Hospice volunteers help ease suffering for end-of-life patients

Soulful Sounds

also in this issue

› SPINE SURGERY TARGETS PAIN
› HELP WITH HEART FAILURE
› CANCER SUPPORT
› MIND YOUR MOUTH
Welcome to the spring issue of Health Matters! Augusta Health remains the healthcare system of choice in the Shenandoah Valley because of the care, compassion and concern that fills the halls of this hospital and all of our practice sites. In this edition we highlight many incredible people — patients, providers and volunteers — who make the Augusta Health community the special place that it is.

One such person is Angie Cacciapaglia, a hospice volunteer. As you’ll read in the story on page 14, Angie plays guitar and sings to patients who are at the end of life. Through her gift of music, she brings solace, tranquility and joy to her listeners. Augusta Health is always looking for compassionate and committed hospice volunteers who help to enrich the incredible care at Augusta Health.

Speaking of top-flight providers, Donna Berdeaux and Megan Howell (page 12) guide patients through every step of the complex and emotionally difficult world of cancer care. As a testament to Augusta Health’s cancer services, patient Paul Klein, who underwent cancer treatment, looks back positively on the care he received (page 10) at Augusta Health.

Heart services also win applause from patients. Gloria Moles (page 22) can’t say enough about how she was treated after she experienced a cardiac arrest. It happened during a Christmas parade. People rallied to her side, including Augusta Health’s electrophysiologist Glenn Brammer, MD. And Thomas Ratcliffe is pleased with the vein procedure he underwent with interventional cardiologist Kenneth Sternberg, DO, FACC (page 24).

Fortunately, thanks to the services available at Augusta Health, many patients can continue to stay well from the comfort of their own homes. The new Heart Failure Clinic follows patients while at home who were previously treated in the hospital for heart failure (page 18). Patient Diana Amick (page 20) feels secure in knowing that people from Augusta Health are looking out for her.

Talented staff are the heart and soul of Augusta Health. Given our emphasis on people, it’s not a surprise that our Take Note profile is Jesse Rohrer, whose favorite part of his job as a radiation therapist is caring for his patients (page 31).

Augusta Health wants to be the place you look to get well and stay well. Don’t hesitate to call our centralized call service, (833) AHC-HLTH, or (833) 242-4584, to make an appointment today.

Have a happy spring!

Mary N. Mannix, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer
Augusta Health
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spring harvest
AMI FARM AT AUGUSTA HEALTH GETS A JUMP ON THE SEASON’S CROPS

While spring begins to flourish, the team at the Allegheny Mountain Institute (AMI) Farm already has planted seedlings in preparation for an early crop of vegetables destined for the AMI Farm at Augusta Health.

“We’ve started kohlrabi, spinach, onions and kale seedlings indoors,” says AMI Farm executive director Sue Erhardt, “and we will move these to the high-tunnel greenhouse for them to mature.”

The spring vegetables will be the first of many deliveries to the hospital, which last year received 300–400 pounds of food in each delivery. This year, the AMI Farm at Augusta Health is shooting for at least 8,000 pounds of produce in total, but it is hoping it can meet or beat last year’s grand total of 15,000 pounds.

The farm is a vital part of Augusta Health’s program to help the community learn about fresh, nutritious vegetables and how to prepare them in balanced — and tasty — dishes. “We want people to look at the ways different foods and nutrients help bodies over the short and long term,” Erhardt says.

Planning and Planting Your Garden, and later there will be classes on container gardening and square-foot gardening, which allow people to grow good food even in a limited space,” he explains.

Classes last year included one on how to grow food in hay bales. A second class on accessible gardening helped people who had stopped gardening because of pain or mobility issues. Thanks to the class, they could enjoy the physical and mental benefits of gardening once again.

To learn more about the AMI Farm at Augusta Health and classes, visit augustahealth.com/farm and alleghenymountaininstitute.org.

A WINNING COMBINATION
AUGUSTA HEALTH AGAIN NAMED A 50 BEST HOSPITAL

For the fifth year in a row, Healthgrades, an independent company that provides comprehensive information on doctors and hospitals, has named Augusta Health one of “America’s 50 Best Hospitals.” This honor puts Augusta Health in the top 1 percent of hospitals in the nation for clinical excellence.

“Those hospitals that have superior performance across multiple specialty lines and areas become eligible for our America’s 250 Best Hospitals,” explains Katharine Mongoven, director of Quality Solutions for Healthgrades. “When a hospital sustains this level of excellence in care year over year, it enters the notable group of America’s 50 Best Hospitals. This group has achieved the America’s 250 Best Hospitals for six years in order to receive the America’s 50 Best Hospitals Award. Augusta Health has been among America’s 250 Best Hospitals for 11 years in a row (2009–2019).”

To determine America’s 50 Best Hospitals, Healthgrades analyzes the clinical outcomes of nearly 4,500
Increasingly, people are taking control over their individual healthcare. Recognizing this, Augusta Health offers a 24/7 online portal so they can access their health information at any time of day. Whether it’s to request an appointment, pay a bill or even communicate directly with a provider, MyAugusta Chart can connect patients directly to Augusta Health hospitals, practices and providers.

“The portal lets patients be more involved and more easily see what’s going on with their care,” says Morgan Smith, clinical analyst for Information Systems at Augusta Health. “Even the simple ability to see scheduled appointments is extremely helpful and having other information at their fingertips — such as instructions or care summaries — can bring comfort to situations where people feel like they don’t have any control.”

MyAugusta Chart offers two portals: one for patients of the hospital and one for patients of Augusta Medical Group practices.

GETTING STARTED
The MyAugusta Chart online portal is easy to use and comparable to many other web-based interfaces people regularly use to manage things like their banking or email. The service is free, and patients can enroll online by visiting augustahealth.com/chart, or Augusta Health staff can help them enroll during a visit.

Once a user is logged in, the Augusta Medical Group portal gives them a number of options to get more engaged with their healthcare. They can:

- Request and view appointments
- Request prescription refills
- Access test results and health information
- Pay or view bills
- Communicate privately with an AMG Provider
- Complete and print health forms

INCREASED ACCESS
Being able to request and view upcoming appointments has been one of the most useful tools for patients, Smith says. She also points to the lab results and imaging reports as ways for patients to learn more about their healthcare situations.

“Messaging is one of the most used functions,” says Smith. “Patients can message nurses and doctors and have a conversation at a time that is convenient for them.”

Offering more convenience and more control for patients is the goal of MyAugusta Chart. And new functionality is always being considered. For example, recently the system was updated to allow patients at some clinics to cancel and reschedule appointments within the portal.
FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES

BREAST CANCER SCREENING RECOMMENDED FOR WOMEN 40 AND OLDER

There are various breast cancer screening recommendations. It can be difficult to know what recommendations to follow, especially when taking into account age, health, lifestyle and other factors. For this reason, Augusta Health has adopted the National Comprehensive Cancer Network’s (NCCN) guidelines for breast cancer screening, which has a simple message: all women age 40 and over should receive a mammogram annually.

