

PA

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HEALTH

YOUR GUIDE TO FITNESS & WELL-BEING

Neurosurgery near home

Ellen Fogleman's now
'doing amazingly well'

+

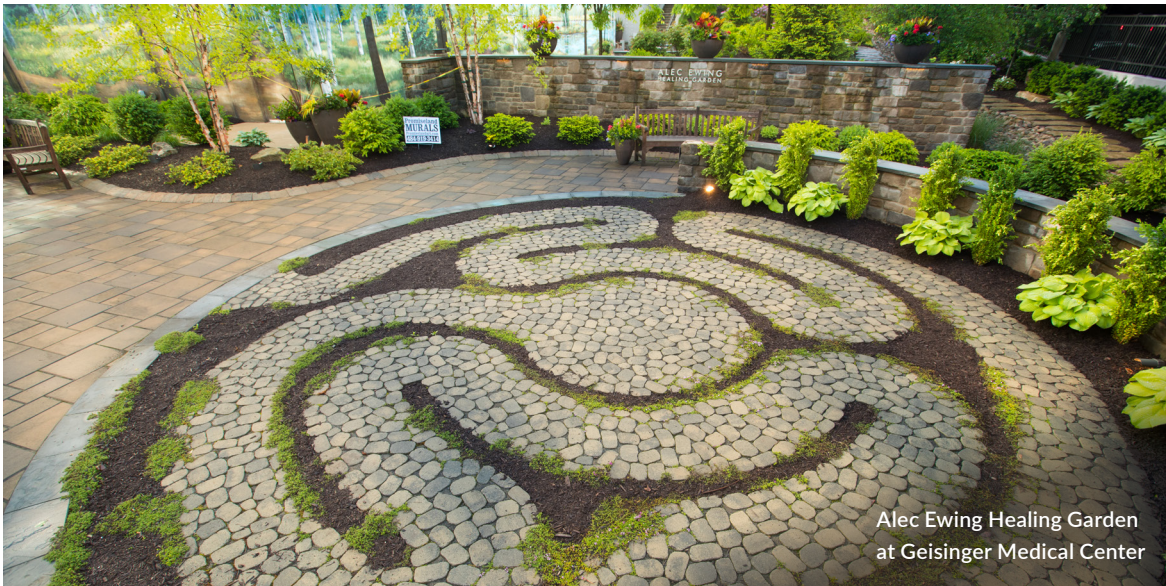
AVOIDING FARMING
HAZARDS

OUTSTANDING CARE -
EVERYWHERE

FORAGING YOUR FOOD

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On the cover:
*After a surprise brain aneurysm
diagnosis, Ellen Fogleman is healthy
and back at work.*

Photo by Mark Dastrup.



As spring begins, we're seeing budding trees, green grass and wildflowers. It's energizing to know the cold weather is mostly behind us — and I look forward to spending more time outdoors.

Spring is planting season in Pennsylvania, and our farms are coming to life in the warmer weather. In this issue, you'll learn ways to reduce injuries for farm workers and how Geisinger supports farm safety in our region.

Many of the farms in our state are owned and worked by Plain community members. Find out how we're caring for and collaborating with these communities, compassionately and respectfully.

You'll also read about Ellen Fogleman's experience with a brain aneurysm and how her surgeon got her back to work with a minimally invasive outpatient procedure.

Finally, reap nature's bounty by finding food in the wild — or your own backyard. Maybe you can use the treasures of your foraging in a flavorful recipe featuring wild ramps.

Enjoy a beautiful spring and make the most of the warmer weather!

Jaewon Ryu, MD, JD
President and CEO
Geisinger

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Your responses to our ZING543210 positive affirmations challenge in our fall issue were positively impressive! Short, empowering statements to yourself can boost your confidence and make for an all-around better day. These were a few of our favorites.

Ms. Campbell explains, "I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in June and at a karaoke venue (my husband and I have been doing karaoke for over 20 years), I was singing 'I Won't Back Down' by Tom Petty, and realized that this is my theme song as I go through chemo."

