

Dedicated to providing patient-centered care and improving the health and well-being of people in the communities we serve



Breaking ground

Center for Hope and Healing construction begins on Leslie Lane

Western Maryland Health System broke ground on August 26 for the Center for Hope and Healing, a 24-hour residential treatment facility that will house patients with substance abuse and behavioral health issues.

Approximately 40 guests attended the groundbreaking, including Senator George Edwards, Mark Widmyer representing Governor Larry Hogan, Cumberland Mayor Ray Morriss and James Pyles, Allegany County Emergency Services Director. Several of these dignitaries and partners joined WMHS President and CEO Barry Ronan to ceremoniously lift the first shovel of dirt on the project.

The center will be located on Leslie Lane, adjacent to the WMHS main campus, and will be built on land gifted to WMHS from the State. Funding for the project is largely attributed to a \$1 million pledge from the WMHS Auxiliary, including an initial gift of \$400,000 made in May of this year.

Auxiliary President Julie Davis, who works as the Fire Administration Officer for the City of Cumberland Fire Department, said at the time of the initial gift, "I see the impact this crisis has on a daily basis. I see how it taxes our emergency service providers. We were all unanimously in favor of facing this challenge

and supporting a valuable asset that will effectively address the need."

"We knew we had to be a huge supporter of the new center," said Sherry Schmitt, Immediate Past President. "Everyone we talked to finds it to be such a worthwhile and positive thing. We have all had people in our lives who are dealing with addiction or have behavioral health problems. This is a much-needed resource. We can connect this with the other programs at WMHS and, as a result, we have a shot at making a real impact. Speaking personally, though I imagine most who work in healthcare would agree, we all seek to find that one thing that will help just one person." The pledge will also fall under the direction of President-elect Kim Kremer, who will succeed Davis.

Speaking at the groundbreaking, Ronan told guests how appreciative WMHS is of the contributions that were made, and Foundation Executive Director Karen Johnson called the center a huge gift to the community that will make an impact well worth the investment.

Ronan said he anticipates the project to be completed in late spring 2020. Patients will stay roughly 10 days, and approximately 10 employees will staff the center.

Above, breaking ground at the Center for Hope and Healing were, from left to right, Shelley Waugh, Lakeside Architecture; Kevin Turley, WMHS Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer; Ray Morriss, Mayor, City of Cumberland; Senator George Edwards; Barry Ronan, WMHS President & CEO; Mark Widmyer, Western Maryland Representative, Office of Governor Larry Hogan; Julie Davis, President, WMHS Auxiliary; Sherry Schmitt, Immediate Past President, WMHS Auxiliary; Carl Belt, Carl Belt, Inc.; James Pyles, Director, Allegany County Emergency Services; Carissa Rodeheaver, WMHS Board of Directors; Karen Johnson, Executive Director, WMHS Foundation; and Jeff O'Neal, Executive Director, WMHS Clinics, Practices & Behavioral Health Services. Below, an artist's rendering of how the center will look upon completion.



U.S. News & World Report names WMHS a high performing hospital

Western Maryland Health System has been recognized as a High Performing Hospital for 2019-20 by U.S. News & World Report.

The annual Procedures & Conditions ratings, now in their fifth year, are designed to assist patients and their doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive care for common conditions and elective procedures. These ratings extend the U.S. News mission of

providing consumers with patient decision support beyond the Best Hospitals rankings, which are geared toward complex specialty care.

WMHS earned "High Performing" ratings for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart failure in recognition of care that was significantly better than the national average, as measured by factors such as patient outcomes. "High Performing" is the highest rating U.S. News awards

for COPD and heart failure care.

"We are very proud to be recognized by U.S. News and World Report for being a high performing hospital when it comes to COPD and heart failure care," said Barry Ronan, WMHS President and CEO. "This latest accolade for our award-winning cardiac program is yet another confirmation of our commitment to serve our area with the highest quality care."

For the 2019-20 ratings, U.S.

News evaluated more than 4,500 medical centers nationwide in nine procedures and conditions. Fewer than a third of all hospitals received any high performing rating, and only 57 earned this rating in all nine Procedures & Conditions. The state and metro area rankings recognize hospitals that received high performing ratings across multiple areas of care.

"For 30 years, U.S. News has strived to make hospital quality

more transparent to healthcare consumers nationwide," said Ben Harder, managing editor and chief of health analysis at U.S. News. "By providing the most comprehensive data available on nearly every hospital across the United States, we give patients, families and physicians information to support their search for the best care across a range of procedures, conditions and specialties."