“There are all of these recommendations out there, all of this noise,” making it difficult for women to remember when they should schedule their mammograms, says Todd Goodnight, MD, mammogram radiologist at Augusta Health. This confusion often results in women missing their screenings altogether, which then becomes missed opportunities to catch breast cancer early.

“When I first [started working at Augusta Health], I noticed there were a lot of women not getting their screening mammograms as often and as regularly as they could, and I noticed a lot of cancers,” says Dr. Goodnight. “It got me thinking that, if we make uniform our message for the community to ‘annual screenings at age 40 and above,’ then we can get everyone on the same page and start attacking this problem.”

Since the NCCN is a not-for-profit alliance of 28 leading cancer centers devoted to patient care, research and education, patients at Augusta Health can be assured that the cancer screening guidelines are objective and evidence-based. Augusta Health also offers tomosynthesis, or 3D mammography, which is an advanced form of mammography and helps catch cancer earlier. (See “3D Mammography” below.)

While it’s important to make healthy decisions to help reduce your risk for cancer — including exercising regularly, eating a healthy diet and not smoking — cancer does not discriminate, says Dr. Goodnight, which is why it’s also important to get screened. Talk to your primary care physician about your breast cancer risks or concerns and, if you’re a woman over 40, make an appointment to get screened for breast cancer today.

3D mammography

Augusta Health offers tomosynthesis, also known as 3D mammography, for patients coming in for breast cancer screenings. 3D mammography is considered a more advanced form of mammography, because it captures multiple layers of the breast as thin layers and then puts them together in a 3D image. Tomosynthesis is preferred by physicians and radiologists because they can see breast tissue and abnormalities in more detail, even in patients with dense breasts. This allows them to catch cancer early, and also reduces false positives and callbacks, which can cause patients unnecessary worry.
**AUGUSTA HEALTH MAKES IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING COMMUNITY**

In August 2014, Rita Wertman went to the Augusta Health Emergency Department for chest pain. Rita is deaf, and her daughter, Ronna Wertman, had to interpret for her for 17 hours.

The experience was eye-opening for both Ronna and Rita. “As a deaf patient, I have struggled without effective communication access to medical care for years and years,” says Rita, who works part-time at Kohl’s and lives in Grottoes, Virginia. “I really wanted to be more independent, with none of my children or members of my family having to interpret or make important decisions for me.”

Change needed to happen. With the help and input from various community organizations, such as Virginia Organizing, Augusta Health has made significant improvements for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. “From our direct experiences and suggestions, we worked together to make some pretty tremendous improvements,” says Ronna, a chapter lead of Virginia Organizing.

**TOP-NOTCH INTERPRETATION SERVICES**

One of the first steps community organizations recommended was getting increased access to qualified on-site interpreters. “[Augusta Health] listened and searched around for local vendors,” Ronna says. “Through our feedback, they have gone with a truly high-quality local agency to get access that meets this need. So far, the results have been phenomenal.”

Isaac Izzillo, director of Patient Experience at Augusta Health, says the on-site interpretation vendor is on call 24/7 and typically arrives in under an hour.

Technology has also improved — beyond tablets and laptops that provide video interpretation in times of emergent need. “We developed a new technology: a mobile cart that is larger than an iPad and is easier for patients to view; it has a much larger screen,” Izzillo says. “It’s new to healthcare; I haven’t seen anything like it. There’s an articulating arm, and it’s really flexible.”

**SENSITIVITY TRAINING**

Another key change has been Augusta Health’s initiative to incorporate disability sensitivity and awareness training into orientation, and this is now done annually for all staff members and volunteers. “This is something that came out of a lot of our conversations with people in the community just not feeling heard or understood,” Ronna says.

Rita says she has been impressed by Augusta Health’s commitment to making improvements for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. “For the past four years, Isaac [Izzillo] and Beth Chadwell have been amazing,” she says. “They have done an amazing job in continuing to help serve and better meet the needs of the deaf patients in the community.”

**Talking it out**

Augusta Health holds community meetings four times this year as part of its initiative to improve services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. At these meetings, Augusta Health’s Isaac Izzillo, director of Patient Experience; Beth Chadwell, director of Risk Management; Lorrie Dean, Patient Relations/Risk Management coordinator; Karen Clark, vice president of Operations; Crystal Farmer, vice president and chief nursing officer; and key community stakeholders discuss the services available at Augusta Health and areas that still need improvement.

“It’s a core group of individuals within our community who have provided valuable insight into how to maximize services here at Augusta Health,” Izzillo says.
screening scare

Colorectal cancer, unfortunately, is common and will affect about 4 percent of American women and about 4.5 percent of American men at some point in their lifetimes. However, the death rate from this cancer has fallen over the past few decades, likely due to increasing awareness and screenings. The colon cancer screening is the only screening test in the United States that cannot only detect colon cancer early, but also can prevent it altogether. During a colonoscopy, precancerous lesions called polyps can be removed before they can ever turn into cancer.

Because of its effectiveness, the American Cancer Society recommends adults with average risk for colorectal cancer begin screenings at age 45. For many people, this can cause some anxiety because of the uncomfortable preparation required for one of the commonly recommended tests: a colonoscopy. I like to remind my patients that the preparation for a colonoscopy is much more pleasant than the surgery, recovery, radiation, chemotherapy and high risk for death that can result if colon cancer is diagnosed because of delayed screening.

Preparing for a colonoscopy does require patients to fast for a day before the procedure, consuming only clear liquids, as well as to drink a preparation that cleanses the bowels. The Colon Clinic at Augusta Health uses a GoLYTLEY® preparation drink, divided between the night before and morning of the procedure, to cleanse the bowels. There is no eating or drinking three hours before the procedure.

Some colorectal cancer screening processes don’t require the same sort of preparation as a colonoscopy. Other tests, including the Cologard stool DNA test, require little to no preparation. It is important to remember, however, that other colon cancer screening tests (aside from colonoscopy) are used to detect cancer but are not optimal in preventing colon cancer.
Last September, Audrey Hanger began experiencing pain in her right leg. Until she saw Clark B. Bernard, MD, a spine surgeon at Augusta Health, she didn’t realize the leg pain was being caused by her upper spine.

In addition to leg pain, Hanger had a host of other symptoms, including poor balance, difficulty walking, numbness in her legs, and poor coordination and dexterity in her hands. All of her symptoms were being caused by arthritis in her neck, Dr. Bernard says.

“She had a lot of arthritis in her neck and it was physically pinching or causing a narrowing or constricting of her spinal cord,” Dr. Bernard says. “She was having so much pinch in her spinal cord that she actually had swelling in her spinal cord.”

Dr. Bernard says it was very likely Hanger would continue having trouble with numbness, balance and coordination — and was even at risk of going paralyzed from the neck down — if she didn’t have surgery.

“When I first went to the doctor, he said I would need surgery, and I said no,” Hanger says. “I said, ‘I’m too old to have surgery. I’m 77. And he said, ‘Let’s stop this right here. We just did this on an 80-something-year-old lady, and she was dancing within two weeks. That stopped me, because that’s something I had to give up also.’”

At 77, Hanger was incredibly active and independent. Now retired, she worked as a buyer at Leggett (now Belk) in Waynesboro, Virginia, for 18 years. She lives alone in Fishersville and takes care of her own home. Until recently, she even mowed an acre and a half of grass.

