

# foundation focus

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**UPMC** LIFE  
CHANGING  
MEDICINE

**SUSQUEHANNA**  
HEALTH FOUNDATION



## A LETTER FROM

# Don Owrey

I had just started to find my footing at my new job when I first heard the phrase “novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.”

My role as chief operating officer for UPMC in the Northcentral region and president of UPMC Williamsport officially kicked off on September 1, 2019 — about six months before the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in the state of Pennsylvania. I greeted 2020 with a new sense that I was beginning to find my way, gaining a better understanding of the community, its people, and the impact of our health system across our region. To say that the months that soon followed were unlike anything I’ve ever experienced would be an understatement.

If there’s one thing I learned during those first few months of the pandemic, and also in the time since, it’s that it truly takes a community to persevere when things seem bleak. Throughout this time, I’ve watched our incredible team of health care heroes come together to meet the incredible challenges we were forced to face.

When I say heroes, it extends beyond our exceptional doctors, nurses, and other health care practitioners. It includes each of the 6,000+ staff members who have worked tirelessly to keep our hospitals, medical offices, and outpatient facilities safe for our patients and for one another. The teamwork and willingness to serve among our entire workforce have been nothing short of remarkable. I have witnessed staff members step out of former roles and step into new ones to meet a new and unforeseen need. When one of our hospitals has faced a surge in COVID-related volume, we’ve been able to reassign and redeploy resources from another as one coordinated unit. In addition, people who haven’t historically worked in patient-facing roles have volunteered to sit with patients (with proper safety measures in place, of course) to ensure their safety.

Those are just a few of the ways that we’re leaning into each other. Our entire staff has been pushed beyond our comfort zones, working long and grueling hours without missing a beat. To keep morale high, we’ve

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made it clear to our staff that we're all in this together. We let them know that it's okay to step back or take a break when needed. Without proper self-care, you can't administer high-quality care to someone else.

To our incredible team, I want you to know that we see you, we acknowledge your selfless work, and we thank you for everything you've done.

It truly takes a community.

And speaking of community, I can't say enough good things about the people in our own backyard. As our team was handling record-high patient volumes, you never stopped applauding our efforts. When our energy and resolve felt low, you replenished them with an outpouring of support that continues to this day.

To the people of our region, I want you to know that we are forever thankful for the way you've embraced our team.

The good news is that things are getting better, and hope is on the horizon with vaccines and treatments showing positive returns. However, we must continue practicing discipline and vigilance around good hygiene, wearing masks, and social distancing.

Ensuring our hospitals and outpatient facilities remain safe is a top priority, so there's no reason to delay care if and when you need us. Our team members are committed to following best practice protocols for personal protective equipment to shield themselves, our patients, and our community from harm.

I often marvel at the quality and sophistication of the care UPMC providers offer in the region. Although we're not located in a major metropolitan area, our hospitals are delivering incredibly complex care, with excellent outcomes, ensuring that patients don't have to leave the area for their health care needs. Through our partnership with UPMC, we are bringing the benefits of an academic medical center to the doorsteps of our community.

I sometimes think about my humble beginnings in health care while I was a college student working in the laundry department at my local hospital. Although my day consisted primarily of washing, drying, folding, and delivering clean sheets, blankets, towels, and other laundry, I had the profound sense that I was contributing to something more. My work mattered because it allowed those who were performing a

lifesaving surgery, changing the dressing of a patient, or taking an X-ray to do their work. My role was different but equally necessary.

I'm proud to say that I still feel that sense of accomplishment today. And with a donation to the *Susquehanna Strong* Comprehensive Campaign, you can too.

*Susquehanna Strong* will create greater access to state-of-the-art equipment and world-class services. We are expanding and renovating the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport, a project that will be completed this spring. Our physical medicine and rehabilitation renovation and expansion project kicks off later this summer, and a continued focus on growing a new Clinical Excellence Endowment is a strategic priority for training and continuing education.

In one way or another, we all have an opportunity to profoundly impact the people we call patients, neighbors, family, and friends.

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# Staring Down COVID-19

**W**hen you're in the middle of a pandemic that has ravaged the globe, it's hard to remain committed to an "everything happens for a reason" philosophy.

For instance, if everything happens for a reason, how could **Jason Dominick** — a 41-year-old, healthy, active, athletic man — find himself in a hospital bed, gasping for air and battling COVID-19? And why did Jason end up receiving treatment at UPMC Wellsboro — a community hospital — when his life was on the line?

Jason maintains that the answer to both of those questions is "it was just meant to be."

## Preparing for the Worst

Months before Jason arrived at UPMC Wellsboro, **Susan Duchman**, chief nursing officer for UPMC in the Northcentral region, found herself in a series of meetings to plan for the arrival of COVID-19. As teams of leaders worked quickly to develop strategies that would prepare UPMC facilities in the region for what could become a significant health crisis, Susan and her colleagues feared the worst.

"We were planning for what we anticipated — and praying and hoping we weren't actually going to see it," she says. "From a planning perspective, it was about capacity. We





pulled out our disaster plans and considered if they would apply to COVID. The answer was yes — and no.”

All UPMC staff in the Northcentral region receive extensive disaster response training on an annual basis. But the difference between COVID-19 and incidents such as multiple-vehicle crashes or widespread fires is that those events usually are short-lived and don’t require a sustained response.

COVID-19 was not — and would.

UPMC leaders in the Northcentral region knew they needed to revamp their staffing and patient care models to ensure

they would have the coverage they would need throughout the health system to accommodate the surges in patient volumes, the very sick patients, and the many other challenges COVID-19 could bring.

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“ I owe a lot to my doctors and the nursing staff. Beyond the medicine, the team’s compassion was what made my experience so special. ”

— Jason Dominick

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## A Thanksgiving to Remember

Both teachers, Jason and his wife, **Marnie**, are no strangers to the types of germs that tend to permeate school classrooms. But the virus that Marnie brought home around Thanksgiving was no run-of-the-mill cold. It was COVID-19.

“My entire family [Marnie; son **Karson** (15); daughter **Claire** (12); and son **Brooks** (8)] got COVID-19,” Jason says. “I was at home working remotely, but my wife was still at school, and we think I caught it by her bringing it home. The first week, I felt the typical flu-like symptoms, but I still cooked Thanksgiving dinner.”

What Jason soon began to experience, however, was much worse than a seasonal flu.

The basketball coach and longtime special education teacher at North Penn-Mansfield High School says he struggled so much to breathe that his family decided he needed emergency care. While in the emergency department at UPMC Wellsboro, he received a thorough examination and fluids to treat his dehydration before staff sent him home to recover.

That night, Jason’s symptoms worsened. COVID-19-related pneumonia set in. The next morning, he returned to the hospital, where he would spend the following week — and where doctors would tell Marnie they weren’t sure if her husband would live.

## Creative Staffing to Meet Patient Needs

While Jason was spending his Thanksgiving break battling the virus, he was far from the only one. In fact, **Matt Romania**, director of nursing at UPMC Wellsboro, says that was the time frame when COVID-19-related cases began to appear in the Northcentral region.

“It was around March 2020 when we started to hear about New York City and the horror that was happening there, but we had not seen anything like that locally,” he says. “For us, the biggest influx of COVID-19 patients began a couple of weeks before Thanksgiving and continued all the way through the first of the year. There were points where more than 90% of our patients had COVID-19.”

Providers are not immune to the virus, and soon Matt and his team were dealing with community spread where providers were also getting sick. That meant a constant shuffling of work schedules, extra hours, long nights, and leadership taking on frontline roles to help fill gaps created by sick health care workers.



“We’re a small hospital,” Matt says. “We had to look to see how we could make the experience the best for the patients while still being safe. I had people from the front offices on the nursing floors answering call bells and just being there for patients.”