Palliative care now offered at WMHS

New practice led by Dr. Benjamin Goldstein

Western Maryland Health System is pleased to welcome palliative care physician Benjamin Goldstein, M.D., who has been practicing since mid-August in suite 300 in the Medical Arts Center.

Originally from Potomac, Md., Dr. Goldstein received his training in New York. "At my interview, I got a great sense of this institution and how wonderful it is," he said. "It's a very supportive, robust and successful hospital. It was clear this was a wonderful opportunity to get a palliative care program up and running."

Palliative care is specialized care provided for someone with a serious life-limiting illness at any stage—not necessarily just at the end of life. It provides patients time to get a good idea of the process of the disease they have.

"A lot of what I do is educate patients about their disease and answer any questions and provide guidance for the complex decisions they have to make," Dr. Goldstein said. Some of those decisions include advanced care planning, like naming a healthcare proxy to make decisions in case the patient is not able to communicate, as well as their wishes when it comes to resuscitation instructions.

A big part of palliative care is the ability to spend an extended amount of time with a patient and their family. "As I went through my training, I noticed that physicians, through no fault of their own due to the multitude of their clinical and non-clinical responsibilities, may not have been successful in fully communicating with families regarding their disease process to a level that patients and their families understand," Dr. Goldstein said.

Those discussions can be emotional and complicated depending on what the patient is facing. "You have to talk to someone objectively, and knowing that I am providing this service means a lot to me," Dr. Goldstein said. "I know that if I wasn't doing this, a patient might not fully understand the answers they need or know things such as how much time they might have left or what is going to happen in their decision-making process if they lose consciousness. Although there are definitely difficult moments, knowing that I am helping these patients have a voice and make decisions helps get me through it with them."

In addition to discussions and spending time making decisions, Dr. Goldstein also helps with symptom management and works along with curative treatment for patients with diseases like cancer and heart failure.

"This service is very beneficial for everyone, including providers who could use the time saved from this service to allocate towards their other numerous clinical responsibilities," he said. "I have the time to sit with a patient and speak with them about everything. I know how busy physicians are, and I am happy to be here to serve in this role."

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call Dr. Goldstein's office at 240-964-8939.

Firefighter's challenge Sept. 28

Latest, greatest Hometown Healthy event offers prizes, screenings

Since the first Saturday in June, the Hometown Healthy Partnership has enjoyed tremendous success in our local communities. The initiative is a collaboration between local health and social service providers and community leaders to help promote the health and well-being of the people of Allegany County.

More than 1,800 contacts have been made with people who are interested in improving their health through WMHS programs and those of our community partners like the Allegany County Food Bank, HRDC, AHEC, the Dept. of Social Services and the Allegany County Health Dept.

Each week, sometimes twice a day on weekends, Hometown Healthy representatives and volunteers attend community events to spread the word about the partnership. WMHS staff also volunteer, as an hour of their time qualifies as a Wellness Advantage Activity.

While at the local events, community members can undergo screenings and tests for diabetes and blood pressure, as well as be connected to programs that will improve their health. Thus far, the modest expectations that were set when the project launched



have been exceeded by leaps and bounds.

"I'm looking at our numbers, and I just can't believe it," said Jo Wilson, Vice President of Population Health at WMHS. "People are genuinely interested. We aren't forcing them. They are having fun and requesting other opportunities for our programming."

The success has come as the result of the grassroots

work of the volunteers and partners. "It's been a huge learning curve," Wilson said. "A lot of people in the community have no understanding how hard we all work here at WMHS. "We are working hard to help people learn how to get healthier. It's been good for our face to be out there. We are learning about them, helping them and laughing with them. We are making a

difference."

Through social media and word of mouth, the Hometown Healthy events – like a Westernport Farmer's market program – have been growing and building positive steam all summer. The largest event of the summer happens on September 28 in Frostburg when the Firefighter's Challenge comes to Hoffman Field.

"People in this area love their firefighting heroes," Wilson said. "We've learned about these wonderful relationships as we've been out in the community." The event will feature friendly competition between fire companies in events like hose accuracy, dummy dragging and equipment dressing. At the same time, a health fair will take place featuring health screenings and the opportunity to sign up for upcoming programs.

HRDC will provide transportation throughout area communities and there is no cost to attend. While the fire companies compete for trophies, prizes will be awarded to individuals from the different communities. For more information on the point system and for a general overview of the program and events, check out Hometown Healthy Allegany on Facebook.

A bag full of blessings

It has been said that blessings come in many shapes and sizes, and thanks to one caring WMHS employee and her family and friends, patients at the Schwab Family Cancer Center are now experiencing a bag full of them.

