



Licking Memorial Health Systems

# Community Connection

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# LMHS Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for The Center at LMHS

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) held a groundbreaking event on June 12 for a \$26 million education and event center that will be constructed on the main Hospital campus. The Center at LMHS will provide a central location for health education, activities, and events that support the LMHS mission to improve the health of the community. LMHS leadership, local politicians, community leaders, and LMHS and Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Board Members were invited to assist in the ceremony.

“This facility is a great investment for LMHS and our community,” said LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese. “Earlier in my career, LMHS employed approximately 900 staff members. We now have over 2,600 employees; however, we have less meeting space at our campus due to expansion for needed patient services and technologies. The Center at LMHS will offer additional area needed to accommodate numerous classes, meetings, and events annually.”

Last year, LMHS became aware of an opportunity 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. Reps. Kevin Miller and Thaddeus Claggett spoke at the groundbreaking event and offered a proclamation of support and gratitude to Rob for his

dedication to the LMHS mission of improving the health of the community.

Initial community support has been overwhelmingly positive for the new facility. To date, the project has received significant philanthropic contributions during the initial phase of fundraising from a number of key donors including:

- The Gilbert Reese Family Foundation
- The Thomas J. Evans Foundation
- Barb Cantlin, In Memory of Mike Cantlin
- The John & Mary Alford Foundation
- The LeFevre Foundation
- The Lindorf Family Foundation
- The Matesich Family
- Gerald K. McClain
- Families of Doug & Bev Donaldson and Roger & Kathy McClain
- Diane & Dan DeLawder
- Rob & Lauren Montagnese
- Janine & Brian Mortellaro
- Park National Bank
- Southgate Corporation & O'Neill Family
- Clarissa Ann Howard

The combined gift to Licking Memorial Health Foundation from The Gilbert Reese Family Foundation and The Thomas J. Evans Foundation was presented as a tribute to LMHS and President & CEO Rob Montagnese. “We are thrilled to be able to honor Rob and LMHS,” said Sarah Reese Wallace, Board Chair of The Gilbert Reese Family Foundation and The Thomas J. Evans Foundation. “Rob’s tenure at LMH over the last 32 years, coupled with his extraordinary leadership for the

last 19 years as CEO, has transformed the quality of care and has led the Hospital through growth at a time when community hospitals are struggling to stay independent. Rob’s commitment to community service at all levels including his employees, the Board, and his personal leadership has strengthened our community. Rob has played a critical role leading organizations that are ensuring basic human needs are met, access to quality education, and providing cultural and recreational opportunities to enrich the lives of Licking County residents. Our community has benefited from excellent care by the physicians and staff under Rob’s leadership, and we will forever be grateful.”

“On behalf of LMHS, I am deeply honored by this special tribute from both Foundations,” said Rob. “I am very thankful to the Wallace family and Lou Reese for their gift which will benefit our community in so many ways. In addition, I am grateful to serve our wonderful community, and as an organization, we could not have had continued success without our amazing team of dedicated employees, physicians, Board members, volunteers, TWIGS, and community supporters.”

In anticipation of the official opening in September of 2026, LMHS continues fundraising efforts to support the development of the new facility. Local leaders Jim and Amy Matesich wholeheartedly agreed to serve as the Chairs for the community fundraising campaign. “LMHS has served as a cornerstone service organization in Licking County for more than 125 years,”

said Jim. “We are honored to help support this new endeavor that will make a difference in our community.”

“We greatly appreciate the Matesichs for their commitment to LMHS and the tremendous, ongoing support that we have received from so many individuals, families, and organizations over the years,” said Veronica Patton, Vice President Development & Public Relations. “We feel strongly that The Center at LMHS will prove to be a great benefit to the community. Additional contributions for the new facility will be greatly appreciated from those who feel inclined to donate.”

By supporting The Center at LMHS, donors will 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, that 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, or visit LMHealth.org and click on the Donate button at the top right corner of the page.

# Dr. Craig Cairns Retires After 48 Years of Service

Craig Cairns, M.D., M.P.H., Vice President Medical Affairs, retired from Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) on June 20. Dr. Cairns provided excellent leadership for the organization for more than 26 years and was a member of the Active Medical Staff for 48 years. LMHS is deeply grateful to him for his dedication to the Hospital and the community.

Dr. Cairns 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 Licking Memorial Hospital Active Medical Staff since 1977. Prior to his becoming the Vice President Medical Affairs, he served as Chief of the Medical Staff and Chairman 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. Cairns has been an outstanding asset to our organization and to the entire community for nearly 50 years,” said LMHS President and CEO Rob Montagnese. “His dedication to LMHS throughout the years has been remarkable, and he will be missed. We wish him the best in his retirement.”

Talya Greathouse, M.D., has accepted the position of Vice President Medical Affairs. Dr. Greathouse previously served as Assistant Vice President Medical Affairs. Prior to that, she was a family practice physician at Licking Memorial Family Practice – West Main, for 25 years. Vice President Acute Care Services Heather Burkhart has taken on responsibility for Shepherd Hill and the Process Improvement Department.





# Easily Obtainable Synthetic Drugs Pose Serious Health Risks

Synthetic drugs, which are easily obtainable at gas stations, convenience stores, vape shops, and online, contribute to a public perception of low risk, but do pose serious health concerns. The substances are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and are typically designed to mimic the effects of controlled substances prescribed by a physician or offer the same intoxication as illegal drugs. Such products are often marketed as mood enhancers, anxiety relief, herbal products, and dietary supplements, and can be addictive and lead to serious withdrawals. Many are sold in similar packaging as actual products such as candy or snacks. Because the FDA does not control these substances, quality, purity, and safety are unknown, and those who ingest the products face the threat of poisoning and toxicity.

Earlier this year, the FDA issued a warning concerning tianeptine, a product commonly referred to as “Gas Station Heroin” and the most recent drug to be sold among regular products. Tianeptine is an available medicine in some European, Asian, and South American countries used to treat anxiety, depression, and irritable bowel syndrome. Product names include Tianaa, Zaza, Neptune’s Fix, Pegasus, and TD Red. According to recent case reports, tianeptine is abused for its euphoric properties similar to other opioids. Severe adverse health effects, including respiratory depression, severe sedation, and

death, have occurred from the misuse of tianeptine.

Delta-8 THC and synthetic marijuana have been available for some time. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is a cannabinoid found in the cannabis plant and is the principal psychoactive compound. Delta-8 THC exists naturally in small quantities in the cannabis plant. Cannabidiol (CBD), another active cannabinoid found in the cannabis plant, is not psychoactive and does not cause intoxication. However, CBD can be synthetically converted into delta-8 THC with a solvent, acid, and heat. The conversion process may create harmful by-products. Delta-8 THC is sold for use in vapes, drops, gummies, chocolates, and infused beverages. Effects of the product include dry mouth, red eyes, anxiety, drowsiness, confusion, impaired coordination, vomiting, loss of consciousness, and seizures.

K2 and Spice are among the many trade names or brands for synthetic designer drugs that are intended to mimic THC and are marketed and sold under the guise of “herbal incense” or “potpourri.” The products are being abused for the psychoactive properties and are packaged without information as to health and safety risks. The adverse effects include elevated heart rate and blood pressure, unconsciousness, tremors, seizures, vomiting, hallucinations, agitation, anxiety, pallor, numbness, and tingling. In some instances, the adverse health effects can be long-lasting even after the user quits using the substances.

Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia. Consumption of the leaves produces stimulant effects in low doses and sedative effects in high doses, and can lead to psychotic symptoms and psychological or physiological dependence. The leaves are crushed and then smoked, brewed with tea, or placed into gel capsules. In the U.S., the abuse of kratom has increased markedly in recent

years. Common product names include Thang, Kakuam, Thom, Ketum, and Biak. At high doses, the products may cause sedation, hallucinations, delusion, confusion, nausea, itching, sweating, dry mouth, constipation, increased urination, and loss of appetite. Long-term use can cause anorexia, weight loss, and insomnia. Kratom is often used as a self-withdrawal from opioid use.

Synthetic stimulants often referred to as “bath salts” are from the synthetic cathinone class of drugs which are central nervous stimulants and designed to mimic effects similar to those produced by cocaine, methamphetamine, and ecstasy. Users may sniff, snort, smoke, orally ingest, or dissolve and inject the substance. Product names include Bliss, Blue Silk, Cloud Nine, Drone, Energy-1, Ivory Wave, Lunar Wave, Meow Meow, Ocean Burst, Pure Ivory, Purple Wave, Red Dove, Snow Leopard, Stardust, Vanilla Sky, White Dove, White Knight, and White Lightning. The products create psychological effects such as confusion, acute psychosis, agitation, combativeness, aggression, violent or self-destructive behavior, paranoia, hallucinations, and delusions. Adverse or toxic effects include rapid heartbeat, hypertension, hyperthermia, breakdown of muscle fibers, headaches, heart palpitations, and seizures.

These and many similar products can be easily found in local gas stations and convenience stores at eye level or near products that children may be interested in purchasing. The packaging appeals to youth and may utilize names similar to authentic snack and candy products, such as Cannanimal Crackers, Dank Funions, and Stoner Patch. The Federal Trade Commission and FDA have sent cease-and-desist letters to several companies marketing products that could violate copyright laws or pose a potential threat to unsuspecting youth; however, new products continue to be marketed and sold. Parents should carefully inspect labels of any item that a child has purchased to ensure the product is safe for consumption.

# LMHS Recognizes Donors at Reception

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) hosted two separate events to honor the individuals and organizations who generously support the mission to improve the health of the community through financial contributions to Licking Memorial Health Foundation (LMHF). The Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Development Council held a Donor Appreciation Reception in June to show gratitude to community members and businesses who made donations to LMHF over the past year. Guests enjoyed a variety of hors d’oeuvres and desserts and received a gift as a token of appreciation.

At the reception, LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese offered an update about The Center at LMHS, a new facility that will provide a central location for health education, activities, and events that support the LMHS mission to improve the health of the community. “The new facility will benefit our community in many ways, particularly by ensuring our staff members are able to receive top-notch education and training. We also offer dozens of free classes and activities for the public,” said Rob. “Your contributions allow us to focus on sharing our resources to promote health and wellness for residents of Licking County. Donor generosity makes it possible for us to provide quality healthcare as well as education on prevention for the overall health of the community.”

LMHS employees who provide support through PRIDE (Providing Resources in Dedicated Employees) were honored during the PRIDE Appreciation Open House in June. Currently, there are 850 PRIDE members. Employees enjoyed a complimentary breakfast and time interacting with other members. Since its inception in 1987, PRIDE has raised more than \$4 million to help fund major projects and capital improvements at LMH, including the Main Street Café renovation project, the purchase of inpatient beds with advanced safety features, Radiology and Laboratory equipment upgrades, and the John & Mary Alford Pavilion fireplace area.

LMHS, a not-for-profit organization, reinvests revenue over expenses back into the Hospital for the ultimate benefit of the community. Gifts may be designated for a specific department, service, facility, or piece of equipment. However, unrestricted gifts allow the funds to be directed to the greatest need. All donations are used for capital expansion, renovations, and equipment. Gifts are never used to pay for operating expenses or salaries. In 2025, unrestricted contributions received for LMHF will help fund the construction and development of The Center at LMHS.





# LMHS Celebrates National Hospital & Healthcare Week

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) paid tribute to the more than 2,600 employees who contribute to the organization’s award-winning care in an annual observance of National Hospital & Healthcare Week. The five-day celebration at LMHS in May included various food trucks offering lunch and assorted pastries, bingo, caricature drawings, and a visit from Pet Partners.

“LMHS celebrates Hospital & Healthcare week to express appreciation for all employees who encompass our workforce, from physicians and nurses to support staff and administrators,” said LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese. “We are grateful for their continued dedication to our mission to improve the health of the community.”

## 56th Annual LMHS Employee Recognition Event

The Employee Recognition Event honored more than 280 employees who observed anniversaries in 5-year increments in 2025, and was held at the John Gilbert Reese Center on The Ohio State University at Newark Campus. The event included a *Family Feud*-

themed game and offered honorees an opportunity to win prizes.

Among the notable honorees were Isabel Paulson, Surgery, and Debbie Briggs, Radiology. Isabel, recognized for 45 years of service, and Debbie, celebrated for 40 years of service, received a framed proclamation and gift to mark these special employment anniversaries.



## Manager of the Year

Rob also presented the Manager of the Year Award during the Employee Recognition Event. Established in 1987, the award recognizes management employees who demonstrate fair and consistent leadership in his or her area of responsibility. Nominees should exhibit an ability to inspire his or her employees beyond the ordinary requirements of their jobs. The 2025 recipients were Jessica Clark and Drew Link.

Jessica joined LMHS in 2013, has been steadily promoted within the Radiology Department, and currently serves as the Director of Radiology and Neurovascular Services. She is a Certified Radiology Administrator through the American Healthcare Radiology Administration, and holds an Associate in Applied Science degree from Central Ohio Technical College and a Bachelor of

Science in Healthcare Administration degree from Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, New Hampshire. Jessica also offers her time to serve her community as the treasurer for the Dresden American Legion Auxiliary. She and her husband, Tom, reside on their farm in Brownsville.

