Baby Boom
Augusta Health delivers three sets of twins in one weekend

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
Quilts for a Cause
Still Cruising at 90
Flu Facts
Love Your Heart
Happy 2015! We rang in the New Year here at Augusta Health amid much excitement. As you will learn from our cover story, the Augusta Health Birthing Suite became the birthplace of three sets of twins over Halloween weekend. New babies offer such joy and the promise for the future, and our doctors and nurses could not have been prouder to help deliver these bundles of love.

Our first issue of Health Matters for 2015 offers a glimpse of how wonderful life can be at any age. One of our features is about Sue Hamilton, who rode a motorcycle on her 90th birthday after a bout with breast cancer. She reveals what makes Augusta Health the special place it is. We are a community hospital and, as such, we are here for people at all stages of their lives.

Speaking of wonderful people who come through our doors, in this issue we list the Augusta Health Foundation donors who have given to Shenandoah House, our hospice facility. We are thrilled to fill four pages with the names of these generous donors. Interested in giving to the Augusta Health Foundation? Visit augustahealth.com/foundation to learn more.

As you will learn in this issue, Augusta Health Hospice of the Shenandoah is also the recipient of beautiful quilts made by the Shenandoah Valley Quilters Guild.

In each issue, we feature remarkable people in our Day in the Life feature in the back of the magazine. This issue, we are pleased to introduce Mignon Holly, who enriches our human resources department. Two additional special employees featured in this issue are Marvella Rea, our newly named chief nursing officer, and Scott Just, MD, who was recently appointed associate chief medical officer. We are pleased to announce these new leaders in our ranks.

To celebrate the new year and all the expectation that it brings, we have a gift for you — the Health Matters 2015 calendar. It is packaged with this magazine. Each month features a different staff member or physician who practices at Augusta Health, along with a health tip and information about the particular department represented. We hope you use and enjoy this calendar all year long (and into 2016, as this is a 13-month calendar). Please don’t hesitate to use the contact numbers in the calendar for Augusta Health if a health need arises.

Best wishes for a happy and, above all, healthy winter!

Mary N. Mannix, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer
Augusta Health
## Community Matters

Guild makes and donates quilts to Augusta Health Hospice of the Shenandoah

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Rhonda Whitmer gives her recovery from spine surgery a kick
Good As New

Renovations at Augusta Health will refresh the hospital’s interior

Augusta Health has experienced many renovations recently and is planning more as part of the hospital’s master facility plan. The goal is to make the hospital a better-equipped, more comfortable space for patients and staff.

“Augusta Health is such a beautiful building,” says Lisa Cline, chief operating officer of Augusta Health. “And so we’re bringing that beauty inside as well, upgrading the inside to match the exterior.”

To that end, the hospital worked with an architectural design firm to evaluate the space in the hospital and make sure all the right services are in the right place. Areas that are on track to be renovated include the behavioral health inpatient unit, the ICU, the respiratory services area, the clinical engineering departments and more.

Currently, the second floor of the patient tower is being renovated, with plans for that to be finished in July 2015. Once that is completed, the third floor renovation will begin. A planned expansion of the Emergency Department will also begin in mid-2015.

Beyond the Augusta Health building itself, Augusta Health buildings that aren’t on the main campus are also seeing renovations. These include the new Waynesboro Outpatient Urgent Care Center, which has just been completed, and a new urgent and primary care building in Stuarts Draft that will be done in mid-2015.

Welcome to the Family

New family medicine practice joins Augusta Health

On Nov. 1, 2014, Thomas A. Shapcott, MD, and his family medicine practice became a part of the Augusta Health family. Dr. Shapcott has been practicing medicine in the Augusta County area for close to 30 years and has now decided to merge his practice with Augusta Health.

“He has treated generations of families in the area,” says Jackie Sims, primary care practice administrator for the Augusta Medical Group.

Family medicine practitioners like Dr. Shapcott provide comprehensive care to patients, covering a wide range of medical issues. The main difference between family physicians and other primary care providers is family physicians have been trained to treat ailments that can affect anyone in the family, whether they are newborn or elderly. Internal medicine physicians focus on diseases that affect adults.

Augusta Health Family Medicine, Staunton, where Thomas Shapcott, MD, is practicing, is currently accepting new patients. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (540) 886-1300.

Augusta Health Family Medicine, Staunton, is located at 1429 North Augusta St., Staunton, VA 24401.
Women’s Imaging Center at Augusta Health now has even more to offer

If you’ve visited the Augusta Health Women’s Imaging Center recently, you probably noticed that it has a new look. Renovations began in February 2014 and have increased the size of the center by 550 square feet. This added space made room for a new physician exam room that not only will help Augusta Health better serve patients being treated at the Center, but also will provide them with more privacy.

“We are focused on reducing what we call ‘sleepless nights,’” says Rader Dod, radiology director at Augusta Health. “Now that we’ve added this physician exam room, the surgeon can come down and do an exam of a patient who may be needing a biopsy the same day they had imaging done.”

Additionally, the Women’s Imaging Center purchased a machine that can take 3-D mammograms — called tomosynthesis — and hired a breast care coordinator, Kelly Brooks, who assists patients throughout their treatment at the center.

“With the coordinator, patients have resources and assistance so they can have peace of mind about getting an appointment with the surgeon or having follow-up appointments made,” says Dod. “She is also the hand-off person to our breast cancer coordinator, so she is the liaison to that next level of care.”

The Augusta Health Women’s Imaging Center has a new physician exam room, a tomosynthesis machine and a renovated lobby.

Learn more about Augusta Health Women’s Imaging Center at augustahealth.com/womens-imaging.
New wall honors Augusta Health employees

A new wall full of photos of Augusta Health employees was recently unveiled in the Augusta Health cafeteria to celebrate the hospital’s 20th anniversary. In displaying hundreds of pictures of Augusta Health employees, it also celebrates the hospital staff and the work they have put in over the past 20 years to make Augusta Health the hospital it is today.

The eight-foot wall features four sections that are each about four feet wide, and each section contains dozens of photos of Augusta Health employees. The photos were taken in March 2014 and include everything from traditional headshots to candid photos of employees in their everyday work environments.

“We took pictures of about 2,000 employees,” notes Lisa Schwenk, director of public relations and community outreach for Augusta Health. “I worked with a professional photographer and we drove around for three days to get pictures at all of our Augusta Health locations. Because we have many employees working at locations off the main hospital campus, we wanted to make sure all were represented.”

While not every employee can make it on the wall, it symbolizes the hard work of all Augusta Health employees. “For the 20th anniversary celebration, we wanted to provide a piece that focused on our employees because an organization is truly its people. And we wanted to celebrate the people who are at the heart and soul of everything we do,” says Schwenk.
Living the LIFE

Augusta Health launches new program to promote staff wellness

The people at Augusta Health know that a healthy staff is key to a well-functioning hospital. To promote healthy living among the employees at Augusta Health, the hospital started the Augusta LIFE Wellness Program, which will help employees be healthier and stay healthier.

The word LIFE in the program’s title is an acronym for Lifestyle, Individual responsibility, Fitness and Education. With these goals in mind, the program makes Augusta Health’s high-quality treatments and services available to employees.

“We have a tremendous fitness facility and talented staff who are experts in exercise and fitness programming,” says Dan O’Connor, vice president of human resources for Augusta Health. “We’ve won national accolades. So we want to capitalize on the human resources within that center and the knowledge base they have.”

