

President's Message by Carl Seitz

As I write this letter, it is late December – the time when we reflect on the past year's accomplishments and plan for the new year.

For 2018, Coalition activity and accomplishments included:

- Coalition membership reaching 220 members.
- Capital BlueCross and Geisinger Health Plan named as Medical Plan Partners for 2019-2021.
- The 38th Annual Conference held May 3 with a record 259 attendees, 30 sponsors/exhibitors, and feedback regarding the high energy level of the event.
- Partnering with the NEPA MAEA to expand our market area and bring our purchasing programs to their members.
- Hosting **Leah Binder**, President/CEO of the Leapfrog Group, as she toured Lehigh Valley Health Network's Muhlenberg Campus and St. Luke's University Health Network's Bethlehem Campus. During her visit, we also screened the documentary, "To Err is Human" with a panel discussion regarding medical errors.
- Holding the inaugural Associates Showcase, which spotlighted five of the Coalition's Associate Members: AblePay Health, Benefitfocus, ConsumerMedical, Health Advocate and Trividia Health.



In 2019, I ask you to include the Coalition in your plans by doing at least one of the following:

- Attend the Coalition's 39th Annual Conference at DeSales University on May 2, 2019.
- Join one of the Coalition's Committees: Membership, Quality, Purchasing, or Data.
- Attend a member education program.
- Bring a colleague from a non-member employer to a Coalition event and encourage them to have their company join the Coalition.
- Meet with **Donna Corsi**, our Director of Member Programs and Services, to learn more about the Coalition, our purchasing programs, and ways to engage in the Coalition.

To our employer and associate members, purchasing partners, consultants, Board and Committee members, and staff, thank you for making 2018 an exciting and productive year. I look forward to working with you to make 2019 even better. And I wish you a happy and healthy year!

In closing, I want to recognize and thank retiring board member **Bob Johnston** of East Penn Manufacturing Company. Bob has provided leadership to the Coalition for more than 20 years as a Board Chair and as Chair of the Quality Committee since its inception in 2004.

New Members

Welcome New LVBCH Members

- ◆ Acopian Technical Company
- ◆ Businessolver
- ◆ Cambridge-Lee Industries LLC
- ◆ Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley
- ◆ CBH2O, LP dba Camelback Resort
- ◆ Colonial Intermediate Unit 20
- ◆ Delaware Valley Area School District
- ◆ East Stroudsburg Area School District
- ◆ East Stroudsburg University
- ◆ EBC Printing and Signs
- ◆ King Spry Herman Freund & Faul, LLC
- ◆ LV Association of Independent Colleges
- ◆ Michelman Steel Enterprises
- ◆ Monroe Career and Technical Institute
- ◆ Northampton Area School District
- ◆ Pen Argyl Area School District
- ◆ Pleasant Valley School District
- ◆ Robbins Rehabilitation
- ◆ SFS Group USA
- ◆ Stroudsburg Area School District
- ◆ TC Motor Car Co. DBA Lexus of Lehigh Valley
- ◆ The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties

Upcoming Events

Employer Forum: Medical Marijuana – What Employers Need to Know

Pennsylvania's medical marijuana program provides access to medical marijuana for patients with specific medical conditions. But how can an employer be sure that their employee's use of medical marijuana is in compliance with current law? What are the employee's rights? What are the employer's rights? LVBCH will provide an informational session on what employers need to know regarding medical marijuana on Tuesday, January 22 at 11:30 am at PBS39 in Bethlehem. The program will feature:



Asare Christian, MD

*Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Physician,
Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network*



Deirdre Kamber Todd, Esq.

