

President's Message by Tom Croyle



Obviously, the election results caught a lot of people by surprise. The election will have major implications for the world of healthcare.

With one party controlling the White House and both houses of congress, it is more than reasonable to expect that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will see major changes over the next few years. Many popular features are expected to be retained. The individual mandate and "Cadillac" tax will likely be repealed.

The cost of prescription drugs is a top concern and there should be increasing pressure on the legislature and the pharmaceutical industry to do something about it.

I think it's a given that employees will continue to have a greater responsibility for the frontend costs of care. As a result, consumers will demand greater transparency - data about the cost, quality of care and expected outcomes - to be able to pick those providers and facilities that offer the best results at an affordable price.

I'm hopeful that some healthcare delivery reforms we have seen will continue. Everyone seems to agree that the "fee for service" payment model is not aligned to guarantee better outcomes, greater efficiency or lower cost. I am hopeful that LVBCH employers will stay engaged with their health systems and health plan partners to ensure that we continue our quest for health care value.

Unfortunately, healthcare costs have continued to spiral out of control and our quality of care lags behind other developed countries. The consolidation of health systems and insurers should be of great concern to all of us since they appear to be for the purpose of increasing market power rather than improving quality and efficiency.

The issues of healthcare are too big, too complex for most employers to take on individually. An engaged membership increases LVBCH's ability to leverage data, expertise and purchasing power to create better healthcare value for businesses and employees.

Best wishes for a healthy and happy 2017.

New Members

Welcome New LVBCH Members

We extend a warm Welcome to the following new members of the Coalition and encourage them to become active in Coalition activities:

- ❖ City of Easton
- ❖ City of Reading
- ❖ Geisinger Health Plan
- ❖ Pittston Area School District
- ❖ Saucon Valley Country Club
- ❖ Wilkes University

Coalition Happenings

LVBCH and CBC Make Strides Against Breast Cancer

On October 22, 2016, LVBCH staff and several Capital BlueCross (CBC) employees and family members participated in the “***Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk-Lehigh Valley***,” sponsored by the American Cancer Society (ACS). Our team, the “LVBCH Walkers”, took a three-mile walk around Bethlehem on a rainy Saturday morning. The event was a celebration of survivorship - an occasion to express hope and our shared determination to make this breast cancer's last century. It also helped raise funds for groundbreaking breast cancer research, life-saving education, and critical patient services.



We would like to acknowledge and thank the CBC employees and their family members who participated in this event including **Vicki Doule, Heather Kowatch, Sean Madara, Anne Baum, Deb Vidumsky, Elisha Pugliese** and **Cian Gray**.

Helping Employees Cope with a Cancer Diagnosis

LVBCH Roundtable – "Balancing Work & Cancer: How Employers Can Help" – October 19, 2016

Unless you've experienced it, you can only imagine how a cancer diagnosis would disrupt your life. And, if you're still working to support yourself or your family, your concerns escalate. How can you continue to work? If you become too sick to work, how will you support your family? Will you lose your job if you're away too long? Will you have health insurance?

A cancer diagnosis also creates challenges for the employer who wants to support the employee in the best way possible while ensuring the work is done. **Chrissy Brennan**, Associate Director of Programs, Cancer & Careers, addressed these concerns at the LVBCH Roundtable at the Glasbern Inn, sponsored by Pfizer. She suggested that the supervisor and employee together develop a simple plan that takes into account the employee's ability, desire and need to work and outlines any accommodations necessary.

"When talking with the employee, do not say, I know how you feel. I know it will turn out OK," she says. "Express your concern and provide information about company policies." The supervisor must respect confidentiality and follow the employee's desire to share his or her diagnosis and health information.

Also, don't assume that the employee would not want to continue working, she says. For many people their job is an important part of their identity and most employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations. Together, create a plan to accommodate their illness and treatment. For example, the employee might need to work shorter days, take rest breaks, start late, leave early or work from home. If they need time away from the office, identify a co-worker who can brief them on work they've missed. Brennan gave the example of a social worker who experienced nausea at work, but not at home. It was caused by aromas coming from the cafeteria. They moved her office to another location in the building and she was fine. "The key is to be creative and logical," Brennan says.



