

# Healthy Living

M A G A Z I N E

*An innovative heart valve procedure*  
**TRANSFORMS LIVES**



*George Jabbour, MD (right), and colleagues in the UPMC Altoona Cardiac Catheterization Lab*

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# Women's Health: A Lifelong Plan of Action

With offices in Altoona, Bedford, Ebensburg, and Huntingdon, the obstetrical and gynecological experts at UPMC Magee-Womens Specialty Services make it easier for women to stay closer to home for the care they need and deserve throughout their lifetime.



Routine gynecological exams are key to a healthy life. “While no woman really likes going to the gynecologist, regular visits are an important way to maintain your health,” says **Amy Anderson, MD** (left), a board-certified specialist in obstetrics and gynecology. It’s important to have a strong relationship with a gynecologist you trust, schedule routine exams and tests such as PAP smears and mammograms, and talk candidly with your doctor when something doesn’t feel right. “We’re able to provide a full range of care at every stage of your life,” she says.

## *Adolescence: The time to start*



Beginning a relationship with a gynecologist early on can make it easier for teen and preteen girls to feel comfortable talking with their doctors and the other adults in their lives about periods, sex, and birth control during critical formative years. “Those early visits also help build trust and confidence before a serious situation or emergency arises,” says **Lindsay Mastrine, DO** (left), who is also a board-certified obstetrics and gynecology specialist.

## *Childbearing years*

The 20s and 30s are a woman’s primary childbearing years. Promoting good health is the focus of care during this life stage.

Obstetric services range from preconception counseling, family planning, and fertility testing and treatment to pregnancy and delivery. UPMC Altoona offers comprehensive care for expectant mothers and their newborns.

Because bone mass peaks around age 30, doctors also emphasize bone health, exercise, and calcium intake.

## *Midlife and menopause*

“Menopause is a major transitional period in a woman’s life,” says Dr. Mastrine. A natural biological process that occurs in most women between the ages of 45 and 55, it causes estrogen levels to plunge. The result is decreased muscle mass and bone density, plus hormonal changes that can disrupt life and sap energy. Many women unnecessarily endure symptoms like excessive bleeding, hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and frequent urinary urges. “New treatments can make this transition much smoother,” she says.

## *Aging gracefully*

While the senior years bring freedom from pregnancy and menstruation, health issues for older women can be complex. Older women are at increased risk for such problems as cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis, and urinary incontinence. A gynecologist can help women deal with health problems, and guide them to adopt healthy behaviors that can help prevent, delay, and control disease, and protect against frailty.



## UPMC Magee-Womens Specialty Services

### Altoona

501 Howard Ave., Suite A107  
Altoona, PA 16001  
814-889-2626

### Bedford

361 Hospital Drive  
Everett, PA 15537  
814-623-9712

### Ebensburg

152 Zeman Drive  
Ebensburg, PA 15931  
814-889-2626

### Huntingdon

9492 William Penn Hwy., Suite 3  
Huntingdon, PA 16652  
814-643-8866

Dr. Anderson and Dr. Mastrine see patients at UPMC Magee-Womens Specialty Services offices in Altoona and Ebensburg.



# A New Lease on Life

Innovative heart valve procedure offers UPMC Altoona patient a “downright amazing” alternative to open heart surgery.



**Terry Burdick** (left) was pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with firewood last June when he suddenly collapsed. His wife rushed him to UPMC Altoona, where he learned he needed a heart valve replacement due to aortic stenosis — a narrowing of the aortic valve.

Normally the size of a quarter, the valve had become so calcified it was smaller than a dime. “There wasn’t enough blood flowing from my heart, which caused me to pass out,” says the 74-year-old Hollidaysburg resident.



His doctor, **George Jabbour, MD** (left), an interventional cardiologist and director of the UPMC Altoona Cardiac Catheterization Lab, gave him three options: do nothing and face imminent death, have open heart surgery to replace his diseased valve, or undergo a minimally invasive procedure called TAVR — transcatheter aortic valve replacement.

