

# HEALTHLINK

YOUR CONNECTION TO HEALTH & WELLNESS / SUMMER 2025

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» VALLEY HEALTH'S VIRGINIA BRAIN & SPINE  
TEAM HELPED PATIENT ANGIE CLOWER RETURN  
TO HER DAILY ACTIVITIES, PAIN FREE

 **ValleyHealth**

## EXPANDING COVERAGE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Spine care is something we don't think about until we need it, whether an issue arises as a result of trauma or a spinal deformity such as scoliosis finally becomes unbearable. Valley Health has an exceptional spinal team that provides both nonsurgical and surgical care, including minimally invasive and complex surgery. As the community grows, our spinal program has expanded to meet your needs.

We also want to highlight the building of our new rehabilitation tower in partnership with the Michigan-based Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation team. Consolidating all our Winchester-based rehab services at one place, located on the Winchester Medical Center campus, will make it easier to receive care.

Also in this issue, we delve into GLP-1s and learn more about our Stronger Together campaign and how the funds raised will aid in improving our community health. We are so close to achieving our \$20 million goal.

We hope you enjoy your summer issue of *HealthLINK* and stay healthy. As always, Valley Health is proud to be your hometown health care partner and friend.

**On the cover:** Patient Angie Clower received expert care from neurosurgeon Charbel Fawaz, MD, at Valley Health Virginia Brain & Spine.



## Mark Nantz in Additional Leadership Role

Valley Health President and CEO Mark Nantz was recently elected as the chairman of the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA). Nantz previously served as the vice chairman of the organization. The VHHA is an alliance of 111 hospitals and 26 health delivery systems that develops and advocates for sound health care policy in the commonwealth. Nantz's term will be for one year.



### Valley Health System

Serving Our Community by Improving Health

### HealthLink

The magazine of Valley Health System  
Serving the Northern Shenandoah Valley, the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and the surrounding areas

### Valley Health Board Leadership

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- Tonya Smith, Chief Operating Officer
- Walt Sowers, Chief Legal & Compliance Officer
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- N. Travis Clark, Vice President, Operations, Page Memorial Hospital and Shenandoah Memorial Hospital
- Jennifer Coello, Vice President, Operations and Administrator, Warren Memorial Hospital
- Heather Sigel, Vice President, Operations, War Memorial Hospital and Hampshire Memorial Hospital
- Tonya Smith, President, Winchester Medical Center

The information contained in *HealthLINK* is not a substitute for professional medical care or counsel. If you have medical concerns, consult a medical professional. A list of physicians, specialists and other care providers is found at [valleyhealthlink.com/physicians](http://valleyhealthlink.com/physicians).

**Executive Editor:** Rebecca Layne

### Medical Editors:

- Gregory Byrd, MD, Medical Director, Valley Health Medical Group
- Jeffrey Feit, MD, Chief Population and Community Health Officer, Chief Medical Information Officer
- Nicolas C. Restrepo, MD, Quality and Patient Safety Officer
- Kris Maddalena, Chief Nursing Officer, Winchester Medical Center

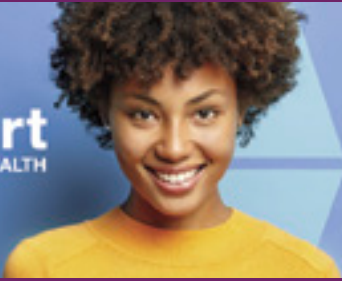
**Health and Wellness Writer:** Sari Harrar

**Photography:** Nick Matheson, Ginger Perry

**Published by:** Diablo Custom Publishing

**HealthLink magazine is published three times a year. Its purpose is to provide health and wellness information to the community and to connect area residents with healthcare experts within Valley Health System.**

- For more information about the many ways we serve the health and wellness needs of the community, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/community](http://valleyhealthlink.com/community).
- For location information, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/locations](http://valleyhealthlink.com/locations).
- Contact [questions@valleyhealthlink.com](mailto:questions@valleyhealthlink.com) or 540-536-5325 to be added to our mailing list; view *HealthLink* online at [valleyhealthlink.com/news](http://valleyhealthlink.com/news).

## MAKE THE MOST OUT OF MYCHART

Valley Health MyChart is a free, easy and secure way to keep tabs on your personal health information.

### Benefits:

- **Immediate test results:** View your test results as soon as they're available.
- **Prescription refills:** Easily request refills for your medications.
- **Appointment reminders:** Never miss an appointment and keep track of important health reminders.

### New Features:

- **Enhanced scheduling:** Schedule appointments for primary care, mammograms and more.
- **Itemized bills:** Access detailed billing information and pay your bills.
- **Tax documents:** Easily find and view your health care spending documents for tax purposes.
- **e-Check-in:** Save time by scheduling primary care appointments and checking in online.



Download the My Valley Health mobile app at [valleyhealthlink.com/mychart](https://valleyhealthlink.com/mychart) or scan QR code to get started.