PA HEALTH READERS THINK POSITIVE

"I GOT JUST ONE LIFE... I'LL STAND MY GROUND... I WON'T BACK DOWN."
 — JUNE CAMPBELL, NORTHUMBERLAND

"I deserve a good night's sleep."
 — Angela Hill, Montgomery

"I'M A DETERMINED PERSON."
 — JOANNE BRIDGMAN, CRESCO



"Looking for tomorrow, which will be a better day."
 — Fran Piraino, Pocono Summit

Appreciating 'a new chance at life'

By Lyndsey Frey

Ellen Fogleman's brain aneurysm diagnosis was a shock. Luckily, her surgeon knew exactly what to do.

When she has free time, Ellen Fogleman spends it in the great outdoors. Sometimes she gardens, sometimes she hikes, sometimes she plays cornhole in the backyard with her husband, Greg.

So it's no surprise that it happened on a walk with her sister: She started seeing black spots. Ms. Fogleman, 60, of Mountain Top, thought she might be getting a migraine. Back home, she was startled to see that her sister's face looked fragmented.

"There was a big black square," she says. "And it covered a large portion of my sister's face."

Concerned by the sudden vision problems, Ms. Fogleman messaged her primary care doctor on MyChart. Imaging tests showed an aneurysm in her brain. Ms. Fogleman was referred to Geisinger neurosurgeon Clemens Schirmer, MD, PhD.

"It was heartbreaking. You don't know if you're going to come out okay," she says. "The diagnosis was frightening, but Dr. Schirmer and his staff were wonderful. He explained everything, answered all my questions and waited to make sure that I understood everything. He made me feel comfortable and confident that I'd be okay."

Treat the aneurysm or not? The choice was hers.

During an initial consultation, Dr. Schirmer discussed Ms. Fogleman's two treatment options: They could observe the aneurysm and watch to see if symptoms developed, or treat it right away.

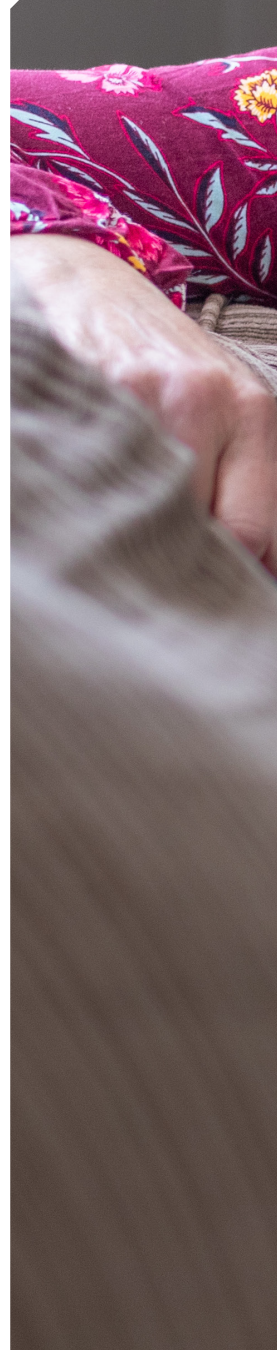
"Some of our patients perceive an aneurysm as a significant problem that is really disruptive to their life, and it's akin to a death

sentence," says Dr. Schirmer. "That is not the case. We do have a number of highly sophisticated techniques, and we can take care of you. We treat around 160 aneurysms at Geisinger per year, and we are very proud to stand behind our positive outcomes."

While Dr. Schirmer believed the brain aneurysm had been there for a while and had nothing to do with Ms. Fogleman's headache, he recommended she undergo a minimally invasive outpatient procedure.

Ms. Fogleman agreed it was the right path for her. "I wasn't comfortable with leaving the aneurysm untreated," she says. "I'd always be worrying about it being there."

On the day of the procedure in Wilkes-Barre, just minutes from Ms. Fogleman's home, Dr. Schirmer inserted a catheter through a blood vessel in her arm. He implanted a flow-diverting stent to reconstruct and heal the artery in her brain where he'd found the aneurysm.





Watch her story
in her own words:
geisinger.org/ellenfogleman

“I was in first thing in the morning and home by 8 that night,” Ms. Fogleman says. “The most amazing part is I have no scar from it. I feel I got a new chance at life.”

Back at work and thankful for great care

Ms. Fogleman is thankful she found all the care she needed at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center, close to her home. She didn’t need to travel for diagnostic testing, surgery or follow-up appointments.

