



Fairfield Medical Center

THE MONITOR

Focusing on
Life While
Living with Cancer

p. 4

The Damaging
Effects of **GERD**

p. 12

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JANUARY 2026



LETTER FROM THE **PRESIDENT & CEO**

At Fairfield Medical Center, we take great pride in our culture of connection. It defines who we are – compassionate, empathetic, and present in moments of both hardship and hope. Healthcare naturally brings together joy and vulnerability, and every day I see our teams honor that balance with remarkable grace.

Some acts of service are profound, like coordinating care for a patient's pet during an unexpected hospital stay or rallying to reconnect with a patient who has left a lasting mark on our team. Others are quiet and easily overlooked: a meaningful conversation at the bedside, a warm meal delivered to a worried spouse, a birthday card for someone recovering alone, or a reassuring hand offered at just the right moment. Large or small, these gestures share the common thread of genuine human connection.

Connection is at the heart of giving. When we take time to show up, offer support, and make others feel seen and valued, we strengthen the bonds that make our community feel like home. My hope is that every time you walk through our doors, you experience the generosity of our volunteers, the comfort of our pet therapy teams, and the unwavering compassion of those who care for you.

At Fairfield Medical Center, this spirit isn't reserved for a season – it's who we are all year through.



THE **MONITOR**

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Photo credit: Stephanie West Photography.

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Focusing on LIFE While Living with CANCER



Rich Martin feels at home in his kitchen and is ready to try the next great recipe.

When Rich Martin was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2018, he was newly retired and had recently started his own deck-building business. Faced with the reality that he could not run a business and fight cancer at the same time, Rich initially felt defeated – until he picked up a pen and pad of paper and decided to take charge of his emotions.

"I'm of the belief that if I don't put things down in writing, they won't happen, so I decided to make a list of everything I was going to do and not do moving forward," Rich said.

In addition to telling his wife, Laurie, how much he loves her every day, Rich's list included commitments to live a healthier lifestyle, show gratitude and praise, and take time to help and educate others. He has remained faithful to those promises, even when a second cancer diagnosis in 2021 threatened to derail his focus.

"From day one, I told myself that I was not going to let cancer dictate who I am or what I can do," said Rich, 69, of Lancaster. "Will I have bad days? Yes – but I will not let them defeat me."

Rich attributes a lot of his positivity to the support of the people around him, including his Cancer Care team at Fairfield Medical Center and his oncologist, Roopa Saha, MD, of FHP Hematology/Oncology, who seamlessly took over his care when his former oncologist, Dr. Kanwaljit Singh, moved to California in 2023.

"When Dr. Singh left FMC, it was devastating because I realized I would have to start over with someone new," Rich said. "But after meeting with Dr. Saha, I knew I was in good hands. In addition to cancer, I have other medical issues – afib, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure and white coat syndrome, which means my blood pressure goes up when I'm at the doctor. At Dr. Saha's office, my blood pressure is normal, and I know it's because I'm comfortable with her."

Rich said he was encouraged at the start of his cancer journey to get a second opinion elsewhere, which he did. However, the personalized care and attention he had received at FMC was the driving factor behind why he chose to remain local for his treatment.

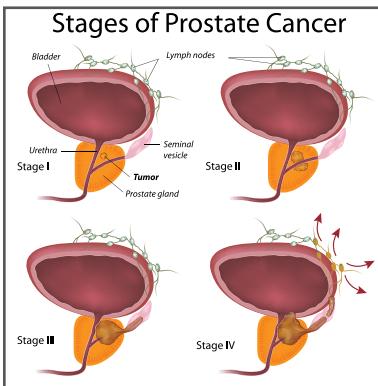
"Dr. Saha's office is a great place and she and her team are helpful and do great follow-up so that I don't have to worry about anything," he said. "You don't see that everywhere. When I went to Columbus, I felt like a number. At FMC, my care is more one-on-one."

Following Rich's prostate cancer diagnosis, Dr. Singh and Dr. Saha recommended hormonal treatments to target the cancer, which had progressed to Rich's lymph nodes and spine. The treatments consisted of daily pills and injections every three months.

"Metastatic prostate cancer treatment is typically a hormone-driven treatment with chemotherapy being utilized much later with disease progression or when other treatments stop controlling the spread of the prostate cancer," said oncology nurse navigator Suzanne Vogel, who works with prostate cancer patients like Rich. "Because Rich's prostate cancer is hormone-driven, treatment is directed towards



Rich Martin with his support system at the TWIG 1 Cancer Care Run.

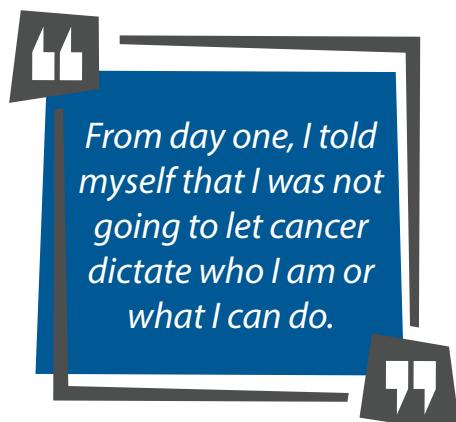


were discovered in his liver. As Rich began treatment to shrink the tumors, Dr. Saha recommended DNA testing to monitor his response to the treatment and disease progression. The results of that testing will help determine an individualized treatment plan for Rich moving forward.

"By monitoring tumor DNA, it can provide clues to a physician about the patient's cancer status, including the potential for recurrence, treatment effectiveness, and the development of resistance mutations," Suzanne explained. "By analyzing the genetic material of cancer cells in the bloodstream, doctors can get a real-time look at how the tumor is evolving even before a tumor is visible on traditional scans."

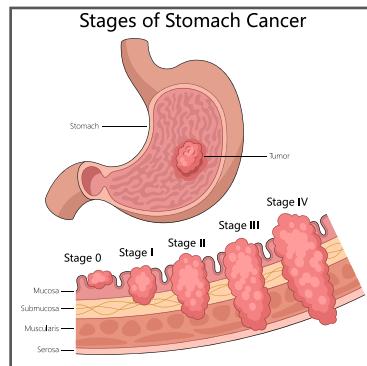
As Rich continues to be monitored and treated for his cancer, he remains focused on the list he started eight years ago that has sustained him throughout his journey. He enjoys sharing his story with others, encouraging them to think positive while also sharing the great experience he has received at FMC. To date, he has spoken to patients and survivors at two FMC events – Cancer Survivor's Day in June and the TWIG 1 Cancer Care Run in October.

