

Fall 2023

heart *to* heart

Your local guide to good health
from Samaritan Health Services



**Volunteering helped retired nurse
stay connected to her passion**



From the president

Doug Boysen, JD, MHA
President/Chief Executive Officer

Fall is my favorite season of the year. It means the transition from long hot days of summer to those crisp fall days splashed with the bright colors of the changing foliage. There is a sense of coming together and starting anew as we prepare for the season to come.

Children across the region return to school, ready for a new year of exploration and discovery. Community activities resume that may have taken a pause during summer, bringing people together again to collaborate and support one other. And everyone from farmers to backyard gardeners to those of us without a green thumb are enjoying the bounty from the season's work.

At Samaritan, we're enjoying the harvest from pursuing our mission of building healthier communities together. This fall, we're celebrating the opening of new clinics in our region, whose seeds were planted long ago.

Within the new health center on the Oregon State University campus, a new family medicine clinic expands primary care options for Corvallis residents and the relocation of the Corvallis SamCare Express provides extended hours for students to better access care. A new pharmacy also located on campus makes getting prescription medications even more convenient. See related story on page 18.

In Sweet Home, a new rural health clinic provides space for primary care, medication management and walk-in care. This clinic, co-located with a pharmacy, improves access to care and prescription medications, allowing east Linn County residents to stay closer to home for their health care needs. Learn more on page 16.

Both clinics have been years in the making and represent collaborative efforts among Samaritan, local organizations and community members to help these become reality.

During this season, we're also planting seeds for future harvests. In collaboration with Pacific Communities Health District, we've broken ground on a Samaritan Treatment & Recovery Services facility in Lincoln County that is slated to open in late 2024. And through our social accountability program, we've issued three-year grants to local nonprofit groups dedicated to helping our communities be safe, healthy places to live.

Throughout this issue of Heart to Heart, you can read more about these ways — and more — that Samaritan is building healthier communities together.

To your health,

heart to heart

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Share your thoughts

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

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On the cover: *Corvallis nurse fills her time in retirement with volunteering and now gardening. Learn how she is leaving a legacy by staying connected to health care and healthy living on page 10.*

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Protect yourself and others: Take precautions to minimize spread of seasonal viruses

Respiratory infections like colds, flu, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus — known as RSV — are very common.

“Most of us are affected by this kind of illness at least once a year,” said Adam Brady, MD, of Samaritan Infectious Disease. “We miss school, work and events as we manage our symptoms. For some people there is a higher risk of severe disease — especially the very old, very young, the immunocompromised and people with certain underlying conditions like cancer or heart disease.”

Respiratory viruses tend to spread more in the fall and winter due to more groups gathering indoors, holiday travel to or from areas of high community spread and some viruses survive better in cooler, less humid environments.

“Sometimes we are most contagious before we even know we are sick or when symptoms first start,” said Dr. Brady. “So, the following general precautions are always helpful, and especially during cold and flu season.”

Take care: Focus on your health with good nutrition, hydration, exercise and sleep. The healthier you are, the better your chances of fighting off illness or keeping symptoms manageable.

Wash up: Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is a good alternative if soap and water are not available.

Cover up: Cover your coughs or sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve. Consider wearing a face mask in crowded public places to protect others if you think you might be getting sick or you cannot stay home.

Clean up: Disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently in your home or office.

Don't touch: Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Don't share: Keep your drinks and personal items like toothbrushes to yourself.

Stay home: Stay home and avoid others if you are sick. In addition to protecting others from your illness, resting at home gives you the best chance for a quick recovery.

Open windows: If possible, open windows in places where people gather. Good ventilation helps prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses.

Get vaccinated: Vaccination is a powerful way to avoid or reduce the severity of the flu or COVID-19. Stay up to date with these vaccines.

“If you do catch a respiratory illness your symptoms will likely make you uncomfortable for at least a few days but unless you are at high risk of severe disease, you can usually care for yourself at home,” Dr. Brady said.

To learn more about how to care for your symptoms at home and when you should seek care from a health care provider see the article on the next page.

Know when to seek care for colds and flu

As respiratory illnesses such as colds, flu, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus — known as RSV — make the rounds this fall and winter, you or a loved one might end up catching something, despite your best efforts at prevention. (See *article on previous page for prevention tips.*)

“Though the fever, chills, runny noses and sore throats may be very uncomfortable, these symptoms usually aren't dangerous and are best cared for at home with rest, fluids and over-the-counter medicines for pain or fever,” said Physician Assistant Hank Wright of SamCare Express — Corvallis.

For symptoms of a cold, flu, COVID-19 or RSV, remember the following guidelines:

- Stay home to avoid passing your illness to others.
- Help manage symptoms with proper nutrition, hydration and rest.
- Use over-the-counter medicine such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen to manage fever and pain. Never give aspirin to children.

Your pharmacist is often a great resource for guidance on over-the-counter medications.

So, how do you know when to call the doctor or make an appointment? Should you go to a walk-in clinic or an emergency department?

If you or your child have these symptoms, seek care immediately at an emergency department:

- Difficult, abnormal or very rapid breathing.
- Audible wheezing.
- Appearing blue or pale.
- Chest pain.
- Pain with breathing.
- Abdominal pain.
- Confusion.
- Severe headache.
- Dehydration in a young child or infant (not urinating; no tears when crying).
- Fever over 105 degrees Fahrenheit.
- A rash that looks like bruising or broken blood vessels.

If you or your child experience the following symptoms, call your primary care provider for an appointment or visit a walk-in clinic:

- Sinus pain and/or pressure.
- Sore throat.
- Ear pain.
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Rash.
- Headache (not severe).
- Body aches.
- Coughing.

“These symptoms could mean something more serious, but usually cold and flu symptoms can be safely and effectively cared for at home,” said Wright. “If you are on the fence and feeling unsure about whether you need to be seen, sometimes a telemedicine appointment or a quick MyChart E-Visit can give you the opportunity to run your symptoms by a health care provider and put your mind at ease.”

For some patients with flu, the antiviral medication Tamiflu can shorten the duration of symptoms if started within 48 hours of symptoms starting.

For patients with COVID-19 who are at higher risk of severe disease, there are antiviral medications which, if started early, can reduce the chance of hospitalization or severe illness.

Employers and educators should also allow people to care for their respiratory illnesses at home.

“If your employees or students have to miss work or school, please do not require a doctor's note that will force them to seek immediate attention in an urgent care or ED,” Wright said. “These unnecessary visits place strain on our emergency departments, urgent cares and clinics.”

SamCare Express — Corvallis is located in the new Oregon State University Health Center, next to Reser Stadium at 850 SW 26th St. and is open seven days a week.

Do you need help finding a primary care provider? Visit samhealth.org/FindaDoc or call 800-863-5241 for assistance.

Clogged sinuses? Find relief with a sinus rinse

Sinus pressure or clogged sinuses can happen when the membrane that lines your nasal passages gets swollen or irritated due to a cold, allergies, sinus infection or other condition. Mucus builds up so your sinuses can't drain normally, which can cause pain, pressure or an infection.

If you suffer from clogged sinuses, an at-home treatment that can help is sinus rinsing, also known as nasal irrigation. This treatment is safe when done correctly and can help relieve congestion, a runny nose or sneezing.

Sinus rinsing helps remove or loosen mucus and rinse away pathogens or allergens like dust, mold, bacteria, dirt and pollen that can irritate the sinuses. This helps relieve nasal pressure and congestion.

The type of sinus rinsing container to use is up to user preference and comfort. The main types are:

- Neti pot – shaped like a teapot.
- Rinse bottle – a squeeze bottle.
- Prefilled saline solution with an applicator.

All the sinus rinse containers are used in the same general way and can be found over the counter at most pharmacies.

Follow these steps to use a sinus rinse:

1. Start by washing your hands and the nasal irrigation container with soap and water.
2. Fill the container with saline solution made with distilled, boiled or filtered water and prepackaged saline packet. Tap water is not safe for sinus rinsing and can cause infection.
3. Lean forward over the sink with one side of your face pointing toward the sink.
4. Start irrigating by placing the container's tip or spout over your top nostril. Squeeze or tilt the solution into your nose and continue until the container is empty. Let the solution drain out of your nose into the sink.
5. Blow your nose to clear out any remaining solution or mucus.
6. Repeat this process on the other side.