Following the presentation, **Jennifer Chambers, MD** (Medical Director, Capital BlueCross) moderated a panel discussion with **Erik Rupard, MD**, Reading Health System; **Lee Riley, MD**, and **Donna Bydlon, RN**, St. Luke's University Health Network; **Suresh Nair, MD**, and **Maritza Chicas, RN**, Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Q&A with New LVBCH Board Member Kristen Wenrich

Please join LVBCH in welcoming Kristen Wenrich, MPH, CPH, Director of the Bethlehem Health Bureau, to our Board of Directors. Recently, Kristen sat down with us and answered a few questions.

Q: How did you become involved with LVBCH?

The city of Bethlehem is a longstanding member of the Coalition. I attended several LVBCH educational programs and was impressed with the work that was being done around the quality and affordability of healthcare. I was a member of the Education Committee before being asked to serve on the Board of Directors.



Kristen Wenrich, MPH, CPH
Director, Bethlehem Health Bureau

Q: How long have you been with the Health Bureau?

I have been the Director since 2013, but I have been with the Health Bureau since 1998. I began as an intern and was hired shortly thereafter. I have worked under two (mayoral) administrations and am trusted as a community health representative.

What do you find most rewarding about your job?

I get very excited about community health projects, especially those related to prevention. I love that part of health care. For example, we recently launched our bike share program this summer with the help of St. Luke's University Health Network, which donated 10 bikes. Bikes can be borrowed, free of charge, from the Bethlehem Public Library or Cutters Bike Shop on the Southside.

What do you like least about your job?

The funding aspect of my job. Much of our budget comes from grants, which can be very unpredictable. Budgeting is challenging. For example, we can be in the middle of a grant-funded project when the funding is suddenly cut. Also, as a city of approximately 75,000 residents, it is difficult to compete with larger cities for grant dollars. In addition, submitting proposals can be complicated because the city of Bethlehem is located in both Northampton and Lehigh Counties and the Bethlehem School District extends beyond the city limits. Some grant opportunities apply only to the city while others involve the counties or the school district.

What is the biggest health challenge facing the city and area?

The opioid situation is a huge issue. This year, by October 1, the number of deaths caused by overdoses had already surpassed the total number of overdose deaths last year. The epidemic has been caused by an explosion in prescriptions for opioids and the availability of low-cost heroin. I'm encouraged by the task force which has come together to work on a solution, including a reduction in the number of opioid medications prescribed, improved treatment, and better monitoring of opioid use.

Another huge challenge is chronic illness and obesity. The city has a higher incidence of obesity and chronic illness than the county, state and nation. The health bureau is very active in creating and advocating for policy and environmental changes that support healthy environments. There are also social determinants that affect health such as poverty, inadequate housing and substandard education. The health bureau is making a concerted effort to not only focus on the immediate health issues but the root causes of those health issues.

Do you feel you are making progress?

I feel we're getting better at coming together as community health professionals to improve our collective impact. We're working with the United Way, LVBCH, hospitals and other community organizations on a common agenda – moving in the same direction toward a common goal.

LVBCH & Capital BlueCross Present “Value-Based Purchasing” at The Leapfrog Group’s 2016 Regional Leader Annual Meeting

Tom Croyle, LVBCH President, and **Bridget Lynn**, MBA, RN, Capital BlueCross Senior Medical Value Consultant, were featured speakers at The Leapfrog Group’s 2016 Regional Leaders Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. on December 5, 2016.

In their presentation, “Value-Based Purchasing in Lehigh Valley,” the pair discussed the regional hospital recognition program established by Capital BlueCross to help employers and consumers in central and eastern Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Valley make more informed health care decisions.

“We are certainly pleased to see Capital BlueCross align with employers to adopt measure to improve quality, transparency and patient safety in the region,” Tom Croyle told attendees. “The effort to reward health care providers based on quality and outcomes certainly enhances the value that Capital BlueCross and those providers bring to our communities.”



