

Community Connection

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Lifetime Achievement Reception Honors Distinguished Recipients

pages 2-4

Support for The Center at LMHS

page 4-5

LMHS Honored for Achievement in Digital Health Excellence

page 6

LMH Celebrates Medical Staff, Announces Physician of the Year

page 8-9

Check out our Quality Report Cards
online at LMHealth.org.

See pages 16-25 for Quality Report Cards in this issue.



Lifetime Achievement Reception Honors Distinguished Recipients

In November, the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Development Council hosted the Lifetime Achievement Reception to honor individuals and organizations whose service to Licking County reflects Licking Memorial Health Systems' (LMHS) mission to improve the health of the community. More than 150 guests attended the event, which was held at the J. Gilbert Reese Center on the campus of Central Ohio Technical College (COTC) and The Ohio State University (OSU) at Newark. The evening featured the presentation of the prestigious Lifetime Achievement and Mary Jane McDonald Building a Healthier Community awards, and recognition of the 2025 A Lifetime of Care recipients.

Lifetime Achievement Award – Jennifer Utrevis and Louis (Lou) A. Mitchell



LMHS is pleased to announce that F. Jennifer Utrevis is the 2025 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award. LMHS also honored Louis (Lou) A. Mitchell posthumously. Created in 1989, the Lifetime Achievement Award is the highest honor that LMHS confers each year. Nominees must be of good moral character, show that their work has contributed to a better quality of life for Licking County citizens, and have provided strong leadership in more than one organization or activity.

After serving as President and General Manager for the Granville Inn, Jennifer was appointed Interim Executive Director for Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Licking & Perry Counties in 2004 during a difficult time for the non-profit organization and accepted a permanent position as Executive Director in 2005. During her 17 years with the organization, BBBS of Licking & Perry Counties achieved "Quality Agency" status and became known for

servicing the most children on the smallest budget. In addition, Jennifer was elected to serve a two-year term as President of the Ohio State Association of Big Brothers Big Sisters in 2016.

"Jennifer has shown compassion, integrity, and passion in assisting the children in Licking County and the entire community with her service to multiple non-profit organizations," LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese said. "Her drive to create more opportunities for others, especially youth, stands as a testament to her commitment to providing a better quality of life for our residents. We are honored that she has partnered with LMHS in numerous endeavors to improve the health of the community."

In addition to her work with BBBS, Jennifer has served as a board member, mentor, and advocate for mental health and youth education and has been a steady force behind initiatives that continue to assist

Newark and surrounding communities. She has served as the Chair of the Licking County Chamber of Commerce and has been an active member of the Development Council for 12 years, where she is currently Vice Chair of the Community Relations Committee. She continues to serve the community as a member of Newark Rotary and a longtime supporter and volunteer with United Way of Licking County.

Jennifer received the John Alford Community Service Award and the Paddy Kutz Mental Health Award for Education in 2021 for her impact on youth through the school-based "Lunch Buddies" mentoring program. She is well-known for leading with integrity, demonstrating unwavering commitment to the mission of helping children and families overcome adversity, and for her skills at organizational turnaround, stakeholder engagement, and non-profit growth.

Born and raised in Newark, Lou Mitchell graduated from Newark High School in 1952 and Denison University in 1957, where he had a distinguished athletic career. He was inducted into the Denison

University Athletic Hall of Fame, the Newark High School Athletic Hall of Fame, and the Ohio Basketball Hall of Fame. After serving two years in the United States Army, Lou worked for an investment firm,

then became the President and owner of County Savings Bank in Franklin and Licking Counties until it was sold in 1996. In 1971, he became President of First Financial Group until his passing in 2012.

Lou felt strongly about supporting his alma mater and served as a Lifetime Trustee of Denison University. In 1994, he funded the building of the Mitchell Athletic Center, a recreation and fitness facility at Denison. He also donated funds to add an auxiliary gym at Newark High School. In addition, Lou started the Licking County Settlers, a summer wood bat baseball league for college players striving to make it in the major leagues.

During his lifetime, Lou supported Newark and Licking County through his charitable interests, including The Works

and the Licking County Family YMCA, where the Mitchell Family YMCA Recreation Center was dedicated in his honor in 2005. For many years, he helped sponsor Newark Middle School students on an annual trip to Washington, D.C. Along with Jane McConnell, Lou established A Call To College, a program that provides college scholarship money to Newark High School students. A Call to College has awarded over \$4 million in funding over the past 31 years. Lou's commitment to youth also included being actively involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program, where he served as President and as a big brother himself.



The Mary Jane McDonald Building a Healthier Community Award – Licking County Transit

LMHS presented the Mary Jane McDonald Building a Healthier Community to Licking County Transit. The organization is owned, operated, and governed by the citizens of Licking County through the Licking County Board of Commissioners. The LMH Development Council created the Building a Healthier Community Award in 2005 to honor a group or organization in Licking County with an ongoing work or project that reflects LMHS' mission to improve the health of the community. It was renamed the Mary Jane McDonald Building a Healthier Community Award in 2018.

Mary Jane was a member of the LMH Board of Directors from 1981 to 1987, and a member of the LMHS Board of Directors from 1988 to 1999. She was elected as the first female Chair of the LMHS Board in 1991 and received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001. Mary Jane dedicated her time and talents to enriching the lives of countless Licking County residents through her charitable and selfless acts of volunteerism.

Public ownership enables Licking County Transit to remain closely aligned with community priorities, adapt responsively to change, and maintain a focus on service rather than profit. By engaging local voices in decision-making processes, Licking County Transit creates a more inclusive and effective transportation network. Transportation has been a critical issue in Licking County for some time.

"To improve the health of the community, residents must have transportation to obtain

proper medical care, find employment, and acquire needed groceries and supplies," Rob explained. "Removing the barrier of lack of transportation improves the quality of life for those living in Licking County. We are honored to continue to partner with Licking County Transit as they provide access to more areas of the county."

In July 2023, Licking County Transit began offering fixed-route services. The first route, sponsored by LMHS, travels east to west along Main Street in Newark with stops at core commercial and residential corridors. The route improved access to employment, retail, medical facilities, and civic institutions. A second route along 21st Street in Newark was soon added, and now there are three more routes offering services to Granville, Heath, Hebron, and Buckeye Lake. Each expansion phase has been researched through data, public feedback, and a network of support partners, ensuring that new services reflect community priorities.

In 2024, Licking County Transit provided over 108,000 rides, a significant increase compared to prior years and a testament to the growing reliance and trust in the system. On average, approximately 110 residents use the system daily, demonstrating both the consistent demand and crucial role that Licking County Transit plays in the lives of county residents. Populations that most benefit from Licking County Transit include seniors, individuals with disabilities, youth, veterans, and low-income families.

(continued on page 4)



A Lifetime of Care – Craig B. Cairns, M.D., M.P.H., and Bruce P. Miller, M.D.

LMHS honored Craig B. Cairns, M.D., M.P.H., and Bruce P. Miller, M.D., with A Lifetime of Care recognition. The award was created in 2018 to honor physicians for their extended service to the Licking County community. Physicians who have served on the LMH Active Medical Staff for 35 years or more, or have 50 years or more of service combined between the Active Medical Staff and Honorary Medical Staff, are featured on a display near the LMH Main Lobby.



Dr. Cairns was serving as Vice President Medical Affairs for LMHS when he retired on June 20. He joined Licking Memorial Health Professionals in 1999 after serving as the physician-owner of Newark Family Physicians for more than 20 years and has been affiliated with LMH Active Medical Staff since 1977. He is continuing his service to LMHS as part of the Honorary Medical Staff. Dr. Cairns received his Medical Degree from The Ohio State University College of Medicine in Columbus, Ohio, and completed his residency at Riverside Methodist Hospital in Columbus. He received a Master of Public Health degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Prior to becoming Vice President Medical Affairs, he served as Chief of the Medical Staff and Chair of the Executive Committee of the Medical Staff. As part of his role as Vice President Medical Affairs, Dr. Cairns provided leadership for Shepherd Hill and the Process Improvement Department. In 1989, Dr. Cairns was elected Physician of the Year by members of the Active Medical Staff. He received the Hometown Hero Award from the American Red Cross of Licking County in 2008. Recently, during the 2025 Employee Recognition Event, Dr. Cairns received the LMHS President's Award, which is given to an individual or group of individuals who demonstrate outstanding service to LMHS and whose efforts contribute greatly to the organization's mission of improving the health of the community.



Dr. Miller served on the LMH Active Medical Staff from 1982 until his retirement in October 2024 and continues his service as part of the Honorary Medical Staff. He also provided medical care to the community at his private practice in Utica, which he opened in 1982. Dr. Miller received his Medical Degree from the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara, in Guadalajara, Mexico. He completed internal medicine residencies at St. Luke's Hospital in Cleveland and at the Medical College of Ohio in Toledo, Ohio.

In addition to his medical practice, Dr. Miller is dedicated to his community. He served as a volunteer physician for North Fork Local Schools in Utica and on the Board of Directors for the Licking County Chapter of the American Diabetes Association. He remains a member of the Sertoma Club and Utica Methodist Church.

Support for The Center at LMHS

A group of community leaders has offered support for Licking Memorial Health Systems' (LMHS) \$26 million education and event center that is being constructed adjacent to the main Hospital campus. The Center at LMHS will provide a place to meet, learn, and share in activities that promote healthy lifestyles and offer valuable resources that support the LMHS mission to improve the health of the community. As Licking County continues to grow and thrive, The Center at LMHS will enhance the opportunity for education and connectivity within the area.

"Initial support for The Center at LMHS has been overwhelmingly positive," said LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese. "We have an amazing group of leaders working on the Fundraising Committee to promote the project to the community. With the generous gifts to date, the cost of building The Center will be significantly offset for LMHS, allowing us to continue to focus on offering top quality care for our friends, families, and neighbors."

The Fundraising Committee, co-chaired by Amy and Jim Matesich, has been diligently working to raise awareness of the importance of the project. "Giving back to our community is ingrained in the culture of LMHS," said Jim Matesich. "In addition to providing excellent healthcare, the organization also shares their resources and generously supports numerous other non-profit organizations in the area. I am honored to assist in leading the efforts to fund the building of The Center at LMHS. Donating to the cause offers the opportunity for me, and the community, to demonstrate appreciation for the quality of care provided to us over the years."

Each member of the Committee is a leader in the community and has supported and served LMHS for years. They are dedicated to enhancing the well-being of Licking County residents and graciously volunteer their time to advance the quality of life for the community. The Committee consists of the following members:

- Mary Jane Carrier
- Tom Cummiskey
- Marcia Downes
- Andrew Guanciale
- Patrick Guanciale
- Ashley Hess
- Dan Hunt
- Pat Jeffries
- Michele Layman
- Bob McGaughy
- Stephanie Mollica
- Robert O'Neill
- Jane Scott, M.D.
- John Uible
- Pattye Whisman, M.D.
- Cindy Young

The project has received significant philanthropic contributions to this point. In addition, LMHS was able to receive state funding from the One-Time Strategic Community Investment Fund (OTSCIF), which helps fund projects that will benefit communities across Ohio. Through the leadership of State Senator Tim Schaffer and the ongoing support of State Representatives Thaddeus Claggett and Kevin Miller, \$3 million in funding was granted for the planned Center. The Fundraising Committee has already garnered much support from the community and been pleased with the efforts, but hopes to continue encouraging others to be generous.

Bob McGaughy retired as Vice President Human Resources after 25 years with the organization and continues to serve LMHS as the Chair of the Development Council. "I continue to stay

involved with LMHS because I believe in the great services they provide our community," Bob shared. "The number of people employed at LMHS has nearly tripled in the past two decades. Our healthcare workers require space to continue their training and education. We can help them build that space. In addition to educating the staff, The Center at LMHS will also be a wonderful place for community members to participate in healthy, educational activities. It will be an invaluable asset in increasing the quality of life in Licking County."

Retiring from Park National Bank in 2022, John Uible now volunteers his time at LMHS. He feels a commitment to giving back rooted in his deep connection to the people of Licking County. "We can make a positive difference in the community by volunteering and giving generously," John explained. "New technologies and methodologies can increase positive outcomes for patients who visit LMHS, and our healthcare workers require continual training to keep them up-to-date. We can give back by making sure

the staff at LMHS has a place to learn new skills. Supporting the building of this new facility will make a difference for us all."

Committee member Ashley Hess has a passion for serving the community and volunteers her time to increase the quality of life in Licking County. "I'm honored to support The Center at LMHS. The project is about more than a building, it is an investment in our community's future, creating lasting opportunities for learning, connection, and improved health for generations to come."

"We greatly appreciate the Fundraising Committee and the Matesichs for their leadership and commitment to LMHS," said Veronica Patton, Vice President Development & Public Relations. "The Committee members have been so generous with their time, and their efforts are evident in the donations that we have already received. We are grateful for the tremendous, ongoing support from so many individuals, families, and organizations over the years. Additional contributions for the new facility will be

greatly appreciated from those who feel inclined to donate."

By supporting The Center at LMHS, donors champion community health by investing in a vital resource that will enhance healthcare provision and improve the overall well-being of Licking County residents. Acknowledgments are available for donors to receive prominent recognition for their contribution. Gifts of \$10,000 and above will be included on the beautiful Donor Wall in the Atrium Lobby. In addition, custom-engraved pavers, which will be placed in the front walkway of the facility, are also available through a donation. A gift of \$100,000 would receive the 24-inch size paver and a \$50,000 gift would include the 18-inch size. Gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. To make a gift or for additional information, please call the LMH Development Office at (220) 564-4102, visit LMHealth.org and click on the Donate button at the top right corner of the page, or contact one of the Committee members listed.