*Attorney
The Kambler Group*



Kathy Strain

*Education Consultant
Drug Free Workplace, PA*

Mark Your Calendar

- February 12 – Associate Showcase
- February 27 – Berks County Pharmacy Update
- March 7 – Wellness Event with BeneFIT Corporate Wellness
- March 20 – Healthcare Symposium with Lehigh University Healthcare Systems Engineering Program
- April 3 – Dental Event with United Concordia
- May 2 – LVBCH 39th Annual Conference

LVBCH Forges Relationship with Manufacturers Organization

LVBCH is continually assessing growing through alliances with other organizations that serve employers. In 2018, LVBCH partnered with the Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturers & Employers Association (MAEA), a private, non-profit, membership-based organization to help its member businesses remain competitive. Based in Pottsville, MAEA currently serves 345 member companies, representing 39,342 employees in 20 counties. Membership services include consulting services, advocacy, education and training in areas such as management skills, human resource management, safety and process improvement. Its networking opportunities include manufacturing tours, dinner meetings and legislative roundtables.

Through LVBCH, MAEA members will now be able to leverage the Coalition's pooled purchasing power to negotiate exclusive rates and premiums for self-insured and fully insured benefits programs, including:

- Medical
- Dental
- Prescription Drug
- Vision
- Behavioral Health
- Private Exchange
- Data Analytics

News Notes recently asked MAEA President Darlene J. Robbins several questions

Q: What led you to develop a relationship with LVBCH?



A: MAEA identifies solutions to any issue that concerns our companies. Increases in the cost of health care continues to be one of the top five concerns among our companies regionally, as well as on a state and national level. In 2019, health care costs are expected to see a 6.8-7.2% increase. MAEA understands that providing employees good and affordable healthcare coverage is critical to attracting and maintaining skilled workers. People want affordable healthcare. People need affordable healthcare. In addition, our companies are looking for flexibility in health care options.

Carl (Seitz, LVBCH President) and I have been in discussions for several months. Through that communication, LVBCH has proven its success in offering coalition members plan cost savings and flexible options. Given our close geographic proximity, we strategized and identified a partnership model that would benefit both organizations.

That plan was then approved by the Boards of Directors of both of our organizations because they saw that the partnership would yield positive results for our organizations, and even more importantly, for our member companies.

Q: How can MAEA members get the most out of the LVBCH alliance?

A: I encourage our members to contact LVBCH and have a comparison audit to look at coverage and costs of their current health plans compared with what the Coalition can offer. They can't lose anything by talking. MAEA members need to look at what is offered through the Coalition and determine whether it fits their business model. They need to ascertain whether there are potential savings in medical, dental, vision, and behavioral health benefit costs.

Q: I understand that LVBCH will be providing several events for your members. Can you describe some of these events?

A: For MAEA members, LVBCH will present an Executive Roundtable on ways to control pharmaceutical costs, including specialty drugs and biosimilars. We plan to continue to provide our members information on programs and services available through the LVBCH partnership on an on-going basis.

Q: Do you have any closing thoughts?

A: It's imperative that we provide programs and services that meet the needs of our member companies. Through the partnership with LVBCH we can help our members reduce their employee benefit costs by providing them savings in their medical, dental, vision, and behavioral health services spending.

Coalition Updates & Announcements

Capital BlueCross and Geisinger Health Plan Selected as Preferred Vendors

Capital BlueCross and the Geisinger Health Plan were selected to administer the Coalition's self-funded health plans for large and mid-sized employers. In selecting these health plans, the LVBCH Board of Directors has endorsed Capital BlueCross and the Geisinger Health Plan as "Preferred Partners."

Both plans participated in an extensive review process that showed Capital BlueCross and Geisinger Health Plan demonstrated better plan performance, pricing, and enhanced service capabilities, giving employers more flexibility to select plan administrators that best meet their needs. The Coalition uses a market-based approach to negotiate rates that are exclusive to its members and better than individual employers could obtain on their own. The new pricing became effective January 1.

Carl Seitz, Coalition President, says, "The plans endorsed by the Board scored high in the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions' eValue8™ process, which measures and evaluates health plan performance. The results of the evaluation verified that Capital BlueCross and the Geisinger Health Plan share LVBCH's goals for improving quality, patient safety, transparency and efficient care delivery. In addition, the endorsed plans offer exclusive pricing and service options for Coalition members, yielding significant savings for employers." Employers considering self-insured plans are encouraged to contact their brokers or LVBCH. [Click here](#) for the full press release.

