



News Notes

• www.LVBCH.com •

Quarterly News & Updates

During this extremely difficult situation with the coronavirus (COVID-19), nothing is more important to the Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare than the health and safety of our members, your employees, your families, our community, and our Country.

Over the last several months, Coalition Operations and Purchasing Programs have remained committed to providing full services to members. Additionally, we continue to celebrate the Coalition's 40th Anniversary through online educational events.

Please enjoy this latest e-Version of the LVBCH Quarterly News Notes!

[Visit our Website](#)

Welcome Message



Tim Hinkle
Formerly of Lehigh University
Former Chair, LVBCH Board of Directors

In honor of LVBCH's 40th Anniversary, we will be featuring Welcome Messages from past LVBCH Board Members.

This issue features a message from former LVBCH Board of Director Chair, Tim Hinkle. Read our October 2020 interview with Tim for his thoughts on his time with the Coalition, the challenges faced then and now, his biggest concerns for benefits managers as well as what he is encouraged by, and Medicare-For-All and the Affordable Care Act.

[Read the Full Interview](#)

Welcome 2020 New Members

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our new Coalition members - We encourage all members to get involved and participate in Coalition activities!

- Ashland Foundry & Machine Works
- First Commonwealth Federal Credit Union

- Hydac Technology Corporation
- Lehigh Valley Academy Regional Charter School

[View All LVBCH Members Here](#)

LVBCH 40th Anniversary



Thank You! LVBCH 40th Anniversary Sponsors

Premier Sponsors



EXPRESS SCRIPTS®

Geisinger
Health Plan



Platinum Sponsors



Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors

ASR Media, ELMC Rx, Sanofi

Upcoming Events

MENTAL HEALTH FROM A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

FEBRUARY 2, 2021

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM ET

Join us...

*for a virtual networking
session and expert panel
discussion.*



[Register Now](#)

NOW AVAILABLE - ON DEMAND WEBINARS

Register to start watching at any time!



September 2020
COVID-19 Impact on Utilization and Health Outcomes
LVBCH Webinar

COVID-19 Impact on Utilization and Health Outcomes

[Watch Now](#)

[View Presentation Slides](#)

[Read the Summary](#)



September 2020
COVID-19 Impact on Mental Health and Substance Abuse
LVBCH Webinar

COVID-19 Impact on Mental Health and Substance Abuse

[Watch Now](#)

[View Presentation Slides](#)

[Read the Summary](#)

LVBCH BOARD ANNOUNCES THIRD-PARTY ADMINISTRATORS (TPA) SERVICES PARTNER



[Read the Press Release](#)

LVBCH RELEASES 8TH EDITION OF TYPE 2 DIABETES REPORT



TYPE 2 DIABETES REPORT™ LEHIGH VALLEY BUSINESS COALITION ON HEALTHCARE

With a Focus on How Cardiovascular Conditions Can Impact Diabetes Care

8th Edition

[Read the Press Release](#)



EMPLOYER FORUM

All LVBCH Employer Members are invited to participate in this ongoing peer-to-peer discussion between local employers on the topics most important to you!

Thank you to all Employer Members who have participated in these calls to date – and for sharing your organizations' experiences with COVID-19, the impact on your organizations, planning for return to work, issues related to testing and CARES Act implementation. As these session progress, they will continue to focus on issues employers are facing related to the coronavirus pandemic, and provide assistance and resources to help you navigate your organizations questions and concerns.

Thank you also to our special guest expert, Dr. Kara Mascitti or St. Luke's University Health Network who provided a clinical update on COVID-19.

The next employer forum is scheduled for:
Thursday, January 28, 2021;
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Please contact Donna Corsi:
dmcorsi@lvbch.com for additional information.

[Register Now](#)

LVBCH RELEASES 40TH ANNIVERSARY VIDEOS

LVBCH 2020 Video – 40th Anniversary Overview



LVBCH 2020 Video – 40th Anniversary History



LVBCH 2020 Videos – 40th Anniversary Testimonials



Eileen Zielinski
Board Chair, LVBCH



Joe Huxta
Former Board Member, LVBCH



Myrna Rivera
Former Board Member, LVBCH

Recent Events

WELLDYNE BROKER WEBINAR

Insights on How to Manage
Pharmacy Trend

Tuesday, October 20, 2020
12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.