If your symptoms don't improve or worsen, contact your provider or nurse advice line, often provided by your health plan provider.



Samaritan steps up to the plate to fill pharmacy gap

Adding two new retail pharmacies and providing free mailing of prescriptions are two of the steps Samaritan Health Services is taking to help fill the void left by the closures of local Medicap and Bi-Mart pharmacies.

“With the closure of some local pharmacies, patients are experiencing delays in medication therapy and services,” said Megan Jones, director of Samaritan’s outpatient pharmacies. “Community members have been reaching out to Samaritan asking how we can help.”

To help address the pharmacy gap, Samaritan opened a new pharmacy in Corvallis this summer at Samaritan Athletic Medicine Center, also known as The SAM, adjacent to Reser Stadium at 845 SW 30th Street.

In September, Samaritan’s first pharmacy in Sweet Home will open along with family medicine, medication management and walk-in clinics at the intersection of U.S. Highway 20 and 49th Avenue.

All Samaritan pharmacies have access to the same electronic medical record system that Samaritan providers use. This enables pharmacists to answer many medication questions by viewing chart notes or lab values and route questions to the right person on the health care team.

If a patient has trouble affording medications, Samaritan’s medication assistance program may be able to help.

Other convenient services offered by Samaritan pharmacies include drive-up windows at Elm Street Pharmacy in Albany, Samaritan Pharmacy in Lebanon as well as the new pharmacy in Sweet Home. The pharmacy on the Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center campus also provides curbside delivery.

In addition to filling prescriptions, Samaritan Pharmacy services include vaccinations; medication therapy management; pharmacist prescribing of birth control, naloxone, Paxlovid and emergency insulin refills; sharps disposal; and drug take-back bins. The pharmacies also offer translation services for prescription labels, medication guides and medication counseling.

Refilling prescriptions is also convenient through Samaritan’s MyChart patient portal, which allows patients to make refill requests through a personal computer or phone app.

Free prescription mailing and a courier service are also offered by all Samaritan Pharmacies.

“If a patient has a transportation or mobility issue and we are unable to mail their prescription, our team will work with our courier services to try to get the medication to them at no charge,” said Jones.

To learn more about Samaritan Pharmacy visit samhealth.org/Pharmacy.

National Cancer Survivors Day celebration boasts a successful post-pandemic return

Sunday, June 4, was filled with warm smiles, laughter and enjoyment by the many cancer survivors, loved ones and others who attended the 2023 National Cancer Survivors Day events offered in Corvallis and Newport.



Left to right and bottom: Pet Partners of the Oregon Coast share pet therapy compassion with survivor; John Campagna and survivor Jeanette Campagna are all smiles; survivor Mary Lou Martin engages in conversation with Radiation Oncology Director Brad Betz; Matt Harrington and survivor Brooke Harrington celebrate with some fun; and survivor and Joann Markham at SamFit take a pause to embrace the joy.

“It was a wonderful day filled with celebration, inspiration and hope — and it gave a time to pause and honor our cancer survivors and their loved ones in person again,” said Anne Webb, regional director of the Samaritan Cancer Program.

The last in-person National Cancer Survivors Day event was held in June 2019. It was then paused until this year due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

“This was also the first year the cancer program was able to hold two events simultaneously — one in the valley and one on the coast,” Webb said. “The positive response from survivors and our care team was incredible.”

Between the two event locations, more than 200 people attended, representing cancer survivors, family,

friends, volunteers, Samaritan cancer providers and Samaritan leadership.

“My sincere appreciation goes to our guest speakers — Anne Pettingill who spoke at the Corvallis event and Sonia Graham, and Virginia “Wynn” Merrill, who spoke in Newport. All bravely shared their stories and personal journeys with cancer,” Webb said.

Attendees also heard from Samaritan cancer providers and leadership.

Plans for the June 2, 2024, National Cancer Survivors Day are underway. Once ready, information will be made available at samhealth.org/CelebrateSurvivors.



Philomath woman defies rare cancer odds



Karen Walker (pictured above), 70, of Philomath, was in overall good health — when life took a different turn eight years ago.

“It was time for my physical exam, which I have routinely each year,” Walker said. “Other than feeling more tired than usual and a headache that was a nuisance, but tolerable, I felt fine.”

Walker’s lab results showed concerning levels of creatinine, warranting a closer look at her kidney function.

Soon after, Walker was admitted to Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, for a kidney biopsy, but had a full body X-ray instead, which indicated a bone marrow biopsy was needed. Walker was then diagnosed with an aggressive form of multiple myeloma. That diagnosis occurred in January 2015.

“When I received my diagnosis, I felt fortunate to have a medical background from the work I was doing at the time,” Walker said. “My knowledge — along with the treatment plan from my care team — reinforced the importance of facing my condition head on.”

Walker had treatment to improve her kidney function and underwent chemotherapy at Samaritan. This prepared her for a stem cell transplant at a partnering health care center. The outcome was successful, and Walker returned home 30 days later.

A few months after the stem cell transplant, a follow-up bone marrow biopsy indicated no cancer cells were present.

A full life in remission

“Karen, who had what we call high-risk disease, has had no detectable sign of her cancer for the past eight years,” said Holly Almond, MSN, FNP, with the Samaritan Cancer Program. “We call this a complete response to treatment.”

Accepting that life now includes ongoing treatment to keep the cancer at bay hasn’t stopped Walker.

“My family means the world to me,” Walker said. “My husband Alan was there for each step of my treatment. Now being retired, I get to spend more time with him.”

Walker is also blessed with two daughters. Both are grown and married. Collectively they’ve given her four beautiful grandchildren.

“I also love sewing or quilting, spending time in the garden and the Exercising Together program through SamFit,” said Walker. “I credit Holly Almond for helping make the connection.”

Advice for cancer survivors

Now eight years into survivorship, Walker shares advice based on her experience she hopes others will find helpful.

Mind over matter.

“A cancer diagnosis affects each of us differently,” Walker said. “Even on my crummiest of days, I would try to remain pleasant and positive — because it’s what I knew I needed.”

Find a way to channel your thoughts.

“After my stem cell transplant, a friend introduced me to CaringBridge. This is where I would journal daily,” Walker said. “It was a great way to keep family and friends informed, organize my thoughts, set goals, and now, is a resource to reflect on what I experienced.”

Be comfortable with and confident in your medical team.

“This is where you get your information and support. If you feel like you’re not getting what you need, then be assertive and your own best advocate,” Walker said.

To learn more about cancer care at Samaritan, visit samhealth.org/Cancer.

Cancer support and survivorship go beyond treatment

Surviving a cancer diagnosis depends on so much more than the medical treatment, whether it is chemotherapy, surgery, radiation or a combination of these. With the Samaritan Cancer Program, an abundance of resources and support services go beyond treatment and play a critical role in a patient's cancer journey.

These services are designed with the patient and their loved ones in mind.

Navigators: Coordinate care, stepping in when cancer is diagnosed. Serving as an early touch point, navigators are involved in your care through every phase to help prepare you for active treatment. Navigators help arrange consults with doctors, work closely with other members of the care team and connect you with the survivorship program when active treatment ends. Samaritan continues to expand their navigation services and has specialized programs for helping patients diagnosed with breast, head and neck, esophageal, gastric, rectal and thoracic cancers.

Dietitians: Provide education and advice about foods to eat during cancer treatment and ways diet can help with the side effects of treatment. They also offer nutritional guidance for cancer prevention.

Social workers: Help you understand and cope with your diagnosis and treatment, manage stress, connect you with resources in the community, refer to mental health services as needed or can help with end-of-life planning.

Financial advocates: Provide information about insurance coverage and out-of-pocket costs, as well as financial assistance programs and connecting you to resources. Financial advocates offer peace of mind about medical expenses so you can concentrate on recovering.

ArtsCare: Offers art and music experiences in health care settings to enhance your physical and emotional well-being.

