

MEETING SUMMARY

Special Virtual Meeting of the LVHN Board of Associates

Title: Network Update & Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest Emergency Department Update

Speakers: Thomas V. Whalen, MD, MMM, FACHE, CPHQ
Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, LVHN

David B. Burmeister, DO, MBA, CPE, FACEP
Chair, Department of Emergency and Hospital Medicine

Date: Friday, November 20, 2020

Welcome and Orders of Business

This meeting was held online via WebEx with all participants joining virtually.

Board of Associates president Sybil Stershic addressed the membership to start the meeting. She reported that the Executive Committee of the Board of Associates has continued to meet virtually in strategic working groups to address the topics of member relations, marketing, and governance. She thanked all members for their engagement throughout the 2020 season and reminded members that information on past meetings can be found online at [LVHN.org/boardofassociates](https://www.lvhn.org/boardofassociates).

Board of Associates Executive Secretary Erin Ludwig provided a brief update on Membership Renewal, noting that renewal in the 2020 season would be passive. Members will be given the opportunity to update their information, but are not required to complete a renewal to be advanced to the 2021 season of Board of Associates programming. She also reminded members that the [LVHN Community Annual Meeting](#) would be held virtually on Wednesday, December 2nd.

Erin noted that members should expect a full slate of Board of Associates programming in 2021, which will be conducted virtually until determined that it is safe to meet in person again.

Network Update

Dr. Tom Whalen, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of LVHN, provided the network update.

Dr. Whalen began with an update on the fight against COVID-19. The number of cases in Pennsylvania and in LVHN hospitals has been rising. He noted that we are in the middle of this pandemic and we must remain diligent.

At the time of the meeting, LVHN ICUs were not overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients, which he attributed through gaining valuable experience and learned how to provide the best possible care:

- At the start of the pandemic, LVHN was seeing what hospitals throughout the northeastern U.S. were seeing, with mortality rates for patients on a ventilator between 80% and 90%.
- However, LVHN started to change that by gathering data about how to best use Remdesivir and other medications, about the most effective mechanical ventilator settings, about proning patients on ventilators, about the use of convalescent plasma and more.
- Colleagues then collaborated with one another to share information and best practices to care delivery methods that achieve optimal results.
- According to data from all hospitals using Epic, the ventilator mortality rate is now right around 50%. That is what we are seeing at LVHN.
- The good news is that the network continues to lower that rate by gathering more evidence, learning and sharing with one another.

Dr. Whalen shared a story as an example of the quality of LVHN's COVID-19 care, the power of partnerships and the number of health care professionals it takes to care for the most severe COVID-19 cases. In this instance, it took literally hundreds of colleagues:

- 21-year-old Luis Hesmhant of Allentown came to LVH–Cedar Crest on April 3 because he was having trouble breathing. He had already been diagnosed with COVID-19 by another health care organization.
- Once he arrived, his condition deteriorated rapidly. Within 24 hours he had to be intubated.
- The LVH–Cedar Crest team says that among the more than 1,200 COVID-19 patients they cared for in the hospital, Luis was the sickest.
- During his hospitalization, he lost kidney function. His lungs were badly damaged. He received a tracheostomy, feeding tube and chest tube.
- He had bilateral hemorrhagic conjunctivitis (bloody eyes), critical illness neuropathy/myopathy and other complications.
- After receiving care in the ICU for two months, he was transferred to the Inpatient Rehabilitation Center at Cedar Crest, where he received care for another three weeks.
- Luis finally went home on June 25 after spending more than 80 days in the hospital.
- Today, Luis says he feels “100 percent.”
- This story epitomizes the quality of our care across multiple specialties, the power of working together as health care partners, as well as our commitment to our patients, colleagues and community.

In the theme of good news, Dr. Whalen also reported that LVHN was recently certified as a [Great Place to Work](#).

- To achieve this certification, 5,000 colleagues were surveyed.
- 83% of colleagues say LVHN is a great place to work. At a typical company, only about 59% of employees would say they work at a great place. Here are more results from the LVHN survey:
 - 92% of colleagues feel good about the ways we contribute to the community.
 - 89% said that when they look at what we accomplish, they feel a sense of pride.
 - 89% said that when you join our health network, you are made to feel welcome.
 - And 88% of colleagues said they are proud to tell others that they work here.
- Results like these will help LVHN attract the best and brightest health care professionals to LVHN and retain the amazing colleagues we already have.

