Dr. Adrian Elliot, Chief of Emergency Department, with Ashley Saunders, Physicians Assistant.

WE UNDERSTAND the dilemma: throughout the Covid pandemic you now have a new cognitive step prior leaving the house. After checking for the last place our mask might be hiding, you ask yourself a couple of questions: is this trip necessary? and is it safe? We understand that this dilemma is considerably more difficult when you are in the stressful situation of deciding whether to go to an emergency department.

1) IS IT NECESSARY?
Sometimes it’s obvious that a situation...
Don’t Delay Seeking Emergency Care

Don’t Delay Seeking Emergency Care

continued from page 1

Physicians and nurses in the emergency department commonly hear patients say that they don’t want to bother us or don’t want to waste their time or our time because their symptoms may not turn out to be a serious emergency condition. We appreciate people being mindful of the severity of their symptoms, but it is better to get to the emergency room and have the reassurance that the issue was not serious than to ignore symptoms and discover the opposite. If you are unsure, just go.

2) IS IT SAFE?

The second question of is it safe is a very important question these days. Of course, emergency departments are where sick patients in the community end up. Like many health care facilities, BHS emergency departments have been successful at encouraging high levels of vaccination in hospital staff.

Resources and time have been poured into protocols, staff education, personal protective equipment, and facility modifications to maintain necessary separation and isolation of patients. Emergency departments separate patients that are high-risk for transmitting Covid from others who are low-risk. There is no reason to believe that you are at any higher risk for being exposed to Covid than going to any other public establishment. The answer is: we are very safe.

3) SYMPTOMS NOT TO MISS

This is not meant to be an exclusive list, as there are numerous reasons to seek emergency care. However, delay can really affect our ability to help in certain conditions—for example in heart attack, stroke, sepsis, serious allergic reactions, and serious bleeding. It may be fine to seek care at an Urgent Care Center or with your primary care physician if the symptoms are mild, but some mild symptoms may “add up” to a potentially serious condition.

“It is better to get to the emergency room and have the reassurance that the issue was not serious than to ignore symptoms and discover the opposite.”

4) THE BOTTOM LINE

If you are experiencing symptoms that would have prompted you to call 911 or seek care in an emergency room before the pandemic, you should still seek care immediately. If you are unsure of whether a visit to an emergency room, contact your primary care physician for guidance or head directly to the emergency room for an evaluation.

–Adrian Elliot, MD
Chief of Fairview’s Emergency Department

Please seek immediate care for:

1. SHORTNESS OF BREATH: wheezing, new or worsening difficulty breathing.
2. CHEST PAIN: especially with lightheadedness, sweating, and shortness of breath.
3. SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION: swelling lips, difficulty swallowing or breathing
4. STROKE SYMPTOMS: sudden inability to speak, sudden numbness/weakness in any area of your body, facial droop, loss of balance or vision, sudden change in mental status (such as confusion).
5. PASSING OUT: fainting, dizziness or loss of consciousness with or without injury.
6. TRAUMA: possible broken bone in areas like the ribs, skull, face, hips, or pelvis, serious burns and cuts (cuts that won’t stop bleeding or wounds that won’t close), or displaced or open wound fractures (broken bones).
7. SEVERE HEADACHE: with or without head injury (especially if taking aspirin or blood thinners).
8. HEMORRHAGE: bleeding that cannot be stopped, coughing or vomiting blood.
9. ABDOMINAL PAIN: especially intense localized pain.
10. PREGNANCY CONCERNS: If you’re pregnant and have vaginal bleeding or pelvic/abdominal pain.

continued from page 1

Barbieri

in May, Barbieri led a team to install a testing tent and establish staffing in just three days.

“It’s like we had been planning for this challenge for over ten years,” she notes referring to 2009 H1N1 pandemic when Fairview Hospital became a community partner in the public health arena.

“Because we are rural, we count on each other for mutual aid and shared resources. We have a history of follow-
A newly formed network of specialized health providers is now in the same location as East Mountain Medical*, the area’s largest primary care practice, at 780 Main Street in Great Barrington. The affiliated practices and services include:

**Surgical Services**
Suite 104, (413) 644-6499
- George Veinoglou, MD
- Stacy Mihlek, DNP

**Fairview Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine**
Suite 106 (413) 854-9753
- Pier Boutin, MD

**Fairview Gastroenterology Services**
Suite 104, (413) 499-8590
- Jeffrey St. John, MD
- Jacques Reichling, MD

**Fairview Urology Services**
Suite 104, (413) 447-2375
- Kevin Killeen, MD

**Fairview Endocrinology**
Suite 106, (413) 496-6838
- Brian D. Phillips, MD
- Robyn Korte, NP

**Diabetes Education**
Suite 106, (413) 395-7942
- Julie Barbour, RD

East Mountain Medical includes the following providers who can be reached at (413) 528-2418:
- Eric Bush, MD
- Daniel Patel, MD
- Andrew Potter, DO
- Edward Weiner, MD
- Laurie Basinait, ANP
- Denise Kincaid, DNP
- Kari Mendel, DNP
- Clare Tullock, FNP
- Blake Williams, MD

“**How are you feeling today?**”

That’s the first of ten questions asked by clinic volunteer Diane Piraino, MD, to everyone who arrives at her chair at the W.E.B. DuBois Middle School in Great Barrington for a Covid-19 vaccination. Between patients, the retired pediatrician notes the air of happiness and gratitude that is evident at the clinic.