In addition to creative staffing within each hospital, all of UPMC’s facilities in the Northcentral region also benefited from careful coordination among the health system’s other facilities and resources within the region.

“Twice each day, leaders and representatives from each of our UPMC facilities and departments in the Northcentral region had a call to plan for the next 12 hours,” Susan says. “The synergy created during those calls was a key factor in our success. Our hospitals shifted staffing and supplies at a moment’s notice across facilities to ensure both patient and employee needs were met.”

## State-of-the-Art, Compassionate Care

Some people might underestimate the capability of a hospital in a rural area to handle a health crisis that struck with the pace and magnitude that COVID-19 did. But, based on the care he received from the team at UPMC Wellsboro, Jason is not among them.

“The treatment I received was outstanding,” he says. “A former basketball player of mine works in a big-city hospital in Atlanta, and everything she recommended for us to try, my hospital was already doing. The care and treatment that I received — I don’t think I could get that type of care anywhere else. I felt like the entire hospital was there to help me get through this.”

**Christopher Domarew, MD; Jill Burns, MD; and Walter Laibinis, DO**, were the physicians who treated Jason during his stay, using monoclonal antibodies to stave off the effects of the virus on his body.





"I owe a lot to my doctors and the nursing staff," Jason says. "Beyond the medicine, the team's compassion was what made my experience so special. The president of the facility, **Janie Hilfiger**, even checked in on me one day, and that was really touching. That just doesn't happen everywhere."

### Coping with the Emotional Side of COVID-19

By now, the physical symptoms of COVID-19 — including shortness of breath, fever, sore throat, dry cough, body aches, and many others — are common knowledge for most people.

What are not as well known are the mental and emotional effects the virus can cause for patients and the staff who care for them.

Initially during Jason's hospital stay, the self-proclaimed family man couldn't receive visits from his wife or children. Exercising an abundance of caution and safety, leaders at UPMC in the Northcentral region at first established a policy that did not allow patients to have support visitors. Then, after careful consideration, hospital leaders amended the policy to offer more flexibility while continuing to maintain stringent safety protocols.

"That was the hardest part, because you couldn't be around anyone," he says. "Starting about the third or fourth day, the staff would allow my wife to come in for 10 minutes. It was tough to be away from my family, but the nurses and doctors went above and beyond to try to make me feel comfortable."

Susan Duchman acknowledged the high level of stress among staff who have stared down the COVID-19 virus for more than a year.

"The emotional toll of having to take care of so many COVID patients struggling to breathe and them not having visitors has been very hard for our staff," she says. "I hear all the time on TV, 'My loved one died alone.' No one in our region died alone. Our nurses were dedicated to being there, holding hands and supporting the patients."

To help address feelings of stress and despair among staff, UPMC's behavioral health and crisis intervention teams offer care and support to those who need it. Staff can take part in faith-based services provided by a chaplain. There are also "recharge rooms" for those in need of a few minutes of solace, quiet music, or prayer.

“We’re all essential workers, and we all play a role. We saw lots of people do their part to positively impact this pandemic — and we needed everybody. We needed truck drivers to get our supplies. We needed businesses to bring in coffee. We had all these pictures and notes come in from the community, and they were hanging all over the walls as a thank-you. Our team truly stepped up like never before.”

— Susan Duchman  
Chief Nursing Officer for UPMC in the Northcentral region

## Redefining What it Means to be an Essential Worker

Matt Romania says he always knew his team would get through the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Even before COVID, I felt that the people who worked here were absolutely amazing,” Matt says. “When the chips are down, we all work together. I’ve never felt hopeless. I’ve always just felt that I want people to stop suffering, and I want our community to come out of this.”

Both Matt and Susan are thankful for the way the team at UPMC and those from the community have rallied together for the greater good.

“We’re all essential workers, and we all play a role,” Susan says. “We saw lots of people do their part to positively impact this pandemic — and we needed everybody. We needed truck drivers to get our supplies. We needed businesses to bring in coffee. We had all these pictures and notes come in from the community, and they were hanging all over the walls as a thank-you. Our team truly stepped up like never before.”

## A Changed Perspective

On the other side of the patient/provider relationship, Jason realizes he might not be alive today if it weren’t for the outstanding treatment and care he received from the UPMC Wellsboro staff and the support of his family and friends.

“An experience like this makes you really appreciate life,” Jason says. “It changes your perspective on everything and makes you appreciate other people. We take so much for granted — that’s a cliché, but it’s the truth. It just makes me appreciate my family and everybody so much more.”





A note to our donors: If your name has been omitted or misprinted, please notify us and accept our sincere apology.

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## ESSENCE OF YOU: A Holistic Approach to Healing

*Essence of You*, a new partnership among the Paternostro Cancer Foundation, Susquehanna Health Foundation, and the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport, is hosting a series of programs designed to give persons receiving cancer treatment holistic opportunities for self-care within a supportive and caring environment.

“The *Essence of You* program comes from a place of deep love and completes the circle of care that our Foundation has shaped through our four cancer programs,” says **Krista Bower**, chairman and founder of the Paternostro Cancer Foundation. “We are excited to see how the community embraces this effort.”

Local experts including makeup artists, massage therapists, registered

dietitians, and yoga instructors will offer the programs virtually every other month on Tuesdays at 2 p.m. using Microsoft Teams.

“UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport is grateful for the six-year partnership with the Paternostro Cancer Foundation,” says **Michelle Gaida**, director of cancer services. “The ongoing support from our community, both financial and programmatic, creates a high-quality, healing environment and serves our patients’ emotional, social, and physical needs outside of treatment.”

Patient **Anne Holladay** of Lock Haven says she appreciated spending time in community with other cancer patients in the first session.

“Cancer can steal your joy,” she says. “*Essence of You* is designed to bring

joy and improve the new you with cancer. This program took me to a happy place.”

Patients aren’t the only ones who say they’re benefiting from the programs. Those presenting the content say their lives are being touched by the experience as well.

“Participating in this program is an honor,” says presenter **Maria Phillips** from Pimp Salon. “Being able to share my expertise and knowledge to help such strong and courageous women feel and look their best is a reminder of why I love what I do.”

The partnership extends its thanks to those who have already presented, including Maria, **Rikki Ferrar** from Rikki Ferrar Makeup Artist, and **Carnie Datres** from Kitchen Repose.

## You Can Make A Difference

UPMC in the Northcentral region is taking the battle against cancer to the next level, building on our mission of providing world-class care close to home for our patients. At UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, we're giving patients increased access to renowned cancer specialists, cutting-edge research in immunotherapy, more than 400 leading-edge clinical trials, and the most advanced technology for cancer detection and treatment.

If you are interested in supporting the recent Cancer Center expansion locally or the Center's ongoing patient and equipment needs, please contact Susquehanna Health Foundation at 570-320-7460. You can also make a gift online today at [UPMCSusquehanna.org/donate](http://UPMCSusquehanna.org/donate) or use the enclosed envelope.

### Remaining 2021 Dates and Topics:

#### May 11

Styling and Fashion with **Alicia Boyer** from Arrow & Thread and **Jennifer Engel Thompson** from Jennifer Engel Designs

#### July 13

Using Art for Healing with **Mallory Scoppa Gardner** from Art with Mallory

#### September 14

Yoga and Meditation with **Beth Myers** from the Eastern Lycoming YMCA

#### November 9

Massage Therapy with Solley Chiropractic

To participate in the program, please contact **Laurie King**, social worker/patient navigator at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport at 570-320-7877.

Carnie Datres of Kitchen Repose



Alicia Boyer of Arrow & Thread

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## YOUNG PHILANTHROPIST

While COVID-19 has rained on a lot of our parades, it didn't dampen the spirits of 11-year-old **Lukas Easton**. Last May, Lukas wanted to help others going through cancer treatment in honor of his Uncle **William Simpson**. Lukas challenged his family and friends to shoot baskets, and for every shot made he would donate \$1. His \$100-donation will help local patients at the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport. Kids, with their big hearts and determination, show us how they can make a difference in our world if given a chance. Thank you, Lukas, for your generous spirit!