Beyond fitness, the two other pillars of the program are nutritional services and education.

“We have the expertise internally here,” says O’Connor, “so we’ve created a structure that makes that expertise easily available to our workforce.”

If the program is a success, the plan is to use it as a stepping stone to a similar program for the Augusta Health community at large.

“What we want to do is build a model internally that is more robust than what we’ve had, and build that model with our own workforce so that eventually we’ll be able to carry it out to our community,” says O’Connor.

Turn to the calendar section on page 29 to see classes available at Augusta Health Lifetime Fitness.

Pharmaceutical Developments

Two new treatments for painful lung disease

Until last October, doctors treating a progressive, often-fatal lung condition called idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a chronic lung disease that causes pulmonary scarring, had few treatment options besides supportive care. There’s no one known cause and, thus far, no cure for the condition.

Now, though, there’s hope. Two drugs, recently approved by the FDA to treat IPF, are set to make a significant difference, says pulmonologist George Verghese, MD. The drugs, pirfenidone (Esbriet) and nintedanib (Ofev), are both anti-fibrotics, which work to slow the progression of the disease. While Esbriet and Ofev are not a cure, they offer the first effective medicines for IPF. Dr. Verghese saw improvement in patients during clinical trials on which he worked. He’s optimistic about the different care options that are now available, thanks to the new drugs. “We have a great team here for diagnosing IPF and other interstitial lung diseases, but that’s just the first step,” says Dr. Verghese. Thanks to these drugs, he says, “we can now offer more hope for patients suffering from this disease.”

What Is IPF?

Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) affects about 80,000 people in the United States. More men than women develop IPF, and the incidence increases with age. Symptoms include a persistent, dry cough and shortness of breath. As lung tissue thickens, the lungs become less efficient at moving oxygen into the bloodstream, which in turn means the brain and vital organs don’t get the oxygen they need. Scarring and symptoms worsen over the years, and all doctors have been able to do is provide oxygen or, in rare cases, offer a lung transplant. IPF is often fatal. Correct diagnosis and treatment of IPF and other interstitial lung diseases require experienced pulmonary specialists, says Augusta Health pulmonologist George Verghese, MD.
The doctor is in

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What can I do to stay healthy this winter?

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While winter can often be a time filled with celebration with friends and family, the weather that comes along with the season is rarely as fun. Colder and drier air coupled with the cold and flu season can cause all kinds of problems for your health. In addition, the darker days can spell trouble for your mood. Here are a few ways you can make sure you stay healthy and balanced this season.

One tried-and-true piece of advice for avoiding germs and sickness is to wash your hands regularly. Touching your mucous membranes — in your mouth, nose or eyes — when you have germs on your hands is one of the easiest ways to get sick. Washing your hands, especially before you eat, will decrease your chances of getting sick this way.

Cold temperatures can be dangerous in and of themselves. If you experience extreme cold for too long, issues like hypothermia or frostbite could occur. Make sure you have a winter emergency kit with you in your car when you’re driving this winter, just in case you get stranded. This should include items such as blankets, jumper cables, a flashlight with extra batteries, a small amount of food and water and a first-aid kit. Also, try to make a habit of bringing winter clothing and a cellphone with you every time you head out.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. It is common for many people to experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a subtype of depression that can cause changes in mood and behavior during the winter months. Some ways to avoid it include managing stress, maintaining a well-balanced diet and exercising. Managing stress might include interacting with friends or meditating. A well-balanced diet entails eating plenty of fruits and vegetables and avoiding foods filled with simple sugars. It is well known that exercise — both the cardiovascular type and weight training — helps to improve mood.

While the weather might be daunting — both physically and mentally — one trick to enjoying the season is to spend time outside. So don’t be afraid to bundle up and brave the harsher temperatures. You might just find yourself having a good time.

Thomas A. Shapcott, MD, is on staff at Augusta Health Family Medicine, Staunton.

To make an appointment, call (540) 886-1300.
While shoveling snow may be something you do out of necessity, rather than for fun or exercise, it can still take a physical toll on your body. As anyone who has lived through a rough winter can attest, shoveling snow is hard work. If you don’t treat it as such, you could end up hurting yourself.

One of the most common medical issues that snow shoveling can trigger is heart attack. In fact, according to Harvard Medical School, emergency rooms often gear up when a large winter storm hits, in preparation for more heart attack patients than usual. For people who rarely exercise, picking up the shovel to clear out the driveway might hasten a cardiac event. If you are at risk for heart disease or are over the age of 50, talk to your doctor about shoveling before you do it. Hiring a neighborhood kid to shovel for you or using a snowblower are good options for avoiding the exertion of shoveling.

When you do shovel, treat it as you would any other physical activity, such as going to the gym or playing a sport. Warm up beforehand by stretching so that your muscles are ready for the strain, and when you do start shoveling, take it slowly and don’t overload your shovel with snow.

Just like with other exercises, using proper form is also important to avoid injuries. For example, lift with your knees rather than your back, and avoid sudden twists of your body. This means turning around and putting a foot forward when you’re throwing snow off your shovel, rather than leaving your feet planted and tossing the snow behind your back. If you’re starting to hurt, take a break, or even better, take short breaks throughout to head off pain altogether.
Halloween usually brings out little ghouls and goblins (and more than a few Batmans and princesses), but this year, it also seemed to bring out twins.

On Halloween weekend, three sets of twins were born at Augusta Health over a roughly 24-hour period, making for a flurry of activity in obstetrics. The charge nurse on duty, Dylan Fix, happens to have twins herself, so when she came in on Saturday morning, following the Halloween holiday, and learned that twins had been born the night before, she was delighted.

“Because I had twins just a little over three years ago, I have a soft spot for twin births, and I love taking care of those patients and their babies,” she says.

When a second patient, Shelby Thomas, came in on Saturday morning, Fix began the process of getting her on a monitor and alerting another nurse. With single-baby births, Augusta Health usually has two nurses in the room, along with a doctor.

For twins, they have three nurses and often bring in a fourth to be a helper. With the other twins born the night before, and three other women in labor, the floor was getting busy, but Fix had no idea that it was about to get even more lively.

While getting Thomas comfortable, another nurse rushed in. “She told me that as crazy as the weekend was already, it was about to get crazier, because another patient with twins was on her way in,” Fix recalls. “My jaw dropped.”

The hospital has had two twin births in a 12-hour period before, but never three patients with twins in such a short time frame. Fix says with a laugh, “I would have been fine not breaking that record.”

More treats than tricks over Halloween weekend as three sets of twins are born at Augusta Health

Speedy Delivery
Making the moment even more exciting, Thomas started delivering after only about two hours of labor.

“I’d definitely call it crazy,” says Thomas. “But the nurses were so great. They helped me when I needed it, and were so supportive during and after the surgery. It was a wonderful experience.”

Thomas had been scheduled for a C-section on Nov. 20, so the early delivery caught her by surprise. But Halloween had a little something to do with it, she believes. She and her fiancé, Luke, were visiting a local house decorated for

Shelby Thomas and her family
the holiday, and a child dressed as a grim reaper jumped out as they walked past the front yard. Thomas had thought it was a lawn decoration, so the scare startled her. “Right then, I knew,” she says, laughing. “That little kid scared the pants off me, and I thought: this is going to do it. Those babies are on their way.”

Although they might have been prompted by a junior reaper, her twins, Martin and Geoffrey, have been little angels ever since, she notes. Like many twins, they can’t stand being separated, so Thomas swaddles them together, and makes sure they’re touching when she feeds them — if they aren’t, they refuse to eat. “It’s funny how connected they are, it’s almost like they blink together,” she says.

