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Cover photo:

Delayed emergency care due to a fear of COVID-19 could *have cost Diane Hartman (pictured with her husband Ted)* her life. See page 8 for her story.

WE ARE All IN THIS Together



The COVID-19 pandemic has touched our lives in ways that were unimaginable only a few months ago. As this magazine arrives in your home, we send with it our sincere hope for good health for you and your loved ones.

The challenges associated with the virus have been daunting for everyone. Through

it all, our commitment to you has never wavered – in fact, it has only heightened our determination to provide you with the best possible health care. The doctors, nurses, and support staff at Premier Health have worked tirelessly, along with first responders and other essential workers, caring for those who have contracted the virus while seeing to the needs and protecting those who have not. We are humbled and immeasurably grateful for what continues to be a tremendous outpouring of support from so many of you. The kindness extended by the communities we serve has touched our hearts and reinforced the reasons why Our Care Lives Here.

As you read this magazine, our sites of care and home health providers are strictly following public health guidelines to maintain the safety of patients and staff. Additionally, there are convenient telehealth options, including e-visits and video visits, available through more than 600 Premier Physician Network providers, giving you virtual access to both primary and specialty care right on your computer or smartphone.

Of course, health care has been on the front lines of the pandemic and we consider it a privilege to be here for you. We have learned a lot in this short period of time and have solved unique and unprecedented issues to continue providing the care you expect and deserve. These efforts have resulted in firsts in clinical care, more readily available access to care, and work with community partners in areas such as the production of critically needed personal protective equipment.

Despite the uncertainty you may be experiencing, you can count on Premier Health's dedication to be here for you and your loved ones with quality, compassionate care. We thank you for your support as we navigate this crisis together.

Mary Boosalis President and CEO

Leading the Way



Mike Osowik didn't know where to turn when he experienced symptoms of COVID-19.

> PREMIER HEALTH SPEARHEADED THE LOCAL RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PROVIDING MUCH-NEEDED RESOURCES FOR TESTING AND TREATMENT.



ATEF SHRIT, MD

Mike Osowik's usual health care routine consists of traveling home to Toledo for a consultation with his physician mother. But when Mike showed signs of COVID-19 in March, he couldn't travel home and didn't know where to turn. The normally healthy 35-yearold lives in Huber Heights and works in aviation at the Dayton International Airport.

Unable to travel to Toledo because of his illness. Mike was directed to the Premier Health COVID-19 testing site at the University of Dayton (UD) Arena parking lot. Information on the site was provided to his mother when she called the Premier Health Urgent Care in Huber Heights, and an order for the COVID-19 test was written there for Mike.

"I thought it was a great idea to have drive-through testing," Mike says. "It was fabulous."

He tested positive and was quarantined at home during his COVID-19 illness. He later was hospitalized for related issues in April. Now recovered, and despite being able to return to work, Mike says he continues to follow

protective measures such as wearing masks when going out in public to the grocery store and other stops.

Easily Accessible Testing

The drive through testing site at UD – a joint effort initially of CompuNet Clinical Laboratories, UD, and Fidelity Health Care – was among several leading steps taken by Premier Health in Southwest Ohio in response to the pandemic. The opening of the testing site on March 17 "was a big deal and a game changer," says Atef Shrit, MD, pathologist and chairman of the CompuNet Clinical Laboratories board of directors. The site allowed easy accessibility and availability of testing.

"The key to preventing those mini outbreaks is to be able to do the testing very quickly," Dr. Shrit says. As part of its response, CompuNet was able to "significantly" ramp up its testing, allowing use of universal molecular testing for all Premier Health patients, he says.

"This is unique. It is really amazing we are able to do that," Dr. Shrit says. "The idea that by isolating positive individuals -

pre-symptomatic, symptomatic, and asymptomatic – Premier Health facilities will ensure the safety of patients, medical staff, and health care workers."

"CompuNet has the capacity and continues to add resources so it can provide testing needed for Premier Health hospitals, providers, and the community at-large," says Kim Stanforth, CompuNet spokesperson.

Therapeutic Intervention

Premier Health also was a leader in the use of convalescent plasma as a potential therapy for COVID-19. Convalescent plasma is not a new concept, having been used experimentally during the Spanish Flu in 1918 and during other disease outbreaks, says Roberto Colon, MD, Premier Health system vice president of quality and safety and associate chief medical officer at Miami Valley Hospital. With convalescent plasma, the plasma – or serum –

from those who have recovered from a virus is extracted, and its antibodies injected in someone dealing with the infection. "You keep starting the body immune response to try to fight off the infection," Dr. Colon says.