Mary Jane Carrier



Tom Cummiskey



Marcia Downes



Andrew Guanciale



Patrick Guanciale



Ashley Hess



Dan Hunt



Pat Jeffries



Michele Layman



Amy Matesich



Jim Matesich



Bob McGaughy



Stephanie Mollica



Robert O'Neill



Jane Scott, M.D.



John Uible



Pattye Whisman, M.D.



Cindy Young

LMHS Honored for Achievement in Digital Health Excellence

For the twelfth consecutive year, the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME) recognized Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) as one of the Digital Health Most Wired recipients. The CHIME Digital Health Most Wired program conducts an annual survey to identify and honor organizations that exemplify excellence through their adoption, implementation, and use of information technology to improve the health of their communities. LMHS earned distinction as a Most Wired recipient for the acute care and ambulatory settings.

Among the more than 50,000 facilities represented, LMHS ranked highly in key focus areas including analytics and data management, cybersecurity, population health, supply chain, administration, and innovation and emerging technology. The survey evaluates the adoption maturity, outcomes, and value of technology integration across healthcare organizations from early development to industry leading.

“LMHS is pleased to once again be recognized for our efforts to improve the health of the community,” said Rob Montagnese, LMHS President & CEO.

“With the support of our community, we strive to stay at the forefront of healthcare technology to maintain our high standards of medical treatment.”

Over the next several decades, emerging technologies have the potential to revolutionize healthcare in fundamental ways. LMHS is committed to navigating this evolution through the continued investment and adoption of innovative technology. Through focusing on technology that directly impacts the quality of care provided to patients, such as integrated computer systems with advanced clinical decision support tools, voice recognition technology, and computer-assisted diagnosis tools, LMHS healthcare providers can deliver top-tier treatments to patients that may not be available at other community hospitals.

Additionally, the LMHS Information Systems Department is charged with maintaining the technology systems that assist clinical staff in providing the best possible care to patients. Through the use of a privacy monitoring system, external audit systems by a certified security organization, and strong authentication protocols, LMHS protects the privacy of patient information, ensures health records

are accurate, and that systems are operating at full capacity to provide clinical staff the tools needed to treat patients effectively.

The Digital Health Most Wired survey serves as a comprehensive evaluation and digital maturity report card for healthcare organizations across the globe. As success in digital transformation increasingly influences the quality and accessibility of care, this recognition program reflects the progress of leading healthcare providers as they reshape the future of healthcare. This achievement extends beyond information technology to every area of the organization symbolizing a collective commitment to advancing healthcare through strategic digital initiatives.



Video Games Impact Health

In the digital era, video games have become an integral part of audiovisual culture. With sophisticated graphics, interactive narratives, and compelling stories, games offer entertainment and an opportunity to escape from the stress of reality. Gaming does have the potential to positively impact mental health by assisting individuals to learn higher-level and abstract thinking skills, communicate with others, and relieve stress. However, spending hours playing video games can have a negative impact on health. Video game addiction is now a commonly diagnosed disorder recognizing both the mental and physical effects of gaming. Not everyone who plays video games is addicted, but it is important for parents to take proactive steps to encourage responsible gaming habits and avoid negative physical symptoms.

An addiction is defined as a person's inability to control the use of a substance or behavior, despite negative consequences. Those who become addicted to video games are so engrossed in the screen time that they ignore other normal activities. Addiction occurs when the reward center in the brain releases dopamine in response to a pleasurable experience or hyperarousal. If a person experiences hyperarousal while playing video games, the brain associates the activity with dopamine, a powerful neurotransmitter in the brain.

The person develops a strong drive to seek out that same pleasure again and

becomes more driven to return to the behavior.

Spending hours every day sitting in front of a computer playing video games may have severe implications for physical and mental health. Chronic hyperarousal can decrease the body's immune function, cause irritability, and unstable blood sugar levels. In children, some can develop cravings for sweets while playing video games. Overeating while gaming may lead to the child becoming obese. Obesity can lead to heart problems and heart-related disorders.

Combined with the sedentary nature of gaming, children's diet and weight can be negatively affected as well. When gaming, some users may forget to eat regular meals or drink water leading to dehydration and other issues associated with a poor diet. Not moving or exercising for long periods of time can lead to physical health atrophy, a wasting away of cells, organs, and muscle tissue. Sometimes children will even avoid stopping the game to go to the restroom, which can lead to hygiene issues. Other common physical ailments include eye strain, fatigue, wrist and hand pain, back problems, neck pain, and reduced spine mobility.

Many children may play video games late into the night, leading to sleep deprivation, which is closely linked to mood disorders, increased stress levels, and decreased academic performance. The blue light emitted from screens suppresses melatonin production, making it harder for children to fall

asleep and regulate their emotions effectively. Poor sleep due to excessive gaming can exacerbate mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, making children more vulnerable to emotional instability.

To mitigate the hidden risks of video games on children's physical and behavioral health, parents and caregivers

must take proactive steps to encourage responsible gaming habits. Some children can self-regulate and engage in physical activities on their own. It is important to encourage these behaviors. Be on guard if the child becomes noticeably more anxious and quicker to lose their temper when spending a lot of time on screens. Be sure to play with the child, teach kindness, be involved, and get to know the child's friends and their activities.

Encourage active screen time over passive screen time. Active screen time involves the child interacting with other people or being cognitively or physically engaged. For example, allow the child to play educational games, or games that require players to build something together. Other options are fitness-type games that require movement while playing. Passive screen time includes watching screens with minimal cognitive engagement, such as scrolling through social media, watching online videos, or playing simple games.

Set reasonable limits for the child's screen time and video game types, especially if the child's use of screens hinders involvement in other activities. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting screen time to no more than one to two hours per day for children. Encourage gaming breaks and ensure that video games do not replace physical activity, homework, or family interactions. Establish clear gaming schedules that prioritize responsibilities before entertainment.

Choose age-appropriate games with positive themes and avoid violent or excessively stimulating games. Utilize parental controls and game ratings to determine suitability. Engage in co-play with children to better understand the content they consume. Parents should set an example by demonstrating responsible screen usage and engaging in non-digital activities together as a family. If concerns about a child or loved one's use of screen time arise, consult a behavioral or addictions specialist or discuss physical symptoms with a pediatrician.

Be Wise...Immunize Provides Free Flu Vaccinations for Licking County Youth

In October, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) offered free influenza vaccines to Licking County infants and children. More than 245 youth, from 6 months up to the age of 18, attended the “Be Wise...Immunize” clinics held at the LMHS location in Downtown Newark and Licking Memorial Pediatrics – Pataskala. LMHS staff members administered the vaccines after reviewing the children's medical history with parents.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual flu vaccines for all children, ages 6 months and older. Children with chronic health conditions are especially vulnerable and should receive a vaccine before the height of influenza activity, which begins in October and continues through May. For those who were unable to attend the clinics, the flu vaccine is available at all Licking Memorial Family Practice and Licking Memorial Pediatrics locations.



LMH Celebrates Medical Staff, Announces Physician of the Year

In October, Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) held the annual Medical Staff Recognition Dinner at the New Albany Country Club to show appreciation for the physicians' commitment to improve the health of the community. The LMH Active Medical Staff is comprised of 159 physicians who represent more than 30 medical specialties. Additionally, 90 physicians are members of the consulting staff.

Following a social hour and dinner, LMH Chief of Staff, Gary D. Sutliff, M.D., announced new medical staff appointees and recognized physicians who were celebrating service anniversaries in 5-year increments in 2025. To conclude the evening, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) President & CEO Rob Montagnese announced that there were two recipients of this year's Physician of the Year award. The winners were Mark T. DeFrancisco, D.O., Licking Memorial Vascular Surgery, and Bassam Kret, M.D., Licking Memorial Hospitalist.

Dr. DeFrancisco joined Licking Memorial Vascular Surgery in February 2020. He received his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine in Athens and completed a general

surgery residency at Doctors Hospital in Columbus and a 3-month vascular surgery fellowship at Arizona Heart Institute in Phoenix, Arizona. Dr. DeFrancisco is board certified in vascular surgery. He and his wife, Abby, have four children, Luke, Cora, Noel, and Jude.

Dr. Kret joined Licking Memorial Health Systems in October 2002. He received his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Damascus Faculty of Medicine in Damascus, Syria, where he also completed an obstetrics and gynecology residency. He then completed an internal medicine residency at St. Joseph Mercy – Oakland in Pontiac, Michigan. Dr. Kret was also recognized as Physician of the Year in 2012. He and his wife, Najwa, have two daughters, Rita and Zaina.

The Physician of the Year award recipient is elected each year by the members of the LMH Active Medical Staff to recognize a physician who has consistently demonstrated care and concern for patients, clinical knowledge, and a good relationship with peers and other Hospital staff members. Other nominees included Valerie D. Collins, M.D., Anesthesiology, and Brian W. Korn, D.O., Emergency Medicine.



2025 Physician Service Awards 60 Years of Service

Harold E. Kelch, M.D.

55 Years of Service

Henry D. Rocco, M.D.
Claude R. Rousseau, M.D.

40 Years of Service

David M. Jackson, M.D.
Donna J. McDonald, M.D.

35 Years of Service

Catherine A. Chiodo, D.P.M.
David W. Koontz, D.O.
Maureen Y. Yablonski, M.D.

30 Years of Service

Stephanie E. Ladson-Wofford, M.D.

25 Years of Service

Jeff A. Bare, D.O.
Lori J. Elwood, M.D.
Shelley A. Gittens, M.D.
Seung H. Park, M.D.

20 Years of Service

Garth A. Bennington, M.D.
Daniel B. Logan, D.P.M.

15 Years of Service

May U. Mbah, M.D.
Nawar Saieg, M.D.
Brent M. Savage, M.D.

10 Years of Service

Daniel W. Kennedy, M.D.
Lisa J. Lee, M.D.
Bruce A. Merwin, M.D.
Robert W. Mueller, M.D.
Kevin M. Ouweleen, M.D.
Amanda L. Quisno, D.P.M.

5 Years of Service

Bashar Alawad, M.D.
Frank K. Boateng, M.D.
Lydia E. Cortes-Betancourt, M.D.
Mark T. DeFrancisco, D.O.
Wondwossen Y. Dererie, M.D.
Sami T. Getahun, M.D.
Maria C. May, D.O.
Elizabeth W. McIntosh, M.D.
John M. Mitchell, M.D.
Colleen M. Pema, D.O.
William H. Phillips, D.O.
Joseph J. Tasch, D.O.
Leah C. Thornton, M.D.
Olugbenga F. Tolani, M.D.

Past Recipients of the LMH Physician of the Year Award

1988 – Charles F. Sinsabaugh, M.D.
1989 – Craig B. Cairns, M.D.

C. Michael Thorne, M.D.

1990 – Mark A. Mitchell, M.D.

1991 – Carl L. Petersilge, M.D.

1992 – Edward A. Carlin, M.D.
Harold E. Kelch, M.D.

1993 – Gerald R. Ehram, M.D.

1994 – William K. Rawlinson, M.D.

1995 – Pattye A. Whisman, M.D.

1996 – J. Michael Wills, M.D.

1997 – Terry P. Barber, M.D.

1998 – Mary Beth Hall, M.D.

1999 – Debra A. Heldman, M.D.

2000 – Frederick N. Karaffa, M.D.

2001 – Elliot Davidoff, M.D.

Bryce I. Morrice, M.D.

Mark L. Reeder, M.D.

2002 – Jacqueline J. Jones, M.D.

2003 – Owen Lee, M.D.

2004 – Larry N. Pasley, M.D.

2005 – Joseph E. Fondriest, M.D.

2006 – May-Lee M. Robertson, D.O.

2007 – Peter T. Nock, D.O.

2008 – Eric R. Pacht, M.D.

2009 – Ann V. Govier, M.D.

David E. Subler, M.D.

2010 – Richard A. Baltisberger, M.D.

David R. Lawrence, D.O.

2011 – Talya R. Greathouse, M.D.

2012 – Bassam Kret, M.D.

2013 – Shakil A. Karim, D.O.

2014 – Brent M. Savage, M.D.

2015 – Garth A. Bennington, M.D.

2016 – Janae M. Davis, M.D.

2017 – Audrey K. Bennett, M.D.

2018 – Elizabeth A. Yoder, D.O.

2019 – Matthew C. Bromley, D.O.

2020 – LMH Medical Staff

2021 – Kevin M. Ouweleen, M.D.

2022 – Lori J. Elwood, M.D.

2023 – Bradley R. Lewis, M.D.

2024 – Terrill D. Burnworth, D.O.

New Procedure Breaks Up Calcification for Better Cardiac Intervention Results

Coronary artery disease (CAD) is a common type of heart disease that affects the coronary arteries, the main blood vessels that supply blood to the heart. In CAD, blood flow is reduced to the heart muscle. Plaque, a substance consisting of fats, cholesterol, and other substances including calcium, accumulates within the artery walls and narrows the arteries, a condition called atherosclerosis. The diminished blood flow or complete blockage may lead to a heart attack. The interventional cardiologists at Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) have been using minimally invasive procedures such as angioplasty and stenting to treat atherosclerosis. However, calcification of the plaque creates a risk of the procedure failing and the artery remaining blocked.