Bold and italicized listing = new donor or new to giving level

\*deceased donor

**SUSQUEHANNA**  
HEALTH FOUNDATION



# UPMC Williamsport Vying for

**M**edical professionals refer to “the golden hour” as the vital moments following a traumatic injury in which surgical intervention stands the highest chance of preventing death.

But the thing about the golden hour is that it doesn’t necessarily have 60 minutes. That’s why time is of the essence — an expression that’s never truer than when an ambulance carrying a trauma patient is enroute to a hospital.

Search online for a map of facilities in Pennsylvania that are accredited to provide specialized medical services and resources to patients with life-threatening injuries, and you’ll find more than 40 across the state.

Currently, none of those facilities are in Lycoming County. But that might not be the case for long, as UPMC Williamsport is seeking a Level II trauma designation, a process that began about four years ago.

“[The Williamsport area] is the only place that’s not totally covered, so that’s our mission,” says **Ronen Elefant, MD**, who heads the acute care program at UPMC Williamsport. “Even though there are trauma centers an hour away, most people want to stay local. If a loved one is in the hospital, they don’t want to have to travel back and forth to see them.”

Trauma systems are considered rural when geography, weather, distance, or resources are capable of causing delays in optimal patient care.



# Level II Trauma Center Status

While the communities in and around Williamsport may lack the populations of larger cities, injuries suffered by area residents are often high-acuity in nature and require specialized trauma care. In addition, the region's remote location and rugged terrain can make getting patients the care they need immediately following traumatic injury even more difficult.

"This rural area is especially challenging for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and trauma," says **Starlett Bixby**, acute care program manager at UPMC Williamsport. "There are many areas around us that are so remote that you can only get there by ATV or pickup truck. Trying to meet that golden hour is what we live by, but it might take a long time just to get to the patient."

The organization responsible for accrediting applicant hospitals is the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation (PTSF), a non-profit corporation that has established four different trauma-level designations.

PTSF has developed specific criteria for what each level trauma center is required to provide its patients.

“We want people to have a great experience. Every single person on this team treats every patient that they come in contact with as if it's their own family.”

— **Ronen Elefant, MD**  
Head of the Acute Care Program at UPMC Williamsport



Achieving a Level II designation, which is what UPMC Williamsport staff hope to receive, would certify that the hospital is equipped to offer initial definitive trauma care, no matter how severe a patient's injury might be.

Other elements of Level II trauma centers include 24-hour immediate coverage by general surgeons along with coverage for various specialties such as neurosurgery and critical care, a continuing education program to ensure staff remain well-informed on the latest trauma techniques, and the incorporation of a comprehensive quality assessment program.

But a trauma patient's outcome depends on more than just hospital care. Sometimes what takes place at the incident scene makes all the difference.

"We're very lucky because we have a hospital-owned EMS agency that's dedicated to this hospital and this program," Starlett says. "That helps to add to the constancy of care that you need to build a brand-new program."

At UPMC Williamsport, the most common traumatic injuries involve falls (especially elderly individuals), motor vehicle accidents, shootings, and stabbings. If the hospital receives a Level II trauma center designation, these patients could soon receive their lifesaving care close to home.

The new trauma center is expected to raise standards throughout the hospital as the trauma service follows patients throughout their time at UPMC Williamsport, from admission through discharge.

Thus far, Dr. Elefant, Starlett, and team have had two consultative visits from PTSF representatives for what Starlett calls practice run-throughs, exercises intended to find areas that require additional development before the final survey.

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“The special thing about what we do in trauma is that we get to try to help people on their worst day. Making a real difference in the lives of our patients is what it's all about.”

— **Starlett Bixby**  
Acute Care Program Manager at UPMC Williamsport

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Besides Dr. Elefant and Starlett, the core team at UPMC Williamsport caring for patients with traumatic injuries consists of six physician assistants and one nurse practitioner. Dr. Elefant says he holds each to the highest standards and still learns from the team daily.

"We strive to do our best every day," Dr. Elefant says. "We want people to have a great experience. Every single person on this team treats every patient that they come in contact with as if it's their own family."

For Dr. Elefant, who says he's always gravitated toward the old-school, jack-of-all-trades nature of general surgery, what makes trauma surgery so satisfying is that the work is so tangible.

"Somebody comes in with a problem that you can fix with your hands, and within a couple hours or days, they just get better," he says.

After years of building its trauma program from the ground up, UPMC Williamsport's official survey for Level II trauma center designation will occur in June.

The project has been a labor of love for Starlett, a 30-year trauma care veteran, who spent the better part of that time in the back of a helicopter on critical care flights.

"The special thing about what we do in trauma is that we get to try to help people on their worst day," she says. "Making a real difference in the lives of our patients is what it's all about."





## Thankful to be Alive Following Massive Accident

When **Bianca Armbruster** loaded her car on Wednesday, December 16, 2020, she was bound for Nebraska with intentions of surprising her family for the holidays. Instead, she ended up in the UPMC Williamsport Emergency Department fighting for her life.

**Ronen Elefant, MD**, medical director, acute care services, believes Bianca's experience is a textbook example of what a soon-to-be Level II trauma center at UPMC Williamsport can do in the most critical of cases.

Bianca was traveling on Interstate 80 when road conditions began to deteriorate during a storm that eventually dumped 15 inches of snow on northcentral Pennsylvania. Her car was one of 66 vehicles in a massive pile-up.

"It was the most chaotic accident I've ever witnessed," says **Joe Hanstine**, paramedic, Susquehanna Regional EMS. "Tractor-trailers were thrown around like kids' toys."

Despite the carnage in front of them, regional first responders, including Joe, worked without hesitation. They worked to free and stabilize Bianca, whose car had been pinned upside down against and under other vehicles.

Her injuries were traumatic and numerous, among them a broken knee, two breaks in one arm as well as a broken elbow and wrist in the other, broken ribs, and a collapsed lung. With snow continuing to fall and freezing temperatures complicating rescue efforts, Bianca and her rescuers were at risk of hypothermia.

After six hours of heroic effort, they finally freed Bianca from her vehicle and transported her to UPMC Williamsport, where she received care from Dr. Elefant and underwent hours of surgery with orthopaedic surgeon **Rena Stewart, MD**, who specializes in traumatic injuries, before going to the ICU.

"I don't remember anything at all from that day, and I only know what others have shared with me," Bianca says. "I've been working to piece it together, and it's crazy to hear what is shared with me and to think that I made it out. When I first met Joe and he told me his story, I cried. It's been so emotional to hear."

Bianca spent more than a month in the hospital, most of which was in Inpatient Rehabilitation — a unit that's prepping for renovation and expansion this summer to coincide with the potential Level II trauma designation.

After extensive therapy to learn to walk again and regain movement and control in her arms, Bianca will need supportive care and therapy for a few more months. She is continuing her care in Nebraska with the support of her family.

After everything she's been through, Bianca remains positive.

"It's so incredible that I'm here today — it's literally mind-blowing," Bianca says. "I'm so grateful for Joe and everyone else who cared for me. I can't imagine what it was like for them. Also, my heart goes out to the loved ones and families who lost someone that day — it's truly a tragedy."



# New UPMC Ambulance Bus Helps EMS Fill Gaps in Transportation and Care





In March 2015, a construction worker accidentally dropped a door that fell two stories, striking a one-inch gas main just west of the UPMC Williamsport, Divine Providence Campus. A decision was made to immediately evacuate the hospital, but, with multiple floors filled with patients, surgeries in progress, and a patient in a hyperbaric chamber, the process wasn't easy.

