

health connection

sentara potomac in the community

ties to clinic strengthen local healthcare

Today's economy is taking no prisoners. No one understands that more than Christie, a Prince William County resident for the past 16 years. As a part-time worker with no healthcare benefits, Christie found herself and her family without any health insurance after her husband lost his job last year.

Of course, paying their bills and supporting their family were paramount. Then, their son got sick and needed to see a doctor. Luckily for Christie, she was steered toward the Greater Prince William Community Health Center to receive the care her son needed.

*** taking a proactive approach to primary care**
For many, receiving primary health-care (services that meet most people's basic healthcare needs over time) is very difficult or not an option at all. The Greater Prince William Community Health Center (GPWCHC), located on Ridgewood Center Drive off the Prince William Parkway in Woodbridge, is a nonprofit healthcare facility that offers primary care for insured and uninsured residents.

"Our mission is to care for the Prince William County community," says Sallie Eissler, chairman of the GPWCHC Board of Directors and director of Partnership Development

at Sentara Potomac Hospital. "If you are sick or need a physical, immunization or checkup, whether you're insured or not, GPWCHC is the place to come to receive excellent healthcare."

Eissler is no stranger to making sure residents get the healthcare they need. She has been the director of Sentara Potomac Hospital's Family Health Connection Mobile Clinics for



Sentara Potomac Hospital's Sallie Eissler, MSN, R.N., also serves as chairman of the Board of the Greater Prince William Community Health Center. The center sees patients who need primary care or sick care, whether they're insured or not. It's located at 4379 Ridgewood Center Drive in Woodbridge.

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more than 13 years. These mobile vans park in various locations throughout the area and treat residents who do not have health insurance.

“We knew over five years ago that there was a huge demand for a new, affordable primary care service,” says Eissler. “And with the downturn of the economy, the Health Center services are more in demand than ever.”



“The difference between the mobile clinics and the GPWCHC is that the patients we see on the health van have no insurance. At the GPWCHC we see all patients, whether they have insurance or not. We also provide primary care, which is a proactive approach to healthcare. Many clinics provide care reactively (when people are already sick). Taking care of patients in a primary care setting reduces the number of emergency room visits, reduces the spread of infectious disease and gives people another option for receiving healthcare.”


According to Eissler, those with health insurance pay their usual copayment and those who don’t have health insurance are charged on a sliding scale based on household income.

* stimulus allows expansion of the program

According to Eissler, the GPWCHC was two weeks away from closing when it received federal stimulus money to keep it up and running.

“To stay open we must receive payments from three sources,” says Eissler. “Federal funds and grants, donations, and payers (insurance companies and self-pay patients).”

“Because of the federal funds and the ability to take almost any insurance, we have been able to expand our services to meet a huge need in the community. We now offer mental health services that allow people to get treatment for depression and anxiety; dental services, which are very rare in this type of setting—but oh, so needed; and obstetrics so that women can receive adequate prenatal care. These services are truly vital to our community.

“Keeping people who don’t need to go to the emergency room out of the emergency room benefits everyone—the patient, the provider and the community,” says Eissler. 

For more information about the Greater Prince William Community Health Center, visit gpwhealthcenter.org.



John Harrison, D.O., is a general surgeon on Sentara Potomac Hospital's medical staff. For more information about Dr. Harrison and other surgeons, call Sentara Potomac's Health Connection at 703-221-2500 or online at PotomacsHealthConnection.com.

Q&A

will surgery soothe my stomach?

discovering the best treatment for diverticular disease

*** I have been diagnosed with diverticular disease and my doctor recommends surgery to treat it. What causes this and is surgery the best course of action?**

Surgery may be the best course of action depending on your personal circumstance. The diagnosis of diverticulosis is made when someone is found to have small pouches, which are similar to blebs on a tire, protruding out of the lining of the colon (large intestine).

Problems occur when these pouches get inflamed or obstructed. This leads to perforation (a small hole). When this occurs it is called diverticulitis and can make you quite sick. The treatment of diverticulitis depends on the severity of symptoms, which are directly related to the size and degree of the hole in the diverticulum (pouch).

The most common symptoms of diverticulosis include no symptoms or cramping and occasional bleeding. Once diverticulitis (perforation) occurs, patients typically experience abdominal pain, nausea, fever, chills and vomiting. These symptoms, along with tenderness to the touch in the abdomen, can signal diverticulitis to your doctor.