Cancer Resource Center: Available to you or your family to find trusted medical information and positive ways to connect with others, including community resources, medical information, support groups, fitness programs and more.

Survivorship and planning: Recognizes from the point of diagnosis that you are a cancer survivor and your health care needs may be different for the rest of your life. Your survivorship care plan summarizes what treatments you've received and outlines regular follow-up care for the future.

Samaritan is the only cancer program that offers extensive local support within the mid-Willamette Valley and central Oregon Coast to cancer patients and their loved ones.

Find out more about the Samaritan Cancer Program at samhealth.org/Cancer.



Genetic testing can guide your cancer treatment

Lifesaving cancer therapies rapidly evolve with the sophisticated use of genetic biomarker testing. Changes in genes and proteins that provide information about cancer can be detected.

Biomarkers are a bit like fingerprints — each person's cancer has a unique pattern. Some biomarkers affect how certain cancer treatments work. Your doctor may consider biomarker testing to help choose a cancer treatment that's best for you.

Doctors have traditionally based treatment decisions on location (the organ where the cancer started growing), whether the cancer has spread and if the patient has other health conditions. Now doctors have another guide when making treatment decisions — the presence or absence of genetic changes in the tumor, known as mutations.

"If certain genetic changes are present, the patient can be treated with targeted therapies designed to take advantage of those changes," said Robert Davis, MD, a hematology and oncology specialist with Samaritan. "This is frequently used in lung cancer, but the list of cancer types with targeted treatments is rapidly growing, and each is a step toward individualized cancer treatment."

"In addition to looking for this information in solid tumor samples obtained by biopsy, we can also use

a simple blood test — referred to as liquid biopsy. Because tumors release DNA into the bloodstream, the tumor's DNA can be identified and analyzed," said Dr. Davis. "A liquid biopsy can help identify targetable mutations. When present in the tumor, doctors can strategically target tumors and tailor cancer care."

While a liquid biopsy doesn't replace a solid tumor biopsy, there are some advantages:

- Easier: A blood test is less invasive.
- Long-term observation: Doctors can monitor the development of new mutations over time.
- Safer: Liquid biopsy is a blood draw, as where a solid tumor biopsy is not. Repeat solid tumor biopsies may not always be possible, depending on the tumor location.
- Advanced technology: Doctors can detect all circulating tumor DNA.
- Targeted therapy: Measuring circulating tumor DNA helps doctors identify targeted therapies that work best against specifically identified mutations.

"I'm optimistic about the present and future of cancer care," said Dr. Davis. "Our ability to treat patients improves with more targeted therapies."

Robert Davis, MD, is a medical oncologist with Samaritan. He can be reached at 541-768-4950.

ArtsCare: Two great events, one meaningful cause

Arts in health care is a growing field. At the core, the arts promote physical and emotional well-being of patients and enhance the overall health care experience.

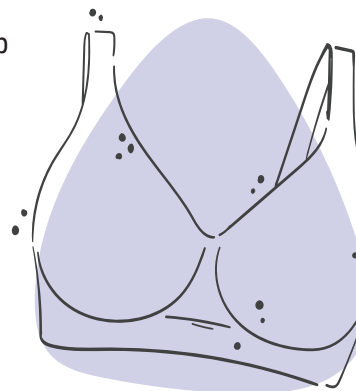
Recognizing the healing power of arts in health care, Samaritan continues to advance its ArtsCare Program and activities available to patients, community members and Samaritan employees.

Expansion of these activities is dependent on donations and grant funding. For the first time since the program's inception, two multifaceted awareness and fundraising events will be held in late September.

Mark your calendar for Sept. 23

Bras for the Cause, 10 a.m. to noon

Kicking off the day, workshop participants will decorate bras or shirts. Items will be displayed in local businesses throughout Corvallis and Albany during October in support of breast cancer awareness month. Space is limited and registration is required.



Art for the Cause, 6 to 8 p.m.

Following in the evening, participants will enjoy live music, refreshments and local works of art, with the option to purchase pieces directly or bid on in a silent auction. Advance registration is preferred but not required.

Both events will be held at the Samaritan Pastega Regional Cancer Center in Corvallis on Saturday, Sept. 23.

Proceeds will support the ArtsCare Program and future offerings specifically designed with cancer patients in mind.

For more information or specific registration details, visit samhealth.org/ArtsInHealth or call 541-768-7138.

Volunteering helped retired nurse stay connected to her passion

In 1999 Carol Carter retired from nursing. During her 37-year career at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center it is estimated that she cared for 35,000 newborns and changed more than 1 million diapers.

However, six months into retirement Carter found herself frequenting the hospital's Center for Women & Families, this time as a volunteer.

She spent parts of the next 16 years with her "family" in the center racking up an impressive 2,328 recorded volunteer hours and countless more diaper changes.

"That is a lot of hours and a lot of years of commitment," said Luanne Barnes, director of Volunteer Services at Good Sam. "She loved that area so much during her career. She knew so many of the volunteers because she worked directly with them in the nursery."

With Carter's knowledge of the unit, she mentored many of the volunteers coming through the center. Carter taught them the normal routine of checking in with the nursing team, rounding on patients, helping restock supplies and, on occasion, comforting or changing the diaper of a newborn.

"It was my home away from home, literally," said Carter. "I spent half my life there, it seemed."

Carter attributes her decision to pursue a nursing career to a neighbor and well-known Good Sam nurse, Mida Harvey.

"She told me about nursing and what a wonderful job it was," said Carter. From there, Carter became a member of the nursing education program at Corvallis High School and was even featured in the newspaper in 1958 taking care of a simulated patient in a classroom created to look like a hospital room.

She started nursing full time in 1962 after graduating from the University of Oregon Nursing School, which later became Oregon Health & Science University. However, Carter points out that she started her college career at Oregon State University before transferring to the nursing school in Portland and still roots for the Beavers.

Her starting pay for the night shift was \$2.25 per hour and nearly 13 years later, the year she was preparing to move to the new hospital facility, her pay more than doubled to \$5.03 per hour.

"I worked in the medical surgical unit at nights for my first two and a half years," said Carter. "Working nights was a challenge because back then it was me as the RN and one aide to take care of the 25-patient floor."

After that she began working in labor and delivery. The old hospital's nursery was one long room. There were 5-foot-tall oxygen tanks chained to the walls, she recalled. Sick babies were placed in large incubators called Armstrong warmers. Technology over the years have made those units less cumbersome with increased efficiencies.

At that time treatments and techniques weren't as advanced in Corvallis as at larger hospitals. This all changed when the administration selected Carter and another nurse to undergo a week-long training in Portland at OHSU where the most critically ill babies from across the state were transferred for care.

"We learned about new equipment and new procedures," said Carter. "Upon returning, we implemented several things including IV pumps. Looking back, the pumps looked funny, but then they were new. The training changed a lot of our practices."

Many of those time-tested practices are still used to this day.

By 1967, Carter and her husband had established a home in Linn County just across the river from Corvallis. Behind her ranch-style house she cultivated her second passion of gardening. The Carters established their family, raising a son and daughter, at the half-acre site.

The 83-year-old still waters her vegetables, prunes her roses and picks her fresh strawberries for breakfast almost daily during the spring and summer.

Both of Carter's children were born at Good Sam. So were her grandchildren and great grandchildren. Carter also became a patient at Good Sam 13 years after the birth of her son.

One Saturday morning she woke up with chest pain.

"I felt this elephant on my chest," said Carter. "No pain, just pressure."

She was 38 and having a heart attack. Her son called 911.

"By the time the medics got here, they couldn't get a blood pressure reading," said Carter.

Carter recalls the ambulance ride to Good Sam, including the medical transport shifting gears to climb the hill to the Emergency Department.

"I didn't remember much about the first three days," Carter said. "I remember my first bath and how grateful I was to get a bath and a shampoo."

Building legacy together

The heart attack prompted her to become a CPR instructor. She started leading CPR classes at the hospital giving lessons to staff, the public and new parents. These classes were a mainstay at the hospital until her retirement.

Now, every Friday, Carter and a group of five other retired nurses gather for a few hours to reminisce over a few glasses of wine. This has been going on for more than 35 years, long before the nurses retired.