With just three mobile intensive care units serving the entire city, crews knew they needed more ambulances than were available. During that activity, **Jim Slotterback**, manager of emergency preparedness for UPMC in the Northcentral region, remembered something he saw at a conference about a year before.

It was an ambulance bus, a vehicle large enough to accommodate multiple patients and equipped with the type of resources needed to keep patients stable during an evacuation or catastrophic event.

From the time Jim first saw the ambulance bus in 2014, he envisioned how it could help UPMC fill gaps in its emergency services delivery system in the region. More than six years later, that dream is now a reality thanks to a generous \$100,000 grant from the PPL Foundation and additional donations.

"In our region, we don't have all the resources they have in more urban areas," Jim says. "If we tapped every ambulance

in our county even for something like a nursing home evacuation, we still wouldn't have enough ambulances."

Established in 2015 as the philanthropic arm of the Allentown-based energy company, the PPL Foundation has distributed \$15 million in grants to projects in communities that PPL serves.

"The PPL Foundation allows our company to go beyond our core business, be a good neighbor, and truly demonstrate that we care about the places where we live, work, and play," says **Tracie Witter**, PPL's regional affairs director and head of a regional committee for the PPL Foundation.

Competition for a PPL grant is fierce among applicants, all of whom must complete a formal application that explains how their need fits within one of three categories: education; advancing diversity, equality, and inclusion; or improving residents' lives by creating sustainable communities.

"We might receive anywhere from 20 to 40 applications during one grant cycle," Tracie says.

Members of a regional committee individually read and grade the proposals and discuss them as a group. The group then presents recommendations to the board, which ultimately makes a decision.

"We all really love and appreciate living in this area," Tracie says. "We want to see it continue to remain vibrant and sustainable."

*continued on page 20*

Jim learned of the PPL grant from Valerie Trego, Susquehanna Health Foundation's senior development officer, who believes the ambulance bus perfectly fits within the grant's sustainable communities category because of its potential impact on the area.

The new UPMC ambulance bus can hold 15 non-ambulatory patients or a combination of patients on stretchers and in wheelchairs, a scenario EMS might encounter during a long-term care facility evacuation. There's also room for five crew members and a driver on the 40-foot-long vehicle.

"That's potentially 15 ambulances that could be freed up to do other things," Jim says. "One thing that I really love about [the bus] is that it's a modular system. We can set it up and configure it how we want, or we can take it all apart and have just an empty shell."

Years ago, Jim had a chance to witness firsthand how beneficial an ambulance bus could be when a similar vehicle was used for UPMC's annual mass casualty exercise. During the activity's first year, the process of transporting the first patient to the hospital took 45 minutes. Removing all patients from the scene took an hour and a half. The next year, with the help of an ambulance bus, EMS was able to cut those numbers down to 13 minutes to transport the first patient to the hospital and 37 minutes to clear the scene.

"There were many factors in this improvement, but the ambulance bus was a big one," Jim adds.

In addition to evacuation scenarios like the one at UPMC Williamsport, Divine Providence Campus in 2015, Jim believes the ambulance bus can serve the region in a variety of ways.

At special events such as the Little League World Series, which attracts upwards of 40,000 visitors per day to Williamsport, the bus could serve as an overflow area for those in need of medical attention. Jim says he also envisions the vehicle being used as a staging area to assess firefighters battling a blaze and for additional exercises and trainings.

The ambulance bus also allows UPMC in the Northcentral region to be more self-sufficient in the event of a mass casualty situation while easing the burden of other ambulance agencies in the area, many of which are operated by volunteers and are not equipped for a scene involving more than 20 people.



The UPMC team has been busy educating county public safety staff, long-term care agencies, and EMS agencies within the Northcentral region about the vehicle, its benefits and capabilities, and opportunities for its use. Agencies in four counties have already reached out to ask how they can request the bus and automatically dispatch it during evacuations or mass casualty events such as the type of large multi-vehicle accidents that occurred on Interstate 80 this past winter. UPMC has developed a driver training program to ensure competence for all EMS staff who will operate the full-size bus. When not in use, the bus will remain stationed at UPMC Williamsport.

Jim says that the ambulance bus is just the latest in a long list of initiatives that show the Susquehanna Health Foundation's pledge to serve the citizens of this area. He commends the entire UPMC system in the Northcentral region for its continued dedication to world-class care and resources that positively impact patient outcomes.

"UPMC's investment into this shows our commitment to the region," he says. "And that really reinforces why I do what I do here. It's all about taking care of the people in our community. To work for an organization that really values that makes everything worthwhile."



# The Path of Your Donation

Thank you for supporting Susquehanna Health Foundation. It is the Foundation's mission to connect the generosity of a caring region with opportunities to improve the lives of all through better health. Our team, comprising seven staff, is committed to connecting our donors' passions to patients locally.

Donations are recorded and acknowledged within 48 hours. The sooner we enter your gift, the faster it goes to work for our patients. More than 53,500 gifts are made each year by nearly 4,000 individuals, businesses, foundations, and employees.

Donation arrives at the Foundation

We work with our finance department to ensure that we fulfill our donors' intentions. Collectively, our donors contribute \$3 million to \$5 million each year, and the Foundation ensures that funding is tracked and put to best use.

The Foundation Staff works with the hospital department that received the funding to determine how donations will be used. Your giving allows visions to be realized, needs to be fulfilled, and strategic priorities to be met.

Friends and loved ones make more than 1,000 memorial gifts each year, and we notify patients' family members of this generosity. They can see the impact their loved one had on others, which in turn is paid forward for the next patient.

Your donation directly benefits local patients and their outcomes.

Your recognition of our frontline heroes' work and support of our patients are the best examples of paying it forward. Your generosity now provides for the next person in need of health care — maybe your neighbor, a loved one, or someone you may never know. When the generosity and kindness of our local communities join together, they magnify the work that can be done.

**Thank you** for being part of making a difference in health care in northcentral Pennsylvania.

# ENDOWMENT GIFTS

**Endowment Gifts** recognizes individuals and businesses who supported Susquehanna Health Foundation with a contribution of \$25,000 or greater to establish an endowment. Donors are listed from **January 1, 2019 to present**. All donations, including endowments, continue to remain local and benefit our Northcentral region. For more information, or to donate, contact Susquehanna Health Foundation at 570-320-7460.

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Dr. William J. and Laura H. Martin

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William P. and Lorraine Manos Foundation

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Greg and Marilyn Frailey

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## Business & Industry Gifts

recognizes businesses that supported Susquehanna Health Foundation with a contribution of \$5,000 or greater. Donors are listed through **December 31, 2020.**

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AutoTrakk, LLC  
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The Caduceus Society recognizes physicians who

made a commitment of \$2,500 or greater to Susquehanna Health Foundation. Donors are listed through **December 31, 2020.**

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Jennifer Rager-Kay, DO

Navitha Ramesh, MD

Dr. and Mrs. William P. Reich

Dr. Herbert Roberts

Dr. and Mrs. Steven D. Rockoff

Eddie O. Rodriguez-Lopez, MD

Jason Scotti, MD

Abdalla Sholi, MD

Zachary Simpson, MD

Dr. and Mrs. Rohit G. Singh

Dr. and Mrs. Sam F. Stea

*In Honor of Our Children*

Bernard and Sarah Steinbacher

*In Memory of Karen E. Steinbacher*

Dr. Allan K. Stryker

Dr. Mohammad Tahir

Dr. Lawrence and Nancy Tomack

Dr. Peter and Rose Trevouledes

Dr. Frank E. Tulak

Dr. and Mrs. Thane N. Turner

Dr. and Mrs. Seth I. Weber

Rosemary Wiegand and Brett Homan

**Williamsport Pathology Association**

Dr. and Mrs. Daniel E. Wolfe

Edward G. Wyshock, MD

## UPMC Expands Services in Lewisburg

UPMC is committed to bringing world-class care to the communities it serves, and 2020 was a year of growth and expansion for services offered in the Lewisburg region.

