



Fairfield Medical Center

THE MONITOR

SPRING 2021



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After taking medication for years to control his heartburn, Drew Mace wanted a permanent solution. He opted to undergo anti-reflux surgery at FMC – and hasn't touched his medication since.

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Editor's Notes: All photographs featured in this issue of *The Monitor* were submitted by the patient or the patient's family, or taken with COVID-19 protocols and social distancing measures in place.



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

John R. "Jack" Janoso Jr.

It's hard to believe, but we've passed the one-year mark since our lives were turned upside down by COVID-19. We've dealt with a lot over the course of this past year – physically, emotionally and mentally – and sometimes it feels like the burden of COVID-19 is getting heavier still. That's because we're exhausted – worn down by months of worry and tired of missing the lives we once led and loved. Thankfully, we finally have tools to help lighten the load and hopefully bring us closer to the eventual end point. While hope is here in the form of vaccines, we need to remain vigilant for some time before we can all go back to the pre-pandemic world we once knew. For so many of us, the memory of COVID-19 will never be erased, nor easily forgotten.

When I feel frustrated or fatigued by our situation, I remind myself to put the past year in perspective. While COVID-19 has disrupted my life and certainly impacted my role as president and CEO of a healthcare organization, I've still been very fortunate. My family and I are well. We're alive. We're here. The inconvenience of wearing a mask and social distancing pales in comparison to saying goodbye to a loved one from a distance, a heart-wrenching reality for the families who have lost someone to COVID-19. In this issue of *The Monitor*, you will read about two of those families – the Cypherts and the Coxes. They are not grieving alone; since the start of the pandemic, more than 18,000 Ohioans have died from this deadly virus, leaving behind spouses, children, grandchildren and friends. For these families, there is no such thing as "returning to normal." They will forever remember this period in history as the time when they had to say goodbye to a loved one far too soon.

As we continue to make our way through this pandemic, I urge you – on behalf of the Cypherts, Coxes and all of the families who have lost a loved one to COVID-19 – to keep doing your part. Wear your mask. Wash your hands. Get the vaccine when it becomes available to you. We have the power to slow the spread, and see a "new normal" again, but we have to continue to work together to make that happen. By doing your part, you can make a difference. You can save lives – possibly ones that mean the most to you.

John R. "Jack" Janoso Jr.



Feeling the **BURN**



Drew Mace lifts weights while exercising at Crossfit Hammerhead in Circleville.

Eating healthy, maintaining a daily CrossFit regimen and getting regular check-ups has always been a priority for Circleville resident Drew Mace, 29. So when X-rays taken at a routine dental appointment in 2018 revealed that Drew had a mouth full of cavities, he wasn't just surprised – he was downright confused.

"I didn't know what was going on there because I brush my teeth 3-4 times a day," said Drew, who also avoids sugary foods and beverages, such as pop. "The dentist agreed that it was a bit odd."

As it would turn out, the cause of Drew's dental issues had nothing to do with his brushing habits. For four years, Drew had been living with heartburn, a common condition caused by acid reflux in which some of the stomach contents are forced back up into the esophagus. Unbeknownst to Drew, the reflux he was experiencing on a regular basis was slowly causing erosion to his tooth enamel. Drew's dentist, Brian Stewart, DDS, of Ely, Dubos and Stewart General Dentistry in Circleville, recommended he make an appointment with the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center for an evaluation.

Dr. Yenchar gave me his honest opinion and I was very comfortable with him. He is actually the reason why I decided to move forward with surgery.

"When you are 25, 26, you think you're invincible; you don't think about what heartburn can do to you because you just think everybody has it," Drew said. "It was just something I never really thought about until I started to see how it was affecting my body."

As one of the leading heartburn centers in Ohio, the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center provides state-of-the-art diagnosis and comprehensive treatment to patients suffering from symptoms of

gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD. The Heartburn Center nurse coordinator and a team of multidisciplinary physicians use a collaborative approach to educate, diagnose and treat patients.

Drew's first step in getting to the root of his acid reflux was a consultation with Heartburn Center nurse coordinator Tonya Mundy, RN. Tonya

said it's not unusual to see young, health-conscious patients like Drew come to her regarding issues with acid reflux. While certain risk factors, such as obesity, pregnancy

and smoking, can increase one's chances of developing acid reflux, anyone – even athletes like Drew – can be affected.

"GERD is very common, and the condition and symptoms affect 20 percent of the U.S. population," Tonya said. "People of any age can develop GERD."

During the initial consultation, Drew explained that he had been treating his condition for the past four years with

medication that had been prescribed to him by his primary care provider. Tonya explained that while Drew's medication was treating his symptoms as intended, it wasn't stopping the regurgitation that was damaging his teeth and possibly causing additional harm to his body.

"The medication was completely masking my heartburn; I would be regurgitating and I didn't even know it," Drew said. "But while I wasn't feeling the burn, the effects were still there."

Tonya said she often hears patients say that they take medication and don't have acid reflux anymore. She noted while medication can be effective in relieving patients of their symptoms by controlling the amount of acid, it does not fix the underlying problem, which is caused by a weakening of the muscle between the esophagus and stomach.

"Before a patient commits to daily medication of any kind, they should be evaluated to determine the cause of their symptoms and a proper diagnosis," she said.

Tonya recommended that Drew undergo testing to confirm the diagnosis of

SURGICAL OPTIONS FOR GERD

The Nissen fundoplication is a minimally invasive surgical procedure that reconstructs the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) – repairing the LES to serve as a one-way valve to stop the reflux. During the procedure, the surgeon reconstructs the malfunctioning valve by loosely wrapping a part of the stomach around the esophagus. There are a number of benefits to the Nissen procedure. Since it is minimally invasive, patients experience less pain, a short hospital stay, a quick recovery, a low risk of infection and minimal scarring. A successful laparoscopic Nissen fundoplication may eliminate or greatly reduce GERD symptoms and the need for medications, as it anatomically corrects the problem that was causing the reflux.

An alternative surgical option to the Nissen is the LINX® Reflux Management System, which is a small, flexible band of interlinked titanium beads with magnetic cores. Through small incisions, the LINX® is placed around the esophagus just above the stomach. The LINX® band is designed so that swallowing temporarily breaks the magnetic bond, allowing food and liquid to pass normally into the stomach. The magnetic attraction then closes the LES immediately after swallowing, restoring the body's natural barrier to reflux. The benefits of the LINX® include a less invasive surgical approach and a fast recovery – patients are typically discharged the day of the procedure and are able to resume their normal diet within a short time frame.