Angioplasty uses a medical balloon to widen blocked arteries. The balloon presses against the inside wall of the artery to open the space and improve blood flow. A metal stent is often placed across the artery wall to keep the artery from narrowing again. When a calcified area is encountered, the balloon may fail to expand, or if the area can be opened with the balloon, there is still a risk that the stent will not successfully deploy.



In the past, if calcification was discovered, an LMHS patient would need to be sent to another facility where an open heart surgeon was readily available if a minimally invasive procedure failed. Now, Cardiologist Hassan Rajjoub, M.D., is using new technology to break up the calcification before placing the stent for a better outcome for the patient.

Shockwave intravascular lithotripsy (IVL) was recently approved for use in the United States. Shockwave disrupts coronary calcium through acoustic shock waves, modifying the calcium in a safe, effective manner to assist in restoring vessel compliance prior to stent deployment. Dr. Rajjoub threads a small wire that contains the device that generates the shock wave along with the balloon and guides it to the calcified area. The shock wave fractures the calcium and allows for effective stent deployment. IVL is a breakthrough technology allowing successful, safe treatment of the calcified lesions that were previously untreatable with angioplasty and stenting.

Patients at high risk for heart disease or who already have symptoms, should discuss testing for CAD with their primary care physician. Risk factors include a family history of heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and lack of exercise and healthy eating habits. Symptoms of coronary artery disease may go undetected for a long time. Plaque buildup takes many years, even decades; however, as the arteries narrow, mild symptoms may become evident such as temporary chest pain or discomfort. The pain may be more evident during physical activity or emotional distress and go away with rest. Some people may experience shortness of breath during light physical activity. If the pain or shortness is severe, call 911 immediately.

Support LMH Through Honorary and Memorial Giving

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) provides Licking County residents with quality care close to home. The community's steadfast support, offered through monetary gifts, allows LMHS to continue to maintain high standards of treatment. Through contributions to Licking Memorial Health Foundation (LMHF), individuals, businesses, and foundations assist in providing state-of-the-art equipment and capital expansions that improve the health of the community. The Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Development Council is responsible for increasing charitable donations to LMHF and has developed a variety of giving programs for the convenience of those who would like to support the Hospital. The Honorary and Memorial Giving program offers a special opportunity to pay tribute to a beloved friend or family member through a gift to LMHF given as a memorial or to provide recognition to living individuals.

For many years, Sue Henry-Mounts has come to rely on LMH for her healthcare needs, and she commends the physicians, nurses, and staff for their dedication to patients and the

community. Because of the excellent care that she has received at the Hospital, she found it fitting to donate in honor of her late husbands, Bill Henry and Lew Mounts. "LMH is a wonderful hospital," she said. "The Hospital does so much for Licking County, and we are fortunate to have it. I am happy that I can contribute to LMH's success."

For more than 76 years, Sue has volunteered her time to LMH as a member of TWIGS (Togetherness, Willingness, Imagination, Giving, and Sharing). During this time, Sue assisted in preparing and serving food at the previous Hospital location's snack bar, participated in the former TWIGS 14 Tour of Homes, and currently serves at the TWIGS 6 Thrift Shop. She also assisted in several other fundraisers including the LMH Golf Gala.

Directing the donations of interested friends, family, and colleagues to LMHF can be a fitting way to give back to the community while memorializing family members who have passed. Some families request charitable contributions in lieu of flowers for funerals, and many have paid their respects in this manner.

For those who participate in honorary and memorial contributions, the honoree and donor names are listed in the Giving Log located in the LMH Main Lobby, *Community Connection* magazine, and the LMHS *Annual Report*. Individuals recognized with a donation are notified by mail that a gift was received in their honor. Financial donations to LMHF can also be made online by visiting LMHealth.org and clicking on the Donate button in the top right corner of the homepage to access the secure giving form.

LMHS, a not-for-profit organization, reinvests revenue over expenses back into providing care for the community. Gifts may be designated for a specific department, service, facility, or piece of equipment. However, unrestricted gifts allow money to be used where the need is greatest. Donations received for LMHF will help fund the construction and development of the The Center at LMHS. The facility will serve as a place to meet, learn, and share in activities that promote healthy lifestyles and offer valuable resources. As Licking County continues to grow and thrive, The Center will enhance the opportunity for

education, connectivity, and relationships within the community.

Every contribution to LMHF – whether large or small – is important to the quality of care at LMH. There are many ways that families and the business community can join together to support LMH. Donations are a meaningful way to remember a loved one's legacy while advancing the community's healthcare. All charitable contributions to LMHF are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Donations are used for capital expansion, renovation projects, or equipment needs. For more information about charitable giving, please call the Development Department at (220) 564-4102 or scan the QR code.



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LMHS Leaders Discuss Safety in the Workplace

The Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Development Council hosted a Corporate Breakfast for community leaders in the Main Street Café at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) in September. Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) President & CEO Rob Montagnese, Vice President Human Resources & Support Services Holly Slaughter, and Director of Safety, Security,

& Environmental Services Nick Keisel spoke to the group about measures implemented throughout LMHS to keep the workforce safe. The presentation focused on the impact of violence in the workplace and the critical role that organizations can play in prevention and response. Workplace violence is now the second leading cause of occupational deaths in the United States.

Holly discussed the LMHS Employee Domestic Violence Support program, which provides resources and assistance for employees who may be experiencing violence at home. Key elements of the program include education and awareness, confidential support, resource connections, and safety planning. She shared that when employees feel

supported and protected, the workplace becomes safer. Nick described several new technologies that have been implemented to detect the presence of weapons, including a new software that analyzes existing video surveillance data and alerts police within seconds if a firearm is detected.

In addition, all LMHS computers have been equipped with 911 Cellular, a program that creates an electronic panic button for employees. In an emergency, the employee can use their computer keyboard to alert emergency responders to the situation. New technology, increased awareness, better training with a focus on de-escalation and staff support, and a visible Safety & Security presence have contributed to a 50 percent reduction in workplace violence injuries for LMH staff.

Corporate Breakfasts are sponsored by the LMH Development Council to inform community leaders about LMHS' new technology and services. The Development Council was established in 1987 to increase charitable giving to the Hospital and to promote positive community relations. Approximately 80 distinguished members of the community volunteer their time to serve on the Development Council.

Golf Gala Proceeds Help Fund The Center at LMHS Construction

The Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Development Council hosted the 2025 Golf Gala on September 15 at the Denison Golf Club. All proceeds from this event support the construction and development of The Center at LMHS. The facility will serve as a place to meet, learn, and share in activities that promote healthy lifestyles and offer valuable resources. As Licking County continues to grow and thrive, The Center at LMHS will enhance the opportunity for education, connectivity, and relationships within the community.

A total of 189 golfers comprised the 48 teams that participated in the split tee format. LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese announced the team and individual awards in a recorded ceremony that featured the 2025 Golf Gala Honorary Chairs, Rodger Kessler and Vicki Sugar, and Golf Gala Committee Chair, Pat Jeffries.

“The funds raised at this event are going toward a great cause,” Rob said. “The Center at LMHS will be an excellent facility not only for Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), but also for Licking County, as non-profits and other organizations in our community will have the benefit of access to this state-of-the-art education and event center.”

Team Wood, which included Thom Wood, M.D., Jerry Ehram, M.D., Drew Ballenger, and Max Rosinski, took first place. Each team member received a trophy and a round of golf with a cart at the Denison Golf Club. The second-place team was Team Thompson and included Shawn Thompson, Max Williams, Jordan Long, and Jed Quackenbush. Each player received a round of golf with a cart at Kyber Run Golf Course. Claypool Electric took home the consolation trophy as the highest-scoring team.

Individual award winners included:
Closest to the Pin – Max Rosinski
Longest Drive (Women) – Jeanetta Pyle
Longest Drive (Men) – John Power
Longest Putt – Ed Keener

This year’s Club Sponsor (\$7,500 and above) was Denison University, and the Condor Sponsors (\$7,500 and above) were Park National Bank and Lou Reese.

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LMHS also recognizes and thanks the numerous individuals and businesses that supported the Golf Gala as Exclusive, Birdie, Hole, and Pathway sponsors, as well as those who donated door and raffle prizes, and for all general contributions received for the 2025 Golf Gala.



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Project SEARCH Welcomes Ten New Interns

For the tenth year, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) is participating in the Project SEARCH program – a unique opportunity that provides real-life work experience to help youth with disabilities make successful transitions from high school to adult life. LMHS partners with the Licking County Educational Service Center, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Greenleaf Job Training Services, the Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and area school districts to offer training for local students. Ten Licking County high school students, from Granville, Licking Heights, Licking Valley, Newark, North Fork, and Southwest Licking school districts, have joined Project SEARCH for the 2025-2026 school year.

“We are excited to celebrate ten years of our continued partnership with Project SEARCH and the outstanding community organizations that help to make this special program possible,” said LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese. “Our staff enjoy working alongside these wonderful students who are so eager to learn. The Project SEARCH program provides students with the opportunity to acquire numerous skills that they can apply to a long-lasting career in the Licking County workforce.”

In addition to serving as the host site, LMHS provides uniforms to all of the students and transportation through Licking County Transit Services. The students began the program in August with orientation and time to adapt to the

healthcare environment. The interns attend an hour of classroom instruction on employability and independent living skills each day. After class, they report to their assigned departments within LMHS for hands-on job training. Each intern is offered three unique rotations during the year in a variety of clinical and technological areas, including Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation, Concierge Services, Culinary Services, Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Fiscal Services, Maternity Services, Purchasing, Radiology, and Registration.

The internship rotation allows the students to acquire marketable and transferable skills necessary to be hired by Licking County businesses for entry-level positions. New responsibilities are added as they become more proficient in their core areas to help students build communication, teamwork, and critical thinking abilities through each work experience.

The long-term goal of Project SEARCH is to provide a set of transferable skills to people with disabilities that will result in a diverse group of motivated job seekers for employers throughout Licking County. At the conclusion of each academic year, the students who graduate from the program are prepared for competitive and integrated employment and have assistance in obtaining complex and rewarding jobs.



Physician Spotlight – Gurunanthan Palani, M.D., FACP

Gurunanthan Palani, M.D., FACP, received his medical degree from the Government Medical College in India. As a research assistant at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit, Michigan, his research included ischemia, arrhythmias, and novel methods to prevent sudden cardiac death. After his internal medicine residency at McLaren/Michigan State University in East Lansing, he worked as Clerkship Director for third year medical students, and then as a Hospitalist in Iowa. He has authored one book chapter, multiple quality improvement projects, and more than 14 publications, which include a collaboration with Harvard University about closed loop technology for insulin pumps. He serves as an editorial board member for more than six medical journals. He has also reviewed more than 50 manuscripts and was selected as a distinguished reviewer by the Journal of General Internal Medicine.

Dr. Palani completed an endocrinology fellowship at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He joined Licking Memorial Hospital in 2021. He is board certified in both Internal Medicine and Endocrinology. Dr. Palani has been married for 15 years and has two children. He enjoys traveling, biking, playing badminton, and skiing.

Ask a Doc – Thyroid Disease with Gurunanthan Palani, M.D., FACP

Question: What are the symptoms of thyroid disease?

Answer: Thyroid disease is a general term for a medical condition that prevents the thyroid gland from producing the correct amount of hormones that regulate metabolism. Ensuring that the thyroid gland is healthy and functioning properly is important for the body’s overall well-being. Thyroid disease affects as many as 30 million Americans, and more than half remain undiagnosed. Several disorders can arise if the thyroid produces too much hormone, hyperthyroidism, or not enough, hypothyroidism. A person may experience a variety of symptoms. Unfortunately, symptoms of a thyroid condition are often very similar to the signs of other medical conditions making it difficult to know if the symptoms are related to a thyroid issue or something else.

The thyroid gland is part of the endocrine system and is a small, butterfly-shaped gland located in the base of the neck below the Adam’s apple that influences the function of many of the body’s most important organs, including the heart, brain, liver, kidneys, and skin. The thyroid creates two hormones, triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroxine (T4), that travel throughout the

body to regulate blood pressure, body temperature, heart rate, metabolism, and reactions to other hormones. The level of hormones produced by the thyroid is controlled by the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland creates a thyroid-stimulating hormone that signals the thyroid to produce and release the correct amount of hormone to meet the body’s needs. In turn, the pituitary gland responds to signals from the T3 and T4 hormones that the thyroid produces, as well as from a part of the brain called the hypothalamus which releases thyrotropin-releasing hormone.

For the most part, the symptoms of thyroid disease can be divided into two groups, those related to hyperthyroidism and those related to hypothyroidism. The symptoms are often “opposite” between the two conditions because hyperthyroidism speeds up the metabolism, and hypothyroidism slows down the metabolism. Hyperthyroidism may be caused by an autoimmune disease called Graves’ disease, a metabolically active thyroid nodule, or a short-lived thyroid gland inflammation. Graves’ disease can be treated with medication, radioactive iodine therapy,

or surgery. Graves’ disease can lead to Graves’ ophthalmopathy, or thyroid eye disease, which can cause vision loss, eye pain, or bulging eyes.

Symptoms of hyperthyroidism may include:

- Losing weight without trying
- Rapid heart rate
- Sweating
- Diarrhea
- Nervousness
- Muscle weakness
- Thinning skin and brittle hair

One of the most common problems affecting the thyroid gland is hypothyroidism which occurs when the gland stops making enough hormone. The most common cause of hypothyroidism is Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, an autoimmune disorder that ultimately causes the gland to stop working. Hypothyroidism is treated with thyroid hormone medicine that is effective when taken at the correct dose. If left untreated, hypothyroidism can lead to high cholesterol and heart problems over time. In the early stages, hypothyroidism may not cause noticeable symptoms.