“It was all done right at Geisinger,” she says. “Anyone who thinks they need to leave northeast Pennsylvania for great medical care should think again. It’s right in our backyard.”

After being a UPS driver for 20 years, Ms. Fogleman is glad to be back at work. It’s a job she loves, even though it’s physically demanding. Her brain aneurysm procedure was done in March 2021. Regulations require drivers to take three months off after this type of surgery, so she was back on the road that summer.

“I’m doing amazingly well,” she says. “I was shocked when they found the aneurysm, but they repaired it and I’ve had no problems since. Greg and I don’t have to worry.”



By Kimberly Adler-Morelli

Farm safety: Protecting lives and livelihoods

Pennsylvania's many rural areas mean a thriving agricultural industry. While the plentiful farms are big business — and offer some of the most beautiful scenery in our state — they also present some unique hazards to those who work on them.

Operating heavy machinery, handling livestock, applying chemicals and being exposed to the elements mean farm workers have one of the highest rates of injuries and fatalities of any industry in the country. In 2023, Geisinger facilities treated more than 300 patients for agriculture-related injuries. And the number could be even higher. Medical record data depends on patients giving details on how they were injured, as well as how the provider coded the visit for insurance claim submission.

“Agribusiness is one of the leading industries in Pennsylvania, and unfortunately, farm-related injuries often occur. Every year, we treat children and adults injured while playing and working on farms,” says Amy Swarthout, trauma program manager at Geisinger Jersey Shore Hospital.

James Doran Sr. owns a farm in Luzerne County.

Common farm hazards Tips to avoid injuries

Farm machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Install rollover protection on tractors.• Provide user safety training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspect equipment frequently.
Power take offs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leave shields on during use.• Disengage before working on machinery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep loose clothing, cords and hair clear.
ATV accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never carry a passenger.• Wear a helmet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid paved surfaces.
Grain bins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn machinery off before entering.• Use a lifeline system and harness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep clear of operating augers.
Hay holes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Install a hay hole cover made from netting.	
Livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use gentle guidance to herd or move animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware of the subtle signs of distress.• Plan an escape route.
Chemical exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store chemicals in their original containers, out of children's reach.• Train workers in proper handling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear gloves, eye protection or respirators as needed.• Wash up after handling chemicals.

Children on the farm

Kids will be kids. They run, hide, explore and play, whether in a suburban backyard or in a barn. And children who grow up on farms often start helping out at an early age.

That's why educating them about farm equipment and other hazards — and properly supervising them — are key to keeping them safe. The National Children's Center for Rural and Ag Health and Safety recommends these top five safety strategies:

- Keep kids away from tractors.
- Don't let children into work areas unsupervised.
- Make sure work is age-appropriate.
- Eliminate hazards from kids' work areas.
- Have children wear personal protective equipment.
- Train kids for tasks and be sure they can do them correctly.

Knowledge is power

To keep people in agribusiness on the farm and out of the ER, Geisinger sponsors an annual Agricultural Safety Fair at the Clinton County Fairgrounds. There, the trauma team, in cooperation with many other agencies, presents information and tips to stay safe.

"We hope to help prevent injuries and save lives by offering education on farm safety, emergency preparedness and how to stop life-threatening bleeding," Ms. Swarthout says. The team's exhibits include tractor stability, farm safety for kids, power take-off safety and ATV safety. The Geisinger Life Flight® crew also attend the safety fair, which is held this year on April 13 in Mill Hall.

By preventing injuries and teaching basic safety measures, Geisinger aims to nurture a safer farming environment in Pennsylvania. And that protects lives, preserves livelihoods and cultivates a thriving agricultural community.

Care – here, there and everywhere

By Beth Kaszuba

To fulfill our mission of making better health easier for all, Geisinger has to get creative. That's because we're different from urban health systems.

Many of our patients live in rural communities, far from hospitals, clinics and specialty care. We could require them to come to us. But to truly serve those in our footprint, we look for ways to meet you where you are.

Sometimes our providers do it the old-fashioned way – like Lowell Stoltzfus, MD, a family doctor who still makes occasional house calls to Amish patients who don't have phones. Or we can deliver care using high-tech methods, like telemedicine or with Geisinger Life Flight® flying ERs that can reach remote spots fast.