“She’s super spunky,” Dr. Bernard says. “She’s just a delight. She’s a go-getter. She’s young-spirited and really just a dynamic person.”

Hanger didn’t want to risk jeopardizing her mobility, so she decided to go through with surgery on Dec. 31, 2018.

“The procedure itself was really a game changer for her,” Dr. Bernard says. “It really helped her symptoms and I think she’s been very pleased with her results.”

Hanger agrees, saying that although she’s still in the recovery process, she’s been happy with her progress thus far. “I hope the rest of the journey is as pleasing as the first part has been,” she says.
AUGUSTA HEALTH CANCER PATIENT APPRECIATES THE HOSPITAL’S FAMILY-ORIENTED APPROACH TO CARE

> Writer Paul Klein, with his wife, Diane, on opposite page, has positive feelings about his cancer treatments.
Paul Klein certainly doesn’t miss his sessions of chemotherapy and radiation, but as funny as it sounds, he looks back fondly on those treatments.

“What I remember most is everyone crowded into a room with me, from my physician and nurses to my family and friends, all having a great time,” he says. “We were all laughing and enjoying each other’s company, and I think that helped me so much. I was with people who cared about me.”

Klein’s journey to that surprisingly joyful experience began in July 2018, when he first noticed some difficulty swallowing. The 83-year-old Head Waters resident chalked it up to being a “child of the Depression,” which fostered a lifelong habit of eating as much as possible, as quickly as he could.

But even when he consciously slowed down on the chewing, the problem persisted. That’s when he came to Augusta Health and saw a gastroenterologist. An endoscopy procedure revealed a tumor that, after biopsy, turned out to be malignant.

CANCER DIAGNOSIS
Klein had esophageal cancer, a type that is complex to remove surgically so instead is often treated with chemotherapy and radiation. In his first meeting with oncology, he learned that many people his age don’t get any treatment at all, since they may have underlying medical conditions or may be in poor health, which would make the treatments too taxing for a weakened immune system.

But Klein was in such good physical condition the clinicians decided to go ahead with the treatment. “I think there’s some irony there,” he jokes. “I was lucky enough to be a very healthy cancer patient.”

His treatment plan included five sessions of chemo, then nearly six weeks of radiation on a daily basis, with his last dose given on Dec. 31. It was quite a way to ring in the New Year, he says.

When initially deciding on Augusta Health, location wasn’t the biggest factor for Klein, since he’s an hour from the hospital’s Cancer Center but only an hour and a half from the University of Virginia.

What made him choose Augusta Health was what he saw in the room during those treatment days — everyone coming together for him, caring about his health and forming a kind of “Team Paul” group that made him feel comforted and confident.

Klein isn’t the only one who feels that way, according to Augusta Health radiation oncologist David Morgan, MD. “It may be hard to believe, but after seeing everyone in our department on a daily basis for many weeks, many patients tell us they will miss us — but not the treatments!” Dr. Morgan says.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH
The cancer care team prides itself on a collaborative approach to treatment, with a team of professionals who treat patients like one of their own family members, Dr. Morgan says.

For Klein, he’s awaiting results from a scan that will let him know if he’s cancer-free, but already he’s gotten back to the life he loves — writing books, running a hobby farm with his wife and playing with his great-grandchildren. If he does end up having to come back, it will be with much less trepidation than he had at the start of his cancer journey.

“It sounds funny, but I had a great time at the Cancer Center,” Klein says. “Of course, I’d rather that I didn’t have to have the experience, but I’m glad I had it at Augusta Health because I felt that every single person, from my oncologist and radiologist to the front-desk staff, felt happy to see me. They knew who I was, they treated me like a friend. And when it comes to facing something as scary as cancer, you want your friends there.”

Visit augustahealth.com/cancer-center or call (540) 332-5960 to find out more about Augusta Health’s cancer services.
At Augusta Health, cancer navigators, nurses who can help patients maneuver the intricacies of their cancer diagnosis and treatment, pair up with breast, colorectal, head and neck, and lung cancer patients. Cancer navigators are typically registered nurses who have extensive experience in oncology, chemotherapy and radiation.

Megan Howell is a cancer navigator at Augusta Health who works with lung, colorectal and head and neck cancer patients, and Donna Berdeaux is a cancer navigator at Augusta Health who works with breast cancer patients. Howell and Berdeaux discuss who cancer navigators are and what they do.

WHAT IS A CANCER NAVIGATOR?

Berdeaux: Cancer navigators guide patients through their journey when they’re diagnosed with cancer. We’re their personal advocate, resource provider and educator. We collaborate with other healthcare providers to coordinate their cancer care. When patients are told they have cancer, all of a sudden their world crumbles. We zoom in, pick them up and say, “We’re going to walk with you through this journey.”

We bridge a lot of the gaps so people really understand what they’re facing. We help them make their appointments, we go to their appointments with them, we take notes, and we’re there with them on the morning of surgery.

HOW DO PATIENTS BENEFIT FROM THE SERVICES OF A CANCER NAVIGATOR?

Howell: We advocate for the patient. A lot of times my patients will confide in me things that they want or don’t want, and then I can advocate for them. We also provide emotional support. I give every single patient my phone number and I say call me at any time if you have any questions or need to talk.

When you first get diagnosed with cancer, you’re so distraught. Just having someone there who will go to the appointments and listen to what the doctor is telling you is great. Because I always tell patients that later on, you’re going to get home and think, What did the doctor say about this? Or I wish I would’ve asked this question. And that’s where they can call me. I’m a really good resource to answer those questions. And if I don’t know the answer, I’ll find it for them.

When my head and neck [cancer] patients get diagnosed, they automatically get multiple appointments made. It can be challenging to keep up with those. A lot of the time, I’ll make calendars for patients and highlight where they need to be on what day at what time.
HOW DID AUGUSTA HEALTH DETERMINE WHICH CANCER PATIENTS WOULD BE PAIRED WITH CANCER NAVIGATORS?  
Howell: Breast and lung are the two most common cancers that we see here at Augusta Health, and colorectal and head and neck cancer patients just need a lot of care and support. But if there’s a patient who needs navigation who isn’t in our disease specialty, we’ll see them and we’ll help them.

DO MOST CANCER CENTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE CANCER NAVIGATORS?  
Berdeaux: It’s a new trend in hospitals. Most hospitals are getting cancer navigators, but you don’t see them as much yet. We’ve been really fortunate here at Augusta Health. They’ve allowed us to have two cancer navigators when some hospitals don’t even have one.

WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING ABOUT YOUR JOB?  
Berdeaux: I’m a cancer survivor myself, so I know what it’s like to be told you have cancer. I didn’t have a navigator — this was 13 years ago — but I had good support. Your world does fall apart and you don’t know how you’re going to make it through. I see the value of what us navigators can do to help.  
I find that this is a very rewarding job because when I got cancer, I was angry. I thought, Why me? But now that I’ve been helping patients through their journeys, I understand this is what I was meant to do. HM

As part of its cancer services, patients can receive donated bags and blankets. Augusta Health also has a boutique that offers wigs, hats and scarves to patients at no charge.

