

# care. together

Atlantic General Hospital & Atlantic General Health System

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care.givers

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[atlanticgeneral.org](http://atlanticgeneral.org)

## From the President

As healthcare continues to be on the forefront of the national conversation, and healthcare systems become increasingly complex to navigate, it is more important than ever for your community hospital to keep you informed.

As you read through this edition of *care.together*, you'll see how the changes we're making are making the healthcare system better for you.

Our strategic 2020 Vision compels us to develop a system of care in our community that results in coordinated quality care and better health. An important component to helping create a healthy community is access to preventive care services.

Medical research has developed preventive vaccines for multiple potentially deadly or debilitating diseases: hepatitis, shingles, pneumonia, and flu, to name a few. Yet, vaccines only work when people are vaccinated,

and people can only get vaccinated when they have access to vaccines. Our AGHRx RediScripts Pharmacy, located on the first floor of the

hospital, will now be providing vaccines for the community, without appointments.

Figuring out how to help those who are at high risk of becoming seriously ill – rather than providing treatment afterward – is a challenge all communities are facing. Those with chronic conditions such as congestive heart failure (CHF) or COPD and individuals who are frail but have difficulty getting to their doctor's office for

regular monitoring make up a large portion of this risk group.

Atlantic General Hospital is partnering with Philips Healthcare to deploy a telemedicine solution that will effectively bring health care services directly into the patient's home. We received a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help develop solutions for public health problems in rural communities to help fund the program.

This new remote patient monitoring technology reduces the risk of acute problems associated with chronic illnesses, and it helps to reduce the fears and concerns of patients and their family members. Through this technology, AGH is always there for these patients.

We are also using telemedicine to expand our ability to bring advanced specialist consultations and care to our community. We've shared with you in the past about our use of telemedicine to bring behavioral and mental health experts from Sheppard Pratt and the Kennedy Krieger Institute to our campus. We have also shared our



relationship with the University of Maryland in providing telemedicine support to patients and caregivers in our ICU.

We are now building on the relationship with the University of Maryland and the technology we have developed with Kennedy Krieger and Sheppard Pratt, to bring to our community cancer care specialists from the University of Maryland to consult and follow up with patients directly.

Initially, we will be focusing on patients with newly diagnosed or suspected lung cancer who may need specialized care beyond the capabilities in our region. University of Maryland physicians will receive all of the test results from AGH. They will then meet with patients and families,

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Michael Franklin, FACHE  
President & CEO  
Atlantic General Hospital



## AGHRx RediScripts Now Offers Vaccination Services

You want to pass on certain things like family traditions, a grandmother's quilt or dad's love of books – but no one wants to pass on a serious illness.

**by Jeff Kukel, Pharm.D., Manager  
AGHRx RediScripts**

Take charge of your health and help protect those around you by asking your doctor or pharmacist about vaccines.

Vaccinating our children is commonplace in the United States. But many adults don't know which vaccines they need, and even fewer are fully vaccinated. In 2014, only 28 percent of adults ages 60 and older had received a shingles vaccine and only 20 percent of adults older than 19 had received a Tdap vaccine.

Each year, tens of thousands of adults needlessly suffer, are hospitalized, and even die as a result of diseases that could be prevented by vaccines.

Not only can vaccine-preventable diseases make you very sick, but if you get sick, you may risk spreading certain diseases to others. That's a risk most of us do not want to take.

Babies, older adults and people with weakened immune systems (like those undergoing cancer treatment) are especially vulnerable to infectious diseases. They are also more likely to have severe illness and complications if they do get sick. You can help protect your health and the health of your loved ones by getting your recommended vaccines.

AGHRx RediScripts Pharmacy is a full service retail pharmacy located in the lobby of Atlantic General Hospital. Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m./Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### What vaccines do you need?

All adults should get:

- Annual flu vaccine to protect against seasonal flu
- Td/Tdap to protect against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis

Some additional vaccines you may need (depending on your age, health conditions and other factors) include:

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Meningococcal
- Pneumococcal
- Shingles
- Tdap

Traveling overseas? There may be additional vaccines you need depending on the location. Find out at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

### Not sure what vaccines you may need?

The CDC offers a short quiz at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adultquiz](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adultquiz) to help you find out which vaccines you might need. You can take the results of your quiz to one of our Certified Immunizing Pharmacists to discuss which vaccines are right for you.

### No appointment or prescription necessary

The good news is that getting vaccinated just got easier! AGHRx RediScripts Pharmacy, conveniently located within the lobby of Atlantic General Hospital, now offers adult vaccinations with no appointment or prescription necessary. Simply stop in the pharmacy and one of our Certified Immunizing Pharmacists will review your immunization history, ask you a few short questions about your health conditions and allergies, and make a recommendation about what vaccines are appropriate for you.

