

communityconnections

Shaping Local Care in North Central Pa.

Photography provided by Wade Spencer
Pine Creek

**IN THIS
ISSUE**

**Our Patients'
Stories**

**Cancer Services
Across the Region**

**Updates in the
Northern Tier**



from the president's desk

As we reflect on 2025, there's much to celebrate at UPMC in North Central Pa. Just as the Pine Creek continues to shape the landscape (cover image), UPMC continues to shape the future of health care in our region. This year marked major milestones including trauma and cancer survivor events, hosting our first Joint Walk for our joint replacement patients, and opening the doors to UPMC-GoHealth Urgent Care.

In September, our hospitals successfully transitioned to Epic, UPMC's unified electronic health record system. This achievement — years in the making — enhances how we deliver care, improving coordination of care and access to information for our patients. I'm proud of our teams who embraced this change with dedication and professionalism.

I would also like to share **Andrea Reed, CNO**, UPMC Muncy, has expanded her role as president of UPMC Muncy. Andrea works here, lives here, and understands how important a community hospital like ours is for this large, mainly rural, area we serve.



Our Mobile Health Center launched in July, bringing essential services and education directly to rural communities. This innovative program is already making a meaningful impact by removing barriers to care and meeting people where they are.

These efforts, along with many others, reflect our ongoing commitment to listening, learning, and responding to the needs of our communities. We hope you find the patient stories a source of hope and a testament to the life-changing care we provide every day.

As we look ahead to 2026, we're excited to celebrate 10 years as part of UPMC and our long history of serving the community. We look forward to sharing more in next year's newsletters.

Thank you for trusting us with your care.

Patti Jackson-Gehris

*Market President, UPMC North Central Pa.
President, UPMC Williamsport*



Building New Connections to Your Care

At UPMC, we're making your health care simpler to navigate with a new and improved patient portal. This change makes it easier to get the care you need at UPMC. You can expect:

- Continued access to your health information and care team.
- New features to help you manage your care from anywhere.
- Support and guidance from UPMC.



To learn more, visit
UPMC.com/Portal-Update
or scan the QR code.

CHAD'S STORY

“Glad to see everyone here,”

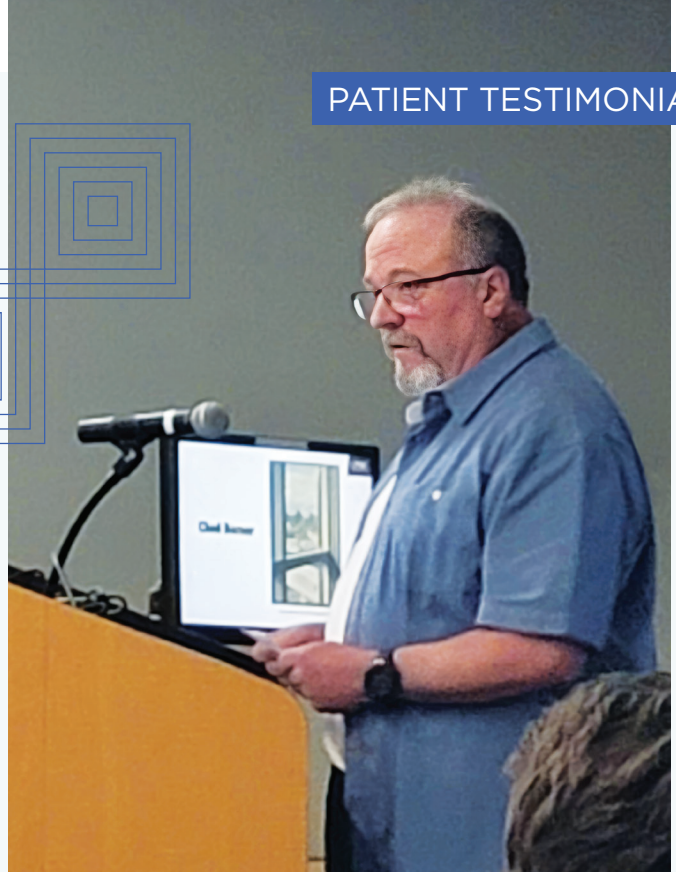
Takes on a New Meaning

April 28, 2024, had started like any other day for Chad — working in the garden with his wife, Pam, and daughter, Sabrina. Chad needed to get something from the loft of their shed and had to climb a 12-foot ladder to get it. Working at a phone company for over 20 years, Chad was no stranger to climbing ladders.

