Here we are at the end of another year and the start of a new one. It has been a big year in health care as we have been hoping for meaningful reform to come from Washington. At this point we don’t see any good solution to many people with no insurance and those unable to get care. We continue to hold out hope.

Sometimes the short days and long dark nights of winter is a depressing time. There is an article here about seasonal affective disorder, something we see all too commonly this time of year. There is also an article about antibiotic use in the winter. This is the time for colds and flu but most of these infections are viral and do not respond to antibiotics. We are trying to use antibiotics only when they are really needed for you and protect our community from more antibiotic resistance. I hope you will help us with this by following the recommendations. Finally we are introducing you to our newest providers in this issue. Our new physician assistant and nurse practitioner will help us expand hours and see patients in a more timely way. They will always be supervised by our physicians and I know you will feel comfortable if you have a chance to meet them. Please read their short biographies and the article about the emergency department diversion grant. We are really hopeful this will help us improve our care to you.

Now I hope you will have (or have had) a wonderfully blessed holiday season.

William Markle, MD

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**RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT**

**Samidha Bhat MD** was born in Ahmedabad, India and grew up in Mumbai. Her mother was a retired math teacher and her father worked with the Bayer Corporation. They always highlighted the importance of higher education. “Medicine was on my mind since 8th grade but the anatomy and physiology classes in 12th grade fueled my desire to be a doctor. I came to the United States after my marriage to Shreyas, an industrial engineer by profession who is currently working at Philips Respironics. I am glad to be a part of the UPMC McKeesport family and am fortunate to have a supportive advisor and great faculty. Apart from medicine I love the outdoors, white water rafting, music and watching movies. My long-term goal is to finish my MPH degree but for now I hope to stay around Pittsburgh after graduation and work as a family physician.”

**Janet Crowell, MD** was born near Chicago, Illinois and moved to the Pittsburgh area, graduating from Gateway High School, where she became a Steelers’ fan. With a Bachelor’s Degree in Biochemistry from Illinois, she initially thought she would work in a research lab. However after visiting an orphanage in Mexico and then working for the USDA in Philadelphia, she decided to pursue a medical degree to work among the underserved in the US and abroad. She obtained a Master’s Degree in Missions and Intercultural Studies from Wheaton College in Illinois, worked with kids at risk and gangs in Chicago, and went to St. George’s University in Grenada for her medical degree. Dr. Crowell will be finishing residency training next July and is looking forward to serving her patients while participating in short-term mission trips overseas. She loves bicycling, volleyball, and eating the great cooking of many of the international residents in the McKeesport Program.
RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Mamta Patel, MD is a final year resident at UPMC McKeesport’s Family Medicine Program. “Delivering the best medical care and improving the health and well-being of my patients are my main goals. Since childhood I knew that helping people is what I enjoyed the most and what I wanted to pursue professionally. I was encouraged and supported by my brother and mother, who helped me make this dream achievable. I graduated from medical college in Surat, India in 2005, after which I moved to the US with my husband to pursue training in Family Medicine. I enjoy caring for patients at the Latterman Family Health Center and I have developed a special relationship with many of them. My biggest rewards are the smiles and satisfaction of my patients. I dedicate part of my time to the 9th Street Clinic, which has opened my eyes to the needs of the uninsured and strengthened my resolve to serve the underserved. I also volunteer at community awareness programs at McKeesport High School. I enjoy teaching medical students and the junior residents. In my spare time I like to watch movies, ride my bike and do outdoor activities. I am also trying to learn Spanish. After graduating from residency, I plan to serve the nearby communities as a family physician.”

GET SMART: KNOW WHEN ANTIBIOTICS WORK

Antibiotics do not fight infections caused by viruses, like colds, flu, most sore throats and bronchitis and some ear infections. Rest, fluids and over the counter products may be your or your child’s best treatment options.

Dangers of Antibiotic Resistance

If antibiotics are used too often for things they can’t treat—like colds, flu or other viral infections—they can stop working effectively against bacteria when you really need them. Antibiotic resistance—when antibiotics can no longer cure a bacterial infection—has been a concern for years and is considered one of the world’s most pressing public health problems. Widespread overuse of antibiotics is fueling an increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. So the next time you really need an antibiotic for a bacterial infection, it may not work.

If You Have a Cold or Flu, Antibiotics Won’t Work for You.