Drew Mace and his wife, Katie Mace.

Do I Have GERD?

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is caused by a malfunction of the valve between the stomach and the esophagus. When this occurs, stomach contents, including acid, flow up into the esophagus resulting in an unpleasant sensation – what many people call heartburn or reflux. GERD is very common, with an estimated 20 percent of the U.S. population suffering from symptoms.

GERD Symptoms:

- Persistent heartburn
- Chest pain
- Regurgitation
- Nausea or vomiting
- Bad breath
- Difficulty swallowing
- Chronic dry cough
- Belching
- Sleep difficulties
- Dental problems

While some may brush it off as “just a little heartburn,” acid reflux that occurs on a regular basis should not be ignored. Long-term acid reflux may lead to serious complications, including Barrett’s esophagus and esophageal cancer. If you are experiencing frequent GERD symptoms, call the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center today at 740-689-6486.

GERD. Fairfield Medical Center offers three diagnostic tests – an esophageal manometry, an upper endoscopy and ambulatory pH monitoring. Patients may be encouraged to get some or all of the tests based upon their medical history and whether they are considering surgery.

Drew’s test results confirmed a GERD diagnosis, as well as a hiatal hernia, a condition in which the upper part of the stomach bulges through an opening in the diaphragm. The diaphragm is the thin muscle that separates the chest from the abdomen. The manometry also revealed that Drew had an esophageal dysmotility, or a weakening of the esophagus.

Tonya advised Drew to meet with Jeffrey Yenchar, MD, medical director of the Heartburn Center, to discuss his treatment options, which included surgery. Fairfield Medical Center offers two surgical options to correct GERD – the Nissen fundoplication and the LINX® Reflux Management System (see box on page 5). Dr. Yenchar explained that Drew would

not be a candidate for the LINX® due to weakened pressures in his esophagus, which could potentially impact the effectiveness of the procedure. With this in mind, Drew and his care team proceeded with the Nissen procedure.

Drew said he was initially hesitant about the idea of surgery, but as Dr. Yenchar explained the benefits, he began to warm up to the idea.

“Dr. Yenchar was awesome to work with,” Drew said. “He gave me his honest opinion and I was very comfortable with him. He is actually the reason why I decided to move forward with surgery.”

Drew’s recovery went well, and he began to notice an improvement almost instantly. Within no time at all, he was back to the active lifestyle he enjoys, which includes his exercise and CrossFit regimen. Now two years post-surgery, he’s enjoying the fact that he doesn’t have to take a pill every day – although he can’t quite bring himself to throw away the bottle of antacids that has

been living in his medicine cabinet for the past several years.

“I’ll eat something that would have triggered my heartburn before, like chili or spaghetti or a piece of pizza, and then I find myself wondering, ‘OK, when is the spike going to come?’” Drew said. “And then it just never comes.”

Drew said his advice for those living with heartburn is to not write it off as something minor. They need to get the problem taken care of: the sooner, the better.

“Before I went to the Heartburn Center, I figured I would just keep taking the pills and then I’d be good to go, but that’s not the case,” he said. “It’s a lot more severe than people realize. You need to have it checked out.”

DREW'S CARE TEAM



Jeffrey Yenchar, MD

is the Heartburn Center Medical Director and a board-certified general surgeon with General Surgical Associates in Lancaster, 740-687-5437.



Tonya Mundy, RN

is the nurse coordinator for the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center, in Lancaster, 740-689-6486.

Experience the Expertise

Fairfield Healthcare Professionals is a multi-specialty medical group owned and operated by Fairfield Medical Center that was formed to provide healthcare services in Fairfield and surrounding counties.

Our Commitment to You

It's our mission to provide our patients, their families and our community with outstanding care. By using a multidisciplinary approach and ensuring coordination of care through communication with the primary care provider, our elite group of healthcare professionals promote a culture of quality and excellence throughout your experience.



Roy Brown, MD, of FHP Urology, with a patient

Specialty Practices:

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Lancaster, 740-475-0442

Cardiology
Amanda, Lancaster, Logan,
New Lexington and Millersport,
740-689-4480

Cardiothoracic Surgery
Lancaster, 740-681-9020

Gastroenterology
Lancaster, 740-687-9182

General Surgery
Lancaster, 740-654-6213

Hematology Oncology
Lancaster, 740-687-4505

Infectious Disease
Lancaster, 740-687-8805

Neurology
Lancaster, 740-687-8888

Obstetrics & Gynecology
Lancaster, 740-689-6690

Ophthalmology
Lancaster, 740-687-6902

Orthopedics and Physical
Medicine & Rehabilitation
Lancaster and Millersport,
740-689-4935

Psychiatry & Health Psychology
Lancaster, 740-689-6600

Pulmonology & Critical Care
Amanda, Lancaster, Logan and
New Lexington, 740-689-6833

Radiation Oncology
Lancaster, 740-687-8550

Rheumatology
Canal Winchester, Lancaster and Logan,
740-689-6408

Sleep Medicine
Lancaster, 740-689-4925

Urology
Canal Winchester, Lancaster and Logan,
740-689-4945

Vascular Surgery
Lancaster, 740-687-6910

Wound Care
Lancaster, 740-689-6430

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Whether it's from your couch at home or your desk at work, you and your loved ones can receive care at the touch of a button. Telemedicine is great for wellness exams, medication management and routine follow-ups. Call your provider to determine if a telemedicine visit is right for you.



Take the first step toward a healthier lifestyle. Call us today or learn more about Fairfield Healthcare Professionals at fmhealth.org. Please contact your insurance provider to learn more about referral requirements.

Motivated to **MOVE**



Sam Price doesn't fit the definition of your typical retiree. At 70, the former Lancaster firefighter works as a part-time delivery driver and stays active by tending to his property and pursuing his many hobbies, including beekeeping, fishing and gardening. "I am very fortunate and have been very blessed," Sam said. "I have always been able to work."

While Sam has no problem staying on the go, it hasn't always been an easy task. For years, Sam suffered from osteoarthritis in both of his knees, taking ibuprofen multiple times a day to manage the joint inflammation responsible for his pain.