➢ To learn more about Augusta Health cancer navigators, visit augustahealth.com/cancer-center or call (540) 332-5960.
In 2010, Angie Cacciapaglia, 59, read in the newspaper that hospice volunteers were needed at Augusta Health. Her husband had died four years earlier, and she was familiar with the struggle families often face when a loved one is near the end of his or her life.

Cacciapaglia, who lives in Waynesboro, Virginia, sold office supplies for 32 years but always played guitar as a hobby. She thought to herself, *Maybe I could play music for people.*

“What inspired me is that I just love loving others — people going through sad times or people whose parents or loved ones have Alzheimer’s,” she says. “I could see how music just brings them back and how music soothes the soul.”
Learn more about becoming a hospice volunteer at Augusta Health or talk about sharing your special skill or talent. Contact Lori Showalter at lshowalter@augustahealth.com or (540) 332-4904.

A Fit for Everyone
Hospice volunteers can do everything from sew quilts to answer phone calls. Below, you’ll find the many different types of hospice volunteer roles available at Augusta Health.

- **Facility volunteers**: Provide companionship to people in long-term care facilities.
- **Veteran volunteers**: Perform service recognitions for veteran patients and offer support.
- **Patient care volunteers**: Visit a patient at home so the caregiver can get out of the house for a short stretch of time, offer meal delivery or light housekeeping duties to patients, or offer emotional support and respite to patients and families during the active dying process.
- **Complementary service volunteers**: Offer support and skill in the following ways: musical support, massage therapy, healing touch, Reiki, hairdressing, art interventions, pet visitation and life review.
- **Bereavement program volunteers**: Make phone calls to bereaved caregivers and deliver roses to survivors on the one-year anniversary of the patient’s death.
- **Administrative volunteers**: Assist with general office support tasks such as data entry, mailings and filing.
- **Shenandoah House volunteers**: Answer phones and doors, greet guests and family members of patients, assist with ordering and serving meals to patients, provide companionship to patients, and assist staff with various duties.
- **Special project volunteers**: Provide behind-the-scenes support by sewing, quilting or knitting for various programs; assist with marketing efforts and fundraisers; or bake for events.

SPECIAL CONNECTION
Now retired, Cacciapaglia plays guitar at Augusta Health’s hospice facility, the Shenandoah House, once a month. She also visits four hospice patients at their homes each week. She formed a special connection with one of these patients, Frank Pullin, who died in March.

“His story was wonderful,” Cacciapaglia says. “He was a Navy veteran, and I’m a mom of two Army sons. And hearing his old stories — I just loved it.”

Cacciapaglia always asks patients what kind of music they like. If she doesn’t know it, she’ll learn it. Pullin, 85, who had dementia, was partial to old country and bluegrass music.

“He really enjoyed the old songs,” says Ruth Pullin, Frank’s wife. “On a recent visit, she had a bunch of Patsy Cline songs. He looked forward to her visiting. He came out to the living room and he didn’t stay there for very long, but he stayed on the couch and listened to her.”

DEEP SENSE OF FULFILLMENT
According to Lori Showalter, volunteer coordinator at Augusta Health Hospice of the Shenandoah, many of the hospice volunteers come to Augusta Health because they’ve had a personal experience with hospice and want to give back. Other volunteers are retired healthcare workers who want to be involved in the community again. And some volunteers are people who simply want to do a good deed.

Showalter says there is a fit for anyone and everyone interested in volunteering with hospice. Volunteers include everyone from hairdressers and massage therapists to gardeners and quilters.

“I love these volunteers,” Showalter says. “I can’t say enough about them. I think they are just extremely generous people to be willing to give of themselves this way for no money in return. They don’t get a paycheck because they get a direct deposit to their heart.”

> Angie Cacciapaglia plays guitar for hospice patients, including Frank Pullin, who passed away in March.
A new hand-held ultrasound device — which is heralded to be the “stethoscope of tomorrow” — is in use now at the newly expanded Augusta Health Emergency Department (ED), thanks to a grant from the Augusta Health Foundation.

Each year, the Foundation Board and its Grants Committee fund projects at Augusta Health using unrestricted gifts from the previous year. In 2018, the Foundation pumped more than $54,000 into innovative projects at Augusta Health. Successful projects must have a positive impact on healthcare delivery in the community by:

> Improving the patient care experience;
> Improving the quality of care provided; and/or
> Decreasing the cost of care.

The new ultrasound device is helping physicians diagnose certain conditions quickly and without radiation.

“We believe that, in time, the hand-held ultrasound device will become the new stethoscope for physicians,” says Adam Rochman, MD, medical director of Augusta Health’s ED. “It is fairly easy to use and provides us with high-quality images without radiation exposure to patients. This allows for a more rapid diagnosis.”

Dr. Rochman expects the most common use for the device will be to diagnose trauma patients at the bedside for life-threatening bleeding. This new technology will also be used to evaluate kidney stones, deep vein thrombosis, pregnancy and gallbladder inflammation (cholecystitis). It will also allow for echocardiograms of the heart.

“We are so fortunate to have the Foundation to support this type of initiative,” Dr. Rochman says. “This is the second year that the Emergency Department staff has been the recipient of a grant, and it has made such an impact on our patients.”
2018 Foundation Grants

In 2017, the Augusta Health Foundation received $50,000 in unrestricted gifts and used them to award seven grants to support new and expanded programs in 2018 in the following patient care services:

• The Emergency Department purchased two hand-held ultrasound devices to care for patients at the bedside.
• Nursing and Staff Education were able to provide training to nearly 200 employees for the management of aggressive behavior (or “code green”). More than 127 employees were certified or recertified and 65 participated in the annual refresher course.
• The Wound Clinic nurses received special training for the care and treatment of pre- and post-operative patients with ostomies.
• Occupational Health purchased state-of-the-art CPR training equipment in order to provide CPR/AED and Basic Life Support training to local employers.
• Outpatient Diabetes Education and the Inpatient Diabetes Program received blood glucose testing supplies for uninsured and low-income patients.
• Outpatient Behavioral Health held a special presentation for local clinicians on the topic of suicide risk assessments.

In addition to these internal grants to specific Augusta Health departments, the Foundation provided more than $1 million in support for new patient care initiatives, facility expansions, and training and technology to enhance patient services.

“We are so fortunate to have the Foundation to support this type of initiative.”
—Adam Rochman, MD

To give to the Augusta Health Foundation, visit augustahealth.com/foundation, call (540) 332-5174 or email ahfoundation@augustahealth.com.
special section: heart failure

HEART
Heart failure is a scary-sounding condition. It implies that your heart no longer works and nothing can be done. It’s failed.

Not exactly. Heart failure actually is a progressive condition that occurs when the heart can’t “keep up” with the body’s need for blood and oxygen. Eventually, as heart failure worsens, the person may experience symptoms like fatigue, shortness of breath, or a swelling or a racing heartbeat that sends them to the doctor’s office or hospital. While it is a serious condition, and there is no cure, much can be done to manage heart failure so those with the diagnosis can live a full and happy life. Two of the key components of care — monitoring symptoms and support for the patient — are now available through Augusta Health’s Heart Failure Clinic.

