

communityconnections

Your Care Should Be Life Changing



**IN THIS
ISSUE**

Women's
Heart Health

Expanding Primary Care
in the Northern Tier

Care for Women
and Children

from the **president's desk**



UPMC in North Central Pa. is proud to bring high-quality care and advanced services to our communities. We ensure that the expertise typically found in large medical centers is accessible right here, close to home.

That means offering cutting-edge technology across specialties. It means training future family medicine providers through our new UPMC Rural Family Medicine Residency and welcoming its first residents to Wellsboro and Coudersport this summer. And it means addressing community needs in unique ways like launching a low-salt food pantry in Wellsboro led by cardiologist Dr. Jeffery Gilbert.

These are just a few ways we're living our mission every day. Our patients' stories in this edition speak volumes about the impact of our work.

I hope you find this issue informative and gain a deeper understanding of how we're serving you, because your care should be life changing.

Sincerely,

Patti Jackson-Gehris

President, UPMC North Central Pa.

President, UPMC Williamsport



Preparing for Surgery **for a Healthier Recovery**

At the Center for Perioperative Care (CPC), our experts provide you with a personalized plan to help prepare you for surgery and lead you to a healthier recovery.

The success of your surgery and recovery may be much better if you know what to do before surgery. Our mission at CPC is to find and reduce the factors that put people at risk during surgery. This work is vital for those having surgery, their loved ones, and the health care teams that support us all.

The CPC will address your:

- Concerns about needing anesthesia or surgery.
- Nutritional status.
- Need for physical heart or lung therapy.
- Need for weight loss.
- Chronic pain needs.
- Tobacco, drug, and alcohol use.
- Mental health issues, if any, and treatment to address them.
- Need to access social work support.

Patients can meet with the CPC team virtually through the MyUPMC portal or in person at the telemedicine center at UPMC Williamsport and UPMC Muncy.

Cassidy: A Three-Sport Comeback Story



During Cassidy's high school freshman-year track season, she started experiencing intense shin pain at practices and meets which was unusual for the life-long athlete.

“My legs felt like they were going to explode. The shooting pain would last for days.”

Her school's athletic trainer figured it was a severe case of shin splints and referred her to a physical therapist. But after a year of continued pain, Cassidy traveled over an hour to visit foot and ankle surgeon, Zachary Ritter, DPM, where she learned that shin splints weren't her problem. She was experiencing exercise-induced compartment syndrome.

“I will forever be thankful for Dr. Ritter,” she says. “The entire team at UPMC dug into depth to figure out my diagnosis, and Dr. Ritter always made me feel seen and heard. He changed my life and gave me back sports!”

Cassidy went on to win her soccer team championship, went to states with her basketball team, making school history, and finished out her senior year with track season. Cassidy is now at college and enjoys running around the soccer field with her intramural team.

WHAT IS COMPARTMENT SYNDROME?

Compartment syndrome is an increased pressure inside the leg muscles that reduces blood flow and causes pain. It is very rare, affecting fewer than 10 of every 100,000 people in the United States.

Symptoms include:

- Burning or aching pain in the lower leg muscles.
- Leg muscles bulging or swelling.
- Weakness or numbness in the legs.

While compartment syndrome can be very painful, fasciotomy surgery can lead to a pain-free life.

To learn more about conditions UPMC Orthopaedic Care treats, visit **[UPMC.com/OrthoNCPA](https://www.upmc.com/OrthoNCPA)**.



The Power of a Positive Outlook

Amy's Story



Amy's journey with breast cancer began back in 1997. As a young stay-at-home mom, she found a lump on her breast and monitored it with her primary care provider for a few years. In 2004, a mammogram found Stage 2 breast cancer. Amy went through numerous rounds of chemotherapy, radiation, and medications.



Amy was referred to the now UPMC Magee-Womens Breast Health Center by her primary care provider. A place she was familiar with as she has been a longstanding employee of UPMC for many years. Here, she found the comfort and expertise of the providers and staff. "Everyone there is kind, caring, and treats you like the only patient there. Dr. Sholi, UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, and Dr. Branton take the time to talk and listen to you and your concerns," says Amy.