Drew began his service to LMHS as a seasonal intern in 2010. Since being hired full-time in 2014 as a Wellness Specialist, he has earned several promotions including Director of Recruitment & Retention in Human Resources and LMHS Controller, his current position. During his tenure as Director of Recruitment and Retention, Drew played an important role in the LMHS Project SEARCH program, a unique one-year, business-led high school transition program designed to

help fifth-year high school seniors with disabilities gain competitive, entry-level employment skills. Through his support, many of the interns were hired at LMHS after completing the program. Drew received a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration and Master of Business Administration degrees from Walsh University in North Canton, Ohio. He and his wife, Mary, have four children.



## President's Award

The President's Award is given to an individual or group of individuals who demonstrate outstanding service to LMHS and whose efforts contribute greatly toward the mission of improving the health of the community. During the Employee Recognition Event, Craig Cairns, M.D., M.P.H., received the award.

Prior to his retirement in June, Dr. Cairns served as the LMHS Vice President Medical Affairs. In this position, he served as a liaison between the Medical Staff and the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Administration and functioned as the Hospital Chief Medical Officer. Previously, he served as LMHS Vice President of Preventative/Occupational Medicine and Medical Director of Licking Memorial Company Care. Dr. Cairns joined Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) in 1997, and has

been a member of the LMH Active Medical Staff since 1977. Before joining LMHS, he was a physician-owner of Newark Family Physicians for more than 20 years.

Dr. Cairns received his medical degree from The Ohio State University College of Medicine in Columbus and completed his residency at Riverside Methodist Hospital. He received a Master of Public Health degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Dr. Cairns is board certified by the American Board of Family Practice and the American Board of Preventive Medicine. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and the American College of Preventive Medicine. He is also a member of various area, state, and national medical associations.

In 1989, Dr. Cairns was elected Physician of the Year by members of the LMH Active Medical Staff. He received the Hometown Hero Award from the American Red Cross of Licking County in 2008. He is the father of three children, Jacob, Daniel, and Bryan, and two step-children, Andrew Thatcher and Julie Earick, and the proud grandfather of seven grandchildren.



Continued page 8





Clarissa Ann Howard Nursing Award for Clinical Excellence

The Clarissa Ann Howard Nursing Award for Clinical Excellence is presented annually to recognize nurses who are respected by their peers for their expertise, professionalism, and clinical excellence while providing patient care. The 2025 award recipients are Toshia Fuller, B.S.N., R.N., Surgery, and Dawn Morrison, B.S.N., R.N., Vascular Surgery.

Toshia began her career at LMH in 2018 as a member of the Intensive Care Unit staff. In 2019, she transferred to the Surgery Department and currently serves as a circulating and scrub nurse in the operating room. She is the surgery team lead, specifically for the orthopedic specialty. Toshia is a phenomenal trainer and preceptor to new staff. Surgeons often request that she is part of their team, and anesthesia providers praise her quick actions in critical situations. She is described as a kind, caring, and top-notch nurse.

Healthcare Worker of the Year

Janet Allotey was awarded the Healthcare Worker of the Year Award. In 2014, Janet immigrated to the United States from Ghana, West Africa, and began her career at LMH the following year as a member of Culinary Services. With a desire and passion to care for others, she sought and received a position as a Unit Clerk on 4-West. Although her primary duties are clerical, Janet has pursued cross-training as a patient care assistant, and is in the process of completing a nursing degree.

Advanced Practice Provider of the Year Award

Jennifer White received the Advanced Practice Provider of the Year Award. She began her service at LMHS in 2008 as a staff nurse and currently works as an Advanced Practice Provider in the Emergency Department and Urgent Care facilities. In 1988, she received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, followed by a Master of Science in Nursing degree a few years later from The Ohio State University (OSU). In 2014, she

Toshia graduated from COTC with her Associate of Applied Science in Nursing in 2018 and completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2020 from Ohio University. She is certified in Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS), and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS). Toshia and her husband, Matt, who is an LMH Emergency Department Pharmacist, have one daughter, Hadley. She enjoys spending time with family, traveling, attending sporting events, reading, and vacationing.

Dawn has worked in several areas of LMHS throughout her professional career. She first served the organization as a staff member of the Emergency Department while attending COTC. After receiving her associate degree in nursing in 1985 from COTC, she became a staff nurse on 4-North and has subsequently held positions as a staff nurse in the Surgery Department and a physician center manager for multiple LMHP offices.

Janet is quick to aid both patients and staff with compassion and empathy, and often volunteers to take extra shifts in support of the nursing staff. In all her tasks, Janet works to solve problems. She studies, researches, and locates resources to figure out how to accomplish goals quicker and easier. Her intuition leads her to seek out those in need and assist them in finding solutions. With her attention to detail and desire to determine the reason behind a problem, Janet continuously performs above and beyond to create a comfortable environment for everyone.

completed her Certified Nurse Practitioner certification, also from OSU.

Before joining LMHS, Jennifer was a floor nurse and transplant coordinator at OSU on the kidney, liver, and pancreas transplant unit. She has also worked at the Grant Medical Center in the open heart and peripheral vascular unit and then as a project manager for the Health Care Quality Improvement Project. Jennifer's co-workers express that she genuinely

She currently serves as a nurse and Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) for Licking Memorial Vascular Surgery. Dawn's co-workers share that she is extremely knowledgeable and is always willing to take a moment to answer questions. She goes above and beyond for both her patients and colleagues.

In 1995, she obtained her RNFA from Columbus State Community College in Columbus. She also attended Capital University in Columbus, where she received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing

degree in 2016. Additionally, Dawn has maintained her Certified Nurse of the Operating Room (CNOR) certification for 35 years. In 2022, Dawn served as an international surgical volunteer on board the *Africa Mercy* hospital ship, fulfilling roles as a registered nurse, RFNA, and surgical assistant. Dawn and her husband, Ray, have a blended family of four children and six grandchildren. She enjoys spending time with friends and family, sewing, and landscape and flower gardening.



Greg Wallis, Dawn Morrison, B.S.N., R.N., Toshia Fuller, B.S.N., R.N., Heather Burkhart, and Rob Montagnese



Rob Montagnese and Janet Allotey



Rob Montagnese and Jennifer White, APRN-CNP

MVP Awards

As part of the Hospital & Healthcare Week celebration, LMHS recognized 39 MVP Award recipients who were selected for their consistent demonstration of LMHS' values: compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence. The 2025 MVPs are featured on pages 32 – 35.

“For Your Health” 5K Run/Walk & 1-mile Fun Walk Promotes Healthy Lifestyles

In July, 1,341 participants gathered at The Dawes Arboretum for the Licking Memorial Health Systems “For Your Health” 5K Run/Walk & 1-mile Fun Walk. Participants had the option to run or walk the 5K course, which weaved through The Dawes Arboretum’s renowned botanical collections. Walkers also had the option to follow a shorter one-mile route. Nancy and Jack Neely served as the Honorary Chairs of the event, which was presented by the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Development Council, The Dawes Arboretum, Buckeye Valley Family YMCA, and Park National Bank (PNB).

“The ‘For Your Health’ 5K Run/Walk & 1-mile Fun Walk is one of our primary community events to encourage physical activity each year and promote healthy lifestyles,” LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese said. “We are pleased by the number of participants who register and support the effort to improve the health of the community. The Dawes Arboretum annually provides a picturesque setting for the event, and we hope to reinforce the idea that the variety of attractions and parks in Licking County offer great locations for exercise.”

The overall male and female winners of the 5K Run included: first place – Corey Rafferty (15:48) and Maddie Carpenter (20:13); second place –

J. Newman (15:52) and Brittany Barchalk (20:55); and third place – Caleb Rafferty (16:04) and Kali Monroe (21:15). The top three overall female and male finishers received medals and were offered gift cards to Dick’s Sporting Goods. Medals were also awarded to those who finished in the top three of their age and gender groups, and participation medals were given to all participants.



LMHS and PNB invited Licking County businesses to promote employee wellness by joining the Corporate Participation Challenge. Businesses were grouped into categories based on their total number of employees, with the winners determined by the highest percentage of participants to run or walk the event. The Corporate Participation Challenge winners were: Small (11 to 20 employees) – World of Wonderment; Medium (21 to 99 employees) – Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities; and Large (100 or more employees) – The Energy Cooperative.





# Annual Golf Gala Supports Development of The Center at LMHS

Sponsored by the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Development Council, the 2025 LMH Golf Gala took place on September 15. The annual event is LMH's largest fundraiser. Proceeds from this year's Golf Gala 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. As Licking County continues to grow and thrive, The Center at LMHS will enhance the opportunity for education, connectivity, and relationships within the community.

The LMH Development Council is proud to acknowledge and thank the sponsors of the 2025 Golf Gala. The list includes the **Club Sponsor** (\$7,500 and above) Denison University

and **Condor Sponsors** (\$7,500 and above) Lou Reese and Park National Bank. **Ace Sponsors** (\$5,000) are MedBen; Southgate Corporation; and Stedman Floor Company, Inc. **Eagle Sponsors** (\$2,500) include Affordable Portables; All Weather Systems, Inc.; AssuredPartners; Claypool Electric, Inc.; Courtesy Ambulance, Inc.; Delta Dental; The Energy Cooperative; First Federal Savings; The Granville Investment Group; Guttridge; The Hinderer Motor Company; Kessler Sign Company; Kokosing, Inc.; Kokosing; Korda-Nemeth Engineering, Inc.; Mattingly Family Foundation; Mid-Ohio Development Corporation; Mill Tech, LLC; Modern Office Methods; Mortellaro McDonald's; MPW Industrial Services, Inc.; Northpoint Ohio Architecture; Owens Corning; Papa Boo's; Scott Peterson of

General Graphics; PNC Bank; Robertson Construction Services, Inc.; Rotary Club of Newark; Shai-Hess Commercial Real Estate, LLC; Summit Home Care & Hospice; TrueCore Federal Credit Union; United Collection Bureau, Inc.; and ValueCare Ambulance. **Exclusive Sponsorships** (\$1,500) include the **Cart Sponsor**, Matesich Distributing Co.; the **Driver Sponsor**, Brett Lowe Mechanical, Inc.; the **Fairway Sponsor**, OhioHealth; the **Games Sponsor**, Going Green Services; the **Hole-in-One Sponsor**, The Hinderer Motor Company; and the **Pro Sponsor**, Griffin's Floral Design and Wineshop.

The 2025 Golf Gala winners will be announced in the next issue of *Community Connection*.

# LMH Hosts Camp Med for High School Seniors

In July, 43 high school seniors considering a career in the healthcare industry participated in Camp Med, a program designed to introduce the students to a wide variety of areas within Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), including Cardiology, Surgery, Rehabilitation Services, Pharmacy, Laboratory, the Emergency Department, and more. The students were selected through an application process and spent two days visiting departments and

medical practices. The comprehensive Camp provides insight and guidance to assist the participants in making important decisions regarding education following high school.

The attendees were divided into groups and allowed to participate in interactive medical demonstrations. Specialists in a number of healthcare fields shared their knowledge and skills, and the students were encouraged to use

educational tools to simulate a surgical procedure, use an ultrasound machine, learn to insert an IV, and dispense medications. Students also spent time observing physician practices including Family Practice, Orthopedic Surgery, Pediatrics, and Women's Health. Many of this year's participants shared positive feedback about the experience and noted that they were inspired by the passion and knowledge of the LMHS staff.



# LMHS Celebrates Project SEARCH Class of 2025



In May, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) hosted the Project SEARCH Graduation at the John Gilbert Reese Center on The Ohio State University – Newark Campus. Five interns gathered with their families and friends to celebrate their graduation from the Project SEARCH program. The program is designed for high school seniors who have completed the requirements for graduation but remain enrolled as fifth-year seniors. The participants spend the equivalent of a school year at LMHS receiving a combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and on-the-job training.

Project SEARCH provides real-life work experience, combined with training in employability and independent living skills, to assist youth with disabilities in making successful transitions from school to adult life. LMHS partners with the Licking Regional 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 the program for local students. The interns began the program in August and completed three unique rotations in a variety of service, support, and technological areas within LMHS.

At the graduation event, LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese spoke to the interns and their guests, sharing some of the accomplishments of the program and the students. "The impact that the Project SEARCH program has in our community is tremendous. Since we began the program nine years ago, 90 percent of our Project SEARCH participants have graduated from the program, and 86 percent of those students have been hired in the Licking County community. The accomplishments of this year's graduates are remarkable. They have developed valuable skills working with LMHS staff and the organizations that we partner with, which they will be able to use in the Licking County workforce."

so far. Three of the past Project SEARCH graduates went on to obtain a higher level of education. For the first time, one intern was chosen to work in Pre-admission Testing for LMHS and another became the first to expand job duties in the Environmental Services Department interacting with patients. Two interns were recognized for having perfect attendance.