The Heart Failure Clinic, staffed by Tami Collins, RN, MSN, AGACNP-BC, CHF-N, and Emily Back, RN-BSN, BS, opened in July and already has grown to more than 120 patient visits each month. Their patients range in age from less than 40 years old to more than 90 years old. Some have chronic heart failure and others are in acute heart failure. They’ve been referred after being diagnosed in the hospital, or by their family physician or cardiologist. But once referred to the Heart Failure Clinic, they become part of the family.

“Our first visit with a patient is 60 minutes long,” says Collins, “and then we follow them weekly for four weeks, with a 30-minute appointment each time. We may manage their medications, help them reduce their fluid retention, order labs or perhaps an echocardiogram, whatever is needed to evaluate their condition. We also do a lot of education and answer all their questions so they understand what symptoms they should be aware of and what they should be monitoring.”

“Patients learn to monitor their symptoms during the week between visits, and a lot can happen during that week.” — Emily Back, RN-BSN, BS

After four weeks of working closely together, the patients form a tight relationship with Collins and Back. “After the four-week session in the clinic, the next step is up to the patients. Some stay with us a bit longer, but the weekly visits are stretched out to two or four weeks. Others choose to be connected to a primary care provider or be followed by the cardiologist,” says Collins.

“But we are always available by phone,” adds Back.

The close relationship established with the patients in their clinic is a big key to its success. A second relationship — with the patients’ other healthcare providers such as primary care physicians, cardiologists, endocrinologists and palliative care physicians — is the other. Collins says: “We really establish trust with our patients, and they know they can call us with any concerns they have. When they call, we work together to do whatever is needed to manage their symptoms and work to keep them out of the hospital.”

If you’d like more information about the Heart Failure Clinic, please contact Tami Collins or Emily Back at (540) 245-7080.
O
n July 30, breathing prob-
lems sent Diana Amick, a
retired nurse, to the Emer-
gency Department. She was
connected with cardiologist Christopher
Bunn, DO, received testing and had a
stent placed.
“I think I met Dr. Bunn on his first day
of work at Augusta Health; I may have
been his first patient in the hospital,”
Amick says. “I kept him busy.”

Amick was also diagnosed with heart failure, and before
she left the hospital, she was connected to Tami Collins and
Emily Back of Augusta Health’s Heart Failure Clinic, and it was
the start of a successful relationship.

Her first appointment was less than a week after Amick’s
discharge from the hospital. They met every week for four
weeks, then every other week. Later the schedule moved to
once every three weeks, and currently Amick has monthly
appointments with the Heart Failure Clinic.

“Tami and Emily are fantastic,” says Amick. “They are very
thorough and check everything — blood pressure, weight and
Diana Amick appreciates the guidelines Tami Collins and Emily Back have provided to help her learn to manage her symptoms by herself.

Fluids. We discuss medications and any adjustments that are needed. I have many complications and many doctors, and Tami and Emily connect and keep in touch with them. They are also very patient with me and my brother [who helps take care of me]. Working with them is a very positive experience.”

Amick appreciates the guidelines Collins and Back have provided to help her learn to manage her symptoms by herself. For example, she’s learning to track her weight, what she eats and how much walking she’s done. She knows that she may gain a little bit of weight, but if she gains more than two pounds in one day, she should give Tami or Emily a call to discuss what’s going on and if she needs to be seen. “The guidelines are simple: If this happens, you need to do this,” explains Amick. “That makes it easy. You just need to follow the guidelines.”

The recovery process has not been without challenges. In addition to the Heart Failure Clinic, Amick participates in cardiac rehab three times each week and has appointments with various providers. A calendar to keep everything straight helps with that. The more difficult challenges have to do with managing her weight. “Going out to eat is a definite challenge,” she adds.

But the benefits have more than compensated for the challenges. She appreciates the reassurance of having someone to touch base with and discuss her symptoms, whether in person or on the phone. The guidelines and the monitoring have helped her learn to be more self-sufficient and improve her health. “You do repeat steps each day, but it’s a confirmation of how well you’re doing,” Amick says. “I’m proud that I’m taking the effort to get out and get better and improve my health. And I think it’s working. Many heart failure patients are back in the hospital within 30 days. I’ve been out for more than five months.”  

HM
For Gloria Moles, everything changed in a moment.

One minute, the 62-year-old Waynesboro resident was clogging with her granddaughter and their dance group in a Christmas parade, and the next minute, she was lying on the ground, looking up at firefighters, paramedics and police officers. She'd been shocked back to life after a cardiac arrest, one of the few to survive such a significant event.

“I found out later that only 5 percent of people who have this kind of event outside the hospital live through it, and of those, half have brain damage,” she says. “God was with me that day. He really made sure I was in the right place and at the right time for this to happen.”

That right place was directly across from a fire station, where they had an AED unit, and one of the other cloggers knew CPR, which kept Moles’ heart going for those crucial first minutes.

Before her cardiac event, Moles never had any heart trouble. She felt fine and healthy, she says, and started the parade feeling as happy and energetic as always. At Augusta Health, she learned that one of her arteries was totally blocked but that her heart had started its own bypass in order to get back to a normal rhythm. Rather than trying to unblock the artery, Augusta Health cardiologist Glenn Brammer, MD, recommended a defibrillator, which Moles says makes her feel confident that her heart can stay on track.

What struck her most — beyond the way that life can change so quickly — was the way that Dr. Brammer pulled up a chair and sat down to talk about her options, she says. “It was a simple gesture, but it really represents what this place is about,” says Moles, who actually works at Augusta Health in the clinical engineering department. “He acted like he had all the time in the world, that I was his only priority. We had such a deep conversation, and it was filled with kindness and compassion. And that’s what everyone I’ve encountered through this has shown. It’s such a gift.”

The way that everyone came together to be part of Moles’ recovery aligns with the mission of Augusta Health, adds Dr. Brammer. “We work here, but we also live here. We have friends and family here. We’re a true community. And that comes through in the care we give,” he says.

Moles believes that her cardiac arrest can have a ripple effect across the area as well. Her entire clogging group, including their family members, are learning CPR from the same paramedic who helped Moles on the parade route.

“This whole experience taught me how quickly everything can happen. It’s been humbling,” she says. “I’m so thankful for a community that stepped up to help me.”

Find out if you are at risk for heart disease. Answer seven questions at augustahealth.com/heart.
Gloria Moles was clogging with her granddaughter, Evelyn Moles, below, when she suffered a cardiac arrest. She is grateful for all the helping hands that day.
In April 2018, Thomas Ratcliffe, 52, got diagnosed with heart failure. He visited Kenneth Sternberg, DO, FACC, an interventional cardiologist at the Augusta Health Heart and Vascular Center, who took one look at Ratcliffe’s legs and knew something was wrong.

Ratcliffe, an ALS (Advanced Life Support) provider who has been at Augusta Health for 15 years, says he didn’t have significant pain. But he did have red marks up and down his legs, as well as edema (swelling of the legs), hyperpigmentation in both of his legs and bulging varicose veins up to his thighs. Some of his varicose veins were so big they were bleeding.