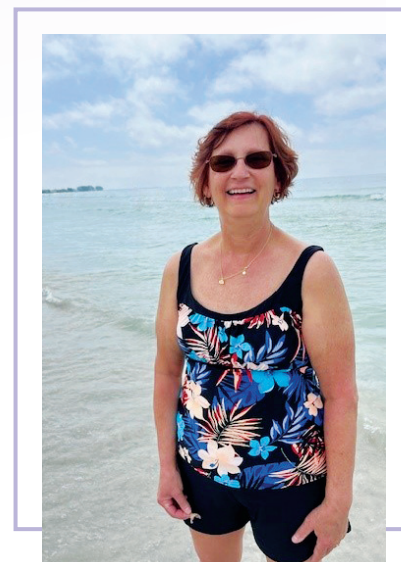
Amy's breast cancer has recurred three times since her initial diagnosis, in 2012, 2019, and 2024. During her journey, she has undergone a double mastectomy, additional rounds of chemotherapy, and radiation for cancer that was detected in her hips.

"Don't say 'no' to help, let people help."

Between dealing with cancer and raising a family, Amy credits her great support group of friends, family, and the community for helping her feel better.

Amy hopes sharing her story is an inspiration for others, especially young people. Not every day is easy, but she keeps going. Amy has the unique power to lift those around her up through her positive attitude and kindness.

Today, Amy enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren and also going to the beach — her happy place.



Don't Miss a Beat

Sign up to receive the latest email updates on new services, health tips, community events, and more.

Bringing Next-Generation Cancer Treatment to Williamsport

Your Support Makes It Possible

Susquehanna Health Foundation is dedicated to securing vital funding for UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport, which drives transformative advancements like upgrading our linear accelerator for radiation oncology. Through this critical investment, we enhance patient care, expand treatment capabilities, and strengthen our fight against cancer.



TRUEBEAM LINEAR ACCELERATOR

About 50% of people with cancer have some type of radiation during their cancer treatment. In 2024, 675 new patients from our 12-county region began treatment at our Williamsport location, totaling nearly 8,000 treatments annually, with 20% being non-oncologic cases, like osteoarthritis, and receiving low-dose radiotherapy.

To further enhance cancer care and improve patient outcomes, we aim to replace the Varian Trilogy with the cutting-edge Varian TrueBeam Linear Accelerator, offering faster treatments and ultraprecision.

Visit SusquehannaHealthFoundation.org/Donate to make your gift to support local cancer care or contact the Foundation at **570-320-7460**.

SUSQUEHANNA
HEALTH FOUNDATION



Women's Heart Health Q&A

by Stephanie Deviney, CRNP

While heart disease can affect everyone, it presents differently among men and women. Stephanie Deviney, CRNP, at the UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute answers your questions about women's heart health.

Q **How does women's heart health differ from men's heart health?**

A Women's symptoms of heart disease are usually more subtle than men's. Women often get nausea, fatigue, and sometimes jaw and tooth pain. They are not the typical "elephant sitting on my chest" symptoms. Women also tend to develop heart disease later in life than men, typically after menopause.

Q **What are other symptoms of heart disease in women?**

A Symptoms tend to be weight gain, noticing shortness of breath. Starting when you're climbing two flights of stairs and becoming progressively worse over a short period of time. Some people notice swelling in their ankles or in their stomach.

Q **How can women manage their risk for heart disease?**

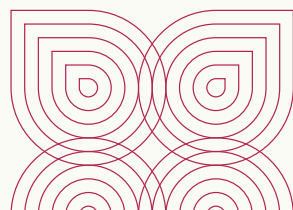
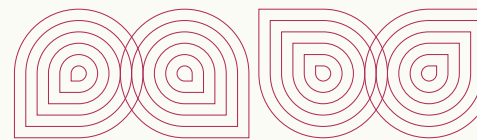
A Know your numbers! Keep track of your cholesterol and blood pressure and know your A1C if you are diabetic. The 90-day average of your blood sugar gives a lot of information. It's important to be aware of your risk factors, too. Smoking and family history play a role in heart disease.