Premier Health, the first health system in the nation to implement this treatment, joined forces with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Community Blood Center to start a local convalescent plasma program following the Mayo Clinic protocol for investigational therapeutics for managing patients with COVID-19. The process was initiated at the end of March/ beginning of April. In a span of two weeks, it went from concept to therapeutic intervention.

"It took only about 14 days. It was amazing to get all those pieces in there and to start treating patients with this therapeutic intervention," Dr. Colon says.



Premier Health has administered convalescent plasma to more than 100 patients. Before this effort, there were only about 20 documented cases of patients with COVID-19 treated with convalescent plasma. The program also allowed community members who overcame the illness to help others by donating antibodies, Dr. Colon says.

"The addition of treatment will hopefully help experts understand the therapy's effectiveness, something that won't be known until all data is analyzed," Dr. Colon says.



ROBERTO COLON. MD

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If you have recovered from COVID-19, you can help current patients by donating plasma. Check your eligibility and complete a donor request form at PremierHealth.com/PlasmaDonor.



Premier Health recognizes that a strong patientprovider relationship can be developed through multiple channels, including digital ones. The coronavirus pandemic has significantly increased the demand for telehealth and Premier Virtual Care services.

This spring, Premier Health's telehealth program saw visits skyrocket from a few hundred visits per week to several thousand.

"Telehealth helps alleviate fears for patients who do not want to see a doctor face-to-face in their office," says Thomas Dixon, MD, of South Dayton Family Physicians. "During the pandemic, we've virtually seen patients of any age. It also decreases the number of patients in the office, so we can stay in accordance with social distancing guidelines."

CONNECT WITH YOUR DOCTOR SAFELY AND CONVENIENTLY WITH PREMIER HEALTH'S TELEHEALTH AND VIRTUAL CARE SERVICES.

Keeping Patients and Providers Connected

"When the Ohio Stay at Home order was introduced, we needed to find a way, in very short order, for us to give our patients the ability to connect with our providers to get the care they desired," explains Diane Pleiman, president, Premier Physician Network. "Telehealth was the key for us to get patients back into the practice virtually, so we could continue to provide care as needed."

As the first health system in Dayton to offer telehealth technology, Premier Health continues to increase the number of virtual services provided to patients, including hospital-based services, live video conferencing, and medical evaluations from a specialist.

"Telehealth gives people the freedom to interact with a physician from anywhere," says Dr. Dixon. "Some patients can take a five to 15-minute break at work and speak with a doctor. I think when the pandemic is over, and people feel comfortable to return to some normalcy, this technology will be beneficial for the patient well beyond coronavirus."

Providing Care Virtually

To meet the growing demand for care during the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 600 Premier Physician Network providers began offering video visits to give patients virtual access to both primary care and specialty care on their smartphone or computer.

Along with telehealth services, Premier Health Urgent Care now offers video visits from the comfort of your home. Your video visit is conducted by the same urgent care staff you would see at the physical location. This means peace of mind, knowing that your visit is with the team of local providers you've come to know and trust.

You can schedule a video visit for common nonemergent illnesses, such as flu, allergies, rash, urinary tract infection, and more. You don't need an appointment for these video visits. Simply check in and let the urgent care providers know you are ready to start your virtual visit.

"Patients see Premier Health providers, it is not a stranger on the other side of the screen," says Pam Lyons, director of Premier Health's Urgent Care facilities. "We're seeing almost as many patients via telehealth as we are seeing in person. We've had a very positive response from patients who have used this user-friendly technology."

"You can still see facial expressions; you can still hear voice inflections," says Dr. Dixon. "A provider can direct patients to perform a basic physical exam on themselves, which is much more personal and insightful than just a phone call."



THOMAS DIXON, MD



PAM LYONS



DIANE PLEIMAN



FAST FACTS

Accessing telemedicine is fast and easy. Get started with a video visit or an urgent care virtual visit at PremierHealth.com/VirtualVisit.

Staying Safe

IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19, FIDELITY HEALTH CARE AND PREMIER COMMUNITY HEALTH ARE PROVIDING SAFE CARE AND ESSENTIAL RESOURCES.

During the uncertain times of COVID-19 and beyond, Fidelity Health Care provides safe home health care, preparing staff and protecting both patients and staff during visits.

At the same time, Premier Community Health (PCH) helps local businesses and organizations reopen following the recent mandatory closures. PCH provides essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), temperature screenings, staff training, and other support services for a safe return to business.