All that matters is delivering the great care everyone deserves, regardless of where they live.





Telemedicine: It's not just for pandemics.

Seeing providers from the comfort and safety of home became popular during the

pandemic. And it's still a great option for those who have difficulty leaving home, for busy families and for anyone who wants confidential, convenient access to care.

But you can also have a telemedicine visit at a nearby Geisinger clinic. This is a good option if you don't have reliable internet service — or if you need your vitals and basic health status checked before seeing a specialist remotely.



Hop on the bus.

Mobile units take care practically to your doorstep. Retrofitted buses can bring mammography, dental and radiology services where they're needed.

And Geisinger recently partnered with the GIANT Company and Central Susquehanna Opportunities, a nonprofit organization, to pilot a mobile food pantry — a project supported by Geisinger Health Foundation. The bus will serve food-insecure people in the central Susquehanna Valley, because healthy food is foundational to a healthy life — and no one should ever go hungry.

Because of you

Geisinger
Health
Foundation

is grateful for a \$50,000 grant from the Ralph and Josephine Smith Fund of the First Community Foundation Partnership (FCFP) of Pennsylvania to support Geisinger at Home in Northumberland County. This third gift brings the FCFP's total support for the program to nearly \$125,000. Thanks for helping us keep people healthy and at home.

If we build it...

Sometimes, the best way to make care more accessible is to build or expand clinics and hospitals.

For example, to better serve residents in rural Wyoming County, Geisinger recently expanded in Tunkhannock. The clinic, renovated with the help of a gift from Coterra Energy Inc., offers primary care; women's health; ear, nose and throat; pharmacy; laboratory and imaging services — plus general surgery and outpatient care for neurology and cardiology.

And in 2022, we opened a new, state-of-the-art hospital in Muncy to care for residents of Lycoming, Sullivan, Clinton and Tioga counties. The 120,000-square-foot, three-story facility includes an emergency room, intensive care unit, surgical suites and primary and specialty care areas.



Home is where the healthcare is.

For some, just getting to the doctor's office can seem impossible. But putting off appointments can result in ER visits and hospitalizations, especially for people with certain chronic conditions.

That's why we created Geisinger at Home. Eligible Geisinger Gold (Medicare Advantage) members can receive in-home care from doctors, nurses, dietitians, case managers, pharmacists and support staff. The program is designed especially for people with difficult-to-manage conditions, such as kidney and heart disease, cancers and dementia.

It's a new twist on the old house call, made not just by a doctor with a stethoscope but a whole well-equipped team.

We're always thinking outside the box, looking for new ways to help people manage their health conveniently and cost-effectively. As we do, we keep in mind that we have expertise to share — but ultimately, we're partners in your care, on a team you lead.



Geisinger Gold Medicare Advantage HMO, PPO, and HMO D-SNP plans are offered by Geisinger Health Plan/Geisinger Indemnity Insurance Company, health plans with a Medicare contract. Continued enrollment in Geisinger Gold depends on contract renewal. Geisinger Health Plan/Geisinger Indemnity Insurance Company are part of Geisinger, an integrated health care delivery and coverage organization.

Geisinger then and now: 112 years of PA health

In 1912, 85-year-old Abigail Geisinger of Catawissa purchased land to begin making better health easier in rural Pennsylvania.

Her vision: a hospital honoring her late husband, a Susquehanna Valley iron magnate. “Make my hospital right. Make it the best,” she directed her fellow founders. In 1915, the George F. Geisinger Memorial Hospital opened in Danville — a little early, spurred by a typhoid epidemic.

Since then, that single hospital has blossomed into an integrated healthcare system. We have 10 hospitals, 25,000 employees, more than 1,700 physicians, a health insurance plan, a research arm and a college that trains doctors, nurses and administrators. Central and northeastern Pennsylvanians enjoy top-notch care, and the entire state can rely on Geisinger Health Plan coverage.

Underpinned by research and innovation, our physician-led system has doubtless become more than Abigail Geisinger ever imagined. We think she'd be proud.

Lift to see how healthcare has changed over the past century.





