and may take several attempts, sometimes upwards of 7 to 10 times before being successful, it’s important to not give up! And, to get help and seek support.

Health benefits of quitting

Quitting smoking will decrease your risk of serious diseases like cancer, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder and chronic bronchitis. You will notice other improvements too:

- **20 minutes:** heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- **12 hours:** carbon monoxide level in the blood returns to normal.
- **3 months:** heart attack risk begins to drop, circulation and lung function improves.
- **1 year:** risk of coronary heart disease is cut in half.

Financial benefits after quitting

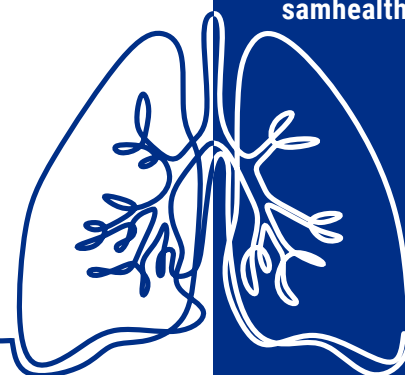
Smoking is pricey — an average cigarette pack in Oregon costs \$9.37. Quit and save:

- **1 week:** \$65.59.
- **1 month:** \$281.10.
- **1 year:** \$3,420.08.

Start with small changes

- List personal reasons to quit. Put the list where you can see it.
- Replace one cigarette per day with a different activity.
- Recognize the urge to smoke will pass whether you smoke or not.
- Take 8 to 10 deep breaths when you have an urge.

It’s never too late to quit! Attend an online Freedom From Smoking workshop. Learn more or register at samhealth.org/HealthEdHub.



Don't procrastinate on prostate care

If you've been getting up more often at night to go to the bathroom, don't just write it off as a part of aging. Prostate cancer can affect your continence function and is a common disease, affecting 1 in 8 men in the U.S.

"Early detection is critical, so pay attention to symptoms like burning or pain while urinating, trouble starting or stopping urinating, a frequent urge to urinate at night or a loss of bladder control," said Layron Long, MD, a urologist at Samaritan Urology – Corvallis.

These symptoms are also common among those who have an enlarged prostate, so don't automatically assume it's cancer if you are having pain or complications with urination. Your best bet is to go in for an exam.

Advanced treatments available

If you are over the age of 65, are Black or have a family history of prostate cancer, you may be at a higher risk, so talk to your primary care provider even if you aren't noticing any symptoms. Since prostate cancer can develop without symptoms, you may need to be screened using a physical exam or a blood test. Depending on the results of these tests you may be referred to a urologist for a biopsy to confirm diagnosis.

"We use highly targeted tools for detecting and treating prostate cancer, like MRI or ultrasound-guided biopsy, which uses real-time imaging to identify a possible tumor and take an accurate sample," said Dr. Long. "If surgery is

needed, our team offers minimally invasive robotic surgery to preserve healthy tissue and minimize side effects."

Some patients are good candidates for a form of radiation therapy called prostate brachytherapy. This treatment uses a tiny device the size of a grain of rice placed at the tumor site to dispense radiation. Since this restricts radiation to a small area, brachytherapy can treat cancer while limiting damage to healthy cells.

Recovery outlook is positive

Dr. Long reports that prostate cancer responds well to treatment, with a 90% to 95% cure rate if detected early.

"Don't ignore prostate problems," he said. "We use the most cutting-edge technologies, but the best care works even better if we can find the cancer when it's small."

Hear from Rik Saverig, prostate cancer survivor, about how his fear prolonged getting care and his hindsight advice for others, at samhealth.org/RikS.



Immunotherapy, is it right for you

Immunotherapy is a fairly new addition to the arsenal of treatments used for cancer. While chemotherapy and radiation therapy work by killing cancer cells directly, immunotherapy gives your body's immune system a boost to identify and eliminate cancer.

"Immunotherapy enhances the body's natural ability to fight cancer, and the effects can sometimes last beyond the treatment period to keep the cancer from returning," said William "Bud" Pierce, MD, PhD, a medical oncologist from Samaritan Hematology & Oncology Consultants.

There are currently five common types of treatment:

- **Immune checkpoint inhibitors.** The body has natural immune checkpoints that keep it from overreacting. Immune checkpoint inhibitors are a medication that blocks the body's natural immune regulation. This lets the immune system respond more strongly to target and kill tumor cells.
- **T-cell transfer therapy.** T-cells are a part of the immune system that target and destroy diseased cells. During T-cell transfer therapy, a sample of the patient's own T-cells are taken and modified in a lab to recognize and kill cancer cells. These enhanced T-cells are

Delayed screenings during pandemic led to increased late-stage cancer



When people were asked to stay home at the beginning of the pandemic, routine preventive cancer screening was just one of many services that paused. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported screening for breast, colorectal and cervical cancer dropped by more than 80% during the early months of the pandemic.

The consequences of that pause are showing up. A survey conducted by the American Society for Radiation Oncology found that radiation oncologists across the nation are reporting patients now have more advanced cancer when they are diagnosed.

“The data is still trickling in, but what we’re hearing from colleagues around the country is consistent with what we’re seeing locally – when people

are diagnosed with cancer it is often at a more advanced stage than what we were experiencing four years ago, before the pandemic,” said John Strother, MD, a medical oncologist from Samaritan Hematology & Oncology Consultants.

Although many people have resumed their regular screenings since 2020, numbers are still below pre-pandemic levels, reports Dr. Strother.

“We can’t predict the long-term effects of these delayed screenings on cancer survivorship, but we do know that an early diagnosis of cancers like breast, colorectal, lung and cervical gives us more choices and a better chance of successful treatment,” said Dr. Strother. “Preventive care is as essential as ever. If you’re worried about visiting a clinic, talk to your doctor about your individual risk factors and ways to stay safe while getting the care you need. Cancer screening is too important to miss.”