"Every day I ask myself, what did I do today to become healthier? Who did I thank or praise today? Who can I help or train, and how can I be of help to others?" Rich said. "The reality is everyone knows someone who needs help, so rather than feeling down about my situation, why not do my part to help lift others up?"



reducing testosterone levels, which is what drives prostate cancer."

The treatments worked and Rich's PSA (prostate-specific antigen) levels returned to normal. However, in 2021, Rich experienced a setback when doctors discovered a tumor in his stomach. When he underwent surgery to have part of his stomach removed, additional tumors



Rich and Laurie Martin enjoy some time on the family's deck, which offers great views during July 4th celebrations.

One in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, making it one of the most common types of cancer. Prostate cancer grows slowly and can usually be cured if it's found early and remains contained within the prostate.

Early-stage prostate cancer may or may not cause symptoms. Early signs and symptoms can include:

- Blood in urine (may appear pink, red or dark red)
- Blood in semen
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Trouble urinating

Advanced symptoms of prostate cancer can include:

- Leaking of urine
- Back and/or bone pain
- Erectile dysfunction
- Fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss
- Weakness in the arms or legs

The exact cause of prostate cancer is unknown, but certain factors, including genetics, age, lifestyle and environmental exposures, can increase one's risk. While there is no way to prevent prostate cancer, you can reduce your risk by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding alcohol. The American Cancer Society recommends that men who are at an average risk of prostate cancer to be screened annually beginning at age 50. Those who are at higher risk of developing prostate cancer should be screened before age 50. Talk with your doctor to determine when you should begin screening for prostate cancer.

RICH'S CARE TEAM



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His story is a powerful reminder that heart disease doesn't discriminate. Fortunately, his recovery also highlights the benefit of quick intervention and the importance of understanding family history.

Zach and Nicole Rohr stand outside of Fairfield Medical Center.

A **HEART**FELT Reminder that **FAMILY HISTORY** Matters

Eat a balanced diet. Exercise often. Stay up to date on healthcare visits. These are all common recommendations for living a healthy life, and Zach Rohr followed each of them closely.

As a retired Marine, fitness enthusiast and the husband of an ICU nurse, focusing on physical wellness seemed like second nature to Zach. Between exercising most days of the week to only indulging in sweets and treats in moderation, Zach was the picture of health at 48. So, when he began having intermittent chest pain and fatigue, he chose to be proactive and scheduled an appointment to get checked out. Zach's precautionary tests – which included an EKG to evaluate heart rhythm and a stress test to assess cardiac function – were normal. With his fears quieted and the all-clear to continue exercising, Zach hit the ground running.

For six months, Zach continued his fitness routine without incident. While the chest pain continued to come and go, he and his wife Nicole had peace of mind that it was most likely harmless. One morning, however, the pain changed. At 5:30 a.m., Zach started his day with good intentions as he ran on the treadmill, but the pressure in his chest forced him to stop. He stepped off the machine to rest and quickly decided to wake Nicole.

"The pain I felt that morning was much more intense and continuous compared to the other times," Zach explained. "I knew pretty quickly it was different."



Zach Rohr walks on a treadmill in the Cardiac Rehab facility at FMC.

Nicole didn't waste any time. She immediately called 911 and kept close tabs on Zach's condition, preparing for the worst as his smart watch showed his heart rate was dropping and his complexion began to gray. She's no stranger to high-stress medical situations, but Nicole admitted that those moments in her home were more terrifying than any she had experienced in the intensive care unit. With their home located in the middle of Lancaster, paramedics arrived within three minutes of her call. By 6 a.m., Zach was in Fairfield Medical Center's catheterization lab, where interventional cardiologist Andrew Stiff, MD, got to work on opening two cardiac arteries that were 100% blocked.

"Zach's case was unique in that he didn't have any of the risk factors we typically associate with heart disease. He was physically fit, didn't use tobacco, and followed a healthy diet," said Dr. Stiff. "His story is a powerful reminder that heart disease doesn't discriminate. Fortunately, his recovery also highlights the benefit of quick intervention and the importance of understanding family history."

Despite the quick care he received, Zach remained hospitalized for several days, and Nicole didn't leave his side. While she's used to navigating the demands of FMC's intensive care unit, the hours she spent as a visitor on the floor couldn't have been more different from her daily job duties. While Zach was sick, she wasn't Head Nurse and Unit Manager Nicole Rohr, RN, BSN. She was a concerned – and exhausted – wife, sleeping on a cot next to her husband's bed. Nicole's office and Zach's hospital room were physically right next to each other, but in every other way, they were a world apart.

"It was surreal for my home life and work life to collide like that. But the Cath Lab girls were wonderful. My leaders and coworkers came together to support me; they covered my responsibilities without thinking twice. And my team – they're amazing," Nicole said. "My nurses are phenomenal. I trust them, and I wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else."

As Zach recovered, a missing piece of the puzzle fell into place. While he knew that his grandfather died young, he never learned the reason. After asking questions and putting the information together, it became clear that a massive heart attack at the age of 42 was the most likely culprit. This development highlighted how strongly family history and genetics can influence cardiac risk factors – even if you do everything right.

"We don't focus on, 'What's the point of living healthy if this was going to happen anyway?'" Nicole said. "That kind of thinking isn't helpful. If Zach wasn't as mindful of his health or as physically fit, this could have happened 10 years earlier or with a much worse outcome."

ZACH'S CARE TEAM



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FMC Cardiac Rehab
FMC Catheterization Lab
FMC Intensive Care Unit



Zach Rohr stands with his truck and new business, G.I.Bins, outside the surgery tower.

Once discharged, Zach began cardiac rehab at FMC to rebuild his strength and restore his confidence. Fitness was an important aspect of his life, but getting back on the treadmill came with a sense of dread after such a close call. Fortunately, the reassurance that came with attending supervised workout sessions surrounded by medical professionals helped Zach realize he was able to return to his active lifestyle safely and successfully. While his commitment to fitness remained intact, other aspects of his life changed almost completely.