## Training the Next Generation of Health Care Heroes

At Valley Health, we train tomorrow's health care workforce while delivering exceptional patient care. In 2024, we invested \$15.2 million in health care training to help address nationwide health care worker shortages. We currently offer hands-on educational programs at various locations across our health care system for individuals of all ages and stages of their professional career. Several of our schools offer fully paid programs—such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and EMT—while others are available at an affordable tuition.



- Our **CNA Program**, located at Warren Memorial Hospital, offers a 10-week course to kick-start a rewarding career in patient care, while **EMT** and **Paramedic** programs in Winchester equip students with the skills to provide critical emergency services.
- Our Winchester Medical Center **School of Medical Imaging** trains aspiring technologists in advanced diagnostic imaging techniques, such as X-ray and MRI, preparing them for certification and vital roles in health care.
- The **Cardiovascular Sonography Program**, also located at Winchester Medical Center, focuses on specialized ultrasound training, equipping students with the skills to assess heart and vascular conditions, leading to rewarding careers in this high-demand field.
- For nursing students and new graduates, Valley Health offers a **Nurse Externship Program** and a **Nurse Residency Program** at most hospital locations, blending clinical experience with mentorship to ease the transition into professional practice.
- Our **Community Pharmacy Residency Program** at Valley Pharmacy, based at Winchester Medical Center and Warren Memorial Hospital, is a yearlong training that develops advanced practice pharmacists skilled in medication management, patient counseling and clinical service expansion, while offering opportunities to serve low-income patients and explore specialties like ambulatory care and pharmacy management.
- The **Shenandoah Valley Family Practice Residency**, located in Warren County, provides a rural-oriented, accredited program for medical graduates, fostering skilled family physicians to serve our region.

Visit [valleyhealthlink.com/careers](https://valleyhealthlink.com/careers) and click on our “Learning Opportunities” tab to enroll and find out more about our educational programs.

### New Mental Health Pavilion

The construction of our new Valley Health Mental Health Pavilion is underway on the Winchester Medical Center (WMC) campus. The pavilion will house new youth programs that support mental health and provide treatment for substance use disorders. The center will also expand adult mental health services, including treatment of substance use disorders, thus decreasing the need for social services interventions and reducing fatal overdoses. The Mental Health Pavilion is becoming a reality in part because of the philanthropic support of Valley Health Foundations and the Stronger Together campaign. (Learn more on page 6.)



## A BRIEF LOOK AT ALL THE LATEST NEWS, SERVICES AND HAPPENINGS AT VALLEY HEALTH

### New Gastroenterology Care

Valley Health Gastroenterology is a new practice at Winchester Medical Center at 1870 Amherst St., Suite 3D. Treated conditions include GERD, Crohn's disease and GI cancers. For more information, call 540-536-5840.

### Introducing Valet Parking

Patients entering WMC at the South Tower now have the option to park using our valet service in the Green Lot, available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. The guest services ambassador at the South Tower information desk will assist patients after hours. Valet parking is also available at the Clyde A. Smith Heart & Vascular Center.

### Security Addition

To ensure a safe environment, Valley Health has begun using metal detectors at WMC. This effort will expand to include our other hospitals and facilities throughout the year.

### Practice Relocation

Valley Health Winchester Family Practice has moved from 1440 Amherst St. to 230 Costello Drive, Suite B. The new practice name is Valley Health Primary Care | Costello Drive, and the providers are Nandita Subedi, MD; Kaitlyn Garnett, PA; Reed Larson, PA; Justin Lipsey, PA; Sarah Chrisman, NP; and Anne Weiss, NP. The phone and fax numbers remain the same.

### Advanced Imaging at Spring Mills

New state-of-the-art MRI and computed tomography machines are now available at Valley Health | Spring Mills, providing residents with the only outpatient MRI option in Berkeley County and enhanced access to outpatient medical imaging services.



### Immersive Colon Experience

A large inflatable colon went on a road show through Valley Health hospitals this spring to showcase the inner workings of a human colon. Visitors were able to walk through the structure and view what a healthy and unhealthy colon look like.



# Addressing Critical Health Needs

Valley Health partners with local nonprofits through grant program

**T**welve nonprofit organizations are recipients of Valley Health's 2025 Community Partnership Grants, which support local organizations in their efforts to address critical health needs.

This year, Page Alliance for Community Action (PACA) received the top grant award of \$50,000. Overall, the one-year grants totaled \$190,000. In addition to the top grant, four organizations received \$25,000 awards, three received \$10,000, and four received \$2,500 mini-grants (see sidebar for all grant recipients).

The Community Partnership Grants program is anchored in a broad understanding of community health and the varied influences that contribute to a healthy community. "In addition to access to quality health care, many other factors impact the health of our communities, such as economic stability, safe housing, education, job opportunities and access to nutritious foods," says Jason Craig, Valley Health's director of community health.

With the grant funding, PACA proposes to establish a pilot program to strengthen the local fresh food network in Page County and southern Shenandoah County. The program will connect community gardens and local producers to market opportunities while also offering community supported agriculture options to ensure that residents in the rural region have access to fresh, healthy food.

"Food insecurity is an issue in rural areas, like Page and Shenandoah counties, that is exacerbated by a lack of grocery stores and

the availability and affordability of fresh food, forcing residents to rely on processed or low-nutrient foods," says Megan Gordon, PACA program director. "The proposed pilot program will be an important step to improve access to healthy food choices."