Schedule a visit with your primary care provider to get back on track with your care.

Visit samhealth.org/FindADoc to find a provider near you.

your cancer?

reintroduced to the patient where they can get to work destroying the cancer.

- **Monoclonal antibodies.** These are antibodies created in a lab to bind to specific cancer cells, making the cells more visible to the immune system. The immune system then targets and destroys the cancer cells.
- **Treatment vaccines.** These vaccines teach the immune system to identify a substance called tumor-associated antigens that are present in cancer cells. The immune system can then destroy the cancerous cells.
- **Immune system modulators.** These boost the body’s immune response against cancer.

Immunotherapy can be used by itself or in combination with other forms of treatment like chemotherapy, radiation therapy and surgery.

“We’re still learning about immunotherapy, but it has been so effective that we’re continually adding it as a treatment option for more types of cancer,” said Dr. Pierce. “It is likely going to develop as a cornerstone for cancer treatment moving forward.”

Read more on this topic, plus hear from Dr. Pierce’s colleague John Strother, MD, as he explains how immunotherapy fights cancer, at samhealth.org/Immunotherapy101.

Music and art contribute to healing for cancer patients

Samaritan's cancer program is known for their reputation of high-quality, patient-centered cancer care. The program focuses on the full spectrum of patient needs — medical, physical, emotional, spiritual and social. Another unique aspect of the cancer program is the partnership with Samaritan ArtsCare.

ArtsCare enhances the health care experience and promotes the physical and emotional well-being of patients, employees and the community. An extensive range of arts-related services are offered, including live music, visual arts, one-on-one services, group activities, plus commissioned art and healing gardens. The use of arts to promote healing isn't a new idea, but the understanding and research behind this methodology is. Research on the ArtsCare program has demonstrated a significantly positive relationship between exposure to the arts and patient satisfaction.

ArtsCare has been helping patients for nearly 20 years. It was developed with a unique model to contract with local, professional artists who are trained with hospital practices and policies and then educated about cancer patients' unique needs. Once the training is completed the artists are mentored by experienced ArtsCare artists.

Many ArtsCare artists say working with patients brings meaning to their own lives. They are dedicated to the cancer center's arts-enhanced environment and to creating memorable experiences to help heal Samaritan's patients, community members and employees.

This program is supported in part through donations to the ArtsCare fund at Samaritan Foundations. Learn more about ArtsCare at samhealth.org/ArtsInHealth. For sponsorship or to donate to ArtsCare, visit samhealth.org/SupportArtsCare.

Photo: ArtsCare participants created a sgraffito "quilt" during a Saturday art workshop.

Saturday ArtsCare workshops make a comeback

Samaritan's ArtsCare program is excited to have in-person workshops again. Join talented ArtsCare artists on the second Saturday of each month for art sessions specifically designed for those touched by cancer. Sessions are free and all materials are provided. No prior art experience is necessary. This is a great way to process your feelings about cancer, connect with others and form new friendships.

Location: Reimer Building, 1085 Sixth Ave. SW, Albany

Date and time: Second Saturdays, 10 a.m. to noon

Registration is required. For information and to register contact the ArtsCare Program Manager, Erin Gudge, at ArtsCare@samhealth.org or call 541-768-7138.



Medical weight loss or surgery – which is right for you?

Obesity is a serious issue affecting 40% of American adults and increases risk of diabetes, osteoarthritis, heart disease and more.

For those committed to a healthier lifestyle, a medical weight loss program or bariatric surgery can jump start weight loss and improved health. How do these options differ?

Medical weight loss

Precision Wellness is an intensive, 16-week medically supervised weight loss program. With comprehensive educational, motivational and physical fitness components, groups meet virtually once a week with weight loss specialists, registered dietitians, and behavioral health specialists, and weekly in person with fitness trainers. Participants develop tools to make lasting lifestyle and behavioral health changes. Weight loss medications are an additional option too.

“People come to us for help with weight management, but part of our job is to de-emphasize scale weight and emphasize health and wellness,” said Katy Brown, DO, endocrinologist and coordinator of the Precision Wellness program.

“Highly motivated participants can see reductions in body fat, improvements in blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as increased mental health wellness, confidence and overall well-being,” Dr. Brown noted.

On average, participants in a medical weight loss program can lose from 3% to 8% body weight, and up to 15% by adding medication.

Participants must be 18 or older, have a body mass index of 30 or higher and be motivated for change.

Surgical weight loss

Bariatric surgery offers a more aggressive weight loss option. By altering the digestive system, surgery limits the amount of food one can eat and adjusts hormones so that a person feels satisfied by eating less. Samaritan offers two gastric restrictive surgical options.

In the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, a small stomach pouch is created by dividing the stomach and rerouting the intestines. This surgery can also improve blood sugar and cure acid reflux.

The vertical sleeve gastrectomy removes a large amount of stomach but does not reroute intestines.

Like with any surgery, complications are possible. A person must also make significant dietary and lifestyle changes after surgery to avoid potentially serious consequences.

Patients must be 18 or older and meet certain criteria to qualify for surgery.

“Both surgical options are effective at weight loss – a person can lose up to one-third of their body weight in the first year,” said Erika La Vella, DO, bariatric and general surgeon. “Beyond weight loss, some of my most favorite results are taking people off their diabetes or high blood pressure drugs and getting them active and moving.”

Surgery is not a fix-all for weight loss, Dr. La Vella noted.

“Long-term weight management is still dependent on lifestyle. In fact, after surgery is when the real work begins. Our most successful patients are those who monitor what they eat and continue exercise long after the surgery,” she said.

To learn more about any of these weight loss options, visit samhealth.org/WeightLoss.

Katy Brown, DO, and Erika La Vella, DO, FASMBS, both see patients at Samaritan Weight Management Institute and can be reached at 541-768-4280.