"I noticed as I was getting older that I was moving much slower," Sam said. "Both of my knees were causing me constant pain that would make me wake up at night. Even though I had pain, I tried my best to not let it stop me."

Osteoarthritis – which occurs as the cartilage, or cushion, between bones wears down over time – is extremely common, causing joint pain, loss of flexibility and stiffness in millions of people worldwide.

Knowing that his discomfort would only worsen, Sam turned to the team at Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Orthopedics and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation for a solution. Following an evaluation with orthopedic surgeon Jason Reed, DO, Sam learned his problem was more than just osteoarthritis – he also had a torn meniscus in his right knee.

"Large meniscus tears can occur as arthritis worsens in the knee, and if left untreated, the pain and locking of the joint will typically persist," Dr. Reed said. "Sam's osteoarthritis was primarily located in the middle of his knees, which was a great indication that partial knee replacements were an ideal treatment to help him stay active."

Sam's team jumped right into creating a personalized plan for his care, which included two outpatient partial knee replacement surgeries and repair of his meniscus. As with any major surgery, Sam had a number of questions about what to expect, and he was relieved to get the answers and assurance he needed from Dr. Reed.

"Dr. Reed is fabulous, and he absolutely explained everything to me," Sam said. "His attitude was positive, and having a good attitude makes all the difference. He knew what he was doing, which made me feel comfortable."

Feeling confident in his treatment plan, Sam was ready to move forward with surgery. His care team tackled his right knee first, replacing the knee and repairing the meniscus during a one-hour procedure at FMC. Unlike traditional total joint surgery, which typically consists of a 3-4 day stay in FMC's orthopedic unit, Sam

Both of my knees were causing me constant pain that would make me wake up at night. Even though I had pain, I tried my best to not let it stop me.

was out of bed, walking and back at home within hours of his surgery.

"Sam is very motivated, attentive, and has a positive outlook in life. I was confident in his recovery plan after surgery," Dr. Reed said.

While Sam was thrilled to spend his recovery at home, he knew that physical therapy was a vital piece of getting back on his feet. Not surprisingly, Sam wasted no time, and in the weeks following his surgery, he set the bar exceedingly high during his outpatient therapy appointments.

SLOWING OSTEOARTHRITIS

Although osteoarthritis is very common, affecting more than 54 million people in the United States alone, it is typically a condition that is neglected or forgotten about while people continue living their day-to-day lives. While arthritis is more common in individuals older than 64, it can affect anyone age 18 and up. Arthritis symptoms may limit your ability to work and reduce your quality of life.

One of the best things to do when diagnosed with arthritis is to keep moving your joints. While the development of arthritis cannot be completely stopped, regular movement and proper management can help to slow progression of the disease. Treatment depends on the type of arthritis. If you are experiencing arthritis pain, don't wait to speak with one of our orthopedic providers. With the help of early treatment and education, you may be able to decrease your pain or delay disability.



Sam Price and Dr. Jason Reed during a pre-surgery visit.



Sam works with FMC physical therapist Elizabeth Poklinkowski, PT, DPT, hours after his surgery.

I wasn't nervous for either one of my knee replacement surgeries because I knew I was in good hands.

replacement surgeries because I knew I was in good hands," Sam said. "I am thrilled with my results and I wish I wouldn't have waited. FMC has always been really good to me. I can't imagine that someone could pick another facility and get the personal treatment that I got at FMC."

It's been over six months since Sam's surgery and he's now back to doing what he loves – this time, without pain. Looking back on his journey, Sam is glad he decided not to further delay his treatment.

"Sam definitely had a goal to get better and was motivated to push through the pain to get to where he wanted to be," recalled Josh Stillwell, PTA, one of Sam's physical therapist assistants. "He would always want to progress and do more each time he was at his therapy appointment, and his dedication to his home exercise plan certainly helped."

During his therapy sessions, Sam said he reflected on advice his parents gave him and his six siblings when they were young: You have to work hard your whole life to do what you want to do.

Thanks to the encouragement from his therapy team and Sam's perseverance, his progress improved with each passing day, inching him closer and closer to the date of his second surgery. In just two months, Sam was back in the operating room, this time for a partial knee replacement on his left knee. The surgery was another success, and Sam immediately began another six weeks of outpatient therapy, pressing forward with the same willpower and determination that he had exhibited following his first surgery.

"I wasn't nervous for either one of my knee

"At the first sign of those painful issues of your knee wearing out or any joint injury, get a consult right away and address the problem," he said. "It is only going to get worse if you wait."

SAM'S CARE TEAM



Jason Reed, DO
is an adult reconstruction specialist and board-certified orthopedic surgeon with FHP Orthopedics and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation in Lancaster and Millersport, 740-689-4935.



Josh Stillwell, PTA
is a physical therapist assistant with Fairfield Medical Center Outpatient Therapy Services in Lancaster, 740-687-8622.



Your Journey **BEGINS HERE**

Our dedicated orthopedic and therapy services teams provide comprehensive care, close to home, to help get you back to doing what you love. We understand that everyone is unique; that's why we develop a personalized plan that meets your needs while including your entire support system to help promote healing.

Our practice:

- ✓ Offers same-week appointments
- ✓ Cares for patients of all ages
- ✓ Accepts all insurances
- ✓ Offers telehealth appointments

FHP Orthopedics and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation is conveniently located in Lancaster and Millersport:

2384 N. Memorial Dr., Lancaster

12135 Lancaster St., Millersport

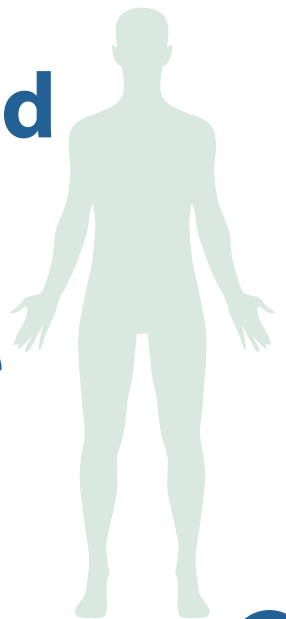
Schedule your appointment today by calling 740-689-4935.

Outpatient Therapy Services at Fairfield Medical Center are offered at two locations in Lancaster:

2384 N. Memorial Dr. & 1143 E. Main St.

Schedule your appointment today by calling 740-687-8622.