“It was a no-brainer,” says Terry. “I didn’t want open heart surgery — and the alternative was not in my game plan. I was all in.”

## *A cutting-edge solution*

Aortic stenosis is a common heart ailment in older adults caused by a buildup of calcium. Since the aortic valve can’t open wide enough, the heart has to work harder to pump enough blood to meet the body’s needs. Symptoms include shortness of breath, chest pain, and fainting. It can lead to heart failure and death.

There is no treatment for this condition other than replacing the valve. Until recently, the only option was open heart surgery — a major operation requiring a large incision and the heart to be stopped.

In contrast, the TAVR procedure is performed in UPMC Altoona’s cath lab. It requires just a small incision in the groin where the new valve is inserted inside a balloon, and the heart is never stopped.

Most patients spend one to two days in the hospital. Compared to the open heart procedure, TAVR benefits include less anesthesia, a shorter hospital stay, and a faster recovery, says Dr. Jabbour.

## *Amazing results*

On July 17, Terry became the first patient to undergo a TAVR procedure at UPMC Altoona. He was up and walking just a few hours after the 60-minute procedure and went home the next day.

“It was downright amazing,” he says. “I didn’t realize how bad I was until after the surgery. I immediately felt better and full of energy.”

Six months later, Terry says, “I still can’t believe how good I feel. I used to feel like I was 90, but I feel 60 now.”

To learn more about the TAVR and other advanced heart procedures offered at UPMC Altoona, or to make an appointment with a UPMC cardiologist in Altoona, Everett, or Huntingdon, contact the UPMC Altoona Heart and Vascular Institute at **814-949-9095**.

# Transplant Support That's Closer Than Ever

Bringing world-class transplant specialists to UPMC Altoona.

At the crack of dawn on the third Tuesday of every month, three UPMC clinicians meet at the Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute at UPMC Montefiore in Pittsburgh — and start driving.

Their destination: the **UPMC Altoona Transplant Clinic** at Station Medical Center, which has delivered care for kidney and pancreas transplant patients since 2014.



“Instead of asking patients to come to Pittsburgh, we bring UPMC’s transplant experts to Altoona,” says **Stacy Acevedo, RN, BSN, CCTC**, outreach transplant nurse coordinator with the Starzl Institute. She and UPMC transplant surgeon **Martin Wijkstrom, MD** (left), make the trip every month, along with a UPMC kidney specialist (nephrologist). “This can be a stressful time. Our goal is to

support patients at every phase — and that starts with making the transplant process as accessible and convenient as possible,” says Dr. Wijkstrom.

Their carefully choreographed day includes educational presentations and testing for patients considering a transplant, on-going preparation and testing for those on the kidney transplant waiting list, and check-ups for post-transplant patients.

**Laura Strayer**, UPMC Altoona’s coordinator of greeter services, is the fourth team member. “Laura’s our on-site link, connecting us with patients and scheduling all appointments and tests,” says Stacy. On a typical monthly visit, the team sees 20 or more patients from throughout Pennsylvania and neighboring states.

Depending on their transplant status, patients might talk with a UPMC Altoona nutritionist, meet via telemedicine with a Pittsburgh-based UPMC social worker, or complete any necessary tests on-site — including blood work, x-rays, ultrasounds, or electrocardiograms.



Diagnosed with kidney failure, **Jay R. Young** of Tyrone, Pa. (above, with Stacy Acevedo), waited nearly five years on the national transplant list before getting a new kidney. Doctors performed his transplant on Jan. 11, 2019 at UPMC Montefiore in Pittsburgh.

Jay is no stranger to stressful, life-threatening situations: he’s been involved in emergency services for 54 years. A trained emergency medical technician instructor, he is a member of Citizens Hose Co. #5 in Lock Haven, Pa., where he served as department chief for six years. Jay also has been a Pennsylvania State Fire Academy instructor for 40 years.