**Thomas Albright, DPM**, joined UPMC in March 2020 as **UPMC Specialty Care, Albright Footcare**, at 2370 Old Turnpike Road; **Robin Spangler, MD**, and **Christine Belgio, CRNP**, opened **UPMC Primary Care Lewisburg**, 260 Reitz Boulevard, in October 2020; and **UPMC Specialty Care Lewisburg**, a multi-specialty clinic located at 2330 Saint Mary Street West, opened in November 2020.

These clinics bring UPMC clinicians and an array of patient-centered outpatient services to the area. Services available include cardiology, gastroenterology, primary care, neurosurgery, pain management, nephrology, podiatry, dermatology, and urology, and the clinics allow space for UPMC to add more services as needed.

For many years, UPMC has served Lewisburg and the surrounding communities, and these new clinics bring the next level of state-of-the-art, patient-centered care that UPMC is known for to the Susquehanna Valley.



# 2020 Foundation Impact Report

As a donor in 2020, YOU were essential to ensure we continued to be forward thinking by planning for the future of local health care. In 2020, YOU and so many others gave generously to support the work of UPMC in Northcentral Pennsylvania. In fact, YOU contributed more than \$4.5 million. Because of YOU, our patients have greater access to care. Projects such as the expansion and renovation of the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport continued, with the expansion opening December 18, 2020. YOU began to fund the new Benevolent Care Fund to help our patients in greatest need. YOU supported our health care heroes in a big way with meals, snacks, and comfort items. YOU encouraged our teams with handmade cards and posters. YOU answered the call to fulfill immediate needs such as iPads, masks, and recliners. Without YOU, our health care system would not have been positioned to push through during the worst of the pandemic. It is the past support of our community and the ongoing commitment of individuals, businesses, and foundations that keep us Susquehanna Strong – thank YOU.

## Foundation Contributions



**1,041**

tribute gifts honored or remembered 483 individuals



**3,872**

individuals, organizations, and foundations supported us



**\$479,851**

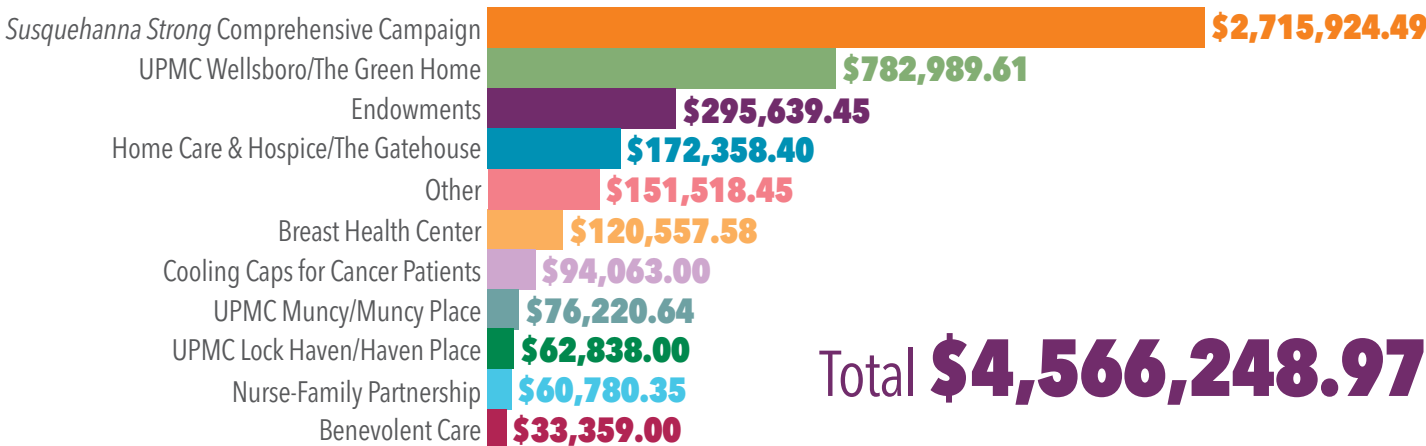
donated from planned gifts



**\$607,953**

UPMC Susquehanna employee and medical staff contributions

## Contributions by Fund





# Donate to Make a Wish Come True

Susquehanna Health Foundation asked our department leaders to share their wish lists — items that operational funding cannot cover this year. The Foundation is asking the community to provide the necessary funds, or a portion of the funds, to purchase the items below. If you would like to make a gift to purchase one or more Wish List items, please enclose your check in the magazine's attached envelope and note which item(s) you wish to fund. You also can make a gift at [UPMCSusquehanna.org/Donate](https://UPMCSusquehanna.org/Donate) and note in the comments section which item(s) you would like to fund.



Any Amount

## Transportation Costs

### *UPMC Hillman Cancer Centers in Williamsport and Wellsboro*

An often-overlooked barrier to health care is transportation to appointments, a crucial step in giving patients access to the care they need. Many of our patients undergoing cancer treatment have frequent, even daily, appointments. In response to this burden, especially in rural communities where public transportation is not an option, we offer free van service to and from appointments. The van transports 28 patients monthly, with some using the van daily for radiation treatments.



\$20

## Board Books

### *Nurse-Family Partnership*

Reading to children is instrumental in their early developmental years. Your gift will purchase 24 board books for children in the Nurse-Family Partnership Program. The program helps transform the lives of vulnerable women who are pregnant with their first child until the child is two years old. Your support will help these children meet developmental milestones.



\$25

## Activities for Senior Communities

### *Muncy Place, Haven Place, and The Green Home*

The past year has been difficult, especially for residents of our senior communities, where group activities have been on hold. We have more than 200 residents in need of crossword puzzle books, word finds, playing cards, markers, gel pens, art kits, and hooked rug supplies. Your donation will bring smiles to residents and help occupy their time in a structured way.



\$150

## Weighted Blankets

### *The Green Home*

A weighted blanket can alleviate anxiety and promote deep, restful sleep. It also can be especially comforting for those who miss the feel of a hug. Your gift will purchase one of two weighted blankets needed to provide restful sleep for long-term care residents.



\$500

## Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Training

### *UPMC Williamsport Emergency Department*

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Training educates nurses in the collection of evidence used to prosecute offenders. The training also provides nurses with expertise to offer additional support to the patient. Your gift will provide one nurse with the 40 hours of online training necessary to become SANE certified.

# KEYSTONE SOCIETY

The Keystone Society lists those who make a commitment to contribute \$250 or more annually to Susquehanna Health Foundation. Listed below are all Keystone Society members through **December 31, 2020.**

## \$1,000–\$9,999

### **Anonymous**

Helen L. Antrim  
Deborah K. Bacon  
Dr. and Mrs. John Becker  
Karen and Michael Belenko  
Bill MacIntyre Chevrolet Buick

### **Blackhorse Holdings LLC**

### **John and Karen Blaschak**

Drs. David and Susan Borys

### **David and Catherine Piccolo Bower**

Michelle Brewer and Tara Crawford  
Chaplain Tom Brokaw  
Tanner Bulkley

Carol M. Cacchione

### **William Carlucci**

Mara L. Carpenter  
Nicholas and Carol Catino  
Clemens Family Foundation  
Mr. and Mrs. James F. Colegrove  
Cheryl Corman  
David and Sharon Crandall

### **Ruth E. Croyle**

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Amber Depew  
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Annette M. DiEugenio  
Discovery Machine, Inc.  
Frani and Doug Doherty  
Kelly Douglass, CRNP  
The Drollinger Family Charitable

Foundation

John and Shirley Eck

### **Enginuity, Inc.**

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Fidelity Charitable  
First Citizens Community Bank  
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Gwen Frye Estate  
Michelle R. Gaida

### **Dr. and Mrs. Daniel R. Gandy**

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Patrick and Joy Gilson

### **Frank and Lynne Girardi**

Amy and Keith Goehring

Juliann W. Gombosi

### **The Greene Children**

Gronski-Lehman Insurance Agency Inc.