Zach quit his job. He had long considered starting his own company, but the timing never felt quite right. After his heart attack, he realized there is very rarely the "perfect" time for anything – and now is better than never. Zach took the leap and became the owner of G.I. Bins Ohio, a veteran-owned small business that delivers residential and commercial trash bin, exterior cleaning, and power washing services to central Ohio. While full of its own challenges, he's thriving as an entrepreneur and doesn't regret leaving his high-stress career behind.

"Having this experience made me realize I can't take my life and my health for granted," Zach said. "I encourage everyone to manage daily stress and make changes to live a life they genuinely enjoy. It's so important to lead a healthy lifestyle, recognize when something is wrong and take those concerns seriously."

There are, of course, a few things that have remained constant and perhaps grown stronger. Zach is still a loving husband and father, a present friend, and an advocate for health and wellness. Beyond the ever-important cornerstones of diet and exercise, Zach encourages everyone to learn more about their family history and share the information with a trusted healthcare provider. Knowledge is power, and in this case, it can be lifesaving.

Preventive cardiology focuses on identifying and modifying risk factors before they become a larger problem. The goal of this approach is to prevent major cardiac events, like heart attacks, from ever occurring. If you are at high risk for heart disease due to family history, genetics or lifestyle choices, talk to your provider about cardiac screenings or referral to FHP Cardiology. Our physicians specialize in advanced imaging, lipid management, lifestyle modification and more to stay on top of your heart health.

Past, Present & Future

The EVOLUTION of Biomarker Testing



Tammy Drobina stands in the Bessie Benson Memorial Park in Carroll, which is named after her grandma.

When you hear the words “community-oriented,” Tammy Drobina is a name that should come to mind. A lifelong Carroll resident, her passion for local history led her to start the Carroll Area Historical Society in 2005. She made history herself in 2011 when she was elected the village’s first female mayor. Before retiring in 2022, she worked her dream job as Executive Director of the Fairfield County Heritage Association, overseeing operations of the Sherman House and Georgian Museum in Lancaster.

About 20 years ago, Tammy experienced a medical issue that required emergency care. After an initial visit to a different emergency department failed to resolve the problem, her husband, Ed, urged her to go to Fairfield Medical Center for further evaluation.

“The care I received at FMC was excellent,” Tammy recalled. “I immediately got the feeling that they were going to get to the bottom of the issue, and within a few days, I had a diagnosis and a plan. Ever since then, I’ve come to FMC for my care and happily stayed with my local doctors.”

Early in 2023, Tammy’s primary care provider encouraged her to schedule a mammogram as she had not had one for several years – a routine test that would soon prove lifesaving. Her initial scan in February 2023 revealed a spot that was not of high concern at the time, but the radiologist noted should be observed closely. She was advised to return every six months for ongoing monitoring.

Nearly a year later at her second follow-up appointment, the screening revealed changes in the original spot, prompting her doctors to take a closer look. Tammy was quickly scheduled for a diagnostic mammogram and a biopsy was performed by David Hasl, MD, of Fairfield Healthcare Professionals General Surgery.

The additional testing confirmed breast cancer, and Tammy received her diagnosis on March 12, 2024. With no known family history of the disease and no noticeable symptoms, the diagnosis came as a shock.

“Hearing those words just kind of hits you, and I just couldn’t believe it,” Tammy said. “I kept wondering, ‘How did this happen?’ It was such a surprise. If it weren’t for the mammogram, I wouldn’t have known.”



I immediately got the feeling that they were going to get to the bottom of the issue, and within a few days, I had a diagnosis and a plan.



The FMC Cancer Care team responded quickly to map out a treatment plan, and in April, Dr. Hasl performed a lumpectomy to remove the tumor. The tumor was analyzed after surgery, and lab results determined Tammy had triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), a rare and aggressive form of the disease.

"Triple-negative breast cancer represents a small percentage of breast cancers," explained Roopa Srikantiah-Saha, MD, of FHP Hematology/Oncology. "It differs from other types in that it tends to grow faster and lacks the usual hormone receptors doctors rely on for treatment, but new advancements are being researched every day."

Tammy's treatment plan called for chemotherapy next, at the same time as several exciting events coming up: a trip of a lifetime to Ireland and Scotland with her husband, and their grandson's wedding just a week after their return.

Wanting to continue to live her life even amid a cancer diagnosis, Tammy made the decision to delay beginning chemotherapy until after these important events. Her doctors supported the decision, as she would still be within the optimal window to begin treatment.

Once Tammy was ready to begin chemotherapy, Dr. Saha informed her that she was eligible for a new type of biomarker testing. The test would analyze the tumor tissue to provide deeper insights into the cancer's behavior and her risk of recurrence.



Tammy Drobina sits under the gazebo at Bessie Benson Memorial Park on one of the 12 benches donated by members of the Carroll Business Assoc. as part of a year-long community service project.

"I was so glad that this test was available to me because it gave my providers and me more information about how to treat my cancer effectively," Tammy shared.

The results showed that the cancer had a higher risk of recurrence than initially thought, prompting Dr. Saha to adjust the treatment plan and change the chemotherapy regimen to a stronger type.

"Biomarker testing allows us to individualize treatment in a way we couldn't before," Dr. Saha said. "For Tammy, we could now offer a stronger, more precise treatment."

Beginning in June 2024, Tammy underwent 16 weeks of chemotherapy, followed by 20 radiation treatments guided by Mark Becker, MD, of FHP Radiation Oncology, to eliminate any lingering cancer cells and reduce the risk of recurrence. This demanding treatment regimen wrapped up in December 2024, and Tammy is now celebrating remission.

In early 2025, Tammy underwent genetic testing, which revealed a PALB2 gene mutation. This genetic trait can increase the risk for breast, ovarian and pancreatic cancers. With this new information,



Tammy Drobina at the 2025 FMC Cancer Survivor's Day Celebration at River Valley Campus.