Community Partnership Grant recipients were selected through a competitive application process that evaluated how their proposed projects align with Valley Health strategies, including health education and navigation, mobile health, telehealth, transportation, behavioral health and community collaborations.

"We understand that the health of our community and the health of the individuals we care for is determined by much more than what goes on inside Valley Health's hospitals and medical facilities," says Jeffrey Feit, MD, chief population and community health officer. "It is a privilege to partner

with other organizations that are working to improve the overall health and well-being of our region."

To learn more, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/grants](https://valleyhealthlink.com/grants).

## GRANT RECIPIENTS FOR 2025

### \$50,000

- Page Alliance for Community Action (Luray, VA)

### \$25,000

- Horizon Goodwill Industries (Winchester, VA)
- Phoenix Project (Front Royal, VA)
- Strength in Peers (New Market, VA)
- Warren Coalition (Front Royal, VA)

### \$10,000

- Concern Hotline (Winchester, VA)
- Reaching Out Now, Inc. (Middletown, VA)
- Wheels for Wellness (Winchester, VA)

### \$2,500

- Community Markets Inc. (Charles Town, WV)
- Community Works for Page (Abingdon, VA)
- Renewed Life Ministry WV (Kearneysville, WV)
- You're Not Alone Ministry (Winchester, VA)



## CAMPAIGN UPDATE

# Stronger TOGETHER

HEARTS • MINDS • CONNECTIONS



**FUNDRAISING GOAL: \$20,000,000 | RAISED: \$17,000,000**

Stronger Together is a three-year campaign that aims to raise \$20 million by December 2026. The funds raised will enhance cardiovascular capabilities, expand mental health care for teens and adults, and equip mobile health vans to bring lifesaving screenings, vaccines and health care access directly to area residents.

### VALLEY HEALTH LAUNCHED THE SILENT PHASE OF THE CAMPAIGN ON JAN. 1, 2024.

- 454 supporters in year one
- 100 percent of our board members donated to the cause
- Over \$1.1 million given by Valley Health employees to date

## HEARTS

**GOAL:** Expanding and updating current procedure rooms to increase treatment options and reduce wait times.

## MINDS

**GOAL:** Opening a new mental health pavilion that will provide child and adolescent services and expand adult options and access in a supportive, therapeutic environment.

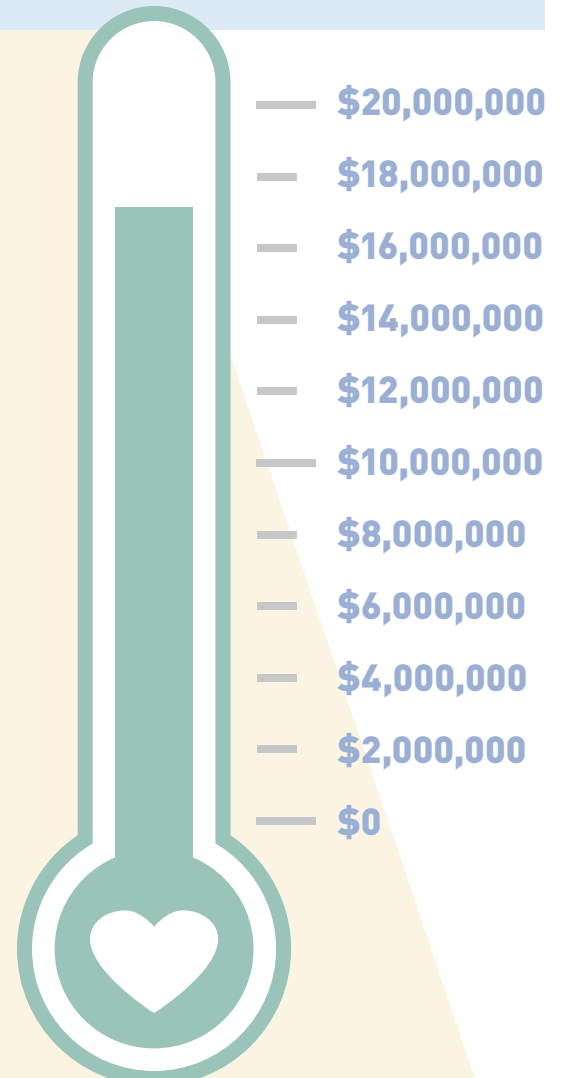
## CONNECTIONS

**GOAL:** Making care possible for anyone, anywhere, by deploying a mobile health mammography unit and mobile health clinic to meet people where they work, worship, and live.

### EVERY GIFT TOUCHES LOCAL LIVES

To support the Stronger Together campaign, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/stronger](https://valleyhealthlink.com/stronger).

For more information on Valley Health Foundations, contact the Foundations at 540-536-6939 or [donations@valleyhealthlink.com](mailto:donations@valleyhealthlink.com).