Dr. Whalen also congratulated our nursing team for earning [Magnet](#) recognition for the fifth consecutive time:



- About 500 health organizations are currently recognized by the Magnet program, and only 23 (including Lehigh Valley Hospital) have earned this distinction five times. That puts LVHN among the top 4% of Magnet hospitals worldwide.
- LVHN received six Magnet **exemplars**, which means our nurses shined in areas such as the following:
 - Nurses' participation in interprofessional collaborative practice is deeply embedded in our culture.
 - Our work with the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program makes a significant impact on population health.
 - Our nurse satisfaction data outperformed benchmark data.
 - Door-to-balloon data from the cath labs at LVH–Cedar Crest and LVH–Muhlenberg outperformed the mean.
 - Home Care's "improvement in ambulation" data outperformed the mean.
 - The implementation of innovative technology such as iPads for virtual visits, COVID-19 contact tracing through our infection control application in Epic and the implementation of virtual nurse discharges were exemplary.

LVHN also recently announced upcoming leadership changes in the organization.

First, Matt Sorrentino, who had been serving in two roles for the past 15 months as both the President and CEO of HNL Lab Medicine and LVHN's Chief Legal Officer, will move into his HNL role full time. A search is being conducted for LVHN's new Chief Legal Officer.

Next, Terry Capuano, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, will retire at the end of the year.

- Terry joined the LVHN in 1982. During her career, she served as Patient Care Services Division Director and Administrator, Vice President of Operations at LVH–Muhlenberg, Senior Vice President of Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer (1999), and Chief Operating Officer (2010).
- Under her leadership, Lehigh Valley Hospital was designated as a Magnet Hospital for the first time in 2002.
- Terry will be with LVHN through December. A national search will be conducted to find Terry's successor.

Dr. Whalen also announced his own retirement.

- He had a full and successful career as a medical officer in the U.S. Navy before joining LVHN in 2006 as Chair of the Department of Surgery.
- As LVHN's Chair of Surgery, he recruited countless talented surgeons and spurred the development of our surgical specialties, ranging from oncologic, urologic, robotic, thoracic and pediatric surgery, and many more.
- He established LVHN as a regional campus for the University of South Florida College of Medicine as part of our SELECT medical school program and solidified a comprehensive medical student curriculum.
- Tom will be with LVHN through February.

Dr. Whalen reported that LVHN continues to grow and give even more people access to LVHN's world-class care:



In July, the network opened a new [inpatient oncology unit](#) at LVH–Cedar Crest. It has 22 private rooms and is designed to meet the unique needs of our patients with cancer.

In December, the [new emergency department and observation unit](#) will open at LVH–Cedar Crest. This state-of-the-art acute care facility is designed to provide ultimate flexibility for the coordination of care in a welcoming and comfortable environment for patients and their families. When this new facility opens, construction will begin to expand the Children’s ER.

LVHN is expanding other areas of Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital. The network will add four beds to the pediatric intensive care unit, bringing the total to 12, as well as a family consultation room, state-of-the-art critical care monitoring and new elevator lobby space. Work is expected to be complete in summer 2021.

Thanks to the generosity of the Hecht family, the façade and lobby of what is now the Hecht Family Children’s Specialty Center was renovated to give kids and families the warm welcome they deserve. The colorful lights outside the center now continue along the front of the building to the Children’s Hospital lobby.

At LVH–Muhlenberg, LVHN is pursuing Level II Trauma Accreditation. The trauma program went live July 1. Since then, dozens of trauma patients were admitted there, eliminating the need for them to be transferred. LVH–Muhlenberg now has 24/7 coverage from an in-house trauma surgeon, OR team and neurosurgery; expanded orthopedics trauma coverage; and a new helipad is coming soon. A site survey for full accreditation is set for June 2021.

Construction of [LVH–Hecktown Oaks](#) is progressing. When it opens in summer 2021, people in Northampton County will have convenient access to the specialized care they need.

In September, LVHN’s Board approved the purchase of land for the site of [LVH–Carbon](#). It is located on Route 443 in Mahoning Township, adjacent to the Borough of Lehighton. This project will move forward in FY21. The network has also purchased land along Route 715 in Tannersville, the site of LVH–Pocono West. This project also will move forward in FY21.

Dr. Whalen also announced that construction is underway on a new LVHN hospital in [Dickson City](#), which is just outside Scranton in Lackawanna County. This is the continuation of a project that was started by Coordinated Health prior to the acquisition.

Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest Emergency Room Featured Presentation

Dr. David Burmeister introduced himself and provided an update and review of the new adult Emergency Room at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest, which opened to the public on Tuesday, December 8.

Dr. Burmeister briefly reviewed the network’s goals; improving colleague engagement, managing the COVID-19 pandemic, providing greater access and convenience to LVHN services, and managing costs.