TAMMY'S CARE TEAM



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Sarah Jones, RN, BSN
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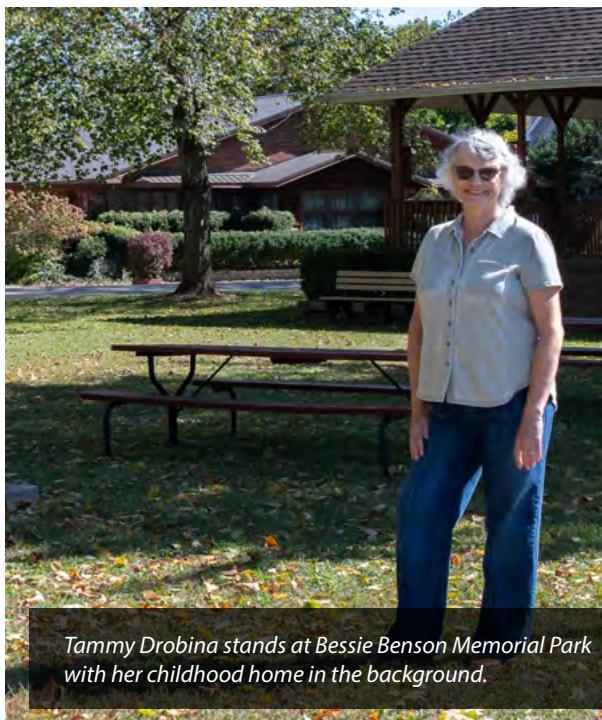
Roopa Srikantiah-Saha, MD
FHP Hematology/Oncology
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Tammy's care team could develop a long-term surveillance strategy to monitor her health.

Tammy's care team keeps close watch to ensure that if the cancer does return, they are prepared to spring into action to treat it. In addition to more frequent mammograms, she is also undergoing MRIs to monitor for any cancer spreading, and she receives regular blood testing that can detect cancer in the bloodstream.

Now, as she's regaining her strength, looking back on her journey and getting back to doing what she loves most around her community, Tammy is thankful she followed through on that initial mammogram, and thankful for the team at Fairfield Medical Center who continues to stand beside her every step of the way.

"My care team is very on top of things – they're knowledgeable and up to date on new advancements," said Tammy. "I'm very appreciative of everybody and what they've done for me."



Tammy Drobina stands at Bessie Benson Memorial Park with her childhood home in the background.

Genetic Testing Knowledge is Power

Cancer is caused by cells in our bodies growing out of control, which is linked to certain changes in genes, called mutations. Gene mutations are present in every cell in the body, even cells without cancer, and can increase a person's risk for one or more cancers.

Predictive genetic testing looks for certain mutations in cancer-related genes and is used to determine whether a person may be at a higher risk of developing certain cancers due to inherited gene mutations. Unlike biomarker testing, which analyzes the tumor itself, genetic testing looks at DNA changes that may increase cancer risk.

Genetic testing is not right for everyone and is something you should discuss with your healthcare provider. If you and your healthcare provider decide that genetic testing is right for you, a genetic counselor will likely meet with you. These specially trained medical professionals will help you better understand your risk and the tests that are available. A genetic counselor will evaluate your medical and family history, explain the advantages and restrictions of genetic testing, review your insurance coverage and more.

If you think you may be a fit for genetic testing, talk with your healthcare provider.

GENTLE YOGA for Cancer Patients & Survivors

In a Lancaster yoga studio filled with soft lighting, soothing music and slow movements, cancer survivors are finding physical and emotional strength, as well as healing, community and hope, through gentle yoga.

For the last several years, certified yoga teacher Melinda Smith, of Lancaster, has led free gentle yoga classes for cancer survivors at any stage of their journeys. Whether newly diagnosed, undergoing treatment or in remission, Melinda fosters a welcoming environment where participants can safely rebuild strength and mobility while forming relationships with other survivors.



Even after cancer treatment ends, many survivors continue to deal with lingering side effects that affect their quality of life. Symptoms like fatigue, pain and anxiety can persist long after treatment is over. While yoga cannot treat cancer itself, it can be an effective way to help manage many of these physical and emotional side effects.

"We focus on medication and procedures, but it can be very important for patients to introduce physical activity back into their routines," says Roopa Srikanthi-Saha, MD, of FHP Hematology/Oncology. "Gentle yoga can give survivors tools to cope with stress, increase confidence and strength, and reconnect with their bodies in a safe, supportive space."

The gentle yoga classes are offered in an accessible space where everyone can participate, regardless of physical limitations. Modifications are offered for all poses by using props or by adjusting the body's position. Chair yoga, a form of yoga done from a seated position, is always an option for those who may not feel comfortable standing.

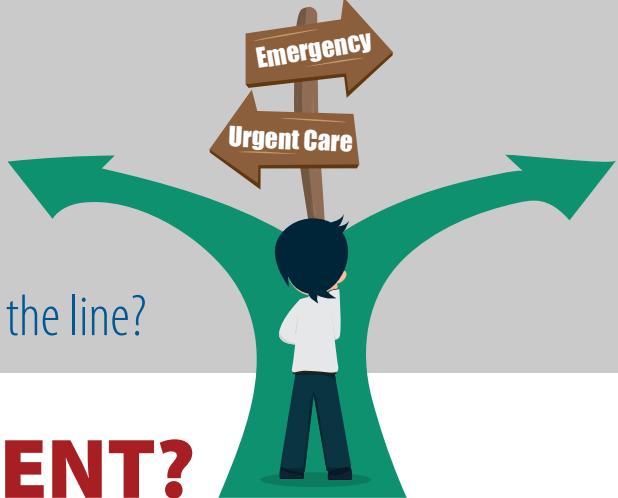
"It's important to me that I create a community where all cancer survivors can come together to quiet their minds to reduce stress and anxiety," said Melinda. "The more comfortable they are in class, the more benefits they will see outside of class."

The advantages of the gentle yoga class extend beyond the patients themselves. Melinda said spouses, children, friends and other support people have attended classes with their loved one.

Free gentle yoga for cancer survivors classes are offered every Thursday at 10 a.m. at Melinda's studio, Alive & Well Yoga and Fitness, located at 1620 E. Main St., Lancaster. Registration is not required. If you have any questions about these classes, please call 740-900-1503.

HEALTHY HABITS

Do you know where to go when your health is on the line?



Is it **URGENT** or **EMERGENT**?

The hacking cough that just won't go away. The bug bite that won't stop itching. A nagging pain that arises out of nowhere. Illness and injury can strike at any moment, and sometimes it can be difficult to determine where you should go for care when symptoms become a concern and your primary care provider is unable to see you right away.



Fairfield Medical Center Urgent Care
1155 E. Main St., Lancaster

Hours:

9 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday
9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday & Sunday

At time of publication, because of severe flooding and damages suffered to the building and equipment, FMC Urgent Care was temporarily moved to 131 N. Ewing St., Ste. A, Lancaster. Please check our website for updates.