This time was different, however. Chad fell. He broke his collarbone, shoulder blade, nine ribs, and had a gash on his head. Chad said he didn't realize at the time, but his lungs were also collapsing on themselves.

While Chad does not remember a lot about arriving at the UPMC Williamsport Emergency Department (ED), one moment will stick with him for the rest of his life. The team was getting ready to insert a chest tube, when someone gently touched his cheek and said, “Don't worry, we got you, Chad.” His entire perspective changed from that moment on.

After the ED, Chad spent time in the hospital and inpatient rehab. He shared that each person on his care team took the time to look him over and assess his needs. In physical therapy, Chad said, “Who would ever have thought that being able to do simple things that we take for granted, now becomes a huge goal or milestone in your life.”



Chad speaking at the 2025 Trauma Survivors Reception

Throughout his time at UPMC Williamsport, Chad could not be more thankful for his teams.

Every May during National Trauma Awareness month, the Trauma team hosts the Trauma Survivors Reception. This is a time to celebrate survivors, remember those who have passed, and share stories of hope, spreading the message of not just surviving, but thriving.

Chad spoke at the 2025 Reception, sharing his experience, what it means to be able to do so, and how “glad to see everyone here,” takes on a new meaning.

UPMC Williamsport is a Level II Trauma Center and sees over 14,000 patients annually. For more information about Trauma Care, visit UPMC.com/TraumaNCPA.

Hillman Is Here in Your Community

UPMC Hillman Cancer Center offers nationally recognized, comprehensive cancer care in Williamsport, Wellsboro, Coudersport, and Muncy. As the region's only National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, our board-certified medical and radiation oncologists provide advanced cancer treatments, including immunotherapy, the latest chemotherapy protocols, and cutting-edge radiation technologies, right in your community.

Patients in our region also have access to two providers who specialize in surgical oncology.

[UPMC.com/CancerNCPA](https://www.upmc.com/CancerNCPA)



UPMC Hillman Cancer Center locations:

Coudersport	Wellsboro
Muncy	Williamsport

Advanced Surgical Oncology at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center

Our expert surgical oncologists collaborate with medical and radiation oncologists and pathologists to tailor treatment plans for every stage of disease. With specialized expertise across all major cancers, we provide cutting-edge care for:

- Breast and gynecologic cancers.
- Melanoma and sarcoma.
- Pancreatic, hepatobiliary, and gallbladder cancers.
- Peritoneal cancers and carcinomatosis.
- Upper gastrointestinal malignancies.

Appointments are available at UPMC Muncy.



**Kyo
Chu, MD**



**Samer
AlMasri, MD**



“”

Everyone that I come in contact with is very helpful, starting with the staff who park my truck, to signing in, drawing blood, and checking my vitals. Great experience. I was nervous about my cancer, but they explained everything and answered all my questions.

Don D.



PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

NIKKI'S STORY

Strength, Self-Advocacy, and Cancer Survivorship

At 39, Nikki Montgomery was a healthy, active single mom when she noticed her breasts felt unusually engorged. Trusting her instincts, she performed a self-exam and found a lump. After a mammogram and biopsy at the Kathryn Candor Lundy Breast Health Center, part of UPMC Magee-Womens, at UPMC Williamsport Divine Providence Campus, Nikki was diagnosed with early-stage, hormone receptor-positive, invasive ductal breast cancer. Her comprehensive care team included Mohammad Tahir, MD, Amitabha Mitra, MD, Abdalla Sholi, MD, and Natasha Alligood-Percoco, MD.

“Dr. Tahir was amazing,” Nikki says of her breast surgeon. “He explained that of all the breast cancers, this was one of the most treatable. That gave me hope.” She underwent skin-sparing mastectomies by Dr. Tahir and breast reconstruction by Dr. Mitra.

Nikki completed preventive chemotherapy rounds at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Williamsport. “Dr. Sholi and the Hillman team were incredible,” she recalls. “I chose to face this journey head-on.” Because her cancer was hormone-driven, Dr. Alligood-Percoco, ob-gyn, later removed her ovaries and fallopian tubes as a preventive measure.



Throughout treatment, Nikki remained active and present for her children. Today, she continues regular follow-ups and feels grateful for her care team. “I’m blessed to have the best doctors. They made me feel heard and respected. I was always part of the conversation.”