Q **How can you keep your heart healthy?**

A

- Stop smoking.
- Get 30 minutes of exercise every day.
- Improve your diet.
 - > Try to eat the rainbow every day, we don't want a beige plate.

Two-thirds of your plate should be fruits, veggies, and heart-healthy grains. Small changes like choosing brown over white rice can make a big difference.





Jeffery Gilbert, DO



Sonya Solomon, RN

Reducing Salt Intake for Better Heart Health

Sticking to a low-salt diet can be difficult. Many prepared, packaged, and restaurant foods contain high amounts of added salt. Nutrition labels can also be unclear.

The recommended amount of sodium ranges from 1,500 to 2,300 mg per day based on different health conditions. Most Americans consume about 3,400 mg every day. Too much salt in a diet can increase your blood volume, which causes your blood vessels and heart to work harder.

In January 2025, Jeffery Gilbert, DO, and Sonya Solomon, RN, launched a low-salt food pantry at UPMC Wellsboro. They aim to educate patients and help them reduce their salt intake with the low-salt food pantry. "This is designed for patients who will benefit from learning how to make lower-salt recipes, how to read nutrition labels, and understand what a low-salt diet is," says Sonya.



At the end of a patient's appointment, they receive a bag of shelf stable, low-sodium food, recipes, and information on how to read nutrition labels. Bags may include rice, beans, low-salt spaghetti sauce, no-salt vegetables, soups, and oatmeal.

For more information about this program, call **570-321-2800**.



Scan here for an easy,
HEART HEALTHY BURGER SOUP RECIPE.



Caring for Women Through All Stages of Life

Whether you are planning a pregnancy, need an annual wellness visit, or have a concern to discuss with your women's health provider, our UPMC Magee-Womens team is committed to helping you in north central Pa.

Recently, child delivery services transitioned from UPMC Cole to UPMC Wellsboro. We understand how important access to women's health care is to our communities. To ensure women understand where services are available in the Northern Tier, please see the list below.



We provide:

- Breastfeeding support.
- Care for health conditions, such as endometriosis, ovarian cysts, chronic pelvic pain, and overactive bladder.
- Care for routine and high-risk pregnancies.
- Continued newborn support as the child transitions into pediatric care.
- Guidance for infertility issues and prenatal care or concerns.
- Labor and delivery services (at The Birthplace at UPMC Wellsboro).
- Minimally invasive gynecologic procedures.



Ethan Gable, MD, ob-gyn, and **Kristine Ball, CNM,** are now seeing patients in Coudersport and Wellsboro.

To listen to our Tele-town Hall about UPMC Magee-Womens services in the Northern Tier, please scan here and go to the "Podcasts" section.



What is a certified nurse midwife?

Certified nurse midwives are women's health care providers who often practice alongside ob-gyns, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. Although midwives are best known for delivering babies, they see women of all ages for a range of health issues.

Same-day Pediatric Care Is Available in Wellsboro

In Wellsboro, our team of pediatric providers offers complete care for infants, children, and adolescents. Whether it is a minor injury, routine checkup, or a chronic medical condition, our team is here for you and your family 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We offer around-the-clock nurse telephone support, as well as same-day appointments. Additionally, virtual visits may be an option.

We will do everything we can to make your child's visit with us as comfortable and pleasant as possible. From well and sick child visits to care for illness and injuries, our team of skilled pediatricians are dedicated to helping your child.

It's important to ensure your child is seeing a pediatrician for well-child visits, so we can check on their development, discuss important issues, and answer your questions about nutrition, safety, family relationships, behaviors, and more.

We offer pediatric care at the following Wellsboro locations:

UPMC Wellsboro Office of Pediatrics

15 Meade St., Suite U5
Wellsboro, PA 16901
570-723-6380

UPMC Wellsboro Office of Internal Medicine*

103 West Ave.
Wellsboro, PA 16901
570-724-3744

*This office recently expanded to provide pediatric care.

For more information about our pediatric services and locations across the region, please visit UPMC.com/PediatricsNCPA.