Sadie Thomas, who has worked in the Transportation Department for the last 4.5 years, was motivated to collect "blessing bags" full of goodies to help cancer patients cope while they undergo treatment.

After finding the idea online, Sadie sought donations on Facebook and had several coworkers chip in. Twelve people gave \$800 worth of donations which purchased provisions for 56 bags.

The insulated lunch bags were stuffed with candy, gum, protein bars, lotion, hand sanitizer, pencils, pens, note pads, games, a water bottle and more, as well as an uplifting note offering encouragement during the patient's treatment.

"We are very grateful to the Thomas family for their donation of these blessing bags," said Ben Kosewski, Executive Director, Cancer Services at the Schwab Family Cancer Center. "We don't often get gifts of this variety, and our patients love the thoughtfulness behind what has gone into them."

Sadie and her family worked with the WMHS Foundation to provide the donation. "I was struck, once again, by the generosity and creativity of one individual who wants to make a difference," said Foundation Executive Director Karen Johnson. "The 56 bags filled to the brim with useful, thoughtful items will help oncology patients



Pictured left to right at the time of the donation are Nicki Thompson, Manager, Cancer Programs and Services at the Schwab Family Cancer Center; Karen Johnson, Chief Development Officer & Executive Director of the WMHS Foundation; Ben Kosewski, Executive Director, Cancer Services at the Schwab Family Cancer Center; Sadie Thomas; Cameron Thomas and little Sophia Thomas.

pass the time during chemotherapy. Moreover, they will share the unspoken message that someone was thinking of them and cared enough to build the bags. I'm convinced the encouragement brought by gestures like this can be even more valuable than the gifts themselves. Encouragement has incredible power."

Sadie cited her past family history of cancer, as well as her relationships with the patients she transports, as her motivation to give back. "In my job, I often get to know these patients from spending a lot of time moving them around the hospital. I always try to let them know that someone is there for them, and I think these bags help with that."

CALLING ALL SCAREDY CATS!

Like our August Dog Days feature, The Pulse wants to share all of our WMHS employees' adopted or rescued feline friends! Simply email a photo of your cat to edewitt@wmhs.com.

Don't forget to tell us your name, department and your cat's name too!



Cardio Core

Join ACE Certified Personal Trainer Mike Browning every Tues. and Thurs. beginning Sept. 3 for this new class! Call 4-8420 or check the Daily Huddle for more information.



Proof positive

Families of WMHS ICU patients offer their feedback

Over the last 18 months, the Western Maryland Health System Intensive Care Unit has received overwhelmingly positive reviews from the ICU Family Satisfaction Survey, which provides families the opportunity to share the experience they had during their stay.

Doctors, nurses and members of the ICU team are rated from outstanding to poor on areas such as meeting needs, care, showing concern and compassion and providing honest information. Those taking the survey can also add additional comments they feel could be helpful.

Reviews consistently fell in the outstanding to good range, and family members have added both testimonials and helpful suggestions that ICU staff might consider. One reviewer said, "The facility is beautiful, but it's the staff that makes the hospital so wonderful. They are always friendly, helpful, and offer assistance. We've had staff greet us and ask, 'how's she doing?' as we go to grab a bite. Even cafeteria staff are warm and friendly to everyone."

The survey also provides the opportunity to share experiences with other family members of ICU patients in the form of a family testimonial. Sometimes, hearing a positive testimonial from someone who has had a similar experience can provide comfort to those dealing with the stress of critical illness.

The reviews and positive feedback confirm the level of care and concern that staff in the WMHS ICU show to all patients and their families. "Having a loved one in the Intensive Care Unit can be an overwhelming and emotional rollercoaster for families," said Crissy Martz, Nurse Manager, Critical Care Services. "The staff in the ICU at Western Maryland Health System are committed to caring for family members the same as they care for patients and believe that the experience of family and friends is just as important as the experience for the patient. The survey results attest to the ICU staff's commitment of providing patient and family-centered care and modeling the core values of

'A lot more to it than babies'

WMHS sonographers serve in many capacities

When it comes to the dozen or so sonographers employed at Western Maryland Health System, a common answer is returned when they are asked what they wish people knew about their job.

"There's a lot more to it than babies," sonographer Julie Hartman said. "We probably do 50 different types of ultrasounds, including ones on location in the operating room, in recovery rooms, portables (when the machine goes to the patient) on newborn babies and in areas like the Intensive Care Unit."

Technically speaking, an ultrasound is a picture made with soundwaves. The gel that is applied directs the soundwaves into the body, as they will not travel through air. Next, the radiologist will read the results of the ultrasound and send them to the patient's doctor, who will then determine the next step.