“It’s going great!” she said. “Everyone is so happy to be here, both as patients and as volunteers.”

While navigating the state’s vaccination website remains a challenge, people appear relieved and appreciative once they arrive at the local school – and very surprised by how well the clinic is organized.

“It’s obviously a well-oiled machine” one person observed while waiting in a socially-distanced line. With plenty of parking and a carefully spaced-out appointment schedule, the spacious halls and gym at the school provide room to register, get vaccinated and sit to be observed for 15 to 30 minutes following vaccination.

The clinic is the result of a group effort called the Berkshire Vaccination Collaboration formed by Berkshire Health Systems, Berkshire County Boards of Health Association and Community Health Programs. The unified effort is bringing more vaccine to Berkshire County so that residents can be vaccinated against Covid-19 as quickly as possible.

“**It’s a team effort,”**

explains Barbieri.
The Impact of Your Gifts to Fairview Hospital

At Fairview Hospital, your donations contribute to the high quality health care we provide to our community. Many donations come from community members who give to Fairview in gratitude for the care they have received. Other gifts are made in appreciation of the peace of mind knowing that excellent healthcare is here if needed. Gifts of all sizes are important and together, help our medical team do more for our patients. Thank you!

In 2020, the tradition of philanthropic support for Fairview Hospital was strong, raising funds for investment in technology and facilities.

Here are some examples of what your donations have made possible at Fairview Hospital!

• Cardiac Monitors for Surgical Services
• Arriving soon! Cardiac Nuclear Unit for Cardiac and Internal Diagnostics
• Portable X-ray Unit that can go to the patient
• Pulmonary Function Testing Machine for Respiratory Care

In 2020, Fairview Hospital also experienced a tremendous outpouring of community donations of masks, protective equipment, food, notes of gratitude and many other heartwarming gestures which meant so much to the staff at Fairview Hospital. Thank you to all who showed their care!

The tradition of philanthropy remained strong during 2020.

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The tradition of philanthropy remained strong during 2020.
Take Ten! Ways We Keep You Safe at Fairview Hospital

High quality care is safe care. Fairview Hospital has earned our community’s trust and our staff is committed to the highest standards of the infection prevention so you can be confident when you seek our care.

Here are ten ways we ensure that our hospital remains safe for our staff and our patients.

1. Infection Control Professionals
At Fairview, our Director of Infection Prevention, Donna Wichman, MSN, RN, CIC, CRNI, CNOR-E, is certified by the national Certification Board of Infection Control. We work closely with neighboring Communities Boards of Health as well as the infection control experts at Berkshire Medical Center to follow the highest standards determined by experts in the field of infectious disease, public health, infection prevention and quality improvement.

2. Infection Control Cleaning Gold Standard
Our Environmental Services Team, named Fairview Hospital’s “President’s Team” in 2019 and 2020, is the pride of Fairview Hospital. They are trained in the proper cleaning methods and solutions. We even have a special ultraviolet light system that provides cleaning for what you cannot even see!

3. Community Commitment
Your safety is everyone’s job. Every member of our staff is required to follow the highest evidence-based infection control processes and is required to receive annual and ongoing education.

4. Screening
We continue to screen everyone who walks into our facilities for symptoms of Covid-19, assure proper masking is worn per CDC guidelines, and limited access in the hospital.

5. Dining Services
Public food service has been discontinued at this time and tables for employees have separators and seating limits to ensure social distancing. Food is individually packaged and held in protected holders to assure minimal handling and exposure and no use of reusable bottles, or mugs.

6. Masks and Hand Sanitizer
All staff wear a mask, and the type of mask is determined by the healthcare services being provided. All patients, outpatients, visitors, and non-clinical staff must wear masks as well. You will also see hand sanitizer available at our entrances and in each department. Staff maintain the highest hand washing protocols before and after every patient.

7. Waiting Areas
In our waiting areas you will find spaced seating. Patients with respiratory symptoms who may be evaluated for Covid-19 will be kept separate from other patients. If there is not adequate space in the Emergency Waiting Area, you will be asked to wait in your car until the proper space is available. (Please note all life-threatening emergencies will not be delayed for assessment.)