George F. Geisinger Memorial Hospital



Geisinger Medical Center



Geisinger Health Plan – Pilot health insurance plan in five counties



Geisinger Health Foundation



Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center (then known as NPW Medical Center)



Geisinger Life Flight®



Geisinger Marworth Treatment Center



Geisinger Health Plan – Licensed as an HMO and expanded to more counties



Retail pharmacy*



Frank M. and Dorothea Henry Cancer Center

1915

1961

1972

1975

1981

1982

1985

1986

1992

1994

2005

*first location

Left: Abigail Geisinger
Top right: Geisinger Life Flight
Bottom right: Ricky Heath, MD,
Geisinger 65 Forward





Geisinger Janet Weis Children's Hospital



Geisinger South Wilkes-Barre



LIFE Geisinger* - Support to let people live independently at home



MyCode Community Health Initiative - DNA data + health information = better care for all



Geisinger Shamokin Area Community Hospital

Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital

Geisinger Community Medical Center



Geisinger Lewistown Hospital



100th anniversary celebration



Fresh Food Farmacy®* - Provides healthy food to help patients control Type 2 diabetes



Mail-order pharmacy



Geisinger Jersey Shore Hospital



Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine



Geisinger at Home - In-home care for our most frail patients



Steele Institute for Health Innovation - Research that improves healthcare everywhere