After the consultation, our immunizing pharmacist will administer your vaccine(s) in our private consultation room and provide you with a record of any vaccines administered. We will even make your primary care doctor aware of any vaccines we have administered so your records are always up to date.

Most health insurance plans cover the cost of vaccines – a call to your insurance provider or stopping in our pharmacy can give you the details.

Our pharmacists can be reached during pharmacy hours at 410-641-9240.

# Beyond These Four Walls

## Atlantic General Hospital Expands Healthcare to the Home

It was the middle of the night, and Jane couldn't catch her breath. Scared and alone, the 79 year old called her son to pick her up and take her to the hospital. She was terribly short of breath and scared. When she arrived at the ER, the staff learned that Jane had been diagnosed with congestive heart failure (CHF) 18 months ago and now her condition had worsened. Her body was holding on to fluids – a classic symptom of unchecked CHF.

Jane didn't know how much she usually weighs and hadn't noticed the weight gain. Nor did she remember that she wasn't supposed to take ibuprofen because it interacts with her medication, something she had been doing recently when the arthritis in her hands flared up.

After a few days at the hospital, Jane felt much better. Her CHF under control, and she was looking forward to going home. She would sleep so much better in her own bed, and her houseplants needed her tending.

She was apprehensive as well. What if her CHF got worse again? Could she do everything she was supposed to do to stay well with her condition? Her son had the same worries. Neither voiced them to the doctor or anyone else on the care team.

### Remote Patient Monitoring

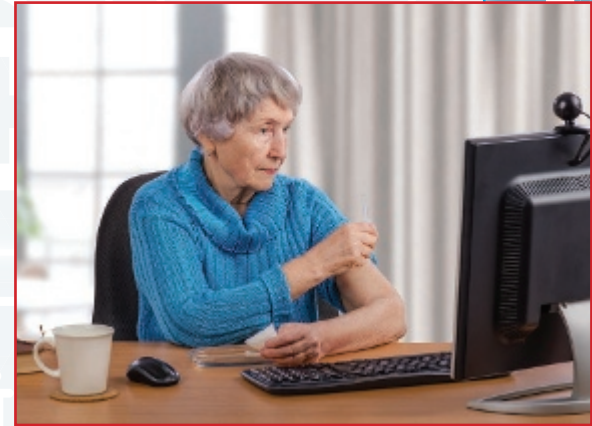
You may have guessed that Jane isn't a real person, although her story is very familiar to many of us.

Now, the at-risk Janes (and Johns) of our corner of the Eastern Shore are being discharged from the hospital armed with a tablet computer, a connecting blood pressure cuff, a pulse oximeter to measure oxygen levels in the blood, a blood glucose monitor, and a scale to measure body weight – the accoutrements of remote patient monitoring.

These devices create a telepresence that allow coordinators at Atlantic General Hospital's Transitions in Care Program, Palliative Medicine Services, and Patient Centered Medical Home to monitor vitals on a daily basis and provide intervention if the data show that a patient's health is deteriorating. The telemedicine technology enables a type of remote patient care that serves as a bridge between visits with the doctor.

### Palliative Care

In addition to remote monitoring of discharged at-risk patients, this technology is used to provide palliative care in a virtual environment. The goal of palliative care is to relieve symptoms caused by a long-term illness.



Palliative care is provided by a specially-trained team of doctors, nurses and other specialists who work together with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness, and it can be provided along with treatment.

You can expect relief from symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping. Palliative care helps you carry on with your daily life. It improves your ability to go through medical treatments. It helps you better understand your condition and your choices for medical care. In short, you can expect the best possible quality of life.

Currently, the telehealth program can treat up to 30 patients at a time, thanks in part to a grant from a grant from the USDA. Future plans include expanding the program to accommodate a larger patient population.

# A bridge across the Chesapeake

## Telemedicine brings specialized lung cancer treatment to patients of the Regional Cancer Care Center

Atlantic General's cancer center physicians are working with specialists at University of Maryland, in Baltimore, to provide additional expertise and access to the community. In cooperation with the University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center – recognized as a National Cancer Institute Dedicated Comprehensive Cancer Center – our providers are offering high-quality care through virtual technology including

telemedicine conferencing. Such tools allow providers to interact with patients – and each other – in ways that are most convenient and best-suited to meet patients' medical needs. This includes access to second opinions and virtual follow-up visits.

The first patients to benefit from this telemedicine arrangement are those undergoing treatment for lung cancer, who can receive care and guidance from pulmonologist Peter Costantini, MD, medical oncologists

Rabindra Paul, MD, and Roopa Gupta, MD, of Atlantic General's Regional Cancer Care Center, and thoracic oncology surgeons at the University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center. All without leaving Berlin.