## RX FOR WEIGHT LOSS

What you need to know about using GLP-1 agonists

**G**LP-1 agonists—diabetes medications that can also help with weight loss—are making headlines as more people use them to shed excess pounds, control high blood sugar, and even protect against heart disease and worsening kidney disease. If you're considering using such medication, here's what you need to know.

"A good candidate for a GLP-1 medication has been struggling with excess weight despite lifestyle changes, has a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes or has a body mass index over 27, with at least one weight-related medical condition such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, prior stroke or a prior heart attack," says Givi Basishvili, MD, a bariatric and minimally invasive

surgeon in Valley Health's Metabolic & Bariatric Program. "Under proper medical and nutritional guidance, people who use them can achieve not only significant weight loss, but also prevent and sometimes cure weight-associated medical conditions."

GLP-1s include semaglutide (Ozempic, Wegovy), tirzepatide (Mounjaro, Zepbound), liraglutide (Saxenda, Victoza) and dulaglutide (Trulicity). These injected medications act like the natural GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide 1) released into your bloodstream when you eat. GLP-1s work for both weight loss and type 2 diabetes. In diabetes treatment, they signal the pancreas to produce insulin, which helps lower blood sugar. They also reduce the amount of

sugar produced by the liver. For weight loss, they slow down how quickly food leaves your stomach, making you feel fuller longer.

"It causes several effects, including insulin release from the pancreas, slowing stomach emptying and suppressing appetite," says Christopher M. Reed, MD, a bariatric and minimally invasive surgeon in Valley Health's Metabolic & Bariatric Program.

The medications are available by prescription from a health care provider. "Early in the course of treatment, you will need to see your health care provider frequently [sometimes every one to two months] to monitor for side effects and slowly increase the dose," says Dr. Reed. (Side effects can include nausea, diarrhea and constipation and usually improve over time.) "Injections are typically administered by the patient at home. Once on a stable dose, you will still require periodic follow-up." Many people take the drugs long term, he adds. "There is growing evidence that patients tend to regain weight when these medications are discontinued, but lifestyle changes can be helpful in limiting this."

Working with your physician to adopt a healthy diet and exercise routine while using a GLP-1 is key. As not all insurances cover GLP-1s outside of diabetes, it is important to understand your own coverage situation.

"At Valley Health, we have a caring and comprehensive team for patients interested in GLP-1 medications," says Dr. Basishvili. "The best way to get started is to call our office at 540-536-0010 and set up an appointment. Our staff can provide guidance and check your insurance for eligibility. No referral is necessary."

To learn more, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/weightloss](https://valleyhealthlink.com/weightloss).



Expert surgical care from Valley Health Virginia Brain & Spine neurosurgeons David Salvetti, MD, and Charbel Fawaz, MD, optimizes outcomes for their patients.

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# State-of-the-Art Spinal Surgery

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VALLEY HEALTH OFFERS ADVANCED SURGICAL TECHNIQUES AND COMPREHENSIVE CARE FOR PATIENTS WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF BACK AND NECK CONDITIONS

## VALLEY HEALTH WELCOMES NEUROSURGEON HEATHER KISTKA, MD



Heather Kistka, MD, has joined Valley Health Virginia Brain & Spine. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's medical school and completed a residency in neurosurgery at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. There, she was drawn to the multi-

disciplinary nature of care for patients with tumors, subspecializing in neurosurgical oncology. Today, Dr. Kistka has a general neurosurgery practice that includes minimally invasive spine procedures; treating herniated discs, pinched nerves, and brain and spine tumors; and performing carpal/cubital tunnel surgery.

**I** am so happy I have my life back," says Angie Clower. Thanks to a remarkable spine surgery at Winchester Medical Center in September, she is cooking breakfast again most mornings at the popular diner she owns. In the afternoons, she plays with her six grandchildren.

Those daily activities had become nearly impossible. Clower, 51, owner of the Romney Diner in Romney, West Virginia, developed scoliosis (a side-to-side curving of the spine) and flat back (loss of the natural curve of the lower back) as an adult, leaving her with severe pain in her back, hips and legs. "My legs would go numb, and I would trip," she says. "I had trouble sleeping. I couldn't stay in one position for more than 20 minutes. Now I sleep great."

Clower's successful procedure illustrates Valley Health's comprehensive approach to spine care for a broad range of back and neck conditions. "The depth and breadth of what we offer is on par with any large university medical center," says Charbel Fawaz, MD, a neurosurgeon at Valley Health Virginia Brain & Spine who performed Clower's surgery. He specializes in minimally invasive spine surgery and complex spine procedures.

"Our team of surgeons and support staff have a high level of expertise. Plus, Valley Health offers advanced technology, so patients experience optimal recovery and results," says Dr. Fawaz. "What makes us really happy is that our patients see real improvements in their quality of life. And they refer their family and friends to us."

### THE SPINE TEAM

At some point in our lives, 80 percent of us will have back or neck pain. Spine conditions can cause discomfort, numbness and difficulty moving the neck, torso, arms or legs, as well as other symptoms. At Valley Health, the diagnosis, management and treatment of back, neck and other spine-related conditions is the work of a team of neurologists, neurosurgeons, pain specialists, rehabilitation specialists and more. Each patient receives individualized care, says Lee Selznick, MD, chairman of the Neurosciences department and chief of neurosurgery.