Colds and flu are caused by viruses, not bacteria. Taking antibiotics when you have a virus may do more harm than good. Get smart about when antibiotics are appropriate—to fight bacterial infections. Taking them for viral infections like colds, flu, most sore throats or acute bronchitis

- Will not cure the infection
- Will not keep other people from getting sick
- Will not help you feel better, and
- May cause unnecessary and harmful side effects.

What not to do

- Do not demand antibiotics when a health care provider says they are not needed.
- Do not take an antibiotic for a viral infection like a cold or most sore throats.
- Do not take an antibiotic prescribed for someone else. Taking the wrong medicine may delay correct treatment.
- If your health care provider prescribes an antibiotic for you or your child; do not skip doses and do not save any medicine for the next time you get sick.

What to do

Wash your hands often, especially before meals and after touching pets. Talk with your healthcare provider about the best treatment for your illness. With upper respiratory infections: Increase fluid intake, get plenty of rest, use a cool-mist vaporizer or salt water nasal spray and soothe the throat with ice chips, sore throat spray or lozenges.

Adapted from: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
A PROJECT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO CARE

UPMC McKeesport is working with the UPMC Health Plan, the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) and the Latterman Family Health Center under a government grant to improve health in our community. Our goal is to offer you more complete care and better preventive health services. You can help us to improve our services by using the Hospital Emergency Department only for true emergencies.

Under the grant, the Latterman Family Health Center is adding a Certified Nurse Practitioner and a Physician’s Assistant and expanding hours to better serve you. These new providers will be working in some evening hours as well as the day and we hope you will begin to utilize them for your minor non-life threatening health care needs that may arise unexpectedly. By adding these new providers we hope to be able to provide more immediate and convenient care right here at Latterman. Introductions to our newest health care providers are at the end of this article.

You should see your Primary Care Practitioner (PCP) here at Latterman for non-emergency care such as:

- Colds
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Toothache (when you are unable to reach a dentist)
- Back Pain
- Aches, strains and sprains (We do have a certified sports medicine specialist on site most days)
- Fever
- Physicals of any type
- Well child care including immunizations (shots)

Under the grant, a new position, called the patient navigator, has been added at UPMC McKeesport’s Emergency Department and is working closely with our practice to better coordinate your health care needs by scheduling follow-up visits and helping to connect or reconnect you to our practice. Some of you have probably already had contact with the patient navigator.

Seeing your PCP at the Latterman Family Health Center is very important to your health. We can help you to prevent future illnesses and improve your overall health. Now with the addition of our new practitioners we are able to provide you with faster prompt care and treatment for all your non-emergency illnesses.

Lissa Lansdale is a Certified Registered Nurse practitioner (CRNP). She began her nursing career at the University of Kentucky and recently completed her Master’s Degree at the University of Pittsburgh. She has previously worked at Presbyterian Hospital and is now excited to start a new career here in McKeesport.

Toni Wilson is a new Physician’s Assistant at the Latterman Family Health Center. Originally from West Virginia, she studied biology at Wheeling Jesuit University and recently completed her Master’s Degree in Physician Assistant studies at Wake Forest University. New to Pittsburgh, she is looking forward to joining the team at Latterman and hopes to further develop her career in Family Medicine.
All the bustle of the holidays are soon behind us and the beginning of the New Year will soon be here. The winter season can be a “SAD” time of year. Have you noticed how the dreary, gloomy days make you feel tired and droopy? Is it just being tired from all the activity? Perhaps, but have you noticed your moods fluctuating this time of year? Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) refers to mood changes that occur the same time each year. The most common type of SAD comes in the winter. The symptoms may begin in the fall and last to the spring each year. The symptoms are most intense during the darkest months. They include:

- Fatigue
- Weight Gain
- Depression
- Irritability
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Oversleeping
- Appetite Changes, Especially Craving Starchy Foods
- Decreased Activity Level

As many as half a million people in the US may have winter depression or SAD. In addition another 10-20% may experience mild forms of SAD. It is more common in women than men and usually doesn’t start until about 20 years of age although some children and teenagers also have these symptoms. The risk of SAD decreases as people get older. Experts feel the disorder is caused by a lack of sunlight. Antidepressant medications and talk therapy can be helpful. Light therapy with a special lamp may also be useful. Symptoms commonly get better on their own with the change of seasons.

The good news is that beginning December 21, the days will be getting longer, which means more light. In the meantime good coping skills can help:

- Pace yourself
- Be realistic about your goals
- Enjoy positive activities
- Do something positive for yourself
- Ask for help when you need it

If you are having difficulty coping, make an appointment to see your family doctor. We are here to help you.

-Shari Leidig Holland