In patients with diverticulosis, it is recommended to eat a high fiber diet and to

avoid foods such as nuts, small seeds and other things that may obstruct the pouch.

If patients have recurrent episodes of mild or moderate diverticulitis it is usually recommended that they have the affected section of bowel removed. This can typically be done laparoscopically with a short stay in the hospital. With laparoscopy, the involved segment of colon is removed and the colon is reconnected through three small incisions, using small instruments and a video camera.

If medical treatment has not worked for you, surgery may be the best option.

John Harrison, D.O., is a general surgeon on Sentara Potomac Hospital's medical staff. His office is located in the Century Medical Building, 2280 Opitz Boulevard, suite 310, in Woodbridge. Contact him at 703-730-4242. [vev](#)

“Laparoscopy allows us to perform the surgery with very small incisions instead of traditional open surgery.”





Rishabh Sharma, M.D., encourages everyone to have their blood pressure checked regularly. High blood pressure is called the "silent killer" because for many there are no symptoms. He can be reached at his office in Woodbridge at 703-730-8002.

is your heart working overtime?

Have you ever worked overtime only to go home and fall—exhausted—onto your couch? That's exactly how your heart feels if you have untreated high blood pressure, or hypertension. In fact, eventually it will work itself to death.

"The heart is just like any other muscle in your body," says Rishabh Sharma, M.D., a cardiologist on Sentara Potomac Hospital's medical staff. "When you work it hard it gets bigger and bigger. Unfortunately, when it gets too big from being overworked, it can actually fail."


According to Dr. Sharma, high blood pressure also stresses out your arteries. "High blood pressure speeds up the process of hardening of the arteries," says Dr. Sharma. "When the arteries harden they become narrower and less elastic, which causes a decrease in blood flow to the

heart and other organs. In turn, your heart starts working even harder to compensate for the blocked arteries."

Also, says Dr. Sharma, blood clots can get lodged in narrow arteries. "Blood clots can result in stroke, heart attack and other serious health conditions," says Dr. Sharma. "It is vital that everyone has their blood pressure checked regularly so that the risk of heart disease and stroke can be decreased."

* take a load off your heart

There are ways to reduce your heart's workload. Lifestyle changes, such as avoiding smoking, getting regular exercise, eating healthy foods and controlling your weight, can help decrease or prevent high blood pressure.

"The first course of action is to prevent high blood pressure with a healthy lifestyle," says Dr. Sharma. "If you already have high blood pressure, you should still make healthy lifestyle changes and continue to take any medications your doctor has prescribed. Keeping blood pressure in the normal range is paramount to avoiding potentially life-threatening health problems." 

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sentara potomac's team

To learn more about doctors on Sentara Potomac Hospital's medical staff, call Sentara Potomac's Health Connection at **703-221-2500** to receive our free *Medical Team* brochure.





PHILIPPE NOBILE

by charlene wilkins

Robyn Gorman, M.D., is a pediatrician with Woodbridge Pediatrics. She can be reached at 703-494-1144.

tackling pesky childhood conditions

Runny noses, earaches, growing pains and upset tummies ... staples of children everywhere. Luckily, these common childhood complaints come and go without the need for major medical intervention. However, there are several irritating childhood conditions that aren't extremely serious, but are pesky nonetheless.

"All parents can count on the occasional minor condition that doesn't warrant an emergency room visit, but does require medical treatment," says Robyn Gorman, M.D., a pediatrician on Sentara Potomac Hospital's medical staff. "Common conditions we see are conjunctivitis (pink eye), lice, ringworm and rashes."

* seeing red? be on the lookout for conjunctivitis

"Pink eye, or conjunctivitis, is something that we see often," says Dr. Gorman. "If your child has red or swollen eyes, a gooey discharge, itchiness or general irritation, you should take him to the doctor for treatment. Sometimes pink eye is mistaken for allergies, but it's actually an infection with a bacteria or a virus, much like those that cause colds or sore throats."

Dr. Gorman says that prescribed eyedrops or ointments will effectively treat the area and provide comfort. Also, she suggests using a damp, warm washcloth to clean the crusty discharge that causes the eyelids to stick together in the morning.

"Pink eye is very contagious, so it's important to wash your hands regularly and keep other children from coming into contact with someone with conjunctivitis," says Dr. Gorman.

* bugging out about lice and ringworm

The names themselves give people the heebie-jeebies. Unfortunately, lice and ringworm like to hang around your kids. Now, those are friends that you don't want your kids to make!



need a doctor for your child?