"We provide both surgical and nonsurgical care for anyone with back or neck problems," says Dr. Selznick. "As our community grows, we grow with it, adding exceptional providers to neurosurgery, pain

management and physical medicine/rehabilitation. We are also developing clinical pathways to get patients to the right provider and service to optimize their treatment with us and with other providers in the community, including those in primary care, physical therapy and chiropractic care."

In other words, it's a "one-stop spine shop," says David Salvetti, MD, a general neurosurgeon at Valley Health Virginia Brain & Spine with expertise in complex multilevel spine surgery, spinal deformity correction and minimally invasive spine surgery.

"The collaborative structure between neurosurgery, pain management and neurology allows for comprehensive care for each patient," says Rehan Waheed, DO, medical director of interventional pain management at Valley Health and a physician with Valley Health Interventional Pain Specialists. "The neurosurgical team led by Dr. Selznick and Dr. Patrick Ireland, [MD], has been instrumental in our effort to build a full-service spine program. We are committed to this goal as a team and continue to see improved outcomes for the community."

**“Valley Health offers advanced technology, so patients experience optimal recovery and results. What makes us really happy is that our patients see real improvements in their quality of life.”**

—CHARBEL FAWAZ, MD



Neurosurgeons  
Charbel Fawaz, left, and  
David Salvetti, right,  
with the surgical team  
at Winchester Medical  
Center.

## PAINFUL CONDITIONS, EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

Up to 90 percent of people with back and neck pain do not require surgery. Nonsurgical, conservative options include physical therapy, chiropractic care, medication, hot and cold compresses, and advanced pain management techniques. For about one in 10 adults with back and neck pain, surgery may be the best option. “We consider surgery when we have exhausted all other options,” Dr. Fawaz says.

The range of spine conditions treated at Valley Health includes cervical and lumbar stenosis (narrowing of the spinal canal), herniated discs (slipped or bulging discs), spine injuries and fractures, tumors, scoliosis, arthritis, osteoporosis and more. Valley Health’s spine team also provides revision surgery—procedures to repair or update previous spine surgery if symptoms return or other areas of the spine degenerate or move out of alignment.

Many common spine conditions can be treated with minimally invasive spinal surgery (MISS). “We work through small incisions instead of opening up an incision four, five or six inches long,” Dr. Fawaz explains.

“MISS is the least disruptive way to get to the spine. Instead of cutting through muscle, we can spread apart the muscle fibers, do our work, then remove the ports we work through and close the incision. We don’t cut blood flow. Muscles stay vitalized and healthy for a faster, easier recovery. There’s less pain and it’s less mentally draining.”

Patients may go home the same day or the next day in many cases. They may return to an office job in as little as two weeks and to a more active job and/or more strenuous physical activity in four to six weeks.

Others may require open surgery, including complex procedures, says Dr. Salvetti.

“Complex surgeries are for more severe conditions,” he says. This may include fusion procedures, placing screws and rods to keep the spine in alignment, removing tumors, correcting deformities, fixing a spinal fracture, or revising a prior surgery. “In general, someone with a spine problem that results in back

“ I had trouble sleeping. I couldn’t stay in one position for more than 20 minutes. Now I sleep great.” —ANGIE CLOWER

pain and possibly leg pain but who also has an alignment problem could benefit from complex surgery. If your daily life is consumed by your back issues and the disability they cause, it may be beneficial.”

For some people, the results are dramatic, Dr. Salvetti notes. “People who were incapacitated are back to an active lifestyle,” he says. “It is the improvement in quality of life that we’re after. A good outcome is to see pain reduced by at least 50 percent.”

### ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

At Winchester Medical Center, surgical suites for spine procedures are equipped with game-changing technology that allows surgeons to achieve a new degree of precision and operative results that reduce pain and improve daily functioning. The neurosurgeons at Valley Health Virginia Brain & Spine, including Drs. Fawaz, Ireland, Salvetti and Selznick along with Heather Kistka, MD, and Robert Maurer, MD, are trained to use these state-of-the-art tools:

- **The Mazor Robotic Guidance System**

“This navigation system brings an unparalleled level of customization and presurgery planning to minimally invasive spine surgery,” Dr. Fawaz says.

The system can be used both during MISS procedures and in the planning and performing of open and complex procedures.

“With Mazor, I can plan the safest angles for inserting screws, the best correction for a rod, and how to work around structures like blood vessels and the spinal cord,” Dr. Fawaz explains. “We can simulate different solutions in advance of the surgery. Without Mazor, we would do this planning in the operating room during a procedure.”

Preplanning can reduce operating time in a complex procedure, so patients spend less time under anesthesia, Dr. Salvetti says. This can make spine procedures possible for older and more frail adults as well as those with diabetes, heart disease and other conditions that might rule out a longer surgery. During a procedure, the Mazor system provides live images of the surgical site, and a special arm guides the surgeon at the precise entry points and angles that were predetermined in the surgical plan.

- **Intraoperative computed tomography (CT)**

This system provides detailed three-dimensional images used two ways: to plan surgery beforehand and in real time for navigation guidance during a procedure.