Dr. Sternberg did a venous reflux study to examine Ratcliffe’s blood flow. It showed Ratcliffe had severe venous reflux in three of the veins in his legs. This means that instead of blood flowing upwardly to Ratcliffe’s heart, it would pool in his legs, causing his symptoms.

The solution for venous reflux disease is venous ablation, a procedure that corrects this problem by closing off the damaged vein so blood can instead flow through a healthy vein. Dr. Sternberg, who treats people ranging in age from 20 to 80 with the procedure, says it is solely done for symptom relief, not for cosmetic reasons.

Over the past year, Ratcliffe, who lives in Waynesboro, had all three veins closed — one in July, one in October and one in December. Venous ablation is a simple and quick procedure. “Each one was about an hour or an hour and 15 minutes,” Ratcliffe says, adding that the process was fairly pain-free, aside from a needle stick. “You really don’t feel anything.”

The recovery time from venous ablation is minimal. In fact, Ratcliffe was back to work the day after his most recent procedure.

“With the procedure, you want people up and walking,” Dr. Sternberg says. “There can be zero time off from work.”

Ratcliffe says he saw symptom relief almost immediately. “I have no leg pain and I don’t have the leakiness of the legs; everything seems to be just great. If you’re having leg problems, the best thing you can do is to go to Dr. Sternberg, let them do an ultrasound and see if that procedure is right for you.”

VenaSeal technology

Thomas Ratcliffe had his veins closed with a heat-based system called radiofrequency (RF) ablation. This procedure is quick, painless and has an easy recovery.

However, a new ablation procedure that uses glue instead of heat to close the veins, VenaSeal, is even faster and easier, and allows patients to have more than one vein done at a time.

“There’s only one needle stick, there’s no heat, it takes 30 minutes, and there are no compression stockings,” says Kenneth Sternberg, DO, FACC, an interventional cardiologist at the Augusta Health Heart and Vascular Center. “When you do the heat ablation, you have to wear very tight compression stockings for a couple of weeks. With the glue, no stockings are necessary.”
some tlc for your teeth

As anyone who’s had a bad toothache knows, oral health issues can have a big effect on your quality of life. They can make eating, talking or even just moving your head around more difficult and painful. While those are all good reasons to stay on top of your oral health and hygiene, oral health issues can also serve as indicators of more serious problems with overall health.

BEYOND THE MOUTH
Researchers studying oral health have found that some diseases that wouldn’t normally be associated with the mouth are connected to poor oral health. One of the most commonly found connections is with cardiovascular disease. Some studies have pointed to periodontitis (or severe gum inflammation) as an indicator of heart disease, while others have found that oral bacteria also is a sign.

The exact reason oral health correlates with heart disease is unknown, but doctors have some pretty good guesses. Oral bacteria makes its way into other parts of your body, and gum inflammation may be a starting point for other vascular damage. Some researchers also point to behaviors such as smoking that affect your heart health and your oral health. Whatever the reason is, it’s clear that a healthy mouth and a healthy heart often go hand in hand.

In addition to heart disease, poor oral health can point to other conditions, including premature or low birth weight in newborns, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, osteoporosis and Alzheimer’s disease. In some cases, such as with diabetes or HIV/AIDS, oral health issues aren’t the cause of the condition, but rather a symptom.

TENDING TO TEETH
Understanding that good oral health affects more than just teeth and gums is a great start, but to stay healthy there are specific actions to take. The good news is they’re not too complicated. Staying on top of oral health involves doing many things that are often already habits.

To keep your mouth in great shape, you should:

- **Brush your teeth twice every day.** Use a toothpaste that contains fluoride. Most toothpastes you find at the store will contain fluoride. If you’re unsure, look for the American Dental Association (ADA) seal; any toothpaste with that seal must have fluoride.

- **Floss daily.** Make sure you floss between every tooth. If you aren’t sure you’re getting into every crevice, ask your dentist or dental hygienist to show you the correct technique.

- **Visit the dentist regularly.** Many people visit the dentist once or twice a year, but there is no one-size-fits-all recommendation for how often you should. Talk with your dentist about what makes the most sense for you.

- **Keep an eye on your diet.** Sugary foods and drinks have a negative effect on your dental health. In particular, try to avoid using mints or gums with sugar.

- **Consider your lifestyle choices.** Smoking or chewing tobacco both will negatively affect your oral health. If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation.

Not only will these behaviors ensure your mouth stays healthy and fresh, but they also will keep the rest of you healthier. And if you have concerns about any of the health issues associated with poor oral health, talk to your doctor or dentist.
Vietnamese Fresh Spring Rolls

**ingredients**
1. cup carrots (cut into long, thin strips)
2. cups bean sprouts
2. cups cucumber (seeded and cut into long, thin strips)
1. cup minced scallions
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
¼ cup chopped fresh mint
8 rice paper wrappers

**directions**
1. Toss first six ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Soak one rice paper wrapper in warm water until soft (1 to 2 minutes). Shake off excess water.
3. Place vegetable filling off-center on rice paper, and fold like an egg roll (tuck in the sides to keep the filling inside).
4. Repeat with remaining vegetable filling and rice paper wrappers.
5. Once you have assembled all of the spring rolls, serve immediately.

*Optional: sliced avocado*

**yields: 8 servings**
(serving size: 1 roll)
- Calories: 70
- Total fat: 1 g
- Saturated fat 0 g
- Cholesterol 0 mg
- Sodium 28 mg
- Total fiber 2 g
- Protein 3 g
- Carbohydrates 16 g
- Potassium 161 mg
- Calcium 25 mg
- Iron 1 mg
GROUP CLASSES AND PROGRAMS

Non-members may purchase a 10-class pass for $100. Classes run on an ongoing basis. Other classes not listed here can be found on our website at augustahealth.com/fitness.

Aquatic Classes
Aquapower: Mondays and Wednesdays, 7:45 a.m.; Mondays and Thursdays, 5 p.m.; Tuesdays, 9 a.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. (Fitness Pool)
Aquaexpress: Fridays, 7:45 a.m.
Deep Water Conditioning: Thursdays, 9 a.m. (Fitness Pool)

Therapeutic/Rehabilitative Aqua
Aqua Lite: Mondays and Fridays, 9 a.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. (Therapy Pool)
Range of Motion (ROM): Mondays and Fridays, 10 a.m. (Therapy Pool)
Information: Visit augustahealth.com/fitness for updated monthly group fitness schedules. Call Jennifer Klemm at (540) 332-5517 or email her at jklemm@augustahealth.com.

Cardio/Body Sculpt
When: Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m.

Chi Kung
Intermediate: Tuesdays, 10:15 a.m.
Advanced: Thursdays, 10:15 a.m.

Core & More
When: Mondays, 9:30 a.m.; Wednesdays, 5:20 p.m.

Cycling Classes
Endurance Ride: Fridays, 5:15 a.m.
Express Ride: Fridays, 8:30 a.m.
Instructor Choice Ride: Mondays, 5:15 a.m.; Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m. (Cycle Studio)
Les Mills RPM: Mondays, 8:30 a.m.; alternating Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. (Cycle Studio)

HIIT Boot Camp
When: Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m.