When should I go to Urgent Care?

Urgent cares are designed to help patients with minor illnesses or injuries get relief quickly – without having to wait for an appointment with their primary care provider. The healthcare team at FMC's Urgent Care can order basic labs and imaging tests, as well as prescribe medication to help you feel better until you can follow up with your primary care team.

Some common ailments that can be treated at the urgent care include:

- Back or muscle pain
- Minor cuts or burns
- Sprains or joint pain
- Respiratory infection
- Skin conditions
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (such as vomiting or diarrhea)



FMC River Valley Campus
Emergency Department
2384 N. Memorial Dr., Lancaster



FMC Main Campus
Emergency Department
401 N. Ewing St., Lancaster

Both locations are open 24/7
Call 911 for all life-threatening emergencies

When should I go to the Emergency Department?

Unlike an urgent care, the Emergency Department has physicians, staff and equipment to provide life or limb-saving care. They also have access to a skilled team of specialists such as cardiologists, pulmonologists and orthopedic surgeons when needed.

If you are experiencing the following symptoms, you need emergency care and should not go to the urgent care or wait to see your provider:

- Chest pain
- Head injury
- Shortness of breath
- Severe headaches
- Seizure
- Abdominal pain
- Paralysis
- Compound fracture (bone is protruding through the skin)
- Severe allergic reaction
- Loss of consciousness
- Trauma

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911. Do not drive yourself to the hospital, especially if you are experiencing signs of heart attack or stroke. EMS workers can care for you on the ride to the hospital and alert staff before your arrival. Additionally, if you have an underlying medical condition that puts you at increased risk for serious illness – including diabetes, heart and lung disease or cancer – talk to your primary care provider about signs and symptoms that warrant immediate medical attention. Proactively managing your condition can reduce the need for hospitalization.

To learn more about these services, visit
fmchealth.org/services/emergencyandurgentcare/



I'm grateful we had such a kind and knowledgeable resource to guide us through this process.

Louanne Burns celebrates the holidays and her healthier lifestyle after surgery.

The Damaging Effects of GERD and the Signs You Shouldn't Ignore

Louanne Burns, 67, had experienced plenty of heartburn over the years, especially when eating the usual triggers, like pepperoni pizza or pasta with tomato sauce. After a while, however, the sensation stopped. Gone were the days of sleepless nights, sitting up in bed or taking antacids at odd hours. What she didn't realize, however, was that her acid reflux never truly went away – and it had been silently causing damage for years.

"When patients go for long periods with chronic or frequent heartburn, acid reflux can actually damage nerve endings in the esophagus, which is the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach," explained Heather Luttrell, RN, BSN, who is the clinical coordinator of the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center. "Even if you don't feel that common burning behind the sternum, it's very possible that you are still experiencing reflux – often with what we call atypical symptoms."

When meeting with Heather for a free consultation, Louanne was surprised to learn that she did have symptoms of GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease), many of which she never even recognized. Uncommon signs like coughing while eating or frequent throat clearing at night were easy enough to ignore, but when she began to have trouble swallowing, the red flags became clearer.

"Early last year, food – especially heavier meals, like meat or bread – would stick in my throat every now and again. I would swallow, and it felt like the bite would get lodged just above my stomach," Louanne explained. "I wouldn't be able to eat any more until I cleared it, but then I would be back to normal."



Photo credit: Stephanie West Photography

With a busy season ahead, Louanne waited to seek medical attention. In the homestretch of planning her daughter's wedding, Louanne didn't feel it was necessary to add an additional layer of stress to an already demanding schedule. She was, after all, completely fine when not experiencing the unpleasant sensation. Unfortunately, on her daughter's big day, she had another episode that couldn't be ignored.

"The wedding was beautiful, but I couldn't eat or drink anything at the reception," Louanne said. "I spent a lot of the evening in the bathroom trying to get rid of that 'stuck' feeling. At the time, I didn't understand that my difficulty swallowing was related to my esophagus, or that the increased pressure on my stomach from my clothing was the reason I was having such a hard time compared to past episodes."

At the urging of her recently married daughter, Louanne promptly called to schedule an EGD, or an upper scope of the esophagus, stomach and first part of the small intestine. During the procedure, which involves passing a small camera through the digestive tract, the doctor found and corrected a narrowing of the esophagus, or stricture, caused by a build-up of scar tissue. Louanne also had significant inflammation in the lining of her esophagus: Both findings were tell-tale signs of her silent acid reflux. With proof of advanced GERD in hand, she buckled down to resolve the issue before her repeated scope in three months.

For Louanne, meeting with Heather and the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center helped her gain clarity around the diagnosis. During their initial visit, they talked through what was happening, why it was happening, and how to manage or prevent future complications associated with GERD. In addition to understanding the disease process and how her anatomy played a role, Louanne also learned the importance of taking heartburn medications correctly as well as key lifestyle changes to help reduce reflux.

"Without Heather, I would have been taking my omeprazole with my breakfast and dinner instead of at least 30 minutes before meals. I would have been going to bed right after eating instead of sitting up," Louanne said. "There are so many things that I didn't realize were impacting my health. I'm grateful we had such a kind and knowledgeable resource to guide us through this process."

When Louanne returned for her second scope after three months of treatment, the inflammation in her esophagus had resolved. During this procedure, Isabel Manzanillo-DeVore, DO, of FHP Gastroenterology and Fairfield Medical Center's Endoscopy team were able to take biopsies to rule out conditions like esophageal cancer and immune-mediated



Louanne Burns looks proudly at her daughter, Olivia, before her wedding in June of 2024.
Photo credit: Stephanie West Photography

inflammation. While the results came back negative for those conditions, Louanne was diagnosed with Barrett's esophagus, or pre-cancerous changes to the cells damaged by her acid reflux. Much like a colonoscopy, protocol includes routine screenings every few years to ensure the condition isn't progressing.

"Of course I didn't want to have Barrett's esophagus, but it's encouraging to know I'm being proactive," Louanne shared. "After talking with Heather and Dr. Manzanillo, I decided to pursue surgery to correct the root cause of my reflux instead of relying on medications for the rest of my life. Once I knew there was a problem, I could work on fixing it."