Symptoms of hypothyroidism may vary, and can include:

- Fatigue
- Weight gain
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Coarse hair and skin
- Muscle weakness
- Slowed heart rate

Consider visiting a primary care professional if signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism are present, or if a nodule in the lower front of the neck can be felt. The healthcare team will take a detailed medical history and perform a physical exam including laboratory testing and possibly a neck ultrasound. If warranted, the primary care physician may make a referral to an endocrinologist or an ear, nose, and throat specialist.





Quality Reporting to the Community

Patient Story and Benchmarks for Diabetes Care

Patient Story – Carol Worst

had to have insulin injections. I did not want to endure the same experience.”

Through the program, Carol learned that making lifestyle changes was not a quick, easy process. The coaches explained the importance of making a commitment to build healthy habits and instructed the group to take small steps toward the larger goals. The Lifestyle Coaches discussed a number of different strategies such as making healthy food choices and the importance of physical activity.

“The coaches are very knowledgeable and easy to talk to about the challenges of making lifestyle changes. They were respectful of our time and kind to everyone,” Carol shared. “They never judged or tried to make participants feel guilty about their habits. The material they covered during the classes was excellent. Every meeting we were asked about our successes and failures, and that accountability was important for me to keep working to build the healthy habits.”

Carol admitted that she had tried other weight loss programs. While she did have some success in the other programs, she would revert to following unhealthy habits once the program was complete. She was not focused on changing her lifestyle. She only focused on the requirements of the program, so

she could not sustain true weight loss. During the *Go Healthy!* program, Carol learned to write down what she was consuming and when she exercised. This habit helped her understand the idea of calorie intake versus calorie output, and the visualization assisted in keeping her on-track.

“Seeing the information on paper made a big difference for me. Another important lesson they taught me was meal planning. Even if I am going to dine at a restaurant, I plan ahead. I look at the menu online and know exactly what healthy items are available to choose from so that I can make an informed choice,” Carol said. “The year-long process of the program was also very beneficial. When the program ended, the coaches touched base with us a month later to ask about our progress. I was so grateful to be able to tell them I was continuing to follow my new healthy habits.”

Since her retirement, Carol feels she has more time to be active. She is enjoying the opportunities to find fun activities to keep her moving. Her blood sugar levels have dropped, she has lost weight, and her energy level is up. While she is still taking medication to prevent diabetes, Carol hopes that Dr. Moore will soon agree that Carol no longer needs the medication.

Carol Worst was born and raised in Licking County. She attended Heath High School and received her teaching degree from The Ohio State University – Newark. Carol retired from teaching for Newark City Schools after 35 years of service. After a visit with her primary care physician, Marita L. Moore, M.D., of Licking Memorial Family Practice – 1272 West Main Street, Carol was diagnosed with prediabetes, blood sugar levels that are elevated but not enough for a type 2 diabetes diagnosis. Without lifestyle changes or medication, adults and children with prediabetes are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Carol began taking medications and working to lower her blood sugar level.

“Last year, I received a letter from Licking Memorial Health Systems informing me that I was eligible to participate in the free Diabetes Prevention Program – *Go Healthy!*” Carol explained. “I thought the accountability of the program was what I needed to make the lifestyle changes necessary to better my health and stop taking the medication, so I enrolled. My father was diagnosed with diabetes and

Pataskala Parade

Licking Memorial Health Systems staff members participated in the Pataskala Parade on August 16. LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese drove the truck that included Laurie Schaeffer, D.O., of Licking Memorial Dermatology, and Keri Hershberger, M.D., of Licking Memorial Family Practice – Pataskala. LMHS mascot, Scrubs, and other staff handed out giveaways to the parade attendees.



Diabetes Care – How do we compare?

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

1. Much of the care that patients with diabetes receive takes place in the outpatient or physician office setting. The physician offices of Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) measure the most critical indicators for diabetes care.

	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	National
LMHP patients with diabetes having HbA1C test	77%	78%	78%	88% ⁽¹⁾
LMHP patients with diabetes receiving eye exam	52%	51%	46%	58% ⁽¹⁾
LMHP patients with diabetes having foot exam	71%	73%	58%*	80% ⁽²⁾
				LMHP Goal
LMHP patients with diabetes having lipid profile	85%	88%	88%	90%
LMHP patients with diabetes having microalbuminuria test	70%	73%	70%	85%

*A new workflow to collect the data elements for a foot exam was implemented in 2024 into the electronic health record, Epic.

2. The hemoglobin A1C (HbA1C) test is a simple lab test that shows the average amount of sugar (also called glucose) that has been in a person’s blood over an extended period of time. While having the testing done is important, the test results (or outcomes) indicate how well the physician, in collaboration with the patient, is managing the disease. The goal for most people with diabetes is 7% or less.

	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	National ⁽¹⁾
LMHP patients with diabetes with HbA1C less than or equal to 7%	50%	53%	52%	38%

3. People with diabetes are at high risk for heart disease. An elevated LDL (“bad”) cholesterol test reveals if an individual has unhealthy fat levels, which increase the risk for heart disease – a very serious complication of diabetes. An LDL level of 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) or less is considered best for heart health.

	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	National ⁽¹⁾
LMHP patients with diabetes with LDL less than or equal to 100 mg/dL	80%	77%	73%	48%

4. The Community Case Management (CCM) program at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) provides services to people with diabetes in the community including the Diabetes Self-Management Education & Support program. The American Diabetes Association recommends that a person with diabetes should have an HbA1C blood test at least every six months to monitor glucose levels. LMH staff members work closely with patients and their physicians to ensure that this test is performed as recommended in order to manage each patient’s condition better.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Diabetes Self-management Education & Support participants who obtained an HbA1C test	100%	98%	100%	Greater than 85%

Data Footnotes:

- (1) Average of reported Commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid/HEDIS measures.
- (2) National Committee for Quality Assurance – NCQA Diabetic Recognition Program



Check out our Quality Report Cards online at LMHealth.org.

Prediabetes

Prediabetes is a condition where blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 98 million American adults have prediabetes. Yet, a considerable number of these individuals are unaware that they have the condition. Left untreated, individuals with prediabetes have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Prediabetes occurs when cells in the body do not respond normally to insulin. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that regulates blood sugar levels by helping glucose enter cells to be used for energy. When a person who does not have prediabetes consumes a meal, the food is digested, and sugar enters the bloodstream causing blood sugar levels to rise. Insulin is then released to return glucose levels to normal. This process does not work properly in an individual who has prediabetes.

Individuals who have prediabetes do not often have noticeable symptoms. However, some may experience mild symptoms such as increased thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, blurred vision, numbness in the hands or feet, slow-healing wounds, increased appetite, unexplained weight loss or gain, darkened skin patches, and frequent urinary tract

infections. Because these symptoms can also be caused by other health conditions, it is important to consult a physician to determine an accurate diagnosis.

A physician can diagnose prediabetes through a blood test that measures blood glucose levels. Red blood cells contain a protein called hemoglobin, which is responsible for carrying oxygen throughout the body. Glucose also travels through the bloodstream and attaches to hemoglobin to become glycated hemoglobin, also known as A1C. An A1C test provides an estimate of the average blood sugar levels in a person's body over the past 2 to 3 months and is a key tool for diagnosing and managing diabetes and prediabetes. A normal A1C level is below 5.7 percent. Levels between 5.7 and 6.4 percent indicate prediabetes, and 6.5 percent or higher indicates diabetes.

Early detection and intervention can help prevent prediabetes from becoming type 2 diabetes. Licking Memorial Health Systems offers a free program for patients who may be at risk for developing diabetes. *Go Healthy!* is a yearlong lifestyle-change program led by a trained Lifestyle Coach and focuses on behavioral and physically active strategies that are proven to help reduce the risk of developing diabetes, achieve weight loss, and improve

overall health. The program is proven to help those with prediabetes make attainable and realistic lifestyle changes and reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58 percent.

Participants are required to attend group sessions for 12 months. Patients attend the group once a week for the first four months, every other week for the next two months, and once a month for the remaining 6 months. Sessions include private weigh-ins with the lifestyle coach and focus on topics such as grocery shopping, tracking food consumption, becoming physically active, managing stress, and coping with triggers.

Qualifying individuals must meet the *Go Healthy!* program criteria, which include having blood sugar levels and a body mass index that are slightly higher than normal. These factors can increase the risk of having a stroke and developing serious health problems, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Individuals interested in the *Go Healthy!* program may contact (220) 564-1864 for more information.

Diabetes Diagnosis Chart

	DIABETES	PREDIABETES	NORMAL
A1C LEVEL (%)	6.5 or above	5.7 - 6.4	below 5.7
Fasting Blood Sugar Test (mg/dL)	126 or above	100 - 125	99 or below
Glucose Tolerance Test (mg/dL)	200 or above	140 - 199	140 or below

Exercise to Lower A1C

A1C is a blood test that measures a person's average glucose, or blood sugar, levels over the past 2 to 3 months. It is used to diagnose and monitor diabetes and provide insight into how well blood sugar is being regulated over time. A1C reflects the percentage of hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen, which has glucose attached to it. Test results higher than 6.5 percent indicate a person has diabetes.

Lowering A1C levels helps reduce the risk of diabetes-related complications such as nerve damage, eye problems, stroke, kidney disease, and heart disease.

Physical activity is an excellent way to lower A1C levels. An exercise routine that utilizes a combination of aerobics and resistance training may improve blood sugar levels and overall health in people with type 2 diabetes.

Aerobic exercise – activities such as brisk walking, jogging, swimming, and cycling improve cardiovascular health and help the body use glucose more efficiently. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week.

Resistance training – strength training using weights, resistance bands, or

bodyweight exercises help build muscle mass and improve the effectiveness of the body's response to insulin. These activities should focus on major muscle groups and be included 2 to 3 times per week in a person's exercise routine.

Choosing enjoyable and sustainable activities can make it easier for people to adhere to an exercise regimen. The ADA suggests daily exercise to meet the recommended aerobic and strength training goals each week. Consistency is key to helping people stick to their routine, manage blood sugar levels, and lower A1C.

Quality Reporting to the Community

Patient Story and Benchmarks for Pediatric Care

Patient Story – Kinsley Riehl

Within 24 hours of playing outside near a wooded area, 4-year-old Kinsley Riehl began experiencing unusual symptoms. Her mother, Michele, noticed that Kinsley had been playing with her siblings when the child's energy seemed to suddenly drain away and her face began drooping. Kinsley became more lethargic and had an ill cast to her face that concerned Michele. Then, Michele noticed that there was no movement in Kinsley's right eye and the facial paralysis was worsening.

"I could barely keep her awake, and she complained that her whole body hurt," Michele remembered. "I was very concerned and decided to visit an Emergency Department near my home. They discovered a rash near her eye and thought that she was having an allergic reaction to an insect bite. They prescribed antibiotics and a steroid, and recommended a follow-up visit with her pediatrician, but I just kept thinking about the facial paralysis, the lack of movement in her eye, and her overall pain. I felt very strongly that Kinsley was experiencing something more than an allergic reaction."

As the day progressed, Kinsley's symptoms worsened. She was having difficulty walking and even standing up. First thing the next morning, Michele called the Licking Memorial Pediatrics – Tamarack office to consult with Richard A. Baltisberger, M.D., her family's primary pediatrician. Dr. Rick, as he is known by his young patients, agreed to see Kinsley right away.

During his examination, he quickly diagnosed Kinsley with Lyme disease. Neurologic symptoms such as those Kinsley was experiencing occur when the Lyme disease bacteria affect the peripheral or central nervous systems. When the cranial nerves are affected,

facial palsy or droop can occur on one or both sides of the face. To confirm the diagnosis, Dr. Rick ordered blood tests and the results were positive for the disease. He also consulted with another LMH physician who has had experience with diagnosing Lyme disease.

"Dr. Rick is very compassionate and caring. We all love him so much and are grateful for the way he treats the children. I live in Lancaster, and people often ask me why I drive so far for pediatric care. I tell them because I have the best physician," Michele shared. "When he was examining Kinsley, Dr. Rick explained that Lyme disease is treatable and that Kinsley would make a full recovery after taking specific antibiotics. Had we waited another week to receive the treatment, the symptoms and recovery would have been very difficult."

Typically, Lyme disease is completely resolved with a short course of antibiotics; however, Lyme disease is not always a simple illness. Sometimes symptoms may be prolonged despite effective treatment. Out of every 100 patients whose cases are reported to the Centers for Disease Control, nine develop facial palsy. Reports of Lyme disease used to be an uncommon occurrence in Ohio. In the early 1990s, the Health Department reported one to two dozen cases in Ohio residents. Since that time, the number of reported cases has increased substantially. In 2023, 1,301 cases were reported. The Ohio Department contacted Michele to obtain the details of Kinsley's diagnosis. Luckily, no one else in the family has contracted the disease.

"After a week of the antibiotic and eye drops, Kinsley was still very lethargic and had not regained movement in her eye,"



said Michele. "I called Dr. Rick again, and he ordered more Laboratory tests to determine if there may be other causes for her symptoms. He confirmed that it was Lyme disease and unfortunately, she was one of the few who was recovering at a slower rate than expected. After about a month, Kinsley finally started to behave like herself again and regained movement in her eye. I was so relieved to see my happy, healthy, little girl again."