UPMC.com/CaresForWomen



UPMC Magee-Womens locations:

Coudersport
Lewisburg
Lock Haven
Muncy
Port Allegany
Wellsboro
Williamsport

*Nikki's treatment and results may not be representative of similar cases.



At UPMC, we're committed to advancing world-class care close to home. In 2024, Susquehanna Health Foundation invested \$4.5 million back into the local community through the following projects and initiatives, directly benefiting patients, families, and employees across the region.

Donations at Work in 2024

FACILITIES

Rehabilitation Services/Pediatric Rehab – \$3,063,987.73

Breast Health Center – \$68,833.25

Muncy Place – \$50,012.08

SERVICES

Home Care, Hospice, Nurse-Family Partnership – \$196,609.72

Cancer Services/Cooling Cap Therapy – \$116,619.04

EQUIPMENT – \$228,622.67

COMMUNITY

Community Outreach – \$462,878.27

Benevolent Care for 390 Patients – \$20,911.47

STAFF OPPORTUNITIES

Recruitment, Retention, and Education – \$104,897.09

OTHER – \$213,214.07

TOTAL – \$4,526,585.39

Welcoming New Faces

We're pleased to introduce three new team members to the Foundation who bring energy, experience, and a shared dedication to our mission. Their work plays a key role in connecting community generosity with impactful health care initiatives.

Our donors make a difference in the lives of both our patients and employees every day — and for that, we extend our heartfelt thank you.

For more information, call **570-320-7460** or visit **SusquehannaHealthFoundation.org/Staff**.



Alison Landgrebe
Development Associate



Annie Fogleman
*Associate Director
Annual Fund Program*



Erin Welch
Major Gifts Officer

SPENCER'S STORY

PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

Graduating High School After a Brain Injury

The UPMC Rehabilitation Institute inpatient unit was renovated in 2024 and includes a comprehensive care team to help patients meet their goals and return to what they love.

One of the patients in the newly renovated unit was Spencer Bowens.

Spencer began inpatient rehab in March 2024 after a car accident left him severely injured. Along with a brain hemorrhage, Spencer had a broken pelvis, spleen laceration, bladder contusion, seven cracked ribs, and two collapsed lungs. He also had bleeding in his brain's right frontal lobe and a diffuse axonal injury, a traumatic brain injury common with car accidents that can cause neurological damage.

Together, Spencer and the unit staff developed a care plan that adapted to his needs. They made a point to learn about Spencer and what he liked. He's a big history buff, so therapists incorporated that into his exercise program. They also brought the therapy to him, because the main therapy room was too stimulating.

His mom Amy, says, "It's such a hidden gem in our rural community. Having this type of care right in our community allowed Spencer's sister, Hannah, to visit daily. They have a special bond and her presence comforted Spencer, particularly during his recreational therapy — he often wouldn't participate unless she was, too."

Spencer was discharged in April 2024 and completed outpatient rehab in 2025. He started driving again and graduated high school on time.

For his mother, there's nothing like seeing her son back to being himself. He worked remarkably hard to get here, but she also credits the many teams at UPMC Williamsport.

"The whole team did everything right, from the EMT to the trauma unit, to the ICU, and the inpatient and outpatient rehab," she says. "I can't thank them enough."

For more information about rehabilitation services across north central Pa., visit UPMC.com/RehabNCPA.



Cultivating Cooks in the Community

The UPMC Williamsport Family Medicine Residency joined forces with the Salvation Army Community Garden in Williamsport to launch Vital Roots. Vital Roots is a series of community teaching kitchens, aimed at strengthening food security in Lycoming County.

Fresh-grown produce is used in the Vital Roots teaching kitchens.



Taylor Rider, DO

Led by Taylor Rider, DO, third-year resident, the goal for Vital Roots is to not only be a source of fresh produce, but to also educate and empower with the tools to make better decisions for better health.

“Food insecurity is more than just a lack of food — it’s a root cause of chronic disease,” said Elizabeth Anderson, MD, Associate Director of the UPMC Williamsport Family Medicine Residency. “Dr. Rider recognized this and responded not only with a plan, but with action. Through her leadership, we are meeting patients where they are — right in the kitchen.”

The residents of Cole Manor in Coudersport have thoroughly enjoyed their summer, all thanks to the new pavilion and sunroom provided by the Cole Foundation. The Foundation aimed to create a home-like atmosphere within the facility.