Pictured L-R: **Missy Danforth** and **Erica Mobley** from Leapfrog, **Tom Croyle**, LVBCH President, **Leah Binder**, President and CEO, Leapfrog and **Bridget Lynn** from Capital BlueCross.

Capital BlueCross (CBC) was the first health insurer in Pennsylvania and the second in the country to partner with The Leapfrog Group on this type of program. CBC has worked with Leapfrog – a national nonprofit organization focused on health care quality and safety – to evaluate hospital performance and provide consumer-friendly results. CBC’s number one priority is to ensure their customers have access to the highest care possible. Working with The Leapfrog Group has enabled CBC to better measure hospital quality, reward high-performing hospitals and help customers make informed decisions.

Hospitals Demonstrate their Commitment to Transparency by Participating in Leapfrog’s Annual Hospital Survey

Choosing a hospital doesn't have to be a daunting task—as long as you have the right tools. The Leapfrog Hospital Survey results can tell you a lot about a hospital, and if it provides safe, high-quality care.



LVBCH is proud to be a “Regional Leader” partner of Leapfrog’s Annual Hospital Survey since 2010. In 2016, LVBCH sent survey requests to 65 PA hospitals encouraging hospital officials to participate. LVBCH would like to thank the hospitals that have chosen to demonstrate their commitment to transparency and continuous improvement through their participation in the Annual Leapfrog Hospital Survey.

Visit <http://www.leapfroggroup.org/compare-hospitals> to view survey results for participating hospitals.

Worth Repeating

Three PA Hospitals Earn Top Hospital Awards

Three Pennsylvania hospitals – **Doylestown Hospital (Doylestown)**, **Grand View Health (Sellersville)**, and **PinnacleHealth West Shore Hospital (Mechanicsburg)** – were named to The Leapfrog Group’s annual list of Top Hospitals. The list honors the highest performing hospitals on the Leapfrog Hospital Survey.



These hospitals meet the high standards defined in the [Top Hospitals Methodology](#). This includes infection rates, maternity care and a hospital’s ability to prevent medication errors. Widely acknowledged as one of the most prestigious distinctions any hospital can achieve in the United States, the award recognizes hospitals who are committed to Leapfrog’s vision of providing the safest, highest quality health care for consumers and purchasers alike. The winning facilities, all recognized in the top general hospital category, were recognized at Leapfrog’s Annual Meeting on Dec. 6, 2016 in Washington, D.C.

To read the entire news release about the 2016 Top Hospital Awards, [click here](#).

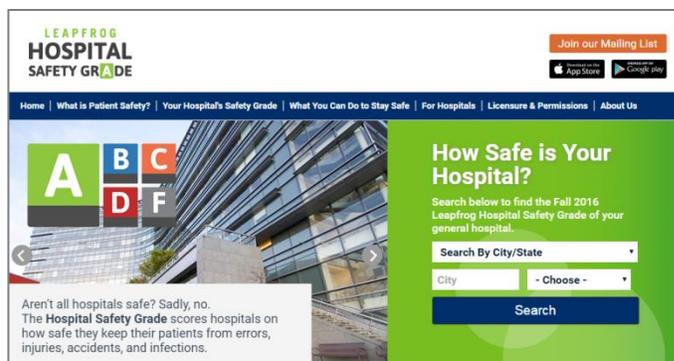
To see the full list of institutions honored as a 2016 Top Hospital, www.leapfroggroup.org/tophospitals.

To read an LVB article about 2016 Top Hospital Awards in PA, [click here](#).

Five Local Hospitals Receive “A” Safety Grades for Fall 2016

Assigning A, B, C, D, and F letter grades, Leapfrog’s Safety Grade provides the most complete picture of avoidable hospital errors, accidents and infections that kill or harm hundreds of thousands of patients every year. Over 2,600 general acute-care hospitals received a grade this fall.