Louanne's next step in her treatment plan included visiting Jeffrey Yenchar, MD, of FHP General Surgery, who explained surgical options to correct her large hiatal hernia and strengthen her esophageal sphincter. These anatomical fixes – one to keep the stomach from pushing upward into the chest cavity and the other to prevent digestive acid from entering the esophagus – can resolve reflux and eliminate the need for medication management. Nearly a year after she began having trouble swallowing, Louanne underwent robotic Nissen fundoplication with Dr. Yenchar – a decision she doesn't regret.

"This surgery and Dr. Yenchar taught me to eat more mindfully by taking smaller bites, chewing more thoroughly and stopping when I feel full – between my recovery and lifestyle changes, I lost weight and started myself on a path to healthier living."

Louanne's positive experience even led her husband, Dave, to schedule an upper scope of his own. Diagnosed with GERD in his late thirties, Dave had been on heartburn medications for three decades, but it never occurred to him that another procedure may be in order. This – coupled with a family history of esophageal cancer and other risk factors like his age, sex, and race – was enough for him to take the plunge. Fortunately, everything came back normal, and they are grateful for the peace of mind.

If you experience frequent heartburn, or if you have a history of frequent heartburn that has resolved without intervention, talk to your healthcare provider or contact the Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center for a free consultation at 740-689-6486.

LOUANNE'S CARE TEAM



Heather Luttrell, RN, BSN

FMC Endoscopy
740-689-6486



Isabel Manzanillo-DeVore, DO

FHP Gastroenterology
740-687-9182



Dr. Jeffrey Yenchar, MD

FHP General Surgery
740-687-5437



Fairfield Medical Heartburn Center

1st Floor, North Entrance
740-689-6486

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Volunteering at Any Age

Volunteer Opportunities



Like most people her age, **Annie McGill, 19**, leads a busy life. Not only is she a full-time college student, but she also works part-time, tutors elementary school students in math and reading and is a member of a student tap dancing group at The Ohio State University. To top it off, the Lancaster resident also finds time in her packed schedule to volunteer one day a week as a Patient Pal at Fairfield Medical Center.

"I decided to volunteer at FMC because I wanted to give back to my community and help people going through difficult times, even if it might be in small ways," Annie said. "I also wanted to get some experience being around patients and in a hospital setting because I want to work in healthcare after I graduate."

While most volunteers at FMC are retirees over the age of 60, young volunteers like Annie are showing that giving back to your community is possible at any age – even if you are juggling the demands of work, school and raising a family. **FMC volunteer coordinator Heidi Reed** said that volunteers of all ages can benefit from serving their community.

"For teens and younger adults, it provides a unique opportunity to gain experience as they head to college, trade school or into a new career, while for working adults, it provides an outlet for service and connection outside of their regular job," Heidi said.

Connecting with the community and forming new friendships outside of work is what compelled **Margaret Roberts, 23**, to start volunteering at FMC. Margaret, who works full-time and attends school part-time, said volunteering as a greeter at the North Information Desk is one of the highlights of her week.

"It grants me a new perspective when I am absorbed with my own issues or feelings," Margaret said. "You learn a lot; it's a rewarding thing to do, even if you can only dedicate a couple of hours a week."

For **Rachel McCandlish, 49**, the flexibility of FMC's volunteer program is what initially appealed to her. Rachel is a busy mom of one who works in FMC's Emergency Department and cares for a variety of farm animals at home, including several horses. Currently, she and her dog, Brio, make rounds at FMC a couple times a month through the hospital's P.A.W. Pals program, which brings pet therapy dogs to the bedside of hospitalized patients who need a little extra comfort during their stay.

"It's not a huge time commitment to volunteer with my dog – ensuring he's had a bath before we come in is probably my greatest hurdle!" Rachel said. "I wanted to be able to share Brio with patients and co-workers, and I really enjoy being able to take the time to relax and get to know patients. I've had many moments where I feel Brio and I have made a difference to patients and their families."

Ohio University student **Joshua Henwood, 19**, considers volunteering to be a nice change of pace from his busy schedule, which includes classes and extracurriculars like sports and theatre. When he's home on breaks, he volunteers 3-5 hours a week in FMC's mailroom and has helped with filming for the hospital's annual employee Holiday Party, an opportunity that provides something different and meaningful to do in his spare time.

"I became a volunteer at FMC because I was very burnt out with school and sports and wanted something else to do," Joshua said. "Now that I'm in college, I can still do a quick shift at the hospital and then return to other obligations without it being too much of a disruption."

Heidi said the patients and visitors at FMC benefit greatly when the volunteer program is diverse in age and life experiences. "With such a variety of patients, you never know if they will connect better with older volunteers or with younger volunteers, so it's wonderful when we can offer a balance of both," Heidi said.

Is your plate full?

The Benefits of Volunteering (no matter your age!)

- Explore potential career paths
- Develop new skills
- Enhance college applications and resumes
- Stay active
- Boost mental health
- Prevent loneliness and isolation
- Provide a positive outlook on life
- Expand your social circle

FMC's volunteer program offers service opportunities in 20 different areas of the organization, with the flexibility to volunteer as little or as much as you want on a schedule convenient for you.

To fill out an application or to learn more, visit fmchealth.org/careers/faq/volunteers/ or contact Heidi Reed at 740-687-8109 or heidire@fmchealth.org.



Volunteers do not necessarily have the time, they just have the heart. ~ Elizabeth Andrews, Author

Joshua Henwood

Mail Services

“ I became a volunteer at FMC during high school because I was very burnt out with school and sports and wanted something else to do. Now, I can still do a quick shift at the hospital and then return to other obligations without it being too much of a disruption. **”**



Rachel McCandlish

P.A.W. Pals and ED

“ It's not a huge time commitment to volunteer with my dog – ensuring he's had a bath before we come in is probably my greatest hurdle! I've had many moments where I feel Brio and I have made a difference to patients and their families. **”**



Heidi Reed

Volunteer Coordinator

“ Volunteers of all ages can benefit from serving their community. With such a variety of patients, you never know if they will connect better with older volunteers or with younger volunteers, so it's wonderful when we can offer a balance of both. **”**





Hospitalist Dr. Imthiaz Khan (center) oversees two Graduate Medical Education (GME) resident physicians, Dr. JJ Jones (left) and Dr. Moe Israr (right), in the treatment plan of a patient at Fairfield Medical Center.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: The Caring Role of Hospitalists



Jennifer Neuding, FMC
Inpatient, 2024

A hospital stay can be an overwhelming experience for a patient, especially when they are grappling with a serious medical issue while navigating a whirlwind of information, tests, treatments and decisions. For Laurelville resident Jennifer Neuding, that was her reality in December of 2024 when she was unexpectedly admitted to Fairfield Medical Center after an imaging scan on her leg revealed two blood clots that required immediate treatment.