“Really, they are the most amazing, precious, awesome gift ever,” Thomas notes. “I guess I owe that little grim reaper a thank you!”

“[The nurses] helped me when I needed it. It was a wonderful experience.”

Shelby Thomas

Comfortable Surroundings

The Birthing Suite offers maternity care for labor, delivery, recovery and postpartum (LDRP) in cozy rooms overlooking the mountains and farmland. Single rooms for LDRP are a special feature of the Birthing Suite and offer privacy and comfort. Other amenities of the suite include:

**Ten Labor Rooms:** These spacious and newly refurbished rooms have Jacuzzi tubs where moms can soak in tranquility and comfort during labor.

**Rooming In:** Mom and her newborn can bond during the entire stay. The nursing staff will be available to care for mom and baby right in the room. There is also a fully staffed nursery.

**Lactation Consultant:** If moms have questions about breastfeeding, they can get advice from a lactation consultant and specially trained staff members.

The Birthing Suite at Augusta Health is open 24 hours a day on the third floor of the hospital. To learn more, call (540) 332-4360.
Two years ago, Lori Abbott-Herrick’s dear friend Alan was in hospice care, and she tried to think of ways to support him and his family during such a difficult time. So she took up her needle and thread.

As part of the Shenandoah Valley Quilters Guild, she knew the organization had done many community service projects in the past, and as service chair at the time, she was able to pick the next project. She proposed making quilts for area hospice care, including Augusta Health Hospice of the Shenandoah, and the other quilters were very enthusiastic.

“I felt strongly about bringing this to the group because I believe hospice will touch all of our lives at some point,” says Abbott-Herrick. “This seemed a wonderful way to show people in hospice care and their families that people care about them and their pain. We wanted them to feel comforted and supported.”

Unfortunately, Alan passed away a week before his quilt was finished, but Abbott-Herrick notes that his nine children now pass the quilt on to each other, as a way to remember their father.

His family isn’t the only one to hold that tradition; the guild’s current service chair, Denise Rudolph, says it’s very common for family members to display the quilts or to share them among multiple family members, as a way to honor loved ones who’ve been in hospice care.
Quilt Donations
Since the program started in 2011, the guild has donated over 100 quilts to hospice programs in the area. Usually the quilts are lap-sized so that patients can put them on their beds, although some choose to hang them in the room as a way to make the space feel more like home.

For hospice patients who are veterans of the military, the guild creates quilts in red, white and blue colors, and Rudolph says those and the other quilts are always well received.

“People always send us thank-you cards and letters and tell us how much these quilts mean for their family, and that inspires us,” says Rudolph. Recently, she arranged a show of service quilts and sent a note out to everyone who’d received one through the hospice program. She expected a few dozen quilts to be sent on loan but ended up with over 90 of them.

“That was amazing, and I think it shows how people are grateful for the quilts, and how much they treasure them,” she says.

Several artisans usually touch the quilt, with one person creating a top, another quilting it and a third finishing off the binding. One quilt goes through many hands, Rudolph says, making the program feel even more like a community effort.

In the past year, the guild has also joined with a church group that makes cloth dolls for terminally ill children. The group creates tiny, doll-sized quilts that match patients’ quilts, and hospice nurses have noted that these are especially comforting for patients with dementia or those who are particularly agitated.

“We’ve done many service projects as a guild, but this feels like one of the most worthwhile,” says Rudolph.

Learn more about Shenandoah Valley Quilters Guild at svqg.org. The group meets on the third Saturday of each month in Harrisonburg.
Joy Ride

Augusta Health patient rides through cancer treatment in style

Sue Hamilton jokes that she’s too young to be having health problems. “I’m only 90,” she says, with a laugh. “I’m not ready to be an old lady.”

For her 90th birthday party, she rode in on the back of her grandson’s motorcycle, waving happily to friends and family, feeling just as playful and sassy as ever. The sight was made especially remarkable considering what she’d experienced only six months earlier.

In early December 2013, Hamilton came into Augusta Health for a visit with her physician, Barbara Fenton, MD, to check on her shortness of breath, an issue she’d struggled with earlier in the year. Previously, she’d had a blood clot in her leg, and Dr. Fenton found another one during the checkup, so the doctor suggested they check for an underlying cancer that might be predisposing her to clots.

Her test results came back with troubling news: breast cancer, which would require immediate surgery. She had a lumpectomy, followed by hormonal therapy. She also spent numerous appointments at the infusion center to help treat blood clots in her leg and left lung.

Through all the procedures, and subsequent recovery, Hamilton felt that her physician was right by her side, constantly checking on her progress.

“Dr. Fenton is a precious person, in addition to being a fantastic doctor,” says Hamilton, adding that she felt comforted by every staff member she encountered at Augusta Health, from the young valet parking attendants to the attentive volunteers.

“It’s like being on vacation,” she says with a laugh. “You get your own room, folks to talk to and people smiling at you all the time. There is an atmosphere of caring there that you can feel.”

Never feeling alone during treatment or recovery is a crucial part of healing, notes Dr. Fenton, especially for older people who often struggle with multiple health issues.

“When you think about what health in our society should be, it’s all about freedom,” Dr. Fenton says. “That might be the freedom that comes from doing the right surgery, or finding the right medication, or simply using a walker instead of being in a wheelchair. We want to do everything we can to make sure patients are free to explore the world.”

She adds that Augusta Health epitomizes care that’s delivered by a community, with that strong emphasis on patient freedom. “You can say any hospital system might have provided the same treatment,” she says. “But here, we put such emphasis on really being there to listen to the patient and on making sure they feel like individuals and that they’re not alone.”

The motorcycle ride that Hamilton took for her birthday was more than a zesty way to enter a party, she says; it felt like the ending to a harrowing medical journey. But like all great journeys, it led to home.

“What a ride this has been,” she says. “But I feel so blessed. I received excellent care, and all with encouraging smiles and genuine concern to my needs and comfort. Now, because of the good care I received, I am home and feeling great!”

Learn more about cancer treatment at Augusta Health at augustahealth.com/cancer-center.
Employees in the Spotlight

Promoting from within an organization — rewarding employees who have proven their worth and shared their talents over the years — feels like an obvious move. It makes even more sense when the organization is a community hospital like Augusta Health, which has built its reputation on caring for folks close to home. Two valued Augusta Health employees recently received well-deserved promotions: Marvella Rea, named vice president and chief nursing officer, and Scott Just, MD, appointed associate chief medical officer.

“Like organizations all over the country, we look for leaders who have the talent to lead, who can transition seamlessly into their new responsibilities, who are looking to build an effective culture and who are invested in our community,” says Augusta Health President and CEO Mary Mannix. “It can take a long time to find someone who can create that special synergy among staff, other departments in the organization and the community outside our walls. It is exciting and gratifying when, such as in the case of Marvella Rea and Scott Just, we find that someone — already invested in the community, understanding of our mission and committed to our team of employees — whose skills have been developed and nurtured throughout their career here at Augusta Health.”

The position of chief nursing officer puts Rea in charge of all the nurses at Augusta Health, as well as initiatives to improve and streamline nursing and patient care. When Rea got her first job as a registered nurse at Augusta Health 28 years ago, she was actually working at Kings Daughters Hospital (one of two facilities that merged to form Augusta Health in 1994). She may not have been envisioning a future time when she’d be in charge of the entire nursing program at Augusta, but she did know one thing: She loved working in a community hospital, her community hospital. “I’m from this area,” Rea says. “I’ve lived here all my life. I understand the culture, I know the values, and I feel that’s important for a leader.”