Head to Toe Care





Gratitude

W

Karla Young knows there are times in life, both good and bad, when words alone are not enough to truly express your feelings. It's in those moments when the Lancaster artist likes to take a deep breath, pull up a chair in front of a blank canvas and let a paintbrush or No. 2 pencil do the talking.

"My favorite artist is Georgia O'Keeffe, and she has a quote that says, 'I found that I could express myself in colors and shapes better than I ever could through words,'" Karla said.

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of those times when Karla, an art teacher for Lancaster City Schools, has used her talents to help give voice to her feelings. Her latest painting, "Gratitude Beyond Words," is a visual expression of appreciation for the providers and staff at FMC.

"It just seems fitting that a piece of artwork can be used to represent the deep gratitude that so many of us in the community feel toward the workers of FMC who have sacrificed and put themselves directly into the line of this virus," she said.

Earlier this year, former FMC Board President Ron Burris and current board member Dan Fruth had the idea to work with a local artist to create a piece of art to honor the staff at FMC. After discussing some ideas, Ron said he reached out to Karla because he's always admired her work and believed she would be the perfect person for the project.

"A year or two from now, when COVID-19 is hopefully gone and the numbers are

down and we're all vaccinated, I don't want the people who got us through this to be forgotten," Ron said. "We want our frontline heroes to be remembered."

Karla said while she chose to focus the painting on a central image of a nurse or doctor, she wanted to make sure the individual represented every FMC employee, regardless of their job title. As part of that process, she used a computer program to overlap several images of healthcare workers to create the face. She then changed the realistic nature of the portrait into a value scale of light and dark in order to make the image more abstract and gender neutral. Because the individual is wearing a mask, Karla paid particular attention to the eyes, as she wanted them to convey a variety of emotions, including grief and hope.

When it came to choosing the color palette, Karla opted to go with basics, using shades of black, white and blue. "I feel like those colors are symbolic of the serious and somber nature of the past year, and the turmoil and stress brought on by the pandemic," she said.

Ron said he was amazed when Karla showed him the final piece, which took 8-10 hours to complete. "The eyes, in particular, I was drawn to them," he said. "They reached out and touched me."

Ron said the plan is to incorporate the painting into a permanent display within the hospital that will contain other items or images to honor FMC's healthcare workers and their tireless dedication over the

past year. His hope is for the display to be installed in 2021.

"It's like 9/11 – it was a terrible time in our history, but we don't want to forget it. We haven't forgotten it and we can't let it be forgotten," he said.

Karla said her hope is that the painting and the surrounding display will serve not only as a powerful statement of hope and sacrifice, but a memorial to every employee who made a difference during COVID-19.

"It's hard to put into words what the pandemic meant to all of us," she said. "I just hope that this painting is a visual reminder that says more than words can say, to thank them for the sacrifices and courage that they've exhibited during this time."



I don't want the people who got us through this to be forgotten. We want our frontline heroes to be remembered.



Beyond Ovds



From Heartbreak to

Healing

Caring for critically ill patients requires a great deal of compassion and selflessness, especially in the midst of a pandemic. When a patient is at the end of their life and their loved ones are unable to be by their side, it's the doctors and nurses who faithfully step in to fulfill that role. Below are the stories of two families who were deeply touched by the care and compassion that FMC's frontline workers provided to them during a time of unspeakable grief.

"She would immediately spread joy wherever she went."

In the backyard of Don Cox's Lancaster home is a fake deer that is covered from head to toe in various shades of spray paint. While it might appear to be nothing more than a unique lawn ornament to the casual passerby, to the Cox family, it's a reminder of a woman whose smile, personality and love for her family was larger – and more colorful – than life.

"She was always thinking of something spontaneous and fun to do with the grandkids," Don recalled of his wife, Connie Cox. "She got this idea one day to go out and buy spray paint in a bunch of different colors. She then told the grandkids to go and paint that deer any color they wanted. So, they did."

It's the silly stories about Connie that keep Don and his four daughters and stepdaughters smiling and laughing during a time of incredible heartbreak and grief. On Dec. 8, Connie passed away at Fairfield Medical Center from complications of COVID-19 at just 66 years old.

"She would immediately spread joy wherever she went, and she had a way with people that was infectious," Don said of his wife, who worked as a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker Realty. "She would always go the extra mile for everyone, no matter what they needed."

Don said both he and Connie were always careful about following safety protocols for COVID-19, staying home as much as possible and wearing their masks. But in late November, Don noticed that Connie seemed to be much more tired than normal. "She had no energy; she would get home and go straight to bed," Don recalled. "Then she lost her sense of smell and taste."

When Connie started to have difficulty breathing, she was admitted to Fairfield Medical Center, where she tested positive for COVID-19. By that time, Don also was not feeling well and, within days, he too was hospitalized at FMC for COVID-19, his room just steps away from Connie's. Safety protocols prevented the couple from seeing one another, so the nurses became the sole line of communication between the two, frequently going back and forth between both rooms to share updates and messages of encouragement. The nurses also made sure that Don's daughters, Sarah Waites and Abbey Bolin, and Connie's daughters, Brooke Kondash and Lindsay Love, were included in that circle of communication.





Don and Connie Cox



"They were our lifeline," Lindsay said. "When she first got there, Mom could talk some and answer her phone, but the nurse said the more she talks, the harder it is for her to breathe, so our communication had to change. We would use FaceTime to talk with the nurse instead; 98 percent of information we got at that time was through a nurse or doctor."

Brooke agreed that when it came to communication, Connie and Don's care teams went above and beyond to ensure that all four daughters had the opportunity to speak with their parents and receive daily updates on their conditions.

"A lot of times, the nurse would hold the phone for Mom and you would see them dressed in their PPE," Brooke said. "Those rooms are small, so I imagine it had to be uncomfortable for them."

As the days went on, Connie's condition continued to decline and she began to weaken in body and spirit. On Dec. 6, she spoke by phone with Brooke and Lindsay for what would be the last time. The next day, she was placed on an emergency ventilator, and on Dec. 8, she passed away. In Connie's final days, Brooke, Lindsay, Sarah and Abbey were hesitant to tell Don too much for fear that it would negatively affect his own recovery. But when it came time to finally give him the news, FMC's devoted care team was there.