Avoid chronic in

By Sridhar Vijayasekaran, MD, Samaritan Cardiology

Most people are familiar with inflammation because they've experienced muscle soreness after a workout or redness and swelling from a bug bite or bee sting. That kind of inflammation is known as acute inflammation. It is the body's way of protecting and healing the affected area.

Another kind of inflammation, called chronic inflammation, acts on our bodies slowly and happens over months and years. It has been found to contribute to many chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and Alzheimer's.

With chronic inflammation, the body's immune system reacts similarly to how it would with a bee sting, but throughout the whole body, continually straining and damaging tissues and organs. With your immune system waging war in your body, the damage continues, and chronic diseases are likely to develop or worsen.

Inflammation plays a role in the aging process. Habits like smoking, lack of exercise and stress promote inflammation, cause damage to the body and accelerate the aging process.

Symptoms of chronic inflammation include mental foginess or memory loss, joint pain, digestive upset, constipation and bloating, fatigue and lack of energy, headache, weight gain or inability to lose weight.

The good news is there is a lot we can do to prevent or reduce chronic inflammation.

- Get enough good quality sleep.
- Eat a healthy diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods, such as the Mediterranean diet.
- Avoid processed and refined foods, deep fried foods, trans fats, added sugars and alcohol.

Inflammation to prevent disease

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise.
- Drink water to stay hydrated.
- Avoid environmental toxins.
- Limit and manage stress.
- Get regular dental cleanings.

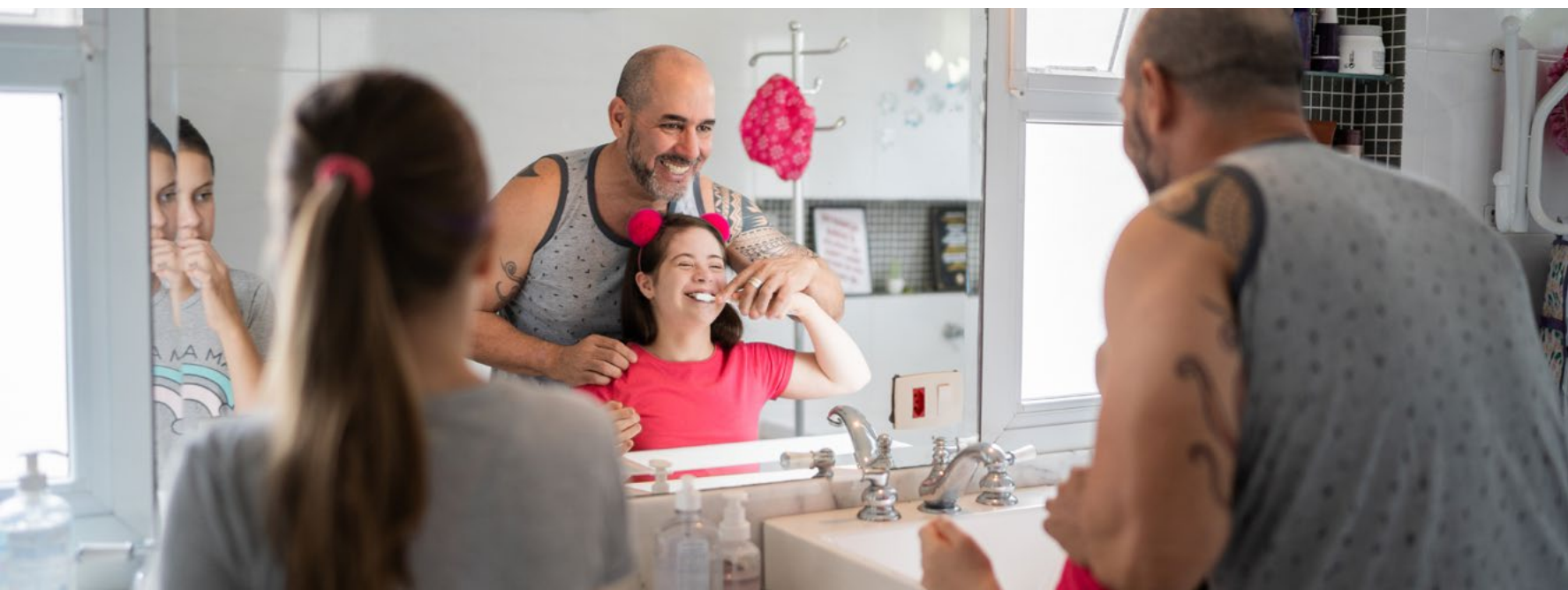
Taking these steps to prevent chronic inflammation will help you avoid or manage chronic disease and maintain your best possible health.

A few anti-inflammatory foods

- Leafy greens.
- Berries and cherries.
- Extra virgin olive oil.
- Whole grains.
- Raw, unsalted nuts.
- Tuna, mackerel and salmon.
- Green tea.
- Dark chocolate.

A few foods to limit or avoid

- Candy, soda, pastries and cookies.
- Fried foods, such as French fries.
- White bread, pasta and pizza.
- White rice.
- Bacon, sausage and deli meat.
- Diet soda and sugar-free candy.
- Alcohol.



Oral hygiene improves overall health

The health of your teeth and gums is linked to the health of your entire body. Taking good care of your mouth can lower your risk for diabetes, heart attack, stroke, premature birth, chronic inflammation and other health problems.

Our mouths harbor bacteria, which is mostly harmless. But because your mouth is an entry point to the rest of your body, some of these bacteria can cause disease.

With good oral health care, such as daily brushing and flossing, your body's natural defenses is able to help keep bacteria under control. Without proper oral hygiene, bacteria can reach levels that could lead to oral infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease.

As you focus on eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and managing stress, remember your mouth. It's the gateway to a healthier you.

Keep your smile bright and your mouth healthy:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- Floss daily.
- Schedule regular dental checkups and cleanings.
- Eat a healthy diet and limit sugary snacks.