Students from Newark, Granville, Licking Valley, Newark, and Southwest Licking School Districts participated in Project SEARCH this school year. During the ceremony, each intern shared details of which departments they served, the impact that the program had on their lives, and their future plans. One intern accepted a position with LMHS in the Culinary Services Department.

The long-term goal 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, students who graduate from the program are prepared for competitive employment and have assistance obtaining rewarding jobs. For the upcoming school year, 10 students representing six Licking County school districts will participate in the 10th year of Project SEARCH.

LMHS employee and 2022 Project SEARCH graduate, Brooklyn Grady, was the keynote speaker and shared how the program impacted her life and career. She also gave the current interns advice on how they can be successful in their personal and professional lives.

LMHS has hired 23 of the 65 interns who have graduated from the program





# Celebrating Cancer Survivorship

In celebration of cancer survivors and their families, approximately 160 Licking County residents gathered for the annual Cancer Survivors Picnic on June 16. The event is in conjunction with National Cancer Survivors' Day, an annual celebration of life held in hundreds of communities throughout the United States. Participants unite to demonstrate that life after a cancer diagnosis remains meaningful and productive. Licking Memorial Health Systems President & CEO Rob Montagnese recognized the attending cancer survivors and thanked family and friends for the continued support that they provide to loved ones who fought and survived cancer.

"We define cancer survivorship as the process of living with, through, and beyond cancer," Rob said. "Survivorship is unique for each person. We recognize that survivors endure many challenges, but they face each day with courage and dignity and serve as an inspiration to us all. As a survivor or a caregiver, it is important to remember to take time to release the tension and worry of every day."

Rob introduced the speakers, Aruna Gowda, M.D., Licking Memorial Hematology/Oncology Clinic, and Garth Bennington, M.D., Licking Memorial Primary Care – West Main. Dr. Gowda received her Doctor of Medicine degree at Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences in Bangalore, India. She completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She completed a hematology/oncology fellowship at

The Ohio State University in Columbus. Dr. Gowda is board certified in internal medicine, hematology, and oncology. She reminded family members to continue to support and care for patients as they continue the cancer journey.

In addition, Dr. Gowda shared information about the care that the Licking Memorial Hematology/Oncology Department provides. In 2024, the Department saw an average of 79 new patients a month with a total of 1,283 patients diagnosed with cancer. Approximately 31 percent of the new Oncology patients were enrolled in clinical trials, which offers those patients access to the newest and most advanced treatments available.

Dr. Bennington received his Medical Degree from The Ohio State University College of Medicine and Public Health. He completed a family practice internship and residency at Grant Medical Center in Columbus. Dr. Bennington is board certified in family medicine. He shared his personal story of being a previvor, a person who has

an increased risk of developing cancer due to a family history or genetic predisposition. After genetic testing revealed that Dr. Bennington did carry a gene linked to stomach cancer, he underwent preventive measures including having his stomach removed. Both Dr. Bennington and Dr. Gowda encouraged everyone at an elevated risk for certain types of cancer to consider genetic testing. LMH offers the testing and counseling to assist in formulating a plan for prevention.

Attendees were offered health information and community resources available to cancer survivors. Guests also received welcome gifts and enjoyed a few games before the main program. The Pastoral Care Team, including Dave Mason, Director, Cory Campbell, Associate Director, and Cheryl Simpson, Chaplain, performed a sing-along for the group. At the end of the program, Rob drew names of the participants who had been placed in a raffle and presented the winners gift cards to various local businesses. The traditional aerial photo of the survivors concluded the event.



# Physician Spotlight – Howard L. Reeves, D.O.



Howard L. Reeves, D.O., a member of the LMH Active Medical Staff since 1999, joined Licking Memorial Vascular Surgery in May 2022.

Dr. Reeves is a board certified general surgeon and vascular surgeon. He earned his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from Ohio University in Athens and completed an internship, general surgical residency, and vascular surgery fellowship at Doctors Hospital in Columbus.

## Ask a Doc – Peripheral Artery Disease with Howard L. Reeves, D.O.

**Question:** How can I avoid suffering from peripheral artery disease?

**Answer:** Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a condition caused by a buildup of fatty deposits (atherosclerosis) that narrows the arteries, especially in the legs. Left untreated, it can lead to serious complications such as heart attacks, strokes, or even limb amputation. Fortunately, PAD is largely preventable with healthy lifestyle choices.

### Quit Smoking

Smoking is the leading contributing factor of PAD. It damages artery walls and reduces blood flow. Quitting, no matter how long a person has smoked, can significantly lower their risk of PAD, even if they have smoked for a long time.

### Stay Active

Regular physical activity improves circulation and keeps arteries flexible. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate exercise such as walking or biking. Even those with leg pain from PAD can benefit from gentle, supervised movement.

### Eat a Heart-healthy Diet

Choose fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats such as olive oil and nuts. Avoid foods that contain saturated fats, trans fats, added sugars, and excess sodium to reduce cholesterol and inflammation.

### Manage Blood Pressure and Cholesterol

High blood pressure and LDL ("bad") cholesterol increases artery damage. Manage both through diet, exercise, and medication if needed.

### Manage Diabetes

Diabetes increases the risk of PAD due to long-term blood vessel damage. Keep blood sugar levels within target range through proper diet, exercise, and A1C monitoring.

### Maintain a Healthy Weight

Weight loss can significantly reduce the risk of developing PAD by improving blood flow, reducing inflammation, and lowering blood pressure.

### Reduce Stress and Stay Hydrated

Chronic stress and dehydration can affect circulation. Practice stress management

techniques such as deep breathing or meditation, and drink plenty of water.

### Get Regular Checkups

People who are 50 or older and those who have risk factors of PAD should talk to their healthcare provider about PAD screening. A simple test called the Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) can detect early signs. An ABI test compares blood pressure in the ankle to an arm.

### Know the Symptoms

Symptoms of PAD include leg pain when walking, coldness or numbness in the legs or feet, or slow-healing sores. Early detection is key so that treatment may begin as soon as possible.

Making healthy lifestyle choices, attending regular visits with a healthcare provider, and adhering to prescribed medications will help to prevent PAD and protect circulation.

# Special Care Nursery Reunion

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) hosted the Special Care Nursery Reunion in June. The annual event offers former Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Special Care Nursery (SCN) patients and their families with the opportunity to visit with Hospital staff and fellow community members with shared experiences. Approximately 80 guests were in attendance, including parents, children, and extended family.

Games and informational tables were set up inside the LMH Auditorium. While enjoying the activities, the guests were also able to speak with SCN staff members about breastfeeding, safety, and nutrition. During the dinner program, LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese shared more information about the SCN with the families.

The Nursery provides a safe, secure environment where specially trained registered nurses care for ill newborns. In addition, pediatric physicians are available 24 hours, seven days a week to direct the care of infants born prematurely, as early as 32 weeks gestation, or infants who require medical assistance. Rob also introduced the guest speakers for the evening, Pediatrician

Richard A. Baltisberger, M.D., and patient speaker Amanda Kick.

Dr. Baltisberger is Chief of Pediatrics at LMH. He spoke about the quality of care offered by the staff at LMH and the need to assure patients that they can receive care in the convenience of their community. Amanda prematurely delivered her son at 36 weeks via cesarean section. Her son was admitted

to the SCN on continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) and stayed for a little over a week. She shared her gratitude to the staff for the exceptional care offered to her and her son.





# Quality Reporting to the Community

## Patient Story and Benchmarks for Behavioral Health

### Patient Story – Patricia\*

For over 30 years, during the time Patricia worked to obtain her education and throughout her career, she battled with depression. Even though she had the resources to research treatments for her condition and receive the medical care she needed, Patricia remained unsuccessful in discovering a method to end the negative, suicidal thoughts that stemmed from her condition. In 2024, Patricia felt she had reached a severely dark place, and began intensive treatment, including partial hospitalization.

The hospital stay, therapy, and medication offered little relief for Patricia. She could not find comfort or stop the suicidal thoughts. Her care team found that Patricia was resistant to common treatments and began discussing alternative methods of therapy including transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). TMS is a noninvasive procedure that uses a magnetic coil to influence the brain's natural electrical activity.

"I began looking for locations that provided TMS, and I was thrilled to find that Licking Memorial Outpatient Psychiatric Services located at Shepherd Hill offered the therapy," Patricia said. "I live in Newark, so visiting Shepherd Hill saved me over 70 hours of driving time to receive the treatment."

TMS services are available at Shepherd Hill for depression. The system was recently updated and Patricia became the first patient to use the updated equipment to alleviate her symptoms. The staff in the office considered Patricia's work schedule and made accommodations to ensure she received the needed treatments when convenient for Patricia. After six-weeks of receiving treatments, Patricia was pleased with the results.

"The process has drastically changed my life. I have been living with depression and suffered through many episodes of suicidal ideation," Patricia shared. "TMS to me is a medical miracle. I feel like my baseline of emotions has been reset, and I have not had suicidal thoughts for the first time in a very long time. I am less distressed, more capable of dealing with frustrations and bumps in the road, slower to anger, and more patient with those around me. If this had not happened to me, I would not have believed that it could change my life."

"I worked really hard to find a solution for my depression, and the research paid off. The risk and discomfort are very low. It felt as though someone were tapping on my head. There was no pain, and I suffered no side effects other than a light headache after the first treatment. Since TMS is a minimally invasive treatment, I would tell anyone considering this type of therapy that there is no reason not to take advantage of the service at Shepherd Hill," Patricia shared.

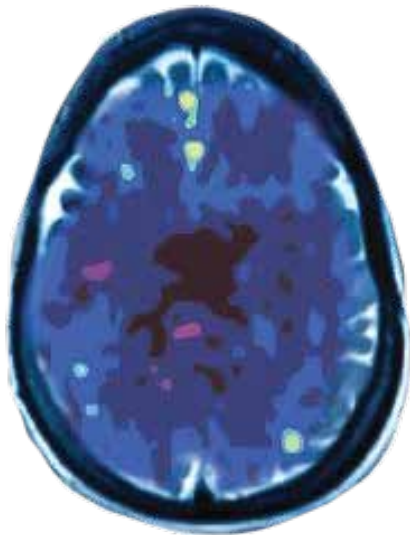
At this time, Patricia continues to work with a therapist to address mental health issues and use of her medications. She understands there are still processes in which she needs to follow in order to better manage the disorder, and that she may need maintenance TMS treatments in the future. For now, she is feeling successful and grateful for the relief TMS has offered.

"Two years ago, I was spending 80 percent of my energy on just keeping alive and moving. Now, I am thriving. I have more capacity to perform daily life skills and my job. The staff at Outpatient Psychiatric Services was wonderful, helpful, and encouraging. The benefits of treatment are incredible."

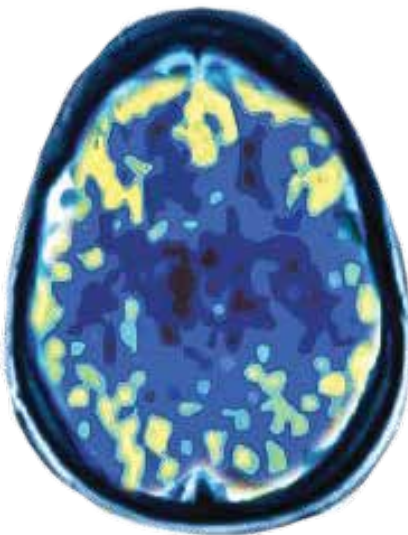
Most insurance carriers provide coverage for the TMS treatments. The staff at Outpatient Psychiatric Services try to be as flexible as possible to schedule appointments. Talk to a care provider about the process and to receive a referral.

\*Patricia is not the patient's real name.

### Actual PET Scans of Adult Brains



Depressed



Non-depressed

Source: Mark George, M.D., Biological Psychiatry Branch, Division of Intramural Research Programs, MIMH 1993.

## Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Relieves Depression Symptoms

Depression is a common mental health condition that affects 1 in 10 adults in the United States and is typically treated using therapies such as medication, psychotherapy, and lifestyle changes. Treating depression can be a complex and personalized process, as not everyone responds to treatment the same way. Individual factors such as differences in brain chemistry, genetics, life experiences, and the specific type of depression contribute to how a person responds to therapy. Individuals who are resistant to common treatments may benefit from alternative therapies to improve their symptoms.

Licking Memorial Outpatient Psychiatric Services offers transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), which treats depression safely without medication. It can also be used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), migraines, and smoking cessation. TMS is a noninvasive procedure that uses a magnetic coil to influence the brain's natural electrical activity. The magnetic fields stimulate nerve cells in the brain to improve symptoms of depression. During a TMS session, a cushioned, electromagnetic coil is placed against the forehead and delivers magnetic

pulses to the area of the brain that regulates mood. These pulses stimulate the nerve cells to release the chemicals, or neurotransmitters in the brain, such as serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine, that ease depression symptoms and improve mood.