In future months, the program will be expanded to address other types of cancer, with fully realized oncology telemedicine services in the new Regional Cancer Care Center, scheduled to open in spring of 2018.

## About Telemedicine at AGH ...

Atlantic General Hospital's experience with telemedicine began with the launch of Maryland eCare to provide around-the-clock remote monitoring of ICU Patients. Shortly thereafter, AGH expanded much-needed behavioral health services in 2011 through a telemedicine partnership with therapists at Sheppard Pratt, a psychiatric hospital in Towson, MD. Another such partnership – this time with Baltimore-based Kennedy Krieger Institute – was forged in 2014 to provide diagnosis and treatment of developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, in children.

In 2015, AGH partnered with Berlin Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (BNRC) to provide telemedicine care for patients discharged to BNRC for rehabilitation services.

In 2016, family physician Diane Ceruzzi, DO, began seeing some of the patients at her Pocomoke practice remotely, in between her wound consultations at Atlantic General Hospital's Wound Care Center, on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



# AGH on the Front Lines of the Opioid Epidemic

**By Carolyn Miller Cragway R.N., ADN, PCMH Care Coordination,  
Clinical Nurse Expert for Addictions**

At Atlantic General Hospital, we strive to stay abreast of the issues affecting the ones we care for and about – even when they are outside our four walls. One of the public health issues most frequently in the news is the increasing use of opioids and their devastating impact across the country. Atlantic General recognizes that our community is not immune to this nationwide epidemic. AGH tracks the number of opioid overdose cases that come through our emergency department. We were dismayed to find that, at current rates, we will see close to 200 cases this year alone. This is an increase from 2013 of 25.

We are working hard to decrease the impact drug addiction has on our community members. Our efforts range from changing the prescribing culture among our medical staff and community physicians and providing educational and support resources to victims of addiction to identifying additional addictions treatment and pain management services for our friends and neighbors affected by this crisis.

Here are some of the efforts we

have undertaken or are currently working on to making our community healthier and safer:

AGH has adopted the Maryland Hospital Association and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for safe prescribing internally and have changed our policies and practices that relate to opioid prescribing in our emergency room and urgent care centers as well as our hospital and health system as a whole.

We are forging partnerships with our local law enforcement agencies, county officials, and our health departments to improve care in our community. AGH works with community organizations such as Worcester County Warriors, the Worcester Addictions Cooperative Service (WACS) Center, and Hudson Health Services to name just a few, so we can have a community-wide leadership and partner role and provide assistance where needed. AGH has formed its own Opioid Taskforce and some of its members also serve on the Worcester County Opioid Awareness Taskforce and Drug and Alcohol councils.

AGH has a dedicated clinical nurse expert for addictions who is available to staff for questions related to patient care and resources. AGH strives to educate our staff and physicians on current best practices in pain management and opioid prescribing so that we don't contribute to this growing problem.

Our AGH Healthy Happenings Program arranged the Addiction Hurts community event, with the New Castle County (DE) Police Heroin Alert initiative, Marie Allen, author of “Dope Help,” and the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office. The event, held in January of 2017, was free to anyone interested in attending to help educate the community on this epidemic and provide prevention and treatment resources. Worcester County Health Department was able to train and certify 12 individuals in the use of Naloxone, the drug used to treat opioid overdose.

AGH partners with CRISP, the health information exchange for Maryland.

Within CRISP is a drug monitoring

**See EPIDEMIC, p.9**

# Volunteering: *Feeling good by doing good*

Discover the benefits of donating your time and talents.

Whether it's bringing a smile to someone who's sick or running an errand for a busy staff member, our volunteers make such a difference in how Atlantic General Hospital runs each day. In addition to their time, they give support, encouragement and compassion.

But our volunteers quickly find out that volunteering isn't just about giving. They often tell us how much they get out of their experience.

"Volunteering here has been so rewarding," says Jan. "Each time I volunteer, I come away feeling like I made someone's life a little better."

We want you to become a volunteer too. Volunteering at Atlantic General is a great chance to interact with our community, to add variety to your life, and to use your skills and interests to help others.

There are both mental and physical health benefits to volunteering. Studies have shown that donating your time can help you feel more connected, thereby warding off depression and loneliness. But, there is increasing evidence that you can improve your physical health, including lowering your blood pressure and reducing stress levels. A longer lifespan has also been linked with volunteerism.

Almost anyone can volunteer—after all, there are many tasks that need doing. Whether you can give minutes or hours of your time, we're happy for your help.



Right now, we really need volunteers to help in the hospital's thrift shop and Emergency Department. Volunteers:

- Greet people.
- Visit patients.
- Run errands for staff.
- Process and deliver mail.
- Work at the information desk.
- Help with administrative tasks.
- Sort, stock and sell items in the AGH thrift shop.