Geisinger St. Luke's

Geisinger 65 Forward Health Center* - Primary care tailored for those 65+



Geisinger Medical Center Muncy

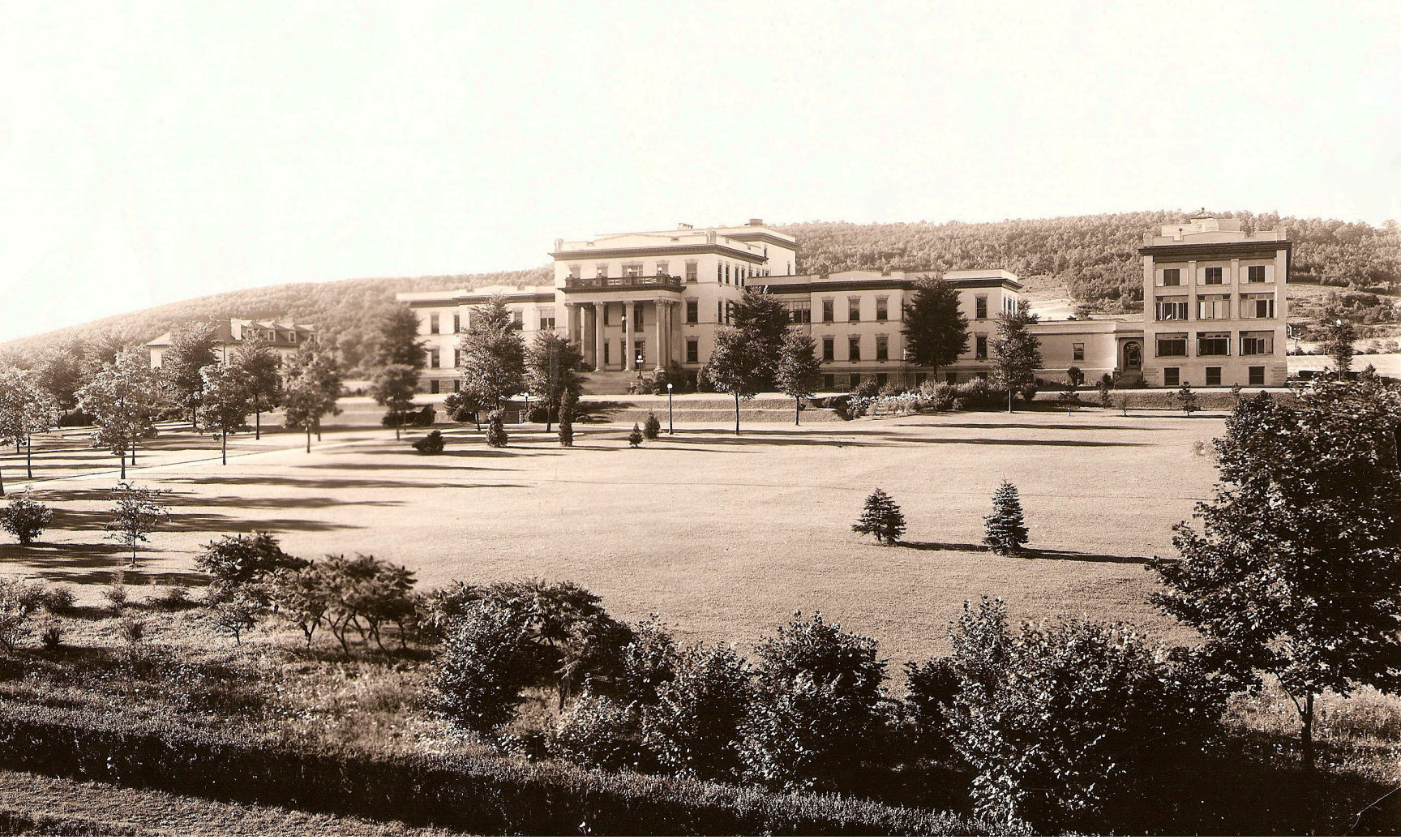


Geisinger College of Health Sciences



Geisinger Behavioral Health Center Northeast





Plain community, complex care

By Beth Kaszuba

When Leon Zook contracted COVID, the Virginia Beach, Va., resident found himself in a hospital room, isolated from family — and with scarce contact from his healthcare providers.

“I was not meant to be alone like that,” says Mr. Zook, 75, who is of Amish and Mennonite heritage. “On my own, I would’ve died.”

He convinced his care team to release him with supplemental oxygen. But he took a turn for the worse, developing blood clots in his lungs.

That’s when family members drove from Pennsylvania to his house, carried him to a vehicle on a blanket and transported him several hours north to Geisinger Lewistown Hospital. Because as employees, they knew Geisinger has been trying to better serve the Plain community.

