

GEISINGER  
HEALTH SYSTEM  
REDEFINING BOUNDARIES®

# REST ASSURED

## WE CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

JUNE 2008



# GEISINGER: LOCALLY COMMITTED AND NATIONALLY RENOWNED

The residents of Northeast and Central Pennsylvania can rest assured knowing they can continue to count on Geisinger Health System for our network of doctors, nurses, technicians, researchers and support staff for their expertise in diagnosing and treating people in need.

When Abigail Geisinger—more than 90 years ago—envisioned the creation of a hospital that would provide excellent care for families in this region, she voiced a clear and concise direction. “Make my hospital right,” she said. “Make it the best.” Since she spoke that visionary phrase, Geisinger has continuously rededicated itself to the people who live, work and raise their families here in Northeast and Central Pennsylvania.

We understand our responsibility—as a not-for-profit, tax-exempt healthcare delivery organization—to address the region’s most critical healthcare issues, create healthy communities and enhance patients’ well being. This responsibility is not only implicit in and demanded by our mission, but is also our distinct privilege.

The result is a truly integrated healthcare delivery system of hospitals, physician offices, an alcohol and chemical dependency treatment center, a health plan, research centers, and more than 12,000 employees—working together to care for and improve the lives of patients and members.

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“(Geisinger) is among the country’s most sophisticated health systems. It has employed electronic health records for more than a decade, for example, which means Geisinger can closely track the care it provides and the results achieved—in detailed ways that are nearly impossible for the many hospital systems that do not have its degree of digital coordination.”

– *The New York Times*

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## EXPERT, COMPASSIONATE CARE

Across 20,000 square miles of 40 mostly rural Pennsylvania counties, 2.5 million people rely on Geisinger to serve their healthcare needs and benefit their communities. From the Poconos to State College and beyond, they turn to Geisinger for everything from primary care to highly complex subspecialty medical services. They come for the expert, compassionate treatment they know they’ll receive and for health insurance they can count on. They seek the knowledge and talent that gives them hope and answers, and they are thankful for the understanding and support Geisinger caregivers provide.

Many of these people come with little money, but with every expectation that they will receive Geisinger quality care. The health system has a generous charity care policy, and in fiscal year 2007 (July 2006 through June 2007) Geisinger provided \$17 million in uncompensated care to patients who were unable to pay.



## HEALTH, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Geisinger Health System continually reaches out to patients and their communities with services and programs designed to improve their health and enrich their lives. Our health system spent more than \$2.5 million during fiscal year 2007 in community health education and outreach programs that benefited thousands of Pennsylvanians—health fairs, health screenings, important health and prevention information, health clinics and support groups that brought the expertise of Geisinger physicians, physician assistants, nurse extenders, nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, physical and occupational therapists and other health professionals to communities throughout Northeast and Central Pennsylvania.



Many of our patients are elderly, with all the health and quality of life issues that accompany aging. Throughout our service area, these people have high rates of chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity-related medical conditions, which often require extensive care and prolonged follow-up treatment. The cost of their care is a significant burden we shoulder. During fiscal year 2007, Geisinger provided \$125.8 million in health services to the elderly and the poor that represented the difference between what was reimbursed by Medicare and Medicaid and what it cost to deliver their care.

Our commitment to improving quality of life for our elderly citizens has led to the opening of our second LIFE Geisinger facility in Kulpmont, joining our first such facility near Scranton. LIFE Geisinger is an adult medical and social daycare program for the frail elderly that keeps these people active and out of extended care facilities for as long as possible.



## EDUCATING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Geisinger has a long history as a teaching organization—a commitment that continues today. The region has been served over the years by thousands of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals who received their training at Geisinger, and we continue to focus on education so Pennsylvania will benefit from the best and brightest medical professionals well into the future.

Medical residents from across the United States choose Geisinger for their training because of the region's unique rural setting and the uncommon variety of medical conditions they can observe and treat here. Last fiscal year, another \$20.6 million represented Geisinger's cost for providing residency, fellowship and allied health educational programs.

