

THE END OF AN ERA

After three decades, Barry Ronan says goodbye

On the Sunday that fell between Christmas and New Year's Day, now former UPMC Western Maryland President Barry Ronan and his wife, Pamela, spent some time in his office reflecting on his career as they gathered his belongings. "No one else was here at the time, and we both thought back on all that has happened," Barry said. "We looked back on all the effort it took to build the new hospital and how everything came

together, and it was just really nice recounting all these memories we have."

Not surprisingly, Barry cites the construction of the Western Maryland Regional Medical Center as one of the biggest achievements in his 45-year career in health care – 30 spent serving so many in Cumberland and the surrounding communities.

"When I first came here in

see BARRY - page 2



"I have so many close relationships with wonderful people, and that's what I'm going to miss the most."

- Barry Ronan

Michele Martz appointed as new President

Late last October, UPMC announced the appointment of Michele Martz, CPA, FACHE, as the new, incoming president of UPMC Western



Michele Martz

Maryland effective Jan. 1, 2021. Martz succeeds Barry Ronan, FACHE, who retired after serving as President and CEO of Western Maryland Health System and President of UPMC Western Maryland since 2000.

Martz most recently served as senior vice president and chief financial officer. During her tenure in this position and in her previous roles as vice president of both Physician Enterprise and Financial Services, she has been an integral part of the management team at UPMC Western Maryland and has proven herself to inspire and motivate her teams to achieve amazing results.

"Michele brings with her 18 years of executive experience at Western Maryland Health System and now UPMC Western Maryland with proven leadership results," said Dave Martin, Senior Vice President, UPMC Health Services Division and Market President, Central Region.

Martz is a West Virginia University graduate and gives her time in several volunteer leadership capacities throughout the region UPMC Western Maryland serves.

"Being a lifelong resident of our community -including being born at Memorial Hospital - makes being selected for this position extra special for me," Martz said. "Over the years, my family and friends have all been recipients of the expert care that we deliver to our patients each and every day. Working here for over 30 years has allowed me to forge important relationships with our board of directors, our medical staff, our leadership team, and our dedicated employees, with the common goal to provide state-of-the-art health care for our community."

As President, Martz will look to continue building upon the successful path Ronan trailblazed during his tenure.

"My short-term goals are to get through the immediate COVID pandemic crisis and to have as many of our staff vaccinated as possible," Martz said. "We can never repay our team of dedicated heroes who have worked tirelessly to care for our patients at UPMC Western Maryland. We also will continue to focus on our integration into UPMC."

For the long term, Martz said focus will remain on the existing strategic plan already in place, where quality, safety, patient and employee experience, care transformation, total cost of care, and access to care within the community are priorities.

We will continue to work together as a team, using our mission statement to guide us," Martz said. "I am so proud to be part of this community and the team here at UPMC Western Maryland, allowing me to make a difference in my hometown."



On Monday, December 21, Katie Cowan, Manager, Employee Health, administered the first COVID-19 vaccine at UPMC Western Maryland to Registered Nurse Randi Frye. In the background, fellow employees Kathy Wisda and Lisa Shrout wait for their turn.

A shot in the arm

Vaccine arrives, many staff opt in

COVID-19 vaccinations are well underway at UPMC Western Maryland, as nearly 2,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine arrived and began being distributed during the week of December 21.

"We are thrilled to begin vaccinating our UPMC Western Maryland frontline staff members," former President Barry P. Ronan said as the vaccinations began. "Our experts in pharmacy, infection prevention, supply chain, employee health and emergency preparedness, among many others, are working day and night to finalize plans so we can efficiently, safely, and equitably distribute this vaccine to health care workers who want it."

Randi Frye, a registered intensive care unit nurse, was the first employee to be vaccinated. "We have been dealing with COVID-19 for so many months, and I am ready to see a light at the end of the tunnel," she said. "I hope everyone participates. We can make a difference."

Director of Nursing Chrissy Lechlitter was also among those in the first round of vaccinations. "I am here today to lead by example. The vaccine is safe, and it will make a real difference in our community. I am proud to be one of the first front line workers to receive it," she said.