Reassuring Patients



ROOPSI NARAYAN



Some Fidelity Health Care patients expressed concern about having a caregiver coming into their home, said Mary Walters, vice president and chief nursing officer at Fidelity Health Care. "When we review the steps we take to protect them and assure them that their safety is important to us, most are okay in moving forward," Walters says. "By working closely with the patients, families, and the physician, Fidelity Health Care helps patients remain safe, comfortable, and independent in the privacy of their own home."

All Fidelity care providers wear a mask in the home and the patient is asked to wear one, too, if possible. Health assessments and temperature checks are made daily to ensure no one with flu-like symptoms or fever goes into a home. Clients are asked, in turn, to tell caregivers if they or family members have



flu-like symptoms, a fever, or were tested for COVID-19.

Fidelity also works closely with the Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice to ensure the safety of patients, Walters says.

Resources for Employers

Through educational programs, PCH has shared an array of information and answers to many questions in a COVID-19 world. "We provide anything that we can ... a lot of the requests are around education," says Roopsi Narayan, director, Premier Community Health. "We let employers know they can rely on their local health care system for the answers."

With the arrival of COVID-19 restrictions, PCH initiated free virtual workshops on topics such as mindful eating, well-being, and crisis and stress management.

Through their Durable Medical Equipment branch, PCH fulfilled many requests for personal protective equipment from essential businesses, such as face shields for the local Regional Transit Authority's (RTA) bus drivers.

Temperature screening services are still being provided to area businesses. A "Train the Trainer" program is available for companies that need assistance with managing ongoing screenings, Narayan says. "The goal is to provide needed resources to employers in the community. They are grateful for having this resource," she adds.

FAST FACTS

Stay safe at home and at work. For safe home health care, go to PremierHealth.com/FHC. For business resources, go to **PremierHealth.com/PCH**.

Room with a View

NEW REHABILITATION CENTER OFFERS MORE COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE

Upper Valley Medical Center's (UVMC) cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation program has an expanded, new home.

"The expansion allows UVMC to serve a growing cardiopulmonary rehabilitation patient population with high-quality care in a supportive setting – all easily accessible to Miami County and the surrounding area," says Tom Parker, recently retired UVMC president.

The new center offers a spacious updated exercise facility where patients with chronic cardiac and pulmonary conditions can receive exercise training in a safe, supervised environment, says Jennifer Clune, MD, pulmonologist and critical care physician. "Exercise training offers significant enhancement for patients in their functional capacity and quality of life. It is a wonderful asset to have this updated facility close to home," Dr. Clune said.

Patients receive an individualized treatment plan to help them regain strength, reduce the risk of future heart and lung problems, prevent their condition from worsening, and improve their quality of life.

Easier Access, More Options

The 7,600-square foot addition to the hospital more than doubled the size of the program space. Equipment was upgraded and spread out, and supplemental oxygen was relocated to improve access and safety during exercise. Private consultation rooms, storage for patients' belongings, a waiting room, and easier access to restrooms also were included.

Doctors praised the exterior window walls that give participants a view of nature. "The space is more open for staff to support patients and can



The retail pharmacy and hospital gift shop will move closer to the hospital's front entrance, and the coffee bar will relocate to the lower level near the cafeteria to help reduce main lobby congestion and noise. First- and second-floor wayfinding signage has been enhanced, and updated waiting areas provide a more comfortable, healing environment.

Penny Kissinger, right, and her daughter, Lori Seman, both are currently in the cardiac rehabilitation program at UVMC's new rehabilitation center. Read their story at PremierHealth.com/CardioRehab.

accommodate social distancing during patient socialization and camaraderie, which are important aspects of rehabilitation programs," Dr. Clune says.

Additional Enhancements

UVMC has initiated other enhancements throughout the hospital, as well. "UVMC is reconfiguring and updating the main lobby and registration areas to provide improved comfort, convenience, ease of access, safety, and confidentiality for patients and visitors," Parker says.



JENNIFER **CLUNE, MD**

FAST FACTS

You can connect directly with the UVMC Cardiac

- and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Center. Call (937) 440-4675
- to talk with a staff member.



Evercoming Fear



they received to put fear aside and get to the hospital right away.

The little things in life make a big impact on Diane Hartman. The 50-year-old mother of three from Tipp City made the best out of being quarantined during the coronavirus pandemic. What started as a typical Friday night, enjoying pizza and a movie with family, took a quick turn that could have cost Diane her life.

"I started having a little heartburn," says Diane. "I really didn't think anything of it."