In Pennsylvania, grades were assigned to 131 hospitals with 32 (24%) receiving an “A”, the highest letter grade, showcasing a dedication to safe care. Only one PA hospital – **St. Clair Hospital** located in Pittsburgh – has received “Straight A’s” since 2013. In the greater Lehigh Valley area, **Doylestown Hospital**, **Grand View Health**, **Pocono Medical Center**, **Sacred Heart Hospital** and **St. Luke’s Anderson Campus**, , received “A” grades in 2016.



To read a news release about the Fall 2016 Hospital Safety Grades and see the complete list of the 32 hospitals in PA that were graded an 'A' in this latest update, [click here](#).

To read a story in LVB about the Fall 2016 Hospital Safety Grades, [click here](#).

For hospital ratings in your area, visit www.hospitalssafetygrade.org.

Choosing Wisely® Material Available on Opioid Abuse

Opioids have been in the news a lot lately. They are very strong prescription pain drugs that can be deadly. During the past 15 years, there has been a huge jump in the amount of opioids prescribed for chronic pain. That is risky because, according to the CDC, more than 14,000 Americans died of overdoses from opioids in 2014. And each day, more than 1,000 people are treated in emergency rooms from opioid misuse.

Click an image below to access some important information from the [ABIM Foundation](http://www.abimfoundation.org) and the **Consumer Reports Choosing Wisely®** campaign about opioid uses and abuses.

To access more than 100 other guides (including videos) to getting better, safer, more cost-effective care, visit <http://consumerhealthchoices.org/lvbch/>

LVBCH Urges Members to Join the Opioid Fight

Last month Governor Tom Wolf signed legislation to battle the state's heroin and opioid epidemic. This legislation will:

- Strengthen the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program
- Restrict the number of pills that can be prescribed to minors or in emergency rooms
- Establish education curriculum on safe prescribing
- Create more locations for the drop-off of prescription drugs

Months earlier, Gov. Wolf attended a forum held at Northampton Community College's Fowler Family Southside Center in Bethlehem. There, some of our area's elected and law enforcement officials, as well as individuals on the front lines of drug and alcohol treatment, described our area's opioid problem.

Northampton County Coroner Zachary Lysek confirmed 42 overdose deaths through the end of May 2016. Similarly, Lehigh County Coroner Scott Grim confirmed 46. Meanwhile, Layne Turner, the county's administrator for drug and alcohol treatment, stated that drug overdoses at the Lehigh County six emergency departments averaged 450 a month.

"It's evident that the nation's opioid drug epidemic has reached our own back yard," says Tom Croyle, LVBCH President. "For years we have witnessed the increased use of opioid prescriptions. These very addictive narcotics often lead to dependence on inexpensive and easily available illegal substances like heroin."

For more information on the bills, visit <https://www.governor.pa.gov/governor-wolf-signs-bills-to-battle-heroin-and-opioid-crisis>.

Choosing Wisely® - Tips About Talking to Your Doctor

Some medical tests, treatments, and procedures provide little benefit. And in some cases, they may even cause harm. Talk to your doctor to make sure you end up with the right amount of care - not too much and not too little. Click the image below to see 5 questions to ask your doctor before you get any test, treatment or procedure.

5 QUESTIONS to Ask Your Doctor Before You Get Any Test, Treatment, or Procedure

Below is some more important information from the [ABIM Foundation](#) and the Consumer Reports Choosing Wisely® campaign that you may want to share with your employees.

Watch a Short Video



Click the photo above to watch a short video and get some great tips on how to talk with your doctor at your next office visit.

5 Questions about Antibiotics



Click the photo above to see 5 questions to ask your doctor to make sure you and your family only use antibiotics for the right reasons - and at the right time.