Michele and her family live near a wooded area behind their home, a prime location for ticks. Such insects have been increasing in population due to the recent heat and rain. Now, before her children enter the house, she checks them for ticks and carefully inspects any exposed skin for rashes or signs of an insect bite. The experience was very frightening for Kinsley and her family. Michele advises all parents to take action as quickly as possible when a child begins displaying concerning symptoms, and to follow their instincts about a child's health. Parents often have a better understanding for their child's behaviors and are a valuable resource of information for the healthcare provider.

Pediatric Care – How do we compare?

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

- Immunizations are one of the safest and most effective methods to protect children from potentially serious childhood diseases. Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) monitor the percentage of children, aged 19 months to 35 months, who receive the individual and complete set of recommended immunizations. The series is frequently referred to as the 4:3:1:3:3:1 series. It consists of the following vaccines:
 - 4 doses of diphtheria, tetanus (lockjaw), and pertussis (whooping cough)
 - 3 doses of polio
 - 1 dose of measles, mumps, and rubella
 - 3 doses of Haemophilus influenzae B (influenza type B)
 - 3 doses of hepatitis B
 - 1 dose of varicella (chicken pox)

	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	National
Childhood immunization rate (4:3:1:3:3:1 series)	72%	77%	78%	70% ⁽¹⁾

- LMHP providers follow Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended vaccinations to prevent cervical cancer, varicella (chicken pox), and meningitis among adolescents. In 2019, the parameters for the HPV vaccination series were changed from females, aged 13 to 17, to persons, aged 11 through 26. The vaccine can be administered to both females and males starting at age 9, and those who have not been adequately vaccinated may still receive the vaccination series until age 26.

	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	National
Persons aged 13 through 17 completing HPV vaccination series	50%	52%	55%	62.6% ⁽²⁾
Adolescent children receiving varicella vaccination	91%	94%	95%	90% ⁽²⁾
Adolescent children receiving meningococcal vaccination	83%	84%	85%	88.6% ⁽²⁾

- Pharyngitis (sore throat) is a common illness in children. Most children's sore throats are caused by viral illnesses. While antibiotics are needed to treat bacterial pharyngitis, such are not useful in treating viral pharyngitis. Before antibiotics are prescribed, a simple diagnostic test needs to be performed to confirm the presence of a bacterial infection. Inappropriate use of antibiotics for viral pharyngitis is costly, ineffective, and contributes to the development of drug-resistant bacterial strains. LMHP monitors and reports how many children with sore throats, aged 2 to 18 years of age, received a Group A streptococcus test before they were given a prescription for antibiotics.

	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	LMHP Goal
Children with pharyngitis receiving test before antibiotics	88%	91%	93%	60%

- Kids' Place is an accredited child advocacy center that provides a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary evaluation of children who are suspected victims of sexual and/or physical abuse and/or neglect. Services are provided in a comfortable and confidential environment. Case management and victim advocate services are also available.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Total number of children served	165	185	168	N/A

Data Footnotes:

(1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Immunization Survey, Vaccination Coverage Among Children Aged 19-35 Months – United States, 2017. Published October 12, 2018.
 (2) Estimated Vaccination Coverage with Selected Vaccines and Doses Among Adolescents Aged 13-17, by age at interview; National Immunization Survey-Teen (NIS-Teen), United States, 2022.

Check out our Quality Report Cards online at LMHealth.org.



Newborn Health Concerns

Bringing a newborn home is an exciting time for parents, but it can also spark worry when health conditions arise. It is natural for parents to want to protect their infant from anything harmful, yet many newborn health conditions are normal parts of early development. Common health concerns for newborns include jaundice, feeding difficulties, reflux or spitting up, and colic. Understanding which symptoms are routine and which may signal something more serious can help parents respond to their baby's needs with confidence.

Jaundice is a common condition in newborns caused by a buildup of bilirubin in the infant's blood. Bilirubin is a yellow substance that the body creates when red blood cells break down. During pregnancy, the mother's liver removes bilirubin from her baby. After birth, the baby's liver must perform this task, and sometimes their liver is not developed enough to dispose of the bilirubin, causing a buildup that makes the baby's skin appear yellow.

Up to 60 percent of full-term infants and 80 percent of premature babies develop jaundice during their first week of life. Mild levels of jaundice resolve within a couple of weeks as the baby's liver continues to develop. It is important for a healthcare provider to check newborns for jaundice during their Hospital stay and before discharge. If the baby's bilirubin level is high or continues to rise, their physician may recommend phototherapy, a treatment in which the baby is placed under special blue lights to help the baby remove the excess bilirubin.

Bilirubin levels are highest when infants are three to five days old. While there is nothing that can prevent jaundice from occurring, parents can reduce the risk of jaundice by feeding their newborns often. Frequent feedings stimulate regular bowel movements, which helps the baby to get rid of the bilirubin. Breastfed babies should feed eight to 12 times per day, and formula-fed infants should receive one to two ounces of formula every two to three hours during their first week of life.

Feeding difficulties in newborns can appear in different ways, such as difficulty latching, excessive spitting up, fussiness during feeding, or poor weight gain. Struggles to latch onto the breast or bottle can stem from a variety of factors including prematurity, oral restrictions, or improper positioning. Preterm babies may have underdeveloped muscles and coordination, which make latching and sucking challenging. Oral restrictions, such as tongue-tie or cleft lip or palate can make it physically difficult for the baby to latch and suck effectively. Jaundice, infections, and other health issues can also impact an infant's ability to suck. In addition, mother-related factors such as incorrect positioning during feeding, inverted or flat nipples, and breast engorgement can contribute to the baby's difficulty to latch.

Spitting up is common in babies; however, excessive spit-up after feedings could be a sign of gastroesophageal reflux or lactose intolerance, which can cause discomfort and interfere with weight gain. Changes in feeding position, frequency, and formula type can alleviate reflux. If symptoms persist or the baby exhibits poor weight gain or dehydration, consult a pediatrician immediately.

Crying is a normal and healthy part of newborn life and signals that a baby needs something. Sometimes, babies cry for no apparent reason. Colic is excessive and inconsolable crying that lasts for three or more hours a day, for three or more days per week, for three or more weeks. Episodes tend to occur in the evening and can be very distressing because no amount of consoling seems to bring any relief. The cause of colic is unknown but may result from factors such as an underdeveloped digestive system, food allergies or intolerances, an imbalance of healthy bacteria in the digestive tract, overfeeding, underfeeding, or infrequent burping. The condition is usually resolved within three to six months of age.

Colic is not known to cause any short or long-term medical issues for the baby; however, the stress of calming a crying baby has sometimes led frustrated

parents to shake or harm their child. Shaking a baby is very dangerous and can result in Shaken Baby Syndrome, which can cause physical and mental damage, and even death. Parents who are feeling frustrated, upset, or angry with their baby should place the baby in a crib or safe area, walk away to relax, take deep breaths, and call a trusted person or 911 for help.

Unsafe sleep practices have been identified as one of the leading causes of infant mortality in Licking County. Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is defined as the unexplained death of an infant in the first year, and in most cases, occurs during sleep. Babies are at the highest risk for SIDS when they are between 1 and 10 months of age and/or sharing a bed with a parent.

Creating a safe sleep environment can help reduce the risk of SIDS. Parents should not share their bed with the baby, as this can increase the risk of suffocation during sleep. Room sharing is recommended until 6 months of age, where the baby sleeps next to the bed in a separate space such as a crib, bassinet, or Pack 'n Play®. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that all infants younger than 1 year of age be placed on their backs for sleep. Use a firm mattress with a tightly fitted sheet in a safe sleeping area, and keep the area clear of soft bedding, comforters, pillows, loose sheets, blankets, toys, and bumpers. Keep sleeping rooms at a comfortable temperature, and a sleep sack may be used to keep the baby warm.

While newborn health conditions are often a normal part of life and tend to resolve naturally, it is essential for parents to recognize symptoms that may warrant prompt medical attention. Maintaining awareness, adhering to safe sleep practices, and consulting regularly with a pediatrician can help prevent minor concerns from developing into more serious conditions. Being attentive to the baby's needs and having appropriate support will help parents foster a healthy and secure beginning for their baby's life.



Larry Brown has lived most of his life in Licking County. After graduating from Newark High School, he began work in the office of the Licking County Clerk of Courts. He served in the office and as Clerk of Courts for many years and retired in 2008. During that time, Larry also volunteered his time by serving on a variety of boards of organizations that benefit the community.

Playing golf is one of Larry's passions. While out enjoying a game in July 2024, he missed a step, fell, and injured his hip. An emergency squad quickly arrived and transported Larry to Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) where he underwent surgery to repair the broken hip. After a few days of recovery, Larry was moved to the Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit (ARU) at LMH. There he began rehabilitation for his injury.

Quality Reporting to the Community

Patient Story and Benchmarks for Rehabilitative Care - Inpatient and Home Care

Patient Story – Larry Brown

"I spent a total of 12 days in the Hospital, and everyone there was so good to me," Larry remembered. "The staff in the ARU were able to get me back on my feet. They knew when to push me and make sure I completed the exercises as needed. They were all very professional and courteous. I was also excited to work with David W. Koontz, D.O., because we had met each other prior to my admission to LMH. We had plenty to talk about and much in common. I am so grateful for his expertise, professionalism, and kindness."

The ARU at LMH is a specialized care center for patients who require medical care while receiving therapy to recover from an accident, injury, illness, or surgery. Patients receive individualized care based on physical need and functionality. Family members and care givers are included in this process. The ARU staff is directed by a physician and includes specially trained nurses, social workers, dietitians, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists who focus on living skills

to prepare the patients to care for themselves.

Patients must be able to tolerate at least three hours of therapy, five days per week and may include physical, occupational, and speech therapy. The goal of the ARU is to restore function and maximize independence in a reasonable time with the intention that the patient will be able to return home after being discharged from the ARU.

"When I was ready to go home, the staff assisted in making appointments for continuing therapy and follow-up care," Larry explained. "Thanks to their assistance, I was able to return to the golf course by September. At my age, a broken hip can be devastating and put an end to participating in activities such as golf. I feel blessed that I am able to remain active, play golf, and spend time with my wonderful family."

Larry and his wife, Beverly, have been married for over 60 years. The couple share three children, Scott, Marcie, and Jeff, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandson.

Rehabilitation for Stroke Patients

Individuals who suffer from a stroke may experience a range of physical, cognitive, and emotional effects, depending on the severity and location of the brain damage. Physical effects include weakness or paralysis on one side of the body, difficulty with movement, balance, and coordination, numbness or tingling, problems swallowing, speaking, understanding language, and fatigue. Cognitive impacts may include memory loss, difficulty concentrating and problem solving, confusion, and changes in mood. Individuals may also suffer emotional effects, such as anxiety, depression, fear, frustration, and anger.

Stroke rehabilitation aims to restore function, improve mobility, and enhance the quality of life for individuals who have experienced a stroke. Stroke rehabilitation is comprised of different therapies that are designed to help the patient relearn skills lost after having a stroke. The type of rehabilitation used depends on the areas of the brain that were affected by the stroke. Rehabilitation typically starts in the hospital and can begin as soon as 24 to 48 hours after having a stroke, as long as the patient is stable.

The Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) provides acute rehabilitation services for patients who have had a stroke. The goal of the Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation program is to help patients develop the skills necessary to live as independently as possible after leaving the Hospital. The interdisciplinary team focuses on the patient's specific area of disability

caused by the stroke, such as balance and coordination, mobility, daily activities, speech and language, and swallowing.

To qualify for Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation services at LMH, patients must be able to tolerate at least three hours of therapy a day for five days a week and be able to achieve rehabilitation goals in a reasonable time frame. Patients may be referred to Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation by their physicians, social workers, family members, insurance representatives, case managers, or themselves.

LMH also offers home care rehabilitation services for patients who are medically stable enough to leave the Hospital but still need support to recover at home. This option can be chosen when inpatient rehabilitation is not necessary or possible, and it allows for personalized therapy in a familiar environment.

Prior to discharge, the patient will be assessed on their ability to perform basic tasks, mobility, cognitive function, and home safety to determine if home-based rehabilitation is appropriate. Once the patient is home, a nurse or therapist from Licking Memorial Home Services will conduct a home assessment that includes reviewing medical history, assessing the patient's physical and cognitive abilities, checking for safety risks in the home, and identifying goals for recovery. An individualized rehabilitation plan will be created based on the assessment that outlines the types of therapy, frequency of visits, and measurable goals.

Outpatient rehabilitation is also offered through Licking Memorial Rehabilitation Services for patients who need continued therapy after they are discharged from the Hospital. This type of service usually follows inpatient rehabilitation or home care when the patient has regained enough function to leave home but still needs structured therapy.

The comprehensive rehabilitation team provides several types of physical, occupational, and speech therapies that focus on decreasing pain while enhancing function to restore quality of life for the patient. The Rehabilitation Services Department utilizes many tools and technologies to improve an individual's daily living activities, including the STISIM Drive®, a driving simulator that assists patients who may need to strengthen basic driving skills including reaction time, managing pedals, and steering. There is also the BTE™ Simulator II, which replicates hundreds of real-world jobs and daily living functions, and is used for functional upper extremity rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation after a stroke is essential for restoring function, preventing complications, and enhancing quality of life. Starting rehab early, whether it is through inpatient, home care, or outpatient services, will help to ensure the best possible outcomes. The highly skilled team of physicians, nurses, and therapists at LMH will create an individualized plan for each patient, providing them with the necessary tools for a successful recovery.