Take the next step. At Atlantic General, put your interests into action and help others at the same time. To learn more about how you can get involved, call 410-641-9678 or visit [www.atlanticgeneral.org](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org) and click on Volunteer.

## PET/CT Now Available in Worcester County

Starting May 18, Atlantic General's Regional Cancer Care Center is offering PET/CT scans every other Thursday in partnership with Insight Imaging's mobile imaging coach.

PET/CT is an imaging procedure that provides physicians with information about the body's chemistry, cell function and exact location of disease. The technology combines the images of cellular function captured by the PET scans with those captured by the CT scan, which provides the anatomic

location of body structures. For oncology patients, PET/CT is used to determine the exact location and stage of cancerous tissue and can prevent unnecessary surgery and biopsies and inappropriate treatments.

**Your doctor can schedule a PET/CT scan with us by calling 1-866-235-7226.**

The mobile imaging coach will be located on the north side of the Atlantic Health Center, at 9714 Healthway Drive, Berin, MD.

ATLANTIC GENERAL *Campaign*  
FOR THE  
*Future*

Financial support is crucial to bridging the gap between the cost of modern medicine and the growing needs of our community.

We are pleased to announce that we have secured almost \$3,000,000 of the \$10,000,000 goal in pledges, commitments and grants for the Atlantic General Campaign for the Future, which will help fund five major healthcare initiatives for our residents and visitors.

But, we still need the community's support for...

**John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center**

**Modernization of our Inpatient Care Area**

**Modernization of our Surgical Facilities**

**Expansion of the AGH Emergency Department and Outpatient Services**

**The New Atlantic General Women's Health Center**

To learn how you can support the Atlantic General Campaign for the Future, visit [atlanticgeneral.org/campaign](http://atlanticgeneral.org/campaign) or contact Atlantic General Hospital Foundation at [foundation@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:foundation@atlanticgeneral.org).

# Centers of Care ... that *Care*

*Our medical specialists and clinical staff are with you every step of the way.*



## **Atlantic General Hospital**

### **Atlantic General Endoscopy Center**

10231 Old Ocean City Blvd., Suite 205  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6800

### **Atlantic General Bariatric Center**

10231 Old Ocean City Blvd., Suite 207  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9568

### **Behavioral Health Services**

9714 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-3340

### **Regional Cancer Care Center**

10231 Old Ocean City Boulevard  
Suites 208 & 210  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6888

### **Wound Care Center**

10231 Old Ocean City Blvd., Suite 104  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6863

### **Sleep Disorders Diagnostic Center**

9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9726

### **Developmental Health Telemedicine**

9714 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-3340

### **Diabetes Education Program**

9714 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9703

## **Atlantic General Pain Center**

9714 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6321

## **Center for Joint Surgery**

9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9189

## **Designated Stroke Center**

9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811

## **Eunice Q. Sorin Women's Diagnostic Center**

9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9215

## **Atlantic General Health System**

### **Atlantic General Dermatology**

38394 Dupont Highway, Suite F  
Selbyville, DE 19975  
302-564-0001

### **Atlantic General Urology**

10231 Old Ocean City Boulevard  
Suite 206  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6277

### **Atlantic General Women's Health Center**

12308 Ocean Gateway, Suites 5 & 8  
West Ocean City, MD 21842

Gynecology  
443-728-1050

Women's Imaging  
443-728-1090



# Calendar of Events

## Hypertension Clinics

*First Monday of every month*

Apple Discount Drugs, Berlin

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Walgreens, Ocean Pines

1 – 3 p.m.

*First Tuesday of every month*

Rite Aid, Selbyville

1 – 3 p.m.

Walgreens, Clarksville

1 – 3 p.m.

*First Wednesday of every month*

Rite Aid, Berlin

1 – 3 p.m.

Rite Aid, Ocean Pines

1 – 3 p.m.

*Third Wednesday of every month*

Walgreens, Bethany Beach

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Walgreens, Selbyville

1 – 3 p.m.

## Stroke Support Group

*Last Thursday of each month*

2 – 3 p.m.

Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1

For more information, contact Dawn Denton at

410-641-9268 or [ddenton@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:ddenton@atlanticgeneral.org).

## Diabetes Support Group

Ocean Pines

*First Wednesday of every month*

7 – 8 p.m.

Ocean Pines Library

Berlin

*First Monday of every month*

6 – 7 p.m.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

For more information, contact the Diabetes

Outpatient Education Program at 410-641-9703.