Dr. Burmeister also reviewed some of the national trends and challenges that impacted the decision to build the new ER, including an overall decrease in the number of hospitals nationally, an increase in the share of sicker patients being seen, an aging population in our region, consolidation of inpatient beds within hospitals, and the unpredictability of how a community's needs for emergency services can change, as seen by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He reviewed some of the changes between the new ER and the existing facility. The new facility increases adult ER beds from 42 to 97 and eliminates hallway spaces. The building also includes a new Observation Unit with 59 adult beds and 12 pediatric beds. The trauma center has been relocated to the new building with three bays and room to expand to four, and a Code Omega room for emergent procedures. The second phase of the project, expanding the Children's ER, will double the pediatric beds from 12 to 24.

Dr. Burmeister shared some of the renderings and construction photos of the facility. He highlighted the expansive welcome and waiting area, which provides ample room for social distancing. He also noted that there is a new public café that will be accessible from both the Adult ER entrance and Children's ER entrance.

He highlighted the new Observation Unit which has a separate discharge area. The dedicated unit will allow patients to more clearly understand their admission status.

Dr. Burmeister showed photos of the patient rooms, which are organized into Pods with dedicated staff and resources. The rooms have a wide range of flexibility to be able to handle the needs at the time. He also showed the new Emergency Behavioral Health unit which is a separate, secure unit.

The facility also features its own acute care laboratory which will result in faster, more efficient lab results. Dr. Burmeister showcased the MRI, which has a number of customized facility components. He showed the helipad, which is located on the roof of the one-story structure and features two vehicle spaces and its own fueling station.

Question and Answer

Questions were submitted by members in advance.

1. How is the hospital preparing for COVID-19 vaccine delivery and distribution?

Lehigh Valley Health Network has significant experience with mass vaccination. The challenges revolve around refrigeration and administration with at least one vaccine needing two separate administrations. As of the morning of the meeting, Pfizer and partner BioNTech had applied for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). The FDA will scrutinize the data on the 44,000 people enrolled in the clinical trial to determine if the vaccine is safe and effective. The trial has found the vaccine to be approximately 95% effective. Moderna is expected to be the next company to apply for EUA with a similar capacity to vaccinate.

The distribution will occur in three phases

- Frontline health care providers



- High risk individuals
- The rest of the general community

LVHN is identifying the groups and working with employee health to complete a mapping process and implementation based on how the vaccine will be distributed to health care organizations.

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit [LVHN.org/vaccine](https://lvhn.org/vaccine).

2. Will the Access Road to the new ER at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest change?

No, but the ER will now be accessible from both the Cedar Crest Boulevard and Fish Hatchery Road entrances.

3. Will ER Physicians or Hospitalists care for patients in the Observation Unit?

Hospital medicine providers will care for patients in the Observation Unit.

4. Our health care consumers are getting increasingly more interested in the cost of health care regardless of how it is paid for since health care costs affect each and everyone. How is LVHN working on becoming a lower cost provider to compete in this marketplace?

There have been many ways that LVHN has built a lower cost infrastructure over the years:

- Continuing to transition from Fee for Service to Quality-Based programs
- Continuing to transition inpatient care to outpatient settings when appropriate
- Utilizing Community Care Teams to care for vulnerable populations
- Increasing Remote Patient Monitoring capabilities
- Adding lower cost care options such as LVHN's ExpressCARE service
- Focusing on decreasing readmissions
- Developing Transitions of Care teams
- Developing concepts for "Hospital at Home" care

5. How does LVHN anticipate being able to manage and absorb potential growth of patients and families that are relocating from adjacent states (NY, NJ) who may be un- or under-insured? Any impact assuming there is a change in Administration?

LVHN recognizes that this trend will continue and will continue a strong focus on managing costs overall. The network will continue to develop strong relationships with its Medicaid and Medicare advantage partners, as well as develop programs to care for vulnerable populations such as Addiction Medicine's Warm Handoff Process.

The following question was submitted by a member but not able to be addressed in the program due to time constraints.

6. Can you please provide an update on Food Services at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest, what new measures are in place?



LVHN continues to meet regularly with Morrison food service leaders and are collecting numerous data points that are then analyzed by the network's leadership team to set control limits and identify opportunities for improvement.

Patient experience associates from Morrison conduct rounds and collect daily feedback from patients and perform service recovery when necessary. The network is seeing Patient Experience scores improve. Morrison has also assisted in increased resources to recruit as staffing this function during the pandemic has been a challenge.