Kidney failure can test even the strongest resolve. That’s why Jay appreciated the convenience of getting his pre-transplant testing, evaluations, and checkups at UPMC Altoona’s Transplant Clinic. “My wife doesn’t really like to drive, so avoiding trips into Pittsburgh was a big relief for us.”

For the army of family members and friends who volunteered as potential living donors, getting tested at the Transplant Clinic at Station Medical Center in Altoona also proved far easier than driving to Pittsburgh. “Quite a few people were tested, but unfortunately, none were a match,” says Jay. “I want to thank my family for their love and support, but I am especially grateful to my donor’s family who gave me back my life.”

“The care I’ve received at the Altoona Transplant Clinic has been excellent,” says Jay. “Before my surgery, the staff made sure we understood everything and they kept me updated on where I was on the transplant list.”

More than a year after his transplant, Jay says he’s doing well. “I also take care of myself and I look forward to having my regular checkups with Dr. Wijkstrom at the Altoona Transplant Clinic. The convenience is important, but it’s the quality of care at Altoona that makes the real difference.”

## DID YOU KNOW?

On average, 20 people on the organ transplant waiting list die every day. And every 10 minutes, someone is added to that waiting list. **Simply put: living-donor kidney and liver transplants save lives.**

To learn more about becoming a living donor, visit [UPMC.com/LivingDonorTransplant](https://www.upmc.com/LivingDonorTransplant).

For information on the UPMC Altoona Transplant Clinic, call **412-647-5800**.

# THE GUIDE

## to Healthy Living

### Making the most of telemedicine at UPMC Altoona and UPMC Bedford

The World Health Organization calls telemedicine “healing from a distance.” Patients in Altoona and Bedford have the opportunity to connect to a growing number of leading Pittsburgh-based UPMC medical specialists, says **Sherry Turchetta, RN**, community education specialist for UPMC Altoona Telemedicine, who shares these insights on this fast-growing service.



#### BENEFITS OF TELEMEDICINE

**Access:** Telemedicine can link you to hard-to-find medical specialties not available in our community

**Convenience:** Say goodbye to long drives, hours in traffic, and time lost waiting in crowded doctor’s offices

**More Face Time:** Spend more time directly interacting with your specialist and less time traveling and waiting

**Satisfaction:** Patients consistently say the quality of care they receive in telemedicine is just as good as traditional care



#### TELEMEDICINE SERVICES

Outpatient telemedicine services offered at UPMC Altoona and UPMC Bedford include:

- AIDS intervention
- Breast cancer second opinion\*
- Cancer genetic counseling
- Diabetes management\*\*
- Gastroenterology\*\*
- High-risk pregnancy\*
- Infectious diseases\*\*
- Maternal fetal medicine
- Neurosurgery (follow-up after surgery)\*
- Pediatric gastroenterology
- Pediatric surgery\*
- Pediatric urology\*
- Pulmonology\*\*
- Reproductive endocrinology and infertility\*
- Rheumatology
- Urology\*
- Voice therapy

*\*Offered only in Altoona*

*\*\*Offered only in Bedford (Everett)*

Other services that use telemedicine as part of their care include the Transplant Clinic (see story on page 4).



#### HOW TELEMEDICINE WORKS

Telemedicine uses secure video and audio technology to deliver health care from a different location. At UPMC Altoona, outpatient telemedicine appointments take place at Station Medical Center. At UPMC Bedford, appointments are scheduled in the Specialty Services building, located across from the hospital in Everett. Consultation rooms look like a regular examination room, but with a camera and video screen that allow you and your specialist to see and talk to each other. Vitals, such as your weight and blood pressure, are taken by an on-site nurse before your appointment.



#### HELPFUL TIPS

- Plan to arrive 25 minutes early
- Be sure your medical records have been sent in advance
- Bring a list of all your medicines (including nonprescription drugs and herbs)

For additional information or to schedule a telemedicine appointment, call **814-889-6072 (UPMC Altoona)** or **814-623-1846 (UPMC Bedford)**.