## NAMI Lower Shore Family Support Group

*Second Tuesday of each month* • 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Atlantic Health Center Conference Room, Berlin

For more information, contact Carole Spurrier, NAMI

Lower Shore Representative, at 410-208-4003 or

[carolespurrier@msn.com](mailto:carolespurrier@msn.com).

## Parkinson's Disease Support Group

*Second Tuesday of each month* • 2:30 – 4 p.m.

Ocean Pines Library

For more information, contact Ron and Mary Leidner

at 410-208-0525.

## Groundbreaking Ceremony for the

New John H. "Jack" Burbage

Regional Cancer Care Center

Wednesday, June 7, 2017 • 2 p.m.

Healthway Drive, Berlin

Call 410-641-9600 or

email [lclark@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:lclark@atlanticgeneral.org) to RSVP.

Rain date June 8, 2017

**Want more information about upcoming events or health news that comes directly to your inbox? Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at [www.atlanticgeneral.org](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org).**

## EPIDEMIC, from p.6

tool that allows us to review the narcotic prescription history for anyone in Maryland before we prescribe any medications. This tool helps us identify drug-seeking behavior so we can refer patients for the appropriate addictions treatment. Through a grant with the Worcester County Health Department (WCHD) we have been able to train more than 75 providers, pharmacists and nurses.

We are fortunate to have also recruited a pain management specialist, Dr. Wadid Zaky, who has extensive training and experience in providing effective therapeutic alternatives to prescription opioids for patients with

servera chronic pain issues, while weening patients off of these types of medications.

When combined with the chronic disease and pain management workshops through AGH Healthy Happenings, safer methods of pain management are available to community members. The workshops are offered at various places and times throughout our community. If you are interested, you can call Dawn Denton at 410-641-9268 for more information.

Atlantic General is currently partnering with WCHD, Hudson Health, and the WACS Center on multiple grant applications to further address opioid

addiction and overdose on the Eastern Shore. Receiving grant funding will help improve access to treatment and provide quicker response times when individuals are in crisis.

Atlantic General Hospital strives to serve and educate our community in ways that have the most effective impact on the crisis that drugs and drug addiction have created on a local level. If you would like more information about opioid addiction and overdose prevention, contact the Worcester County Health Department, the WACS Center in West Ocean City or Atlantic General's Clinical Nurse Expert at 410-629-6439. If you or a family member is in crisis, please call 211.

# New Faces & Places

Atlantic General Hospital and Health System recently welcomed the newest members of the Board of Trustees:



**James Ryan Bergey, III** is a Berlin native, certified public accountant and a member of Bergey and Company, P.A., with offices in Berlin, Md. He has been a practicing accountant since 2006 and holds bachelor's degrees in both accounting and finance from the University of Maryland. Bergey is a member of the finance committee of Atlantic General Hospital, and is on the board of directors of Calvin B. Taylor Banking Co., and Hudson Health Services, Inc.



**The Honorable Charlotte Kerbin Cathell** was first sworn into office as the Register of Wills for Worcester County on December 3, 1998. A lifelong resident of Worcester County, Cathell is married to Judge Dale R. Cathell (retired). She is on the AGH Foundation Board of Directors and the corporate board. Cathell was a founder and president of Worcester County G.O.L.D. (Giving Other Lives Dignity), is currently a member and former vice-president of the Worcester County Commission for Women and is on the board of directors of Calvin B. Taylor Banking Co.



**Kieran Py, MD**, provides family medicine care at Atlantic General Primary Care in Ocean View, DE. Dr. Py joined Atlantic General Health System in February 2017 after completing his family medicine residency at Northwell Health's Southside Hospital in Bay Shore, NY. He completed his medical education at Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, West Indies, performing his clinical rotations at teaching hospitals in Long Island, Brooklyn and Queens, NY. Dr. Py is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Medical Association. Dr. Py is currently accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment or for more information, please call 302-541-4460.

The new **Atlantic General Women's Health Center** in West Ocean City is now open to provide state-of-the-art treatment in a convenient location with flexible scheduling that allows patients to get all their women's health preventive screenings during a single visit. An open house and ribbon cutting ceremony were held in late March to celebrate the opening.

The center is staffed with some of the areas most respected women's health providers, including **Lisa Bayles, DNP, CRNP; Brandi Musselman, MD, Christine Neto, MD; Nicki Akstinas, CRNP; and Kevin J. Lee, MD**. Services include physician consultations, diagnostic imaging, 3D mammogram screenings, biopsies, lab services, pre-conception counseling and pregnancy testing. For more information, visit [atlanticgeneral.org/womenshealth](http://atlanticgeneral.org/womenshealth). For gynecology consultations, call 443-728-1050. For women's imaging, call 443-728-1090.