New Appointments



Adam J. Clemens, M.D., joined Licking Memorial Urology.



Jesse M. Ewald, M.D., joined Licking Memorial Hospitalists.



Ashley N. Fowler, APRN-CNP, Providence Kidney & Hypertension Specialists, joined the Licking Memorial Hospital Active Medical Staff.



Nadia Hameed, D.P.M., of Foot and Ankle Specialists of Central Ohio, joined the Licking Memorial Hospital Active Medical Staff.



Caleb A. Kennon, M.D., joined Licking Memorial Anesthesiology.



Derek A. Lapp, D.O., joined Licking Memorial Endocrinology.



Prem P. Mathai, M.D., joined Licking Memorial Neurology.



Joshua E. Mormal, D.P.M., of Foot and Ankle Specialists of Central Ohio, joined the Licking Memorial Hospital Active Medical Staff.



Remmy S. Owor, D.P.M., of Foot and Ankle Specialists of Central Ohio, joined the Licking Memorial Hospital Active Medical Staff.



Prit G. Patel, M.D., joined Licking Memorial Family Practice - Granville.

Rehabilitative Care – Inpatient and Home Care – *How do we compare?*

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

1. Patients who are undergoing rehabilitation are at increased risk for falls due to factors such as the misperception of their own level of independence, weakness, and the possible use of pain medication. Falls can result in injuries and potentially delay a patient's rehabilitation. All Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit (ARU) patients receive daily fall risk assessments, fall-prevention measures, and are advised of precautionary measures.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Unassisted patient falls in the ARU that resulted in injury	0	0	0	0

2. Upon admission to the ARU, patients receive a standardized assessment scoring their ability to perform daily activities, such as walking, dressing, and personal hygiene. Upon completion of the rehabilitation plan, the skills assessment is repeated to determine the degree of improvement in function as a result of treatment.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National ⁽¹⁾
Overall rate of improvement in self-care ability	12.6%	15.1%	13.3%	13.8%
Overall rate of improvement in self-mobility	24.7%	26.5%	26.7%	35.9%

3. The goal of the ARU is to help patients who have experienced an illness or injury improve their functional status and mobility so that they may return home rather than to a nursing care center.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National ⁽¹⁾
ARU patients discharged directly to home	87%	82.2%	80.7%	88.2%

4. Inpatients' level of satisfaction with their healthcare experience is affected by many factors, such as achievement of therapy goals, staff communication skills, nurse response times, and facility cleanliness. To monitor the quality of care, the ARU at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) offers patients an opportunity to provide feedback through a post-discharge survey. A score of 4 or 5 is considered ideal.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National ⁽²⁾
Overall patient satisfaction with ARU experience	93.9%	92.9%	94.4%	81%

5. LMH Home Care provides skilled professional care to patients at home. Services are based on the individual's needs and include a wide range of support, such as therapy, nursing care, medication instruction, pain management, home management, financial needs assistance, emotional support, as well as others. LMH surveys Home Care patients regarding their level of satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10, to evaluate how well their needs are being met. A score of 9 or 10 is considered ideal.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National ⁽³⁾
Percent of Home Care patients rating LMH a 9 or 10	95.1%	92.9%	96.7%	88.4%

6. LMH Home Care patients often have some degree of physical deficit which can interfere with their ability to walk and quality of life. The Home Care staff provides physical therapy and other support to help patients improve their walking function.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Home Care patients with improved walking function	98%	86%	89%	86%

7. Patients who have physical impairments due to illness, surgery, or injury may not recognize fall hazards in their homes. Items such as throw rugs, stairs without railings, extension cords across floors, and slippery bathtubs are particularly dangerous to recovering patients. The LMH Home Care staff offers a safety evaluation of the patient's home, as well as an assessment of the patient's own physical abilities in the home environment.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Fall risk assessment completed for every Home Care patient	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data Footnotes: (1) Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation Report. (2) Press Ganey – IRFCAHPS. (3) Press Ganey – HHCAHPS.



Check out our Quality Report Cards online at LMHealth.org.

LMHS Honors Former Board Members

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) hosted an annual appreciation dinner in the Main Street Café at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) in September to recognize and honor the service of former Board members. Community leaders selflessly volunteer their time and talents to serve on the Boards of Directors that govern LMHS and LMH. During the evening, LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese outlined the strategic goals set to continue providing the best quality care for Licking County.

Maintaining financial success is key to LMHS' viability and independence as a community hospital. An important way to do this is by continuing to improve access to care in the community. Rob highlighted the additions of specialty practices, including Licking Memorial Cardiac Electrophysiology, Endocrinology, and Rheumatology, which allowed LMHS to

expand and offer services locally, so patients do not have to travel to Columbus.

LMH is planning to create more inpatient rooms on the Fifth Floor within the next couple of years. Licking Memorial Hematology/Oncology will consolidate the physician practice and chemotherapy into one location. The facility will be remodeled and expanded to accommodate the department. This move will allow for the creation of about 18 private inpatient rooms on the LMH Fifth Floor.

Construction for The Center at LMHS began in June and continues to progress in a timely manner. In anticipation of the official opening in the fall of 2026, LMHS continues fundraising efforts to support the development of the new facility. Rob announced a raffle fundraiser that will support construction of The Center at LMHS. Participants entered to win a vacation to Tuscany, Italy. Generously

donated by Paul and Cindy Palumbo, the winner will enjoy a 7-night stay in a brand-new apartment, and the Palumbos will assist with the details to plan a dream Italian getaway.

Rob concluded the evening by thanking the former Board members for their continued support to improve the health of the community. "The excellent healthcare we provide in Licking County today is possible because of the example you set for our organization. Your wise financial management created a stable foundation from which we now offer care to our families, friends, and neighbors through a variety of services, state-of-the-art technology, and outstanding facilities."

LMH has been governed by a Board of Directors since 1898, when the first nine-room Hospital was established on North Third Street in Newark. Created in 1984, the LMHS Board of Directors oversees operations of the Hospital, Licking Memorial Health Professionals private practices, which was established in 1995, and Licking Memorial Health Foundation.



Licking Memorial Health Foundation Recognizes New Donor

Contributions to Licking Memorial Health Foundation (LMHF) will help fund the construction and development of The Center at LMHS. The facility will serve as a place to meet, learn, and share in activities that promote healthy lifestyles and offer valuable resources.

The William Schaffner Society

The William Schaffner Society was created in memory of William Schaffner, the first Chair of the Licking County Hospital Commission in 1961, and an instrumental player in the county bond issue that financed the current location of LMH. He dedicated his life to providing quality healthcare services to our community. Membership is extended to those who make a commitment of \$10,000 or more paid over a period of 10 years, and a donor affirms William Schaffner's belief in the need for excellent healthcare at the local level.

Michael Gromofsky, P.T., D.P.T., O.C.S., FAAOMPT

Michael Gromofsky recently accepted a glass recognition piece from President & CEO Rob Montagnese and LMH Board President Jim Cooper to honor his pledge of financial support through membership in The William Schaffner Society.

Michael earned his bachelor's degree in biology and a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Walsh University in North Canton, Ohio. He graduated from the Upstream Rehab Institute's Fellowship in Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy in 2021 and joined Licking Memorial Rehabilitation Services as a Physical Therapist in 2024.

Michael is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association, the Ohio Physical Therapy Association, and the American Academy of Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapists. He belongs to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Pickerington and serves in the Knights of Columbus. Additionally, Michael participates in the Licking County Pollinator Pathway initiative.

In his free time, he enjoys spending time with family, exercising, gardening, and learning about native plants. He is also a big Cleveland sports fan. Michael

and his wife, Michelle, reside in Etna with their children: Grace, Nicholas, and Emma.



LMHS is proud to acknowledge those who make significant contributions to support its mission to improve the health of the community. Charitable contributions to LMHF are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Contributions are used for capital expansion, renovation projects, or equipment needs. Contributions are not used for operating expenses, salaries, or other day-to-day expenditures.

LMHS Purchases Hartford Fair Steer Pool Grand Champion

At the 164th Hartford Fair, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) purchased the Steer Pool Grand Champion for \$7,000. Owned by Amelia Savage, the steer weighed in at 1,245 pounds. Amelia is a member of American Traditions 4-H Club in Johnstown and the daughter of Phillip G. Savage, D.O., of Licking Memorial Hospitalists.

In September, LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese and Vice President Human Resources & Support Services Holly Slaughter presented 772 pounds of beef from the purchase to the Salvation Army of Licking County. The donation will be used in the Salvation Army soup kitchens and food pantries to benefit community members in need.



Honorary Medical Staff Celebrated

In August, Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) welcomed members of the Honorary Medical Staff for a special luncheon in appreciation of the years that they spent providing care to the Licking County community. The annual event, which was established in 2007, offers the retired physicians an opportunity to socialize with one another and is a gesture of LMH's enduring gratitude for their service. During the luncheon, LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese thanked the physicians and shared updates on The Center at LMHS, the new education and events center, before serving the physicians the meal prepared by Culinary Services.

The LMH Honorary Medical Staff currently is comprised of 56 physicians who retired after longtime service on the LMH Active Medical Staff and have maintained an outstanding reputation in the community.

Front row – left to right:
Craig B. Cairns, M.D.; Elliot Davidoff, M.D.; Debra A. Heldman, M.D.; Mark A. Mitchell, M.D.; Patty A. Whisman, M.D.; Zdravko S. Nikolovski, M.D.; John L. Adams, M.D.; John J. Winsch, M.D.

Second row – left to right:
Rob Montagnese, President & CEO; Charles J. Marty, M.D.; Thom D. Wood, M.D.; RR Evans, M.D.; Robert R. Kamps, M.D.; Gerald R. Ehsam, M.D.; Vincent I. Walsh, D.O.; Larry N. Pasley, M.D.; Douglas N. Schram, D.O.; Donald E. Harris, D.O.



Donors

Undesignated contributions to Licking Memorial Health Foundation benefit The Center at LMHS. This section highlights our donors and their very generous gifts, which were received recently.

Benefactor

Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Wallis

Capital Improvement Fund

TWIGS 6
TWIGS 8

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Ronald and Patricia Babcock
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In honor of: Evan Arthur Scott
By: Licking Memorial Health Systems

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Golden Corporate Honor Roll

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Grants

Licking County Foundation

Honorary

In honor of: Licking Memorial Hematology/
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Memorial

In memory of: Barbara E. Cobb
By: Edward Cobb
In memory of: E. Elliot Gerber
By: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clovis
Reese Pyle Meyer, PLL
In memory of: Bill Henry
By: Ms. Sue Henry-Mounts
In memory of: Donald Hill
By: Licking Memorial Hospital
In memory of: Lewis Mounts
By: Sue Henry-Mounts

Paving Our Future

Ms. Joyce McCreary

William Schaffner Society

Mary Albright
Craig B. Cairns, M.D., M.P.H.
Jeff and Jane Cox
Lynne Dolan-Rotruck
Joan and Bill Franks
Pam (D) & Dave Froelich
Lee & Sally Heckman
Rodger Kessler & Victoria Sugar
Robert & Patricia McCaughy
Alison & Matt Miller
Barry M. Riley
Penny & Larry Sargent
Dave and Tickie Shull
Dr. Sharad & Mrs. Meena Thakkar
Jim and Trinda Ward
Bart & Juliana Weiler
In Loving Memory of Joe Yee by Sue Yee

Development Spotlight – Judge Craig Baldwin

Judge Craig Baldwin began his service to Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) in 2011 as a member of the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Board of Directors where he served as Secretary, Vice Chair, and Chair. In 2016, he joined the LMHS Board of Directors and served as Secretary/Treasurer and Vice Chair. After finishing his tenure with the LMHS Board of Directors in 2025, he was invited to join the LMH Development Council. The invitation offered Judge Baldwin the opportunity to continue to support LMHS and give back to the Licking County community.

A native of Newark, Judge Baldwin and his wife, Kelly, returned to Licking County to raise their family after he received his Juris Doctor from Capital University in Columbus. “We purposely decided to return to Newark so that we could contribute to the betterment of the community that we love,” said Judge Baldwin. “The Hospital is a pillar of this community, and I am happy to do whatever I can to help LMH be successful.”

Judge Baldwin serves on the Education & Membership Committee that is

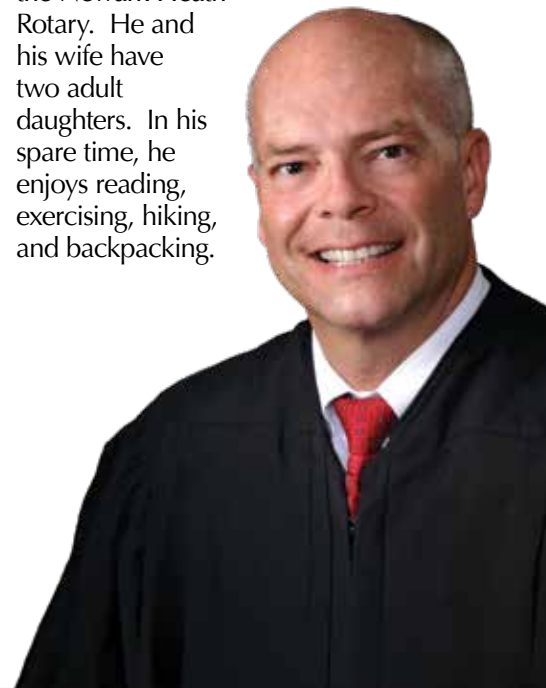
responsible for providing members with continuing education through committee and full Development Council meetings. The Committee also hosts the Corporate Breakfast for community leaders to learn more about LMHS’ new technology and services. Through the Committee, Judge Baldwin is offered the opportunity to promote LMHS and share the notable contributions the organization provides to Licking County. “In terms of community outreach, LMH is one of the best hospitals I have ever seen,” he said. “LMHS does so much to raise awareness and help people pursue healthier lifestyles.”