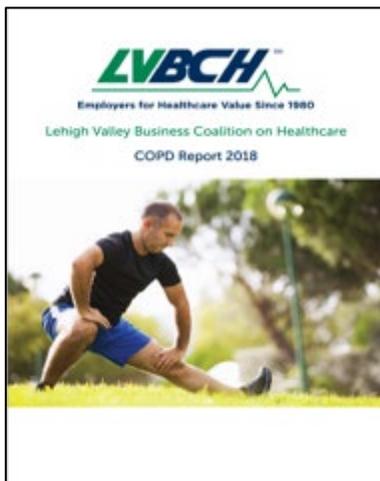


LVBCH Releases COPD Report

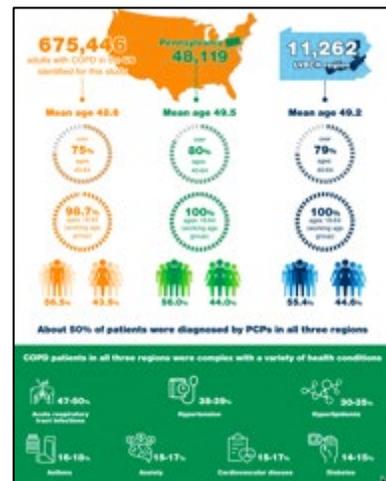
LVBCH is pleased to announce the release of an in-depth report on a serious health issue facing our community – chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

"LVBCH believes that information is a powerful tool in fighting rising healthcare costs," said LVBCH President Carl Seitz. "Community health issue reports, like this one, provide employers the information they need to positively address conditions affecting their employees. Wellness programs assist members in maintaining healthy lifestyles and help prevent COPD and other diseases in individuals who are at risk for developing them."

This report could not have been possible without the support of our partner Astra Zeneca. To read the report, click on the pictures below.



COPD Report



Coalition Events

LVBCH, Lehigh University Host Patient Safety Documentary Screening

Employers, professors, students and healthcare professionals gathered at Lehigh University's Iacocca Hall on Oct. 9 for the screening of *To Err Is Human*, a patient safety documentary. The film looks at medical mistakes and preventable harms – the third leading cause of death in the United States – and those working quietly behind the scenes to create a new age of patient safety.

The film shares the story of the Sheridan family, including Cal, a young man with cerebral palsy. His condition resulted from undiagnosed newborn jaundice. Cal's father, Patrick Sheridan, was diagnosed with cancer but it was not communicated to his physician. He died of cancer at age 45. *To Err Is Human* was directed by Mike Eisenberg, son of John Eisenberg, MD, a driving force behind federal efforts to improve patient safety. A reaction panel discussion followed the screening (see participants below).

Earlier in the day, Leah Binder, President & CEO of the Leapfrog Group – joined by LVBCH staff and board members – toured local hospitals and met with leadership at Lehigh Valley Health Network and St. Luke's University Health Network. The Leapfrog Group represents employers and other purchasers of health care calling for improved safety and quality in hospitals.



Pictured from left to right: Moderator **Scott Fair**, USI Insurance Services, host **Ana-Iulia Alexandrescu**, Director of the Healthcare Systems Engineering Program; panelists **Jennifer Chambers**, MD, Capital BlueCross; **Marc Granson**, MD, Surgeon Check; **Donna Sabol**, St. Luke's University Health Network; **Matthew McCambridge**, MD, Lehigh Valley Health Network; **Terrill Theman**, MD, Lehigh University's Healthcare Systems Engineering Program; **Leah Binder**, Leapfrog Group, and host **Carl Seitz**, LVBCH President.