**G. Hale Harrison**, an Ocean City native, is vice president of operations and real estate for Harrison Group Resort Hotels in Ocean City, Md. Harrison serves as a director and is past president of the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association (OCHMRA), and is on the board of directors of Calvin B. Taylor Banking Co. He has also served as a member of the Atlantic General Hospital Foundation Board, the Town of Ocean City's Tourism Advisory Board, the Town of Ocean City's Tourism Commission, and the Ocean City Development Corporation Board of Directors.



**Greg Shockley**, owner of Shenanigan's Irish Pub in Ocean City, Md., was the 2012 recipient of the Paul Hazard Award, named after one of the original Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association (OCHMRA) members. Shockley is a founding member of the Boardwalk Development Association, helping to implement \$5 million in boardwalk improvements, and serves on the Maryland tourism development board. He has also served as president of the Ocean City Development Corporation and the OCHMRA.



# Healthcare Reform: *What Does that Really Mean?*

Atlantic General Hospital and Health System shifted its focus long ago, from treating a given illness or injury when there is an acute need to caring for a person's entire wellbeing over his or her lifetime. However, there are obstacles to providing this type of care that are being reduced, or at least shifted, by recent changes in healthcare policy as well as information technology (IT).

Several years ago, if you ended up in the ER with extreme dehydration caused by high blood sugar levels, you would be given fluids and the appropriate diabetes medications and told to follow up with your doctor after discharge. Now, we have the electronic systems in place to review your entire medical history upon arrival and properly monitor your condition after

discharge, following up with you if you have not kept your appointment with your doctor or if you get off track with

Now, a care coordinator can see that Jane Q. Patient hasn't filled her diabetes medication, so the nurse

and other organizations are flipping the healthcare model. There are key driving forces in the U.S. that are hastening this paradigm shift.



your medications.

The seemingly impersonal hardware and software technology now found in healthcare organizations, rather than distancing clinical staff, is allowing them to more closely interact with patients and caregivers.

picks up the phone and learns from Jane that she can't afford it. They then discuss available prescription assistance programs that will help her get the medicine she needs.

This is just one example of how Atlantic General

## Value-based Medicine

Value-based medicine is the direct opposite of fee-for-service, which is the traditional payment model for the care doctors and hospitals provide. Fee-for-service is reimbursing a provider for each patient-provider interaction. With this model, there is no financial incentive to coordinate the care that Provider A is giving with the care that Provider B is giving. This can lead to costly duplication of services or even inadvertent harm to the patient's health.

Hence the shift to value-based models that are focused on rewarding

[See REFORM, p.12](#)

## Pres, continued from p2

along with our oncology team here via telemedicine, to complete the patient examination and develop the right treatment plan together.

If the patient needs to go to the University of Maryland for specialized surgery or other treatment, follow-up care may also be provided here in our community through telemedicine and our local oncology team. This minimizes the travel and discomfort for patients and family members, and creates a safer care environment.

Our advances in cancer care are extending beyond telemedicine. Beginning in May, cancer patients can get their PET scans here at AGH. In anticipation of our groundbreaking for the John H. "Jack" Burbage Regional Cancer Care Center in June, we will begin providing PET-CT imaging in partnership with a national imaging company at AGH.

This mobile PET-CT imaging system will allow cancer patients who are newly diagnosed or continuing their follow-up care to stay close to home. This will be the first time this

technology is available in Worcester County, and in the future this program will find its "home" at the new Burbage Regional Cancer Care Center.

We are fortunate to be in a community invested in creating access to advanced care for a region that is growing tremendously. At Atlantic General, we are continuing our commitment to providing the Right Care, with the Right People and the Right Partners, in the Right Place, and being the Right Hospital, right here, close to home.

## Diabetes Outpatient Education Program Receives National Recognition



The prestigious American Diabetes Association Education Recognition Certificate for a quality diabetes self-management education program was recently awarded to the Atlantic General Hospital Diabetes Outpatient Education Program on March 9, 2017. The program was originally recognized in April 2006. ADA believes that this program offers high-quality education that is an essential component of effective diabetes treatment.

The Association's Education Recognition Certificate assures that educational programs meet the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education Programs. Programs that achieve Recognition status have a staff of knowledgeable health professionals who can provide participants with comprehensive information about diabetes management.

To learn more about the Diabetes Outpatient Education Program at Atlantic General Hospital, call 410-641-9703.

## DAISY Winners, Quarters 1 & 2

One Atlantic General Hospital and Health System nurse who goes above and beyond is honored each quarter with a DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses. The award is part of the DAISY Foundation's program to recognize the super-human efforts nurses perform every day.



*From left: Dr. Atif Zeeshan, ICU; Michael Franklin, President and CEO of Atlantic General Hospital; Anne Watson-Waples, RN, DAISY recipient; and Scott Rose, RN, Director of the ICU.*

The winner for Quarter 1 was registered nurse Anne Watson-Waples, who works in the Intensive Care Unit.