He specifically commended LMHS for their outreach to local schools, noting the sports screening and Youth League Scholarship programs. “The impact of the youth league scholarships is phenomenal,” Judge Baldwin said. “These are truly life changing for many children in Licking County.”

Judge Baldwin also finds membership on the Committee to be personally rewarding. He enjoys the opportunity to meet other professionals and learn from them. “My colleagues on the Development Council are great people,”

he said. “I am better for being in their company.”

Judge Baldwin has served as a judge for more than 20 years. He is currently the Presiding Judge of the Fifth District Court of Appeals. In addition to LMHS, Judge Baldwin has served on the Board of Directors for the Licking County Family YMCA and the Hospice of Central Ohio Foundation. He is also a member of the Newark-Heath Rotary. He and his wife have two adult daughters. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, exercising, hiking, and backpacking.



Thank you VETERANS!

To show our gratitude on Veterans Day, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) honors those who have served our country in the armed forces, including our employees, volunteers, active medical staff, Board members, and Development Council members listed below. Thank you for your service and the sacrifices you have made for the liberty and security of our country.

Please join LMHS in recognizing the following individuals for their service to our country:

Name	Branch	Department	Name	Branch	Department
Brandi Aber	Air National Guard	Laboratory	Jeff Kreager	Army National Guard	Volunteer
Brian Adams	Marine Corps	Information Systems	Chris Lallathin	Marine Corps	Non-Invasive Cardiology
Larry Armstrong	Air Force	Volunteer	Owen Lee, M.D.	Army	Radiology
Dick Birtcher	Marine Corps	Transportation	Vicki Lennon	Army	Community Case Management
Matt Born	Air Force	2-West	Michelle Martin	Army	Psychiatric Services
John Bowyer	Army	Information Systems	Michael Massaro	Army Reserve	LMHS Board
Dale Boyd, Jr.	Navy	Plant Operations	Mark Mayle	Air Force	Information Systems
Dennis Brown	Air Force	Respiratory Therapy	Alissa McConnell	Navy	5-East
Sherri Brubaker	Air Force	Surgery	Jay McKinney	Navy	Outpatient Clinic
Alizza Burkholder	Marine Corps	Interventional Radiology	Phil McLellan	Army	Engineering Services
Rob Cahill	Army	Intensive Care	Jeff McTerrell	Army	Information Systems
Jacqueline Cleland, APRN-CNP	Army	Women's Health – Downtown	Christopher Meyer, M.D.	Air Force	Surgical Services
Mike Cochran	Army	Environmental Services	Alli Miller	Army	Family Practice – Pataskala
Ed Compton	Navy	Plant Operations	Patience Miller	Air Force	LMPC Coding
James Cooper, Esq.	Navy	LMH Board	Michelle Monro, D.O.	Air Force	Psychiatric Services
Skylar Corum	Army	Emergency	Darlene Montgomery	Army	Public Relations
Jeff Craft	Navy	Endoscopy & GI Laboratory	Seth Montgomery	Marine Corps	Cardiology
Elliott Davidoff, M.D.	U.S. Public Health Service	Volunteer	Robert Mueller, M.D.	Navy	Orthopedic Surgery
Sadie Deckard, PA-C	Army Reserve	Orthopedic Surgery	Thomas Mullady	Marine Corps Reserve	Development Council
Chris Dimos	Marine Corps	Information Systems	Autumn Myers	Army National Guard	Intensive Care
Mandy Dougherty	Navy	5-East	Alec Neubauer	Navy	Information Systems
Sandra Doughman	Army	Health Information	Ralph Offensmeier	Army	Volunteer
Lindsay Dunham	Air Force	Radiology	Kary Perkovic	Navy	Psychiatric Services
Cameron Evans, PA-C	Army National Guard	Emergency	Calista Puryear	Army	4-West
Bill Fielding	Air Force	Volunteer	Curtis Pyle	Marine Corps	Information Systems
Kevin Finley, M.D.	Air Force	Urgent Care – Granville	Donny Reynolds	Navy	Urgent Care – Granville
Christopher Forbush, D.O.	Army	Family Practice – Hebron	Kelsey Riddle	Air Force	Neurology
David Fosco	Army National Guard	Safety & Security	Kendra Ritterbeck	Navy	Case Management
Ken Friel	Marine Corps, National Guard	Transportation	Alek Rogne	Navy	Intensive Care
Mark Gargaro	Army	Transportation	Tamera Scherer	Army	Labor & Delivery
Audrey Garove	Army	Radiology	Michelle Schwartz	Air Force	Health Information
Michael Gazer	Army Reserve	Safety & Security	Andrew Seipel, M.D.	Army National Guard	Family Practice – Licking Valley
Justin Gill	Army	Laboratory	Thomas Slater	Army	Development Council
Shelley Gittens, M.D.	Army National Guard	Pediatrics – Tamarack	Wyatt Slonaker	Marine Corps	Information Systems
Carrie Gough	Army	2-West	Darin Smaage	Navy	Information Systems
Herb Gregg	Navy	Volunteer	Doug Smith	Navy	Printing Services
Michael Griffin	Navy	Environmental Services	Sadie Smith	Army	Volunteer
Alexis Hagans	Air National Guard	Emergency	Scott Smith	Air National Guard, Navy	Environmental Services
Malcolm Harris	Air Force	Radiology	Will Smith	Army National Guard	Plant Operations
Marcus Hawkins	Navy Reserve	Safety & Security	Steve Spain	Marine Corps	Volunteer
Mike Higgins	Army Reserve	Development Council	Denny Stewart	Army National Guard	Volunteer
Matt Holmes	Marine Corps	Information Systems	Michael Stout	Army	Surgery
Angel Huber	Army	Endoscopy & GI Laboratory	Kim Swartz	Army National Guard	Registration
Ann Hupp	Army	Surgery	Brian Thatcher	Army	Process Improvement
Pat Jeffries	Army	LMHF Board & Development Council	Allan Thomas, PA-C	Army	Emergency
Amanda John, APRN-CRNA	Navy	Anesthesiology	Brad Tuller	Navy	Environmental Services
Nick Keisel	Marine Corps	Safety & Security	Steve Warren	Army	Urgent Care – Granville
Patrick Kelly	Navy	Fiscal Services/Professional Billing	Jim Whitaker	Air Force	Engineering Services
Caleb Kennon, M.D.	Air Force	Anesthesiology	Beth Worstall	Army	Respiratory Therapy
Alisha Kirkpatrick	Navy Reserve	Laboratory	Elizabeth Yoder, D.O.	Navy	Psychiatric Services

Walk with a Doc

In September, Licking Memorial Health Systems hosted a Walk with a Doc event at Oak Hill Manor in Utica. Zackary Birchard, D.O., of Licking Memorial Orthopedic Surgery, led a discussion and answered general questions about orthopedic shoulder injuries. During the October event at Karr Park in Pataskala, Richard Baltisberger, M.D., of Licking Memorial Pediatrics, discussed attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The monthly program offers community members an opportunity to ask general health questions related to a physician's specialty during a 40-minute walk at various locations in Licking County. For more information on upcoming Walk with a Doc events, visit LMHealth.org/Calendar.



Behind the Scenes – Safety & Security

Workplace violence, encompassing acts or threats of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or disruptive conduct, has increased over recent years, especially in the healthcare sector. According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), healthcare workers are five times more likely to sustain an injury from workplace violence than other professions. In response to the increase in workplace violence, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) established the Safety & Security Department in 2021. A combination of the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Police and safety assistants and specialists, the Safety & Security Department aims to provide a safe environment that allows the clinical staff to provide optimal patient care.

A strategy rarely seen in healthcare settings, LMHS has developed a unique approach by blending law enforcement officers with dedicated safety employees. This integration has led to a significant reduction in workplace violence. Safety assistants and specialists serve as an important intermediary, helping staff de-escalate tense situations without immediately involving LMH Police, which can feel intimidating in non-criminal circumstances. Since introducing the safety team, LMHS has achieved a 51 percent decrease in workplace violence between 2020 and 2024.

All Safety & Security staff are trained in crisis prevention and de-escalation techniques. Using the evidence-based Aegis Training program, the safety team is equipped with the skills needed to stay prepared and confident when facing challenging conditions. The staff is trained to respond quickly, communicate, and

work together under pressure. To ensure that everyone is ready to handle complex situations, the Safety & Security team provides this training and other security training to clinical staff.

The Safety & Security Department also works to cultivate a culture in which the Hospital staff feels comfortable contacting the safety team to mitigate stressful settings. Developing trusting and supportive relationships with clinical employees has directly contributed to the reduction in workplace violence. LMH employees regard the Safety & Security Department as essential to maintaining a safe workplace and has come to rely on the department to defuse problems and prevent aggressive behavior.

In addition to workplace violence prevention, Safety & Security also oversees the Hospital's emergency management protocols. The department holds disaster preparedness drills that train staff on how to respond to traumatic events such as mass casualty incidents. If such an event were to occur, the Safety & Security Department is responsible for coordinating with fire departments, police, and other local emergency agencies to make sure those involved receive prompt and quality care. The department also works closely with the Central Ohio Trauma System to effectively communicate with other agencies during a mass casualty event.

In order to protect employees from exposure to fentanyl, Safety & Security and Nursing collaborated to implement procedures and a new Hospital code, Code White. With increased illegal use of

opioids, including synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and its analogue, carfentanil, it was deemed necessary to create a policy to guide response to a medical emergency in which suspected fentanyl is present, likely the cause, or the suspected cause of the medical emergency, and a risk of secondary exposure to responding staff. In addition to the new code, the Safety & Security Department provides fentanyl and proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) education to LMHS Staff and placed Code White response bags that contain all PPE needed for response, including Narcan atomizers, on all the units and departments throughout LMH. A decontamination policy was also written and implemented for the Environmental Services Department, and a panic button is included on the Vocera devices for Emergency Department staff use.

To further support LMHS staff and make certain all employees, visitors, and patients are safe, secure, and protected, the Safety & Security team provides training on hazardous materials, fire protection, and other common safety issues. They also make sure that staff have reliable PPE.

Responding to over 7,000 calls for assistance in 2024, the Safety & Security Department emphasizes an environment in which employees recognize when harm could occur, feel confident reporting dangerous conditions, and express opportunities for improvement. The Safety & Security team diligently strive to solve and address safety concerns to render positive outcomes for both patients and staff.

Interventional Cardiology Reunion

Patients who received life-saving Interventional Cardiology services at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) gathered for a special event in the Main Street Café at LMH. Patients and their guests reconnected with the staff who provided their care, met fellow community members with shared experiences, and enjoyed a heart-healthy meal.

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) President & CEO Rob Montagnese welcomed the attendees, introduced the Cardiology physician and staff members, and shared some facts about Licking Memorial Cardiology. Since 2011, the Cardiology Department has performed 2,092 elective percutaneous coronary interventions and nearly 1,000 ST-elevation myocardial infarctions (STEMIs). To date, 48 STEMIs have been performed in 2025.

Rob then introduced Hassan Rajjoub, M.D., of Licking Memorial Cardiology, who credited the administration for providing state-of-the-art technology that allows the team to continue providing excellent cardiovascular services to the community. Dr. Rajjoub also expressed his appreciation for the guests in attendance.

"We have an extremely dedicated staff. The first time we see our patients, they are not doing well, and then two to three days later, they are up walking around and feeling better," Dr. Rajjoub explained. "There is no greater reward than seeing all of you here tonight

enjoying your lives. You give us the motivation to keep going."

The guest speaker was Wendell Combs. Known to many of the LMH staff as the Turkey Trot Guy, Wendell experienced a heart attack while running in the 2024 Granville Turkey Trot. He was running the course when he collapsed. Cailyn Campbell and Shelby Gaul were running behind Wendell and saw him collapse. Cailyn, Shelby, and Granville Police Officer Tristan Martin performed CPR on Wendell until Granville EMS arrived to take over.

"By the time I arrived at LMH, my vitals were normal," Wendell said. "After more tests, it was discovered that one of my arteries was 75 percent blocked, and another was 40 percent blocked. Dr. Rajjoub performed the procedure to place stents to open each artery. I began cardiac rehabilitation soon after and completed it in March."

In July, Wendell participated in the Licking Memorial "For Your Health" 5K Run/Walk & 1-mile Fun Walk. He was proud to announce that he completed the race in 44 minutes. Wendell admitted that he was feeling depressed in the months leading up to the event, but completing the 5K provided a significant improvement to his mental health.

"You are probably all wondering if I am going to participate in the Turkey Trot this November," Wendell said. "I am already registered and looking forward to it."

Attendees received a T-shirt, LMHS-branded giveaway items, and the opportunity to win various gift cards from local businesses in a raffle drawing. LMH hosts the Interventional Cardiology Reunion annually in the fall.



Hassan Rajjoub, M.D.



Wendell Combs



LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese



Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Staff Reunites with Former Patients

Former patients of the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit (ARU) reconnected with a variety of their healthcare providers in October at a special reunion event. LMH hosted a catered, cookout-style dinner for the patients and their guests, who also enjoyed blood pressure screenings, informational tables, and socializing with other attendees who had participated in acute rehabilitation after an illness, accident, or surgery.