"When we took Dad in to see her after she passed, it felt like time was standing still," Sarah said. "Dad was not sure he was ready to see her, so we waited for him to feel ready. I never felt rushed; I felt like the staff would wait hours for us. We moved over to her room, and the chairs were ready and

the chaplain was there. Everything fell into place even though, all around us, so much was going on."

Abbey said she is thankful to the staff at FMC for giving her family the time and space they needed to say their final goodbyes. "I am eternally grateful that Brooke and Lindsay could go in and see their mom, and that Sarah and I could be there for our dad when he saw his wife for the last time," she said.

Don, who was discharged the day after Connie's death, agreed. "If there are unsung heroes in this world, it's nurses. They do not get enough credit. I just can't emphasize enough how well they took care of us."

Shortly after Connie's death, Sarah, a RN who works in FMC's Information Services department, had the opportunity to pick up several shifts in FMC's COVID-19 unit. Sarah said returning to her nursing roots after years of working in a non-clinical environment has been a rewarding experience.

"I know how good it felt to have that presence of the nurses, and that's what made it easier for me," Sarah said. "I feel proud because I know how they made my family feel, and if I could do that for someone else, that is all that matters."

In the months following Connie's death, Don and his loved ones say they are taking life one day at a time while cherishing the

memories Connie left behind: childhood birthday parties complete with scavenger hunts and ghost stories, a "secret family recipe" for rolls (which, as Connie famously revealed at one holiday gathering, were actually store-bought frozen rolls) and the unbreakable bond she had with her grandchildren. They hope her story will serve as a reminder of the dangers of COVID-19 and the importance of taking the virus seriously.

"When you experience COVID-19 firsthand and see how it affects the people you really love – when you have to speak to them through a glass window, and you've lost all ability to touch them – it becomes very real," Sarah said. "You can't truly understand what that feels like until you experience it."



Connie Cox's stepdaughter, Sarah Waites (left), assists Kari Good, RN, in the COVID-19 unit at Fairfield Medical Center.

"He meant so many things to so many people."

When it came to COVID-19, David Cyphert, 68, was not one to take the virus lightly. Like so many others, he practiced social distancing and wore his mask faithfully. His wife, Anne Darling Cyphert, can recall only one time when he forgot to wear his mask while in the company of others. She now believes that brief encounter was all it took for him to contract the virus that would end up taking his life.

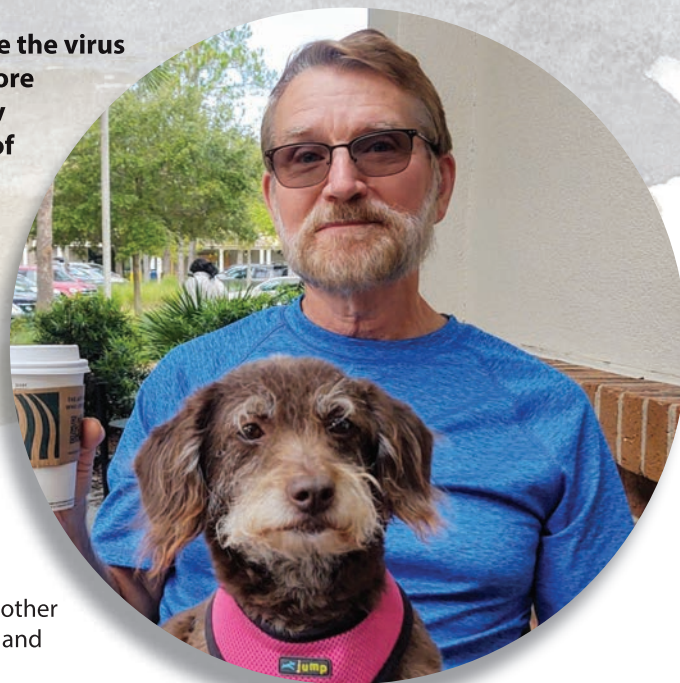
"Aside from that one time, we both always took every precaution we could," she said.

What would unfold shortly after was a nightmare that would change Anne's life forever. In just 15 days, David went from testing positive for COVID-19 to developing a severe condition that causes a hardening of the lungs. As David's condition worsened, Anne said she found strength in her husband's care team at Fairfield Medical Center, who went above and beyond to try to save his life while providing her with the comfort she needed to keep moving forward.

"After Dave died, I joined some widow support groups on Facebook, and the other women on there were talking about how their husbands were just a number and how they died all alone," Anne said. "I did not have that experience at Fairfield Medical Center. It was like they were all assigned just to Dave. We know that was not true, but that is how they made us feel. They cared for him up until the end, and I couldn't have asked for anything more."

A LIFE-CHANGING DIAGNOSIS

Like so many others who have contracted COVID-19, David's symptoms started with fatigue, a high fever and shortness of breath. He immediately began to quarantine in a room at his house, even before testing positive for the virus. For five sleepless nights, Anne lay in bed with a video monitor at her side, watching and listening to her husband for any signs of distress. On Thanksgiving, his breathing sounded like it was getting worse, so Anne called 911. David was immediately transported to FMC, where he was admitted.



David and Anne Darling Cyphert

Anne was hopeful that David's stay would be brief, but two days later, his condition worsened. Anne said she will never forget the day the doctors told her that David would need to be put on a ventilator. She immediately rushed to the hospital, where she was given the opportunity to stand outside her husband's door and talk to him through the glass. As Anne stood at the window of David's room, she uttered a desperate plea.

"I said, 'Dave, fight, fight, fight,' and he gave me a thumbs-up," Anne said. "I told him, 'I love you, Dave!' and he blew me a kiss. And that was the last time we ever spoke."

COMFORT IN A TIME OF GRIEF

On Dec. 13, David tested negative for COVID-19 and was moved to FMC's ICU. Now able to visit her husband, Anne spent the majority of her days by his side as he lay unresponsive. During that time, she was able to observe the doctors and nurses who were working around the clock to care for her husband.

"The compassion from the staff was amazing," she said. "FMC doesn't just treat the physical symptoms, they treat the emotional symptoms as well. They treat people like family."

Anne said the kindness she received from the staff kept her strong as David's condition continued to fail. It was the little things that made a huge difference: the environmental services worker who would inquire about David every time she cleaned the room. The staff member who discreetly paid for her lunch in the cafeteria. The chaplains who kept Anne's faith intact when the rest of the world felt like it was crumbling to pieces.

"There was this one instance where I left Dave's room to make a phone call, and the nurse who had cared for him that day was just about to end her shift," Anne explained. "When I got back to Dave's room, I saw her sitting there by his bed in the dark, holding his hand and sobbing."

On Dec. 15, David's pulmonologist Andrew Twehues, MD, of Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Pulmonology & Critical Care, told Anne that he needed to speak with her and her three children. As they were given the news that David was not likely to survive, they were comforted by not only Dr. Twehues, but the nurses and chaplains who had become Anne's second family. Two days later, that entire care team was there with Anne and her children once again as David took his final breaths.

"I held his hand and said, 'Dave, if you have anything left, fight, fight, fight. But I

want you to know that I will be strong and will make you proud, and if you feel God calling you, go,'" Anne said. "Dr. Twehues started tearing up. That is how personal it is for them. We would have not gotten that compassion anywhere else. In its own horrific way, Dave's death was a beautiful experience because of the staff at FMC."

A LASTING LEGACY

Anne said knowing that David is with God and watching over her gets her through the most difficult of days. She feels his presence all the time; since he's passed, she's discovered two cards from him – one a birthday card tucked away on the mantle and the other a Valentine's Day card mixed inside a stack of paperwork.

"Dave left a legacy of the life he lived; he meant so many things to so many people, and my goal is to continue that legacy," Anne said.

She is already off to a good start. In early 2021, Anne met with FAIRHOPE Hospice and Palliative Care to form a support group for people in the community who have lost a loved one to COVID-19 (see box). She has also made it her mission to educate others about the dangers of the virus, a conversation that, at times, can be challenging.

"What angers me is when people say that only 1 percent die," Anne said. "I tell

FMC doesn't just treat the physical symptoms, they treat the emotional symptoms as well. They treat people like family.

them, 'One of the people in that 1 percent was David Cyphert. He had a name, he was a husband, he was a father, he was a grandfather. That 1 percent matters.'"

Anne said she's also using her experience to tell others how FMC made a difference in David's final days. She said at one point during David's hospitalization, a person close to her suggested moving him from FMC to a hospital in Columbus. When Anne asked David what he thought, his response was an immediate shake of his head.

"He said, 'I am not leaving here. We know the people here, they are our friends, I trust them,'" Anne said. "His wish was to stay at Fairfield Medical Center, and I'm very glad we did."



GRIEF SUPPORT

FAIRHOPE Hospice and Palliative Care in Lancaster is holding virtual grief support sessions for people who have lost loved ones to COVID-19. The COVID-19 Mourners' Support Group meets every second and fourth Thursday of the month through May. During these sessions, attendees will learn about "the six needs of mourning," a concept created by Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt of the Center for Loss and Life Transition.

If you are interested in joining the COVID-19 Mourners' Support Group, call 740-785-6546 or visit fairhopehospice.org/grief-support/adult-grief/ and complete the registration form, selecting the "COVID grief support" option.



HEALTHY HABITS

Guest Columnist: Sarah Jones, Women's Health Nurse Navigator
To learn more, call 740-687-2727

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it's that there are times in life when we have to make sacrifices for the good of ourselves and others. Over the past year, many of us have had to make the tough decision to cancel a birthday party, host a virtual holiday gathering or delay vacation plans. We've done our part to help slow the spread – but not everything in life can be put on hold.

Annual physical exams and routine screenings are essential to our well-being and should not be canceled or delayed during this time. Screenings in particular are a vital piece of your overall healthcare, as these tests can help to detect cancer in its early stages when it is most treatable.

As the women's health nurse navigator at Fairfield Medical Center, my role is to help ease concerns for female patients when it comes to diagnostic breast screenings and other women's health issues. Over the past several months, I've talked with numerous women who are worried about coming in for a mammogram in the midst of a pandemic. During that conversation, we discuss the risks of putting off something as essential as a screening.

Ultimately, delaying a screening that could

potentially detect cancer is not something we advise, as the potential long-term health problems could outweigh the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Depending on your age and sex, there are a number of screenings recommended to check for a variety of conditions, including breast, cervical, colon, lung, prostate and skin cancers. Your healthcare provider will discuss which screening tests are right for you based on your individual health and your family history.

In addition to these screenings, other tests may be ordered by your provider if you are exhibiting symptoms that could indicate cancer.

If you are still experiencing anxiety about an upcoming appointment, it's important to note that FMC has implemented a number of policies to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19, including screening everyone entering our facilities, intensified cleaning procedures and spaced-out seating in waiting areas. Tell your provider if you have concerns – while screenings must be done in person, our providers have expanded their telehealth



capabilities so that certain well visits or follow-up appointments can be conducted from the comfort of your home. You are also welcome to talk with your provider's office about what measures they are taking to reduce exposure – this is a good conversation to have that could help put you at ease prior to your appointment.

If you've had a routine screening that was delayed or canceled, make it a priority today to talk to your healthcare provider about rescheduling your appointment.

Financial Peace of Mind

At Fairfield Medical Center, we want your focus to be on staying healthy. That's why we offer financial assistance for certain cancer screenings to those who qualify. Programs are available for both the uninsured and underinsured, and members of your healthcare team will work collaboratively with financial aid personnel to determine what individualized assistance is available to you.

Financial assistance may be available for:



- ✓ **Breast cancer screenings**
- ✓ **Colonoscopies**
- ✓ **Cervical cancer screenings**

- ✓ **Lung cancer screenings**
- ✓ **Diagnostic testing**

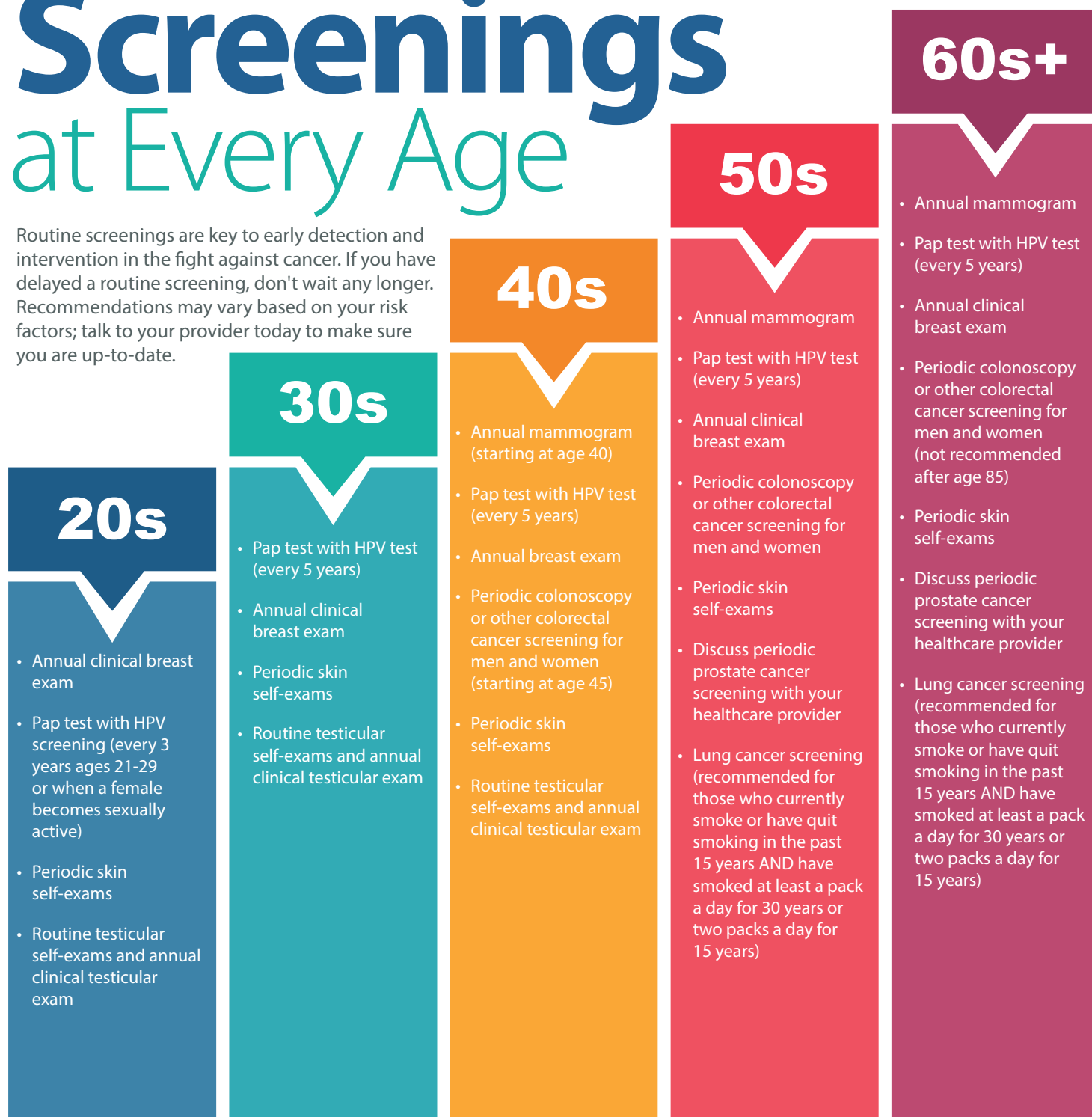
If you think you may qualify for financial assistance, contact our financial reimbursement specialist at 740-687-8134.

Health Screenings & COVID-19

Don't Delay Your Care

Screenings at Every Age

Routine screenings are key to early detection and intervention in the fight against cancer. If you have delayed a routine screening, don't wait any longer. Recommendations may vary based on your risk factors; talk to your provider today to make sure you are up-to-date.



Straight from the **HEART**

In 2020, the Fairfield Medical Center Foundation generously donated \$20,000 toward the purchase of upgraded heart modems for local first responder stations.

The modems – which transmit EKG results from the ambulance to the hospital during transport – alert FMC’s staff to incoming heart attack patients, allowing them to provide lifesaving care immediately upon arrival. And for patients arriving with a very serious type of heart attack called an ST-elevated myocardial infarction (STEMI), every second counts.

Indicative of a 100% blockage, STEMI’s quickly deprive the heart of oxygen, which can cause irreversible damage. In these cases especially, time is muscle. Without prompt treatment, cardiac muscle dies, increasing the risk of patient mortality.

To combat these outcomes, national guidelines recommend that arteries be opened within 90 minutes of a confirmed STEMI event. FMC has consistently upheld this standard, ranking above the 90th percentile while maintaining an average of 43 minutes from the time the patient arrives at FMC to the moment blood flow is restored to the heart.

“This gift has helped us save many lives,” said Deserae “Des” Belcher, FMC RN and STEMI coordinator. “Without upgrading the modems, we would be taking a step backwards in the care of our heart patients.”

Since the upgrade in October, these modems have saved a total of 386 minutes, allowing the team to deliver faster, lifesaving care to 38 patients in our region.

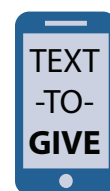
The FMC Foundation supports every heartbeat in our community by creating access to excellent medical care, technology and wellness programs.

“The FMC Foundation is honored to be part of this lifesaving program. Thanks to our compassionate donors, our STEMI team and first responders have been empowered to save even more lives – providing men and women throughout our community with the most precious gift of all – more time with those they love,” said Tracy Kelly, FMC Foundation Executive Director.

To learn more about supporting the healing mission of the FMC Foundation, please visit fmchealth.org/foundation.



Lancaster EMTs Rich Charles, Josh Harris and Nathan Sharp with a heart modem.



Text **FMC** to
855-735-2437 to
give today.



SPRING 2021 Calendar

With your safety as our top priority, Fairfield Medical Center is now offering the following in-person classes and education. COVID-19 safety protocols will remain in place. For the most updated list of event offerings, visit fmchealth.org/calendar.



Newborn Care

Learn basic newborn care, such as feeding, burping, coping with illness, bathing, sleeping, crying and typical newborn characteristics.

Registration: 740-687-8218 or mollyd@fmchealth.org. Dates subject to change, registration required.

Price: FREE

Dates/Times:

April 11 – 2-5:30 p.m.
April 26 – 5:30-9 p.m.
May 2 – 2-5:30 p.m.
May 24 – 5:30-9 p.m.

Location:

2nd Floor Conference Room at Fairfield Medical Center

Tobacco Cessation Program

The Tobacco Cessation Program at Fairfield Medical Center is designed to help tobacco users break the habit.

Registration: 740-687-4404 or tobaccocessation@fmchealth.org to set up an appointment.

Price: FREE

Location:

Fairfield Medical Center

Grandparenting Class

Explore the latest trends in childbirth and safe practices in caring for newborns.

Registration: 740-687-8218 or mollyd@fmchealth.org. Dates subject to change, registration required.

Price: FREE

Dates/Times:

May 12 – 5-6:30 p.m.

Location:

2nd Floor Conference Room at Fairfield Medical Center

CPR Classes

Learn adult, child and infant CPR; participants receive a certification card upon completion of a written exam.

Registration: Required. Call 740-687-8477 or email resa@fmchealth.org. Price: \$35/person

Dates/Times:

May 8 – 8:30 a.m.-noon
June 5 – 8:30 a.m.-noon
July 24 – 8:30 a.m.-noon
Aug. 21 – 8:30 a.m.-noon
Sept. 11 – 8:30 a.m.-noon

Location:

To be determined

Childbirth Education Series

This series of classes explores labor and birth, pain control options, relaxation techniques, childbirth recovery and cesarean birth. This class will be offered as a two-part series. Expectant mothers and one support person are welcome to sign up for classes at their convenience. However, it is recommended that sessions be taken in order. Both sessions must be attended to receive complete information.

Registration: 740-687-8218 or mollyd@fmchealth.org. Dates subject to change, registration required.

Price: FREE

Part 1 Series Dates/Times:

April 6 – 5:30-9 p.m.
April 18 – 2-5:30 p.m.
May 3 – 5:30-9 p.m.
May 16 – 2-5:30 p.m.

Part 2 Series Dates/Times:

April 12 – 5:30-9 p.m.
April 25 – 2-5:30 p.m.
May 10 – 5:30-9 p.m.
May 23 – 2-5:30 p.m.

Location:

2nd Floor Conference Room at Fairfield Medical Center

You also can tour our Maternity Unit for free. Registration is requested. Register online at fmchealth.org or call 740-687-8218.

Breastfeeding

This information session for expectant families is provided by lactation nurses to increase breastfeeding success.

Registration: 740-687-8656 or breastfedbaby@fmchealth.org. Dates subject to change, registration required.

Price: FREE

Dates/Times:

May 12 – 6-8 p.m.
June 10 – 6-8 p.m.
July 7 – 6-8 p.m.
Aug. 12 – 6-8 p.m.

Location:

Maternity Unit at FMC

First Aid

Receive hands-on emergency training; participants receive a certification card upon completion of a written exam.

Registration: Required. Call 740-687-8477 or email resa@fmchealth.org. Price: \$35/person

Dates/Times:

May 8 – Noon-3:30 p.m.
June 5 – Noon-3:30 p.m.
July 24 – Noon-3:30 p.m.
Aug. 21 – Noon-3:30 p.m.

Location:

To be determined

Childcare & Babysitting Safety (CABS)

Learn what to do in an emergency, what to expect at what age and how to positively discipline kids. Participants will receive CPR and Foreign Body Airway Obstruction Training. Open to children/teens ages 11-15.

Dates/Times:

June 4 – 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
July 23 – 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Registration: Required. Call 740-687-8477 or email resa@fmchealth.org. Price: \$35

Location:

To be determined.

MEET OUR NEW PROVIDERS

The following professionals recently joined the medical staff at Fairfield Medical Center. Looking for a provider? The right one is just a click away. Go to fmchealth.org and click "Find a Provider."



Jason André, MD

FHP Vascular Surgery
618 Pleasantville Road, Ste. 302,
Lancaster
740-687-6910



Leanne Casserlie, PA-C

FHP Cardiothoracic Surgery
618 Pleasantville Road, Ste. 202,
Lancaster
740-681-9020



Susan Choe, DO

COPC Fairfield Medical Associates
1781 Countryside Dr.,
Lancaster
740-687-8600



Jeffrey Haggenjos, DO

FHP Primary Care of New Lexington
399 Lincoln Park Dr., Ste. A,
New Lexington
740-343-4447



Seth Levin, DO

FHP Gastroenterology
1500 E. Main St., Ste. 2D,
Lancaster
740-687-9182



Megan Robison, CNP

FHP Internal Medicine
2405 N. Columbus St., Ste. 280,
Lancaster
740-689-4470



Mark Stebbins, PA-C

FHP Vascular Surgery
618 Pleasantville Road, Ste. 302,
Lancaster
740-687-6910



Brittney Valentine, CNP

FHP Primary Care of New Lexington
399 Lincoln Park Dr., Ste. A,
New Lexington
740-343-4447

A volunteer's shoes are *impossible* to fill.



The value you bring to Fairfield Medical Center is irreplaceable, and your dedication is something we've all grown to appreciate more and more in your absence over the past year. As we begin to slowly bring our volunteers back to FMC, we look forward to the day when it is safe for all of you to walk our halls once more. Until then, we thank you for the care and support you have shown us from afar. We are proud to call you a vital part of our FMC family.

Happy Volunteer Appreciation Month

THE MONITOR

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President & Chief Executive Officer

Jonathan Kelly
Chief Financial Officer

Debra Palmer, RN
Vice President of Administrative Services

Alan Greenslade
Chief Operating Officer

Mark Vanderhoff, RN
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Laura Moore
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Fairfield Medical Center, located in Lancaster, Ohio, provides healthcare services to more than 250,000 residents in Southeastern Ohio. FMC is a nonprofit medical center that strives to provide outstanding care to its patients, their families and visitors.

The Monitor, produced by the Marketing & Community Services Department, is published to share health information and updates with members of the communities we serve. All material is property of FMC and may not be reproduced without permission.



401 N. Ewing St.
Lancaster, Ohio 43130-3371
fmchealth.org

Experience the Caring

Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Primary Care Services

Primary care is truly at the heart of wellness. No matter your age, you should plan to visit your primary care provider once a year: Routine wellness exams are an important part of your overall health.

FHP Primary Care offices are conveniently located in:

- Amanda
- Canal Winchester
- Carroll
- Lancaster
- Logan
- New Lexington

Please do not delay or avoid seeking the medical attention you need: our staff is here to care for you. Ask your provider if telehealth visits may be right for you.

Sara Busch, CNP, examines a patient at FHP Old Schoolhouse Family Practice.



**Fairfield Healthcare
Professionals**

An Affiliate of Fairfield Medical Center

Learn more at [FMCHEALTH.ORG](https://www.fmchealth.org)