"We'd get off at 3:30 or 4 and run just down the hill," Carter said. "Sometimes the doctors would come and join us, or our husbands."

"It was a social thing," said Carter. "It was both psychological and physical healing."

Carter decided to retire from volunteering after the birth of her second great grandchild who she would care for. Now she enjoys gardening, travel and time with her family.

When thinking about Carter, Barnes said, "Carol is the definition of dedication with her career and coming back to volunteer and having such a high level of commitment to the Center for Women & Families and nursing. Her love of babies and helping them with that first start into the world, supporting the parents, teaching, just providing that reassuring and really comforting presence is an intangible that exemplifies Samaritan's values."

Learn more about Carol Carter and her journey from nurse to Samaritan volunteer at samhealth.org/CarolC.

Become a volunteer

Depending on the hospital, volunteers help out from as early as 6 a.m. to as late as 11 p.m., seven days a week. Volunteers, from teens to retirees, typically offer their time a few hours a week.

"We have both patient care and non-patient care environments," said Luanne Barnes, director of Volunteer Services at Good Sam. "Right now, we have more retired employees volunteering than we ever have had in our history. It's just amazing."

Volunteer opportunities also include coffee carts, greeters, wayfinders, gift shop workers, flower delivery and pet therapy.

"People find love in their career, they find family here," said Barnes. "Some of our retirees take a little break and return. Other people just want to get started right away. It's really a gift to us and our mission and really says a lot about the strength of this organization and connections we make."

Volunteers play an important role at Samaritan Health Services and their efforts always attract great appreciation from patients and staff.

Visit samhealth.org/Volunteer to learn more about volunteering with Samaritan at any of its hospitals or with hospice.

A look at increasing maternal mortality — factors and prevention

Folic acid and pregnancy — what's the connection?

It's no secret folic acid is important if you're trying to get pregnant or are pregnant, but what exactly is it?

Folic acid is the synthetic version of folate, which is vitamin B-9. Folic acid is critical to take during pregnancy because it helps reduce the risk of birth defects of the brain and spine. This key nutrient helps make red blood cells and many other new cells in the body. Someone who does not get enough folic acid during pregnancy can become anemic, which means their blood does not carry oxygen well.

People who are pregnant need 400 to 800 mcg a day of folic acid or folate, which is standard for any prenatal vitamin. Folate can also be found naturally in foods like dark green vegetables, beans, nuts or seeds. Other foods like breads, pasta, rice and cereals have folic acid as an added ingredient. Read the nutrition label for exact amounts.

"Not only does baby need vitamins and nutrients to develop, grow and be healthy, but so does the person carrying the baby," said Katherine Bowen, certified nurse midwife at Samaritan Obstetrics & Gynecology. "This is why making sure you get enough folic acid during pregnancy is so important."

The most critical time for folic acid intake is before most people even know they are pregnant. Because of this, many providers recommend a prenatal vitamin with either folate or folic acid as soon as you start trying to conceive. If you don't begin supplements before you become pregnant, you should start as soon as you know you are pregnant. Contact your provider with any questions or concerns. They are there to help you.

If you are seeking an OB/GYN or midwife, please visit samhealth.org/FindADoc. You can also browse Samaritan's birthing and child preparation services and resources at samhealth.org/Baby.

What you should know about maternal mortality

The birth of a baby should be a time of hope, joy and new beginnings.

When a person dies during pregnancy, childbirth or the postpartum period, it is a tragedy for families and communities.

The rate of maternal mortality is on the rise in the United States, nearly doubling in the past two decades. There were 1,205 women who died of maternal causes in 2021, the most recent data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Even though the rate is increasing, it is still very rare, with three maternal deaths reported in 10,000 births.

Why is this happening?

COVID-19 contributed to the recent spike in maternal mortality and is suspected in a quarter of maternal deaths in 2020 and 2021.

But there are other factors behind the rising maternal mortality rate. Certified Nurse Midwife Emily Yeast of Samaritan Obstetrics & Gynecology — Corvallis and Psychiatrist Petra Zdenkova, PsyD, explains how other causes, including access to care, racial and socioeconomic disparities and inadequate support can increase the risk of complications that lead to maternal death.

More than 80% of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable

The best way to improve the chances of a healthy pregnancy is to receive prenatal care from an obstetrician or midwife beginning in the first trimester (12 weeks).

"As soon as you find out you are pregnant, schedule an appointment with your provider," Yeast said.

Factors such as age, underlying health conditions and multiples (twins and triplets) can change the risks.

Not all risks can be eliminated. But being proactive can help.

"Stress management, nutrition, exercise, sleep and prenatal care contribute to a pregnant person's overall health," Yeast said.

Women of color are more likely to be affected

In low-risk pregnancies, Black and Indigenous people are more likely to die than white people.

"It isn't race that causes disparities," Yeast said. "It's racism."

Studies have also shown that Black people experience more physiological effects of chronic stress, which contribute to a higher risk of complications.

Another explanation is that a health care provider's bias (implicit or overt) can cause reported symptoms to be ignored.

"You may need to advocate for the support you need," Yeast said. "Find a provider who will listen to you and take the time to answer your questions."

"More than half of maternal deaths occur in the postpartum period after childbirth," said Dr. Zdenkova.

Mental health conditions are the most common complication

One in five women suffer mental health complications during pregnancy or postpartum.

"Pregnant people may experience new complications, or their existing conditions can become more serious," said Dr. Zdenkova.

Of women who experience mental health conditions during pregnancy or postpartum, 75% go untreated.

Postpartum depression increases the risk for suicide, a leading cause of death particularly in the period six to nine months postpartum.

Postpartum care has expanded

Oregon recently became one of more than 30 states where eligibility for postpartum care through Medicaid — the Oregon Health Plan — extends to 12 months.

Those benefits used to last only two months, aligning with the CDC's definition of the postpartum period lasting 42 days, or six weeks, after delivery.

"It will likely take longer than six weeks to feel like yourself again," Yeast said.

Your midwife or obstetrician is an important part of your care team during that first year and can help you access mental health services.

Ideas for offering support

One option for additional support is to use a doula, a person trained to provide emotional and physical support during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum. InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization members in Benton, Linn and Lincoln counties have access to doula services "Doulas are knowledgeable and can act as your advocate," Yeast said.

Pregnant people and new parents need support. Here are a few things family, friends and coworkers can do.

- Ask how they are doing.
- Invite them for a walk.
- Prepare a healthy meal.
- Give them a break.

TeleNICU now available at Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital

Maternity staff, pediatricians and family physicians at Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital now have the added expertise of the neonatal team at Oregon Health & Science University to guide them through critical times during deliveries.

This assistance is offered 24/7 through a live and interactive two-way video technology program called OHSU TeleNICU. The system went live this spring. Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital is the first Samaritan site to offer this service.

TeleNICU brings peace of mind, knowing that an expert can be available in an instant when additional medical knowledge is needed for neonatal intensive care, such as when newborns need help transitioning to life outside the womb in the form of respiratory and cardiac resuscitation because they are born too early, or they are born with a disorder, or an emergency arises.

"It is extremely helpful to have this for our patients and their babies," said Jennifer Pierce, RN, manager of the Family Birthing Center at Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital.

Six easy steps to winter-proof your skin

As winter approaches and temperatures change, so do the needs of your skin. To help maintain healthy looking skin all winter long, try these tips:

Leverage your cleanser.

Use a cleanser, like Epionce, with gentle ingredients that won't disturb naturally occurring oils in the skin.



Protect your pucker.

Look for lip balms with broad-spectrum SPF 15 and those that are antioxidant rich to help protect, soothe and soften.



Try a more hydrating facial product.

Consider using a heavier cream. This will better insulate the skin, especially as you go from the cool outdoors to the warmth of inside. If the cream is too heavy for daytime use, apply at night to get the benefits of extra hydration. Not a fan of heavy creams? Some firming masks can offer the same hydration benefits.



Keep your sunscreen routine.

Harmful ultraviolet rays, also known as UV rays, are still present during the winter months. Continue to apply broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher.



Bolster your beauty from the inside out.