Geneia Introduces New CMO at Quarterly Meeting

Geneia's new Chief Medical Officer, [Aurel Iuga, MD](#), led the September 11th quarterly strategic meeting for the employer groups with access to Geneia's data analytics solution, the Theon[®] platform. Board-certified in clinical informatics, preventive medicine and public health, Dr. Iuga brings an expertise in population health, clinical strategy and clinical algorithm development. Most recently, he served as medical director and clinical solutions manager for Anthem's clinical modeling group. Dr. Iuga's experience also includes tenure as a healthcare strategy consultant and as a research fellow at Massachusetts General.

Dr. Iuga and the Geneia team presented three primary topics:

1. Updated Diabetes Report: Continued discussion and analysis.
2. Unnecessary Care: Dr. Iuga spoke about the need to address unnecessary care through multi-component intervention. Unnecessary care currently accounts for approximately 8% of total U.S. healthcare spending. A 2014 analysis of 44 low-value health services in the Virginia all-payer claims database found that low-cost/high-volume health services contribute most to unnecessary health spending.
3. Biologics: Dr. Iuga discussed what biologics are, how many have been approved by the U.S. Food and Federal Drug Administration (FDA), how many are in the pipeline and some of the barriers to biosimilar adoption.

The next quarterly strategic meeting is scheduled for January 24.

Leapfrog Update

Leapfrog Names St. Luke's - Bethlehem Campus to List of Top Hospitals

[The Leapfrog Group](#), a national nonprofit aiming to improve health care quality for consumers, employers and purchasers, in December announced that St. Luke's University Hospital – Bethlehem Campus was among eight Pennsylvania hospitals named to its 2018 national list of Top Hospitals.

"The Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare congratulates St. Luke's University Hospital – Bethlehem Campus for its inclusion on the 2018 Top Hospital list of Top Teaching Hospitals," said Carl Seitz, President of LVBCH, a Leapfrog Regional Leader. "In addition to St. Luke's participation in coalition events related to quality, the hospital also hosted leadership from the Coalition and Leapfrog at a campus tour earlier this year."

The elite award is one of the most competitive honors American hospitals can receive in safety and quality. Leapfrog is a national nonprofit watchdog organization that rates hospitals on how well they protect patients from errors and infections, as well as the effectiveness of procedures and other care they provide.

Other Pennsylvania's 2018 Top Hospitals are:

- UPMC East, Top General Hospital
- Jeanes Hospital, Top Teaching Hospital
- Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital, Top Teaching Hospital
- Lancaster General Hospital, Top Teaching Hospital
- Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Top Teaching Hospital
- UPMC Bedford Memorial, Top Rural Hospital
- St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, Top Children's Hospital

Methodology

Local Hospitals Earn "A" Safety Grade from Leapfrog

The Leapfrog Group in November announced its Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades. The independent grading system assigns letter grades to general acute-care hospitals in the U.S. based on their ability to protect patients from avoidable errors, injuries, accidents and infections. In Pennsylvania, 132 hospitals were graded, and 50 earned an "A," 27 earned a "B," 47 earned a "C," 8 earned a "D" and none earned an "F."

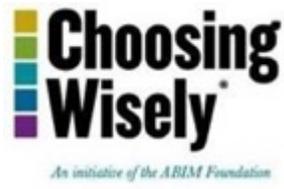
Local hospitals earning an "A" safety grade were:

- Easton Hospital
- Grand View Health
- Lehigh Valley Hospital – Cedar Crest
- Lehigh Valley Hospital – Hazleton
- Lehigh Valley Hospital – Muhlenberg
- Lehigh Valley Hospital – Pocono
- Reading Hospital
- St. Joseph Medical Center (Reading)
- St. Luke's Hospital – Allentown Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital – Anderson Campus
- St. Luke's University Hospital – Bethlehem Campus

"The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades offer information about Pennsylvania hospitals so we can work with our local health providers to improve safety and quality of care," said Carl Seitz, president of LVBCH, a regional leader for Leapfrog. "On behalf of local employers, purchasers, and patients, we are committed to working together to make our community the safest one in America."

