



Expert Specialty Care for Women, By Women

A group photo of just some of the women physicians at UPMC Passavant. From left to right in the front row are: Michelle Victain, Venmathi Indramohan, Amber Makani, and Lydia Davis. In the back row are Shailaja Parepally, Elisabeth Bergman, Kiran Mehta, Jessica Berger, Wende Goncz, and Madeleine Courtney-Brooks.

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Surveys show that nearly half of all women prefer to receive their health care from a woman doctor. Today, women in Pittsburgh's northern communities have more opportunities than ever to receive advanced care from a female doctor in medical specialties. These include breast cancer, cancer, cardiology, gastroenterology, gynecologic oncology, and urogynecology.

Choosing a health care provider is an intensely personal decision. "Having a doctor who you can relate to and feel comfortable with is extremely important. For many women, that means having a female doctor," says **Susan Hoolahan, MSN, RN**, president of UPMC Passavant.

While the number of female physicians serving patients in the northern region of Pittsburgh has increased by 52% in the last 10 years, Hoolahan says options for women seeking female specialists can be limited because there are fewer women providers in many medical fields.

"That's why UPMC Passavant is more committed than ever to offering increased comprehensive care choices for women at every point in their health care journey," she says.

Magee-Womens Specialty Services brings the advanced expertise of special-

ists from UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital to Pittsburgh's northern suburbs. At both UPMC Passavant-McCandless and UPMC Passavant-Cranberry, women can also choose to receive their care from a woman provider.

What UPMC Passavant doctors have to say about the difference women specialists bring to patient care.

Robert Edwards, MD
Gynecologic oncologist and chair of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital; surgeon at UPMC Passavant

"Diversity of choice in terms of gender and ethnicity is so important to our ability to deliver the best possible care. For several years now, UPMC Magee-Womens has been collaborating with UPMC Passavant to expand the resources of

Magee-Womens Specialty Services in the northern communities. It's also recruiting more women specialists to its hospitals in McCandless and Cranberry.

"UPMC Passavant is the only UPMC location where the majority of gynecologic cancer and surgical oncology cancer specialists are women. Giving patients the option to choose – coupled with UPMC Passavant's size and patient-centered approach – also contributes to high patient satisfaction."

Madeleine Courtney-Brooks, MD, MPH
Gynecologic oncologist, UPMC Hillman Cancer Center at UPMC Passavant-McCandless

"It's well established that women who receive care for their gynecologic



logic cancer by a gynecologic oncologist – whether male or female – have better outcomes. But some women are more comfortable having a female provider for what is a sensitive and delicate exam and operation. Nine years ago, I was the only female gynecologic oncologist practicing at UPMC Passavant. Today, there are three of us. That is an impressive sign of commitment to patient choice.

“And patients of color are often surprised when they meet me. Having a female doctor of color – someone who looks like them – can provide a greater level of comfort and relatability. Representation does matter. It’s important for patients and families to know that’s an option.”

Lydia S. Davis, MD

Cardiologist, Magee-Womens Heart Program, UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute at UPMC Passavant

“When caring for women’s hearts, prevention and early intervention are key. Men and women share many of the same heart problems, but there are differences. And women’s risk factors and symptoms are often very different. For example, events related to pregnancy like gestational hypertension and diabetes can have a significant impact on a woman’s heart and cardiovascular health later in life. I think that’s why there’s been such a positive response to the Magee-Womens Heart Program at UPMC Passavant. We’re in tune with women’s cardiac needs.



“Both my male and female patients tell me they value the woman’s touch that I bring to their care. My male counterparts also appreciate the perspective I offer our practice. We both bring essential, but different, approaches to patient care.”

“There’s growing evidence pointing to the connection between women’s

Michelle S. Victain, DO

Gastroenterologist, UPMC Digestive Disorders Center at UPMC Passavant-McCandless; Associates in Gastroenterology-UPMC

hormones and a host of gastrointestinal (GI) issues. And while not limited to women, there’s also a clear brain/gut connection to many GI illnesses and symptoms. Both those factors make treating women patients very satisfying to me.

“I’ve found most women are in tune to their bodies. When you start to feel differently or if your GI habits have changed, it’s important to set up a conversation with your primary care provider or a gastroenterologist. That’s especially true if you feel your concerns have been dismissed in the past. It’s my hope that women who prefer a female doctor will read this and think about medical issues they’ve had on the back burner. We’re here to help.”



Venmathi Indramohan, MD

Cardiologist, Magee-Womens Heart Program, UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute at UPMC Passavant

“A few years ago, the American College of Cardiology conducted a systematic research review that looked at heart attack outcomes. The study showed that when female patients were taken care of by female cardiologists, they had better mortality outcomes. In other words, they didn’t just help patients feel better – they prevented deaths. The Magee-Womens Heart Program at UPMC Passavant is giving women that choice.”



“The study also showed that male cardiologists who treated more female patients had better outcomes than male cardiologists who did not. That finding is one reason why I don’t think that female patients should only be cared for by female cardiologists. Cardiology groups need both men and women because working together, we bring distinctly different perspectives that benefit both our patients and the practice of medicine.”

“There’s growing evidence pointing to the connection between women’s

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Just for Women

A UPMC Passavant virtual series on key women’s health care concerns – presented by women medical specialists especially for women

Alive & Well Virtual Presentations

- **Women’s Heart Clinic: Why Women Need One** with Dr. Indramohan • Sept. 27, 11 a.m.
- **Heart Health After Menopause** with Dr. Davis • Oct. 11, 9 a.m.
- **Gynecologic Cancer: What Every Woman Needs to Know** with Dr. Courtney-Brooks • Oct. 12, 11 a.m.
- **Gut Check: Ways to Improve Digestive Health** with Dr. Victain • Oct. 20, 1 p.m.

Register at UPMC.com/VirtualEvents.

Breast Health Tele-Town Hall Oct. 20, 5 p.m.

Join our UPMC experts for a special Tele-Town Hall discussion on women’s breast health.

- **Terri-Ann Gizienski, MD, MPH**, diagnostic radiologist
- **Priscilla McAuliffe, MD, PhD**, breast surgeon
- **Shannon Puhalla, MD**, hematologist and oncologist

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