### **Carol Zablocky Hall**

April L. Hartzel-Lewis

Jennifer and Julie Harvey

### **Dan and Suzie Hawbaker**

### **Dean and Karen Heintzelman**

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Autumn S. Hill

Ann M. Hocker

Kenneth and Ann Hoover

Deborah E. Horriat

Thomas W. Hoy

Stephen and Martha Huddy

Hudock Capital Group, LLC

Mark and Rebecca Huffman

Jersey Shore Football Booster Club

Nathan Johnson

Phil and Christine Johnson

Steven and Mary Ann Johnson

Stacey M. Kacyon

\*David and Gloria Karchner

Leah M. Kile Estate

Carol Kitchen

### **Kitchen Repose**

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Edwin J. Krejci

Janice D. Kuzio

Keith and Jennifer Kuzio

### **Stacia Kuzio**

Patty Lacy

Abbey M. Lepley

The Lindsay Family

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Lock Haven Hospital Auxiliary

Denise and Bud Lorson

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Fund

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John and Judy Maietta

Joseph Makowski

Dr. and Mrs. George A. Manchester

Dr. and Mrs. Michael Marceau

Erin Mincemoyer Martinko

Kathryn S. Mason

Helen R. McCloskey

Amy McCorkel

Heather R. McCormick

### **McCormick Law Firm**

### **McCormick Pink Crusaders**

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James and Patricia McGee

Ron and Judy McKibben

Joseph McTish

Helen Menold, Ernest J. Menold, Linda

Menold Rooney, Debbie Menold Marini,  
and Michael Menold

### **Robert K. and Dorothy White Mertz**

### **Mid-State Beverage Co. - Don and Betty Jo Heim**

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Robert R. Mincemoyer

Donna Mitten-Long

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J. Dennis and Linda Murray

Murray Motors - Brian Peace and Bill  
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### **Danut F. Neagu**

Mark A. Nyce

Diana Nyman

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Penn Oak Realty, Inc.

### **Pennsylvania College of Technology**

Ms. Ann Pepperman and Senator Gene Yaw

John E. Person III

Pledge the Pink Foundation

### **Carol H. Pursell**

Brenda L. and Barry K. Rake

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Michael Rau and Marisa Rainey Rau

### **Jay and Julie Raup**

Red Run Rod & Gun Club

### **Jim and Peg Redka**

Andrea N. Reed

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Berta Robbins Estate

### **Robert M. Sides Family Music Center**

### **Dave and Maggie Roche**

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Rogers Uniforms

Sean and Cynthia Roman

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Terry Saulter

### **Carol A. Savoy**

### **The Children of Julia Savrock**

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Erin L. Shelinski

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\*Joseph and Charmaine Shockloss

Chaplain Edward Siddle

Mark and Connie Sitler

# KEYSTONE SOCIETY

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 Young Industries, Inc.  
 Young Men's Democratic Club of Lycoming County, Inc.  
 Young Men's Republican Club, Inc.  
 Marie B. Zurinsky

## \$500-\$999

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**Paul H. Beiter**  
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 Christopher and Susan Branton  
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 Cioffi Wealth Management  
**Alan Cipriani**  
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 Divine Retiree Travelers  
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 Chelsea M. Eggler  
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 Charlotte Heck and Family  
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 Shana B. Heimer  
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 Sherry L. Hyland  
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**Stephen and Christine Kaiser**  
 Aleksander W. Keller  
 Caron Kenyon  
 Kiwanis Club of Williamsport  
 Cindy K. Kling  
 Jason G. Kling  
 Karen B. Kling

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# CARE FOR AND FROM THE HEART

There are just some days in your life that you don't forget — the day of your wedding, the day each of your children was born, and for 74-year-old **Don Metzger**, the day he had a heart attack.

That day was April 12, 1994, and it was also the day that Don met his cardiologist. While getting dressed for work that morning, the Williamsport native recalls having discomfort in his chest and a clammy feeling that prompted him to tell his wife, Irene, that they needed to go to the hospital.

"That's when I met who I call 'the great man,'" Don says of his first interaction with **Donald T. Nardone, MD**, interventional cardiologist, UPMC Heart & Vascular Institute.

It was during that visit that Dr. Nardone discovered the cause of Don's heart attack: There were severe blockages that were affecting his heart. The visit was also the impetus for the start of a great doctor-patient relationship that now spans nearly three decades.

Confirmation of the heart attack and blockages brought a chilling realization for Don, who lost his father to a heart attack when his dad was just 55 years old. As Don and Dr. Nardone spoke about the situation — one overcome with anxiety and trepidation, the other offering kindness and empathy — Dr. Nardone told Don and Irene that he had a plan.

"I think he's been placed in this world to do exactly what he's doing," Don says. "Without me even telling him, I think he saw the fear in my eyes of potential surgery and he let me know that he recommended we begin with a different approach that included medication."

That plan included the use of beta blockers — prescription drugs used to manage irregular heart rhythms and cardiac action — along with an improved diet and an increase in exercise.

Don leaned on Irene for support, taking advantage of his wife's degree in dietetics and knowledge of nutrition as the two immediately cut junk food from their diet in favor of a healthier life.

For two years, the plan worked well. Don and Irene went on vacations, led an active lifestyle, and enjoyed time with their children, Holly and Todd, who were in their early 20s at the time.

Then, while exercising one day in 1996, Don felt a pain in his chest. A trip to the Emergency Department at UPMC Williamsport resulted in a follow-up with Dr. Nardone, who confirmed that Don's condition now required surgical intervention.

Shortly after, Don underwent a quadruple bypass, a procedure that has kept his heart functioning well in the years since. Although the fear Don and Irene originally had about his undergoing open heart surgery initially returned, the couple ultimately felt comfortable with the procedure because they knew Don's health was in the right hands.

"Everyone at UPMC treats you like a human being," Don says. "They make you feel like you are somebody. I'm not just a social security number and date of birth to them."

Because of UPMC's approach to patient care, Don and Irene have trusted the health system almost exclusively with their health care. Don also speaks highly of **Sara Swain, DO**, his primary care physician, and **William Banks, MD**, his ear, nose, and throat specialist.

"He tells you everything in terms that you actually understand," Don says of Dr. Banks. "He doesn't rush you through the appointment. It's like you're the only patient that day."

Now retired from a career that included lengthy stints in both accounting and food sales, Don is feeling good and staying busy, living his personal philosophy: to enjoy every day. He and Irene, who have been married since 1984, still love to travel and spend time with their family, which now includes seven grandchildren.

Although traveling gives Don a glimpse into what it's like to live elsewhere, there's no place he'd rather be than Williamsport, which he describes as a "small town with big-town facilities." Except for time away during college, both he and Irene have spent their lives here.

"Living in rural America, we're blessed to have a metropolitan-area health system," Don says. "When I see what UPMC has brought to Williamsport, it's just amazing. The people in this area should be so thankful for what they're doing for the community. You can't pat them on the back enough."