"I am going to be a new grandma in January, and I want to protect my unborn

grandchild. I've also lost both my grandmother and my uncle to COVID within the last week," said Lisa Shrout, a unit clerk in the Emergency Department and 41-year employee at UPMC Western Maryland. "I am doing this today in their honor."

A multidisciplinary team stretching across many departments created the plan to begin vaccination as soon as the vaccine was received. "Everyone involved in the logistics of the vaccination process has been extremely flexible in this fluid situation, and I could not be more proud of the team who made this possible," Surender Kanaparthi, Executive Director, Cancer Services, Pharmacy Services & Supply Chain, said.

Wellness ambassadors flourish in 2020

Thousands benefit locally despite pandemic’s challenges

UPMC Western Maryland’s mission to provide value-based care relies on a base of caring volunteers that provide vital health resources to the communities we serve. UPMC Western Maryland has partnered with more than 15 faith and community organizations and has trained over 50 volunteers to deliver health and healing through resources such as food, housing, transportation, employment, education, and social support. This community of volunteers is called the Wellness Ambassadors.

The Ambassadors work collaboratively and have provided over 12,000 resources to Allegany County and surrounding area residents during 2020. While the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the distribution of resources - especially early on - the Ambassadors did not stop. Their resilience and resourcefulness allowed them to find new ways to safely support our community.

Food insecurity, health literacy, and mental health were the main focuses of the year because of the effect of COVID-19. These health issues were addressed by work done at food pantries, health topic webinars, and countless hours spent providing social support to those particularly affected by isolation.

These are just a few highlights of the work done by the Wellness Ambassadors in 2020:

Park Place United Methodist Church, led by Wellness Ambassador Barbara Jewell, spent over 250 volunteer hours providing food, health supplies, and social support in 2020. Some of their work included making over 500 pieces of personal protective equipment such as masks and gowns for residents and health care workers, delivering school supplies to students of Parkside Elementary School, and delivering food to those who were isolating due to COVID-19.

The Allegany County Department of Social Services in partnership with UPMC Western Maryland provided family-style holiday meals to 173 households (serving 415 individuals) for Christmas. Meals were prepared by Fratelli’s Restaurant, and contactless delivery was made by ACDSS staff. Wellness Ambassadors Jen Shingler and Jen Sealer also assisted 79 homeless individuals with benefits, food, and personal care items in downtown Cumberland on Homeless Resource Day.

Friends Aware Wellness Ambassador Haley Fitzpatrick created and delivered calm kits to over 250 individuals during the pandemic. The kits included adult

coloring books with colored pencils, tea, mints, dark chocolate, and stress squeeze balls. These items were donated by UPMC Western Maryland.

Cheri Duncan from HRDC distributed a Wellness Resource Guide to 547 area seniors addressing COVID-19 best practices which included instructions for disinfecting food, creating home safe zones, curbside food pick-up options, and self-care wellness exercises.

Jacqueline Magbie of the Ministry of Encouragement organized a healthy eating and home exercise seminar provided by professional health educators from UPMC Western Maryland. Members learned how to shop for healthy food and how to do simple home exercises. Jaqueline also delivers healthy food weekly from the Cumberland food pantry to Cumberland Meadows, Cumberland Manor, and Queen City and JFK apartments.

Deb Hardinger noted that when Zion United Methodist Church closed their doors a few of their church members joined Centenary Church. “They had a tradition where they sponsored a mitten, hat, and a scarf tree,” Deb said. “We invited them to continue their traditions with us. During the month of December, we collect-

ed over 50 mittens, gloves, and scarves to be donated to the Union Rescue Mission. We are a small church with a BIG giving heart.”

Michell Scott, Ambassador from the First Church of the Nazarene, partnered with the Lions Center to deliver food and clothing to over 71 community residents from the Mountain Maryland Compassion Center. South Penn Elementary helped collect clothing for this event.