"I was thinking maybe they would admit me overnight, but as she started to explain what was going on, I realized this was going to be a process to treat and that I was going to be in the hospital for a couple of days at least," recalled Jennifer, 38.

As Jennifer's care team prepared to transition her from the Emergency Department to an inpatient room, she met Dr. Doug Pope, a hospitalist who would not only oversee her care for the next five days but also help her mentally and emotionally navigate her frightening diagnosis.

"Once I was admitted, I was unable to leave the floor or go outside, so I began to feel claustrophobic and anxious," Jennifer said. "Dr. Pope would stop by to see me every day, and he would sit at the bedside and answer my questions in a way I could understand. I've been hospitalized a lot in my life and the care I received from Dr. Pope was the best care I've ever had."

"For a patient who has just been told that they need a heart catheterization or a major surgery, it can be overwhelming," Dr. Pope said. "I will come in after they talk to the specialist and ask them what their understanding is and if they know what is going to happen. I often find that a lot of patients don't know if they have questions because they don't know what questions to ask. It's my job to put them at ease and make sure they understand the process."

WHAT IS HOSPITAL MEDICINE?

Hospital medicine is a relatively new but rapidly growing specialty at Fairfield Medical Center. When the Fairfield Hospital Medicine program launched in 2009, there were only two hospitalists; today, there are 22 who round on every unit and care for a wide range of patients, from those dealing with acute issues like pneumonia or sepsis to those recovering from surgery. Most hospitalists work 12-hour shifts and see 15-18 patients a day, although that number can increase in the winter months to as many as 25.



When a patient is hospitalized for an acute issue such as infection, serious health conditions, or post-surgical recovery, they are partnered with a hospitalist who manages their overall care.

Hospitalists are a vital component to the patient experience, not only because they work in the hospital full-time and know every unit and specialist, but they remain with the patient from the moment they are admitted to the day they are discharged, ensuring the patient always has a familiar face to turn to for updates and questions.

Fairfield Medical Center FHP Hospital Medicine providers Dr. Doug Pope, Dr. Imthiaz Khan and Dr. Majida Giancola. There are currently 22 hospitalists at Fairfield Medical Center.



FMC's Graduate Medical Education (GME) program, which offers a three-year residency in internal medicine or family medicine for physicians, has been instrumental in fostering a wave of hospitalists over the past decade. Half of FMC's hospitalists are graduates of the program and received extensive training on caring for inpatients during their residency.

"Residents have the opportunity to rotate with many specialties, and this is generally where they are able to identify their goals after residency," said GME supervisor Melissa Newman. "Many residents select the hospitalist rotation as an elective because they want to enhance their skills and increase their volume of patients, much like they will after graduation."

Dr. Imthiaz Khan, who completed his residency at FMC and has been a hospitalist since 2023, said the role of a hospitalist appealed to him early in his residency.

"I loved the problem-solving aspect of inpatient medicine and the opportunity to make a real impact on patients' lives," Dr. Khan said. "It's especially rewarding now to work alongside my former mentors and teachers as colleagues who continue to support me."

Dr. Majida Giancola, who also completed her residency at FMC in 2015, said she pursued hospital medicine because she found it to be challenging and rewarding. She and Dr. Khan now assist with mentoring new residents to help them find their niche in the healthcare field.



"My journey into medicine wasn't something I always had mapped out from the beginning – it developed over time as I discovered my strengths and where I felt called to serve," Dr. Giancola said. "I was drawn to this role because it combines direct patient care, problem-solving across different specialties, and the chance to be part of a team that guides patients through some of their most vulnerable moments."

WHAT SHOULD PATIENTS EXPECT FROM THEIR FMC HOSPITALIST?

As a hospitalist, building trust and familiarity with each patient is key to ensuring a successful hospital stay. When a patient is introduced to a hospitalist for the first time – usually right before or right after they are admitted – the hospitalist has already reviewed the patient's files and been briefed by their care team.

"I think some patients may feel like the hospitalist doesn't know them, but that's not the case – in some instances, that hospitalist may have even taken care of the patient before," Dr. Pope explained. "So even though I'm not that patient's primary care provider, I know who they are and can still build that familiar relationship with them."

Jennifer said she developed a trust and confidence with Dr. Pope very quickly, so much so, that she felt comfortable speaking with him about other health issues she was experiencing.

"At one point, I told him I was worried I might also have lymphedema, as my legs have always been large and sensitive to touch," Jennifer said. "He looked at my legs and agreed that I needed to be checked out at the lymphedema clinic. I appreciated that he didn't brush it off."

Dr. Pope said his visits with patients extend beyond caring for their medical needs, but also putting them at ease, encouraging them when they experience setbacks or bad news and letting them know that they are not alone as they navigate the path toward healing.

"I don't wear a white coat when I visit patients and I always sit at their bedside, talk to them about their life and try to use some humor when appropriate," he said. "My interaction is a success if the family and patient are smiling when I leave."



ASK THE PROVIDER

Nicole Sabatina, DO, Fairfield Healthcare Professionals
Orthopedics and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
740-689-4935

**When accidents happen:
WE'RE HERE FOR YOU**

As winter rolls in, so does the risk of slips and falls. Icy sidewalks, snow-covered driveways and wet floors are all risks for accidents that can range from minor bruises to serious injuries. "Hospitals often see an increase in patients presenting with complications from winter weather-related falls, and many of these accidents can be prevented with a little extra caution and preparation," said Nicole Sabatina, DO, of FHP Orthopedics and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation.



Walk like a Penguin

Walk flat-footed, take short steps, hold your arms at your sides and concentrate on maintaining your balance.