Her symptoms began getting worse and she started experiencing chest pain, numbness in her left arm and trouble sleeping. In fear of going to the emergency department, and the possibility of contracting COVID-19, Diane weighed her options.

She decided it was time to get help but wanted advice before making the trip to the hospital. She made a call to her health insurance company and was connected to a medical professional who advised her to seek care right away.

"He said, 'Ma'am, you're going to die of a heart attack if you don't go to the hospital," says Diane. "He told me that he believed I either had a heart attack or I was in the middle of having a heart attack."

DELAYING MEDICAL TREATMENT BECAUSE SHE WAS AFRAID OF CORONAVIRUS COULD HAVE COST DIANE HARTMAN HER LIFE.

A Dangerous Downward Trend

An April study in the *Journal of the* American College of Cardiology found admissions for STEMI, a serious type of heart attack, dropped 38 percent after March 1, 2020. In April, Premier Health also saw a significant decline in people seeking treatment for both strokes and severe heart events.

In disbelief that she likely suffered a heart attack, Diane was torn. Encouraged by her husband, she decided it was time to go to Miami Valley Hospital's Emergency Department.

"I thought the symptoms of a heart attack were like something you'd see on TV or in the movies - someone in extreme pain dropping to the ground or grabbing their chest," says Diane. "It wasn't that."

Diane was seen by Joseph Mauro, MD, emergency department medical director at Miami Valley Hospital. It was discovered that she had a significant obstruction in her left anterior descending artery.

"What she had is also known as the widow maker," explained Dr. Mauro. "She could've potentially died, lost a significant portion of her cardiac function, or been dependent on medications and

a pacemaker/defibrillator for the rest of her life."

The next day, a cardiac stent was placed to increase Diane's blood flow to her heart. After three days of observation, Diane was released from the hospital.

"I was so pleased that I made the decision to come to the hospital and be treated."

Keeping Patients Safe During a Pandemic

Premier Health recognized early on that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic would make it necessary to change the experience of visiting the hospital. The health system's emergency departments were, and still are, well-prepared to care for people with emergent health care needs in addition to COVID-19.

"Premier Health was proactive and pulled our teams together at each hospital, so that we were ready," explains Marc Belcastro, DO, system chief medical officer for Premier Health. "We leveraged all our clinical experts, across the health system, to work around the clock to ensure we were able to take care of our community."

At all Premier Health sites, safety measures are in place to protect against the spread of COVID-19 and to put the well-being of

patients and staff first, which includes visitor restrictions.

"It was hard to be in the hospital by myself, but I understood," says Diane. "I would've liked for my family to visit, but with modern technology we were still able to connect and be in touch."

Diane says she has quite a few more years left, and she's not done yet. "My son is getting married next year, someday there's going to be grandchildren - I want to be part of that, healthy and able to run around and play." 🗖



Delaying needed medical care can be lifethreatening. The hospital is still the safest place to be in an emergency. Find out how Premier Health is keeping your care safe at PremierHealth.com/SafeCare.



JOSEPH MAURO, MD



MARC BELCASTRO, DO



DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND OTHER BEHAVIORAL ISSUES ARE NORMAL RESPONSES TO UNUSUAL SITUATIONS.



JONATHAN LAZZARA, DO



BETH ESPOSITO

The uncertainty, isolation, and stress of the coronavirus pandemic can be significant causes of anxiety and depression. During these unprecedented times, many people have found themselves searching for help and coping mechanisms.

"We're seeing new callers with higher increases in anxiety than they typically experience," says Beth Esposito, president of Samaritan Behavioral Health (SBHI). "Typically, we see our call volumes skyrocket after a major event has occurred."

SBHI provides services for people in Montgomery, Miami, and Preble counties who are experiencing depression, anxiety, trauma, addiction, and behavioral issues.

"I'm hearing from people who are asking, 'What is wrong with me?" explains Beth. "I want people to know that it may not be mental illness; it's normal to feel that way. You're responding to something in a very uncertain time. It's not a sign of weakness."

It's still uncertain how the pandemic will evolve locally and around the world, and there is no shortage of speculation. Besides following public health recommendations, there is little people can do to control the spread of COVID-19 or the extent of the pandemic. People dislike uncertainty and tend to "fill-in-the-blanks" in these circumstances, which often results in highly unlikely worst-case scenarios.

"Initiate things slowly," says Jonathan Lazzara, DO, medical director at Atrium Medical Center's Behavioral Health Unit. "Go outside and ride a bike, go on walks - these are activities where you have control over your environment. It's important to push yourself a little bit outside of your comfort barrier to find out what you're comfortable doing."