TMS does not require any anesthesia or sedation, as the patient remains awake and alert during the treatment. Patients are seated during each session and may feel a tapping sensation where the coil is positioned. Individuals are required to wear earplugs during treatment for their comfort and hearing protection, as TMS produces a loud clicking sound with each pulse. Each treatment lasts between 20 and 40 minutes, with the entire treatment course consisting of five treatments per week for a six-week period. Common side effects can include:

- Headache
- Scalp discomfort
- Lightheadedness
- Tingling, spasms, or twitching of facial muscles
- Increased sensitivity to sound

Many TMS patients begin to see improvement with two to three weeks

of treatment, including changes in mood, fewer days of depression, and an increased desire to engage with other people more often. Completing the full course of treatment is strongly recommended, as it ensures the best outcome for delivering long-lasting relief from depression.

The TMS procedure is available at Licking Memorial Outpatient Psychiatric Services. The office is open Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information about alternative treatments, call (220) 564-4873.



## LMHS President & CEO Speaks to Pataskala Chamber of Commerce

During the Pataskala Chamber of Commerce's monthly meeting in June, held at Tri-Village Church of Christ, Licking Memorial Health Systems President & CEO Rob Montagnese shared information about The Center at LMHS, an education and event center being built adjacent to Licking Memorial Hospital. The building will provide a modern, well-equipped facility that will serve as place to meet, learn, and share in activities that promote healthy lifestyles and offer valuable resources. LMHS Culinary Services catered the luncheon.





# Behavioral Health 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.** Behavioral health is a broad term that refers to psychiatric illnesses and/or substance use disorders. Inpatient hospitalization for either condition is often necessary for effective intervention. LMH provides a wide range of services for people with behavioral health illnesses at the Shepherd Hill facility. One goal is to transition patients into outpatient settings where they can continue treatment, decreasing the need for readmission.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Behavioral Health patients readmitted within 7 days	1.3%	2.4%	1.9%	1.4%

**2.** Outcome studies are conducted to monitor and measure the treatment success of addictive disease. LMHS data is collected for up to two years after completion of the program and demonstrates how patients are faring. Information regarding abstinence one year after completing the program is self-reported by patients.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
Patients remaining abstinent	90%	92%	91%	greater than 85%
Improvement in quality of relationships	99%	97%	97%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall physical and mental health	100%	93%	100%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall quality of life	100%	98%	98%	greater than 85%

**3.** Withdrawal management, the safe and medically supervised elimination of addictive substances from the body, is the most intensive care offered for patients with addictive disease. Acute withdrawal symptoms are managed by the use of appropriate medications specific for each patient’s situation. The length of stay for detoxification depends upon the drug of choice and the severity of the withdrawal.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
Average length of stay – alcohol treatment	2.9 days	2.8 days	3.3 days	less than 3 days
Average length of stay – opiate treatment	2.5	2.3 days	2.7 days	less than 4 days
Average length of stay – tranquilizer (benzodiazepines) treatment	4.0 days	3.0 days	4.0 days	less than 5 days

**4.** Education is considered an essential component of providing complete behavioral healthcare. A thorough understanding of the diagnosis, the purpose of medications, side effects to medications, and the expected response to treatment leads to decreased relapse and readmission rates and increased long-term compliance with medication on an outpatient basis.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
Medication education provided for patients and/or family	100%	98%	99%	greater than 97%

**5.** In mental health, aftercare programs are recommended for patients who have completed intense treatment programs as well as hospitalization. At Shepherd Hill, follow-up appointments are required in order to continue monitoring patients for continued symptoms and medication effectiveness.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
Aftercare appointment scheduled within 2 weeks of treatment	99.6%	93%	96%	100%

**Data Footnotes:**  
(1) Comparative data from the Midas Comparative Database.

# Practicing Good Sleep Hygiene

Sleep is essential for physical health and emotional well-being. Sleep hygiene refers to practices that promote good quality sleep. Focusing on sleep hygiene is an excellent way to establish healthy sleep habits. Below are tips to start practicing good sleep hygiene:

**Establish a consistent sleep schedule** – going to bed and waking up at the same time every day helps to regulate the body’s sleep cycle. The recommended goal is seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

**Create a relaxing bedtime routine** – taking a warm bath, reading, meditation, yoga, and stretching can promote relaxation. Avoid phones, tablets, and computers at least one hour before bed.

**Optimize sleep environment** – make sure the bedroom is dark, quiet, and cool, ideally between 60 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Using blackout curtains or a sleep mask can block out light. Earplugs, white noise, a fan, or music can mask external noise.

**Be mindful of dietary habits** – avoid caffeine and alcohol in the evening, and do not consume heavy meals close to bedtime.

**Avoid exercise before bed** – while physical activity helps to improve sleep by regulating circadian rhythms and reducing stress and anxiety, exercising an hour or two before bedtime can trigger insomnia.

**Associate the bed with sleep** – the bed should only be used for sleep and intimacy. Activities such as watching television or using mobile devices should be enjoyed in another room.



## Walk with a Doc

In May, Licking Memorial Health Systems hosted a Walk with a Doc event at Infirmary Mound Park in Granville. Suba Pathmanathan, M.D., of Licking Memorial Internal Medicine, led a discussion and answered general questions about diabetes. During the June event at the Buckeye Lake Bike Path in Buckeye Lake, Kenneth Parker, M.D., of Licking Memorial Otolaryngology (ENT), discussed the thyroid. John Keller, M.D., of Licking Memorial Cardiac Electrophysiology, addressed managing atrial fibrillation (AFib) during the July event held at Geller Park in Heath.

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](https://LMHealth.org/Calendar).







# Quality Reporting to the Community

Patient Story and Benchmarks for Stroke Care

## Patient Story – Ben Reed

temporal visual field loss. After consulting with other physicians at Center For Sight, the optometrist determined that Ben was having a stroke and instructed him to go to the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Emergency Department (ED).

Ben's parents drove him to the ED. When he arrived, he registered and was taken to an exam room. He does not recall what occurred while he was in the ED, as he was very overwhelmed and was trying to process his diagnosis. He remembers that he could not see well, and his mom advocated for him with the nurses and physicians.

A Computed Tomography Angiogram (CTA) head and neck scan was ordered to determine if there was a blockage in Ben's arteries. A CTA is a medical imaging technique that uses CT scans and contrast dye to visualize the blood vessels in the head and neck. The CTA revealed no evidence of obstruction in Ben's carotid or vertebrobasilar arteries; however, the scan did reveal indications of a previous lacunar infarct in the right cerebellum. A lacunar infarct is a type of stroke that occurs when a small artery deep in the brain is blocked, leading to a small area of brain tissue damage.

Ben was admitted to LMH and underwent a magnetic resonance imaging

(MRI) on his brain that showed an area of ischemia in the left occipital region of the brain, which is responsible for processing visual information. He was treated by Noman M. Ahmed, M.D., of Licking Memorial Neurology. Ben was administered a cholesterol medication and an antiplatelet medication, and by the next morning, his vision had almost returned to normal.

Ben was discharged from the Hospital after three days and was instructed to wear a heart monitor for two weeks and follow up with his primary care physician as well as Licking Memorial Neurology. He also could not operate a vehicle for 30 days, but his manager made arrangements for Ben to work remotely, for which he was grateful. For his own peace of mind and to be proactive about his health, Ben also underwent a procedure for an implantable loop recorder, a small, battery-powered device implanted under the skin to continuously monitor the heart's electrical activity. The device can help identify atrial fibrillation, a common cause of strokes.

Just two months after Ben experienced his stroke, his wife Rachel delivered their first child; a daughter named Sonora. Ben is grateful to the physicians and staff at LMH for helping him through his stroke recovery and is happy to be able to spend time with his wife and daughter.

Ben Reed is 36 years old and a lifelong Licking County resident. Growing up in Newark, Ben attended Newark High School and studied Computer Networking Technology at C-TEC. He currently works in the Information Technology Department at Kokosing Construction.

Ben awoke one morning in August with a strange feeling in his right eye. He could not identify the problem, but something did not feel right. As he was getting ready to drive to work, Ben began losing vision in his eye. He called his manager to inform him of the situation and that he was going to the eye doctor. Ben did not feel that he could drive himself, so his wife, Rachel, drove him to the optometrist.

"My wife had to go to work, so she dropped me off at the eye doctor," Ben explained. "I called my parents to let them know what was happening and ask if they could provide a ride for me after the appointment."

The optometrist performed a visual field test which revealed dense temporal visual field loss on the right and mild left

## Hardening of the Arteries Can Lead to Stroke

Atherosclerosis, commonly known as hardening of the arteries, is the gradual buildup of plaque inside the arterial walls. Arteries are blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich blood to organs and tissues in the body. Plaque is comprised of cholesterol, fatty substances, cellular waste, calcium, and fibrin. Over time, plaque accumulation narrows the arteries and restricts blood flow which can lead to the formation of blood clots. If the arteries that supply blood to the brain are affected by this process, the risk of stroke is significantly increased.

A stroke occurs when the brain is deprived of oxygen-rich blood. Two types of strokes that are associated with atherosclerosis are ischemic and hemorrhagic. Ischemic strokes, which account for 87 percent of all strokes, typically result from a blockage. Plaque buildup can rupture leading to the formation of a blood clot. If the clot obstructs an artery leading to the brain, blood is prevented from reaching brain tissue, causing cell death in minutes.

Atherosclerosis also contributes to high blood pressure, forcing the heart to work harder to circulate blood through narrowed arteries. Over time, this pressure can weaken the arterial walls causing a vessel to rupture and bleed into the surrounding brain tissue. Hemorrhagic strokes are less common than ischemic strokes but are associated with a higher risk of death and long-term disability.

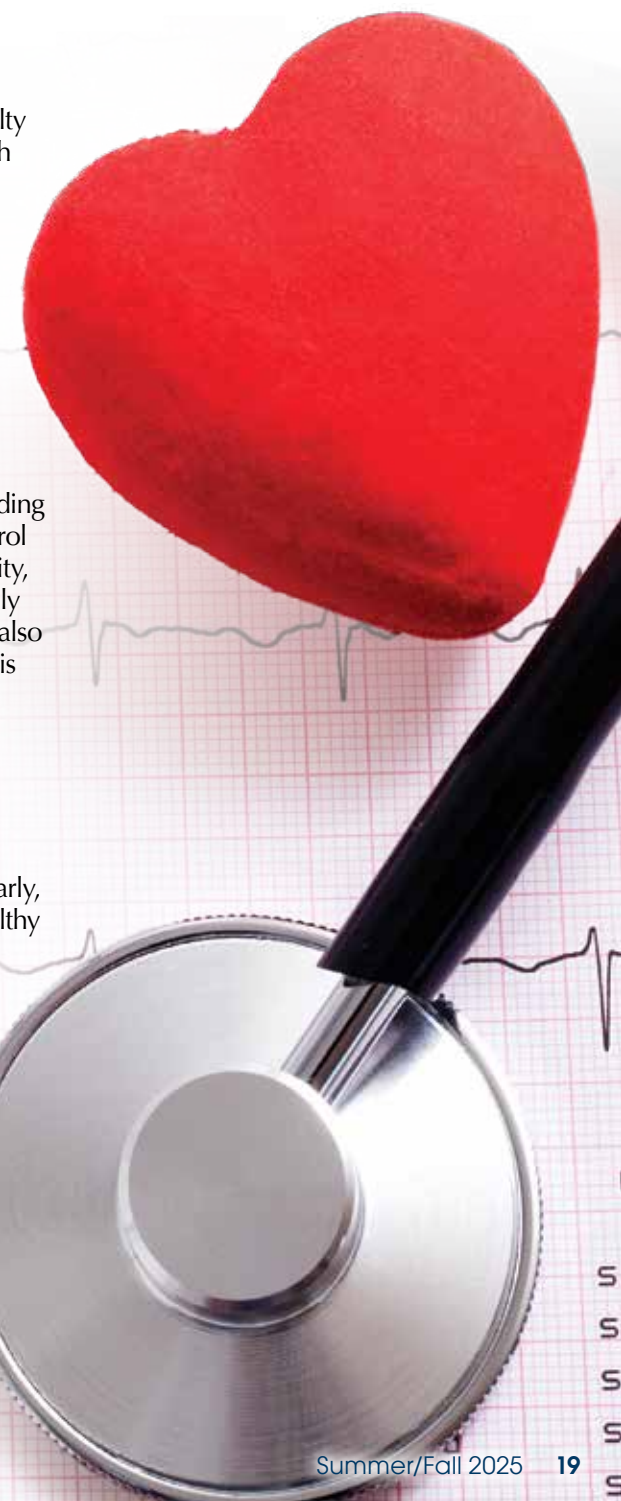
Recognizing the signs of a stroke early is important. Stroke symptoms occur suddenly and vary from person to person, depending on what part of the brain is being deprived of oxygen. Remembering the acronym B.E.F.A.S.T. can help individuals identify the signs of stroke:

- Balance – loss of balance, severe headache, or dizziness
- Eyes – blurred vision
- Face – one side of the face is drooping
- Arms – arm or leg weakness
- Speech – slurred words or difficulty speaking or understanding speech
- Time – call 9-1-1 immediately

Atherosclerosis is a slow, lifelong progression of changes in the blood vessels that begins forming in childhood and worsens as people age. Symptoms may not appear until a medical emergency occurs, such as a heart attack or stroke. Several risk factors contribute to the development of atherosclerosis, including smoking, hypertension, high cholesterol and triglyceride levels, diabetes, obesity, and unhealthy lifestyle habits. A family history of cardiovascular disease can also play a significant role in atherosclerosis and stroke risk.