Likewise, Dr. Just, who received his appointment this past October, wasn’t thinking of a future in administration when he was hired on at Augusta Health in 1999 as an emergency-room physician. In 2008, he became chair of the department of emergency medicine, and president of Augusta Emergency Physicians. Energized by this increased administrative role, he felt he’d best serve the hospital and his patients if he got a business degree. While still working full-time, he earned an MBA from the Darden School at the University of Virginia in 2014.

The associate chief medical officer, working with the chief medical officer, works to improve the quality and safety of care at the hospital, as well as helping ensure that Augusta continues to hire well-credentialed professionals.

“I was a little surprised at first,” he says, describing his reaction after being appointed. “Although it was something I had thought about, I knew it was a great opportunity, and I jumped at the chance.”
In mid-August, 46-year-old registered nurse Rhonda Whitmer went to the gym, hoping to stretch out muscles in her leg, which had been bothering her for a few weeks. After her usual workout routine, she tried some strength training by holding “plank pose” for a few minutes—a move that looks like the start of pushup—and when she was done, she realized she couldn’t walk.

“To say it was terrifying is an understatement,” she recalls. “One minute I’d just been having some sciatic issues and leg pain, and the next I couldn’t get off the floor.”

In the emergency room, Whitmer found out she had a cyst in her spine, lodged between her L4 and L5 vertebrae. At first she thought that surgery would be simple: a quick incision, cyst removal and a few weeks of recovery. But Matthew Pollard, MD, at the Augusta Health Spine Clinic knew that the solution wasn’t so easy.

“He had me in his office on a Monday and operated three days later,” she says. “If he hadn’t acted so quickly, it definitely would have compromised my ability to walk.” The cyst was one of the largest that Dr. Pollard had seen, requiring major surgery and a spinal fusion.

Because the time frame from ER visit to surgery was so short, Whitmer feels like she didn’t have time to contemplate what might have happened if she hadn’t come to Augusta Health. But she did realize, even in such a medical whirlwind, the importance of the support she was receiving.

“They say nurses make the worst patients, and in my case, that’s absolutely true,” says Whitmer with a laugh. “I gave Dr. Pollard and his staff a run for their money because I’m so stubborn. But they embraced me, literally and figuratively. They’re all amazing.”

Because Whitmer is a nurse and her husband is a firefighter and medic, the couple was aware of the risks that come with surgery, and with spinal surgery specifically.
We know more than we probably want to know about what can go wrong,” she says.

**Finding Solace**

With three children, they were nervous about Whitmer’s recovery process. But the Spine Clinic provided much relief and comfort and eased their fears, she says. Dr. Pollard and other staff members called often to check on her progress and make sure she had what she needed.

She goes to Augusta Health for recovery services like physical therapy, and although she’d like her progress to be faster, she knows that slow and steady progress is winning the race.

“The recovery has been a long process, and I have to admit that I get frustrated because I’m strong-willed and want to be back in the gym and working out as hard as I used to,” she says. “But Dr. Pollard keeps saying I just need to be patient. He’s been right about everything else, so I should probably take those words to heart.” With a laugh, she adds, “Believe me, I’m trying.”

Whitmer moves more slowly than she used to but improves a bit more every day, she says. Even though the surgery required major incisions down much of her back and around her right hip, those are healing well, too.

Before that fateful moment at the gym, Whitmer had never even had a backache, so now, months later, she’s still in disbelief at how much has happened. But she’s grateful to Augusta Health for the care she’s received.

“I was never treated like I was just a bunch of symptoms. I always felt like an individual who had a voice,” she says. “They made me feel like a priority, and I knew that they cared about me, every step of the way.”

Find out about the Augusta Health Spine Clinic at [augustahealth.com/amg/spine-clinic](http://augustahealth.com/amg/spine-clinic).
While the holidays are a key part of winter, there’s another event this season that is hard to ignore: flu season. Fortunately, Augusta Health has a comprehensive vaccination program that’s working to protect the community as well as the hospital’s employees. Here are questions and answers about what’s in store for this season:

What does the flu vaccine cover?
According to Allison Baroco, MD, in Augusta Health’s Infection Control Department, this year’s flu vaccine contains protection against Influenza A (both H3N2 and H1N1) and Influenza B. The vaccine is available at many locations this year, including Augusta Health’s Convenient Care Clinics, Urgent Care and local physician offices.

What has Augusta Health put in place for greater vaccination rates?
Augusta Health usually begins its vaccination program in October, but doctors saw one confirmed flu case during the last week of September, which prompted the hospital to start vaccinations earlier than expected. Since then, there were some additional cases of Influenza A and B in October. That type of early flu trend makes it especially important for people to get vaccinated sooner rather than later, Dr. Baroco notes.

“We’ve been working to get the word out about the benefits of the flu vaccine, and to do everything we can to educate and support the community,” she says. “This year, there’s been a lot of attention paid to Ebola, but your chances of getting that disease are extremely small, and there’s no vaccination for it. However, your risk of getting the flu is something that should be taken seriously.”

Fast Facts
According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, here are some quick facts worth noting about the influenza virus:

- Flu seasons are unpredictable in terms of the timing, severity and length of the season, and usually vary from one season to another.
- Flu viruses are constantly changing so it’s not unusual for new viruses to appear each year.
- Usually, flu activity peaks in the United States between December and February, but can begin as early as October and extend until May.
- Children younger than 6 months are at higher risk of serious flu complications, but are too young to get a flu vaccine.

That makes it especially important for those who are caring for infants to get the vaccine.

- It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body to provide protection against the flu.
- Influenza vaccine manufacturers are projecting that as many as 155 million doses of flu vaccine will be available for this flu season.
To help promote the vaccinations, Augusta Health has partnered with the local health department, and provided information to the media in an effort to emphasize the importance of vaccination.

If I’m healthy, do I still need a vaccination?
Vaccinations work because of a concept called “herd immunity.” That means if a significant portion of a population or community is immunized, infection can be controlled because there are fewer people who will be affected by the disease. Herd immunity is crucial for protecting those who would be hardest hit by the flu, such as babies under 6 months old, who are too young for immunization.

Vaccination is also vital for individual wellness, Dr. Baroco adds. Even in healthy individuals, there’s risk that the flu could lead to serious complications that could require hospitalization. Also, there are genetic and environmental factors that can heighten your risk, which means that you can be perfectly healthy and still get hit hard by this year’s flu.

“Unfortunately, we have no way of predicting who will have a minimal reaction to the flu and who will end up in intensive care,” says Dr. Baroco. “Having generally good health isn’t a protection.”

However, there are some groups who are particularly at risk, she adds. Women in their third trimester of pregnancy often have very bad responses to the flu, for example, and people who are obese tend to have more complications if they come down with the flu as well.

What is Augusta Health doing to make sure employees and their families are vaccinated?
Every year, Augusta Health offers free vaccinations to employees, and also offers to cover employee family members to increase immunity across the community. Gail Johnson of Employee Health notes that last year’s vaccination rate was 85.2 percent, and the hospital is aiming for 90 percent this year. Those who opt out of vaccination must wear a mask if they have direct patient contact.