Drink lots of water and load up on omega-3s, like salmon, chia seeds and walnuts, which improve hydration. Shorter days equal less sun exposure and reduced vitamin D. So, it's no surprise lower energy can result with tiredness reflected in our skin. Adding more vitamin D-rich foods, like fish, egg yolks, liver and wild mushrooms, gives the body the boost it craves. Also consider increasing your B vitamins; these deliver nutrients and regulate the turnover of skin cells. Add dark green vegetables to your daily diet and your skin will reap the rewards.



Moisturize all over.

Hot showers can dry out your skin. Arms and legs have fewer oil glands, so they tend to be drier and scallier than other parts, especially in the winter. Stick to warm water, limit showers to 10 minutes and use a quality all-over body lotion.



Looking for the perfect skin care products or interested in scheduling a consultation? Contact Samaritan Plastic, Reconstructive & Hand Surgery in Corvallis at 541-768-4370.

Let's get social!



Follow Samaritan Plastic, Reconstructive & Hand Surgery on Facebook and Instagram to stay informed about product sales, aesthetic promotions, and events offered throughout the year.



Simple comfort soup is packed with flavor and nutrients

Recipe from bestrecipebox.com

Butternut squash is not only tasty and versatile, it is also a nutrient powerhouse. It is packed with immunity-boosting nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, potassium and vitamins A, C, E and B6.

“Research shows that butternut squash supports heart health through lowering cholesterol,” said Lauren Burns, registered dietitian at Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital. “It can also aid in cancer prevention due to its robust beta-carotene content. Beta-carotene (a form of vitamin A) is an antioxidant that gives certain fruits and vegetables their deep orange pigment.”

Butternut squash is rich in complex carbohydrates including soluble fiber, which slows blood sugar spikes and gives the food a low glycemic index. Including squash in a diet abundant in plant foods can lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels and can support metabolic and cardiovascular health.

Thanks to its long storage potential, butternut squash is readily available year-round. Locally, it can be found in grocery stores and farmers markets starting around August and September and into the later months of winter. Squash can easily be made into a sweet or savory soup with only a few ingredients.

Prep time: 15 minutes | Cook time: 30 minutes | Servings: 6 | Nutrition information per 1 cup serving: 123 calories, 6 g fat, 52 mg sodium, 17 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, 4 g protein

Ingredients

- ❑ 1 medium butternut squash.
- ❑ 2 tablespoons olive oil.
- ❑ 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth.
- ❑ Salt and pepper to taste.
- ❑ Optional garnish: smoked paprika, toasted pumpkin seeds, minced parsley, cinnamon.

Directions

1. Peel and core the butternut squash. Cut into 1-inch cubes.
2. Heat a large pan on medium-high heat and add the olive oil and squash cubes.
3. Cook the squash for about 5 minutes until lightly brown. Add chicken or vegetable broth.
4. Simmer the squash for about 20 minutes, until the squash is completely tender.
5. Use an immersion blender or countertop blender and blend until smooth.
6. Add salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with additional toppings and serve warm.

Visit samhealth.org/RecipeMinute for more healthy recipes.



New medical center in Sweet Home helps serve a growing population

Meeting the health priorities of Sweet Home and surrounding communities played a major role in the development of a new medical center located in Sweet Home in affiliation with Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital.

“We are excited to provide health care enhancements and improve access for the community,” said Juliette Asuncion, DO, primary care medical director at Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital Medical Clinic — Sweet Home.

Located at 1289 49th Ave., the 17,500-square-foot building focuses on improving access to health care with clinics offering family medicine, walk-in care and medication management as well as a pharmacy with a drive-thru window and a helipad. Once the new facility opens in the fall, the former Sweet Home Family Medicine clinic location will be renovated to expand physical therapy and rehabilitation services.

“This new campus gives us an opportunity to invest in health care services while also building a stronger community

bond,” said Dr. Asuncion. “The size of the previous building limited our ability to hire new clinicians to take care of our growing number of patients due to the restricted amount of space and exam rooms. We now have the opportunity to bring in additional primary care clinicians and expand our team.”

Included in the building are 18 family medicine exam rooms, seven walk-in clinic exam rooms, two consultation rooms and a behavioral health consultation space. Specialized services and modern equipment include X-ray, anticoagulation, laboratory and connectivity in all rooms to support telemedicine visits.

“With the rise of telehealth, we hope to be able to provide our patients with increased access to specialists. A lot of our patients do not have reliable internet access or a smart phone or computer to even connect with other providers outside of our area via telehealth. We have rooms dedicated to setting our patients up for this,” said Dr. Asuncion. “Our team is looking forward to better serving the Sweet Home community!”



Pictured above: James Cassidy, soil scientist and faculty advisor for the OSU Organic Growers Club, assembles produce that is being distributed by Samaritan’s Care Hub team through a new community partnership. In photo at right, Cassidy works with student Rose Roberts in a greenhouse.

Often referred to as the father of modern medicine Hippocrates famously said, “Let food be thy medicine.”

A new community partnership between Samaritan Population Health’s Care Hub Department and OSU Organic Growers Club is returning to the roots of Hippocrates wisdom from 400 BC.

The premise is simple: positive health outcomes are directly linked to the food we eat.

The Care Hub looked for a way to emphasize the importance of nutrition to improve health outcomes by offering patients fresh food, particularly fruits and vegetables, which are abundant in the Willamette Valley.

This summer, Samaritan purchased a community supported agriculture share, commonly called CSA, to provide produce to patients in need for 28 weeks.

Approximately 40 pounds of food is distributed weekly by the Care Hub’s team of social workers, nurses and community health workers to people interested in preparing healthy meals, including people staying in respite care, the elderly and people without housing.

“OSU Organic Growers Club provided us with a great opportunity,” said Social Worker Anita Earl. “We appreciate partnering with Oregon State University.”

OSU Organic Growers Club teaches students and community members about organic farming.

“We provide transformative experiences for people to be outside, using their body and senses, connecting to the soil, plants and living creatures,” said James Cassidy, soil scientist and faculty advisor for OSU Organic Growers Club.

Purchasing a CSA from the student farm supports a production model, investing in student farmers by buying a share of the harvest in advance. This addresses the food insecurity of clients and improves access to healthy food directly from the student farm.

“One of the best things you can do for your health is to eat fresh, wholesome food,” Cassidy said. “It goes a long way towards sustaining rich soil, a benign climate and some fantastic farms.”

Samaritan’s CSA share will initially feed half a dozen or more people each week.

“We will distribute it among members who are looking for plant-based choices, particularly people who struggle with chronic health issues,” Earl said. “This is the first step in a collaboration that we hope will grow.”

Learn how to support and expand community supported agriculture and OSU Organic Growers Club at soilforward.org.

Medical and pharmacy services expanded on Oregon State campus

This summer, Samaritan opened a family medicine clinic, same-day care clinic and a pharmacy on the campus of Oregon State University to serve students, staff, faculty and the community.

“At Samaritan Health Services, our mission is ‘building healthier communities together,’ and this collaboration between Oregon State University and Samaritan is a shining example of the mission in action,” said Doug Boysen, Samaritan’s president and chief executive officer. “When we work together, we can achieve so much good for the health and well-being of the community.”



The Samaritan clinics are located on the second floor of the newly constructed four-story 30,000-square-foot Student Health Center located at the southeast corner of Reser Stadium at 850 SW 26th St.

The family medicine clinic will provide full-service primary care delivered in a team approach. Services include preventive care and screenings, chronic disease management and lab services.

In addition, SamCare Express has relocated to the second floor from its Circle Boulevard location. It provides same-day

“At Samaritan Health Services, our mission is ‘building healthier communities together,’ and this collaboration between Oregon State University and Samaritan is a shining example of the mission in action,” said Doug Boysen, Samaritan’s president and chief executive officer.

care by appointment and extended hours for the treatment of non-life-threatening health concerns.

The pharmacy is located in the Samaritan Athletic Medicine Center on the southwest side of the stadium at 845 SW 30th St. This will be the first on-campus pharmacy since a student-focused pharmacy located in Plageman Hall closed its doors in 2018.