Most people can prevent or delay atherosclerosis from developing by making lifestyle modifications such as adhering to a heart-healthy diet, quitting tobacco use, exercising regularly, managing stress, and maintaining healthy

blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels. In some cases, medications or surgical interventions may be necessary such as stent placements or carotid endarterectomy, a procedure that removes plaque buildup from the carotid arteries in the neck. Individuals who think they may have atherosclerosis should consult with their primary care physician or cardiologist.



## New Appointment



**Chelsey J. Benner, APRN-CRNA,**  
joined Licking Memorial Anesthesiology



**Tanisha M. Dilo, APRN-CNM,**  
joined Licking Memorial Women's Health



**Janae L. Otto, APRN-CNP,**  
joined Licking Memorial Emergency Medicine



**Deborah L. Pevsner, M.D.,**  
of Tri-County Radiology, joined the Licking Memorial Hospital Medical Staff



**Kayla R. Thomsen, APRN-CRNA,**  
joined Licking Memorial Anesthesiology



**Rebecca (Becky) A. Wheeler, APRN-CRNA,**  
joined Licking Memorial Anesthesiology



# Stroke 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. Thrombolytic drugs, sometimes called “clot-busters,” often are effective in treating a stroke in progress, and may even reverse some of the neurological damage. However, thrombolytic drugs can have dangerous side effects. To lower the risk of complications, thrombolytic drugs can be given only to patients who have arrived at the Emergency Department (ED) quickly enough to have the drugs initiated within four and a half hours of their first symptoms of having a stroke.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Eligible stroke patients who received timely thrombolytic drugs in the ED	91.7%	96.9%	100%	88%

2. Tenecteplase (TNK) and tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) – FDA-approved medications for acute ischemic strokes, are given through intravenous therapy (IV) in the arm, and work by dissolving clots and improving blood flow to the part of the brain being deprived. tPA can help reduce damage to the brain and the long-term effects of stroke. Minimal time to administration produces brain-saving benefits.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Median time from arrival to administration of tPA	65 Minutes	57 Minutes	59 Minutes	60 Minutes

3. Quick access to brain scan results is critical to physicians when treating a patient with a suspected stroke. Clot-buster medications can be administered, but only for a short period of time after the patient’s stroke symptoms begin, and the medications may not be given until a brain scan is completed. Quick completion of a brain scan upon the patient’s arrival can reduce the amount of time elapsed before these important medicines can be given, which then increases the patient’s chance for improved recovery from a stroke.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Stroke patients in the ED with brain scan results within 45 minutes	84%	88%	100%	70%

4. Ischemic stroke is a type of stroke that results in damage to the brain caused by an interruption or blockage in blood flow. It is the most common type of stroke. A stroke can result in death, so seeking medical attention quickly is vitally important. Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) measures the rate of in-hospital death of patients suffering an ischemic stroke. Prompt and comprehensive stroke treatment can reduce the risk of death and long-term complications. Lower percentages are preferable.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National <sup>(2)</sup>
Ischemic stroke – inpatient mortality rate	0.79%*	0.00%	0.80%*	2.38%

\*In 2022 and 2024, one individual suffered a fatal ischemic stroke.

5. The “incidence rate” is a measure of how often ischemic strokes occur in our community, as compared to national averages. It is measured as the number of patients who are admitted with a stroke, out of every 1,000 admitted patients. Rates higher than average mean that more patients are admitted to the Hospital with strokes than the national average, while lower rates indicate fewer strokes occur in the community than the national average. Lower numbers are preferable.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National <sup>(2)</sup>
Incidence rate	21.43	16.06	20.29	20.14

6. Atrial fibrillation, also known as “AFib,” is a condition in which the heart does not pump blood effectively. Patients with AFib are five times more likely to suffer a stroke than the general population, and many patients may be unaware that they have it. Patients with AFib are at risk of having blood clots form inside their heart, which can travel to the brain, causing a stroke. This measure reflects the percentage of patients, diagnosed with stroke who had underlying AFib. Patients with AFib typically are treated with blood thinners to help reduce the likelihood of clots forming inside the heart. Lower percentages are preferable.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National <sup>(2)</sup>
Ischemic stroke – percentage with AFib	14.96%	14.29%	20.00%	18.46%

7. In some cases, after the immediate crisis is stabilized and the patient no longer requires hospital care, ongoing care may be required depending on the needs of the patient. Patients may be transferred to post-hospital care settings such as inpatient rehabilitation, skilled nursing facilities, or home health agencies. The LMH goal is for the patient to return to baseline functioning and be discharged directly home from the Hospital.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National <sup>(2)</sup>
Ischemic stroke – percent discharged home	58.27%	50.00%	52.80%	55.83%

8. Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) office-based physicians use evidence-based measures in order to provide excellent, quality care to patients. The American Stroke Association and American Heart Association recommend the use of blood-thinning medication in order to reduce the risk of blood clots in patients with coronary artery disease.

	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	National <sup>(3)</sup>	LMHP Goal
% LMHP coronary artery disease patients seen receiving blood-thinning medication	88%	88%	85%	>80%	>85%

**Data Footnotes:** (1) Comparative data from [www.medicare.gov/care-compare](http://www.medicare.gov/care-compare). (2) Comparative data from the Midas Comparative Database. (3) American Heart Association/American Stroke Association/National Committee for Quality Assurance Heart/Stroke Recognition Program.



Check out our Quality Report Cards online at [LMHealth.org](http://LMHealth.org).

## Manage Blood Pressure to Prevent Stroke Risk

High blood pressure is the leading modifiable risk factor for stroke. Left uncontrolled, high blood pressure can cause blood vessels to weaken and predispose such to damage, which can lead to blockages and blood clots that can cause a stroke. However, there are many ways to successfully manage high blood pressure.

### Eat a healthy diet

Eating a diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products that are also low in saturated fat and cholesterol can lower high blood pressure considerably. Examples of eating plans that can help control blood pressure are the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet and the Mediterranean diet.

### Increase physical activity

Regular exercise can reduce blood pressure significantly. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. Activities such as walking, running, swimming, cycling, high-intensity interval training, and strength training are great methods to incorporate into an exercise routine.

### Stop smoking

The nicotine in cigarettes can raise blood pressure and heart rate, narrow arteries, and make blood more likely to clot, which increases the risk of stroke. Quitting smoking helps lower blood pressure, can lower the risk of heart disease, and improve overall health.

### Reduce salt and sodium intake

Avoid foods and beverages that are high in sodium. A general recommendation is to limit sodium intake to 2,300 milligrams (mg) or less per day. However, the American Heart Association recommends 1,500 mg a day of sodium as an upper limit for all adults. Individuals should talk with their physician to determine the appropriate amount of sodium in their diet.

### Maintain a healthy weight

Blood pressure often increases as weight increases. Losing even a small amount of weight can help to lower blood pressure. A lifestyle with good nutrition, regular physical activity, stress management, and adequate sleep all help to sustain a healthy weight.





# Quality Reporting to the Community

Patient Story and Benchmarks for Emergency Care

## Patient Story – Dakota Dunlap

escorted to an exam room. The nurses came within minutes and the physician examined Dakota within 10 minutes.”

When the ED physician examined Dakota, it was confirmed that she was experiencing an allergic reaction to the antibiotic. An allergic reaction to antibiotics occurs when the immune system produces antibodies in response to taking the medication. The body is reacting to what is perceived as a harmful substance and releases chemicals that cause the symptoms associated with an allergic reaction such as a rash and swelling. Delayed reactions usually appear several days after starting the antibiotic, often after several doses, and may even begin after treatment has been stopped.

Gretchen knew that Dakota was allergic to amoxicillin, a penicillin-based antibiotic used to treat a variety of bacterial infections including tonsillitis and bronchitis. As a young child, Dakota experienced hives after taking the medication. The reaction was mild and easily treated. In this instance, Dakota was prescribed an antibiotic that did not contain penicillin; however, the medication was similar enough in structure to cause the delayed allergic reaction.

The physicians and nurses treated Dakota with epinephrine. Epinephrine reduces or reverses the severe symptoms of an allergic reaction very quickly by opening the airways and reducing swelling. The medication assists in maintaining heart function and blood pressure. As epinephrine causes the blood to be diverted away from the skin, it reduces hives and itching. Epinephrine

also can prevent a further release of histamine, the chemical that responds to allergens and ushers in symptoms. Other intravenous medications were administered as well to halt the allergic reaction, and Dakota was sent home.

“I could see she was feeling so much better as the medications began to work. The physician was personable and professional. He kept us informed about the treatment plan, as well as what to expect. The nurses all worked so well together, as a team, placing patients first and foremost,” Gretchen shared. “While checking-in, the registration clerk suggested where we should stand until we were called to triage. Since we were at the ED for an allergic reaction, she wanted to ensure we were not exposed to those with viruses and other illness to protect our health. LMH provided such a positive experience for us personally and for our health.”

Dakota’s reaction to the antibiotic is rare. In most cases, the allergic reaction is mild to moderate, and symptoms include a raised, itchy skin rash or hives, coughing, wheezing, or tightness of the throat. Mild to moderate allergic reactions can usually be successfully treated by taking antihistamines. Call a primary care physician or pediatrician to obtain advice. In addition to the ED, there are three Licking Memorial Urgent Care locations, Granville, Downtown Newark, and Pataskala. Wait time for all locations can be found on the home page of LMHealth.org.

Dakota Dunlap lives in Heath with her parents, Gretchen and D.L. She has two older sisters, Delaney and Allie, and an older brother, Kevin. Earlier this year, Dakota was prescribed an antibiotic. After taking the medication for nine days, she woke up with a rash on her arms and face. Her mother gave her an antihistamine, a medication that relieves allergy symptoms such as itching and swelling, and Dakota decided to attend school. However, the rash worsened, she began feeling unwell, and left school and went home. “She was a real trooper. Dakota felt awful, but she wanted to try to finish her school day,” said Gretchen.

The next morning, the rash was worse and Dakota’s throat felt swollen. Gretchen called Dakota’s pediatrician, Richard A. Baltisberger, M.D., of Licking Memorial Pediatrics – Tamarack. Due to the concerns about Dakota’s throat swelling, the office staff advised Gretchen to take Dakota to the Licking Memorial Hospital Emergency Department (ED).

“Taking Dakota to the ED made me feel a little uncomfortable,” Gretchen said. “In the winter, with cold and flu season, I understand the ED can be very busy and wait times are longer. I was not eager to spend an entire day sitting in the waiting room. However, starting with registration, the process went very quickly and smoothly, and everyone was kind, sympathetic, professional, and caring. We were only in the waiting room for about five minutes before being taken to triage, where we were then

## LMH Among Top Hospitals in the Nation for Sepsis Care

Sepsis is a complication that occurs when a patient has an extreme response to an infection. It causes damage to organs in the body and can be life-threatening if not treated. If sepsis becomes severe enough or develops into septic shock, the chances of death increase significantly.

On average, over 270,000 people in the United States die from sepsis every year. Anyone can develop sepsis, but older adults and people with weak immune systems have a higher risk for developing sepsis and a greater chance of dying from severe sepsis or septic shock. Early identification of sepsis and early appropriate care can lower the risk of death from sepsis.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) implements quality initiatives to assure excellent healthcare for Medicare beneficiaries through accountability and public disclosure. CMS uses quality measures in the various initiatives to encourage continual improvement. Studies show that measuring hospital performance is related to better patient outcomes. Some quality measures are publicly reported on the CMS Hospital Compare website; a tool designed to assist Medicare beneficiaries in finding top rated providers.

One such initiative is a requirement for healthcare providers to track and report specific treatment methods that

must be met for all patients suspected of suffering from sepsis. According to the data collected by CMS, the rating for Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) reflects outstanding performance for sepsis care. LMH scored in the top 10 percent of hospitals throughout the nation in sepsis treatment, ranking higher than several top national hospitals, and the only hospital in Central Ohio to receive the designation.

In 2015, CMS implemented the Severe Sepsis/Septic Shock Management (SEP-1) Bundle to promote timely sepsis care. SEP-1 is a process for hospital clinicians to follow for every patient with severe sepsis or septic shock. In the Emergency Department, the sepsis care bundle focuses on timely interventions within the first few hours of sepsis recognition to improve outcomes. It includes actions such as measuring lactate, obtaining blood cultures before antibiotics, administering broad-spectrum antibiotics, and fluid resuscitation for low blood pressure. These steps are crucial for preventing progression to septic shock and improving patient survival. The mortality risk for a patient with severe sepsis and septic shock increases by 4 to 9 percent for every hour that treatment is delayed.