Learn more about oral health and local resources at [samhealth.org/HealthySmiles](https://www.samhealth.org/HealthySmiles).



Tips for a better, healthier night's sleep

Sleep is essential for survival, but consistently getting a good night's sleep is a challenge for many. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states more than 35% of American adults get less than the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep each night.

“Having good sleep hygiene, which includes your daily routine and sleep environment, can help you experience better quality sleep and allow you to reap the health and well-being benefits that come from sleep,” said Nicholas Gaffney, manager of neurodiagnostics and Samaritan Sleep Center.

Good sleep hygiene starts with healthy daily habits, said Gaffney, including:

- Eating well, including limiting sugar and soda.
- Exercising regularly.
- Limiting caffeine after 1 p.m.
- Limiting alcohol, which may help you fall asleep but too much can cause sleep fragmentation and impact sleep quality.
- Avoiding anything with a blue light — TVs, tablets, computers and phones — 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime. Your optic nerve picks up the blue light and signals to your body that the sun is out and time to be awake. This also eliminates stimulation so that your brain can produce the melatonin necessary for sleep.

- Setting a regular sleep schedule — including a bedtime and wake up time — and stick to it. While it's tempting to sleep in on a Saturday, it will throw off your sleep schedule and by Monday morning you'll be in a sleep deficit.

Where you sleep is also important. Here are a few ways to ensure your sleep environment contributes to a successful night's sleep:

- Keep your bedroom clean and clutter free.
- Keep your bedroom as dark as possible.
- Turn your phone off at bedtime or put it in do-not-disturb mode so that you are not awakened by noisy or bright notifications.
- Do not let your pets sleep in bed with you. This is a tough one for pet lovers but our furry friends are often what keep us from a good night's sleep.

For more sleep hygiene tips, visit sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene.



Air-fried curry cauliflower, *a healthy alternative*

By Alexis Rocha, registered dietitian, Samaritan Albany General Hospital

Air frying foods can be a healthier way of enjoying vegetables while enjoying the satisfying crispy crunch of deep-fried foods. If done right, you can enjoy fried foods with 100% less fat and fewer calories. Here are some air fryer healthy cooking tips:

- Reduce or skip the oil. For taste or extra crisp, lightly drizzle with oil to coat food.
- Choose unsaturated fats such as olive oil, avocado oil or sunflower oil. Coconut oil and butter are not ideal due to higher saturated fat content.
- Substitute high fat meats with tofu. Press the tofu to remove moisture before cooking.

Vegetables are ideal for cooking delicious and healthy meals with an air fryer. Try this roasted curry cauliflower recipe as a side dish or mid-day snack. Skip the oil for a fat-free option.

Preparation time: 5 minutes | Cook time: 15 minutes | Servings: 4

Nutrition information per 1 cup serving: 112 calories; 21 g total fat (7.8 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 51 mg sodium; 5 g fiber; 4 g total sugars (0 g added sugars); 4 g protein.

Ingredients

- ❑ 1 head cauliflower, broken and chopped into 1/2 inch thick florets.
- ❑ 2 tablespoons olive oil (optional).
- ❑ 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice.
- ❑ 2 teaspoons yellow curry powder.
- ❑ 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon or cardamom.
- ❑ Pinch of pepper to taste.

Directions

1. Preheat air fryer to 400°.
2. Lay florets out in air fryer basket in a single layer. Depending on the basket size, you may have to do two batches.
3. Air fry for 15 minutes. Shake for even cooking two to three times.

Visit samhealth.org/RecipeMinute for more healthy recipes.



**Joint
replacement
gets fishing
guide back
on the water**

When it comes to finding the best fishing spots in southeast Alaska, few people know the waters of the last frontier better than Randy Kiesling, 74, of Corvallis. But when it came to navigating treatment options for his chronic knee pain, he chose the experts at Samaritan Medical Group Orthopedics – Albany to be his guides.

For 22 years, Randy showed tourists to the 49th state where to cast and reel in lunkers worthy of a great fish story. But it came at a cost.

“I started noticing the pain getting worse when I was in Alaska,” Randy said. “I kept hyperextending my knee, because I was constantly bending over the rails of the boat to get fish and doing stuff like that.”

Randy decided it was time to see a doctor. He knew people who had pain similar to his and ended up having joint replacement surgery. In fact, Randy’s sister had two knee replacements several years prior and his wife, Nance, was her coach for both procedures.

“His sister had her surgeries in Salem, so I just assumed that’s where we’d go,” Nance explained.

Before making a final decision, however, Nance did some research. That’s when she learned about the DNV-GL certified joint replacement program at Samaritan Albany General Hospital.

“I was like, ‘Wait a second,’” she recalled. “I read about some of the new things they had done at the Albany hospital and it sounded like the greatest place.”

Randy followed his wife’s advice and made an appointment to see James Ryan, MD, the program’s medical director.

“Like any sensible husband, I just did what she told me to do,” he joked.

Dr. Ryan diagnosed him with severe osteoarthritis and joint replacement was indeed one of the options on the table. However, since there were plans for several more seasons in Alaska, he initially opted to try a series of less-invasive treatments such as cortisone and lubricant injections into the knee joint, taking ibuprofen and wearing a knee brace.

But following his final season in Alaska, Randy acknowledged the inevitable.

“It was bone-on-bone,” he said. “It got so painful to walk on, it was ridiculous. Dr. Ryan showed me the x-rays and said it was time to get things taken care of. I trusted him and figured I could take what he said to the bank.”

Soon after his joint replacement, Randy was feeling like his old self again.

“It’s night and day – just such a big difference,” he said. “I can get out, work in the yard and bend over and pick things up with no problem. There’s no more pain in the knee, period.”

Randy credits Samaritan’s joint replacement education class with getting him well-prepared for his surgery and recovery.