“When the pharmacy closed in Plageman, we had a pretty big outcry from students and the community,” said Kelly Hower, executive director of Student Health Services. “Since then, people have wanted something located on campus. I think having an on-campus pharmacy for not only students but also the community will be a huge asset for OSU and Corvallis.”

“This collaboration is the result of years of shared visioning between our organizations,” said Kelley Kaiser, senior vice president and chief administrative officer at Samaritan. “As an OSU graduate and longtime leader at Samaritan, I am proud we have been able to build this health center together to serve students, faculty and the community.”

SamCare Express will be open seven days a week most weeks with the exception of some closures due to Reser Stadium events. This schedule will help supplement the hours Student Health Services is not available. Free designated parking is available for Health Center visitors in the adjacent lot.

Hands-only CPR saves lives

Each year, approximately 356,000 people in the U.S. suffer sudden cardiac arrest in their homes, workplaces or communities. Though CPR can double or triple chances of survival, bystanders provided CPR only about 40% of the time.

“Given the opportunity to save a life, it would be ideal if more people were prepared to give CPR,” said Brandi Young, a registered nurse with a master’s degree in nursing education. Young has been a Basic Life Support instructor with the American Heart Association for more than 15 years and serves as program manager for Samaritan’s Simulation & Life Support Education program

“Bystander CPR is much less complicated than what many people learned a decade or two ago,” Young said. “Hands-only CPR training is recommended, 911 emergency dispatchers are able to guide you through CPR and AED (automatic external defibrillator) use in an emergency situation, and AEDs are becoming more common in public locations.”

If a teen or adult collapses, is unconscious, lifeless and not breathing, they may have had a sudden cardiac arrest. To potentially save their life and brain function CPR should be started right away. It is best to take part in a training, but here are the basics:

- Start CPR immediately. If you are the only other person there, and if you have a cell phone, dial 911 on speaker phone and set it down next to you while you begin CPR. If others are nearby, instruct someone to call 911 and get an AED if one is available.
- If the victim is on a soft surface, put them on the floor or ground. Get directly over the victim. Put the heel of one hand over their breastbone, put your other hand on top of the first and keep your arms straight as you

push hard and fast on the center of the chest until help arrives.

- It is important to push with about 100 to 120 compressions per minute. For reference, a song with the right tempo is “Stayin’ Alive” by the Bee Gees.
- Do not leave the victim to go get an AED. If someone brings you an AED, ask them to turn it on while you continue CPR.
- The AED will immediately begin giving instructions (audio and/or visual) on how to use the device to give the victim’s heart an electric shock. If someone is with you, continue chest compressions while another person follows the instructions to place the pads of the AED on the victim. If you do not have help, pause chest compressions only very briefly to follow the instructions. Make sure no one is touching the victim as the AED shock is delivered.
- Continue chest compressions and following the instructions of the 911 operator and the AED device until help arrives or the victim is breathing.

The American Heart Association and American Red Cross provide resources with information on using an AED to save a life, CPR for infants, children, and adults, finding CPR trainings and much more. Visit cpr.heart.org or redcross.org/cpr. In-person classes are also offered at the Center for Health Education in Newport. Visit samhealth.org/CPR for information.



How to conquer hard-to-swallow pills

The thought of taking a pill can cause anxiety. One in three people may gag, choke or even vomit when trying to swallow a pill. Some people have swallowing disorders called dysphagia, which can make it difficult or even impossible to swallow medication, foods or liquids.

For most, pill swallowing issues are not due to a physical condition but are fear based – fear of gagging, choking or concerns the pill will get stuck in their throat.

“Typically, swallowing a pill can result in gagging or getting it stuck in your esophagus if you’ve not used enough liquid,” said Megan Jones, director of Outpatient Pharmacy for Samaritan Health Services. “The good news is your esophagus provides plenty of room to accommodate even the biggest pills.”

Two techniques that can help

Tricks identified by researchers at the University of Heidelberg might make taking your medicine easier.

Pop-bottle method

- Fill a plastic bottle with water.
- Place the pill on your tongue and close your lips tightly around the opening of the water bottle.
- Take a drink while using a sucking motion and swallow the pill and water.

Lean forward method

- Place the pill on your tongue.
- Take a sip of water.
- Tilt your chin down towards your chest and then swallow the pill.

“In addition to these methods, you can also try putting the pill in food, like applesauce,” said Jones.

Do not crush your pill before adding it to food without first talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

“For some medication, crushing or grinding it can cause it to not work properly,” said Jones. “For example, crushing a medication that is supposed to be time-released will lead to the dose being administered all at once.”

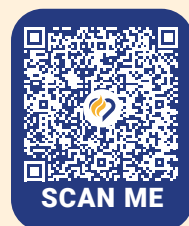
Also, the protective coating on some medication, labeled as enteric coated, helps protect your stomach from being irritated and should never be crushed.

If, after trying these methods, you are still having difficulty swallowing talk to your primary care provider to see if there is an underlying issue that might benefit from therapy. Speech therapists specialize in treating dysphagia.

As a patient advisor, you will be able to:

- Represent patients and families.
- Provide honest feedback.
- Enhance the patient and family experience.
- Attend monthly meetings.

To learn more, email SHSServiceExcellence@samhealth.org or scan the QR code to fill out an application.



Join Samaritan’s Patient and Family Advisory Council

Patient advisors are part of Samaritan’s ongoing efforts to improve patient satisfaction, provide feedback for health

care providers and promote a better understanding of health care among patients and the community.



Pictured above: Toshio Nagamoto, MD, third from right, and his surgical team complete their first surgery with the new robot.

A hernia surgery at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center ushered in the first surgical robot used in an ambulatory surgery center in Oregon earlier this spring. Good Sam’s second da Vinci robot will focus on outpatient surgery.

“From the patient’s perspective, it’s much safer, it’s a much easier recovery,” said Michelle Mitchell, director of Perioperative Services. “From our surgeons’ standpoint, it will extend their careers by up to 10 years because of the reduced strain on their back and knees.”

Standing during conventional surgery takes a toll on a surgeon’s entire body.

“Our surgeons are on their feet 12 to 16 hours a day,” said Mitchell. “Robotic-assisted surgery provides a safe alternative, it’s less physically demanding and our

surgeons can care for more patients in our underserved community. That’s huge.”

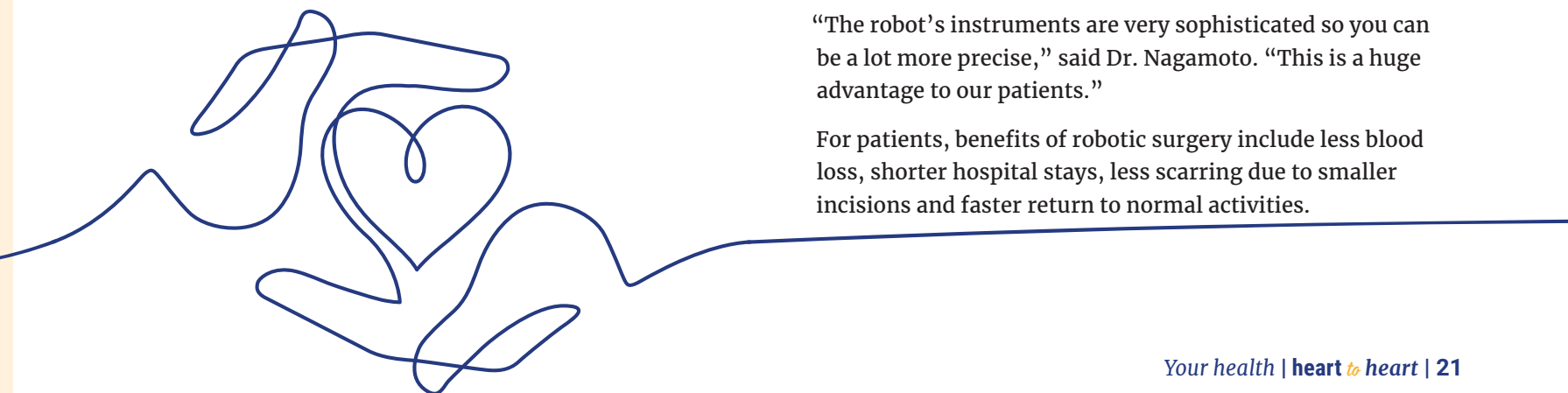
The surgeon works from a console, viewing the anatomy in high-definition 3D while using foot and hand controls to maneuver the tools while doing precise procedures.