The winner for Quarter 2 was Kelly Fox, RN, also of the Intensive Care Unit.

The DAISY Award, created by The DAISY Foundation in Memory of J. Patrick Barnes, honors the extraordinary work nurses around the world do for patients and families each day.



*From left: Colleen Wareing, Vice President, Patient Care Services; Kelly Fox, RN, DAISY recipient; and Dr. Susan Andrews, Medical Director of the ICU.*

Patients and visitors can nominate an Atlantic General Hospital and Health System nurse for the DAISY Award at any time. Nomination forms are available in every hospital department and health system physician office.

from REFORM, p.11

achievement of the Triple Aim: **improving health and lowering costs while also improving the overall patient experience.** While these concepts have been discussed for more than a decade, it wasn't until recently that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and private insurance carriers began experimenting with new payment models to support this change. That comes via the concept of shared savings: if healthcare providers succeed in lowering healthcare costs while improving health, they will be rewarded with a portion of the cost savings. (Changes in existing legislation also had to occur to allow

independent healthcare providers to work together in ways that were previously prohibited.)

### Accountable Care Organizations

This is where Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) come into play. An ACO is a group of hospitals, community physicians and other healthcare providers who maintain direct communication with each other and the patients they have in common to make sure these individuals get the care they need to get healthy and stay that way. If patients remain healthy, then costly healthcare services will not be used for treatment of severe

illness that results in an ER or inpatient admission. Currently, more than 450 ACOs participate in Medicare's shared savings program. According to CMS, more than \$1.29 billion has been saved by keeping Medicare beneficiaries well and out of the hospital since 2012. This covers more than 9 million recipients.

### Bundled Payments

Under a bundled payment model, private insurance companies or Medicare pay a single price for a certain set of services. A good example is a joint replacement.

Rather than a health plan

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reimbursing an independent orthopedic surgeon, the hospital and an independent anesthesiologist separately, the hospital would receive a lump-sum payment to then distribute as appropriate. If the hospital and its partners provide the services for less than the assigned price, while upholding high quality, it will share the savings with the insurance company. Other situations in which bundled payments are being considered are cancer care, maternity, heart bypass surgery and heart attack treatments. Initial results have been mixed, but it can take several years to determine whether quality as well as costs, have improved.

### Capitation

Something a little further down the road for Medicare may be capitation. In this system, a healthcare provider receives an annual patient fee from the insurance company to care for an individual throughout the year. The fee is based on the estimated average cost to treat patients in an insurer's risk pool. If patients are sicker, and therefore require more services than anticipated, the provider doesn't receive higher payment. On the flip side, if the healthcare provider is able to keep its patient population well, it could reduce its own costs of operation and receive the same payment. In the state of Maryland, which has a Medicare waiver and doesn't follow the same reimbursement model as the other 49 states, capitation is already in effect

through the Global Budget Revenue model. And, some managed care plans (MCOs) already pay doctors based on this system.

### MACRA

Until now, most of the federal government's focus on healthcare reform has been directed at large



healthcare organizations. Beginning this year, physician practices that care for more than 100 Medicare recipients will be subjected to similar electronic medical record and quality reporting requirements as hospitals. The new CMS program was created through the Medicare Access & Chip Reauthorization Act (MACRA). All quality data reported this year will serve as a baseline.

In year two of MACRA, Medicare reimbursement to physicians –

whether in the form of penalties for poor performance or bonuses for quality improvement – will be based upon comparison of current efforts to this data. MACRA is encouraging more independent physician practices to join ACOs, where they can receive help to install and use pricey, complex electronic health records software, report the required quality data and demonstrate that they have achieved the Triple Aim.

### Population Health Management

Healthcare organizations and physician practices are still figuring out how to continue to improve the quality of the care they provide while reducing costs, two goals that are seemingly at odds. It stands to reason, that the more effort and resources you use to improve a service, the more expensive that service will become. In the case of healthcare, hospitals are not just improving services within their walls but creating connections outside them.

Until the insurance reimbursement models are fully evolved to support non-traditional efforts (chronic disease self-management education, close monitoring and management of symptoms in the home setting through patient centered medical homes, nutrition and cooking instruction, etc.), to keep patients healthy and away from costly services, hospitals are finding creative ways to offer this type of care. Much of this is occurring through grant funding, partnerships with community agencies to share resources and support from the community itself.

# Know your rights: Designate a family caregiver

According to AARP, more than 771,000 Maryland residents are caring for an older parent or other loved one, helping them to live independently at home. The responsibilities of such caregivers are enormous, and they can be made burdensome when caregivers can't get the information they need to help their loved ones.