“I felt very well-informed about everything that was going to happen,” he said. “I was given the pre-op exercises and I did them militantly. The same with rehab. It made a huge difference. You need to do it absolutely by the book.”

In addition to Dr. Ryan and his physician assistant, Eric Moen, PA-C, Randy gives the entire Samaritan team rave reviews.

“It really made me appreciate how a thoughtful, conscientious crew can really make a difference in your experience,” he explained. “From the nurses to the person who empties the trash in your room, from the person who brings your food to everybody in between, they all took their jobs very seriously. I never met an unpleasant person.”

When asked what advice he would share with other people who are considering joint replacement, Randy doesn’t hesitate.

“I’d tell them to call Samaritan and get it done. It’s just not worth being in all that pain.”

Learn more about Randy Kiesling’s joint replacement journey at samhealth.org/RandyK.

Building
adventure
together

Know your risk factors and recognize the symptoms of vascular disease

Listening to your body and mitigating risk can help prevent the disease's most serious complications

They say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This is especially true when it comes to vascular disease.

Many vascular conditions can be asymptomatic. A person may look or feel fine, but that doesn't mean the warning signs aren't there.

“Risk factor modification is a mainstay of vascular disease treatment,” said Aditi Madabhushi, MD, medical director of Samaritan's Vascular Surgery program. “Some risk factors such as age, being male and having a family history of vascular disease are inherent — but others can be mitigated with medication or by making certain lifestyle changes.”

A history of smoking, an increased body mass index and extended periods of immobility are among the more common causative risk factors for vascular disease. Not surprisingly, quitting smoking, changing your diet and exercising are good ways to reduce these risks.

High blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes are also precursors of the disease and these can be managed with medication if diet and lifestyle changes alone are unsuccessful.

If you have a number of the risk factors, talk with your primary care provider to see if you should be screened for vascular disease.

Dizziness, sudden stomach pain, leg pain that impairs walking, and swelling of the legs can all be signs of peripheral vascular disease, deep vein thrombosis or aneurysms. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek immediate attention at an ER or urgent care clinic.

Left untreated, vascular disease can be fatal or result in a stroke, pulmonary embolism or amputation.

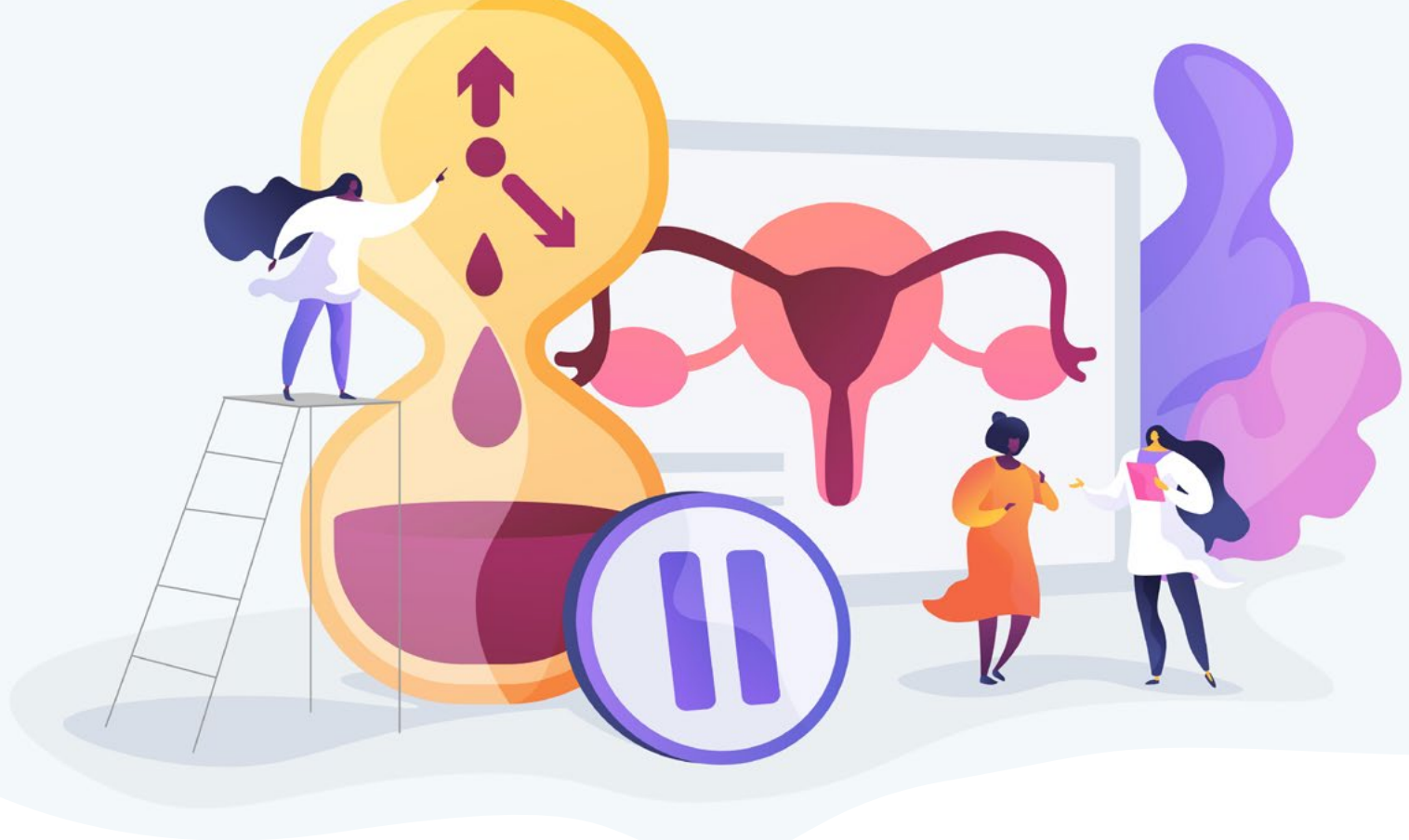
The good news is that treatment no longer requires bypass surgery or long hospital stays.