To access more than 100 other guides (including videos) to getting better, safer, more cost-effective care, visit <http://consumerhealthchoices.org/lvbch/>

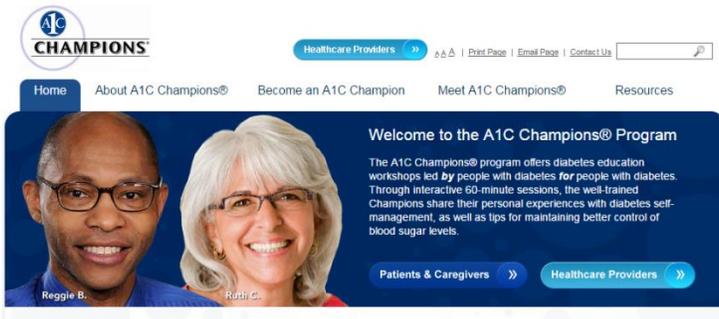


An initiative of the ABIM Foundation

FREE Tools from Sanofi to Help Your Employees Manage Diabetes

Sanofi has some FREE tools that are available to all LVBCH members to help their employees manage their diabetes. Please take a few minutes to check them out and pass this information on to your employees.

The A1C Champions® program offers **FREE** diabetes education workshops led by people with diabetes for people with diabetes. Through interactive 60-minute sessions, the well-trained Champions share their personal experiences with diabetes self-management, as well as tips for maintaining better control of blood sugar levels.



A1C Champions® Program

<http://www.a1cchampions.com/>

GoMeals is a **FREE** mobile app (available for iPhone, iPad and android devices) that was developed to help you get the information you need to make healthy choices at home or on the go. It includes features for eating healthy, staying active and tracking your blood glucose levels. In addition to tracking meals and locating nearby restaurants, you can track workouts and record your blood glucose readings. You can also sync activity calories burned from your Fitbit to GoMeals.



GoMeals App

<https://www.gomeals.com/>

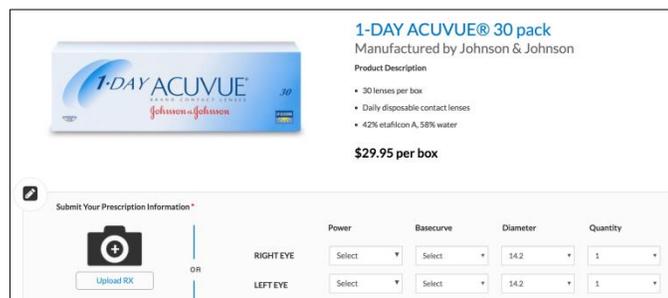
Guest Articles

NVA's Contact Lens Website, Contact Fill Gets a Facelift

An advantage of an NVA vision benefit with LVBCH is that members have coverage on contact lenses. Most people visit an eye care professional's office to purchase contact lenses. NVA's newly updated [Contact Fill website](#) is available for LVBCH members in need of replacement contact lenses, or who prefer to receive their lenses by mail order.

After several months of hard work, the [Contact Fill website](#) is now live and offers LVBCH members free standard shipping when they **use coupon code LVBCH16 at checkout**.

NVA still offers LVBCH members a large selection of brand name contact lenses at low prices with first-class customer service, but now their website is easier to use. NVA can't wait to share all of the new enhancements with LVBCH members.



What are some of the new features?

The Contact Fill team built its new website from the bottom up. They analyzed and found solutions to the bottlenecks their customers went through during the ordering process. In addition, they wanted to best highlight the value they provide with their industry-leading selection, low prices and invaluable customer service.

Below, are features that NVA thinks you will love?

- Real-Time Shipment Tracking – Track packages with a link sent directly by email
- One Step Checkout – Checkout occurs on one page
- Photo Prescription Upload – Upload a photo of your prescription from any device

NVA is excited to offer an exclusive launch promo to all LVBCH members. Use coupon code LVBCH16 at checkout for free standard shipping for savings of \$6.95 on your order of contact lenses. For more information visit us at www.contactfill.com or call 1-866-234-1393 to order by phone.

Use Coupon Code
LVBCH16
To get FREE standard shipping

Help for Healthy Smiles from United Concordia Dental

Dental caries, also known as tooth decay or cavities, is a breakdown of teeth due to activities of bacteria. This is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Fluoride varnish and sealants are just one way your dentist can help your child develop and maintain a healthy mouth.