Johnson says that the hospital doesn’t mandate vaccination, since it tends to get higher compliance if it’s offered free on a volunteer basis. “We don’t want the flu vaccine to be seen as a negative, so we try to emphasize the benefits and create plenty of opportunities for employees to come in when they want,” she says, adding that the vaccine the hospital uses is preservative-free, in case people have concerns about those ingredients. Egg-free vaccine is also available for staff who require it.

The hospital recently held a big vaccination event for employees and their family members, and ended up vaccinating 574 people in one day. Johnson says that everyone was exhausted the next day, but the event’s success made it worth the effort. Employee Health will continue to create events and incentives for vaccination, and Johnson is confident that Augusta’s vaccination rate will keep climbing. “We’ll do this until we run out of vaccine,” Johnson says. “We will do our best to make sure vaccine is available.”

Flu Basics
There are many misconceptions about flu vaccines. Here are the facts:

• The flu shot can’t give you the flu. The vaccine takes about two weeks to provide full protection, so if you get the flu within that timeframe, it’s likely you were exposed to the flu virus just before getting the shot or soon after. Or you may have been exposed to a flu virus that’s different from the viruses covered by this year’s vaccination.

• Side effects can seem like the flu. Sometimes the flu shot can cause low-grade fever, headache or muscle aches. Usually, though, most people experience only minor side effects like tenderness or redness where the shot was given.

• You should get the flu shot even if you’re healthy. Some people believe that they can skip the flu shot because they rarely get sick, but the purpose of vaccination isn’t just for individual health. You can carry the virus without showing any symptoms, or even getting sick. And you can pass the virus on to those who would be more affected by the flu, such as people with compromised immune systems, young children or older adults.

• The flu vaccine is recommended yearly. Even if the viruses covered in last year’s shot are the same as this year, it’s recommended that you renew your vaccination yearly because your immune protection can decline over time.

To receive your flu vaccination, simply stop in at any of Augusta Health’s Urgent Care or Convenient Care facilities.
Augusta Health is fortunate to have numerous donors supporting the Augusta Health Foundation, a community-centered program that helps us expand patient services.

In this issue of Health Matters, we highlight donors who have given to Hospice of the Shenandoah, which provides comfort, care and support for terminally ill patients and their families. Those who donate to Augusta Health Foundation and restrict funds to hospice are often people whose lives have been touched by hospice caregivers.

“We are so grateful for those who decide to give back after a loved one has passed,” says Tami Radecke, director of the Augusta Health Foundation. “What a wonderful tribute to the caregivers and physicians, and to everyone else who works with hospice patients every day.” The hospice has a long history of contributors in the community, she adds, and that support is invaluable.

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Special thanks to all donors for their generous support of our hospice programs. While every effort has been made to list correctly all donors, we sometimes make mistakes. We apologize for any errors and would appreciate your bringing them to our attention. Please contact the Foundation office at (540) 932-5174 or AFHFoundation@augustahealth.com. Thank you.
What do you get when you bring nine third-year medical students to a community hospital for their training? Thanks to a new partnership between Augusta Health and the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM), launched in July 2014, what you get is a unique way for students to get intense, hands-on bedside experiences. You also receive expert supervision by physicians and other hospital personnel, and a true taste of what community hospitals do, see and handle every day.

While all medical students typically complete hospital rotations as part of their third and fourth years, the Augusta Health/VCOM partnership is different in one major way: “We are able to provide cutting-edge academic and clinical teaching to students, but because we are a community hospital, the atmosphere is more familial than they’d see at a large, tertiary-care academic medical center,” explains Aristides Avgeris, MD, an Augusta Health hospitalist. “We [at Augusta Health] have wanted to get more involved in medical-student education for some time, and this is our first commitment to medical education on a formal, large scale.”

The students certainly benefit. Rather than labor under a hierarchy of attending physicians, residents and other medical students, these third-years work one-on-one with preceptors (physician supervisors) in each of their rotations, and as such are directly and intimately involved in patient care, says Michelle Mason-Pedigo, Augusta Health’s medical education coordinator, who is working to add fourth-year VCOM students to the mix next year.

“Students spend four weeks in each of 10 rotations — from OB-GYN and pediatrics to surgery, internal medicine 1 & 2, geriatrics, psychiatry, rural underserved primary care and family medicine,” she says.

In that time, the students are truly living the life of a doctor, performing screenings and discussing patient-care plans with their preceptors. “The way the rotations are structured, each of the core, mandatory rotations has an accompanying didactic portion, in the form of online modules and lectures that are provided by VCOM,” explains Dr. Avgeris. “The students cover the book material, the theory online, and take an exam at the end of each rotation. That leaves the preceptors overseeing them free to devote all their time to clinical, bedside teaching.”

Students aren’t the only ones who derive a measurable benefit from the program. Augusta Health physicians are eager to be involved for the simple reason that it offers them a chance to give back. “Most physicians feel a certain amount of nostalgia and indebtedness to their own mentors,” explains Dr. Avgeris.

Augusta Health as a whole stands to benefit too: “We see the program as a way to involve students in the community and hopefully form relationships here, so that they want to come back and contribute to the community and be part of it,” he says.

At the hospital, the perception of the students has been positive; both patients and staff have good things to say about their efforts. Dr. Avgeris has worked closely with four students thus far. “They are earnest, devoted students,” he notes. “They impress me with their initiative, and they’ve been gracious to patients, as well.”
Cholesterol: Friend or Foe?

That waxy substance in our bodies known as cholesterol has a mixed reputation. Learn about why it is perceived so and how it affects our hearts.

The American Heart Association recommends all adults age 20 or older have a cholesterol test every four to six years (depending on your individual risk; talk to your doctor). Here’s what’s behind the numbers:

**Total blood (or serum) cholesterol**

This is calculated by adding your LDL and HDL numbers, plus 20 percent of your triglyceride levels.

- **HDL (good) cholesterol**: This form of cholesterol is more protective against heart disease. Quitting smoking, losing weight and getting a good amount of physical activity can help raise this level.

- **LDL (bad) cholesterol**: You want this number to be lower than your HDL number, but new guidelines from the American Heart Association say that it’s better to keep this number low for you, rather than trying to hit a certain universal number.

- **Triglycerides**: This is the most common type of fat in the body. There’s no “normal” number, as it varies by age and gender. But if you have high triglycerides combined with low HDL and high LDL, you’re at greater risk of atherosclerosis.

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  \[ <180 \text{ mg/dL} \]

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Thinking about love and romance is easy this month, with Valentine’s Day cards, flowers and candy everywhere you look. But give some thought to your actual, beating heart this February, the month dedicated as Heart Health Month. It’s smart to do so, given that it’s the No. 1 cause of death in the United States, for both men and women, beating out cancer. Here’s what you need to know about keeping your heart healthy, now and in the future.

Heart Disease 101
Not one condition but a constellation of them, heart disease (also known as coronary artery disease) usually arises from a buildup of plaque inside the walls of the arteries. As plaque builds up, the arteries narrow, impeding blood flow. If the arteries feeding the heart become too restricted, the heart — which is a muscle — doesn’t get enough oxygen, leading to a heart attack (also called a myocardial infarction). If not treated promptly, a heart attack could result in parts of the heart muscle dying.

One example of lifesaving critical treatment is cardiac catheterization, during which a thin catheter is inserted into a blood vessel in the groin, and threaded up toward the heart. There, a balloon is gently inflated that opens up blocked arteries enough to restore blood flow to the heart.