“Open surgery, while effective, can be more challenging for a patient’s recovery,” said General Surgeon Toshio Nagamoto, MD, who performed the first three surgeries with the new robot. “Laparoscopic surgery is much better than open surgery, but the instruments aren’t quite as sophisticated as the robot.”

The 3D imaging allows the surgeon to view the area at 10 times the magnification. The robot’s finger and hand controls allow for meticulous maneuvering that two-dimensional laparoscopic surgery does not offer.

“The robot’s instruments are very sophisticated so you can be a lot more precise,” said Dr. Nagamoto. “This is a huge advantage to our patients.”

For patients, benefits of robotic surgery include less blood loss, shorter hospital stays, less scarring due to smaller incisions and faster return to normal activities.



Health insurance options for the new year

The fall season brings opportunity to reevaluate your coverage.



Every year, Medicare recipients and those on employer health insurance have an opportunity to review and change their insurance plans or coverage options. Each fall typically marks the beginning of the annual health insurance shopping season.

If you've been thinking about making changes to your coverage for next year, here are some things you should consider:

- **Look at your total annual out-of-pocket costs.** Consider not only monthly premiums but other costs such as copays, coinsurance and deductibles. Plans with a maximum out-of-pocket benefit also offer a set limit on your total annual out-of-pocket spending, providing additional peace of mind and another way to manage costs.
- **Check the provider network.** Make sure your favorite doctors, hospitals and other important providers are included in the plan's network.
- **Review your prescription drug coverage.** While drugs may be added or removed from your plan's list of covered drugs throughout the year, most changes in drug coverage happen on Jan. 1. Drug tiers, copays and the list of drugs covered by your plan may change from year to year. New restrictions or limitations may also apply. It's important to be aware of anything that may adversely affect your coverage.

• **Look for changes in coverage for dependents.** If you are on an employer health plan, review any increases in the employee premium contributions for dependent coverage. Also look for any new surcharges your plan may be adding to cover a spouse or partner eligible for other insurance through their workplace. These surcharges can exceed \$100 a month — above and beyond the premium contributions — so it's a potentially significant cost and something to watch for.

Your employer's human resources department or plan administrator should keep you informed about your plan's changes for the coming year, how to enroll and your enrollment period.

Oct. 15 marks the beginning of open enrollment for those on Medicare.

Whether enrolled in Original Medicare only or already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage or Medicare Supplement plan, Medicare recipients can take advantage of this period each year to switch to a new health plan or add to their Medicare insurance coverage for the following year.

Original Medicare covers a lot, but it doesn't cover everything. Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans often include extra coverage and benefits for hearing, vision, chiropractic, fitness memberships and more.

Original Medicare and Medicare Supplement plans do not include coverage for prescription drugs, so you may need to purchase a separate Part D prescription drug plan. Medicare Advantage plans, however, often include prescription drug coverage without a separate premium.

Applications for Medicare Advantage plans or stand-alone Part D prescription drug plans must be received by the health plan you intend to enroll in by Dec. 7 each year, which is the open enrollment period.

Medicare recipients: Samaritan Health Plans offers Medicare Advantage plans to residents of Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties. Local Medicare experts are available to answer your questions. Call 866-747-5267 or visit samhealthplans.org/Medicare.

Samaritan supports local nonprofits with Social Accountability grants

For many years, Samaritan Health Services has partnered with other local nonprofits to address the unmet health and medical needs of underserved populations, through its Social Accountability grants.

During this current cycle of grant funding, Samaritan will award nearly \$1 million over 30 months to support nonprofit organizations in Benton, Lincoln and Linn counties.

"While reviewing grant applications this year, committee members noted the huge need for services in our communities and the quality of the proposed projects," said JoAnn Miller, director of Community Health Promotion, who oversees the grant process. "We are pleased to support these nonprofits and their caring staff who create programs for the betterment of our local population."

Projects and collaborating agencies receiving grant funding are:

Benton County

- After-School Enrichment — Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis, Corvallis School District and Linn Benton Food Share.
- Emergency Financial and Sustainability Support for Vulnerable Benton County Citizens — We Care and Casa Latinos Unidos.
- Food for Families — Corvallis Environmental Center, Corvallis Parks and Recreation, South Corvallis Food Bank.
- HELP Employment Workshare Project — Corvallis Daytime Drop-In Center and Vina Moses.
- Hot Meals for Vulnerable Individuals, Sheltered and Unsheltered — Stone Soup Corvallis Inc., Unity Shelter and Linn Benton Food Share.
- Rural Child Care Health/Nutrition Education and Activities — Philomath Youth Activities Club, OSU-Moore Family Center, Philomath School District, Philomath Community Library, Corvallis Parks and Recreation, Old Mill Center, Strengthening Rural Families.

- Additional continued support will go to the Benton County Oral Health Coalition (Benton County Health Department, Love INC and Strengthening Rural Families).

Lincoln County

- Early Childhood Project — Neighbors For Kids and Olalla Center.
- Guatemalan and Latinx Community Cooking Classes and Farmer's Market Tours — Food Share of Lincoln County and OSU Extension.
- Additional continued support will go to Family Promise, Food Share of Lincoln County, Meals on Wheels and My Sister's Place/My Safe Place.

Linn County

- Food, Hygiene, Rent and Utility Assistance for Lebanon Households — Fish of Lebanon, St. Vincent de Paul and Salvation Army.
- Healthy Smile — Boys & Girls Club of Albany and Practical Dental Assisting of Oregon.
- Stand By Me: Oregon Program — Cascades West Council of Governments and Casa Latinos Unidos.
- Additional continued support will go to Sweet Home Emergency Ministries, Sweet Home/Lebanon Farmer's Market, Meals on Wheels, Volunteer Caregivers, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Santiam, Jackson Street Youth Services and Faith, Hope and Charity.

Visit samhealth.org/CommunityBenefit to learn more and to read the 2023 Community Health Impact Report.

Pathfinder Clubhouse increases access to mental health support and services



Pictured above: Members help serve up lunch at the Pathfinder Clubhouse.

Life can be difficult, and even more so for people who experience mental health issues — such as depression, bipolar disorder, psychosis or post-traumatic stress disorder, to name a few. Fortunately, Pathfinder Clubhouse in Corvallis offers access to support and resources to improve the lives of adults living with mental illness.

Based on the Clubhouse International model, Pathfinder Clubhouse uses best practices to offer low-barrier, nonclinical support so members can complete their education, find meaningful employment, attain financial stability and rediscover a purpose for their lives. The goal is to keep them out of the hospital, jail or prison system and get them into the workforce where they can be successful.

“Community partnerships and financial support for members are essential to the success of Pathfinder Clubhouse,” said Elizabeth Hazlewood, Pathfinder Clubhouse executive director, “and especially so in its partnerships with employers, including Samaritan Health Services.”

Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center provided partial funding for this important program, through its social accountability funding process.

“Oregon has the highest prevalence of mental illness in the nation, yet ranks 49th in outcomes,” said Hazlewood. “That means Oregon is the second worst in the nation with lots of gaps in mental health services.”

Pathfinder Clubhouse is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays and offers social and recreational opportunities on some evenings and weekends. Members are encouraged to create their own schedule and participate on their own terms. Services are open to anyone age 18 and older who has a mental health diagnosis.

“We work with our members’ strengths, talents and abilities,” Hazlewood said. “Our staff and members have an unstructured and flexible interaction. The support happens organically in most cases. For example, we don’t tell a member how to budget. Instead, members work side by side with a staff member who may be working on a grant. Next thing you know, the member is taking an interest in the process and learning about budgets.”

Continued on next page.



Pictured above: Resource coordinator Branden Harvey, at left, works with a clubhouse member.

In the Clubhouse model, this is known as a “work-ordered day.” The purpose is to assist members to feel better about themselves. Developing self-esteem, purpose and confidence are foundational to the member before setting additional goals for employment or education.