Krave 30X
When: Mondays, 8:45 a.m.; Tuesdays, 12:15 p.m.; Fridays, 12:15 p.m.

Les Mills Body Combat
When: Mondays, 5:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Thursdays, 4:30 p.m.; alternating Saturdays, 9 a.m.

Les Mills Bodypump
When: Mondays, 4:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, 9 a.m.; Thursdays, 5:30 p.m.; alternating Saturdays, 9 a.m.

Martial Arts
Extra fee; class passes excluded.
Beginner and Intermediate: Mondays and Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
Cost: $55 a month for members, $85 for non-members

Senior Cardio
When: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m.

Senior Strength
When: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.

Senior Stretch
When: Wednesdays, 10:45 a.m.

Step & Core
When: Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m.

Tai Chi
Free to cancer recovery patients; sponsored by the Augusta Health Cancer Center.

Arthritis and Diabetes: Tuesdays, 11:15 a.m.
Beginner: Wednesdays, 11 a.m.
Intermediate: Thursdays, 11:15 a.m.
Multi-Level: Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

Yoga
Chair Yoga: Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
Gentle Flow: Mondays, 5:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, 9 a.m.; Thursdays, 9 a.m.
Intermediate/Advanced Vinyasa: Wednesdays, 9 a.m.
Power Vinyasa Flow: Thursdays, 6:15 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
Yoga Express: Fridays, 9:05 a.m.
Yoga Basics: Saturdays, 9 a.m.

Zumba
When: Mondays, 9 a.m.; Tuesdays, 4:15 p.m.
Information: Visit augustahealth.com/fitness for updated monthly group fitness schedules. Call Jennifer Klemm at (540) 332-5517 or email her at jklemm@augustahealth.com.

RxEX Program
(available on land or in water)
What: This monitored medical exercise program at Augusta Health Fitness is by physician referral only. It is an eight-week exercise program with pre- and post-program health evaluations. Participants exercise twice a week with staff and have access to Augusta Health Fitness throughout the eight weeks. Outcome measurements will be sent to the referring physician upon completion of the program.
Cost: $80
Information: Call Michael Campbell at (540) 332-5517 or email him at mcampbell@augustahealth.com.
RxEX Cancer Program
What: This monitored medical exercise program at Augusta Health Fitness is for members of the community who have had or currently have cancer. The program is designed to improve a person’s stamina, strength and fitness through monitored exercise. Participants will meet with certified cancer specialists twice a week to be assisted with an individual workout routine. Program outcomes will be sent to the referring physician.
Cost: $80.
Information: Call Michael Campbell at (540) 332-5527 or email him at mcampbell@augustahealth.com.

RxEX Prehab Program
What: This monitored medical exercise program at Augusta Health Fitness is for members of the community who are scheduled for joint replacement surgery. The program is specifically designed to strengthen the joint during the few weeks prior to surgery. Participants will meet with exercise specialists twice a week and work out in a small-group setting of three participants. Program outcomes will be sent to the referring physician.
Cost: $80
Information: Call Michael Campbell at (540) 332-5527 or email him at mcampbell@augustahealth.com.

RxEX Cardiac Program
What: This monitored medical exercise program is a continuation of Cardiac Rehab Phase II, and is available to anyone completing or who has completed Cardiac Rehab within the past three months. The focus of the program is on improving the heart’s function and increasing cardiovascular endurance. The participant’s blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen saturation levels are monitored throughout the program as necessary, and a follow-up appointment with Cardiac Rehab staff is performed upon completion of the program. Program outcomes will be sent to the referring physician.
Cost: $80
Information: Call Michael Campbell at (540) 332-5527 or email him at mcampbell@augustahealth.com.

AUGUSTA HEALTH FITNESS TENNIS PROGRAM SCHEDULE †

Adult Cardio Tennis
What: Adult tennis players have the opportunity to get fit for life while enjoying the sport they love! This unique fitness/tennis clinic is packed with high-energy tennis drills, sport-specific training stations, great music and lots of fun! We recommend that you consult with a physician before participating in Cardio Tennis or any activity that involves a strenuous exercise routine.

Munchkin Tennis
What: Ages 10 and under. A great introduction to tennis for the youngest of players! Smaller court, smaller racquets, slower balls with the same big fun!

Future Stars
What: Ages 10 and under. Kids learn and compete in this unique format that encourages young players to develop rally skills and proper stroke technique as well as keep score and compete on courts and equipment that are size-appropriate to ensure faster learning and more fun!

Rising Stars
What: This class focuses on skill development and learning the tactical side of tennis. It is geared to youths hoping to experience tennis for the first time or raise their game to the next level. Fast-paced drills and games expose students to the many positive exercise benefits of playing tennis.

Aces
What: The program is for the most skilled and competitive junior tennis players. With a focus on enhanced skill and tactical development through games-based point value drills and competition, players will be challenged to take their game to new levels.

† Times and fees for tennis classes and programs are subject to change. For more information, call Chad Reed, tennis coordinator/pro, at (540) 332-5280 or email him at creed@augustahealth.com.
Registration forms for classes are available at augustahealth.com/fitness/tennis.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Friends Listening to Friends Group
What: For newly diagnosed cancer patients who have fears, questions or concerns. This group also addresses life after cancer treatments.
When: Tuesdays, 11 a.m.—12:30 p.m.
Where: Augusta Community Care Building, Conference Room 1
Information: For more information about any cancer group, call Leigh Anderson at (540) 245-7105.

Shenandoah Valley Stroke Club
What: This support group is for those who have suffered a stroke and their family members, care partners and friends.
When: The first Friday of the month at 12 p.m.
Information: Call Shelley Payne at (540) 332-4047 or (540) 932-4047.

Heart to Heart Support Group
What: If someone you love has died and you’d like the “heart-to-heart” support of others who have also lost someone, we invite you to attend our support group. We understand this is a very difficult time in your life. Talking and sharing with others going through similar experiences can provide tremendous support and be extremely helpful in learning how to cope and live with your grief. Support groups are open to the community and provided free of charge.
When: New groups begin throughout the year.
Where: Augusta Health Community Care Building
Information: To find out starting dates and to learn more, contact Debbie Brown, bereavement coordinator, Hospice of the Shenandoah, at (540) 932-4911 or at dbrown@augustahealth.com.

Ostomy Support Group
What: This support group is for those who have an ostomy or are currently preparing for an ostomy surgery. It is for members of the community who are people with ostomies, professionals, family members, care partners, friends or ostomy surgery patients.
Where: Augusta Health Community Care Building, Conference Room 1
When: The second Monday of every month, 6–8 p.m.
Where: Augusta Health Community Care Building, Room 3
Information: Call (540) 332-4346 for details.