8. Facilities Renovation
Fairview Hospital has undertaken extensive renovations such as installing negative pressures rooms, air handling systems, physical walls and opening new patient areas to meet the highest evidenced based standards in healthcare safety.

9. Staff Vaccinations
Over 90% of Fairview’s staff are vaccinated. Our healthcare team knows that getting vaccinated helps prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the hospital and in the community.

10. Limiting Visitors
We know that having visitors is important, but to avoid risk, we continually adjust our Visitor Guidelines to keep our patients and staff safe. However, people who need assistance can be accompanied by one person. For up-to-date guidelines, please go to: www.berkshirehealthsystems.org.

These and many other processes are in place to keep you safe. As we continue to care for our patients during Covid-19, our commitment to your safety has only grown stronger. Although wearing a mask may make it harder to see our staff’s caring faces, we hope you see their kind and smiling eyes.

For up-to-date guidelines, please go to: www.berkshirehealthsystems.org
Fairview Respiratory Therapist Earns Award

FAIRVIEW HOSPITAL RESPIRATORY Therapist, Jim Rintoul, RPT, was named the first recipient of the Berkshire Health Systems Safety Hero Award for his ingenuity in adapting equipment to help improve care and safety for patients and staff in their fight against Covid-19.

During the pandemic, Jim adapted BiPAP machines to serve as ventilators if there were ever a shortage; designed a plexiglass box that would protect staff from airborne viruses while intubating patients, and created a filtration system for respiratory therapy equipment to contain respiratory aerosols.

His innovations led colleagues to refer to him as a Scottish “McGyver,” the popular TV series character who can use whatever is handy to solve a crisis.

“In every situation there is an opportunity to improve safety,” Jim said. “Covid-19 was an urgent call to action for everyone. These were three solutions that I knew could save lives.”

Fairview Staff Supports Vaccination Effort

DONNA WICHMAN, MSN, RN, CIC, CRNI, CNOR-E, Fairview Hospital’s Director of Infection Prevention, recalls that most members of the hospital’s staff were eager to sign up when the Covid-19 vaccine arrived, but some employees were hesitant and had concerns.

“They wanted more information and the opportunity to see how their co-workers responded to the vaccine,” she said. “What they saw were minimal reactions and a huge sense of relief.”

By the second round of signups, most Fairview Hospital staff were getting the vaccine. Today, over 90% of Fairview’s employees are vaccinated.
Fairview’s Cardiopulmonary Director Leads Statewide Organization

**FAIRVIEW’S DIRECTOR** of Cardiopulmonary Services at Fairview Hospital, Paulette Pontier, RN, MSN, CNL, CCRP, is serving as the 2021 President of the Massachusetts Association of Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Rehabilitation (MACVPR). The mission of MACVPR is to promote the practice of high standards of care in cardiovascular and pulmonary rehabilitation in Massachusetts. The organization has over 100 members.

“In the era of healthcare reform and now the Covid-19 pandemic, our cardiopulmonary rehabilitation programs must continue to evolve to provide value to our patients and health systems. During Covid-19 we have not lost focus on patient care, adapting to virtual care, tele-health and other innovative ways—in addition to the old-fashioned phone call—to maintain connection with our patients and let them know we are here for them,” said Pontier.

The organization is an affiliate of the American Association of Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Rehabilitation and provides education, information, as well as state and national advocacy to support professionals and promote the important role and impact of cardiopulmonary programs have for patients and in the values-based care environment.

Fairview Hospital offers both Cardiac Rehabilitation and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programs on an out-patient basis. Both programs, nationally certified, provide medical oversight education, and support to help patients recover and live healthier, more satisfying lives with cardiopulmonary disease.

For more information about Fairview Hospital Cardiopulmonary programming, contact (413) 854-9737.

Getvaccinatedberkshires.org Provides Crucial Information for Our Community

**Dr. James Lederer, Jr.**, Berkshire Health System’s Chief Medical Officer/Chief Quality Officer, has led the medical response to Covid-19 in Berkshire County, and he is eager to dispel misinformation and promote vaccination in Berkshire County.

Dr. Lederer spoke of his own decision to get vaccinated. “I took the Covid-19 vaccine because I felt it was an important way to safeguard my health, the health of my family, and the colleagues and patients I deal with every day.”

Dr. Lederer urges others to “trust the science and trust the CDC and learn as much as you can. In the end, by taking the vaccine you will protect your health, your loved ones’ health and those in the community that you interact with.”

Fairview Hospital joins Berkshire Health Systems, Community Health Programs, and the Berkshire County Boards of Health as part of the Berkshire Vaccination Collaborative.

Go to getvaccinatedberkshires.org website to find credible information as well as announcements about upcoming clinics in the Berkshires.
Thank you for...

Wearing your mask!

Getting vaccinated!

Washing your hands!

Practicing social distance!

Summer 2021 Newsletter