Will You Get Heart Disease?
Many factors play into an individual’s risk for heart disease/heart attack. The American Heart Association separates risk factors into major risk factors that can’t be changed, major risk factors that you can alter to an often significant extent with lifestyle changes, and other factors. Here’s a quick summary:

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Cardiac catheterization treatment involves threading a catheter through blood vessels toward the heart where a balloon inflates and opens blocked arteries.

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Not one condition but a constellation of them, heart disease usually arises from a buildup of plaque inside the walls of the arteries.
Heart Attack: Know the Signs!

If you’re having a heart attack, getting immediate medical attention could save your life and save heart muscle. It’s important to know the signs of heart attack so you can seek help, pronto. Those signals often don’t mimic what you might imagine (or have seen on TV), such as a sharp pain in your chest. Be aware of the following:

Chest Discomfort: You may feel pain in your chest, but heart attacks more commonly involve a feeling of acute discomfort, or often intense pressure in the center of the chest. Heart attack sufferers have described a feeling of having an elephant sitting on their chest.

Upper Body Pain: You may feel pain in your left arm (or both arms), the back, the neck and/or the jaw.

Difficulty Breathing: Pain and discomfort as described above combined with shortness of breath is another telltale heart attack signal.

Other Signs: You may break out in a cold sweat, or feel nauseous or light-headed.

Major factors you can’t change:

- **Being male**: Men are more prone to heart disease than women, and at younger ages, statistically. Though a woman’s risk increases after menopause, that rate is still lower than a man’s at the same age.

- **Advancing age**: About 82 percent of people who die of coronary heart disease are 65 or older.

- **Heredity**: Your risk is higher if your parents had heart disease. You also have a higher risk if you’re African-American, Mexican-American or Native American. While you can’t control heredity, you can use your higher risk as motivation to change certain lifestyle factors (see below).

Major factors you change:

- **Smoking**: Tobacco smokers have a risk of developing coronary artery disease that is two to four times greater than that of nonsmokers, according to the American Heart Association.

- **High blood pressure**: This is a measure of how hard your heart is pumping. If your blood pressure is too high (meaning your cardiovascular system is working too hard), your heart muscle thickens and become stiffer, which over time (especially in combination with other risk factors) significantly raises your heart-attack risk.

- **Cholesterol level**: High blood cholesterol, especially in conjunction with other risk factors (smoking, high blood pressure), raises your heart-attack risk.

**Diabetes**: Having this condition raises your risk of heart disease, even more so if your blood-sugar levels are not well controlled.

**Weight/Obesity**: People who have excess body fat — especially if a lot of it is at the waist — are more likely to develop heart disease and stroke even if they have no other risk factors.

**Physical inactivity**: Keeping active (experts recommend at least 30 minutes a day, either at once or split up throughout the day) can help control blood cholesterol, lower blood pressure, stave off diabetes and control your weight.

**Other factors**:

- **Alcohol use**: Drinking in moderation has been shown to be good for heart health (that means no more than two drinks per day for men and one for women). But drinking in excess raises blood pressure and contributes to obesity.

- **Diet/nutrition**: Keeping caloric intake in check is important for weight control, but what you choose to eat also contributes to heart health. Choose nutrient-rich foods: fresh vegetables and fruit, whole grain and high-fiber foods, lean meat and fish, and healthy fat such as olive oil, nuts and avocados. Limit salt, trans fats and highly processed foods.

- **Stress**: In some people, stress may increase the risk for heart disease, probably because it may trigger poor habits such as overeating and smoking.

Learn about Augusta Health’s Cardiovascular Department at [augustahealth.com/heart-and-vascular](http://augustahealth.com/heart-and-vascular).
Creamy Squash Soup

Recipe

Ingredients
2 boxes (16 oz. each) frozen pureed winter (butternut) squash
1 Tbsp olive oil
½ tsp pumpkin pie spice
2 cans (12 oz. each) fat-free evaporated milk
¼ tsp salt
dash ground black pepper

Tip: For chunkier soup, try two bags (14 oz. each) frozen diced butternut squash. Or cut a fresh butternut into small chunks, and place in a microwave-safe dish covered with 1 inch of water. Microwave on high for 5–10 minutes, or until squash is tender and can be easily pierced with a fork. Remove skin. Place squash in blender until desired consistency.

Directions
1. Place the frozen squash in a microwave-safe dish. Cover loosely. Defrost in the microwave on medium power for 5–10 minutes, until mostly thawed.
2. Warm oil in a 4-quart saucepan over medium heat.
3. Add thawed squash and pumpkin pie spice. Stir.
4. Add the evaporated milk about ½ cup at a time, stirring after each addition.
5. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Cook and stir over high heat just until soup is about to boil.
7. Ladle into individual soup bowls. Sprinkle with additional pumpkin pie spice, if desired. Serve with a crisp green salad and crusty whole-wheat bread.

Yield 4 servings
Calories 287
Total fat 4 g
Saturated fat 1 g
Cholesterol 7 mg
Sodium 370 mg
Total fiber 2.5 g
Protein 18 g
Carbohydrates 50 g
Potassium 1,044 mg
classes, groups and events at Augusta Health

AUGUSTA HEALTH LIFETIME FITNESS 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/lifetime-fitness. For more information, call Heather Moneymaker, group fitness coordinator at Lifetime Fitness, at (540) 332-5571.

Yoga Classes
Basic: Mondays, 5:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, 9 a.m.; Thursdays, 9 a.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m.
Beginner: Thursdays, 5:30 p.m.
Intermediate: Tuesdays, 7:30 a.m.
Advanced: Wednesdays, 11 a.m.
Therapeutic/Rehabilitative
Aqua Classes
Aqua Lite: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 9 a.m.; 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, 4:45 p.m. (Therapy Pool)
Range of Motion (ROM): Mondays, Fridays, 11 a.m. (Therapy Pool)
Zumba Dance
When: Mondays, 9:15 a.m.; Tuesdays, 10:15 a.m.; Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.; Thursdays, 1:15 p.m.; Advanced/Beginner, 5:30 p.m.; Fridays — Intermediate, 12:15 p.m., Beginner/Intermediate, 5:30 p.m.
TRX Suspension Small Group Training Class
When: Tuesdays — Intermediate/Advanced, 6 a.m.; Wednesdays — Intermediate, 12:15 p.m., Beginner/Intermediate, 5:30 p.m.; Fridays — Intermediate, 12:15 p.m.
Information: Call Heather Moneymaker at (540) 332-5571 or email her at hmoneymaker@augustahealth.com.

Tai Chi
Cancer Recovery: Tuesdays, 6:45 p.m.
Free to cancer recovery patients; sponsored by Augusta Health Cancer Center.
Arthritis and Diabetes: Tuesdays, 11:15 a.m.
Beginner: Wednesdays, 11 a.m.
Intermediate: Thursdays, 11:15 a.m.
Advances: Tuesdays, 7:45 a.m.

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

Les Mills Body Combat
When: Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m.; Thursdays, 5:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. See schedule, which can be found at augustahealth.com/lifetime-fitness, for exact dates.

Martial Arts
Extra fee, class passes excluded.
Beginner: Mondays, Wednesdays, 7–8 p.m.
Intermediate: Mondays, Wednesdays, 8–9 p.m.
Cost: $55 a month for members, $85 for non-members.