More Information

Choosing Wisely® Update



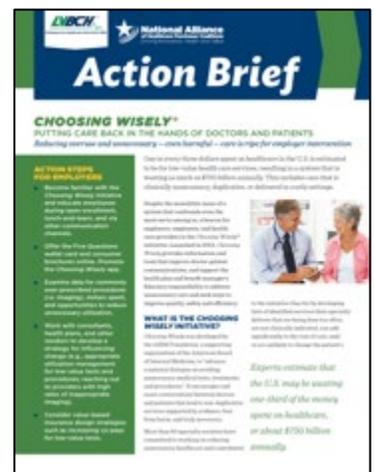
One in every three dollars spent on healthcare in the U.S. is estimated to be for low-value health care services, resulting in a system that is wasting as much as \$750 billion annually. This includes care that is clinically unnecessary, duplicative or delivered in costly settings.

Choosing Wisely, an initiative of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Foundation, helps employers inform their employees about wasteful health care and how they can reduce it. This can result in significant savings for both the employee and the company health plan. *Choosing Wisely* provides information and tools that improve doctor-patient communications, and support the health plan and benefit manager’s fiduciary responsibility to address unnecessary care and seek ways to improve quality, safety and efficiency.

Action Brief Describes Ways to Reduce Wasteful Spending

For more information on how you and your employees can significantly reduce wasteful health care spending, click on the picture on the right.

- Learn 5 questions to ask to your doctor
- Read case studies of how employers benefit from *Choosing Wisely*
- Get links to additional resources



Drug Pricing: National Alliance Continues to Educate and Advocate

The Trump administration unveiled a drug pricing proposal in October to substantially reduce the price of certain costly drugs administered under Medicare. The proposal would link what Medicare pays for these drugs to what other industrialized countries pay.

Since then, the National Alliance has provided its members with updates, submitted comment letters, and continued to follow national discussions on drug pricing issues.

A Purchaser Viewpoint Offers Drug Pricing Policy Information

For more information about the complexity of the drug pricing proposal, click on the picture on the right.

- See a definition of key RX purchaser policy principles
- Read about the complex challenges of providing consumers with pricing
- Learn why employer purchasers should remain engaged in discussions



Guest Articles



Wellness Challenges Benefit Employees & Business

More employers understanding the value of healthy employees and are seeking turnkey ways to make an impact. Wellness Challenges, from BeneFIT Corporate WellnessSM, are easy to implement and enjoyable with a 98 percent participant satisfaction rate.

BeneFIT's Board-Certified Health Coach and Registered Dietitian Tiffany Ritter, offers a few "Maintain Don't Gain" Challenge tips:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables: Aim for 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables each day.
- Eat breakfast: It should include lean protein, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Fix healthy snacks: Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese, or a tablespoon of peanut butter with an apple or banana.
- Get to know food labels: Reading the nutrition facts panel can help you shop and eat or drink smarter.

Learn more about BeneFIT's Wellness Challenges [here](#) or contact Eileen Fallis, Senior Client Solutions Specialist, 610-969-0044, Eileen.fallis@lvhn.org



Keep Your Teeth Healthy During a Cold

Achoo! The season of sickness is upon us. With so many germs being passed around this time of year, you may find yourself turning to a bottle of cold or flu medicine. Before you dose, it's important to understand how these types of medicines can affect your teeth.



A spoonful of sugar? The addition of ingredients like high fructose corn syrup and sucrose mean that liquid cold medicines are often full of sugar. Combined with the bacteria in your mouth, this can lead to cavities or infections. **Pucker up.** Cold medicine often includes citric acid, which can dissolve enamel. Some medications also contain alcohol or antihistamines that can dry up the saliva needed to help protect your teeth's enamel. Here are some [tips to limit the harm that syrups](#) can do to your teeth.

United Concordia members have access to one of the nation's largest networks of dentists. So if you do run into tooth troubles this winter, [use our Find a Dentist tool](#) to find an in-network provider nearby.



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Our affiliation with these national organizations is a value-added benefit for our members.