“Thanks to advances in technology, we are able to offer simpler, less invasive treatments to all of our patients,” said Dr. Madabhushi. “Ninety percent of them go home the same day and the side effects are minimal, so there really is no reason to put off seeking treatment.”

Aditi Madabhushi, MD, can be reached at Samaritan Surgical Specialists in Corvallis by calling 541-768-5930.



Aditi Madabhushi, MD, explains the effects of vascular disease and the importance of screenings.



Hormone therapy: *Is it right for you?*

If you are unable to fall asleep, wake up too early or have hot flashes and night sweats, it is possible you are experiencing perimenopause or menopause. As your estrogen hormone level drops with age, symptoms can become unmanageable and it may be time to call your doctor.

According to the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, on average, menopause occurs at age 51. The ovaries stop making estrogen and the menstrual cycle ends. Perimenopause typically begins earlier as estrogen levels fluctuate causing hot flashes, sleep issues, vaginal dryness and urinary tract changes.

Going through perimenopause and menopause can be difficult. If symptoms interfere with daily living, hormone replacement therapy can ease this transition and help replace the estrogen your body no longer makes after menopause.

“Estrogen may be good for your heart and joints, can help protect against osteoporosis, and may boost your mood,” said Sarah Vander Pol, MD, of Samaritan Obstetrics & Gynecology – Corvallis. “Hormone therapy may be associated with a small increased risk of heart attack, stroke, deep vein thrombosis and breast cancer. Patients with a personal or family history of these conditions should tell their doctor before treatment to determine if hormone therapy is right for them.”

What are the two basic types of hormone therapy?

- Systemic estrogen — in pill, skin patch, ring, gel, cream or spray form — typically contains a higher dose of estrogen that is absorbed by the body. Women who have not had a hysterectomy should pair systemic estrogen with progesterone therapy to protect the uterine lining according to Dr. Vander Pol.
- Low-dose vaginal estrogen products — like a cream, tablet or ring form minimizes the amount of estrogen absorbed by the body. These low-dose vaginal preparations are typically used to treat the vaginal and urinary symptoms of menopause.

Natural ways to manage symptoms.

- Try lifestyle changes: be physically active, eliminate alcohol, smoking, caffeinated beverages, and practice relaxation and breathing techniques.
- Talk to your doctor about herbal supplements or nonhormone prescription medications that may help relieve hot flashes.

Ready to get help for your menopause symptoms? Find an OB/GYN provider at samhealth.org/FindaDoc.



Mother, daughter create health habits for life

Parents commonly strive to raise their children with positive character traits by teaching kindness, generosity and empathy early in life. At the same time, they sometimes overlook developing a healthy routine to support a child's physical body.

Instilling a lifelong workout habit is one reason an Albany mother signed her child up with a personal coach at SamFit in Albany.

"I want to make sure they have the healthiest life possible," said Amanda Rose. "If you set good habits now, they will carry them on throughout their life."

Rose' child, Gemma Monroe (they/them), recently started working with SamFit personal trainer Jackie Welter.

"I really want to be better with my body," Monroe said. "Staying home, eating chips and watching TV in my room isn't going to make me better. So I thought working out might improve both my mental and physical state."

Monroe, who is entering their freshman year of high school, works out for 30 minutes twice a week with Welter.

"The 30 minutes kill me," Monroe said. "Your body might hurt, but it's going to be good at the end."

Monroe's workout includes cardio along with squats, planks and pushups.

"I've been feeling better about myself," Monroe said. "I'm getting stronger, and I've actually noticed improvement on my grip."

"Getting active and moving around releases all those endorphins," Rose said. "It makes me a happier person. I've definitely seen improvement in my mood since we started working out. I think it helps them make better choices as far as food goes and activity level. Plus, it gives me and my daughter something to bond over."

The goal for Rose is to have her child develop a workout routine that they will carry the rest of their life.

"I want it to be how life is," said Rose. "It'll just be natural."

Learn more about SamFit memberships and programs at [SamFit.org](https://www.samfit.org).

Above: *Gemma Monroe exercises using an elliptical machine at the Albany SamFit location.*

Recognizing post-pandemic trauma in teens

For many teens, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a traumatic experience that created fear, anxiety, questions and caution.

Youth and adolescents are among those most affected by the pandemic and it's important to know that they may still be adjusting to the ever-changing world around them, especially as they enter another new school year.

“COVID-19 interrupted routines, education, relationships and a sense of safety for everyone, but especially teens,” said Geoff Schaubhut, PhD, behavioral health specialist at Park Street Clinic in Lebanon. “Teens are at a crucial developmental stage in life and the threats of the pandemic left many feeling anxious and depressed.”

Mental Health America shares these signs and symptoms of mental health disorders.

- Problems with concentration, memory or ability to think clearly.
- Changes in appetite.
- Feeling sad, empty, hopeless or worthless.
- Loss of interest in things that they used to enjoy.

- Excessive worry.
- Irritability or restlessness.
- Changes in sleep.
- Angry outbursts.
- Not wanting to be around people or take part in activities.

“Be on the lookout for any of these traits in your teen,” said Dr. Schaubhut. “If you notice any of them develop — even just one — have a conversation with your child about how they are feeling and what kind of support they need.”

Screening tools are available at MHAScreening.org for parents and youth to learn the signs and find out if a young person may have symptoms of a behavioral, emotional or cognitive disorder. If screening results indicate cause for concern, seek professional help.

**Looking for a health care provider?
Call Samaritan's Find a Doctor line for assistance
at 800-863-5241.**



Shifting job market spurs innovation

Millions of Americans have left their jobs in the past two years as part of the pandemic-driven “Great Resignation,” and Samaritan has not been immune to the challenging job market and shifting priorities of the workforce.