Diane Knowlton, volunteer from Wesley Chapel United Methodist provided food weekly through their pantry and organized wellness groups who exercise regularly by doing such activities as chair yoga and walking.

These are just a few examples of what the Wellness Ambassadors do for our community. They are the people on the ground who work hard to deliver the much-needed resources people need to stay healthy and well, but more importantly, they deliver hope and healing to the underserved and less fortunate. If you are interested in becoming a Wellness Ambassador, please contact UPMC Western Maryland Health Program Specialist Mike Browning at browningmr@UPMC.edu.



A mitten tree organized at Centenary Church collected more than 50 items that were donated to the Union Rescue Mission. “We are a small church with a BIG giving heart,” said Wellness Ambassador Deb Hardinger.

BARRY - from page 1

1989, it was a week before my interview at Memorial Hospital. I didn’t really even know where Cumberland was at the time, so we packed the kids in the car and took the drive down to look around. I walked through the facility, and people could not have been friendlier. It set the tone that this would be the right place to be if I was offered the position.”

Thankfully, and to the benefit of so many, that offer came.

Now, 30 years later and with a lifetime of retirement excitement ahead, Barry is clear on what made the last three decades so special for him. “What I will miss the most are the people,” he said. “Knowing the majority of our 2,000 employees by their first names is something I’ll really miss. I’ve been working with many of them the entire time. That will be tough to say goodbye to. I have so many close relationships with

some wonderful people, and that’s what I’m going to miss.”

Barry credits working with a visionary Board of Directors as a key component of his success and enjoyment during his tenure. “I was blessed with being able to work with a Board that allowed me to do what I thought was best and one that helped work to make things the way they should be going forward in this community.” In addition to the construction of the new hospital, Barry notes the formation of Western Maryland Health System and the affiliation with UPMC as milestones in his career. “All of these decisions were made to ensure we would be able to provide quality health care for the people of this region for years to come.”

Part of saying goodbye, of course, is taking some stock on how he got where he ended up career-wise. “My goal was always to follow in my father’s footsteps

and become a police detective,” Barry said. “I wanted to find a job that would pay for my education – and that happened to be in a hospital in Pittsburgh, which, ironically enough, is now UPMC Presbyterian. I just started to enjoy working in health care. Over the years I honestly owe so much of my success to my wife. She has been the motivational support behind me my entire career.”

Critical too, were his coworkers. “I have always surrounded myself with exceptional people at every level of this organization. I wouldn’t trade this group for anything,” he said.

When it comes to the keys for success and happiness in the world of health care, Barry recalled advice he routinely gives his daughters in their own careers. “Make yourself indispensable,” he said. “Learn and embrace your job and learn other aspects of your place of employment. It has worked

for me. I’m not an expert in anything. I’ve been very fortunate to know a little bit about a lot of stuff, and I think that has served me very well over the years.”

Now that he is stepping back, Barry will keep looking forward, though not quite right away. “Everyone wonders what is next for me,” he said. “I am going to take it easy for the next year and then figure out what lies beyond that. Having the opportunity to have my family with me in South Carolina and be a part of my life on a daily basis is going to be wonderful.”

Naturally, there will always be time for reflection on his life and career. “It’s just been a great ride. I think back and wonder if I’d change anything, and I honestly wouldn’t. There were many good times and plenty of tough times, and it all worked out. I am just so very fortunate.”

Matthew Simmons, MD, named VP of Medical Affairs

UPMC Western Maryland is pleased to introduce Matthew Simmons, MD, as its Vice President, Medical Affairs. Dr. Simmons was previously the Chief Infection Control Officer at City Hospital of West Virginia University in Martinsburg, where he also served as the director of the Infection Control Department.

Throughout his career, Dr. Simmons has been a leader in managing the care of infectious disease patients and has earned several awards, including Fellow of the Year in 2011 by WVU Hospitals/Robert C. Byrd Health Science Center.

“On behalf of our entire staff, I wish to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Simmons in his new role as UPMC Western Maryland’s Chief Medical Officer,” said President Michele Martz. “Dr. Simmons brings with



him years of leadership experience and a proven track record of elite medical expertise.”