# KEYSTONE SOCIETY

continued from page 29

## **\$500–\$999** *Continued*

Brooke Koch  
Heidi A. Kosmer  
Judith A. Krezmer  
Thomas Kump  
Nancy J. Lady  
Tawyana Lake  
Chaplain Zelma Lang  
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White & Case  
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**Woodlands Bank Employees Fund-Raiser Group**  
**Jennifer A. Woodward**  
Jennifer Worthington  
**Dawn and Gregory Wright**  
Sherry Wyble

## **\$250–\$499**

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AC Cruz - State Farm Insurance  
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Dawn Albright  
Alexandria Aldinger  
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Karen A. Armson  
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Brenda Aunkst  
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Terry L. Austin  
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Brian and Victoria Bair  
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Erin R. Bannon  
**Michael Philip Barclay and Laurie Crockett Barclay**  
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Debra Beard  
Talia Beatty  
Gregory L. Beck  
Ann S. Beitz  
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Tara M. Benjamin  
Dusti Berninger  
Ezmeralda Berrones  
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# KEYSTONE SOCIETY

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 John Blachek  
 Kimberly Black  
 Miranda R. Black  
 Roxanne Blazina  
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 Blue Ridge Cable  
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 Morganne Bresnock  
 Carlyn Brickley  
 Amy Brink  
 Dawn Brooks  
 Renee Brooks  
 Christine K. Broschious  
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# new doctors



## **Saul Arber, MD**

***Radiation Oncologist | 570-326-8203***

Dr. Saul Arber received his medical degree at the University of Miami School of Medicine in Florida. He completed an internship in internal medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in Miami Beach as well as postgraduate training in radiation oncology at Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein Hospital in Bronx, New York. Dr. Arber is board certified in radiation oncology and has more than 30 years of experience in cancer care. He sees patients at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport, 1100 Grampian Boulevard.

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## **Darcie Desiderio, DNP**

***Nurse Practitioner | 570-567-5450***

Darcie Desiderio, a nurse practitioner, received her doctor of nursing practice degree from Case Western Reserve University, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, in Cleveland and her master of advanced practice nursing from New York University,

Rory Meyers College of Nursing, in New York. She is certified in critical care, emergency, and heart failure with more than 20 years of experience in health care. She sees patients at UPMC Muncy, 215 East Water Street; and UPMC Specialty Care, 2330 Saint Mary Street West, Lewisburg.



## **David Luo, DO, MHS**

***Family Medicine Provider | 570-769-1300***

Dr. David Luo received his medical degree from New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine in Old Westbury and his master of health sciences from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore. He completed his residency at Mount Sinai South Nassau in Oceanside, New York. He sees patients at UPMC Outpatient Center, 1 Outlet Lane, Suite 400, Lock Haven.

## **Eugene Muchnik, MD**

***Medical Oncologist | 570-326-8470***

Dr. Eugene Muchnik received his medical degree at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School.

He completed his internal medicine residency and his fellowship in hematology at the University of Rochester in New York. He is triple board certified in hematology, medical oncology, and internal medicine. Dr. Muchnik sees patients at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport, 1100 Grampian Boulevard.



By bringing the best physicians and advanced medical treatments to our region, UPMC delivers on its promise to provide high-quality, patient-centered care.

**Renee Muchnik, MD**  
**Cardiologist | 570-321-2800**

Dr. Renee Muchnik received her medical degree at University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She completed her internal medicine residency at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, New York, and her fellowship in cardiology at University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, Massachusetts. Dr. Muchnik sees patients at UPMC Williamsport, 740 High Street, Suite 2001.



**Hadeel Naqib, MD**  
**Pediatrician | 570-723-6380**

Dr. Hadeel Naqib received her medical degree from University of Baghdad College of Medicine in Iraq and completed residencies in pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and T. C. Thompson Children's Hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She has more than 30 years of experience and is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics. Dr. Naqib sees patients at UPMC Wellsboro Office of Pediatrics, 15 Meade Street, Suite U4.



**Ingrid Ockenhouse, MD**  
**Primary Care Provider | 570-368-3321**

Dr. Ingrid Ockenhouse received her medical degree at the Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where she also completed her internship and residency in internal medicine. She has more than 34 years of experience and is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. Dr. Ockenhouse sees patients at UPMC Family Medicine, 900 Plaza Drive, Suite A, Montoursville.



**Vwaire Orhurhu, MD, MPH**  
**Pain Management Specialist | 570-326-8457**

Dr. Vwaire Orhurhu received his medical degree from Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science in Rochester, Minnesota, and his master's in public health from Harvard University School of Public Health in Boston. He completed residencies in general surgery with Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and in anesthesiology with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. He also completed a chronic pain fellowship with Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Orhurhu sees patients at 1100 Grampian Boulevard, Williamsport.





### **John Pellegrino, DO**

**Primary Care Provider | 570-321-2770**

Dr. John Pellegrino received his medical degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency in family medicine with UPMC's Williamsport Family Medicine Residency. Dr. Pellegrino has more than 25 years of experience in family medicine and is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Pennsylvania Medical Society. He sees patients at UPMC Williamsport, 700 High Street, 9th Floor.

### **Stacy Prall, DO**

**Gastroenterologist | 570-321-3454**

Dr. Stacy Prall received her medical degree from University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine in Biddeford, Maine. She completed her residency in internal medicine and her fellowship training in gastroenterology and hepatology at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville. Dr. Prall is diplomate board certified in gastroenterology by the American Board of Internal Medicine. She sees patients at UPMC Williamsport, 700 High Street; UPMC Muncy, 10 Shady Lane, Suite 101; and UPMC Specialty Care, 2330 Saint Mary Street West, Lewisburg.



### **Mariam Salisu, MD, MPH**

**Pain Management Specialist | 570-326-8457**

Dr. Mariam Salisu received her medical degree at George Washington School of Medicine in Washington, D.C. She then completed a residency in anesthesiology at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and a fellowship in chronic pain at Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital, in Boston. She sees patients at 1100 Grampian Boulevard, Williamsport; UPMC Specialty Care, 2330 Saint Mary Street West, Lewisburg; and UPMC Lock Haven, 24 Cree Drive.

### **Fadi Sweiss, MD**

**Neurosurgeon | 570-321-2820**

Dr. Fadi Sweiss received his medical degree from Northeast Ohio Medical University in Rootstown, Ohio, and completed his residency in neurosurgery at George Washington University Hospital in Washington, D.C. He specializes in the diagnosis and surgical treatment of degenerative, traumatic, and oncologic spinal conditions. Dr. Sweiss sees patients at UPMC Williamsport, 740 High Street, Suite 3002, and UPMC Specialty Care, 2330 Saint Mary Street West, Lewisburg.





## EMPLOYEE DONORS (iGIVE)

The **iGIVE** campaign recognizes current employee donors of UPMC in the Northcentral region. Our employees have donated more than \$4.9 million since 2006. ☉ denotes Hour Club members. The Hour Club recognizes an elite group of employees who make a tremendous commitment by giving back one hour of pay every pay period. Listed below are all **new** donors from **July 1 – December 31, 2020**.

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## Friends of Soldiers + Sailors Provides Lifesaving Equipment

Thanks to the generosity of more than 154 donors, the Friends of Soldiers + Sailors Annual Campaign raised \$36,400 from the community. In addition, C&N contributed \$4,500 in matching funds, bringing the total raised to \$40,900. The donations will purchase two LUCAS devices for the UPMC Wellsboro Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit. LUCAS is a portable device that provides consistent, high-quality chest compressions in emergency situations and during invasive cardiac procedures.



# LEGACY SOCIETY

The Legacy Society recognizes those who made a planned or estate gift to Susquehanna Health Foundation. The “past members” designation distinguishes our members who have passed away but whose estate or planned gifts to the Foundation reflect the lasting legacy they left to help others.

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Sell Stock And Donate Cash Proceeds		Donate Stock Directly To Charity
\$20,000	VALUE OF STOCK WHEN PURCHASED	\$20,000
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\$7,140	CAPITAL GAINS AND MEDICARE SURTAX PAID ON \$30,000 (23.8%)	\$0
\$42,860	TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO CHARITY (AFTER DEDUCTING FEDERAL TAXES)	\$50,000
\$15,858	INCOME TAX SAVINGS BY MAKING CONTRIBUTION	\$18,500

Your donation to Susquehanna Health Foundation might qualify for an income tax deduction in accordance with federal and/or state income tax laws. Please consult your tax advisor to determine whether your donation is tax deductible in whole or part. Nothing in this communication is intended to constitute legal or tax advice.