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**“Geisinger’s value goes beyond its first class health care...The impact of large facilities and huge employment numbers can’t be overstated for its effect on the local economy, especially in times like these. While many experts suggest we’re heading for recession, Geisinger is going strong, with 125 projects in the works right now...That’s a good thing for the economy.”**

*– The Shamokin News Item*

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## LEADING THE ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD INITIATIVE

Geisinger Health System is on the forefront and is recognized as a national leader in the development and use of the electronic health record (EHR). The possibilities for improving quality and efficiency of care with the EHR are endless, and both the White House and the United States Congress place the electronic health record at the center of the nation's emphasis on providing excellent care for all Americans. At Geisinger, we have invested more than \$80 million to date in our electronic health record system, and we continue to share our expertise to help other providers move the EHR forward in their organizations.

## INSURANCE OPERATIONS IN AN INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICES ORGANIZATION

As part of an integrated health services organization, Geisinger Health Plan (GHP) is able to channel experience, knowledge and support to pursue unique projects benefiting members and improving the health of the community. GHP and the rest of the health system work together to develop new and better ways to provide high quality care. For example, by following GHP's nationally recognized disease management programs and targeting best practice initiatives on several of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures, the health plan helps improve care for patients living with many significant public health issues such as heart disease, smoking, asthma and diabetes.

GHP provides important de-identified data to assist Geisinger researchers in studying a variety of issues including population-based and clinical genomics, and understanding and addressing rural population health needs. GHP also posts its participating primary care providers' quality rankings on its web site. The web report—Physician Quality Summary—helps members select providers that are right for them, and encourages quality improvement among physicians.

## FINDING ANSWERS

Geisinger is also committed to medical research. The Sigfried and Janet Weis Center for Research conducts original and innovative research that contributes new knowledge to biomedical science and benefits patients by providing the latest scientific information to our clinical staff. The Geisinger Center for Health Research is primarily responsible for fostering and advancing system-wide research, advancing research programs within clinical departments, and devising new models of care that advance Geisinger's primary mission of improving the efficiency and quality of care to patients. Numerous clinical trials are underway at Geisinger to advance care and make the latest treatments available to our patients.

The un-reimbursed cost of research programs was approximately \$2.7 million in fiscal year 2007.

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**“Geisinger Medical Center has long been a good neighbor to the Danville downtown. Soon (it) will be a part of that downtown. The decision to house some of its operations in Danville’s downtown illustrates the commitment Geisinger has to the community it has called home for decades.”**

*– The Sunbury Daily Item*

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## ADDING IT ALL TOGETHER

In all, when combined with \$2.8 million in services provided by volunteers on behalf of patients and approximately \$1.2 million in payments to various taxing districts to assist in providing municipal services, Geisinger provided approximately \$171.8 in community benefit in fiscal year 2007. This is equal to more than 11.3 percent of the almost \$1.5 billion in total expenses reported. State law requires a corporation to “donate or render gratuitously a substantial portion of its services” in order to qualify as charities for tax purposes.

Caring for the community is an important priority in Geisinger’s mission—one that we will always emphasize as we continue caring for the people of Northeast and Central Pennsylvania.

## HOW WE SERVE

Geisinger benefits the communities we serve across all specialties, all ages, and all parts of the region.

### CASE STUDY I—MISSION CATARACT

Twenty-one area people are able to see much clearer, thanks to Mission Cataract and the dedication of Herbert J. Ingraham, MD, director of the ophthalmology department at Geisinger Medical Center, and the members of his department.

Geisinger has participated for several years in Mission Cataract USA, a program offering free cataract surgery to people of all ages who have no means to pay. In addition to the 21 free cataract surgeries this year, Geisinger ophthalmologists performed 12 free cataract removals in 2006 and 19 in 2007 for qualified applicants.

“I am overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness of the good people at Geisinger and others who have literally changed the lives of these patients,” said Dr. Ingraham. “I thank my colleagues for their efforts on behalf of friends and neighbors in our community.”