Fluoride Varnish

Fluoride varnish is a type of strengthened fluoride that helps prevent tooth decay in children. It is painted directly on the teeth. It becomes hard as soon as it comes in contact with the moisture in the mouth, so the teeth do not need to be dry before applying it. This makes it easier to apply to young children and lessens the chance of swallowing it.

The fluoride remains on the teeth for several hours and slowly absorbs into the teeth. After fluoride varnish application, the teeth may have a yellowish film. This is normal, and will go away within 24 hours. Your child can eat and drink right away, but should not brush his or her teeth until the next morning. Because only a small amount is used, Fluoride has little risk of being swallowed.

Sealants

Sealants are an excellent and painless solution to help prevent tooth decay in children. Sealants are a plastic coating that is painted on the pits and grooves of your child's teeth. These pits and grooves tend to decay more easily than other parts of the teeth.

In some cases, your dentist might recommend certain teeth to be sealed if your child is at high risk for caries. The teeth that are most at risk of decay and most often covered by dental benefits are the permanent first and second molars.

Sealed teeth require the same oral care as unsealed teeth. Continue to brush and floss daily and have regular exams.

Always have a discussion with your child's dentist about what is best for your child's needs!



UNITED CONCORDIA®
DENTAL

Protecting More Than Just Your Smile™

Get More Information about LVBCH's Dental Benefits!

United Concordia offers LVBCH members both fully insured and ASO dental benefits. Through your membership with LVBCH, you can offer your employees affordable access to quality dental care with plans that also offer extensive benefits, a large, national network of dentist and best-in-class service and online tools. Click the following link to download a [factsheet](#) about the LVBCH Dental Program.

To get more information, contact Alison Huddleston, Senior Sales Manager, United Concordia via email at Alison.Huddleston@ucci.com or via phone at 610-573-5438.

Corporate Wellness: Not a one-size-fits-all endeavor

Employers are an important part of their own wellness programs. Starting out with the right information and services is directly connected to employees adapting healthy behavior, taking less sick time, and being more productive on the job. Here are three important considerations:

1 HOW TO GET STARTED

Talk to a wellness provider about their experience, customizability of services, and reporting capability. Start with a basic package of services, such as Strategic Wellness Consultation and an online portal. From there, services can be added based on what unique needs exist in your employee population.

2 WHICH WELLNESS SERVICES?

Are you focused on retention or recruitment of employees, improving morale, or do you simply want employees to know they are cared for at work? The answer will be different for everyone, but will point you to an individualized plan for reaching your corporate and employee wellness goals.



3 SEEING POSITIVE RESULTS

Your wellness partner should be regularly checking in, letting you know people are using your program and what results look like. That way, if changes are needed, they can easily be implemented. This also helps to motivate employees, providing higher levels of engagement and satisfaction.

For more information on how to implement a corporate wellness program the RIGHT way, download the BeneFIT Corporate WellnessSM eBook, [“Wellness by the Numbers: A Beginner’s Guide to Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating a Workplace Wellness Program.”](#)

Enjoy the Holidays and Stay Healthy



Worried that the holidays may be hazardous to your health?

You're not alone. Many of us shudder when we think of the extra calories and fat the holiday table typically holds. Especially since, as the weather cools, we'd rather curl up with a good book than go for a vigorous walk.



Don't despair. With good planning, you can enjoy the holidays and stay healthy. Take some time to check out the various [stay healthy tools](#) found on the American Cancer Society website at www.cancer.org.

Enjoy the holidays and kick off your new year on a healthy step.

Upcoming Events

“Save the Date” for the LVBCH 2017 Annual Conference



Date: Thursday, 5/4/17

Time: 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Location: [DeSales University](#), [University Center Building](#), 2755 Station Ave, Center Valley, PA 18034

Happy Holidays

Happy Holidays from LVBCH

We wish you health and happiness this Holiday Season and prosperity in the New Year. We value our relationship and thank you for being a member of our organization. We look forward to continuing our partnership in the coming year. All the best to you, your family, and your organization!