“The benefits of CT navigation start with safety,” Dr. Salvetti says. “You are working around the spinal cord, around nerves exiting to different parts of the body at every level. This imaging technology allows us to place hardware with even more confidence.”

### BACK TO NORMAL

Clower’s procedure took place over two days and included a fusion of vertebrae in her neck and decompression of vertebrae in her lower back.

“I used minimally invasive techniques and deformity correction techniques,” Dr. Fawaz says. “I used robotics for the hardware implantation as well as the intraoperative CT scan and navigation station to confirm everything was in optimal position.”

In late December, Clower returned to the Romney Diner. “My customers were so excited to see me,” she says. But another fan club closer to home may be even more thrilled. “Now I can get down on the floor to play with my grandchildren and pick them up,” Clower says. “I had missed that.”

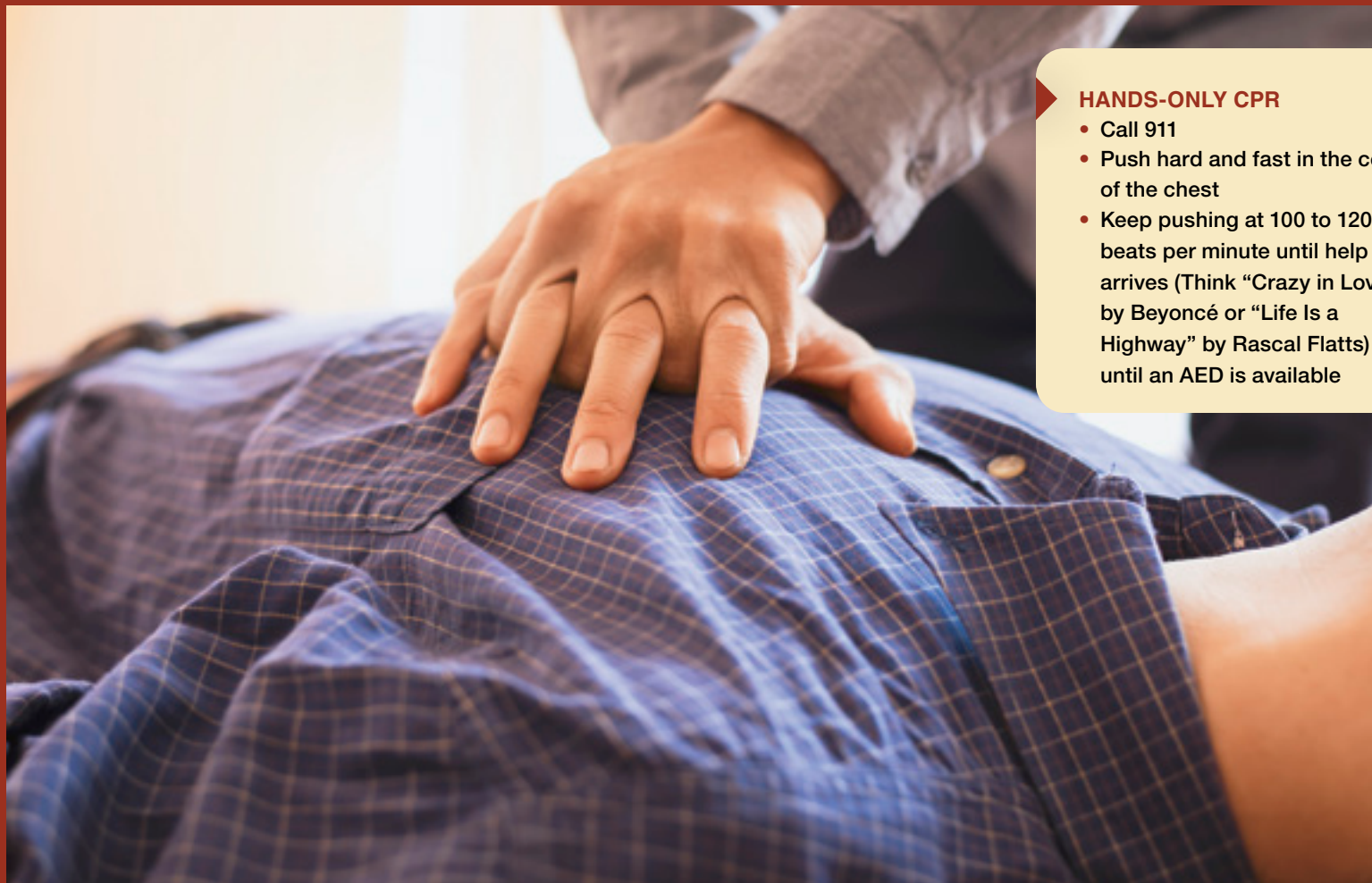


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To learn more, visit [vabrainandspine.com](http://vabrainandspine.com) or call 540-450-0072.