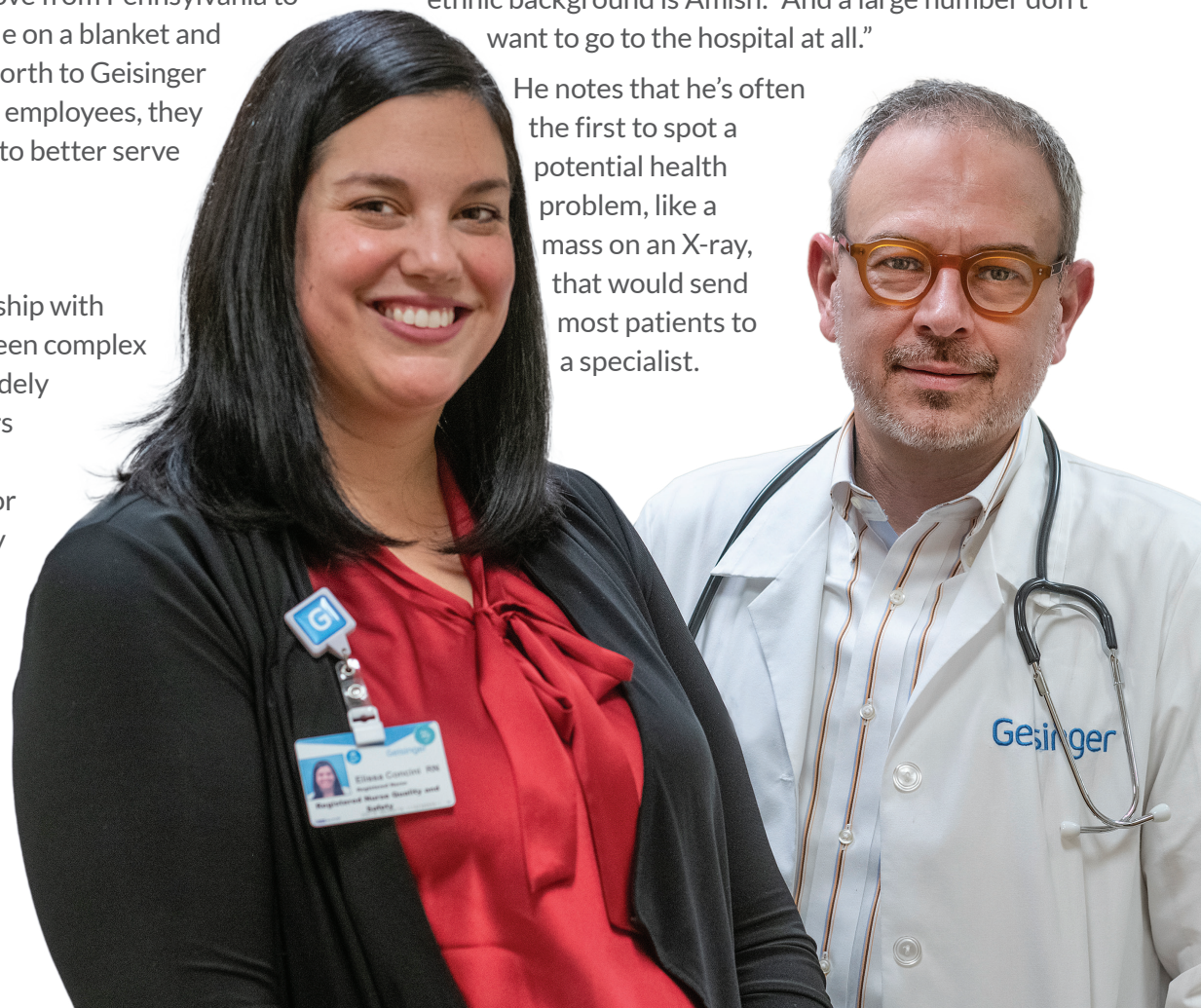
Relationship building

Historically, Geisinger’s relationship with the local Plain community has been complex because its people live under widely varying circumstances. Members include Amish people who drive buggies and don’t have phones or electricity in their homes. Family groups who share one phone at the end of a lane. And Mennonites who drive cars and use most modern technology.

Communication can be difficult — and not just because of language and tech issues. For example, the standard healthcare question “Do you feel safe at home?” is meant to assess domestic violence risk. But it can seem intrusive and even threatening to an Amish patient, who may fear they’re facing scrutiny for living “differently.”

And members of the self-reliant communities tend to view healthcare differently from non-Plain people, says Lowell Stoltzfus, MD, a family doctor who sees many Amish and Mennonite patients at Geisinger’s Belleville clinic. “The idea of going in for a checkup when there’s nothing wrong doesn’t necessarily make sense to them,” says Dr. Stoltzfus, whose ethnic background is Amish. “And a large number don’t want to go to the hospital at all.”

He notes that he’s often the first to spot a potential health problem, like a mass on an X-ray, that would send most patients to a specialist.



But members of the Plain community may choose to monitor it themselves. “I discuss all the possibilities and try to give ‘best chances,’” Dr. Stoltzfus says. “It may take more persuading to get them to pursue more care.”

Starting better communication at birth

One area that’s seen tremendous improvement? Communication with midwives, according to Jay Bringman, MD, maternal-fetal medicine specialist and vice chair of women’s health, and Elissa Concini, MSN, obstetrics clinical nurse educator.

In 2020, the two learned that over a period of time, several pregnant women from the Plain community had been brought into the Geisinger Lewistown emergency room. All had complications with their home births, assisted by midwives — and the results were sometimes disastrous.

“Lay midwives were transporting patients too late for good outcomes,” Ms. Concini says. “It creates a real challenge when providers have to pick up the pieces with little or no knowledge of the situation.”

Seeking to remedy a “broken relationship,” the team invited local midwives to a meeting. “We ripped the Band-Aid off,” Ms. Concini recalls. “We confronted issues for everyone’s safety — and we learned a lot.”

Key to their approach was building a respectful relationship, as opposed to telling the midwives that Geisinger experts were here to solve a problem.

“We told them, ‘We’re not here to change your practice, discourage home births or turn you in to the government,’” Dr. Bringman says. “There were a lot of fear and trust issues.”

“We started getting to know each other,” Ms. Concini adds. “Our cultural differences, our belief systems and how decisions are made on both ends.”

The initial meeting expanded into long-term outreach. That allows Geisinger providers to learn from Plain community midwives, such as potential ways to relieve pain naturally and techniques to free a baby’s shoulders during vaginal births.

“This community reveals some of the things we lose sight of in a medical setting,” Ms. Concini says.

Expanding a reputation for fair, respectful care

When COVID patient Leon Zook arrived at Geisinger Lewistown hospital, he didn’t just recover. He found a new home for his healthcare, even though most Geisinger providers are about eight hours from his house.