# The Doctor Is In (the Hospital)

Hospital medicine is the fastest growing specialty field in the United States.

If you've been a patient at UPMC Altoona in the last 20 years or UPMC Bedford in the last 10 years, it's possible that one of our hospital medicine specialists — or hospitalists — coordinated your overall care. Between the two hospitals, there are now more than 20 hospitalists who provide inpatient care.

## *A new approach*

There was a time when primary care doctors had the flexibility to keep regular office hours and oversee care for hospitalized patients. "The pressures and workload facing primary care doctors today make it nearly impossible for them to be available any time of the day or night," says **Gregory Martinek, DO, FHM** (above right), medical director of Hospital Medicine at UPMC Altoona and UPMC Bedford.

Hospitalists — doctors who've completed medical school and residency training — specialize in caring for patients who are in the hospital. "Because we're 100% hospital-based, we're able to provide 24/7 bedside coverage," says Dr. Martinek. "Since we care daily for patients with complicated health issues, we become experts in providing and managing the medical care of hospitalized patients."

Most hospitalists are board-certified in specialties such as internal medicine, family practice, and pediatrics. The scope of their work includes designing treatment plans, performing medical procedures,

consulting with other specialty physicians and hospital staff to coordinate patient care, and communicating with patients and their families. UPMC Altoona also recently implemented a pediatric hospital medicine program that was developed in consultation with UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

"More than 1,400 babies were born here last year. We determined that having pediatric hospitalists available 24/7 was the best care model for our babies and their parents," says **Stacey-Ann Okoth, MBA, MSN, RN, NEA-BC**, chief nursing officer and vice president, Patient Care Services at UPMC Altoona. In addition to providing general inpatient care and pediatric emergency consults, the pediatric hospitalists also are present in the delivery room to provide newborn care as needed.

## *Patient-focused care*

"A hospital stay can be confusing," says Dr. Martinek. When a hospitalist is leading the care team, patients and family members benefit by having someone readily available to answer questions, share test results, and even manage discharge. The hospitalist also ensures that a summary of the hospital stay and recommendations for follow-up care and additional testing are sent to a patient's primary care doctor.

"With UPMC's electronic health records system, your doctor can access your health data in real time, making it very easy to check up on you," says Dr. Martinek. Having immediate access to a patient's complete medical history also helps the hospitalist make a faster and more accurate diagnosis.

# News from the UPMC ALTOONA FOUNDATION

## Foundation Report for 2019

After raising nearly \$1 million in 2019, the UPMC Altoona Foundation was able to provide more than \$800,000 in grants and sponsorships to UPMC Altoona and the larger community.

Following is an overview of some 2019 events and grants, all made possible through the generous support of our donors:

- In September 2019, the Foundation hosted more than 2,000 cancer survivors and their families during the annual Cancer Survivors Picnic at DelGrosso's Amusement Park.
- The 750 guests who attended our Winter Splendor gala in January helped to raise funds in support of the hospital's emergency and trauma services.
- The Foundation made several other grants in support of emergency and trauma services, including the purchase of an Arctic Sun®. The device, which cools a patient's body temperature during a life-threatening cardiac event, preserves heart and nerve tissue and helps improve patient outcomes.
- Through its Community Education programs, the Foundation offered six health fairs and eight clinic days, including free walk-in mammography screening events. More than 4,000 members of our community attended hospital-sponsored health and wellness educational events throughout the year.

Our thanks and deepest gratitude to our donors and volunteers, whose passionate support ensures the success of everything the Foundation undertakes. With your ongoing dedication and friendship, we look confidently toward the challenges and opportunities that 2020 will bring.



**Tim Balconi**  
President  
UPMC Altoona  
Foundation



**Jay Drenning**  
Board Chair  
UPMC Altoona  
Foundation

UPMC Altoona Foundation

SAVE THE DATE!

**GOLF  
Classic**

Monday, June 22, 2020  
Scotch Valley Country Club



Visit [UPMCAaltoonaFoundation.org](http://UPMCAaltoonaFoundation.org) and click Events.