Having a standard process for every patient with sepsis encourages closing gaps in sepsis outcomes across race, socioeconomic status, geography, and insurance status. The latest SEP-1 data

that LMH reported to CMS included its performance related to identifying and treating both severe sepsis and septic shock. The national average for SEP-1 performance is 63 percent. LMH’s performance result was 85 percent, which ranked the Hospital in the top 10 percentile in the country. The Ohio average for SEP-1 performance is 55 percent. LMH scored third highest in the state with 85 percent compliance in the overall sepsis bundle. LMH was the only hospital in Ohio to score 100 percent compliance on both the 3-hour and 6-hour septic shock measures, earning a first place ranking for both bundles.

Licking Memorial Health Systems’ (LMHS) commitment to sepsis care excellence is not new. In 2016, LMHS began a campaign to significantly reduce the mortality rate from sepsis. By using innovative technologies, standardizing care, and raising awareness among the staff, LMH’s inpatient mortality rate from sepsis decreased by 70 percent. The campaign’s success was credited to the collaboration of a newly established multidisciplinary sepsis team that included physicians, nurses, pharmacy and laboratory personnel, and members of the Process Improvement and Information Systems Departments. In 2018, LMHS was recognized as an honoree of the Ohio Patient Safety Institute’s (OPSI) Best Practice Award for their Sepsis Initiative.

## LMHS Honored for Top Contribution in Operation Feed Campaign

Licking Memorial Health Systems raised over \$25,000 to benefit the Food Pantry Network (FPN) of Licking County. This year, LMHS earned the overall campaign contributor in Licking County. The awards were announced at Operation Feed’s annual award ceremony. The FPN Funds Development Director, Alyssa Shepherd, and Operation Feed Campaign Board Chair, Jennifer McDonald, presented a plaque to Holly Slaughter, Vice President Human Resources & Support Services, Becky Thomas, Director of Human Resources, and Kalani Friend, Human Resources Specialist.





# Emergency 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. Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Emergency Department (ED) length of stay and efficiency measures are shared to provide the community with useful information regarding treatment times. For real-time updates on the ED wait times, visit LMHealth.org. During 2024, there were 51,169 visits to the ED.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
Median length of stay in the ED for all patients*	190 min.	187 min.	198 min.	Less than 187 min.
Median length of time from arrival until seen by a physician*	23 min.	18 min.	18 min.	Less than 28 min.
Median length of stay in the ED for patients discharged home*	182 min.	189 min.	212 min.	215 min. <sup>(1)</sup>
Percentage of patients who are in the ED for more than 6 hours*	6.4%	6.3%	5.9%	8.0% <sup>(2)</sup>

\*LMH data represented on this table reflects nearly 100% of all ED visits, while goals reference CMS hospital comparative data, which uses a small sampling of all U.S. emergency department patients.

2. LMH operates three Urgent Care facilities: Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Pataskala, Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Granville, and Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Downtown Newark. Patients are encouraged to visit Urgent Care rather than the ED when they have illnesses and injuries that are not life-threatening, but need immediate attention, such as ear infections, minor fractures, and minor animal bites. Urgent Care visits usually require less time and offer lower costs than visits to the ED. During 2024, there were 18,188 visits to Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Granville, 8,758 visits to Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Pataskala, and 22,944 visits to Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Downtown Newark.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
Urgent Care – Downtown Newark: median length of stay	57 min.	47 min.	47 min.	Less than 60 min.
Urgent Care – Granville: median length of stay	42 min.	31 min.	31 min.	Less than 60 min.
Urgent Care – Pataskala: median length of stay	46 min.	38 min.	36 min.	Less than 60 min.

3. Sepsis is a life-threatening condition that occurs when the body’s immune system has an extreme reaction to an infection. Sepsis can lead to widespread inflammation in the body, including damage to vital organs. Sepsis is the most common cause of death in hospitals, and also is the most frequent cause of hospital readmissions. Prompt recognition of sepsis and immediate treatment can significantly reduce the likelihood of death in sepsis patients, and long-term complications. Best practices for treating sepsis have been identified, and hospitals across the United States are measured on adherence to the recommendations, which is commonly referred to as the “sepsis bundle.” Higher bundle compliance scores can result in better patient outcomes, lower death rates, and fewer readmissions. LMH has been aggressively targeting sepsis care for continual improvement, and boasts some of the highest sepsis bundle scores in Ohio, as well as the Nation. Out of 3,089 hospitals nationally, only 248 scored 85 percent or better which places LMH in the top 8 percent in the country.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National
“Sepsis bundle” compliance	76%	85%	85%	63%

4. Emergency angioplasty restores blood flow in a blocked heart artery by inserting a catheter with a balloon into the artery to re-open the vessel. The procedure has been proven to save lives during a heart attack and is most effective when performed within 90 minutes of the patient’s arrival to the ED to minimize irreversible damage from the heart attack.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
Median time to opened artery	53 min.	60 min.	64 min.	90 min.
Percentage of patients with arteries opened within 90 minutes	100%	98%	96%	96%
	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Median time from arrival to completion of EKG	2 min.	4 min.	3 min.	7 min.

5. A high rate of patients who return to the Hospital within 72 hours after an ED visit and are admitted can possibly signal a problem with patient care. These cases are very heavily reviewed and scrutinized, and LMH sets an aggressively stringent goal for this indicator, as listed below.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
Patients admitted to the Hospital within 72 hours of ED visit	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	Less than 1%

6. Patients who are seen in the ED and return home can sometimes develop further problems that warrant a return to the Hospital. Returning to the ED within 24 hours may indicate a potential problem with initial diagnosis and treatment of a patient’s condition. For this reason, LMH measures the rate of unplanned returns to the ED. LMH sets an aggressively stringent goal for this, as listed below.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
ED patients who return to the ED within 24 hours of discharge	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	Less than 2%

7. For personal reasons, some patients may elect to leave the ED prior to completing any recommended treatment. Doing so can place the patient at serious health risk. As a measure of ensuring patient safety, LMH measures the percentage of patients who elect to leave the ED prior to completing their treatment.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	Goal
ED patients who leave before treatment is complete	1.4%	1.7%	1.5%	Less than 3%

Data Footnotes: (1) Hospitalcompare.hhs.gov national benchmarks. (2) Comparative data from the Midas Comparative Database.



Check out our Quality Report Cards online at [LMHealth.org](https://LMHealth.org).

## Protect Yourself from Respiratory Viruses

Many respiratory viruses circulate in the fall and winter seasons causing illness of varying severity across the United States. Three common viruses include influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19. Children under 5, older adults, and those with underlying medical conditions such as chronic lung disease, heart disease, and diabetes, have an increased risk for severe illness from respiratory viruses. The following tips can help to protect people from these illnesses and prevent such from spreading.

**Get vaccinated.** Vaccines remain one of the safest ways for individuals to protect themselves and prevent the risk of spreading viruses to others. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that children and adults receive vaccinations for the flu, COVID-19, and RSV in late summer

to early fall before the viruses start spreading widely within the community.

**Handwashing.** Wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available. Wash or sanitize hands before preparing food, before eating, before and after caring for someone who is sick or around someone who has a cold, after using the bathroom, after sneezing or coughing, and after touching anything that may carry germs such as grocery carts, diapers, raw food, animals, or trash.

**Cover coughs and sneezes.** Individuals should use a tissue to cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and wash hands afterward. If tissues are not available, using the elbow to cough or sneeze into can also reduce the spread of germs.

**Stay home when sick.** Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick. While ill, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from spreading infection. Wearing a mask around others can also help provide protection against circulating viruses.

Individuals who become infected with the flu, COVID-19, or RSV should self-isolate, get plenty of rest, and stay hydrated. Over-the-counter pain relievers may also be used to reduce some symptoms associated with these illnesses. If symptoms worsen or fail to improve after three days, contact a healthcare professional. People who experience shortness of breath, fever for more than three days, or other concerning symptoms should seek medical care right away.



# Licking Memorial Health Foundation Recognizes New Donors

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 John Alford Fellowship

The John Alford Fellowship honors the commitment and efforts of longtime supporter John Alford, the recipient of Licking Memorial Hospital's first Lifetime Achievement award and the namesake for the 2007 John & Mary Alford Pavilion, providing the local community with a new Emergency Department and Surgery Department in the 100,000-square-foot addition to Licking Memorial Hospital. Individuals donating to the John Alford Fellowship support his efforts to ensure local, quality healthcare by contributing \$25,000 or more over a period of 10 years.

### Daniel (Dan) L. Hunt

LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese and Vice President Development & Public Relations Veronica Patton presented Daniel (Dan) L. Hunt with a glass piece to recognize him for joining the John Alford Fellowship. Dan retired from Park National Bank and is currently serving as Chair and President of Beacon 360 Management Inc. He also serves as Chair of Candlewick Commons, Inc., WSHDC/ZHDC Apartments, Inc., East Newark Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, Oak Hill

Manor, Inc., Washaw, Inc., Wasmver, Inc., Shiloh Housing I, Inc., Licking Arc Apartments, Inc., Keygate Manor, Inc., and Washington Square Plaza Apartments. A Newark High School alumnus, Dan received an Associate Degree in Business Management from COTC. He earned his Bachelor of Business Administration and Master of Business Administration degrees from Ohio University. In the community, Dan serves as Chair of the Finance Committee of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, a member of the Senior Levy

Board of Licking County, Treasurer of the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army of Newark, and a member of the Education & Membership Committee of the Licking Memorial Hospital Development Council. Dan lives in Newark and has two children, Daniel II and Alexa, and four grandchildren, Bryson, Isabella, Daniel III, and Isaiah.



## The Caduceus Society

The Caduceus Society recognizes physicians who support LMH through a charitable contribution of \$10,000 or more over a period of 10 years. This group of physician leaders continues the tradition of healthcare excellence by providing funds for the latest medical technology.

### Gurunanthan Palani, M.D., FACP, and Suba Pathmanathan, M.D.

Gurunanthan Palani, M.D., FACP, and Suba Pathmanathan, M.D., were recognized by LMHS President & CEO Rob Montagnese and Vice President Development & Public Relations Veronica Patton with a glass piece for joining the Caduceus Society. Dr. Palani joined Licking Memorial Endocrinology in July 2021. He earned his Medical Degree from Government Chengalpattu Medical College in Tamil Nadu, India, and completed an internal medicine residency at McLaren Flint Hospital in Flint, Michigan. Dr. Palani also completed a

fellowship in endocrinology at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota and is board certified in internal medicine and endocrinology. He has published 14 peer-reviewed manuscripts and serves as a reviewer and editorial board member for several medical journals. Dr. Palani and his wife, Suba Pathmanathan, M.D., have two children.

Dr. Pathmanathan joined Licking Memorial Internal Medicine in July 2021. She earned her Medical Degree from

Madras Medical College in Tamil Nadu, India, and completed an internal medicine residency at McLaren Flint Hospital, affiliated with Michigan State University, in Flint, Michigan. She is board certified in internal medicine. Dr. Pathmanathan enjoys traveling with her husband and two children, walking, and playing badminton.



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.

# 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

Stu & Marcia Parsons

## Capital Improvement Fund

Goodwill Industries  
TWIGS 6

## Community Cornerstone Club

Brandon & Ellie Akey  
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## Cradle Roll

In honor of: Barron Fincato  
By: Licking Memorial Hospital  
In honor of: Lincoln Gooding  
By: Licking Memorial Hospital  
In honor of: Rohan Patel  
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In honor of: Wyatt Sharp  
By: Licking Memorial Hospital  
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By: Licking Memorial Hospital

In honor of: Ty Noah Taylor  
By: Licking Memorial Hospital

In honor of: Jonah James Williams  
By: Licking Memorial Hospital

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The John & Mary Alford Foundation  
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Patricia Law  
Licking 387 Memorial Education Charity  
Licking County Sheriff's Office  
James Mitchell  
Claude Summers  
Debbie Young

## Golden Corporate Honor Roll

First Federal Savings

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In honor of: Craig B. Cairns, M.D., M.P.H.  
By: Lori Elwood  
In honor of: Robert McGaughy  
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## John Alford Fellowship

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Dr. Jack L. & Nancy G. Neely  
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# Development Spotlight – Brittany Misner

Brittany Misner consistently pursues opportunities where her talents help make the community stronger. As the former Vice President of the Licking County Chamber of Commerce and current Economic and Community Development Director for the Village of Hebron, she has a background in nonprofit leadership, communications, and economic and community development that she shares with the multiple community organizations in which she is actively involved. Due to her professional and civic connections in Licking County, Brittany was invited to join the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Development Council in 2023. She accepted the offer, viewing it as a meaningful way to support local health and wellness.

“I have always had a strong passion for community engagement, and this opportunity aligned perfectly with my values,” Brittany said. “Being part of the Development Council allows me to support LMHS in its mission to improve the health of the community.” In addition to the LMH Development Council, she currently serves as the President of Explore Licking County and is a member of the Buckeye Valley

YMCA, Ohio Economic Development Association, and the Buckeye Lake Region Chamber of Commerce Boards of Directors. Previously, Brittany served as the President of the Lakewood Board of Education.