If you need a pediatrician or other doctor, visit PotomacsHealthConnection.com for a free referral and information, or call Sentara Potomac's Health Connection at **703-221-2500**.

"Every year, especially after the start of school or day care, we see increased cases of lice and ringworm," says Dr. Gorman. "Again, these conditions aren't serious, but they are an annoyance to parents and children."

Both are very contagious and may or may not require a prescription, says Dr. Gorman. "Lice are pesky little critters that like to hang out in hair, and ringworm is actually a fungus (like athlete's foot) that should be treated with anti-fungal medication."

There are some over-the-counter treatments, but Dr. Gorman recommends visiting the doctor if symptoms are severe or if treatment methods aren't working. vva

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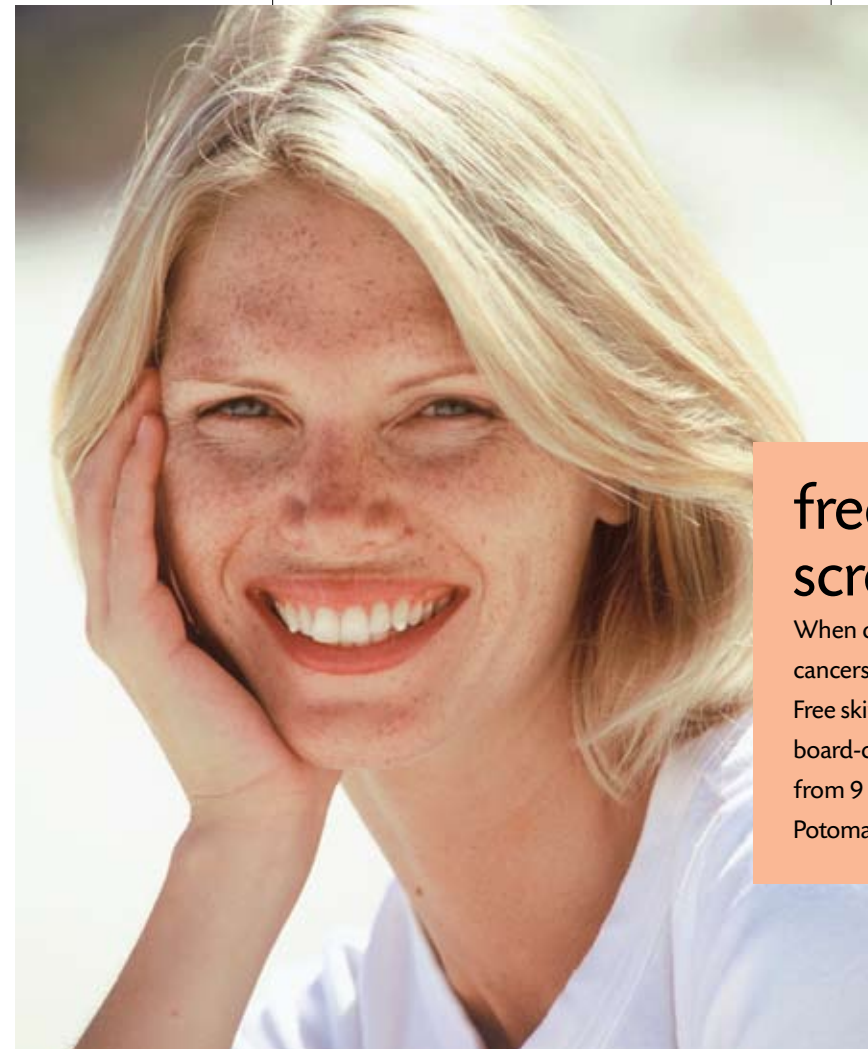
get the skin-ny on skin cancer

“Early detection and diagnosis is vital for successful treatment.”

One million people. That’s how many Americans will be diagnosed with skin cancer this year. Of those 1 million people, 60,000 will be diagnosed with the most serious type of skin cancer—melanoma.

“Melanoma is the least common but the most dangerous and life-threatening of all skin cancers,” says Geoffrey Moorer, M.D., an oncologist on Sentara Potomac Hospital’s medical staff. “Early detection and diagnosis are vital for successful treatment.”

“Melanoma is more dangerous than other cancers of the skin because it can spread to vital organs in the body, making treatment much



An oncologist on Sentara Potomac Hospital’s medical staff, Geoffrey Moorer, M.D., stresses the importance of early skin cancer detection. He can be reached at his Woodbridge office at **703-897-5358**.

more difficult,” says Dr. Moorer. “Less serious carcinomas (skin cancers) usually do not spread to internal organs.”