“We offer low-barrier access to services,” Hazlewood said. “We want to help people get the services they need before a full-blown crisis starts — because once you are there (in crisis), it’s hard to get help when you most need it.”

One Clubhouse member’s story

Kristin Appelt and her brother were both diagnosed with a mental illness. Two years ago, police were called to a Corvallis motel where her brother was acting aggressively and erratically while he was experiencing a mental health crisis. Unfortunately, he was killed during the ensuing encounter with the police.

“My life changed forever,” Appelt said. “To say I fell apart was an understatement. The days that followed were some of the worst days of my life. I found myself in the emergency room but still needing more help.”

Despite her anxiety and apprehension, she attended an outpatient program at the hospital, where she first heard about Pathfinder Clubhouse.

“They didn’t punish me for being emotional or having an attitude toward rules or boundaries. What they did was meet me where I was at and accept me how I came and for who I was,” Appelt said. “It’s now been months since I found this place. I don’t cry myself to sleep every night. I have built relationships and friendships while working side by side with others. I never thought these great things would be part of my life but they are and I’m grateful.”

Visit samhealth.org/CommunityBenefit to learn more about Samaritan’s role in improving the health of our communities.



Anyone feeling distressed and suicidal can get free confidential help 24/7 by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK or 988.



Samaritan welcomes new health care providers



Reda Bassaly, PA-C, has joined Samaritan Lebanon Health Center. He specializes in family medicine. He earned a master's degree at University of Zagazig – College of Veterinary Medicine and a master's in physician assistant studies at Franklin Pierce University – PA Program. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/rbassaly](https://samhealth.org/bio/rbassaly).



Elizabeth Bouressa, MD, has joined Mid-Valley Children's Clinic. She earned a bachelor's degree at Saint Mary's College and a medical degree at Creighton University – School of Medicine. She completed residency training at University of Colorado School of Medicine. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/ebouressa](https://samhealth.org/bio/ebouressa).



Rachel Elsasser, DO, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Family Medicine – Circle Blvd. She earned a bachelor's degree at Kent State University, a medical degree at Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed residency training at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/raelsasser](https://samhealth.org/bio/raelsasser).



Taylor Frank, PA-C, has joined Samaritan Cardiovascular Surgery. She earned a bachelor's degree at Oregon State University and a master's in physician assistant studies at Rocky Vista University. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/tfrank](https://samhealth.org/bio/tfrank).



Hilary Licardi, DNP, has joined Samaritan Evergreen Hospice. She earned a bachelor's degree at Pace University Lienhard School of Nursing and master's and doctorate degrees at University of Florida. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/hlicardi](https://samhealth.org/bio/hlicardi).



Eric Martin, MD, has joined Samaritan Urology – Lincoln City. He earned a bachelor's degree at Southern Oregon University, a medical degree at Oregon Health & Science University School of Medicine and completed residency training at Albany Medical College. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/emartin](https://samhealth.org/bio/emartin).



Shalini Mehta, MD, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Pulmonology – Corvallis. She earned a bachelor's degree at University of Michigan – Dearborn and a medical degree at St. George's School of Medicine. She completed residency training at University of Mississippi Medical Center and fellowships in interventional pulmonology at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Medicine and in pulmonary and critical care medicine at Henry Ford Hospital. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/smehta](https://samhealth.org/bio/smehta).



Hiroko Poceski, ANP, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Geriatric Medicine. She earned a bachelor's degree at University of Central Florida and a master's degree from University of South Alabama. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/hpoceski](https://samhealth.org/bio/hpoceski).



Matthew Rafus, PA-C, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Orthopedics – Corvallis. He earned a bachelor's degree at Castleton University and a master's in physician assistant studies at Westfield State University. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/mrafus](https://samhealth.org/bio/mrafus).



Atalie Rutherford, MD, has joined Samaritan Family Medicine Resident Clinic – Lebanon. She earned a bachelor's degree at University of Nebraska at Lincoln and a medical degree at University of Nebraska Medical Center. She completed residency training at The University of Arizona COM – Tucson Family Medicine Residency Program. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/arutherford](https://samhealth.org/bio/arutherford).



Jenny Stegeman-Olsen, MD, has joined Samaritan Medical Group Family Medicine – 26th Street. She earned a bachelor's degree at Oregon State University, a medical degree at Oregon Health & Science University and completed residency training at Lincoln Medical Education Foundation. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/jolsen](https://samhealth.org/bio/jolsen).



Hazel Tetzlaff, PA-C, has joined Samaritan Albany Surgical Associates. She earned a bachelor's degree at University of Pittsburgh and a master's in physician assistant studies from Chatham University. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/htetzlaff](https://samhealth.org/bio/htetzlaff).



Leyen Vu, DO, has joined Samaritan Athletic Medicine Center. He earned a bachelor's degree at University of Washington and a medical degree at Midwestern University. He completed residency training at Providence St. Peter Hospital and a fellowship in primary care sports medicine at University of Utah. [Learn more at samhealth.org/bio/lvu](https://samhealth.org/bio/lvu).

Express your gratitude, *thank a health care worker*



Has a Samaritan employee left a lasting impression?

Express your gratitude for a Samaritan staff member who made an impact in your health care experience at samhealth.org/ShiningStar.





Coastal recovery center to open next summer

Soon, there will be a peaceful, healing place for adults who have made the decision to reclaim their lives, their families and their communities, with the opening of a second Samaritan Treatment & Recovery Services center.

The 16-bed residential and outpatient facility is slated to open in mid-2024 in Newport. It will serve people from Lincoln County and across the state wanting to recover from substance use disorder.

“It is exciting to see talk turn into action as work moves forward on this much needed treatment center,” said Lesley Ogden, MD, CEO of the two Samaritan hospitals in Lincoln County. “We have talked about the desperate need for this service for years. Now, thanks to collaboration and support by many community partners, we are well on the way to making it a reality.”

The central Oregon Coast center will be patterned after the recovery center Samaritan opened in Lebanon three years ago. The patient-centered approach to care will include group and individual therapy, medication-assisted treatment and peer-delivered services by staff who have previously lived with substance use disorder and have received training to help others on the path to recovery.

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

“The center will offer hope for recovery and a better life in a healing environment fostered by dignity, compassion and respect,” said Dr. Ogden. “People who come to this center

have made the decision to seek help. They want our help and it is our privilege to provide it.”

The closest inpatient treatment center is in Corvallis, but it often has waitlists so many Lincoln County residents travel up to 300 miles for treatment.

“With Oregon ranked second in the nation for substance use disorder and 50th for access to treatment programs, it’s obvious that there is a need for this service not only in our country but in the state,” Dr. Ogden said.

Pacific Communities Health District was instrumental in kicking off the project by purchasing a 4,700-square-foot building in Newport. Most recently used as an adult foster care facility, the building and grounds are being remodeled and an 8,302-square-foot two-story addition is being constructed.

Pacific Communities Health District Foundation and North Lincoln Hospital Foundation are raising \$10.1 million to remodel, construct, furnish and equip the center. The goal is close to being met, with financial support from numerous public and private entities and individuals from across the county and the state.

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

Visit samhealth.org/SupportSTARSCoast to learn about this project, including how to make a donation.

Resources to help you be well



Classes and support

Samaritan Health Services offers a wide variety of support groups, health education classes and seminars to help community members find the support and gain the knowledge they need to live a healthier life.



Health and wellness topics include: cancer, diabetes, heart health, childbirth, parenting, grief, living well with chronic conditions and more.

To see the most current list of events, visit samhealth.org/Classes.

Keeping you informed

Sign up for Samaritan’s e-newsletters by visiting samhealth.org/Subscribe.



To Your Health
Get monthly health and wellness tips and updates on classes and events.



Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies seminars
Receive information on free health education seminars offered by Samaritan.



Samaritan Plastic, Reconstructive & Hand Surgery specials
Get beauty tips and learn about our cosmetic specials and events.



James Cassidy, soil scientist and faculty advisor for OSU Organic Growers Club, holds produce that will benefit patients in need. Read more about the partnership between Samaritan and OSU Growers Club on page 17.

SOIL



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