Dr. Simmons completed his residency training in 2009 and his infectious disease fellowship in 2011, both at West Virginia University’s Ruby Memorial Hospital. He is also a 2005 graduate of Potomac State College, and in 2009 earned the college’s Young Alumni Achievement Award.

Oh Baby!

UPMC Western Maryland welcomed its first baby of the new year on January 1, at 8:35 a.m. Everly Laken Hitchins, daughter of Shayla and Travis Hitchins, arrived weighing in at 5 lbs. 14.8 ounces and measuring 17.5 inches long. Everly is the couple’s second child. Congratulations to the Hitchins family!



Foundation luminaries, donations light the way for healthcare heroes

With the holiday rush behind us, the WMHS Foundation is wrapping up a project that cast a ray of hope on a turbulent year. In early December, incoming President Michele Martz approached Foundation chief development officer Karen Johnson with an idea. Was there a way to encircle the hospital in light so that our dedicated employees would know that they are not alone? She wanted luminaries to convey a visible symbol of the care and support our community holds for our health care workers and the staff that support them. Karen responded enthusiastically, and the “Light the Way” Luminary project was born.

The community, who remained eager to find a way to demonstrate their support for our heroes, took to the idea immediately. As the Foundation promoted the project through local news and social media and vigorously plotted a logistics plan with the facilities department, donations began to roll in. They came in the form of funding, as well as meals and special treats. At every turn, generous hearts were finding ways to give to our Healthcare Heroes, which lifted morale at a very challenging time. In addition to funding and food donations, individuals like Ed Mullaney supplied holiday light displays to enhance the lighting ceremony, and Bishop Walsh students made

beautiful cards to encourage our workers. But perhaps the greatest gifts came in the form of heartfelt tributes to our heroes.

While the plan was to direct these funds toward feeding UPMC staff, the Foundation had already started to provide meals to various departments in response to the surge of COVID inpatients. With renewed emphasis, the Foundation turned to the Pastoral Care Department for help. Rev. Bruce McBride and staff joined hands to deliver lunches and an extra helping of encouragement to our fearless front line workers and the many who support them. Since mid-November, the Foundation and Pastoral Care have served nearly 1,500 meals and special treats to UPMC staff, thanks in large part to the generosity of residents in our community who have given more than \$10,000 to the Luminary campaign on top of the Foundation’s year-end Healthcare Heroes appeal.

When it came time for the luminaries, on December 23 in the approaching dusk, a small crowd gathered expectantly outside the cafeteria to witness the lighting of the UPMC Western Maryland campus. Karen Johnson thanked the community for its timely outpouring of gifts. “In a wonderful show of love from several sources, hundreds of luminaries were adopted by community members,” she said, “and some were adopted by employees

themselves to recognize their co-workers.” Karen then pointed to Michele Martz, whose vision created the event. “Surely, this is a harbinger of her respect and esteem for our staff,” she said.

At 5:30 p.m., Michele stepped up to the microphone. “In this season of light, we remember that each of our dedicated employees is a beacon of light to our patients and their families, who entrust us with their care. Starting tonight and for the next week, we want to lift up our health care workers with a reminder that they are not alone.”

Michele praised the staff of UPMC Western Maryland, calling them “a compassionate team who works tirelessly, generating thousands of patient experiences as stories of hope and healing unfold in our facilities, while they care for our friends, our families, and our community.” Then, counting down from ten, she threw the switch that lit up an array of glittering snowflakes and ornaments as 1,000 luminaries began to glow all around the hospital.

From an upper window, a nurse waved at Michele and Karen, smiling from behind her mask to show her gratitude. It was a magical moment and the culmination of a year of silver linings from a grateful community.



Incoming UPMC Western Maryland President Michele Martz and WMHS Foundation Chief Development Officer Karen Johnson organized a drive to light up the campus with luminaries for the holidays.