Expanding Primary Care in the Northern Tier

Starting this July, two resident physicians will be joining our family medicine practices in Port Allegany and Wellsboro. Our mission as the Rural Family Medicine Residency Program is to develop highly competent and compassionate family physicians by providing an exceptional learning environment to meet the health needs of our rural community.

What is a resident physician?

A resident physician has completed medical school and is currently in their residency, which is a three-year training program in their respective field. The residents work in partnership with an attending physician.

What is an attending physician?

An attending physician has completed all of their medical training and oversees residents to provide guidance on patient care.

Why Williamsport and Wellsboro?

“I am excited to be a member of the inaugural class of the Rural Family Medicine program at Williamsport/Wellsboro. I am drawn to the challenges and rewards of being a part of a new program, particularly a program that is dedicated to rural populations. The health needs of rural populations align with specific facets of my clinical interests, particularly regarding behavioral change, mental health, and addiction.”

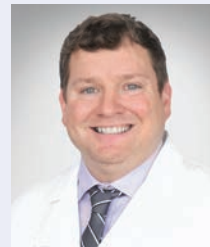
— Dr. Benjamin Balin

Why Williamsport and Port Allegany?

“I feel like I can make a difference here. Additionally, the support from fellow staff and coworkers is phenomenal. I also love the mountains and abundant access to the nature that surrounds the area.”

— Dr. Nicholas Ihnatenko

MEET OUR PHYSICIANS



**Nicholas
Ihnatenko, MD**
Resident Physician

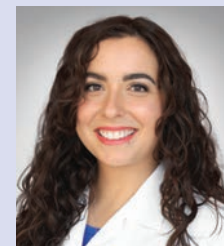


**Jason
Tronetti, DO**
Attending Physician

**Port Allegany
Community Health Center**
45 Pine St.
Port Allegany, PA 16743
814-642-2505



**Benjamin
Balin, MD**
Resident Physician



**Rebecca
Rickard, DO**
Attending Physician

**UPMC Wellsboro Office
of Internal Medicine**
103 West Ave., Suite 203
Wellsboro, PA 16901
570-723-8835



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Wellness

in Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties

Our wellness centers provide robust programs and services to help you identify, practice, and achieve fitness goals. With a range of membership options, you are sure to find the right fit for your life.

Our centers offer:

- Classes including yoga, aerobics, and SilverSneakers.
 - Membership not required to take classes.
- Modern facilities with 24-hour access*.
- Personal training and massage services.
- Strength training and cardiovascular equipment.

We are proud partners of FitOn Health. This program allows you to earn credits while enjoying our fitness centers and SilverSneakers classes. Have questions? Email us at NCPAWellnessCenters@upmc.edu.

*Staffed hours may vary by location.



Free Summer Fun for Kids

This summer, kids ages 7 to 13 can enjoy a wide variety of activities in Coudersport, Port Allegany, Emporium, and Smethport.

Activities include:

- Active and Fit Camp
- Food fun
- Kids helping kids
- Speed and Agility Camp
- Yoga for kids
- Ziploc greenhouse

The summer series ends with a Celebration Pool Party!

To learn more about our wellness centers and summer programs, call **833-546-4867** or visit UPMC.com/NCPAWellness.



UPMC

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Pittsburgh, PA 15213

UPMC Williamsport
700 High St.
Williamsport, PA 17701

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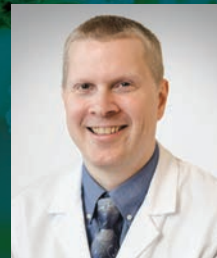
IT'S ALLERGY SEASON

We are now accepting new patients

From food allergies to asthma to immunodeficiencies, our specialists at UPMC Allergy and Immunology provide patients of all ages with a personalized treatment plan.

We treat the following conditions and more:

- Asthma
- Contact dermatitis
- Eczema
- Food and drug allergies
- Hives/Angioedema
- Immunodeficiency
- Recurrent infections
- Sinus problems
- Seasonal allergies



Nathaniel Hare,
MD



Skye Miller,
PA-C

Call **570-320-7070** to schedule an appointment or visit **UPMC.com/AllergyNCPA**.