# WHEN EVERY SECOND COUNTS

Immediate efforts, including at-home CPR and treatment from a multidisciplinary team at Valley Health, helped save William Cross's life after he suffered cardiac arrest



## HANDS-ONLY CPR

- Call 911
- Push hard and fast in the center of the chest
- Keep pushing at 100 to 120 beats per minute until help arrives (Think "Crazy in Love" by Beyoncé or "Life Is a Highway" by Rascal Flatts) or until an AED is available

**T**he last thing Clear Brook resident William Cross remembers on Thanksgiving Day 2024 was seeing his wife, Linda, sitting beside him in bed. Ten days later, he awoke from a medically induced coma at Winchester Medical Center (WMC).

William, 67, suffered a heart attack, during which blood flow to his heart was blocked. Once the blood flow was compromised, William went into cardiac

arrest, a medical condition where the heart stops beating. Linda remembers her husband struggling with the sheets that morning. When she looked over, William's face was contorted in an expression of "total distress." He was unresponsive and not making a sound.

Linda immediately called 911. The dispatcher instructed her to get William on the floor and begin CPR. Although Linda

had CPR training years ago, she never had occasion to use it. "The dispatcher reminded me where to position my hands and counted with me the whole time," Linda says.

When the Clear Brook Fire and Rescue EMS team arrived 10 to 15 minutes later, they could not find a pulse. They used an automated external defibrillator (AED) and a portable mechanical chest compression

device on William, stabilizing him as much as possible before getting him into an ambulance bound for WMC. In all, about a half hour had passed from when Linda first saw signs of distress on William's face until his arrival at WMC.

Interventional cardiologist and chest pain medical director Sumeet K. Lall, MD, FACC, FSCAI, quickly assembled the Multidisciplinary Cardiogenic Shock (MCS) Team, which includes an intensivist, a cardiac surgeon, and individuals with cardiology and heart failure experience.

"The multidisciplinary team of caregivers at the hospital was able to transition William smoothly, relying on prehospital communication to bring the care team together early and prepared," says Dr. Lall, who served as the lead on the case. William had already received eight AED shocks for arrhythmia from EMS; Emergency Department care staff continued to maintain mechanical chest compressions and administered four additional shocks. They also intubated William, obtained vital blood tests, and started and increased medications to maintain blood pressure support.

As the MCS team gathered to discuss all available options for William, they employed the use of a mechanical circulatory support device to help stabilize him. Once William was stabilized, the team was able to identify a treatable blockage, leading to the placement of a stent in his heart.

The days William spent with the MCS team in a medically induced coma were "touch and go," according to Linda. But this time allowed for further treatment, which included a pacemaker implant. The couple's two sons and several close friends stayed in contact with William, talking to him as much as possible during the ordeal.

William pulled through and was brought out of the coma on December 8. "Everyone at Valley Health did a super job," says William, who is now almost fully recovered from the ordeal.

Quick thinking by Linda Cross, right, helped manage a medical emergency experienced by her husband, William.



"The entire team worked together for the patient," Dr. Lall says. "There are so many areas where things could have gone wrong, but we followed the protocols to a T." Considering the severity of the case, Dr. Lall remains awed by William's recovery. He attributes the positive outcome to William's lifestyle habits and activity, which supported a strong baseline of health before the event occurred. Dr. Lall also credits the smooth transitions across the multidisciplinary team that cared for William.

Dr. Lall emphasizes the importance of learning the basics of CPR and understanding how to identify when a loved one is ill. "Calling EMS early is important," he says. "The quick reaction of Mrs. Cross in recognizing that something was wrong and then quickly administering CPR saved her husband's life."

Indeed, Linda has a clear message for those who might need to administer aid: "Be familiar with CPR, and don't be afraid to call 911. Don't worry that it might be a false alarm. It could save somebody's life."

Local CPR classes are available through Valley Health Professional Development (540-536-8282) and the Valley Health Wellness & Fitness Center (540-536-3000).

To learn more about heart and vascular services, visit [valleyhealthlink.com/heart](http://valleyhealthlink.com/heart).

## HIGH-QUALITY HEART CARE

The cardiac catheterization lab staff at WMC is a dedicated team of nurses, technologists and doctors trained to treat patients who arrive during a heart attack and are often very ill.

- Since 2006, the team's expertise has earned WMC the **American College of Cardiology's Platinum Level Chest Pain Center Accreditation**. This recognition, the highest possible, attests to consistent high-quality heart care and improved patient outcomes.
- Each year, WMC treats an average of **193 ST-elevation myocardial infarctions**, the most serious and deadly kind of heart attack.

## Signs and symptoms of a heart attack include the following:

- **Chest discomfort**, including pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain
- **Discomfort in other upper body areas**: back, neck, jaw and stomach
- **Shortness of breath**, with or without chest discomfort
- **Other signs** can include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, rapid or irregular heartbeat, feeling unusually tired, or feeling lightheaded



# ADVANCED REHABILITATION CARE CLOSE

Valley Health and Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Partner to Build a New Rehabilitation Tower

In partnership with Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation—one of America’s top 10 rehabilitation centers—Valley Health is building a new state-of-the-art rehab tower on the Winchester Medical Center (WMC) campus. Set to open in late 2026, the \$75 million facility will provide top-quality inpatient and outpatient care close to home with new features for patients and their families.