ARE YOU OVERWHELMED? HELP IS AVAILABLE.

Samaritan **CrisisCare Hotline** (937) 224-4646 Free hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week **OneFifteen** (937) 535-5115 Help and treatment for substance abuse **SBHI's Access to Care** (937) 734-8310 Mental health assistance and treatment

Care Without Judgment

Sometimes, simple tasks can become unbearable for people struggling with anxiety, depression, or addiction. In such cases, exercise, diet, and staying busy often are not enough.

"There's always been a stigma to reaching out for any type of psychological help," says Beth. "We here at Samaritan Behavioral Health believe in the mission of compassionate care and leaving people with their dignity. Knowing that you can call into a place and get help on your terms, without being judged, is beneficial for people to know."

SBHI provides outpatient counseling services for children and adults from licensed counselors and social workers.

Premier Health offers outpatient behavioral health services that address depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, personality disorders, and substance abuse. Visit PremierHealth.com/support to find the location closest to you. Inpatient care is available at Atrium Medical Center in Middletown, Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, and Upper Valley Medical Center in Troy.

"I want people to realize that we are all here for you," says Dr. Lazzara. "We are here to help you with your medical and mental health needs. We're always going to have our doors open."

COVID-19

Tell Us Your Thoughts

How do you feel about the changes to health care visits and lifestyles due to coronavirus precautions? Go to PremierHealth.com/MyCOVIDopinion to take a short survey and let us know what you think.

Milestones

Premier Health is improving the health of the communities we serve by expanding access to care and maintaining high standards for the care we provide.

Premier Health Hospitals Among "America's 100 Best" and the Area's Top Workplaces

Miami Valley Hospital and Atrium Medical Center have been recognized by Healthgrades® as two of the nation's 100 best hospitals for 2020. Miami Valley Hospital was the only recipient of the award in the Dayton area. This distinction places both hospitals among the top 2% of hospitals in the country. Additionally, Atrium Medical Center has been named a Top Workplace in Cincinnati. PremierHealth.com/Top100, PremierHealth.com/TopWorkplace

System-Wide Geriatric Accreditation

Premier Health is the first in Ohio and second in the nation to achieve system-wide Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation from the American College of Emergency Physicians. This distinction reflects our commitment to providing the necessary expertise, equipment, and personnel for older adults at every Premier Health emergency department. PremierHealth.com/Senior

The Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio

A joint venture between Premier Health and Encompass Health, The Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio, formerly known as the Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Dayton, has started serving patients in its new home located at 835 S. Main St. in Dayton, across from the Miami Valley Hospital campus. encompasshealth.com/locations/daytonrehab

Premier Health Urgent Care Piqua

Premier Health's newest urgent care is open at Outpatient Care Center North, a satellite Upper Valley Medical Center facility, at 280 N. Looney Road in Piqua. The facility is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Patients can schedule appointments online and can also request video visits. Walk-ins are welcome. PremierHealth.com/PHUrgentCare

Miami Valley Hospital South Level III Trauma Center

Miami Valley Hospital South has achieved designation as a Level III Trauma Center from the Ohio Department of Public Safety, joining Miami Valley Hospital's Level I Trauma Center and Atrium Medical Center's Level III Trauma Center to provide well-coordinated care within the Premier Health trauma system. PremierHealth.com/MVHS-Trauma

Premier Health and Miami Valley Hospital North Celebrate 25 Years

Since its founding in 1995, Premier Health has provided a locally governed and managed health care delivery system. With five inpatient hospital campuses, seven emergency centers, seven outpatient surgery centers, nine urgent care locations, home health services, a network of primary and specialty care physicians, and affiliate members across the region, the integrated network offers a comprehensive continuum of health care services in Southwest Ohio.

Miami Valley Hospital North opened in 1995 as the largest and most innovative outpatient care center in the country. Now one of Premier Health's Magnet® hospitals for nursing excellence, it offers a comprehensive range of services, including inpatient beds.

Our care lives here more than ever. Now just behind a mask.



Our Care Lives Here

We know getting care comes with a little uncertainty right now. But behind these masks, you'll find unwavering dedication, compassion, and protection for you and the care we provide to you. You won't find us backing down. As long as you need us, we'll be here, standing strong. Because it's who we are, and care is behind everything we do.

Our Care Lives Here. Still.

For more information on the steps we are taking to keep you safe, visit PremierHealth.com/SafeCare



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SUMMER 2020 IN THIS ISSUE

ACCESS CARE ANYWHERE TELEHEALTH AND VIRTUAL CARE KEEP PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS CONNECTED



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