Aquatic Classes
Aqua Power: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 7:45 a.m.; Tuesdays, 9 a.m.; Mondays, 4:45 p.m. (Fitness Pool)
Aqua Express: Thursdays, 4:45 p.m.
Deep Water Conditioning: Mondays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. (Fitness Pool)
Aqua Boot Camp: Mondays, 5:45 p.m.; Tuesdays, 7:45 a.m. (Fitness Pool)

RxEX Program — now available on land or in the water!
What: This monitored medical exercise program offered at Lifetime Fitness is by physician referral only. It is an eight-week exercise program with pre- and post-course health evaluations. Participants will exercise twice a week with staff and have access to Lifetime Fitness throughout the eight weeks. Outcome measurements will be sent to the referring physician upon completion of the program.
Cost: $64 for the RxEX Medical Program
Information: Call Angela Kaltenborn, medical fitness coordinator, at (540) 332-5527, or email her at akaltenborn@augustahealth.com.

RxEX Cancer Program
What: This monitored medical exercise program offered at Lifetime 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 needs through monitored exercise. Participants will meet with a certified cancer specialist twice a week to be assisted with an individual workout routine. Program outcomes will be sent to the referring physician.
Cost: Please call Membership Services at Lifetime Fitness (540) 332-5843.
Information: Call Angela Kaltenborn, medical fitness coordinator, at (540) 332-5527, or email her at akaltenborn@augustahealth.com.

RxEX Prehab Program
What: This monitored medical exercise program offered at Lifetime 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 an exercise specialist twice a week and work out in a small setting of three participants. Program outcomes will be sent to the referring physician.
Cost: $64 for the RxEX Prehab Program
Information: Call Angela Kaltenborn, medical fitness coordinator, at (540) 332-5527, or email her at akaltenborn@augustahealth.com.

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RxEX Prehab Program
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Cost: $64 for the RxEX Prehab Program
Information: Call Angela Kaltenborn, medical fitness coordinator, at (540) 332-5527, or email her at akaltenborn@augustahealth.com.
**RxEX Youth Program**

**What:** This monitored medical exercise program offered at Lifetime Fitness is for youth in the community 8–12 years old. The program is designed to improve your child’s fitness and wellness needs through monitored exercise and age-appropriate nutrition. Youth will meet with an exercise specialist twice a week and work out in a small setting of three participants. Nutrition classes will focus on increasing awareness about food choices, portion sizes and healthier options. All participants are eligible to take part in Fun Friday, an aquatics hour of fun in the pool. Program outcomes will be sent to the referring physician.

**Cost:** $99 for the RxEX Youth Program

**Information:** Call Angela Kaltenborn, medical fitness coordinator, at (540) 332-5527, or email her at akaltenborn@augustahealth.com.

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**NUTRITION SERVICES AT LIFETIME FITNESS**

Augusta Health Lifetime Fitness is proud to offer a registered dietitian for individualized nutrition counseling. Packages and prices are listed below and can be scheduled directly with the registered dietitian.

**Energize Package**

**What:** If you’re only exercising to help shed the pounds, you’re missing half the picture. Partner with the dietitian to learn how modifying your diet can help you reach a healthier weight. The program includes personalized nutrition advice, dietary intake analysis and body fat measurements. Package consists of one 60-minute initial consult with the registered dietitian as well as three 30-minute follow-ups.

**Cost:** $150 for members, $175 for non-members

**Information:** Contact Julia Kearns, registered dietitian, at (540) 221-7894, or email her at jkearns@augustahealth.com.

**Lifestyle Package**

**What:** This package is designed for nutrition newcomers. If you’re looking to begin a healthy eating program, start here. The sessions cover topics including basic nutrition and you, label reading, planning and prep and special-occasion eating. Package consists of one 60-minute initial consult with the registered dietitian as well as three 30-minute follow-ups.

**Cost:** $150 for members, $175 for non-members

**Information:** Contact Julia Kearns, registered dietitian, at (540) 221-7894, or email her at jkearns@augustahealth.com.

**Prescription Package**

**What:** Do you have diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure or another chronic condition? Learn how to improve your well-being through the foods you eat. There is no physician referral needed! You will receive personalized nutrition advice and an individualized dietary intake analysis. Package consists of one 60-minute initial consult with the registered dietitian as well as three 30-minute follow-ups.

**Cost:** $150 for members, $175 for non-members

**Information:** Contact Julia Kearns, registered dietitian, at (540) 221-7894, or email her at jkearns@augustahealth.com.

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**60 for 60**

**What:** This is a one-time, one-hour session to discuss your dietary needs. Members get 60 minutes with the dietitian for only $60. (A slightly higher fee applies to non-members.) Appointment includes a three-day food recall review, instruction on your calorie needs, Q&A time and materials to take home.

**Cost:** $60 (Members) $75 (Non-Members)

**Information:** Contact Julia Kearns, registered dietitian, at (540) 221-7894, or email her at jkearns@augustahealth.com.

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**Future Stars**

**What:** Ages 10 and under, tennis format. Beginner and intermediate, ages 7–10.

**When:** Saturdays, 9:45–11 a.m.

**Cost:** $95.62

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**Rising Stars**

**What:** Learn to play through competitive drills and games. Beginner and intermediate, ages 11–17.

**When:** Saturdays, 11 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

**Cost:** $95.62

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**Aces**

**What:** Advanced and competitive, ages 12–17.

**When:** Saturdays, 12:15–1:45 p.m.

**Cost:** $114.75

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**Circuit Aces**

**What:** Advanced and competitive, ages 12–17.

**When:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30–6 p.m.

**Cost:** $229.50

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1 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 creed@augustahealth.com.
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.–12:15 p.m.
Where: Augusta Health Cancer Center
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: First Friday of every month at noon.
Information: Call Shelley Payne at (540) 332-4047 or (540) 932-4047.

Celiac Sprue Support Group
What: Group meetings feature free samples of gluten-free foods, recipes from support group members, visits from food-service providers and a wealth of practical tips.
When: Third Tuesday of every other month, 6–8 p.m.
Where: Augusta Health Community Care Building, Room 2
Information: Call Laura Johnson, RD, at (540) 932-5034.

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 a similar experience 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: In this group meeting, you’ll share ideas and improve your quality of life after ostomy surgery.
When: Second Monday of every other month.
Where: Augusta Health Community Care Building, Room 2
Information: Call (540) 332-4346 for details.

COMMUNITY WELLNESS AND EDUCATION

Gain Independence From Tobacco
What: This six-session smoking and smokeless tobacco cessation program will help you examine why you use tobacco and create an individual quit plan. The instructor uses evidence-based guidelines and is a certified tobacco treatment specialist.
When: Fourth Monday of most months, 5–6 p.m.
Where: Augusta Health Heart and Vascular Care Building
Information: To find out when the program starts, call (540) 213-2537.

You Can! Live Well, Augusta!
What: If you are living with a chronic illness (such as asthma, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease or hypertension), join our Community Wellness educators for a six-session workshop to help you explore effective ways to manage your condition and take charge of your life. No charge; all community members welcome.
Information: To find out when the workshop begins, call (540) 332-4988.

DIABETES AND NUTRITION CLINICS

Type 1 Diabetes Support Group
What: Learn and share with other people with type 1 diabetes. Topics will be centered on the latest interventions for management. No charge, open to the public.
When: First Thursday of every month, 6–7 p.m.
Where: Augusta Health Community

Type 2 Diabetes Support Group
What: Have questions about diabetes and need answers? Learn and share with other people with diabetes. Topics will be centered on learning to manage your diabetes. No charge, open to the public.
When: Fourth Monday of most months, 5–6 p.m.
Where: Augusta Health Heart and Vascular Care Building
Information: To find out when the program starts, call (540) 332-4988.