“There was a big difference there,” Mr. Zook says. “My wife was allowed to be

with me, order my meals and bring me healthy food like smoothies.”

He also discovered that Geisinger is friendly to the Plain community regarding payment. Most Amish and Mennonite people aren’t covered by commercial insurance. They’re used to negotiating for services. But Geisinger offers a payment structure that allows members of the Plain community to pay reasonable rates without bargaining.

“We’re not looking for a handout,” Mr. Zook says. “We understand that hospitals need to make money. We just want a reasonable price.”

Thanks to the care he received at Geisinger, Mr. Zook tells other members of the Plain community in Virginia to consider making the trip to Pennsylvania, too.

“Geisinger considers the way we live, and the way we don’t use commercial insurance,” he says. “If people find out there’s a hospital that’s considerate to the Plain community, they’ll go there.”

Ms. Concini says Geisinger benefits from its connections to the Amish and Mennonite communities, too — especially the midwives.

“They’re a pretty remarkable group,” she says. “It would’ve been a great loss if we hadn’t gotten to know them.”

*Elissa Concini, RN, and
Jay Bringman, MD*



Forest to table:

The surprising health benefits of finding your food



Foraging for wild foods has gained popularity in recent years to promote sustainable living and reconnect with nature. An added bonus: This age-old practice comes with a whole host of health benefits.

Finding your meals means filling your plate with fresh, organic, nutrient-dense — and free — produce. Research shows wild plants contain more vitamins, minerals and antioxidants than their commercially grown counterparts because they don't undergo heavy processing and chemical treatments.

“Foraging also gets you out in nature and moving your body, which are proven to boost your mood and reduce stress,” says Coryn Kalwanaski, RDN, a clinical dietitian at Geisinger. “Not to mention, a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables can lower blood pressure and inflammation, reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and obesity, and even protect against certain cancers. It's a win-win.”

So why not reap the bounty of nature's pantry? Believe it or not, Pennsylvania's state parks, forests and meadows — maybe even your own backyard — are great spots to forage for wild food. Spring and summer are best for ramps, fiddleheads, mayapples, dandelions, blueberries and raspberries. Fall and wintertime also boast great finds, such as crabapples, grapes, hen-of-the-woods mushrooms, black walnuts and chestnuts. Browse foraging tips and events by visiting dcnr.pa.gov and searching “foraging.”

“Obviously, foraging for food isn't essential in today's world, but it's an opportunity to revisit your roots and enjoy the fruits of your labor — literally,” says Ms. Kalwanaski. “Just be sure to do your homework and follow the golden rule of foraging: Never eat anything you can't identify.”



Braised cod with wild ramps

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 cups wild ramps, sliced lengthwise and rinsed well
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into thin sticks
- 4 red potatoes, sliced into thin circles
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 4 cod fillets, about 3 oz. each
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat butter in a large sauté pan. Add ramps and carrots, and cook for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring often, until vegetables begin to soften.
2. Add potatoes, chicken broth, parsley, salt and pepper, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are just tender, about 10 to 12 minutes.
3. Add cod fillets and cover. Continue cooking over low heat for an additional 5 minutes or until the fish is white and flakes easily with a fork (or has a minimum internal temperature of 145° F).
4. Serve each cod fillet with 1½ cups broth and vegetables.

Adapted from Delicious Heart Healthy Eating from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute: [healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov](https://www.hearthealthy.gov)

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**Geisinger Commonwealth
School of Medicine:**



Black Ties for White Coats Gala

**Dinner. Dancing.
Doing good.**

Looking for a reason to have an elegant evening out? The Black Ties for White Coats Gala raises money exclusively for medical student scholarships.

Each year, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine honors prominent members of the community who embody aspects of its principles and its founders.

Join us in celebrating our scholars while recognizing this year's honorees:

Founders: *Tom Churilla, MD '13*

Well-being: *Shubhra Shetty, MD*

Innovation: *The Scranton School for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children*

Held on Saturday, April 20, at Mohegan Pennsylvania in Wilkes-Barre, this black-tie preferred event includes a cocktail reception and silent auction beginning at 6 p.m. They're followed by a gourmet dinner and dancing to live music. Reserved seating is \$250 per person.

Register for or sponsor the gala:
go.geisinger.org/gcsomgala