Tips from Dr. Sabatina on winter injury prevention:

- Walk like a penguin when wet or icy surfaces are unavoidable. To walk like a penguin, keep your feet flat on the ground, bend your knees, take short steps and point your toes slightly outwards.
- Wear proper footwear. Flat shoes with nonslip soles are the best. If you must wear heels or dress shoes for work, it is best to commute to work in appropriate footwear, then change into your work shoes once you are inside a building.
- Prevention is key! If you notice that your balance has been declining, Dr. Sabatina recommends visiting the Physical Therapy Team at FMC – they can assist you with exercises to help with gait, posture, balance and core strength to reduce the risk of falls. You do not have to wait until an injury occurs to do physical therapy.

Winter can be the most wonderful time of the year, so follow these tips and don't let slipping on ice deter you from enjoying the festivities. However, if an accident does happen, we're here for you. Unsure where to go? See page 11 for a guide to care.



See your Primary Care Provider for muscle pain or strains, etc.



Visit Fairfield Medical Urgent Care if you need stitches, have a sprain or a possible break, etc.



Call 911 or come to the Emergency Department for major breaks, head trauma, serious neck or back injury, signs of stroke or heart attack, etc.

If you do experience a slip or a fall, take your time getting up. It's important to assess how you feel after a fall to avoid any risk of further injury or slipping again. Be sure to monitor yourself for any worrisome indications that you need medical attention – it's better to be safe than sorry. According to Dr. Sabatina, some signs that may warrant a visit to the doctor include:

- Injuries to your head or spine
- Hearing a pop or a crack
- Bleeding that cannot be stopped quickly (especially if you are on blood thinners)
- Pain greater than general soreness
- Excessive bruising
- Inability to move a joint
- Inability to bear weight

Wear Better Shoes/Boots

In bad weather, avoid smooth, flat soles and heels. If you can't feel distinct grooves with your thumb, your shoes or boots won't keep you upright on ice.



The experts at FHP Orthopedics and PM&R can help you get your strength and confidence back, so you can experience your life with less pain and more ease, helping you once again enjoy doing the things you love. **To request an appointment with one of our compassionate orthopedic and physical medicine & rehabilitation providers, talk to your primary care provider about a referral, or call 740-689-4935.**

Annual Community Classes From Support to Instruction

Fairfield Medical Center extends care beyond the doors of its facility and offers a variety of classes for free or at a minimal cost. These classes include Childbirth Education, Diabetic Education, Neuro Support, Clinical Symposia, Nutritional Services, Special Health, Recognition and Awareness Events, CPR, First Aid, and CABS certifications. Also offered are noncertification trainings for diverse topics such as Hands-Only CPR and AED operation.

For more information, or to sign up online, visit fmchealth.org/calendar/



 View Calendar



CALL. PUSH. SHOCK.

CPR, AED, First Aid training offered through FMC
For info, email Resa Tobin:
Resa@fmchealth.org

CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION SERIES

These education courses are free and should be completed four to six weeks before your due date. Registration is required, and space is limited. Scan the QR code or visit fmchealth.org/services/maternity-care/classes/.



CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION Sessions 1 & 2

Explore labor and birth, pain control options, relaxation techniques, childbirth recovery and cesarean birth.

Expectant mothers and one support person are welcome to sign up for classes at their convenience. It is recommended that Sessions 1 and 2 be taken in order. Session 2 includes a tour of Maternity Services.

SIBLING CLASS

This class uses hands-on practice to focus on safety and the importance of being a sibling.

GRANDPARENTING CLASS

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

MATERNITY TOUR

This tour is designed for expectant parents who desire more information about Maternity Services at Fairfield Medical Center.

Note: A tour is included as part of the Childbirth class (session 2) for those who are enrolled in Childbirth Education Classes.



NEWBORN CARE Session 3

Learn more about infant characteristics during the first weeks of life and beyond. Topics include when to call a pediatrician, how to soothe a crying/fussy infant, feeding recommendations and a hands-on bathing, dressing and diapering demonstration.

This class can be taken prior to attending Childbirth Education Sessions 1 and 2 and can also be taken as an individual class.

BREASTFEEDING CLASS

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

MEET OUR **NEW PROVIDERS**

The following providers recently joined Fairfield Healthcare Professionals. Looking for a provider?
Go to fmchealth.org and click Find a Provider or scan the QR code.



Tori Horne, DO



Fairfield Healthcare Professionals
Family Medicine of Amanda
5115 Amanda Northen Rd. SW
Amanda, Ohio 43102
740-969-4828

Heather Huffman, CNP



Fairfield Healthcare Professionals
Primary Care Internal Medicine
2405 N. Columbus St., Ste. 280
Lancaster, OH 43130
740-689-4470

Steven Mould, MD



Fairfield Healthcare Professionals
Cardiology
2405 N. Columbus St., Ste. 200
Lancaster, OH 43130
740-689-4480

Nicholas Spurgus, PA-C



Fairfield Healthcare Professionals
Cardiothoracic Surgery
618 Pleasantville Rd., Ste. 202
Lancaster, Ohio 43130
740-681-9020

Please call the office to inquire about an appointment. Some providers and offices are not currently accepting new patients. Referrals from a Primary Care Provider are needed for most specialties. If you are in need of a Primary Care Provider, call our referral line at 740-687-8687.

NOW AVAILABLE IN WISHES!



Are you looking for a 2026 calendar to hang in your office space or home? Stop by Wishes and purchase a P.A.W. Pals calendar! Each month features an adorable member of our P.A.W. Pals team, and all proceeds from the sale of the calendar support the P.A.W. Pals Volunteer Fund.



Two ways to purchase:

- Stop by Wishes Gift Shop on the Main Campus. Cash, credit card or payroll deduction is accepted. Wishes is open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and closed on the weekend.
- Unable to get to Wishes during store hours? Order a calendar online at fmchealth.org/wishes/. Calendars can be picked up at Wishes or sent via interoffice to staff members once the order is placed.



P.A.W. Pals is a pet-assisted wellness program that uses trained volunteers and their furry friends to provide comfort for patients, visitors and staff. The P.A.W. Pals Volunteer Fund supports P.A.W. Pals and other volunteer activities that benefit patients and visitors at FMC. To learn more about this program, scan the QR code.



P.A.W. Pals

For more information on how you can give to the Fairfield Medical Foundation, call 740-687-8107 or visit fmchealth.org/foundation.



Fairfield Medical Center
FOUNDATION

Grateful for your care?
Share your story.

Scan the QR code to read Grateful Patient Michael Parrish's story, and learn how you can nominate a caregiver who has made a difference in your life.



Michael's Story