## UPMC Altoona Receives a Gift of Music



Neil Port entertained guests as part of the dedication ceremony.

Former Altoona resident Shirley Pechter donated a grand piano to UPMC Altoona for the hospital's lobby. The piano, which has a self-play option, was

dedicated during the hospital's annual Menorah lighting ceremony last December. Neil Port, a Foundation trustee, played "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" as many guests joined in singing.

The Foundation is deeply grateful to Mrs. Pechter and her family for their generous donation.

## Girls Night Out Altoona Inc.

Girls Night Out Altoona Inc. recently presented a \$10,000 check for the breast health program at UPMC Altoona. To date, Girls Night Out has donated \$17,500 to the program, which provides a full spectrum of breast care services.



The Girls Night Out Altoona Committee presented a \$10,000 check to Tim Balconi, UPMC Altoona Foundation president.

UPMC Altoona Foundation

**Cast & Blast**  
TOURNAMENT

benefits patient care at UPMC Altoona

SAVE THE DATE  
August 25 & 26  
at HomeWaters



Visit [UPMCAaltoonaFoundation.org](http://UPMCAaltoonaFoundation.org) and click Events.

**UPMC Altoona**

620 Howard Ave.  
Altoona, PA 16601

# Q & A

## Ask the Experts

### Nurses: At the Heart of Hospital Care

For the 20th year in a row, nursing has topped Gallup's annual ranking as the nation's most trusted profession. **Paula Kustenbauder, RN, MSN**, a nurse in the medical intensive care unit at UPMC Altoona, was a finalist in the 2019 Nightingale Awards of Pennsylvania, which recognize excellence in nursing. She shares her thoughts about the profession and her 27-year nursing career.

**Q.**

**Why did you choose to become a nurse?**

**A.** I wanted a profession where I could help others and make a difference in their lives. For me, nursing seemed like the perfect fit. As nurses, we spend more time with patients than any other health care professional. Our patients trust us with their care and well-being at the most vulnerable times of their lives. Quite honestly, I love being a nurse.

**Q.**

**Why did you choose UPMC Altoona?**

**A.** I knew I wanted to be in an innovative and fast-paced hospital environment where employees and their talents were valued. That place was UPMC, and that's why I've stayed here for 27 years.

I also like working with people who care about each other and UPMC supports that.

**Q.**

**What is the best thing about your job?**

**A.** Knowing that I can ease someone's loss, sadness, or worry and help them heal is very rewarding. The health care system can be frightening and confusing; we try to make it easier for patients to navigate.

**Q.**

**You were a finalist in the 2019 Nightingale Awards. What did that mean to you?**

**A.** I was truly humbled by the nomination. And I never expected to be a finalist in the nursing education category.

Part of me felt I shouldn't receive an award for doing what I feel like I was put here on earth to do. I am, however, so grateful to be recognized.

**Q.**

**What advice do you have for nurses just starting their careers?**

**A.** Always remember that the patient you are caring for is someone's sister or brother, mother or father, grandmother or grandfather. Those people are depending on you to be a compassionate, knowledgeable advocate for their loved one. As nurses, it's important for us to learn to recognize when we are in need of comfort and support.

**Q.**

**What do you do when you're not at work?**

**A.** I like to spend time with my husband, Rich; my children, Alyssa and Noah; and my dog, Boone. I also enjoy running, traveling, and doing anything outdoors.



For more information about nursing careers at UPMC Altoona or UPMC Bedford, visit [UPMC.com/NursingCareers](https://www.upmc.com/NursingCareers).

*Healthy Living Magazine* and *Healthy Living Highlights* are published quarterly to keep you up-to-date on the services UPMC offers in Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, and Huntingdon counties. Look inside for our calendar of events.

To be added to or removed from our mailing list, call 814-889-6405 or email [HLMAaltoona@UPMC.edu](mailto:HLMAaltoona@UPMC.edu).

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