Licking Memorial Health Systems President & CEO Rob Montagnese welcomed the attendees and introduced Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Medical Director David W. Koontz, D.O., of Licking Memorial Internal Medicine. Dr. Koontz thanked the former patients for attending the reunion and for allowing the Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation staff to be part of their recovery process.

“Tonight, we honor and recognize all of you and the difficult challenges you faced, and we congratulate you on your successful recoveries,” said Dr. Koontz. “The three main goals of the Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit are to restore the quality of patients’ lives,

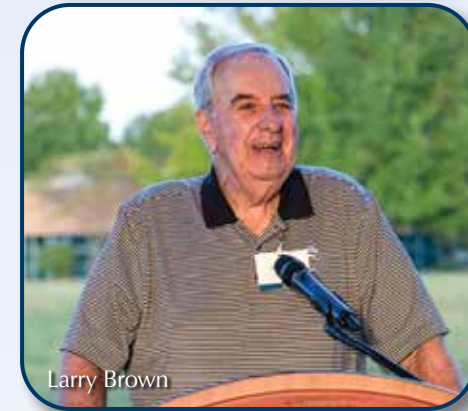
to improve their level of function, and to provide the best opportunity possible to return home. It is truly an honor to have partnered with you and to have this opportunity each year to receive updates on your life after you were discharged from the Unit.”

The featured speaker was former Licking County Clerk of Courts, Larry Brown. Larry underwent hip replacement surgery at LMH after falling and breaking his hip playing golf. He shared how the ARU helped him recover and return to playing the sport he loves.

The Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit opened in 2012 on the Hospital’s sixth floor and is a specialized care center that provides at least three hours of skilled therapy services per day, five days per week, to patients who have experienced an illness or injury. The care team consists of specially trained professionals, including nurses, social workers, physicians, dietitians, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists, who work to improve the patient’s functional status and mobility so they may return home and live as independently as possible.



David Koontz, D.O.



Larry Brown



LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese



Volunteer Spotlight – Dennis Himes

Dennis Himes has been a dedicated volunteer with Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) for a year and a half, serving in the Urology Department on Mondays and Fridays. His journey into volunteering began with encouragement from his son, Scott, a technician at LMHS, who believed it would be a great way for Dennis to stay connected with the community. After retiring from a successful career in hospitality and restaurant management, Dennis found that his background in service and people skills translated naturally into his volunteer work where compassion, patience, and attention to detail are essential.

In his volunteer roles, Dennis assists in a variety of ways, including escorting patients after surgery, helping drivers, and offering coffee or water to patients and families. His natural ease with people makes these simple gestures meaningful, creating a sense of comfort for everyone

he meets. Dennis enjoys meeting new people and creating a connection with his volunteer team. When he previously assisted in the Oncology Department, he often delivered specimens to the laboratory. After a few weeks, he began to recognize familiar faces and developed friendly rapport with regular patients – something he remembers fondly.

For Dennis, volunteering at LMHS is much more than just filling a schedule. “Volunteering with LMHS is very rewarding, satisfying, and never dull. It is different every day,” Dennis shared. His enthusiasm and willingness to step in wherever needed has made him a valued member of the volunteer team. His reliability and kindness have left a lasting impression on both staff and patients alike.

Outside of LMHS, Dennis enjoys a full and active life with his wife, Wendy, to whom he has been married for 39 years.

Together, they have four children, six grandchildren, and three dogs who bring them great joy. In his free time, Dennis enjoys golfing and reading, often finishing two to three books a week. He has also found a new pastime in YouTube, which he says keeps him entertained and assists in learning something new. At home, Dennis finds peace in tending to his lawn and feeding the squirrels and birds.



In Memoriam – Employees and Volunteers

Employees

Terra Annarino, EEG Technologist, passed away Sunday, June 8, 2025, after 9 years and 8 months of service.

Robert Newsome, Environmental Assistant, passed away Thursday, June 12, 2025, after 9 years and 8 months of service.

Volunteers

Bill Butler, LMH Volunteer from 2015 to 2021
 Roberta “Ann” Englefield, LMH Volunteer from 2010 to 2015

Phoebe Harden, Member of TWIGS 15 in 1989
 Justine Kelley, Member of TWIGS 17 from 1989 to 1990

LMHS is greatly appreciative of the time and talent that each of these individuals dedicated to the organization’s mission. Please join LMHS in offering continued condolences to their family and friends.



LMHS Hosts Active•Senior Events for Seniors

Game Show

In July, LMHS hosted the Active•Senior Game Show at the John Gilbert Reese Center at Central Ohio Technical College/The Ohio State University – Newark campus. More than 170 guests, ages 60 and older, attended the event, which featured a *Family Feud*-themed game show.

LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese served as the game show host, and two games were played. For each game, 10 participant names were drawn from a raffle and split into 2 teams of 5 in a friendly competition for gift card prizes.



Brunch Walk

On August 26, 60 Licking County Seniors participated in the Active•Senior Brunch Walk. Participants enjoyed a walk that began at the Rotary Park Pavilion on Sharon Valley Road in Newark and a healthy brunch afterward. During the walk, David Koontz, D.O., of Licking Memorial Internal Medicine, discussed acute inpatient rehabilitation.

Patients receive individualized care based on physical need and functionality. Family members and caregivers are included in this process. The ARU staff is directed by a physician and includes specially trained nurses, social workers, dietitians, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists who focus on living skills to prepare the patients to care for themselves.

The Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit (ARU) at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) is a specialized care center for patients who require medical care while receiving therapy to recover from an accident, injury, illness, or surgery.

Patients must be able to tolerate three hours of treatment per day, five days a week, which may include physical, occupational, and speech therapy. The goal of the ARU is to restore function and

maximize independence in a reasonable time period with the intention that the patient will be able to return home after being discharged from ARU.



Pickleball

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) hosted the Active•Senior Pickleball event at the courts near the Lou & Gib Reese Ice Arena in September. President & CEO Rob Montagnese welcomed the participants. The seniors played in teams of two for up to 30 minutes. Each

player was entered into a raffle for the opportunity to win pickleball-inspired gifts such as pickleball retrievers, water bottles, and cooling towels. A gift card to the LMH Main Street Café was awarded to the winning team of each match.



Gourmet Gardener

More than 40 participants gathered at the Career and Technology Education Centers of Licking County (C-TEC) for the Active•Senior Gourmet Gardener event in October. Participants received guidance about gardening by LMHS Culinary Services

Gardener Kristina Mohler, watched a cooking demonstration by LMHS Chef Brian Merritt, and enjoyed a meal at the conclusion of the event prepared by Chef Brian and Sous Chef Colin Gleek.



The Active•Senior Program was created to promote healthy lifestyles for adults, ages 60 and older. Participants are encouraged to earn points by completing a variety of goals in each of four categories: Physical, Nutritional, Mental, and Social. The Active•Senior program was designed, reviewed, and approved by medical staff, physical therapists, and dietitians to ensure a well-balanced program. Individuals should discuss their personal exercise and nutrition goals with their physician. For more information or to register for the Active•Senior Program, please visit LMHSActiveSenior.org, or call the Licking Memorial Events Line at (220) 564-1560.

LMHS Hosts New Active•Fit Events for Youth

During the summer, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) hosted two new events for Licking County youth, ages 6 to 12, as part of the Active•Fit Youth Wellness Program. The program promotes healthy lifestyles and motivates children to create goals that develop a lifelong commitment to personal fitness, proper nutrition, and overall well-being.

categories: Boys, ages 6 to 8; Boys, ages 9 to 12; Girls, ages 6 to 8; and Girls, ages 9 to 12, and races were timed. Those with the fastest times won prizes. Participants also had the opportunity to enjoy additional inflatables, health screenings, information tables, face painting, and healthy snacks.

On July 24, LMHS invited children and their parents or guardians to the Active•Fit Summer Splash event. The families enjoyed a private evening at the YMCA's outdoor pool. Health screenings, information tables, and healthy snacks were provided for the participants.

Participation in the events counted toward the Active•Fit Program Period 3 goals that ended on August 30. Period 1 of the 2025-2026 program year began September 1. All program participants have an opportunity to complete new wellness goals by December 31 to qualify for the next incentive drawing. Since 2012, the Active•Fit Program has registered more than 14,200 participants who select health-related goals and track their progress on the Active•Fit website. For more information or to register for the Active•Fit Youth Wellness Program, please visit ActiveFit.org.

The inaugural Active•Fit Ninja Warrior event took place on Thursday, August 7. Children had the opportunity to test their athletic skills with the Active•Fit Ninja Warrior inflatable obstacle course. Contestants were divided into four



Active•Fit Period 2 Prize Winners

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) recently recognized the Active•Fit prize winners from Period 2. Participants in the Youth Wellness Program who completed their fitness goals between January 1 and April 30 were entered into a special drawing. Winners received their prizes from LMHS as special recognition for their achievements.

Meta Quest 2 Virtual Reality Headset & Fitness Software

Brooks Johnson
Tyson Ramsey
John Farkas

iPad & Fitness Software

Jack Lake
Walter Self
Logan Auruda

\$50 Dick's Sporting Goods Gift Card

Ethan Coleman
Elijah Young
Riley Goodburn
Trevor Krichbaum
Shaleam Dedja
Dottie Reed
Logan Mulkey
Nixon McClung
Naomi Loving
Christopher Montoya-Herandaz

Bicycle & Helmet

Gabriella Lott
Callie Erden
Giselle Hatcher

\$100 Dick's Sporting Goods Gift Card

Victor Sanchez
Hailey Doyle
Raskin Bhujel
Roudeene Dedja
Nash Ammar
Karlii Holloway
Brody Stevens
Aubree Duncan
Ronit Bhattarai
Jameson McIntire

Athletic Shoes

Vayda Butler
Brynn Ricker
Anup Bhattarai



The Active•Fit Program has registered over 14,200 participants who select health-related goals and track their progress at ActiveFit.org. There are exciting Active•Fit events and opportunities for children to get active and learn about their health during the year. Period 3 for 2024-2025 began May 1 and ended on August 31. Period 1 for 2025-2026 began on September 1 and runs through December 31. For more information, or to register for the Active•Fit Youth Wellness Program at any time throughout the year, please visit ActiveFit.org.



Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

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Community Events

Walk with a Doc

Saturday, January 17, 9:00 a.m.

**Licking County Family YMCA
470 West Church Street, Newark**

Join Gurunathan Palani, M.D., of Licking Memorial Endocrinology, as he leads a discussion and answers general questions about thyroid disease.

Saturday, February 28, 9:00 a.m.

**The Ohio State University, Newark – Adena Recreation Center
1159 University Drive, Newark**

Join Thomas Hagele, M.D., of Licking Memorial Hospital Dermatology Clinic – West Main, as he leads a discussion about skin cancer.

Walk with a Doc events are free of charge; however, registration is required. Each walk lasts approximately 40 minutes. Healthy snacks and blood pressure screenings will be provided.

To register, call the Licking Memorial Events Line at (220) 564-1560.

Community Education: Heart Health

Tuesday, February 3, 6:00 p.m.

**Licking Memorial Hospital
First Floor Conference Room**

American Heart Month is celebrated in February to raise awareness about heart disease and its prevention. Licking Memorial Health Systems is promoting heart health by offering a special Community Education event. Join Leslie Solomon, APRN-CNP as she speaks on Women's Heart Health and the effects of sleep deprivation on the heart.

The program is free; however, space is limited and registration is required. To register, please call the Licking Memorial Events Line at (220) 564-1560.

Active•Fit Junior Chef

Saturday, February 21, 10:00 a.m.

**Career and Technology Education Centers of Licking County (C-TEC)
150 Price Road, Newark**

Youth, ages 6 to 12, will learn how to make various healthy recipes and participate in several cooking stations for the preparation of a healthy lunch to be enjoyed following the program.

This event is free; however, registration is limited to members of the Active•Fit Youth Wellness Program (ages 6 to 12). All children must be accompanied by an adult at the event. To register for the Active•Fit Junior Chef event, please call the Licking Memorial Events Line at (220) 564-1560. To enroll in the free Active•Fit Program, visit ActiveFit.org.

First Impressions – Maternal Child Classes

- Boot Camp for Dads
- Pregnancy & Childbirth Education Classes
- Grandparenting
- Childbirth & Mother-baby Basics One-day Course
- Prenatal Breastfeeding Basics Class
- Sibling Preparation Class

Unless otherwise noted, classes are located in the Licking Memorial Hospital First Floor Conference Room. To register for classes, visit LMHealth.org or call (220) 564-4333.

Diabetes Self-management Education and Support (DSMES)

Class sessions are offered twice a month:

Session 1

**First two Wednesdays of each month, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon
Licking Memorial Diabetes Learning Center
1865 Tamarack Road, Newark**

Session 2

**Third and fourth Wednesdays of each month, 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.
Licking Memorial Diabetes Learning Center
1865 Tamarack Road, Newark**

Registration and physician referral are required. To register for classes, call (220) 564-4722. For information on course fees, call (220) 564-4915. Fees vary depending on insurance coverage.

Please take a few minutes to read this issue of **Community Connection**. You will once again see why Licking Memorial Health Systems is measurably different ... for your health! **Visit us at LMHealth.org.**

A publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department. Please contact the Public Relations Department at (220) 564-1561 to receive future mailings.

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