“Mary Free Bed is a recognized expert in rehabilitation care,” says Tonya Smith, Valley Health chief operating officer and WMC president. “Our partnership with them began in 2024 at our current rehab center on Cork Street in Winchester. Patients will be more aware of Mary Free

Bed at the new rehab hospital. They bring insight, expertise and resources that will help us provide the best possible patient care and recovery.”

## KEEPING THE FOCUS ON PATIENTS

Called the Valley Health Winchester Medical Center Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Tower, the three-story facility will provide services to both adults and children.

Outpatient physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy services will be located on the first floor. “We’re bringing outpatient rehab services together in one place,” says Smith. “There will be a beautiful outdoor space with equipment for pediatric rehab, too.”

The second and third floor will feature an advanced inpatient rehabilitation center with 50 single-bed rooms—larger than Valley Health’s current 30-bed facility. But more patient rooms are just the beginning. “The way we’ve designed every aspect is specifically for the rehab patient,” says Kristin Brooks, vice president, system operations, for Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation. “We want to focus on efficiency during their time here. Even the color palette—including Freedom Orange, Mary Free Bed’s signature color, with bright accents in green, blue and yellow—is meant to energize and motivate patients to reach their end goal: going home to the life they love with family and caregivers.”



# TO HOME

at Winchester Medical Center

## DESIGN FEATURES WILL INCLUDE:

- **Easy access to WMC via a skybridge walkway:** “Patients at WMC who are transitioning to rehab won’t have to be transferred by ambulance,” says Jake Meza, vice president, operations, ambulatory, post-acute and community services at Valley Health. Patients will be able to continue seeing their WMC specialists without getting into a car or waiting until rehabilitation is over—and specialists can easily visit their patients in rehab.
- **Care technology for medically complex cases:** Built-in supplemental oxygen systems (both in patient rooms and in the rehab gym), on-site lung-clearing equipment and on-site kidney dialysis machines

mean the new hospital will be ready for rehab patients who need extra medical attention, says Brooks.

- **Lift systems in hallways and rooms:** “Patients who are unsteady on their feet or not yet able to fully bear their own weight can still practice walking with the lift systems in all units and in hallways,” says Brooks. Some rooms will also have lift systems to move patients safely from their bed to the toilet.
- **Facilities for working on real-life moves:** “We want patients to be able to practice things they would have to do every day at home,” says Brooks. “In the day room, there will be an apartment with a kitchen, laundry room and tub. There’s a car in the gym where people can practice getting in and out. It’s adjustable, moving up and down to simulate the height of your car at home.”
- **Space for loved ones:** “Family and loved ones are so important to patients during and after rehab,” says Brooks. “Our care is designed to integrate them in every way. There’s space in patient rooms if a family member wants to stay overnight, and family and caregivers receive training before a patient is discharged to go back home.” Having high-quality rehab nearby makes it easier for loved ones to visit, get training and support their family member, adds Smith.

## INPATIENT REHABILITATION IN OUR COMMUNITY

Typically used by survivors of stroke, traumatic brain injury, and bodily injuries from falls and accidents, inpatient post-acute rehabilitation is an important step in recovery, Smith says. Patients undergo rehab for a minimum of three hours a day with 24/7 nurse support. The typical stay is about two weeks. The rehab tower will offer advanced equipment and treatment routines and feature the most intensive rehab program in the region, meaning families won’t have to drive long distances or choose less-intensive care options because of proximity, Meza notes. “Partnering with a rehab organization with more than 100 years of experience allows Valley Health to rapidly advance care in this important area,” he says. “Receiving care in a rehab hospital can mean a better recovery.”

A not-for-profit, Mary Free Bed operates a flagship rehabilitation hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with additional locations and partnerships throughout Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, West Virginia and now in Virginia with Valley Health. “Our mission is to restore hope and freedom through rehabilitation,” Brooks says. “Every patient we see has experienced a life-altering injury or diagnosis. In those moments, you can lose your independence—and sometimes, your hope. We focus on helping people reclaim both, so they can return home, rejoin their community and truly thrive.”

## THE MARY FREE BED STORY

In 1891, a philanthropic group of women passed around a little purse in Grand Rapids, Michigan, asking that anyone named Mary or who knew a Mary contribute a dime toward a free bed at a local hospital for people who couldn’t afford health care. That bed grew to become the area’s first pediatric orthopedic clinic in 1920 and began offering rehabilitation services to adults in 1953. In 2024, Mary Free Bed was ranked in the nation’s top 10 Best Hospitals for Rehabilitation by *U.S. News & World Report*. Today, the Mary Free Bed Guild still governs the hospital and plays an important role in community fundraising.



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At Valley Health, we want the people in our community to feel strong, healthy and capable of pursuing their passions — at work, at play, and at home. That's why we offer advanced orthopedic care right here in the Valley.

We'll get you back to your personal best, with a comprehensive approach to care featuring advanced orthopedic technologies including robotics and the latest minimally invasive treatment options. All to minimize pain and recovery time so you can get back to doing what you love most.

**Here's to making the most of every day.**

*Here's to You!*

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