In addition to the pavilion and sunroom, the Foundation also funded a grill, outdoor seating, various outdoor games, and raised flowerbeds, which have significantly enhanced the residents' enjoyment and comfort this summer.

Located at 101 East Maple Street in Coudersport, Cole Manor is a personal care facility featuring apartment-style resident rooms.

YourColeFoundation.org

Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples

A heart-healthy recipe that can be served as a side dish, breakfast, or dessert.

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 medium sweet potatoes, peeled, cut crosswise into quarter-inch slices
- 2 medium sweet apples, each sliced into 10 wedges
- 3 tablespoons light tub margarine

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
2. Lightly spray a 1 1/2-quart glass casserole dish with cooking spray.
3. In a small bowl, stir together the sugar and cinnamon. In the casserole dish, layer in order half each of the sweet potatoes, apples, and cinnamon-sugar.
4. Dot with about half the margarine.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4.
6. Bake, covered, for 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes, or until the sweet potatoes and apples are soft.

UPDATES in the Northern Tier



Dan Glunk, MD, interim president, UPMC Cole and UPMC Wellsboro, and chief quality officer, UPMC North Central Pa., has announced his retirement, effective Dec. 31, 2025. “Dr. Glunk’s leadership at UPMC Cole and UPMC Wellsboro has strengthened our culture of collaboration and advanced our mission to deliver high-quality, accessible care to the communities we serve,” said Patti Jackson-Gehris, market president. “We are deeply grateful for his decades of service and wish him the very best in his well-earned retirement.”

As of Oct. 1, **Ron Reynolds, FACHE**, president, UPMC Muncy, became the new president for UPMC Cole and UPMC Wellsboro. He has more than 30 years of experience in health care and is familiar with leading through the challenges of providing quality health care services in rural communities. “We are confident that Ron will continue building upon our hospitals’ legacies. His experience, values, and commitment to our mission will ensure continued excellence at UPMC Cole and UPMC Wellsboro,” said Jackson-Gehris.



Mobile Health Center

The Mobile Health Center has been on the road. Since July, the unit has:

- Served over 1,500 community members through 500 vehicles
- Provided families with fresh produce, a variety of meats, and non-perishable items
- Completed 13 car seat safety checks
- Connected individuals to local resources

The unit has visited Coudersport and Westfield with more stops coming up in Wellsboro and surrounding areas.

Planning a community event, health screening, or public health initiative? UPMC’s versatile unit is here to support your efforts.



Request the mobile unit by scanning the QR code or call **570-321-3222** for more information.

UPMC in North Central Pa. provided \$80 million in community benefit, including \$42 million in care for those unable to pay in fiscal year 2024.



Sister Gabrielle Nguyen, SCC, and Michael Creighton, RN, UPMC Cole Emergency Department.

Spiritual Care Services for Patients and Employees

At UPMC in North Central Pa., spiritual care is an important part of our commitment to whole-person healing. Our Spiritual Care team is here to support you — regardless of your faith, cultural background, or beliefs.

Chaplains are available 24/7 for patients and families. To request a visit, call **272-236-3194** or ask a member of your care team.

Tea for the Soul

Tea for the Soul is a program dedicated to employees who provide care for others. It's a space and time to provide solace and comfort. The Spiritual Care team offers stillness, prayer, a listening ear, and sometimes a sweet treat as a bright spot on heavy days or busy weeks.

Tea for the Soul is a reminder to slow down and share which can be challenging sometimes. Teams in the emergency departments may only have a few seconds to stop. However, these small moments are meaningful — it's an extra way they feel seen and cared for.

For more information about Spiritual Care Services in north central Pa., visit **UPMC.com/NorthCentralPa**.

UPMC

200 Lothrop St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

UPMC Williamsport
700 High St.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Non Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit #3834

GH7964/NCPA CS/LD 12/25 © 2025 UPMC

Did You Know?

UPMC offers FREE grief support for children, teens, and their families right here in north central Pa.

When children and teens experience the death of a loved one, they can become overwhelmed by their emotions, have many questions, and feel alone. Heartworks is a family-based support program for children and teens who have experienced the passing of a loved one.

Specially trained facilitators help children and teens cope with loss through art, play, music, discussion, and remembering.

Groups meet twice a month and registration is required.

To learn more, visit UPMC.com/HeartworksNCPA.



Heartworks