Brittany is a member of the Development Council Community Relations Committee that is responsible for supporting and maintaining a positive community image for Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS). She finds that the Committee helps strengthen the connection between LMHS and the community and bolsters awareness of the services and programs provided. Brittany learns something new at each meeting and loves the opportunity to share that information with friends, family, fellow church members, and local residents who she interacts with on a regular basis.

As someone who works closely with residents, businesses, and local leaders, Brittany offers a unique perspective of the challenges and opportunities that area towns and villages encounter. She also understands the importance of clear communication and outreach to the individuals whom an organization serves.

She is impressed by how involved LMHS is in everyday community life, and its commitment to meeting the needs of a growing and evolving Licking County.

“I did not realize just how much LMHS does beyond the Hospital walls through supporting schools, hosting events, offering wellness programs, and being a visible, trusted presence across the county,” she said. “It is clear LMHS genuinely cares about patients, and that commitment shows in everything they do.”

Brittany also provides first-hand experience as an LMHS patient who is navigating a life-changing condition. About 5 years ago, she was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. During this difficult time in her life, she was overwhelmed by the sudden changes and uncertainties that came with the diagnosis. She recalls finding relief in the compassionate care, education, and ongoing support from LMHS physicians and staff. “Managing my type 1 diabetes is essential for me to continue being the mom, wife, and community member that I strive to be every day,” she said. “That experience has given me a deep appreciation for accessible healthcare and a personal

understanding of the importance of a strong community health system like LMHS.”

Brittany lives, works, and worships in Hebron. She is celebrating 15 years of marriage to her husband, James, and they have two daughters, Ella and Emma. She is an alumna of Central Ohio Technical College (COTC), and in her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, attending local events, and walking in the many Licking County parks. She can also be found watching her daughters play golf and volleyball and supporting any Lakewood Lancer event.



# Volunteer Spotlight - Brenda Land

**Brenda Land** is a Rootstown, Ohio native who grew up near Youngstown and relocated to Newark in 1974 when she began her career as a special needs teacher for the Newark City School District. She earned her master’s degree from The Ohio State University and became a high school counselor at Newark High School. Brenda met her late husband, Jim, in Licking County. After the loss of her husband to COVID-19 in 2021, Brenda’s daughter sincerely expressed a wish for her mother to stay busy and active, and informed Brenda of an available volunteer position with LMHS.

Brenda felt encouraged to accept the volunteer position after reflecting on her experience with Licking Memorial

Hospital (LMH) during the passing of her husband. “The Hospital was wonderful, and I could not have asked for a better experience during such a difficult time,” she said.

Brenda began volunteering at LMH in 2023. On Thursdays, she assists in Outpatient Surgery, escorting patient families to recovery rooms to see their loved ones and meet with physicians. She is pleased with her decision to become a volunteer and believes that continuing her position is accomplishing just what she had hoped for: keeping busy and active. “Volunteering is pleasant and not stressful. I do get busy, and I like that,” Brenda said.

In addition to her volunteer services, Brenda continues her active lifestyle by attending the YMCA adult strengthening and conditioning swim class three times a week. She also serves as a congregational life leader on the Board of the United Church of Granville, where she can make a difference by bringing people together through events and opportunities to connect. When Brenda is not volunteering, swimming, and planning, she watches her young grandchildren and assists with transporting them to their extracurricular activities.

Brenda’s generous personality plays a part in the enjoyment she receives from her volunteer work. “My fellow volunteers are kind and appreciative of

the help that I give, which makes me feel good,” she explains. Visitors and employees are always happy to see Brenda volunteering at the Hospital. Some have even expressed that they wish she worked there every day.



# Summer Camps Offer Fun & Education for Local Youth

## Camp Feelin’ Fine

In June, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) hosted Camp Feelin’ Fine, an annual day camp for children, ages 6 to 12, who are under a physician’s care for asthma. More than 30 children attended this year’s event at Infirmary Mound Park, south of Granville. The event included tropical-themed activities and presentations designed to help local youth learn more about asthma, manage their symptoms, and interact with others who have the condition.

Richard Baltisberger, M.D., of Licking Memorial Pediatrics – Tamarack, members of the LMH Respiratory Therapy Department, and other LMHS staff taught participants how to avoid common “triggers” of an asthma attack, such as pollen, strenuous exercise, dust,

and pet dander. The LMH Respiratory Therapy Department is staffed with state-licensed respiratory care professionals who work under the direction of a physician and assist with the diagnosis, treatment, and management of patients with pulmonary disorders.

Asthma is a condition that inflames and obstructs the airways in the lungs. Acute attacks, in which airflow is severely restricted, can be life-threatening if left untreated. Symptoms of an asthma attack include coughing, irregular or labored breathing, wheezing, frequent clearing of the throat, and chest tightness. If a child who has not previously been diagnosed with asthma exhibits these symptoms, consult a pediatrician or family physician for a complete evaluation.



## Camp Cool

On July 15, LMHS hosted Camp Cool, an annual one-day camp for youth, ages 6 to 12, that offers information and activities focused on improving mental health and mindfulness. During the event, campers learned relaxation techniques and mental health coping strategies while enjoying many fun activities and presentations.

Psychiatrist Elizabeth Yoder, D.O., and the staff of Licking Memorial Outpatient Psychiatric Services facilitated games, crafts, and educational programs designed to reduce stress and anxiety related to the uncertainties of life. Other activities included yoga, inflatables, and water games. More than 35 children attended this year’s event held at Infirmary Mound Park in Granville.





# Active•Fit & Active•Senior Events

Approximately 65 Licking County youth, ages 6 to 12, and seniors, ages 60 and older, attended the Active•Fit and Active•Senior Bowling event on June 11. The event took place at Park Lanes Bowling Center in Heath and included free bowling for a two-hour period. Attendees enjoyed healthy snacks and beverages and opportunities to win prizes.

Participation in the event counted toward the Active•Fit Program Period 3 goals. The current period began May 1. All program participants have an opportunity to complete new wellness goals by August 30 to qualify for the next incentive drawing. Since 2012, the Active•Fit Program has registered more than 14,000 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.

Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) hosted the Active•Senior Celebration on June 17, for seniors ages 60 years and up. Approximately 115 participants attended the event at the Bryn Du Mansion Field House in Granville, and enjoyed

a delicious meal featuring marinated chicken breasts, bacon-wrapped scallops, and flatiron steaks catered by LMHS Culinary Services. The attendees also participated in fun activities including Plinko, 3-In-a-Row, Can Smash, and Spinning Wheel.

Those who earned points through the Active•Senior program received raffle tickets to participate in a pick-a-prize drawing with a plethora of items such as gift cards to local businesses, an iPad, a Fitbit, and an Apple Watch. Licking Memorial Health Systems President & CEO Rob Montagnese served as the emcee for the evening.

The Active•Senior program was designed with activities that have been reviewed and approved by medical staff, physical therapists, and dietitians to ensure a well-balanced program. However, individuals should discuss their personal exercise and nutrition goals with their physician. The 2025-2026 program began May 1, 2025 and continues through April 30, 2026. 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.



## 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

Tyson Stadler  
Jamie Trick  
Ki'yaan Hureski

### Athletic Shoes

Rhyme Wagley  
Lewis Shroyer  
Ally Hrebluk

### iPad & Fitness Software

Victoria Theodore  
Camden Charles  
Reshika Gurung

### \$100 Dick's Sporting Goods Gift Card

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Norah Wells  
Gabriel Sandman  
Ben O'Rourke  
Asa Schwartz  
Trace Evans  
Ace Bohn  
Ileana Mishra  
Noelle Miller  
Corbin Smith

### \$50 Dick's Sporting Goods Gift Card

Cruze Brenning  
Asmika Khadka  
Alaina Baker  
Ryder Smith  
Jack Falstick  
Aroni Gurung  
Rian Basnet  
Kinsley Mullins  
Ameila Bartley  
Seyenna Berhane

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.

# LMHS Hosts Active•Fit Wellness Event and Family Movie Night

On June 13, families joined Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) at the LMHS Pataskala Health Campus for an evening of active play on a variety of inflatable fun areas, as well as healthy snacks and beverages. Afterward, attendees enjoyed a viewing of the Disney•Pixar animated film, *Inside Out 2*, on a 30-foot-high inflatable screen.

LMHS hosts Family Movie Night as an initiative to promote family-oriented activities. The Active•Fit Youth Wellness Program is a valuable community resource for youth, featuring guidelines designed to prioritize exercise and well-being. LMHS utilizes its resources to help Licking County children learn about healthy lifestyles, make and accomplish

goals, provide activities for fun exercise, and socialize with those in their age range.

Since its creation in 2012, the Active•Fit program has registered more than 14,000 participants who select health-related goals and track their progress at ActiveFit.org. Each period of the Active•Fit Program features exciting events and opportunities for children to be active and learn about their health. Period 1 for 2025-2026 began on September 1 and continue 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.





# MVPs

Licking Memorial Health Systems' (LMHS) 2025 MVPs were chosen for their consistent demonstration of the LMHS CARE values: **compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence.**



**Kailey Angus, B.S.N., R.N.**  
Family Practice – Granville

Kailey earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Capital University in 2020. She joined LMHS in 2021 and works as a nurse at Licking Memorial Family Practice – Granville.

A lifelong Licking County resident, Kailey lives in Newark with her fiancé, Todd, and their puppy, Millie. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, writing, spending time with her seven nieces and nephews, and walking Millie.



**Kelly Augenstein, B.S.N., R.N.**  
Surgery

Kelly is a lifelong resident of Licking County and a Newark High School graduate. She earned her nursing degree from Central Ohio Technical College (COTC) and her Bachelor of

Science in Nursing degree from Ohio University. She joined LMHS in 2011 as a nurse on 5-South (now 5-East) and moved to Outpatient Surgery and Pre-admission Testing in 2012. Kelly and her husband, Mikey, have three children; Logan, Colt, and Landrie. She enjoys taking walks, reading, spending time with family, and cheering for her kids at their sporting events.



**Brooke Barron**  
Patient Experience

Brooke joined LMHS in 2019 as a Patient Care Assistant Transporter. She focuses on improving the overall experience by addressing concerns, resolving issues, and advocating for patient needs during their Hospital stay. She gathers feedback from patients and families that is used to further identify opportunities for improvement. Brooke enjoys hiking and exploring various national parks with her mom, cooking, traveling, watching Ohio State football, physical fitness, weight training, and spending time with family and her husband, Steven.



**Dan Blevins**  
Plant Operations

Dan Blevins joined LMHS in 2021 and works as an engineer assistant in Plant Operations. Dan helps to repair, maintain, and operate HVAC systems and assists with light repairs and maintenance duties in the Hospital.



**Roy R. Brown Jr., M.D.**  
Urology

Dr. Brown joined Licking Memorial Urology in October 2021. He earned his medical degree at the University of Minnesota Medical School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and completed a general surgery and urology residency at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Virginia. He is board certified in urology. Dr. Brown is a member of American Medical Association, American Urological Association, American Society of Clinical Urologists, National Medical Association, American Board of Urology, American College of Surgeons and Ohio Urological Society.



**Chuck Buerkle**  
Culinary Specialist

Chuck is a Senior Culinary Specialist and is most often seen working behind the counter at Main Street Coffee. He has served LMHS for the past 25 years, joining the organization in 2000. He is a member and youth leader at Eastpointe Christian Church in Blacklick, and enjoys spending time with his family, playing video games, cooking, and playing basketball. He and his wife, Sarah, live in Pataskala and have three children; Scott, Lizzie, and Josh.



**Laney Carpenter, B.S.N., R.N.**  
Labor & Delivery

Laney is a graduate of Newark Catholic High School. She earned her nursing degree from COTC and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Ohio University. She began her career at LMHS in 2014 and is now a clinical nursing supervisor in the Labor & Delivery Department. Laney resides in Utica with her husband, Ben, and their three children, Briggs, Reid, and Gus. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, home improvement, and tending her flower beds.



**Molly DaRif**  
Rehabilitation Services

Molly began her career as an occupational therapist at LMHS in 2018. She received a bachelor's degree from Marietta College and a Master of Occupational Therapy degree from Tennessee State University. She is a member of the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy and Pi Theta Epsilon. Molly lives in Newark with her husband, Grant, and children, Isla and Bennett. She enjoys spending time with her family, gardening, and taking walks.



**Melissa Dennis**  
Laboratory

Melissa began her career in the Licking Memorial Laboratory Department in 2015 as a Medical Laboratory Technician. She received a Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Science from Muskingum University. She was promoted to Hematology Supervisor in 2022 and became the Core Laboratory Supervisor in 2024. Melissa has two children, Max and May. She currently serves as the secretary for the Tri-Valley Band Boosters, and enjoys cooking, reading, and riding her bicycle.



**Travis Drumm**  
Safety & Security

A lifelong resident of Licking County, Travis was born at Licking Memorial Hospital, is a graduate of Heath High School, and became a Safety Specialist for LMHS in 2022. He currently lives in Licking Valley with his wife, Fallon, and children, Emersyn, Ruby, and Miles. Travis enjoys spending time with his family, hunting, and golfing.