Governor Larry Hogan
13h · 🌐

The Moderna vaccine has arrived in Maryland, and is now being administered to front line healthcare workers at hospitals like [UPMC Western Maryland](#).

As laid out in our statewide vaccination plan, our earliest vaccinations are focused on our front line healthcare workers, the residents and staff of our nursing homes, as well as first responders. Maryland's total allotment now includes more than 191,000 total doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

We encourage Marylanders... [See More](#)



UPMC Western Maryland
14h · 🌐

Vaccination is officially underway at UPMC Western Maryland! Katie Cowan, RN, Manager of Employee Health, is shown giving the first vaccine to Randi Frye, a Registered Nurse in the Intensive Care Unit.

Five hundred doses of the Moderna vaccine arrived today and 1,400 more are expected later this week.

[#COVID19](#)



3.1K



1K Comments 193 Shares

UPMC | WESTERN MARYLAND

Social Media Spotlight

On December 21, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan's Twitter and Facebook feeds were quick to share the good news of UPMC Western Maryland staff members receiving some of the first Moderna COVID-19 vaccines in the entire state. The posts received thousands of views, shares and retweets, giving some much-deserved recognition to the team that made the vaccinations happen so flawlessly and quickly.



Governor Larry Hogan @GovLarryHogan · 13h

The Moderna vaccine has arrived in Maryland, and is now being administered to front line healthcare workers at hospitals like [@UPMCWesternMD](#).

UPMC Western Maryland @upmcwesternMD · 14h

Vaccination is officially underway at UPMC Western Maryland! Katie Cowan, RN, Manager of Employee Health, is shown giving the first vaccine to Randi Frye, a Registered Nurse in the Intensive Care Unit.





33 37 382

Follow Us!



2020

A YEAR OF **EXCITEMENT, PRIDE, FEAR AND RESILIENCE**



Affiliation with World-class University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

On February 1, 2020, WMHS integrated with UPMC, the fifth largest health system and one of the leading clinical research centers in the United States. UPMC has committed to enhance services and upgrade facilities at what is now known as UPMC Western Maryland. These investments by UPMC, along with investments that the WMHS Foundation has made and continues to make, will help ensure that UPMC Western Maryland will continue to provide state-of-the-art, quality health care for the community, as well as maintaining its position as one of the largest employers in the region for years to come.



Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

- Introduced the JITS Meet, a virtual visitation app that provides a free video chat for patients to connect with their families during restricted visitations.
- Implemented molecular testing to detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus using the Cepheid GeneXpert system to provide a quick turnaround time to make informed, quick treatment decisions.
- Provided special prayer and counseling sessions for staff during the pandemic, including a special Easter and Passover video for prayer and National Day of Prayer event blessing with the Archdiocese of Baltimore.
- Purchased and implemented Surfacide UV-C light technology to treat all COVID-19 discharge rooms and equipment, which provided additional protection against contamination.
- Incorporated telemedicine capability in primary care, urgent care and occupational health facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic and going forward.
- Honored UPMC Western Maryland employees through the Foundation's Healthcare Heroes campaign during the initial COVID-19 surge. With unanimous Foundation Board support, \$215,000 was approved to provide every employee with a \$100 Healthcare Heroes gift card.

Ongoing Recognition for Award-winning Health Care

- MAAPE Excellence Award
- Mission: Lifeline® NSTEMI Gold Quality Achievement Award as well as the Mission: Lifeline® STEMI Receiving Center Gold Quality Achievement Award
- U.S. News & World Report as a High Performing Hospital for COPD and heart failure care
- Gold Plus/Target: Stroke Honor Roll-Elite award from the American Heart Association
- American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer Accreditation
- Blue Distinction Center designation for Knee and Hip Replacement



12500 Willowbrook Road, Cumberland, MD 21502
240.964.7000 | [UPMCwesternmaryland.com](#)

THANK YOU TO OUR STAFF FOR WORKING TIRELESSLY AND CONTINUING TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY CARE TO OUR COMMUNITY DESPITE A CHALLENGING YEAR. YOU ARE ALL TRUE HEROES.