Type 2 Diabetes Class Series
What: A monthly, three-class series recognized by the American Diabetes Association will help with your daily management of type 2 diabetes. Topics include managing blood sugar, avoiding complications, meal planning, eating foods you enjoy and taking medications.
When: Classes are offered at various times and days of the week.
Information: Call (540) 213-2537 or (540) 941-2537.

Pre-Diabetes Class
What: This class is for people diagnosed with pre-diabetes (previously called border-line diabetes). The focus of the class is on understanding the risk factors that contribute to developing diabetes and how to slow the progression to type 2 diabetes by making healthy lifestyle changes. The emphasis is on good nutrition and keeping active.
Information: Call (540) 213-2537 or (540) 941-2537 for class dates and times.
new in town

Jonathan Black, MD
Specialty: Plastic Surgery
Augusta Plastic Surgery
78 Medical Center Drive
Fishersville, Virginia

William Davidson, MD
Specialty: Otolaryngology
Augusta Health Otolaryngology
70 Medical Center Circle, Suite 104
Fishersville, Virginia
(540) 221-7010

Rachel Hallmark, MD, PhD
Specialty: Spine
Augusta Health Spine Clinic
70 Medical Center Circle, Suite 103
Fishersville, Virginia
(540) 245-7400

Gretchen Jones, CNM
Augusta Health Care for Women, Fishersville
36 Beam Lane
Fishersville, Virginia
(540) 213-7750

Sana Khan, MD
Specialty: Nephrology
UVA Health System, Division of Nephrology
1215 Lee St.
Charlottesville, Virginia
(434) 924-5125

Leonid Lipkin, MD
Specialty: Hospitalist
Augusta Health Hospitalists
78 Medical Center Drive
Fishersville, Virginia

Julie Monroe, DO
Specialty: Primary Care
Augusta Health Primary Care, Lexington
55 Comfort Way, Suite 1
Lexington, Virginia
(540) 463-3381

Anne Robertson, MD
Specialty: Pediatrics
Valley Pediatric Group
19 Green Hills Drive
Verona, Virginia
(540) 885-8143
Ines Wu Soukoulis, MD  
Specialty: Dermatology  
Blue Ridge Dermatology  
1151 13th St.  
Waynesboro, Virginia  
(540) 949-6934

Ashley Sparler, MD  
Specialty: Anesthesia  
Anesthesia Associates of Augusta  
78 Medical Center Drive  
Fishersville, Virginia  
(800) 249-5835

Rajanshu Verma  
Specialty: Hospitalist  
Augusta Health Hospitalists  
78 Medical Center Drive  
Fishersville, Virginia

Danielle Wales, MD, MPH  
Specialty: Hospitalist  
Augusta Health Pediatric Hospitalists  
78 Medical Center Drive  
Fishersville, Virginia  
(540) 932-4298

Urgent Care/Convenient Care

Deonna Dearing, FNP-C  
Specialty: Urgent Care/Convenient Care  
851 Statler Blvd.  
Stanton, Virginia  
(540) 245-7470

Jennifer Gerardi, PA-C  
Specialty: Urgent Care/Convenient Care  
851 Statler Blvd.  
Stanton, Virginia  
(540) 245-7470

Oleg Glushkov, MD  
Specialty: Urgent Care/Convenient Care  
851 Statler Blvd.  
Stanton, Virginia  
(540) 245-7470
new in town

new physicians and health professionals on staff

Tonia Martin, NP-C
Specialty: Urgent Care/Convenient Care
851 Statler Blvd.
Stanton, Virginia
(540) 245-7470

Michelle McNeal, NP
Specialty: Urgent Care/Convenient Care
851 Statler Blvd.
Stanton, Virginia
(540) 245-7470

Janna Potter, NP
Specialty: Urgent Care/Convenient Care
851 Statler Blvd.
Stanton, Virginia
(540) 245-7470

Ashley Taylor, FNP-C
Specialty: Urgent Care/Convenient Care
851 Statler Blvd.
Stanton, Virginia
(540) 245-7470

Amanda Gummo, PA
Specialty: Urgent Care/Convenient Care
851 Statler Blvd.
Stanton, Virginia
(540) 245-7470

This list of new physicians and practitioners at Augusta Health was made possible by Chris Morgenstern, physician liaison at Augusta Health.
Augusta Health’s human resources manager Mignon Holly is known as the historian in her department because of her long tenure at the hospital and her knack for remembering things.

“I’ve been in the department longer than anyone else, so when people need to remember something that happened 10 years ago, or more, they come and ask,” she says. “I have a memory like an elephant.”

While Holly started working at Augusta Health 34 years ago, she has actually been a part of the community since Augusta Health was built. “I was raised here in Fishersville,” she says. “I lived on one of the main roads to the hospital, when [the Augusta Health location] was just a cow field.”

Holly began working at Augusta Health as a switchboard operator after she graduated high school. “That was different,” she says of her switchboard experience. “I was pretty shy at the time.”

After six months on the switchboard, she was transferred to the business office where she worked as an insurance biller. She spent 18 years working her way up in the business office until she was recruited by the HR department where she now works.

Every day is different as the HR manager, Holly explains, as every employee is different and you never know what problems will need to be solved. The parts of her job that Holly enjoys most include the interaction she has with Augusta Health employees and the many different projects on which she gets to work.

“Because [HR is] in a different building, sometimes it can be hard for employees to get to us, so twice a month I’ll go out with our HR staff and go to the individual employee departments,” says Holly. “I really like interacting with people and the diversity of the job. One day you may be dealing with an employee issue and the next day you might be doing something like planning the employee picnic.”
Granting Hope

Augusta Regional Clinic, assisted by grant, serves low-income patients

As part of its commitment to improve the health of its community, Augusta Health gives grants to organizations to help address the priorities identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment. The Augusta Regional Clinic (formerly the Augusta Regional Free Clinic and the Augusta Regional Dental Clinic) is one such recipient.

“As a community hospital, we recognize the importance of addressing the health needs of the community,” says Lisa Schwenk, director of public relations and community outreach at Augusta Health. “However, we also realize that we are not always the best resource to address all these needs, so we value collaboration with our partners [such as the Augusta Regional Clinic].”

The Augusta Regional Clinic serves low-income, uninsured patients who live in the Augusta Health community. Many patients being treated at the clinic have chronic diseases, such as diabetes or heart disease.

The recent addition of electronic records to the Augusta Regional Clinic, which was made possible by the grant from Augusta Health, especially helps patients with chronic disease, because it makes it easier for physicians and staff at the clinic to stay abreast of treatments and medications provided.

For uninsured people in need of dental care, the cost at the Augusta Regional Clinic for all services up to and including a full-mouth extraction is $35. “A lot of patients need an extraction or several extractions,” says Margaret Hersh, executive director of the Augusta Regional Clinic, “so they would not be able to afford the cost if they had to pay out of pocket. There’s not really another provider in the area that is filling this gap.”

The Augusta Regional Clinic offers medical and dental care to low-income, uninsured residents in the Augusta Health community.

Flu Season Is Here!

It’s time for your annual flu shot. The quadrivalent flu vaccine, which is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is designed to protect against four different flu viruses: two Influenza A viruses and two Influenza B viruses. It provides the maximum protection. The cost for the vaccine is $45. Augusta Health facilities complete the insurance billing. Visit an Augusta Health outpatient clinic or practice to receive the vaccine.