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## YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WORK:

# Benevolent Care Fund Helps Patients in Need

Over the last two decades, one of the largest gatherers of publicly provided data has been tracking the percentage of Americans who say they have — or a family member has — postponed medical treatment due to cost.

The good news is that, in 2020, the result dipped to a low that Gallup pollsters haven't seen since 2004. The bad news is that it came in at 26% or one in four individuals, still a high number when you consider the ramifications of delaying necessary medical intervention amid a global pandemic.

But, thanks to a new fund designed to help those in need of short-term assistance, some patients at UPMC in the Northcentral region will no longer have to postpone medical treatment due to financial hardship.

Established in the fall of 2020, the Benevolent Care Fund is an entirely donation-driven program that provides aid

to patients who otherwise would have no means to pay for physician-prescribed medications, transportation to appointments, infant care necessities, medical equipment and supplies, and medical co-pays.

According to **Stacy Moore**, a licensed social worker and manager of social services for UPMC Williamsport, the program not only offers patients financial support but also educational guidance.

"We try to make connections in the community for long-term solutions, but we also provide short-term help with this program," Stacy says. "This fills in that initial gap with the funding, so patients can eventually get to that long-term solution."

The Benevolent Care Fund isn't the first of its kind for UPMC in the Northcentral region, but it is the most robust. A previous program called the MAP Fund was rolled into the



Benevolent Care Fund after staff at various levels advocated for an expanded program that could help patients struggling to pay for potentially life-altering services, medication, and other supplies.

Much of how the new fund operates hinges on the process involved when UPMC in the Northcentral region discharges a patient from the hospital. A registered nurse case manager or social worker will talk with the patient about financial matters and explain how the program can help with funding if it's needed.

"We want to make sure that you can afford whatever treatment has been recommended to you as a patient," Stacy says. "Some people have excellent insurance coverage, but others do not."

A panel of employees that consists of the manager of social work at UPMC Williamsport; a UPMC Hillman Cancer Center patient navigator or financial advisor at UPMC Williamsport, Divine Providence Campus; and the personal care home administrator of The Laurels coordinates distributions from the fund. If the amount needed is \$150 or less, social workers and personal care home administrators can grant immediate approval. The panel must review and approve funding involving larger amounts.

The Susquehanna Health Foundation not only distributes the funds but also raises them, a mission that has benefited from a series of very generous donations.

"I'm most proud of the number of patients who have been touched by this program. It helps ensure that no matter who you are, you will be given dignity and respect."

— Stacy Moore  
Manager of Social Services for UPMC Williamsport

**The Harry Plankenhorn Foundation** gave a considerable gift, as did **Dave Steinbacher**, who established the Karen Steinbacher Endowment in support of the Benevolent Care Fund. In addition, **St. Luke Lutheran Church** has played an ongoing role in supporting the fund and UPMC patients in the Northcentral region.

In total, nearly 100 donors have contributed to the new fund.

"People are donating their hard-earned money to help other individuals, which has been greatly appreciated by recipients of the funds," Stacy says. "I'm most proud of the number of patients who have been touched by this program. It helps ensure that no matter who you are, you will be given dignity and respect."

Thus far, the program has helped patients with travel expenses and transportation for both routine cancer care and specialty care in Pittsburgh, as well as prescriptions for many patients. The fund also has been a blessing for COVID-19 patients who required home oxygen after leaving the hospital but who otherwise would not have been able to afford it.

The Benevolent Care Fund is still in its infancy, and administrators are continuing to refine the program so that it will have an even greater impact in the future. Stacy says she speaks for the entire team when she thanks the many donors who have already made a profound difference in the lives of recipients.

"We really try across the board to get to know people and make personal connections," she says. "We have the ability to sit down with patients, get to know them, get to know their support system, celebrate with them, rejoice with them, and grieve with them. They are unique and special to us and not just a number."

If you would like to donate to the Benevolent Care Fund, please contact the Susquehanna Health Foundation at 570-320-7460 or use the enclosed envelope.



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The Friends list includes those who contributed to Susquehanna

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# DRIVE FOR A CAUSE

**C**ar dealerships throughout the region joined Susquehanna Health Foundation for our third annual Drive for a Cause event in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. During October 2020, participating dealerships donated \$25 to UPMC's Kathryn Candor Lundy Breast Health Center for every new or used car sold.

This year, \$19,550 was raised to support the fight against breast cancer in our communities. Over the past three years, Drive for a Cause has raised almost \$70,000 for breast health services at UPMC in the Northcentral region.

The Breast Health Center screens approximately 12,000 patients annually for breast cancer, performs an additional 12,000 imaging procedures, and completes nearly 10,000 patient visits each year.

"We are grateful for the dealerships and sponsors joining together to support local breast health services for the overall benefit of patients in our region," says **Sherry Watts**, vice president of development, Susquehanna Health Foundation. "Early detection is the best tool in the fight against breast cancer. The funds from Drive for a Cause will help to purchase an additional 3D mammography machine at the Breast Health Center to improve detection rates for women. The event is also a way to encourage women to take the time to schedule their mammograms."

#### Participating dealerships:

- Bill MacIntyre Chevrolet Buick
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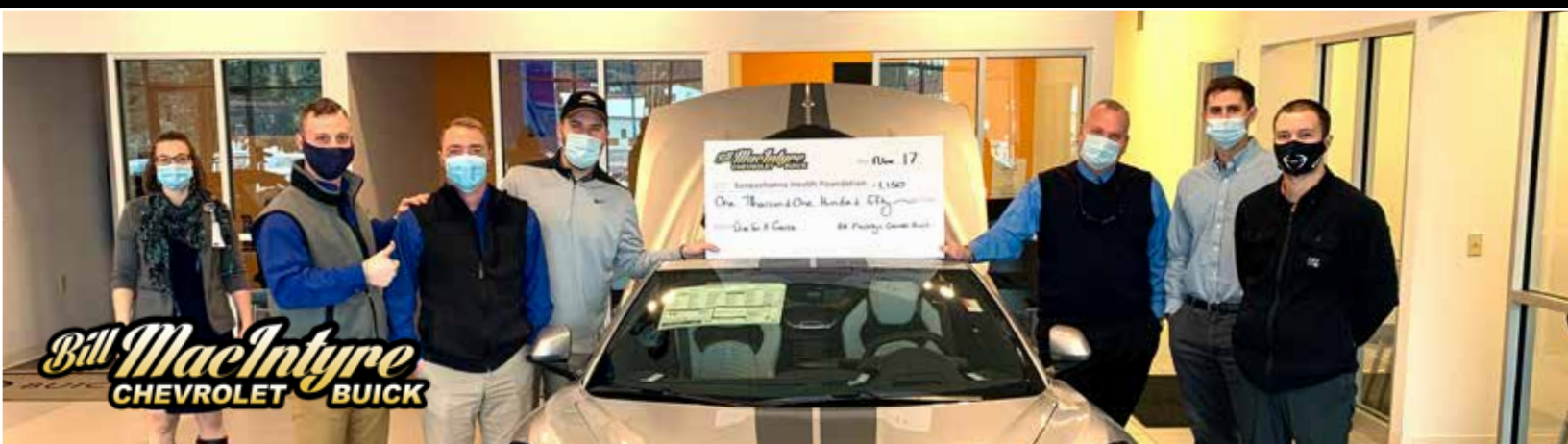
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“We are grateful for the dealerships and sponsors joining together to support local breast health services for the overall benefit of patients in our region.”

Sherry Watts

Vice President of Development, Susquehanna Health Foundation



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