* get to know your moles

Dr. Moorer says that the best way to detect skin cancer at its earliest stages is to get to know your moles and the look of your skin.

“Everyone should closely inspect all moles or spots on the body,” says Dr. Moorer. “Any changes in these moles, such as darkening or irregular colors, uneven borders (normal moles are usually oval or round with defined borders), or moles or spots that are bigger than a pencil eraser, should be reported to your doctor immediately.”

According to Dr. Moorer, other warning signs to watch for when inspecting your moles include itchiness, tenderness or pain; oozing, bleeding or a bump; spread of the pigment to the surrounding skin; and moles that look completely different from your other moles. [vev](#)

free skin cancer screening

When detected early, about 90 percent of skin cancers can be successfully treated and cured. Free skin cancer screenings will be performed by board-certified physicians on Saturday, April 24, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. To register, call Sentara Potomac’s Health Connection at **703-221-2500**.



PHILIPPE NOBILE

by charlene wilkins

Atousa Farough, M.D., encourages all women to talk to their doctors about getting the right amount of vitamin D. She is a partner at Cardinal Internal Medicine in Lake Ridge and can be reached at 703-497-4700.

easy as a, b, c & d!

putting the 'd' back in your diet

Recent studies have shown that many Americans are not getting an adequate amount of vitamin D. What does that mean for women? Simply, if you're not getting enough vitamin D you are at risk for osteoporosis because vitamin D aids in the absorption of calcium.

"Even if you're taking calcium supplements your body may not be getting the calcium it needs," says Atousa Farough, M.D., an internal medicine physician with Cardinal Internal Medicine and a member of the Sentara Potomac Hospital medical staff. "Without adequate vitamin D, calcium is not properly absorbed into the body. Therefore, the calcium is really not helping maintain your bone health."

According to Dr. Farough, the relationship between calcium and vitamin D is similar to gas and oil in your car. Even if you use the highest quality gas in your car, it won't run well if you don't replenish your oil.

"The two work in tandem and don't really work as well without the other one," says Dr. Farough. "The current recommendations are for women 18 to 50 years old to take 200 IU (International Units) of vitamin D a day. Those ages 50 to 70 should take 400 IU and those over 70 should take 600 IU a day. But women should talk to their doctors about how much vitamin D they need. Many women need more than the recommended amount—especially those who get limited sun exposure or who have other health conditions that warrant the increase.

"In addition to aiding calcium absorption," says Dr. Farough, "research suggests that

vitamin D also provides protection from osteoporosis, hypertension, cancer and other diseases, which makes talking to your doctor about vitamin D even more important."

According to Dr. Farough, 10 minutes of daily sun exposure can also contribute to vitamin D intake, as well as eating vitamin D-rich food such as fish, eggs, and fortified milk or orange juice. [vev](#)

"Research suggests that vitamin D also provides protection from osteoporosis, hypertension, cancer and other diseases."



have you heard

surgical options expand with sentara potomac's da vinci[®]



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With only two years in service, Sentara Potomac's da Vinci robotic-assisted surgical system has gone from being used for one kind of procedure to more than six.

In addition to performing prostatectomy (removal of the prostate), surgeons on Sentara Potomac's medical staff are now using da Vinci to perform hysterectomies, to treat uterine fibroids and vaginal



Todd Henderson has been the division director of Surgical Services at Sentara Potomac for more than 10 years. For more information about Surgical Services visit PotomacHospital.com or PotomacsDaVinci.com.

vault prolapse, for several kidney conditions and for weight loss surgery, including gastric bypass and gastric banding.

"da Vinci has opened up a whole new surgical world for us," says Todd Henderson, division director of Surgical Services at Sentara Potomac Hospital. "It's exciting to see our surgeons learning the latest techniques and seeing our patients benefit from this state-of-the-art equipment."

* patients enjoy faster recovery, less pain

"The main benefits for our patients who have surgery with da Vinci are a quicker recovery, less pain, smaller surgical incisions and getting back to their normal lives in a shorter period of time," says Henderson.

Henderson says that da Vinci robotics enables the surgeons to operate with very precise surgical movements within a closed chest, abdomen or pelvis.

"The days of performing open surgery with 6- or 8-inch long incisions are quickly disappearing thanks to this new technology," says Henderson. "Being able to provide this service to our patients is a wonderful tool that we feel privileged to have." wv