“We consistently have 200 more job openings at any one time than we did pre-pandemic,” said John Heffron, director of talent acquisition. “Like most organizations, we have had to re-evaluate our recruitment and retention strategies to ensure our organization is not only attractive to job seekers but a place where our employees want to continue to work.”

One way Samaritan has transformed to meet post-pandemic employee expectations, including a greater emphasis on work-life balance, is by embracing remote or hybrid work models and flexible schedules, knowing that those are big job satisfiers.

“There are many roles across the health system that don’t require employees be on site, and we have been able to transition those to remote-only positions,” said Heffron. “Not only is this appealing for employees who live in our communities, it has allowed us to cast a wider recruitment

net around Oregon and out of state.”

Today, nearly 700 Samaritan employees, primarily administrative or technical roles, are working in a remote/hybrid model, including employees who live in Samaritan’s primary service area and as far away as Michigan and Florida.

“Samaritan is a special place to work, and actively evaluating our benefits and compensation packages, and ways in which we can support our employees, is a high priority for us,” said Gail Worden-Acree, vice president of human resources.



Samaritan welcomes new health care providers



Julio Bird, MD, has joined Samaritan Weight Management Institute. He earned a bachelor’s degree at University of Wisconsin – La Crosse and a medical degree at Saint Louis University School of Medicine. He completed residency training at AMITA Health Saint Joseph, and an internship at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center and a fellowship in bariatric surgery at Minnesota Institute of Minimally Invasive Surgery – Cuyuna Regional Medical Center. He can be reached at **541-768-4280**.



Rebekah “Becky” Bird, MSN, FNP, has joined Samaritan Internal Medicine – Corvallis. She earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Grand Canyon University and a master’s degree in nursing to become a family nurse practitioner at University of South Alabama. She can be reached at **541-768-5140**.



Rebekah Byrne, MD, has joined Samaritan Heartspring Wellness Center. She earned bachelor’s and medical degrees at Tulane University. She completed residency training at Swedish Family Medicine Residency – First Hill in Seattle and a fellowship at Swedish Family Medicine – Cherry Hill Campus. She can be reached at **541-812-5656**.



Richard Jones, DO, has joined Samaritan Mental Health – Albany. He earned a bachelor’s degree at University of Kentucky and a medical degree at Pikeville College School of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed residency training at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. He can be reached at **541-812-5060**.

ion in work setting, arrangements



One way Samaritan invests in employees is through the Workforce Pathways Program, which offers on-the-job training opportunities, including a pathway for non-clinical employees to transition into clinical roles.

“We believe in lifelong learning and supporting continual personal and professional development,” said Roxanne Shaw, director of learning & development. “Workforce Pathways provides paid training and career advancement opportunities. For example, an employee in a non-clinical role who has an interest in patient care can be trained and certified as a

certified nursing assistant through our CNA Pathway Program or as medical assistant by participating in our Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program.”

In addition to supporting employees with learning and career opportunities, Samaritan has created groups to provide social support, mentoring, networking and community participation, and has worked to promote cultural awareness and employee engagement.

Samaritan employee resource groups launched earlier this year to advance equity and inclusion within the organization and to foster practices of respect and appreciation for multiple cultures, experiences, interests and perspectives.

The groups — Pride Alliance, Employees of Color, Veterans and DiverseAbility Alliance — work collectively to create informal spaces for employees with shared identities or common interests to gather and build community.

For more information about working at Samaritan, visit samhealth.org/Careers.



Michael Saltzman, MD, has joined Samaritan Urology – Albany. He earned a bachelor’s degree at College of William & Mary and a medical degree at Eastern Virginia School of Medicine. He completed residency training and an internship at New York University Medical School. He can be reached at **541-812-5800**.



Eva McCarthy, DO, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine Residency Clinic. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Oregon State University, a medical degree at Des Moines University - Osteopathic Medical Center and completed residency training at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. She can be reached at **541-768-5142**.

Need help finding a health care provider?

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

Samaritan creates plan to help substance users during disaster

When COVID-19 hit Oregon in early 2020, many services began shutting down. An unintended consequence of stay-at-home directives was an alarming increase of drug overdoses. Later in 2020, wildfires forced thousands of local residents to evacuate while homeless people were left watching and uncertain what to do.

“We realized then that we had no regional plan to help homeless and low-income people who struggle with substance use disorder during emergencies,” said Joanna Kubes, Community Health Improvement Program specialist. “Now, thanks to a federal grant, we have a plan.”

Substance use disorder is a disease of dependency on legal or illegal drugs and medication including alcohol. In the best of times, it can be difficult for people to seek treatment, counseling and peer support. Lack of housing, transportation, health insurance and finances are among the barriers, and these barriers are compounded during times of crisis, disaster or pandemic, Kubes said.

The new plan will supplement existing emergency preparedness plans. It will provide a framework of support and coordination for substance use disorder prevention, treatment and recovery services. To create and implement this plan, Samaritan obtained a federal grant on behalf of the Coast to the Cascades Community Wellness Network, a well-established consortium that addresses health issues across Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties.

Along with gathering information from a wide range of service agencies throughout the region, those who wrote the plan sought input from people who have lived experience in recovery.

“We believe this is the first such plan in the nation to address this issue,” Kubes said. “Our plan is specific to our three counties, yet broad enough to be adapted by other agencies throughout the nation. Our hope is that all communities can be prepared to assist our most vulnerable populations so they are not forgotten during times of disaster.”

For more information about the plan, visit ccwn.org.

Starker Forests Inc. donates to Newport treatment and recovery project

Philanthropy and service run as deep as the roots in an Oregon forest for the Starker family of Corvallis.

For generations, family members have held leadership positions in the local hospital’s foundation and auxiliary, and since 1993 the family business, Starker Forests Inc., has donated to Samaritan Foundations. The company’s contributions have helped to support Samaritan’s cancer care, capital projects, hospice services and more.