**Cheryl Durst**  
Rehabilitation Services

Cheryl has been serving LMHS as a physical therapist since 2007. She received a bachelor's degree from Mount Vernon Nazarene University and a master's degree from The Ohio State University. She was born in Ravenna, Ohio, and now resides in Granville with her husband, Matt, and children, Hudson, Henry, and Hunter. Cheryl enjoys working out, running, reading, and camping with her family.



**Shelley A. Gittens, M.D.**  
Pediatrics – East

Shelley A. Gittens, M.D., joined Licking Memorial Pediatrics in August 2000. She received her Medical Degree from Wright State University School of Medicine in Dayton, Ohio and completed a pediatric residency at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, Connecticut. Dr. Gittens and her husband, Richard Collins, have three children, Dellon, Richelle, and James. Dr. Gittens served as a Captain in the Ohio National Guard from 2014 to 2020. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking, traveling, decorating, and walking.



**Colleen Griffith**  
Development

Joining LMHS in 2022, Colleen first served as a Physician Center Manager. She is certified as a Medical Office Manager by the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management. In 2024, Colleen transferred to the Development Department where she now serves as an Events Specialist. She and her husband, Buck, have two sons, Jacob and Ty, and a granddaughter, Cameron.



**Julie Hamilton**  
Family Practice – East

Julie has served LMHS for approximately 18 years as a physician center clerk. She has completed training and certification for medical coding, emergency response, State-tested Nursing Assistant (STNA), and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Julie and her husband, David, have been married for almost 44 years and reside in Knox County. They have three children and ten grandchildren. She is a member of the Rocky Fork Church of Christ and enjoys spending time with her grandchildren, gardening, traveling, and working on her farm.



**Erica Hanlon**  
Environmental Services

A lifelong resident of Licking County, Erica joined LMHS in 2007. As an Environmental Services Assistant, she ensures that LMHS facilities are hygienic, clean, safe, and in good condition to create an effective healing and working environment. Erica is a graduate of Utica High School and enjoys mowing, helping her neighbors, and spending time with her dog, Rita.



**Michael Harper, L.P.N.**  
Urgent Care

Michael has cared for patients at the Licking Memorial Hospital Urgent Care – Downtown since 2018. He is a graduate of Tri-Valley High School and Mid-East Career and Technical College. He served in the United States Army as part of the Heavy Mechanized Infantry based in Erlangen, Germany. Michael and his wife, Angie, have four children, Mason, Maelynn, Mavrik, and Mallory. He enjoys riding bikes and UTVs with his children, target shooting, and bear hunting.



**Barry Harter**  
Culinary Services

Barry has served LMHS as a Culinary Services Assistant since 2022. In 1984, he graduated from Tyler County High School in Middlebourne, West Virginia, and then attended West Virginia Northern Community College in New Martinsville, West Virginia. Barry and his wife, Sandy, live in Newark and have two sons, Christopher and Dylan, and two daughters, Nikki and Ashley. He is a member of the West End Church of Christ, and enjoys reading and collecting comic books, and is a co-founder of JediCon WV.



**Kaylee Heagren**  
Pharmacy

Kaylee began her career at LMHS as a Patient Care Assistant on 5-East in 2021. In 2023, she transferred to the Pharmacy where she currently serves as a Certified Pharmacy Technician. Kaylee graduated from Career & Technology Education Centers (C-TEC) of Licking County in 2022 with the certifications of Point of Care Technician, EKG Technician, Phlebotomist, and Pharmacy Technician. A lifelong resident of Newark, Kaylee enjoys spending time with her family, particularly her seven younger siblings.



**Matthew Hennerfeind**  
Information Systems

Matthew Hennerfeind joined LMHS in 2016 as a Pharmacy Technician, and transitioned to Clinical Application Analyst in 2018. He is the primary analyst for the Epic Willow application, supports Meditech, and provides backup support across several critical Epic modules. He has been a resident of Licking County for over 26 years, and is a graduate of Newark Catholic High School. Matthew and his wife have two children, Logan and Lucy, and a Boston terrier, Willow. He enjoys fishing, building electronic projects, and supporting Logan in cross country and track.





**Stacey Hibbert**  
Coding

Stacey is a lifelong resident of Licking County and currently resides in Thornville with her husband, Chris. In 1994, she earned her associate degree from COTC. She completed her Certified Professional Coder (CPC) certification in 2017, and Dermatology Specialty Coder (CPCD) certification in 2021 from American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC). She enjoys showing her two purebred horses, Emmitt, and Simon, obedience training her dog, Petra, gardening, and watching hockey.



**Kellie Hilton**  
Registration

Kellie joined LMHS in 2021 and currently serves as a registration team lead. She earned her associate degree from COTC in 2014. Kellie lived in Licking County for 15 years before relocating to Westerville with her significant other, Cory. She enjoys music, photography, and spending time with family and friends.



**Pamela Johnson, B.S.N., R.N.**  
Inpatient Rehabilitation

Originally from Scranton, Pennsylvania, Pamela has been a resident of Licking County for 45 years. She began her career at Licking Memorial Health Systems in 2005 after earning her associate degree from COTC, later completing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Ohio University in 2019. She lives in Heath and has three children, Paul, Megan, and Jennifer. She enjoys gardening, long walks in metro parks, vacationing with her mother and sisters, and spending quality time with her six grandchildren.



**Tiffany Johnson, B.S.N., R.N.**  
Outpatient Psychiatric Services

Tiffany, a lifelong resident of Licking County, received her associate degree from COTC in 2017, and Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Capella University in 2021. She lives in Newark with her significant other, Shane, and enjoys traveling, watching her son, Trei, play college football at Murray State University, and attending sports outings.



**Jen McBurrows, R.N.**  
Critical Care Unit

Jen began her career at LMHS in 2021 after earning her associate degree in Nursing from COTC. She currently works as a CCU charge nurse and assists with coordinating assignments and patient care of the unit. She lives in Newark with her husband, Tony, and their two daughters, Merrin and Maggie. Jen's hobbies include furniture restoration, gardening, and karaoke.



**Dana Minor, B.S.N., R.N., O.C.N.**  
Oncology/Hematology

Dana earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in 2007 after graduating Summa Cum Laude from the University of Akron. She began her nursing career working in the Emergency Department at Akron Children's Hospital and as a nurse for the local school district. Dana joined LMHS in 2019 as a nurse on 4-East and transferred to Oncology in 2021. She is a certified oncology nurse with additional certification in chemotherapy and immunotherapy. Dana enjoys completing house renovations, hiking, traveling, and photography.



**Sarah Morgan**  
Endoscopy and GI Lab

Sarah has lived in Licking County for 23 years since relocating from Asheville, North Carolina, and currently resides in Utica. She joined LMHS in 2014 and now serves as a scrub technician, assisting with endoscopy procedures. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outdoors with her two children, Serenity and Boone.



**Lea Ann Morris, APRN-CNP**  
Licking Memorial Hospitalists

Lea Ann has been at LMHS since 2021 working as a Nurse Practitioner. She received her diploma in nursing in 1984 from The Christ Hospital, her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in 2004 from Indiana Wesleyan University, and her Master of Science in Nursing degree in 2011 from Vanderbilt University. Lea Ann lives in Blacklick with her husband, Shawn. She has one daughter, Sarah, and three grandchildren, Bryson, Emmerson, and Ava Mae. In Lea Ann's free time, she enjoys crocheting, sewing, and reading.



**Leslie Neubauer**  
Fiscal Services

Leslie began her career at LMHS as a Payroll Specialist in 2023. She graduated from Belmont College with her associate degree in 2015 and will be graduating from Franklin University with her bachelors degree in August 2025. She resides in Newark with her husband, Alec, her three dogs, Bailey, Bolo, and Timmy, and her two cats, Binx and Bobo. Leslie volunteers at the Licking County Humane Society in her spare time, and enjoys antiquing, reading, sewing, and cross-stitching.



**Suba Pathmanathan, M.D.**  
Internal Medicine

Suba Pathmanathan, M.D., joined Licking Memorial Internal Medicine in July 2021. She earned her Medical Degree from Madras Medical College in Tamil Nadu, India, and completed an internal medicine residency at McLaren Flint Hospital, affiliated with Michigan State University, in Flint, Michigan. Dr. Pathmanathan lives in New Albany with her husband and two children. She is a member of the Licking Memorial Caduceus Society. In her free time, she enjoys playing badminton, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.



**Jeffrey Pitts**  
Pharmacy

Jeffrey began his career at LMHS in 2021 as a Clinical Pharmacist. He received his bachelor's degree from Northeastern University in 2015 and Doctor of Pharmacy degree from The Ohio State University in 2019. Jeffrey is also the Director of the Pharmacy Residency Program. In his free time, he spends time with his wife, Madeline, and his two dogs, Louise and Hallie. He enjoys hockey, golf, and traveling with his wife.



**Haley Reynolds**  
4-West

Haley began her career at LMHS in 2023 and now serves as a lead technician on 4-West. She attended a pre-nursing program at the Fairfield Career Center. She and her husband, Mason, live in Newark. She enjoys spending time with her friends and family, being outside, and walking her dog.



**Jamie Rice, B.S.N., R.N.**  
Emergency Department

Jamie began her career as a Registered Nurse (RN) at LMHS in 2022. She has been an RN since 2013, received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in 2019 from Ohio University, and is currently enrolled at Chamberlain University working on her masters degree. Jamie lives in Cambridge with her husband, Scott, and their children, River, Kaytee, Jayden, and Darian. She enjoys traveling with her family, outdoor activities with friends and family, and reading.



**Lindsey Rice**  
Dermatology - Pataskala

Lindsey has been a Medical Assistant for Licking Memorial Dermatology since 2020. She graduated from Licking Valley and C-TEC, where she obtained her Medical Assistant license in 2014. She is a lifelong resident of Licking County, living in Newark with her husband, Travis. In her free time, Lindsey enjoys reading, cooking, working out, boating, and vacationing.



**Olivia Rodeniser**  
Emergency Department

Olivia began her career at LMHS in 2021 as a Patient Care Assistant and was recently promoted to Lead PCA. She graduated from Utica High School and C-TEC in 2020. She currently lives in Zanesville with her fiancé, Brayden, and their two-year-old daughter, Paisley. Olivia enjoys spending time with friends and family, being outdoors, and watching football.



**Tracy Settles, R.T.(R)(M)**  
Radiology

Tracy is a lifelong resident of Licking County. She began her employment with LMHS in 2016 as a Radiographer in the Radiology Department and transferred to Mammography as an Imaging Specialist in 2022. She earned her associate degree in Radiology from COTC in 2016 and received her mammography license in 2017. In 2019, Tracy was honored as the COTC Technologist of the Year for Licking Memorial Hospital. She enjoys beach vacations with her husband, Charlie, and spending time with her dogs, Lucy and Maci.



**Stephanie Tomlinson**  
Case Management

Stephanie is originally from North Carolina and currently resides in Newark. She graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Philosophy. She also earned her Master of Social Work degree from The Ohio State University. She currently works in Case Management as a Social Worker and has been employed by LMHS since October 1998. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, landscaping, reading, and weightlifting.



**Cheryl West**  
Sterile Processing

Cheryl West is originally from Columbus and currently resides in Thornville. She graduated from Pickerington High School in 1984. She is a Certified Sterile Processing Technician for the Surgery Department and has been employed by LMHS since August 2004. Cheryl enjoys fishing and spending time with her family, which includes her husband, Harold, and their three children; Crystal, Chuck, and Alicia. She also enjoys going on walks, hiking, and making handwoven blankets.



**Gina Wilson**  
Cardiology and Critical Care

Gina has worked for LMHS since 2013, where she serves as an administrative assistant for Cardiology and Critical Care. Gina and her husband, Adam, have two adult children and two granddaughters. She enjoys gardening, spending time with her family, and beekeeping with her husband.



**Janice Wingate**  
Hospital Billing

Janice began her career at LMHS in 2016 in Patient Accounting. Born in California, she has lived in Newark for 31 years with her husband of 30 years, Stephen. Together, they have four children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Janice enjoys embroidering, sewing, and crafting.





## Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street  
Newark, Ohio 43055

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# Community Events

### Walk with a Doc

Saturday, October 18, 9:00 a.m.  
Karr Park  
621 Broad Street SW, Pataskala

Please join Richard A. Baltisberger, D.O., of Licking Memorial Pediatrics – Tamarack, as he leads a discussion and answers general questions about Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Saturday, November 1, 9:00 a.m.  
C-TEC  
150 Price Road, Newark

Please join Karen L. Smith-Salone, M.D., of Licking Memorial Gynecology, as she leads a discussion and answers general questions about Gynecological Cancer Awareness and Screening.

Saturday, December 6, 9:00 a.m.  
Johnstown-Monroe Middle School  
401 South Oregon Street, Johnstown

Please join Phillip G. Savage, D.O., of Licking Memorial Hospitalist, as he leads a discussion and answers general questions about Heart Failure.

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.

### 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](http://LMHealth.org) or call (220) 564-3388.

### Diabetes Self-management Education and Support

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](http://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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