The Maryland CARE Act has helped with that. Passed last May, the new law requires hospitals to make reasonable attempts to keep designated caregivers informed about discharge plans and prepare the caregiver for follow-up care needed at home.

The new law dovetails nicely with Atlantic General's efforts to keep discharged patients on the path to health after they leave the

hospital. We believe that both the patient and his or her primary caregiver are critical members of the healthcare team. Much of the work we're doing includes making sure there are no financial or social barriers that prevent patients from following the doctor's orders, and also educating patients and their families – in language they understand – about the importance of keeping follow up appointments with their physicians, following the discharge instructions and taking medications as prescribed.

Effective October 1, 2016, the Maryland CARE Act requires hospitals to:

- Provide your loved one the opportunity to designate a family caregiver
- Inform you, as the designated

family caregiver, when your loved one is to be discharged to another facility or back home

- Give the designated caregiver live or video instructions of the medical or nursing tasks you will need to perform at home

The AARP has created a wallet card that will provide you with quick access to the information you need to know about the Maryland CARE Act the next time you or a loved one is hospitalized. For a copy of the wallet card, visit [www.aarp.org/md/mdcareact](http://www.aarp.org/md/mdcareact) or clip out the card template below.

And, remember it's important to designate a caregiver. He or she plays a crucial role in the patient's care team.

**Cut cards out • Tape front and back of cards together and laminate, if desired • Place in your wallet**



Do you have feedback about the care you received from Atlantic General Hospital and Health System?

## Please, tell us!

We value the opinions of our patients and families. If you have a less than satisfactory experience, please share it with us so we can improve how we provide care. If you have a positive experience we would love to share kudos with our associates, volunteers and medical staff. We strive every day to bring you the best care possible.

There are several ways you can share your opinions with us: **Fill out and return surveys you receive in the mail from NRC Picker.** This agency conducts surveys on our behalf to collect valuable information about our patients' experiences. Survey responses are confidential.

**Fill out a comment card.** These are available in every hospital department and physician office of Atlantic General Health System. Just hand the completed survey to any associate.

**Consider giving to our Grateful Patient Program.** This is a wonderful way to honor a caregiver while sustaining quality healthcare for our communities. More information can be found at [www.atlanticgeneral.org/honoracaregiver](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org/honoracaregiver).

### Send us an email.

Drop us a line at [pr@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:pr@atlanticgeneral.org) and we will respond to your comment or question within 72 hours.

### Write or call.

Letters can be sent to:  
Atlantic General Hospital  
Patient and Family Relations  
9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
Or, call our Patient and Family  
Services Representative at  
410-629-1500.



### VISION

To be the leader in caring for people and advancing health for the residents of and visitors to our community.

### MISSION

To create a coordinated care delivery system that will provide access to quality care, personalized service and education to improve individual and community health.

### VALUES

(Keeping "PATIENTS" at the Center of our Values)

- P** Patient safety first
- A** Accountability for financial resources
- T** Trust, respect & kindness
- I** Integrity, honesty & dignity
- E** Education – continued learning & improvement
- N** Needs of our community – Participation & community commitment
- T** Teamwork, partnership & communication
- S** Service & personalized attention

These values are honored in all we do for our patients, visitors, medical staff, associates, partners and volunteers.

### ETHICAL COMMITMENT

To conduct ourselves in an ethical manner that emphasizes community service and justifies the public trust.

### QUALITY STATEMENT

We deliver care that is accessible, safe, appropriate, coordinated, effective, and centered on the needs of individuals within a system that demonstrates continual improvement.

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## care.together

*care.together is the community magazine published by Atlantic General Hospital and Health System.*

### General Information

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### Physician Referral Line

(410) 629-1500  
(877) 641-4244

### Patient & Family Relations

(410) 641-9654

Michael Franklin, *President & CEO*  
mfranklin@atlanticgeneral.org

Jim Brannon, *Vice President of Professional Services*  
jbrannon@atlanticgeneral.org

Andrew Fowler, *Vice President of Information Services*  
afowler@atlanticgeneral.org

Kim Justice, *Vice President of Planning/Operations*  
kjustice@atlanticgeneral.org

Toni Keiser, *Vice President of Public Relations*  
tkeiser@atlanticgeneral.org

Cheryl Nottingham, *Vice President of Finance/CFO*  
cnottingham@atlanticgeneral.org

Ann Bergey, *Vice President of Quality/Medical Staff Services*  
aebergey@atlanticgeneral.org

Colleen Wareing, *Vice President of Patient Care Services*  
cwareing@atlanticgeneral.org

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**410-289-0065**  
(Open Sat/Sun seasonally)



[atlanticgeneral.org/immediCare](http://atlanticgeneral.org/immediCare)