"People just don't understand all that is involved with the job," sonographer Marla Niland said. "We are the doctor's eyes." Beyond ultrasounds, sonographers also assist with procedures like biopsies on masses and during breast exams, abscess and other drainages and

examinations of things like nodules. They also can see how much fluid a patient has and how much needs to be drained and where.

Julie, who has worked as a sonographer for 33 years (the last six at WMHS), has been trained and registered in six specialty areas and currently works in ultrasound. "We are constantly learning," she said. "As much as you think you know, you can know so much more. Every day you learn something new, and because advancements in technology are allowing us to see more, we are expected to keep up on that and be able to find more from our tests every day."

New machinery is constantly being added to the fleet of equipment at WMHS and every time a machine is improved or updated, it allows the sonographers to see more than they could before. In fact, 3D and 4D readings are now possible depending on the test and the patient. For example, women with dense breasts are able to have a 3D scan that will show previously undetectable cancer hidden by dense breast tissue.

With these new possibilities come an

increase in responsibility. "A lot is expected of us," Julie said. "We are unlike other facilities I've worked at because we do everything. Most facilities are separated. We don't have that here. That has helped me stay sharp in all my areas."

Julie, Marla and their coworkers embrace the challenges they face and have enjoyed some amazing experiences with their patients over the years. Marla, who has been at WMHS for 19 years, enjoys her one-on-one time with the patients, especially the expectant mothers. "You have conversations and you get to know them, especially if patients come back for multiple visits. We are the first ones to see what is going on with them."

Even though there is a lot more to their jobs than those little moments with moms-to-be, Julie agreed that also is her favorite thing about her job. "There's a special bond with the patient, and it's amazing being the first person to learn things about the baby. I love what I do, and I couldn't imagine doing anything else."



Healthgrades recognizes WMRMC as 5-Star recipient for vaginal delivery care

Western Maryland Regional Medical Center recently announced that it is a 5-star recipient for Vaginal Delivery as recognized by Healthgrades, the leading online resource for information about physicians and hospitals. This 5-star rating indicates that Western Maryland Regional Medical Center's clinical outcomes are statistically significantly better than expected for Vaginal Delivery.

"We are very proud to be recognized with a 5-star rating for vaginal delivery by Healthgrades," said Barry Ronan, Western Maryland Health System President and CEO. "When WMHS is recognized

for its quality standards and excellence in care, it is yet another confirmation of our commitment to serve our area with the highest quality."

To help consumers evaluate and compare hospital performance, Healthgrades analyzed all-payer state data for 15 states for years 2015 through 2017. Healthgrades found that there is a significant variation in hospital quality between those that have received 5-stars and those that have not.

For example, from 2015 through 2017, patients having a vaginal delivery in hospitals rated 5-stars have, on average,

a 43.5 percent lower risk of experiencing a complication while in the hospital than if they were treated by hospitals rated 1-star.

"Healthgrades recognizes hospitals for providing exceptional care in a variety of cohorts for women's health, and those that achieve a 5-star rating are focused on delivering high quality care," said Brad Bowman, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Healthgrades. "As healthcare trends continue to improve and evolve, patients who select a hospital that is a 5-star recipient can feel confident in their decision when it comes to women's care."



Visit WMHS.com for more information on the September Population Health Focus

Drop us a line!

Community Relations wants to hear all of the good news about the employees, patients and departments at WMHS. Contact Ed DeWitt at 4-8019 or edewitt@wmhs.com if you have a story that is begging to be told.

Do you follow us?





Above, housekeeping aide Katelyn Whetstone prepares a bed for the next patient. Right, Wayne Nicol operates a floor buffer in Labor and Delivery. Below right, members of the WMHS EVS department gather to celebrate their milestone.



Cleaning up

When it comes to patient satisfaction, the WMHS EVS department sets the bar again

Over the last several years, the Western Maryland Health System Environmental Services Department has worked hard to increase staff engagement, morale and efficiency.

As a result, a milestone was recently achieved that few hospitals the size of the Western Maryland Regional Medical Center can boast about – a score of 80.1 on the yearly EVS HCAHPS, or the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems, which is a patient satisfaction survey required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for all hospitals in the United States.

“We’ve raised the bar on our HCAHPS every year over the last four years,” said Nick DeArcangelis, Director of EVS. “We’ve set a new record every year,” DeArcangelis said. “We scored 80.1 this year, which is amazing. Eighty is a milestone for us because of the size of the hospital we are. Often, scores of 80 and higher are reached by hospitals with smaller bed counts.”