Starker Forests’ most recent gift was given through Pacific Communities Health District Foundation to help establish Samaritan’s second treatment and recovery center in Newport. In 2018, Starker Forests gave an equal amount to help establish the center in Lebanon. In addition, the company contributed this year toward state-of-the-art mammography technology at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center.

“Access to quality health care close to home is essential to our community’s quality of life,” said Anna Starker May. “Samaritan provides these services to the communities where

we live and work. As a fifth-generation forestry business we are committed to the sustainability of not only the forest we manage but also the communities we operate in. We support Samaritan Foundations to provide our communities with the care they need to thrive.”

Earlier this year, Samaritan Foundations welcomed Starker Forests as a PRIDE Partner at the President’s Leadership Level. PRIDE stands for the Samaritan values of passion, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence.

“Organizations such as Starker Forests and their leaders are not only great friends of our hospitals and Samaritan Foundations, but they are also beacons of hope and healing for patients, caregivers and community members,” said Darrel Kau, executive director of Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation. “We are extremely grateful for the generosity and leadership of our PRIDE Partners again this year.”

Learn how your business can partner with Samaritan at samhealth.org/StrongerTogether.



Treatment center in Newport will help rebuild lives

"I didn't have a plan to die but I didn't have a plan to live either," said Gina Myers of Newport, describing her life before recovery from substance use disorder.

Substance use disorder affects a person's brain and behavior, leading to the inability to control their use of legal or illegal drugs, alcohol or medications.

Myers lost control of her life and custody of four children, but she found her way back to sobriety and to her family through a supportive and healing residential treatment program. She is now a certified drug and alcohol counselor and doula who specializes in helping pregnant women who are incarcerated.

About Samaritan Treatment & Recovery Services in Lincoln County

Giving hope to hundreds of people like Myers is a driving force behind opening the Samaritan Treatment & Recovery Services center in Newport. The center will serve adults with substance use disorder from across Oregon, with priority given to residents of Lincoln County.

"Oregon ranks second in the nation for substance use disorder and 50th for access to treatment programs," said Lesley Ogden, MD, CEO of the two Samaritan hospitals in Lincoln County. "In our county alone, there are close to 900 people

impacted by substance use disorder and our residents travel up to 300 miles for residential treatment. We hope to offer a healing and compassionate place for people to receive help, closer to home."

As a nonprofit health care provider, Samaritan does not turn anyone away for inability to pay or insurance type.

Beginning in early 2024, Samaritan Treatment & Recovery Services will offer a 16-bed residential and outpatient treatment program, including group and individual therapy, medication-assisted treatment and peer-delivered services. The facility will model the successes of Samaritan's treatment facility in Lebanon.

The Pacific Communities Health District purchased the 4,700-square-foot property that will be home to the recovery center, while Samaritan Health Services will operate the program. North Lincoln Hospital Foundation and Pacific Communities Health District Foundation are spearheading the \$6 million campaign to remodel the existing building and add space for critical services.

Visit samhealth.org/SupportSTARSCoast for more information about this project and to learn how you can help.

Pilot project integrates oral health in hospitals

Dental hygienists, who have expanded practice permits allowing them to practice without a dentist present, are improving the lives of patients at Samaritan hospital, one tooth at a time.

Since 2020, a hygienist with Capitol Dental has been working at the Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital alongside doctors, nurses and other clinicians to assess and treat patients, make referrals and provide oral health education.

Recognizing how oral health affects overall wellness, InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization Delivery System Transformation committee funded a hygienist from Capitol Dental to work at the hospital and provide oral health services, education and patient navigation.

With overwhelming positive results, including developing a process to integrate oral health services in hospitals, the pilot stands as a model for others to replicate.

“To our knowledge, the collaboration with Samaritan was the first and is the only one in Oregon to offer dental hygiene services in a hospital setting,” said Linda Mann, director of Capitol Dental. “It would be fantastic to have expanded practice dental hygienists working in every hospital.”

Before, hospital patients did not always receive oral health care, and many went without dental care for years. Now, everyone from new moms in the labor and delivery department, to people receiving treatment for cancer and diabetes to patients intubated with serious conditions are benefiting.

Additionally, when a hygienist is available, they can assist with triaging patients who present with dental issues in the emergency department, providing assessments and referrals for follow-up care.



“Having an expanded practice dental hygienist has been a huge benefit for the hospital and patients,” said Wendie Wunderwald vice president of Patient Care Services at Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital.

The hygienist also has educated hospital staff, who are primarily focused on the medical aspects of care. Alexa Blake is a speech language pathologist with Samaritan and worked alongside the hygienist. Access to dental care can be restrictive in rural communities, due to transportation, finances or difficulty finding a dentist.

“Having a hygienist on-site makes it so convenient,” Blake said.

The collaboration between physical and oral health isn’t a new idea in rural Linn County. The idea began with an arrangement between Capitol Dental and Sweet Home Family Medicine, where an expanded practice dental hygienist has worked alongside clinicians for more than seven years.

Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital CEO Marty Cahill was eager to become the first to integrate oral health in a hospital setting and is pleased to share the results with others. IHN-CCO and Capitol Dental continued funding for the program in Lebanon. And the program has been replicated by Capitol Dental at Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City and by Advantage Dental Care at Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital in Newport. The coastal hospital programs are funded through a federal grant.

“The program is growing in ways that we did not expect,” Cahill said. “It’s been very positive.”

Above: Expanded practice dental hygienist Karen Hall provides oral health services at Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital.

Resources to keep you healthy



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.



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.

Express your gratitude, *thank a health care worker*

It takes every person in a health care organization to provide for the health and well-being of the community.

Nothing feels more affirming than a simple thank you. Share your gratitude and let a Samaritan employee know they are a Shining Star.



Photo: *Shining Star* nominee
Stephanie Marshall Mckuhn, RN, at
Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital.