



Fairfield Medical Center

# THE MONITOR

FALL 2023

## A HEARTFELT APPROACH

p. 4

## MATERNITY CARE: PASSION & PURPOSE

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# LETTER FROM THE **PRESIDENT & CEO**

Do you remember a time in your life when you experienced a great deal of change? While many of us agree that change incites fear, disrupts normal life and can be overwhelming, all change is an opportunity for growth.

When I think about a time when I experienced great change, I go back to 2014 – the year I started working at Fairfield Medical Center. Not many people know that the day of my first interview for the role of president and CEO happened to be my 50th birthday (yes, I'm giving away my age here). I was entering a new decade with the hope of a new leadership role, in a new city, with new colleagues and new challenges to take on – and I had a lot of adjusting to do. Meanwhile, our organization was in the midst of constructing a 116,000-square-foot addition onto the hospital called the Surgical Tower. We were also on the brink of celebrating our Centennial, which encompassed a full year of events, including a community rock party, a black-tie gala and dedication of a time capsule. Thankfully, I had an incredible team and community to help me navigate this time of great change so seamlessly.

Every day, we see patients in our hospital who are going through their own periods of incredible change. Sometimes it's positive, such as the birth of a baby or learning to walk again after surgery. Other times, it's difficult, such as receiving a cancer diagnosis or experiencing the death of a loved one or friend. Each story in this issue of *The Monitor* features a patient who managed a major health event in their life and was supported by our team. Amanda Reynolds, whose story is featured on page 4, has an anxiety disorder that makes going to the doctor especially challenging. With the help of our cardiology team, she found the courage to undergo an important procedure that restored her quality of life. FMC maternity nurse Lauren Thomas, whose story is featured on page 14, was a teenager when she delivered her son six weeks early here at FMC. She was so impressed with the care the maternity nurses provided that she decided to go into nursing herself. These testimonials highlight the vitality of kind, attentive healthcare workers who are good listeners and genuinely empathetic. These are the types of caregivers you'll find here at FMC. Our dedicated team knows that it is not just the care we deliver but the way we deliver it that is truly life-changing.

As you read this issue, I hope that you see all that Fairfield Medical Center does to care for those who undergo immense change in our community. As always, we invite you to reach out to us and share your own personal stories by emailing [marketing@fmchealth.org](mailto:marketing@fmchealth.org) or sending us a message on our Facebook page.



John R. "Jack" Janoso Jr.



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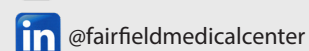
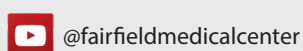
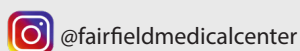
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**Get to Know Us**  
fmchealth.org



*Has Fairfield Medical Center made a difference in your life? We want to hear your story.*  
**Email us at [marketing@fmchealth.org](mailto:marketing@fmchealth.org), or share your story on our Facebook page.**



# A Heartfelt Approach



**When a severe anxiety disorder made it difficult for Amanda Reynolds to seek care for a heart condition, her cardiology team at Fairfield Medical Center helped guide her through the process with compassion and understanding.**

"No heart procedure is routine," said Amanda Reynolds, 54, of Logan. "To have complete trust in a healthcare team when they are working on such a vital organ, that speaks volumes about the kind of care Fairfield Medical Center provides."

When Amanda's heart began racing in May 2021, she initially thought it was because of a sweet Mother's Day surprise. As she and her husband pulled into their driveway, Amanda saw a brand-new apple tree waiting on the porch – and her heart rate skyrocketed.

"I felt like my heart was going to beat out of my chest," Amanda said. "It seems silly now, but at the time, I really thought it was just excitement. I wasn't worried until I realized my heart wasn't slowing down."

This episode – and the trip to her local emergency department – was the first of many for Amanda. With recurring episodes of an erratic and racing heart, she was eventually diagnosed with supraventricular tachycardia, or SVT. In some cases, this type of abnormal heart rhythm, or arrhythmia, might come and go without any symptoms; for others, it can take a negative toll on their quality of life.

"Every single day, multiple times a day, I was having hourlong episodes where my heart rate would shoot up to 160 or 180 beats per minute, like I was running a marathon," Amanda said. "I felt fatigued all the time. I had no energy. Even walking up the stairs was a chore for me, and I'm an active person."

As the special events coordinator at The Trout Club, a Newark-based resort and golf club, Amanda is on the go at all hours of the day. From curating the perfect wedding experience for new brides to organizing corporate retreats and class reunions, it's a position that



requires stamina and agility. Most of all, however, Amanda wanted to keep up with her active family.

"I have three kids and seven grandbabies, and they are my motivation to stay healthy," Amanda said. "I love them with all my heart, and I want to be involved and present in their lives. I want to be able to play with them, cheer them on and celebrate them for years to come."

This determination helped drive Amanda on her journey back to health. When she was diagnosed with SVT, Amanda worked closely with her primary care provider to manage the condition with medications. Unfortunately, she did not find relief. While some of the prescriptions helped her heart, they worsened her asthma. When she began carrying an inhaler with her, Amanda and her doctor decided it was time to explore a more permanent solution with cardiologist Michael Reinig, DO, at Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Cardiology.



While excited to protect her active lifestyle and restore her quality of life at Fairfield Medical Center, Amanda's new treatment path was complicated by a severe anxiety disorder. At her first appointment with FHP Cardiology, the closed-door exam room triggered a specific condition known as claustrophobia, or a fear of being trapped. The situation made it impossible for Amanda to focus on the conversation in front of her.

"I should have spoken up, but I didn't," Amanda said. "I am a very logical person, but I was caught in that place of irrational panic. When I called the office to explain what happened, they graciously scheduled a follow-up appointment. I came back armed with a list of questions, and Dr. Reinig answered each of them with understanding and compassion."

After this second discussion, the pair planned to move forward with an electrophysiology study and ablation to eliminate the source of Amanda's abnormal heart rhythm altogether. During this complex procedure, Fairfield Medical Center's specialized team uses advanced technology to study the electrical currents of the

## What is SVT?

Supraventricular tachycardia, or SVT, is caused by an electrical error in the upper chambers of the heart. During one of these episodes, the heart rate can rise to 150 to 220 beats per minute. In addition to a racing heart, symptoms of the condition might include:

- Heart palpitations, or a fluttering sensation in the chest
- Pounding or throbbing in the neck
- Weakness or fatigue
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Fainting or near fainting
- Sweating
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath

Like many arrhythmias, episodes of SVT can be a rare occurrence, or they can happen frequently enough to disrupt daily life. If you regularly experience episodes of an increased heart rate that do not respond to rest, talk to your healthcare provider about treatment options and management tools. If left untreated, moderate to severe SVT can increase the risk of heart failure, stroke or even cardiac arrest.

heart, pinpoint the cause of the erratic rhythm and then apply extremely cold or hot temperatures to form scar tissue, blocking the signal and restoring the heart's normal function.

With her sights set on a solution, Amanda took steps throughout the process to ensure her anxiety would not prevent her from putting her health first. This included meeting with cardiologist Alexander Hattoum, MD, prior to the procedure to ease her fears and communicate her needs.

"I can't put into words how incredible my experience at Fairfield Medical Center was," Amanda said. "Dr. Hattoum took the time to help me feel calm and confident, and every single person I met that day made me feel seen, cared for and understood. I genuinely



Amanda talks with a bride-to-be while providing a tour at The Trout Club in Newark.





believe that without this hospital and its wonderful staff, I would still be living with that arrhythmia.”

Dr. Hattoum said that Amanda’s decision to be transparent about her anxiety allowed him and his team to provide her with more individualized care, including regular check-ins before and during her procedure. Amanda’s intervention was performed with sedation only, which means she remained alert the entire time.

“Our electrophysiology nurses and technologists played a huge role in helping Amanda through this procedure, and I’m proud to be part of such a compassionate team,” Dr. Hattoum said. “Amanda’s specific arrhythmia was less common than most, but we were able to treat it in an environment that made her feel comfortable, preventing potentially dangerous complications down the road.”

Within a week of her April 2023 procedure, Amanda found herself with more energy and peace of mind than she had felt in years. While she initially took her return to work slowly, she soon was operating at full-speed for event season. By May, Amanda found herself touting two important titles at The Trout Club: event coordinator and mother of the bride.

“My job is always filled with so much joy, but my daughter’s wedding was incredibly special,” Amanda said. “Coordinating any wedding is easily a 15-hour day, and on top of that, I danced all night with my family. That meant so much to me, because before my procedure, I wouldn’t have been able to get through a single song.”

In a heartwarming moment, Amanda’s motivation was on full display as she celebrated with her loved ones at the same venue



*Shortly after her procedure at FMC, Amanda (right) danced at her daughter’s wedding. (Photo credit: Stephanie West Photography)*

where she makes so many dreams come true. Looking back, she has found a renewed sense of confidence in her ability to navigate the world of healthcare despite her anxiety, and Amanda encourages anyone dealing with similar circumstances to find a healthcare team that makes them feel safe and accepted.

“I have never had an experience like the one I found at Fairfield Medical Center,” Amanda said. “I never felt like a number, I never felt like a burden, and the care was absolutely customized to my needs. I am forever grateful for the wonderful team that helped me get where I am today.”

## AMANDA'S CARE TEAM

In addition to state-of-the-art technology, FMC’s advanced electrophysiology program includes a dedicated team of specialized nurses and technologists.



*Pictured from left to right: Brandee Stemen, Dr. Michael Reinig, Ashlee Skibinski, Erin Hoffman, Dr. Alexander Hattoum, Maddy Burt, Megan Iser and Sara Crispin.*



**Michael Reinig, DO**  
is a cardiologist specializing in electrophysiology at Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Cardiology, 740-689-4480.



**Alexander Hattoum, MD**  
is a cardiologist specializing in electrophysiology at Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Cardiology, 740-689-4480.





# ASK OUR PROVIDERS

*P. Aryeh Cohen, MD, and James Obney, MD  
Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Cardiothoracic Surgery  
740-681-9020*

Fairfield Medical Center offers the personal experience of a community hospital with the benefits of a larger health system. Most notably, FMC's cardiovascular services have expanded over several decades to meet the needs and serve the hearts of patients. With the help of cardiothoracic surgeons P. Aryeh Cohen, MD, and James Obney, MD, the team provides lifesaving care to residents across Southeast Ohio.

## WHAT IS CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY?

It's a specialized field that deals with diseases or conditions of the chest, including the heart and lungs. You might hear these doctors referred to as heart surgeons, but they also play an important role in restoring lung health.

## WHAT TYPES OF PROCEDURES ARE PERFORMED?

Cardiothoracic surgeons work as a team with many different physicians, including pulmonologists and oncologists. These providers might work together to biopsy a growth in the lung, or to surgically remove cancer from the lungs and lymph nodes within the chest. Cardiothoracic surgeons may also treat collapsed lungs, lung infections and other respiratory-related diseases.

Looking beyond the lungs, the majority of procedures performed by Dr. Cohen and Dr. Obney are heart-related. Working with Fairfield Medical Center's group of cardiologists, recommended treatment plans may include surgery to replace or repair heart valves, implant lifesaving cardiac devices or restore blood flow to the heart muscle.

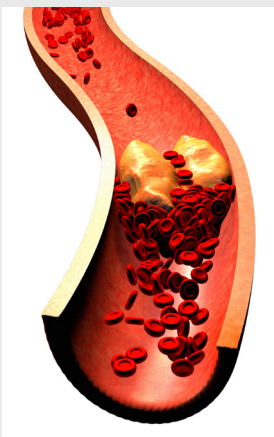
## WHAT IS OPEN-HEART SURGERY?

Open-heart surgery involves opening the chest for immediate access to the heart, and it might be necessary for any number of conditions. Most commonly, the term refers to a procedure otherwise known as coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG). During CABG, the surgeon takes a healthy blood vessel from the body, such as the arm or leg, and uses it to create a new path for blood to reach the heart. Bypassing the damaged, blocked or diseased coronary artery can reduce symptoms of heart disease and restore cardiac function. Depending on how many grafts are needed, you might also hear this procedure called a double-, triple-, or quadruple-bypass.



*Dr. P. Aryeh Cohen performs a minimally invasive heart valve replacement in FMC's operating room.*

## UNDERSTANDING CLOGGED ARTERIES



Coronary artery disease is caused by atherosclerosis, a condition that occurs when substances such as cholesterol and fat gather inside the arteries. Much like a clogged pipe, this plaque can build until it breaks loose or blocks blood flow to the heart, increasing the risk for heart attack and stroke.

Some blockages can be fixed with a stent, which is a small mesh tube that's used to open the narrowed artery. In certain cases, coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), or open-heart surgery, might be recommended. No matter the treatment, lifestyle changes and medications are necessary to prevent new blockages from occurring in these important blood vessels. Symptoms such as **chest pain (angina), fatigue or weakness, shortness of breath, cold sweats and nausea** are common symptoms of atherosclerosis and coronary artery disease.

Many of these warning signs are also symptoms of a heart attack. If you are experiencing new or worsening symptoms, **call 911 right away**. A healthy lifestyle and routine visits with your primary care provider and cardiovascular team can help manage your risk of coronary artery disease.





Catherine Brock serves drinks to general managers Brooke Sells and Zane Lawrence at Cherry Street Pub in Lancaster.

# A Fight to the **Finish**

**When Catherine Brock discovered a lump in her breast during a self-exam, her care team at FMC moved quickly to diagnose and treat her cancer. Now she's encouraging other women to be proactive when it comes to their breast health.**

As the daughter of a nurse, Catherine Brock, 33, was taught early on about the importance of regular breast self-exams in the detection of cancer. So when her fingers grazed across an unfamiliar lump during a self-exam earlier this year, Catherine tried not to panic – but she didn't brush it off either. "The first thing I did is call Dr. Emily Burnette, my favorite doctor, because she's the one I feel most comfortable with," Catherine said. "I really appreciate Dr. Burnette's office taking my concern seriously. It makes me really confident that if anything were to happen to my sisters, that office would take care of them."

Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Obstetrics & Gynecology and Emily Burnette, DO, were quickly able to get Catherine in for an initial appointment, where they directed her to Women's Health at FMC River Valley Campus for a mammogram and an ultrasound. The following week, Catherine met with Scott Johnson, MD, of FHP General Surgery River View for her breast biopsy. Three days later, Catherine received her breast cancer diagnosis.



"It was scary, but after the initial shock of finding something that's not supposed to be there, I said, 'OK, this is reality now. Got to deal with it and move forward,'" Catherine said.

Some healthcare professionals, including Dr. Burnette, now recommend that women receive annual mammograms at age 40, earlier than previous recommendations of age 45. A physician referral is not required to schedule a mammogram for women 40 and older.

"It is important that women participate in regular breast cancer screenings, as breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women in the United States, and the second-leading cause of cancer death in American women," said Dr. Burnette, who also recommends clinical breast exams every other year beginning at age 25. "Ideally, breast cancer screening decisions should be made after a conversation between the patient and their provider."

Sarah Jones, BSN, RN, a women's health nurse navigator at FMC who works with patients like Catherine, said early detection is key when it comes to survivorship. According to the American Cancer Society, the five-year survival rate is 99 percent when breast cancer is detected at a localized stage.

"When breast cancer is found early, while still small and confined to the breast, it is much easier to treat, and the chance that treatment will be successful, resulting in being cancer-free long term, is great," Sarah said. "Being diligent with routine breast cancer screenings is the most reliable way to achieve early detection, ideally long before a lump can even be felt by the woman or her provider."

With a mother in the healthcare field and three younger sisters, Catherine has always been aware of the importance of women's health screenings, especially due to her family history of breast cancer in her aunt and great-grandmother.

*It can be unsettling to find something and worry that you might be overthinking it, but don't be scared. Get it checked out no matter what.*

"We always had the waterproof 'How-to Breast Exams' in the shower, the ones that hang on the showerhead. I do self-exams regularly enough that I knew it [the lump] hadn't been there even four months before," Catherine said.

For her treatment, Catherine is undergoing an initial 12-week round of chemotherapy. After the first round of chemotherapy, she will have a lumpectomy to surgically remove the cancer, then immunotherapy. The final step of her treatment is radiation therapy to further reduce the risk that the cancer will return.

Catherine's treatment plan is being managed by Roopa Saha, MD, of FHP Hematology-Oncology, whose "very calming, very grounding personality" has helped reinforce Catherine's trust in

## WELCOME: DR. UTPAL BHANJA



Fairfield Healthcare Professionals announces that Utpal Bhanja, MD, has joined FHP Hematology-Oncology alongside Roopa Saha, MD, and Megan Brown, CNP. In

his 40 years of practice, Dr. Bhanja has served communities across Ohio, and his addition to FHP will allow for the continued growth of cancer services at FMC.

FMC's Cancer Care Program offers state-of-the-art technology, compassionate caregivers and a full complement of services, from diagnosis to support groups and rehabilitation. FMC knows that patients undergoing cancer treatment want to receive the best care close to home, which is why they have invested in the latest technology to help patients treat – and beat – cancer.

## CATHERINE'S CARE TEAM



### Emily Burnette, DO

is an obstetrician and gynecologist with FHP Obstetrics & Gynecology  
*\*currently not accepting new patients*



### Roopa Saha, MD

is an oncologist with FHP Hematology-Oncology, 740-687-4505.



### Scott Johnson, MD

is a surgeon with FHP General Surgery River View, 740-654-6213.



### Sarah Jones, BSN, RN

is a women's health navigator with Fairfield Medical Center, 740-687-2727.

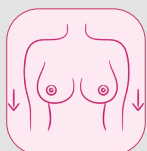


## HOW TO: BREAST SELF-EXAM

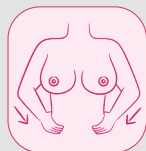
1. Start the exam by looking in the mirror and visually inspecting the breasts with your arms in different positions.



Arms up



Arms down

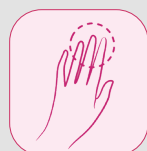


Hands on waist



Sideways

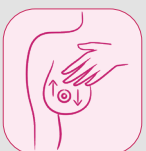
2. Look for any changes in the contour or placement of the breasts, changes in the color or shape, discharge from the nipples and discoloration of the skin.



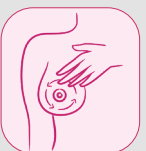
Gently use the pads of fingertips



Wedge pattern



Vertical strip pattern



Clock pattern

the medical oncologist's advice. Regarding her experience with Sarah, Catherine said, "she takes anything I say very seriously, but she does keep it lighthearted enough to where I don't panic."

Catherine's family and friends have also played an important role in her treatment, from her mother carefully watching over her, to her father driving her to her appointments and surprising her with her favorite snacks to quell her "chemo cravings." Catherine's work family at Cherry Street Pub, a bar and grill in Lancaster where she has worked as a waitress for almost two years, is also a major component of her support system.

"They set up a fund for me the moment I told them [about the diagnosis]," Catherine said. "My managers, Brooke Sells and Zane Lawrence, have started this journey with me, and are going to be there for me when I finish it."

Catherine is now using her experience to encourage others to schedule important appointments and screenings, and to not hesitate to seek medical advice if they have a concern. "It can be unsettling to find something and worry that you might be overthinking it, but don't be scared," she said. "Get it checked out no matter what."

## PATIENT UPDATE: STACY KNIGHT

In 2018, one year after undergoing chemotherapy, a mastectomy and reconstructive surgery for breast cancer, Stacy Knight decided she was going to use her diagnosis to raise awareness and help others in her situation. In addition to sharing her story in FMC's Experience commercials, Stacy created Pink Hope Society, a social media group that connects Central Ohio breast cancer survivors and their families, friends and caregivers. The group aims to share opportunities for socialization, advocacy and awareness, while also providing moral support. "I know how much fellow survivors meant to me during treatment, and I want to be that person for someone else," Stacy said.

In addition to her personal efforts, Stacy is also an active member of TWIG 1, a committee of community members who coordinate fundraising efforts on behalf of Fairfield Medical Center. Donations from this group, which are submitted to the FMC Foundation's Cancer Care Fund, are used to provide cancer patients with nutritional supplements, diagnostic and preventative treatments, wigs and other necessary items not covered by health insurance. TWIG 1's largest event of the year, the 11th annual Cancer Care Run & Walk, was held Oct. 7 at Martens Park in Lancaster to support the Cancer Care Fund and patients such as Catherine Brock.

*Pictured above: Stacy Knight with her husband, Gary Knight. Pictured right: Stacy, Gary and their daughter, Eve, appeared in FMC's Experience commercials in 2018.*







# HEALTHY HABITS

Jarrod Bruce, MD  
Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Pulmonology & Critical Care  
740-689-6833

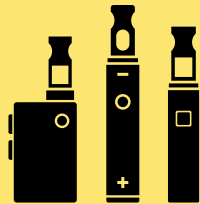
## Escape the Vape

Vaping, or the use of electronic cigarettes, has become so commonplace that many don't think twice about the side effects. In fact, many scientists, researchers and physicians are still learning how these devices could negatively impact health in years to come. "When electronic cigarettes originally came out, they were controlled and used as a tool to help people stop smoking," said Jarrod Bruce, MD, a pulmonary and critical care physician at FMC. "Unfortunately, now the market has been saturated with devices that are unregulated. We don't know what goes in them, which means we don't know the long-term effects."

*When discussing the topic with patients and parents, Dr. Bruce talks about the information that is known about this trend:*

### What is vaping?

- Vaping devices come in many shapes and sizes and may be called by different names.
- Typically, they all contain a battery, a heating element and a compartment that holds liquid.
- When activated, this liquid is heated and inhaled into the lungs as a vapor.



### What's inside?

E-liquid components are **not regulated**, which means ingredients are not standardized or closely monitored. Aerosol from e-cigarettes can contain:



- Ultra-fine particles and chemicals that can cause injury or increase risk of disease when inhaled
- Flavoring that may be safe to eat but harmful to breathe
- Heavy metals, such as nickel, tin and lead
- THC (an element of marijuana) and nicotine

### Is it harmful?

While vaping does not contain the additives found in combustible tobacco, **it is still considered harmful**. In addition to the potential for lung injury and disease, nicotine is found in nearly all e-cigarettes, which carries its own set of risks, including:

- Increased blood pressure and cardiovascular risk
- Dependence for mood regulation
- Abnormal sleep disturbances
- Hormonal disruptions
- Delayed or disrupted brain development in adolescents and young adults (through age 25)



## Vaping & Tobacco Cessation

Generally, Dr. Bruce and his colleagues at FHP Pulmonology & Critical Care discourage using smoking modalities as a way to quit smoking, recommending U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved nicotine-replacement strategies instead. However, if you are currently pursuing tobacco cessation and are reluctant to give up a vaping device, Dr. Bruce recommends the following ground rules:

- If you are not vaping, **do not** adopt the habit for tobacco cessation.
- Select the lowest nicotine level possible.

- No additives**, including flavors or THC compounds.
- Purchase the same brand from the same store for a greater chance of consistency in an unregulated market, and never refill or mix e-liquid cartridges.





# Preventative Measures

**A new DNA test offered at the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center is helping patients such as Bill Maffit identify health issues that could lead to esophageal cancer if left untreated.**

As an endoscopy tech at Fairfield Medical Center, Bill Maffit cares for patients every day who are seeking relief from persistent heartburn and other unpleasant symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Having only experienced heartburn a few times in his own life, it never occurred to Bill that he could have the same condition as his patients – until a new screening test yielded some surprising results.

In early 2023, Bill opted to undergo EsoGuard™ testing, a DNA test offered at Fairfield Medical Center that detects abnormal cells in the esophagus, which is the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach. As a Caucasian male older than age 50, Bill is considered at-risk for developing esophageal cancer, which is what spurred him to get tested.

The EsoGuard™ test takes just a few minutes and does not require sedation. The patient swallows a capsule that is attached to a thin catheter. The capsule is lowered into the patient's stomach and inflated like a balloon to collect cells from the lining of the esophagus. It is then gently pulled back up so the cells can be sent for testing.

Bill said he was shocked when his results came back positive, meaning that abnormal cells had been detected. He then underwent an upper scope (EGD) at FMC and had two different types of biopsies taken from his lower esophagus, both of which confirmed a diagnosis of Barrett's esophagus. Barrett's esophagus is a condition caused by chronic reflux where the cells in the lower part of the esophagus start to change because of frequent exposure to damaging stomach acid. These initial changes are not cancer, but Barrett's esophagus is a risk factor for esophageal cancer in the future.



Endoscopy Tech Bill Maffit shows a patient how the EsoGuard™ technology works.

*Had I not been tested, I could have gone on for years not knowing that anything was wrong.*



"I used to cough a lot, but never thought much of it or suspected it might be a symptom of something serious," Bill said. "I would also occasionally have some burning in my stomach but, for the most part, I could eat whatever I wanted."

Heather Luttrell, BSN, RN, nurse coordinator for the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center, said it's not unheard of for patients with GERD to exhibit few if any of the classic symptoms, such as heartburn or reflux. Instead, their symptoms, like Bill's, might be more obscure. Oftentimes, symptoms don't show up until the patient's condition has increased in severity or progressed to cancer (see box).

"The Caucasian male over 50 demographic makes up a large portion of our patient population, which is at higher risk for developing esophageal cancer," Heather said. "If you also take into account other risk factors, that demographic becomes even larger, so we are trying very hard to prevent those individuals from falling through the cracks when it comes to testing."

As the nurse coordinator, Heather does a free consultation with all new patients to the Heartburn Center, regardless of whether they were referred by their provider or self-referred, to learn more about their symptoms. Following the consultation, Heather typically recommends diagnostic testing to examine the patient's esophagus and uncover the root cause behind their symptoms.

The EsoGuard™ is just one of the testing options offered at the Heartburn Center. It's a good screening tool for patients such as Bill who are at a higher risk of esophageal cancer and who might experience heartburn occasionally. Patients may also undergo an upper scope (EGD), which allows the provider to examine the upper part of the patient's gastrointestinal tract. An EGD is preferred for patients who have already been diagnosed with GERD and/or Barrett's esophagus.

Once diagnostic testing is complete, Heather works with patients and their provider to come up with a solution. While FMC offers two surgical options for GERD – the Nissen and the LINX® – Heather said she always prefers to explore nonsurgical treatment options with patients first.

"Just implementing some diet and lifestyle changes can be very effective, so I love to start there," Heather said. "I am not one to recommend surgery right away. I think surgery becomes an option for people after they've tried diet and lifestyle changes and have even tried medication, but are still experiencing GERD symptoms frequently, or they're wanting to get off of their GERD medications entirely."

For Bill, taking a daily acid reducer has been beneficial in helping to slow any further damage. In addition, he is scheduled to get an EGD every three years to monitor his Barrett's esophagus and make sure the cells in his esophagus are not continuing to change. He hopes to continue to use his own experience to raise awareness and spur patients to get screened.

"Had I not been tested, I could have gone on for years not knowing that anything was wrong, only to be surprised by a cancer diagnosis," Bill said. "I'm very grateful that I found this when I did so I can be proactive and make sure it doesn't get worse."

## ESOPHAGEAL CANCER & TESTING



*Nurse coordinator Heather Luttrell talks with a patient during a nurse consultation.*

### What is the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center?

As one of the leading heartburn centers in Ohio, the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center helps patients who are suffering from GERD and other esophageal-related conditions. In addition to a free nurse consultation, the Heartburn Center offers diagnostic testing and therapies, customized treatment plans, education and surgical treatment to help patients get back to living a heartburn-free life.

*To schedule a free consultation with the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center, call 740-689-6486. A provider referral is not required to make an appointment.*

### What is esophageal cancer?

Cancer of the esophagus – the long tube that runs from your throat to your stomach – usually begins in the cells that line the inside of the esophagus. Symptoms can be silent for years, which is why it is important to get tested if you have risk factors for esophageal cancer (see below). Common symptoms of esophageal cancer include:

- Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Chest pain, pressure or burning
- Worsening indigestion or heartburn
- Coughing or hoarseness



### When to get tested: Risk factors for esophageal cancer

A risk factor is anything that increases your chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Scientists have found that the following factors can affect your risk of esophageal cancer:

- Male
- Caucasian
- Older than age 50
- Tobacco use
- Obesity
- Heartburn or GERD
- First-degree relative diagnosed with Barrett's esophagus or esophageal adenocarcinoma





Lauren Thomas, RN, talks with a patient in FMC's Maternity Services.

# Passion and Purpose

**Maternity nurse Lauren Thomas never imagined she would end up working in healthcare – until her own labor and delivery experience ignited a passion she didn't know she had.**

Lauren Thomas, RN, is the type of nurse that every mother wants by her side during labor. She's compassionate and kind, and she is able to remain calm in the midst of stressful situations. "Lauren is a gem," said Sara Wright, manager of Maternity Services at Fairfield Medical Center. "She is very empathetic, and she is able to focus on what the individual patient needs to provide that level of care."

While Lauren knows that nursing is her true calling in life, she didn't always feel that way. In fact, the Baltimore resident spent most of her youth dreaming about going into education and becoming a teacher. She admits that nursing was a profession she never would have considered had it not been for the maternity staff who cared for her at FMC during a special and emotional time in her life.



"I was 16 years old when I had my son, Derreq," said Lauren, who has two other children, and a "bonus" daughter with her partner, Victor. "Having my son so young and being cared for by the nurses in maternity at Fairfield Medical Center truly changed the course of my life. I didn't feel judged that I was a young mom. I didn't feel like a burden. In fact, I felt the complete opposite: I was treated with respect, kindness and gentleness."



Derreq Davis was a premature baby, born in 2005 at just 32 weeks. Lauren said she started experiencing contractions at home, and was already dilated by the time she reached Fairfield Medical Center. With no time to administer an epidural, Lauren was terrified at the thought of giving birth without pain medication.

"The nurses were so comforting," she said. "I remember one time yelling out in pain, and a nurse quietly calming me down. I didn't yell out after that. I felt almost a sense of peace knowing that I was taken care of, and that my baby would be taken care of, too."

Since Derreq was so small, he was immediately taken to Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus while Lauren remained at FMC. Being separated from her newborn was overwhelming and emotional for Lauren, but her nurses were there to help her through the anxiety and provide her with the education she needed to care for her child when they were reunited.

"One of the nurses came in and talked to me about breastfeeding my baby. Nobody in my family had breastfed and I didn't even know it was an option honestly," Lauren said. "She told me all the ways my breastmilk could benefit Derreq, especially with him being so pre-term, and I wanted to do whatever would help."

Lauren said that nurse set her up with a breast pump, provided education and stayed with her for the duration of the pumping session. "I breastfed all my babies because of that nurse," Lauren said. "She took the time to educate me and just love me and my son enough in that moment to help me provide for him exactly what he needed. I am so grateful for her."

Lauren said her experience in FMC's Maternity Services was so positive, she started to think about the possibility of one day becoming a nurse herself. "I wanted to be able to give back to other moms like me and love those moms and babies during such a vulnerable time in their lives," Lauren said. "Young moms, scared moms, pre-term moms, moms that have babies that go to a higher level of care. I knew I could relate with those moms and share my story in hopes that I could shine a little light in their lives when they experience challenges, too."



Three years after Derreq was born, Lauren shifted her career path from education to healthcare, enrolling in nursing school at Central Ohio Technical College. It was a challenge to put herself through school and care for two children while also pregnant with her third, but Lauren focused on her end goal: She wanted to one day work with the same nurses who had cared for her. "I couldn't imagine myself doing anything other than that," Lauren said.



*Having my son so young and being cared for by the nurses at Fairfield Medical Center truly changed the course of my life.*



*Pictured (clockwise from top): Lauren with Derreq shortly after his birth in 2005; Lauren, Derreq and Lauren's daughter, Aundrea, at Lauren's nursing school graduation; Lauren and Derreq in June 2023.*



During school, Lauren worked as a nursing assistant in the medical/surgical unit at FMC, where she enjoyed getting to know her patients and hearing their stories. Following graduation, she worked in FMC's former Substance Abuse Stabilization Unit, which cared for patients who were going through addiction withdrawal.

"Taking care of those patients really made my soul smile," Lauren said. "They needed lots of love, and I wanted to be there to love them during their time of need. I loved sitting at the bedside with them, talking with them and hearing their journey in life. I loved encouraging them to get healthy again."

In 2017, Lauren got her ultimate wish – to work in FMC's Maternity Services. She immediately recognized the familiar faces of several of the nurses who had cared for her when she gave birth to Derreq – including her manager, Sara Wright. "It is humbling to learn that I had an impact on Lauren's career path," Sara said. "When women give birth, we try our best to provide individualized and personal care to give them the best experience possible. We love our jobs working with new mothers and bonding with our patients."

As 2023 comes to a close, Lauren now has a lot to celebrate. Her little preemie is not so little anymore – Derreq towers in height over his mother, excels in basketball and music, and is preparing to graduate from Liberty Union High School in 2024. As for Lauren, she is celebrating her 10th year of nursing, six of which have been spent in Maternity Services. The birth of her oldest son turned out to be a blessing in more ways than one – and has shown Lauren how everything in life happens for a reason.

"I really just hope and pray to always be that nurse that has the listening ear, the warm smile, the gentle hug and the reassurance my patients need during their stay," Lauren said. "Maternity Services is my mission field. This is where I am meant to be."



Lauren Thomas and her colleague, Laura Gornall, RN, work on the computer in FMC's Maternity Services.

*I wanted to be able to give back to other moms like me and love those moms and babies during such a vulnerable time in their lives.*

# Whatever you're searching for, you can find it *here*.

jobs in healthcare



Visit [fmchealth.org/careers](https://fmchealth.org/careers)



# SAFE & SOUND

**A new intake process in the Emergency Department called SAFE ED is decreasing long wait times by connecting patients with providers and nurses more quickly.**

Fairfield Medical Center's Emergency Department is aiming to make long waiting room visits a thing of the past by implementing a new process that helps patients get seen more quickly by a provider or member of the healthcare team.

Known as SAFE (Speedy Assessment Focused Environment) ED, this process was implemented at FMC's Main Campus on Aug. 1 and is already yielding results. In January, the average wait time for a patient to be seen by a provider in the ED was 37.3 minutes; by the end of August, that time had decreased to 14 minutes. In addition, a patient's average length of stay decreased by 28 minutes between January and August.

"We are absolutely elated with our outcomes thus far," said Emergency Department Manager Leigh Anne Germani. "As with all change, we have been tweaking the process and fine-tuning our approach to keep our community safe and happy with their care."

Under the SAFE ED model, patients are checked in when they arrive at the hospital and, depending on the care they need, are escorted to a SAFE room for assessment by a doctor, nurse practitioner or a physician assistant.

What happens next is dependent upon the treatment the patient needs. If their condition is complex or life-threatening, they will be admitted to a bed in the ED. If the patient does not need to be admitted, but does require lab work or additional testing, an order will be placed and an IV may be started. These patients will be asked to return to the waiting room until the provider has the results of their lab work or diagnostic testing.

"This process helps us to keep the sickest of our patients in beds for treatment, while allowing our less acute patients to be seen quicker with the speedy assessment in a SAFE room," Leigh Anne said.

Leigh Anne added while the waiting room might appear busy, patients shouldn't worry about a long wait, as the other patients in the waiting room likely already have been seen and are awaiting their own test results. Once a patient's test results are available, they will be brought back to a room to discuss findings, next steps and treatment before they are discharged.

*To learn more about SAFE ED, watch a short video about the process by scanning the QR code to the right or visiting [fmchealth.org/services/emergencyandurgentcare/safeed/](https://fmchealth.org/services/emergencyandurgentcare/safeed/).*



*Pictured: Robert Dominguez, MD, and ED nurse Emma Greeler, RN, examine patients in the Emergency Department.*

**SPEEDY  
ASSESSMENT  
FOCUSED  
ENVIRONMENT**





# SPONSORSHIPS – A VITAL ROLE

As the philanthropic branch of Fairfield Medical Center – an independent, nonprofit health system – the FMC Foundation plays a vital role in supporting access to medical care and wellness programs throughout the region, regardless of income. The FMC Foundation raises roughly one million dollars annually through grants, planned giving, gifts, naming opportunities, TWIGs and more. In addition, the FMC Foundation hosts five signature events each year to help raise money for a particular service area within the organization. This year, the FMC Foundation designated cardiovascular services as the cause to support through its events, with an event sponsorship goal of \$120,000. **At the time of publication, the FMC Foundation is at 97% of its event sponsorship goal.**



You can be a part of their lifesaving mission! To learn more about how you can make an impact and become a valued supporter, email [fmcfoundation@fmchealth.org](mailto:fmcfoundation@fmchealth.org). To see how donations are helping patients, visit [fmchealth.org/foundation/impact/](http://fmchealth.org/foundation/impact/) or scan the QR code.

## EVENT SPONSORSHIP

### GOAL:

**\$120,000**

## EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

### RAISED:

**\$116,460**

**\$16,475**

**\$52,885**



## OUR 2023 CAUSE

### *Cardiovascular Services*

Dollars raised in 2023 through sponsorships and special events are committed to FMC's state-of-the-art Cardiovascular Services program. The program performs more than 2,000 cardiac procedures – and saves nearly 200 lives – every year.

Donations to the FMC Foundation also support cancer care, palliative care, emergency care, women's health, maternity care, pediatric care, lifesaving equipment and much more.



## BREWS & BASKETBALL

*March 23, 2023*

The second annual Brews & Basketball event was held at Outerbelt Brewing, with more than 80 attendees enjoying an evening of appetizers, beer tastings, games, live music and, of course, basketball. Fourteen FMC employees and board members volunteered at the event.



## GOLF OUTING

*June 12, 2023*

The 16th annual FMC Charity Golf Outing at the Lancaster Golf Club was a huge success, with 30 teams of golfers participating overall. Additionally, 40 volunteers, including 34 FMC employees, gave of their time throughout the day.

## THANK YOU 2023 SPONSORS

The following individuals, businesses and organizations are supporting 2023 events as Diamond, Platinum and Gold sponsors. It is because of their compassion and support that the FMC Foundation can continue its healing mission of purchasing lifesaving equipment and funding program expansions for patient care.

Sponsorship opportunities are available in many different packages and levels, including hole sponsors, food and beverage sponsors and single event sponsorships. To find the best option for you, visit [fmchealth.org/foundation/sponsorship-opportunities](https://fmchealth.org/foundation/sponsorship-opportunities).

**To become an event sponsor or to make a charitable gift, visit [fmchealth.org/foundation](https://fmchealth.org/foundation), call 740-687-8107 or email [fmcfoundation@fmchealth.org](mailto:fmcfoundation@fmchealth.org).**



### DIAMOND SPONSORS

- US Acute Care Solutions with support from Dr. Mark and Theresa Darnell and Dr. Robert and Sharon Dominguez
- Alan and Maris Mahler



### PLATINUM SPONSORS

- Park National Bank
- Crestview Rehabilitation & Skilled Nursing Services
- FAIRHOPE Hospice & Palliative Care



### GOLD SPONSORS

- Hickory Creek of Athens
- Buckeye Automotive Family
- Stifel
- Porter Wright
- Claypool Electric
- Caretenders, VNA
- Dr. Aryeh and Judith Cohen

**\$15,725**

**\$24,525**

**\$6,850**  
(as of Sept. 21)



### HEART & LUNG RUN Aug. 19, 2023

The annual Heart & Lung Run includes a 5K Run/Walk and a 10K Run to raise funds for patients in need of cardiopulmonary rehab. More than 190 people participated in the event this year.



### FOOD & WINE TASTING Sept. 28, 2023

Guests are invited to savor a variety of wine and food while bidding on silent and live auction items. This year, each attendee received an exclusive, first-in-a-series wine glass designed by Gay Fad Studios in Lancaster.



### TURKEY DAY 5K Nov. 23, 2023

The Turkey Day 5K is a tradition for many families that will continue this year on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23. Racers will receive a commemorative race item and can compete for prizes in their age group. Registration is open until race day.



# 2023 Calendar

For an updated list of events, visit [fmchealth.org/calendar](https://fmchealth.org/calendar).



## **Childbirth Education Series**

Our certified childbirth educators offer private, in-person classes to help prepare expectant mothers and one support person for the arrival of a new baby. These education courses are free and should be completed four to six weeks before your due date.

**Registration:** Required. Space is limited. Scan the QR code, call 740-687-8218 or visit [fmchealth.org](https://fmchealth.org).



## **Childcare & Babysitting Safety (CABS)**

Learn what to do in an emergency, what to expect at what age and how to positively discipline. Participants will receive CPR and Foreign Body Airway Obstruction Training. For attendees ages 11 to 15.

**Date:** Dec. 28, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. **Price:** \$35/person

**Location:** To be determined

**Registration:** Call 740-687-8477 or email [Resa Tobin at resa@fmchealth.org](mailto:resa@fmchealth.org).



## **Walk-In Wednesday Hiring Event**

Are you interested in a career at Fairfield Medical Center? Walk in on Wednesday, Nov. 1, and interview with a member of our recruitment team! We are hiring for a variety of positions, both clinical and non-clinical. We offer competitive pay/benefits, 401(k) with company match, tuition assistance and opportunities to advance your career. No appointment is necessary; please bring your resume.

**Date:** Wednesday, Nov. 1, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Location:** Fairfield Medical Center Main Campus, 401 N. Ewing St., Lancaster. Parking is free. Please enter through the Main or Emergency Department entrances.



## **Medical Mobile Unit Women's Cancer Screenings**

Women's Cancer Screenings are for uninsured, underinsured and insured women by Ohio University Heritage Community Clinic. Services provided include Pap tests, pelvic and breast examinations, same-day mammograms, and breast health education and navigation. Funded by grants from the Breast and Cervical Cancer projects of Southeast Ohio and Ohio University Community Health Grant.

**Date:** Dec. 7, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Location:** FMC River Valley Campus, 2384 N. Memorial Drive (Columbus Street entrance)

**Registration:** Appointments are required. To schedule, call 800-844-2654 or 740-593-2432.

### **CPR & AED Classes**

Receive adult, child and infant CPR training and a certification card upon completion of a written exam.

**Registration:** Required. Call 740-687-8477 or email Resa Tobin at [resa@fmchealth.org](mailto:resa@fmchealth.org).

**Price:** \$35/person

**Dates:**

Nov. 4, 8:30 a.m.-noon  
Dec. 2, 8:30 a.m.-noon

**Location:** To be determined.

### **First Aid**

Receive hands-on emergency training and a certification card upon completion of a written exam.

**Registration:** Required. Call 740-687-8477 or email Resa Tobin at [resa@fmchealth.org](mailto:resa@fmchealth.org).

**Price:** \$35/person

**Dates:**

Nov. 4, noon-3:30 p.m.  
Dec. 2, noon-3:30 p.m.

**Location:** To be determined.



### **Turkey Day 5K**

Get your Thanksgiving Day off to a healthy start! Sponsored by the Fairfield Medical Center Foundation.

**Date:** Thursday, Nov. 23. Race begins at 8:30 a.m.

**Location:** Forest Rose School, 1592 Granville Pike, Lancaster

**Early Registration (through Nov. 1):**

- Ages 14 and older – \$25 per person, includes shirt/race bib
- Ages 13 and under – \$15 per person, includes shirt/race bib
- Ages 13 & under (not timed), free, no shirt/race bib

**Late Registration (Nov. 2 – Race Day):**

- Registration fees increase \$5.
- Shirt cannot be guaranteed with a late registration.



Turkey Day 5k



The following seminars are free and will be held at FMC's River Valley Campus, 2384 N. Memorial Drive, Lancaster. **Scan the QR code or visit [fmchealth.org/healthy-habits](http://fmchealth.org/healthy-habits) to register.**



### **Step Up Against Stroke**

Learn the warning signs of a stroke and how to significantly reduce your risk. The event includes a fun, low-impact workout led by certified personal trainer Susie Birdwell.

**Date:** Oct. 25, 5-7 p.m.

### **Healthy Holidays: Staying Balanced**

Overindulgence is common during the holidays, but it can lead to an increased risk of heartburn and unintended weight gain. Learn how you can enjoy the festivities of the season while staying healthy.

**Date:** Nov. 14, 5-7 p.m.



### **Neuro Support Group**

For patients, family and caregivers, this support group is designed to provide connections and motivation to individuals who are going through rehabilitation from a neurological disorder or injury, with a focus on improving communication and access to resources.

**Dates:** Third Wednesday of each month, 4:45-5:45 p.m.

**Location:** Conference Room A, River Valley Campus, 2384 N. Memorial Drive, Lancaster (enter on Columbus Street side)

**Contact:** For questions, call 740-689-6328.



# MEET OUR NEW PROVIDERS

The following providers recently joined Fairfield Healthcare Professionals. Looking for a provider? The right one is just a click away.

**Go to [fmchealth.org](https://fmchealth.org) and click Find a Provider or scan the QR code.**



**Collin Gabriel, DO**

FHP Family Medicine of Millersport  
12135 Lancaster St., Millersport  
740-467-2787



**Utpal Bhanja, MD**

FHP Hematology-Oncology  
135 N. Ewing St., Suite 202, Lancaster  
740-687-4505



**Jay Bauerle, MD**

FHP Neurology  
135 N. Ewing St., Suite 201, Lancaster  
740-687-8888



**Emily McCulloch, PA-C**

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



**Angela Welch, CNP**

FHP Gastroenterology  
1231 E. Main St., Lancaster  
740-687-9182



**Brittany Peters, CNP**

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



## WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

*Your Insight Matters. Patient-Focused, Patient-Driven.*

As a patient-centered healthcare system, Fairfield Medical Center values the feedback and recommendations of those we serve. We are asking community members, patients and caregivers to **complete a short online survey** evaluating FMC's branding and marketing efforts. Whether you've received care with us multiple times, or are brand new to the community, your opinions and insight as a healthcare consumer will help shape our future marketing initiatives and campaigns.



To complete this survey, scan the QR code or visit  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P2BHKJS>

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Volunteer program expands to River View Surgery Center

In an effort to enhance the customer experience and help surgical patients feel comfortable prior to their procedure, Fairfield Medical Center is looking for volunteers who can serve as greeters at River View Surgery Center, 2401 N. Columbus St., Lancaster. Volunteers at this location will welcome patients and visitors when they arrive, escort them to the appropriate areas, and assist the pre-op staff with transporting the patient's belongings to their recovery room. "Volunteers provide a sense of calm to patients who may have some anxiety coming in," said Eileen McClellan, manager of River View. "They can also help provide direction and familiarity for patients in an unfamiliar space."

The volunteer position at River View is relatively new and very much needed for that location, Eileen said. On the days that River View is experiencing a high volume of patients, it can be difficult for staff to greet and assist every person who walks through the door, which makes it essential to have a volunteer who is primarily dedicated to that task. "While our staff does a great job, the volunteers provide that extra attention that can get lost on a busy day," she said.

Eileen and Volunteer Coordinator Heidi Reed said the volunteers who serve at River View Surgery Center prefer the location because it's smaller than the main campus and in close proximity to their homes. "Volunteering at River View allows you to be part of a team that works together like a family," Heidi said. "The staff are so appreciative and supportive of our volunteers."

**Ready to get started? For more information about Fairfield Medical Center's volunteer program, contact the Volunteer Services office at 740-687-8109 or email [heidire@fmchealth.org](mailto:heidire@fmchealth.org).**



*Pictured: FMC volunteer Marylee Uhl talks with Eileen McClellan, manager of River View Surgery Center.*

## THE MONITOR

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Fairfield Medical Center provides healthcare services to more than 250,000 residents in Southeastern Ohio. FMC is a nonprofit health system 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.



# Lasting Legacies Grateful Hearts

In times of darkness and discouragement, there was light and hope. That's how Baltimore resident Cathy Trimmer describes the care her late husband, Dan Trimmer, received from Dr. Roopa Saha of Fairfield Healthcare Professionals Hematology-Oncology and FMC's cancer care team during Dan's two-year battle with metastatic prostate cancer. In July, Cathy and her daughter, Devon Meyers, made a financial gift to FMC's Cancer Care and Infusion Center in memory of Dan, who passed away in 2022. The family also opted to do a naming opportunity through the Fairfield Medical Center Foundation's Grateful Patient program. Naming opportunities are just one way to honor a loved one who received care at FMC. You can also designate specific staff members as Legendary Caregivers in recognition of exemplary care.

*To learn more about the Grateful Patient program and naming opportunities, contact the FMC Foundation at 740-687-8107 or email [fmcfoundation@fmchealth.org](mailto:fmcfoundation@fmchealth.org). You can also learn more at [fmchealth.org/foundation](https://fmchealth.org/foundation).*



*Pictured: (Above) Members of the Trimmer family stand with Dr. Roopa Saha in front of the dedication wall for Daniel Trimmer. (Top right): FMC president and CEO Jack Janoso and Cathy Trimmer unveil the wall dedication. (Bottom right): Cathy Trimmer hugs Dr. Roopa Saha during the dedication ceremony.*