In addition to the free cataract surgery, the patients also receive post-operative medication and eyeglasses at no cost.

### CASE STUDY 2—RESEARCHING & IMPROVING POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER CARE

Joseph Boscarino, PhD, a researcher at The Geisinger Center for Health Research and a Vietnam combat veteran, is working to ensure that veterans returning home from Afghanistan and Iraq will not suffer from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) without proper medical diagnosis and treatment.

Research indicates that healthcare professionals often overlook PTSD unless the patient is seeing his or her provider for a PTSD-specific reason.

Dr. Boscarino and his colleagues recently hosted a national conference of healthcare professionals at Geisinger to discuss and develop solutions for diagnosing and treating veterans in rural areas with post traumatic stress disorder. The goal is to raise awareness so providers can better identify patients with PTSD among both veterans and civilians.

PTSD can result in mood swings, depression, substance abuse, inability to hold a job, family separations and even suicide. With proper treatment, though, patients with PTSD can live happy and productive lives.

The conference is an example of the type of work designed to benefit the public that is being conducted at The Center for Health Research.



*Joseph Boscarino, PhD*



## CASE STUDY 4—A CLINICAL TRIAL FOR PATIENTS WITH ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

Charles Rapp, Sr., 76, from Thompsettown, is one of more than 2 million Americans who suffer from atrial fibrillation – a condition in which two of the heart's chambers quiver instead of beating effectively. Because the blood isn't pumped completely out of the chambers, he is at increased risk for clots or stroke.

Last year, as part of a five-year clinical trial at Geisinger, Rapp had a device inserted that is designed to combat that condition – the Watchman Left Atrial Appendage System.

Surgeons insert the device through the groin, running it up through the body and attaching it to the heart. The device unfolds like a 1-inch umbrella, shutting off the appendage from the rest of the heart. The Geisinger team evaluates what happens to device-receiving patients like Rapp, as compared to similar patients who use blood-thinning medications or a placebo.

Principal investigator Kimberly A. Skelding, MD, and investigators James Blankenship, MD, and Randle Storm, MD, are examining the safety and effectiveness of the Watchman Left Atrial Appendage System. They are one of about 50 research teams across the country taking part in this clinical trial. Geisinger is the only group that was selected from northern Pennsylvania and is one of just four in the entire state.

For Rapp, it means being part of a cutting-edge study and an improved quality of life. For Geisinger, it means advancing care and making the latest treatments available to patients in rural Pennsylvania.

## CASE STUDY 3—PROVEN CARE...SURGERY WITH A WARRANTY

Geisinger has been receiving national attention for its Proven Care program—a best practice, flat fee arrangement for caring for its Geisinger Health Plan cardiac surgery patients. In a *New York Times* article on May 17, 2007, Reed Abelson wrote, "...its (Geisinger's) effort is noteworthy as a distinct departure from the typical medical reimbursement system in this country, under which doctors and hospitals are paid mainly for delivering more care—not necessarily better care."

Under the Proven Care program, Geisinger charges a flat fee for the surgery and a percentage (about 50%) of the historical costs of related care for the 90 days following surgery. Rather than billing for any additional care during that timeframe, Geisinger absorbs the extra costs.

The health system's cardiac surgeons reviewed the existing professional guidelines and latest medical literature, and developed 40 different best practice action items that are followed for all Geisinger coronary artery bypass graft surgical patients. Items on the list include giving patients antibiotics prior to surgery to the administration of beta-blocker drugs following the procedure to reduce the likelihood of the patient developing an irregular heartbeat.

The result is fewer complications, less time in intensive care, fewer readmissions to the hospital, and healthier and happier patients.

Geisinger would like to interest other insurers and employers providing health benefits in Proven Care, and plans on expanding this approach to other medical procedures such as orthopedic joint replacement surgery.

Proven Care is yet another way that Geisinger stands out in offering innovative services and approaches to benefit patients and members.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Additional information on Geisinger Health System is available at [www.geisinger.org](http://www.geisinger.org) or by calling 1.800.275.6401.