DeArcangelis attributes that success to a few factors. “One is our processes,” he said. “We have good training and great management. Our managers follow up

with our employees to find out what they need to do their jobs.” That has resulted in the purchasing of new equipment that uses technology to provide more efficient work. “We have a lot more equipment we can ride instead of push. That makes a big difference. Our management has not been shy in providing us with what we feel we need to do a good job,” he added.

Employee recognition is also a primary focus. “We focus on keeping our staff happy and engaged,” DeArcangelis said. “This includes things like special monthly and quarterly meals with our staff.”

Communicating with staff members in the form of meetings and Top Five Board interaction has greatly increased the level of engagement.

“These meetings, which are held both internally and with the hospital’s nursing staff, will continue to help us improve,” DeArcangelis said. “We are looking at things now that will make our HCAHPS even better. We have to figure out where our shortfalls are. We are trying to put the very best people in the areas where we have dipped in the past, and then our other employees will learn from them. That is very critical. The beautiful thing is how

our staff has embraced what we do. They know their purpose for WMHS.”

Beyond the hard work of the staff, DeArcangelis gives much of the credit for his department’s success to Kevin Turley, WMHS Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer. “Kevin is very instrumental and extremely active in our department,” DeArcangelis said. “He comes here a lot to talk to our staff. He comes to our functions. That makes our staff more aware of what is going on. When you have a Vice President who is constantly engaged, it makes a big difference for your staff. They see that he cares what is going on.”

“It is a privilege to work with such a great group of people,” Turley said. “They have embraced and excelled with our performance excellence journey and have provided great results. Most importantly, our patients are benefiting. We are here to serve them. I could not be more proud of our EVS team.”

All of this teamwork helps push the



EVS team forward, hopefully toward what DeArcangelis calls the next level. “We want to achieve a score of 90 on our HCAHPS survey results,” he said. “That’s a hard level to achieve in this business. To get there it’s going to be a hard journey. It’s going to take a lot of dedication on everybody’s part.”

Despite the work ahead to achieve the EVS Department’s next plateau, DeArcangelis is constantly overjoyed by the work of the team he oversees. “I am proud about where I work,” he said. “I love the people I work with. It’s important to remember, however, that you are only as good as the work you’ve done today. Tomorrow you have to prove yourself all over again.”

Low-dose CT lung cancer screenings aid early detection, treatment options

For the last few years, Western Maryland Health System has proudly offered a test that can help patients with a long history of smoking. Low-dose CT lung cancer screenings, often referred to as LDCT, are much more sensitive than traditional chest X-rays. The test serves the same purpose as a mammogram or colonoscopy, which are tests that can detect cancer at an early stage.

“The test is a way of screening patients with a heavy smoking history for early detection of lung cancer,” said Dr. Michael Dwyer of the WMHS Radiology Department. “The earlier it is detected, the more options there are to treat and potentially cure.”

The screenings are designed for patients who are between the ages of 55 and 80 and have a 30-year or more pack-year history (the number of years the patient has smoked multiplied by how many packs a day they have smoked). LDCT is for patients who have no clinical signs of lung cancer. If there are clinical signs of lung cancer, a diagnostic CT of the chest is required.

“Lung cancer is one of the leading causes of death in men and women across the country,” Dr. Dwyer said. “In the past, a regular chest X-ray was used for screening, which is not nearly as sensitive. Compared to an LDCT, it’s a night-and-day difference regarding the information obtained.”

The test takes about 10 minutes, and no needles or medicine is required. During the screening, an LDCT scan creates a detailed 3-D picture of the lungs. While this scan will expose a patient to a low-dose of radiation, LDCT uses 75 percent less radiation than a traditional CT scan and shows more detail than a standard chest X-ray. An LDCT scan is the only method recommended for lung cancer screening.

The American College of Radiology recently created a new standard for LDCT screenings and reports called Lung-RADS™ (Lung Imaging and Reporting Data System). This new standard has resulted in fewer false positives, as well as fewer unnecessary follow-up scans and procedures.

Once ordered by the patient’s doctor, the screening should be done yearly until the age of 80, and patients who have quit smoking within the last 15 years are still encouraged to have the screening performed.

Until recently, the process has remained largely unknown to both patients and doctors across the country, but Dr. Dwyer said “It’s gradually ramping up, and we’ve had success with this. It’s important that people know that this is out there and that it can make a difference.”

A patient needs a referral from their primary care provider or another practitioner to have the low-dose CT lung cancer screening scan performed at the WMHS Lung Cancer Screening Center, which is nationally accredited by the American College of Radiology.

These outpatient tests are scheduled at the WMHS Outpatient Diagnostic Center Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, patients should consult their doctor.