**Stronger Together Breast Cancer Support Group**
What: Stronger Together offers support for patients diagnosed with breast cancer. This group provides a safe space to share personal stories, celebrate victories, express emotions and be uplifted.
When: Thursdays, 3–4:30 p.m.
Where: Augusta Health Cancer Center Conference Room
Information: Call Leigh Anderson, LCSW, at (540) 245-7105 for details.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

**Gain Independence From Tobacco (GIFT): Begin Your Journey to Stop Smoking/Stop Using Smokeless Tobacco**
What: To quit tobacco, you must first examine how and why you use tobacco. Then you can create an individual quit plan. The GIFT program is provided by a certified tobacco treatment specialist. Evidence-based guidelines and recommendations are given on an individual basis. Don’t let fear keep you from quitting.
Information: Call Jan Emnswiler, RN, at (540) 332-4988 for information.

**Living at the End of Life — Hospice Volunteer Training**
What: Have you been touched by hospice? Are you looking for a way to give back or serve others in your community? Hospice volunteering is a very rewarding experience and one that you likely won’t regret! This short day and a half course will prepare you for this journey.
When: Monday, June 24, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., and Tuesday, June 25, 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
Where: Augusta Community Care Building
Information: Call Carrie Gibbons, volunteer coordinator, at (540) 332-4977.

**DIABETES AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Diabetes Support Group** *(Type 1 and Type 2)*
What: For all those who are interested in learning more about managing their diabetes. Family, friends and care partners are welcome, too! This group offers guest speakers, a field trip to a local market and lots of educational opportunities.
When: Third Thursday of every month, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

**Diabetes Prevention Class — FREE!**
What: This is a single-session program taught by a certified diabetes educator. It is designed for individuals who have been diagnosed with prediabetes. During this session, participants will identify their risk factors and learn how to make lifestyle changes to help delay or even prevent the development of type 2 diabetes.
When: Thursday, May 9, 9–10:30 a.m. AND Thursday, Aug. 8, 6–7:30 p.m.
Information/Registration: Please call the Outpatient Diabetes and Nutrition Education Program at (540) 213-2537 or (540) 941-2537.

**CHILD BIRTH PREPARATION SERIES**

**CHILDBIRTH PREPARATION SERIES**
What: During the final trimester of pregnancy, birthing classes are an ideal way for expectant mothers and their partners to prepare for the “big event.” Classes cover signs, symptoms and stages of labor, body conditioning exercises, breathing and relaxation techniques, vaginal and cesarean births and other medical options, helpful hints for the birth coach, what to expect during recovery, and a video tour of the Birthing Suite.
When: Six classes will be held every other month on four consecutive Mondays, as well as the Baby Basic and CPR class and Breastfeeding class on Thursday nights.
Where: Augusta Health, Community Care Building, Room 3
Information: Sign-up information is available at augustahealth.com/birthing-suite/classes.
welcome aboard

MEET THE NEW HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ON STAFF

Sarah Borchelt, NP
Specialty: Palliative Care
Augusta Health
Transitional Care
57 N. Medical Park Drive
Fishersville, VA 22939

Jaqueline Carney, DDS
Specialty: Pediatric Dentistry
All Smiles Harrisonburg
129 University Blvd., Suite A
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
(540) 432-1300

Kristamarie Collman, MD
Specialty: Urgent Care
Augusta Health
Urgent Care
Urgent Care locations

Tanika Cushing, PA
Specialty: Urgent Care
Augusta Health
Urgent Care
Urgent Care locations

Jamie Ewing, PA
Specialty: Internal Medicine
Fishersville
Internal Medicine
22 North Medical Park Drive
Fishersville, VA 22939
(833) AHC-HLTH

Julie Garnett, NP
Specialty: Urgent Care
Augusta Health
Urgent Care
Urgent Care locations

Judy Ko, MD
Specialties: Rheumatology and Osteoporosis
Lexington Multispecialty Clinic
55 Comfort Way, Suite 1
Lexington, VA 24450
(833) AHC-HLTH

Melissa Lafferty, NP
Specialty: Emergency Medicine
Augusta Emergency Physicians
Augusta Health
Emergency Department

Sylvia Le, MD
Specialty: Family Practice
Augusta Health Primary Care, Stuarts Draft
2570 Stuarts Draft Hwy, Suite 101
Stuarts Draft, VA 24477
(833) AHC-HLTH

Matthew Painter, NP
Specialty: Family Practice
Augusta Health Family Practice, Verona
1 Green Hills Drive
Verona, VA 24483
(833) AHC-HLTH

Claire Plautz, MD
Specialty: Emergency Medicine
Augusta Emergency Physicians
Augusta Health
Emergency Department

Kurt Sandine, MD
Specialty: Urgent Care
Augusta Health
Urgent Care
Urgent Care locations

Victoria Tomlin, NP
Specialty: Family Practice
Augusta Health Primary Care, Stuarts Draft
2570 Stuarts Draft Hwy, Suite 101
Stuarts Draft, VA 24477
(833) AHC-HLTH
A People Person

R adiation therapist Jesse Rohrer may deal with numbers and facts all day — like dosage amounts, treatment schedules, and CT results — but the 34-year-old says that what he loves most about his job are the people.

“Working with patients is the best part of every day,” he says, noting that most people who come to Cancer Center for radiation treatment are there five days a week, often for weeks at a time. “You get to know people, to feel like they’re friends. We hear a lot of people say they won’t miss the treatments, but they’ll miss us once they’re done.”

In addition to patients, Rohrer says he works with a fantastic and diverse group of professionals, including physicians, support staff, nurses and others at the Cancer Center.

“There is this big group of people rallying around a common cause and being very passionate about what they do,” he says. “That’s one of the things that drew me to it, that sense of purpose and passion.”

Rohrer didn’t always see this as a career path, though. After growing up in Harrisonburg, he went to college in northern Indiana and earned a degree in history. But, he says, halfway through writing his senior thesis, he knew it wasn’t the route he really wanted. After graduation, feeling a bit directionless, he decided to look into the field of diagnostic X-rays, since his father was a radiologist and seemed happy with that profession.

When he was able to shadow his father on some procedures, that’s when Rohrer felt the “click” of what he should pursue.

“To see how my father interacted with patients was inspirational,” he recalls. “My mother was a nurse, which means both of my parents are so compassionate, and when I was trying to think about my own strengths, I knew some of that had been instilled in me, too. I wanted to be able to draw on that and use it.”

While in school for radiologic technology, Rohrer had a clinical rotation in radiation therapy and loved it from the start. Unlike a role that requires diagnosis — in which he might meet a patient once — his profession is more about establishing longer-term relationships with patients and guiding them through radiation treatment.

That means working to ensure proper dosages are followed, creating a treatment schedule, and monitoring for side effects so they can be addressed quickly.

Outside of work, he now has the opportunity to pass on that legacy of compassion. He and his wife, Megan, have a nearly 2-year-old daughter, Lucy June, and he jokes that she keeps them pretty busy. They’re hoping to buy a house soon in Harrisonburg, and he feels grateful to be at Augusta Health, since it’s not only a job he loves, but also gave him an opportunity to move back home.

“When you’re dealing with cancer, of course there can be intensity and stress, so I try to eat healthy and stay active, and leave my work in the car when I get home,” he says. “But to be here can also be an incredibly positive experience, and that’s what we all focus on, bringing our best selves for our patients.”

> Jesse Rohrer is a radiation therapist at Augusta Health.

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