[View Presentation Slides](#)

[Watch the Recording](#)

[Read the Summary](#)

HEALTH CARE POLICY WEBINAR:

To the 2020 Election and Beyond
with Scott Wham

Tuesday, October 13, 2020
12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m



[View Presentation Slides](#)

[Watch the Recording](#)

[Read the Summary](#)

BLEED OUT

3rd Annual Documentary
Screening Reaction Panel

Tuesday, October 6, 2020
12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m

[Read the Summary](#)

The top 10 most expensive drugs in the US range from over \$633,000 to well over \$2.1 million annually, making specialty drugs the fastest-growing area of spend for employers (and contributing to the 88.5% of personal bankruptcies tied to medical costs). Since the vast majority of all specialty is currently in the medical category, it's important for purchasers to understand and analyze these costs. Markups and misalignment of incentives have created unstructured pricing that leaves employers and other purchasers in the dark about what they are paying for and whether they have access to the highest value care. For example, hospital markups as high as 700% on certain specialty drugs are not uncommon.

Employers must set united expectations to effectively manage medical drug benefits
Integrate the services of all stakeholders in the medical drug supply chain to achieve consistent value-based care for patients

See details about solutions 1-5 on slide 2 ▶



An example of high-cost, low-value care

The top 37 infused cancer drugs averaged 86.2% more per unit in hospitals than in physician offices. About half of all patients are receiving infusions in the hospital with no discernible benefit over outpatient care.



How National Drug Codes (NDCs) Ensure Actionable Information

It's news to many employers that 35% of specialty drugs are billed through the medical benefit, leaving them without the data they need to manage the medical drug benefit on behalf of their workforce. Product specificity matters.

- NDC codes provide an essential level of transparency. The numbers identify the labeler (manufacturer, re-packer or distributor), product code (strength, dosage form), formulation of a drug for a specific company, and package code.
- Drugs reimbursed through the medical benefit include unhelpful J codes, which are much less specific and mask the true cost of specialty drugs and care associated with administering them.



Action Briefs

Staying Healthy During COVID-19 (October 2020)



STAYING HEALTHY DURING COVID-19
SPECIAL FOCUS ON PREVENTIVE CARE AND IMMUNIZATIONS

The importance of immunizations
Most health care providers require COVID-19 test results as a condition for providing services. Immunizations (including preventable diseases like COVID-19) are critical.

Catch up on missed immunizations and preventive care for you and your family
Most plans cover the cost of recommended immunizations and preventive care. 100% coverage will not leave anything. Many plans offer access to a variety of services for immunizations including: vaccines, pharmacies, urgent care centers, and mobile clinics.

FAST FACT
81% of employers offer immunizations for children ages 18-24. 64% offer immunizations for adults ages 18-24.

Get the flu shot
Getting the flu shot every year is one of the best ways to protect yourself from COVID-19. Flu shots reduce the risk of severe illness and hospitalization. Flu shots also help reduce the risk of complications from COVID-19.

Schedule routine doctor visits to manage chronic conditions
If you're not a doctor about getting immunizations for you, it's not too late to get them. COVID-19 is still spreading, so it's important to get your health care services for your condition.

Consider all of your preventive care needs
Immunizations, coverage for chronic conditions, mental health services, and tests (like blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol).

Behavioral intervention
Healthy lifestyle and mental care for chronic conditions and stress management.

Preventive care
Preventive care services.

This brief's COVID-19 strategy guide is available in English and Spanish. For more tips, apply to the U.S. too.

High-Value Preventive Care During COVID-19 (September 2020)



HIGH-VALUE PREVENTIVE CARE DURING COVID-19
SPECIAL FOCUS ON IMMUNIZATIONS

ACTION STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS:

- Plan specific activities to promote and provide access to care coverage for immunizations.
- Ensure that health plans and employee wellbeing partners conduct proactive outreach to fill immunization gaps.
- Educate and involve employees.

As the country is navigating the complexities of highly troubling issues caused by COVID-19 and bracing for a "second wave" coinciding with the flu season, now is the time for employers to communicate the importance of employees and their families focusing on prevention—including the flu shot—and re-engaging with primary care.

—Michael Thompson, President of CEO Coalition Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions

EMPLOYER PREVENTIVE CARE STRATEGY AREAS

- Vaccinations
- Behavioral intervention (e.g., chronic condition management)
- Coverage for chronic conditions, mental health services, and tests
- Preventive care
- Healthy lifestyle and mental care for chronic conditions and stress management

Stroke Awareness (September 2020)

STROKE AWARENESS

URGING EMPLOYEES TO GET EMERGENCY CARE DURING THE PANDEMIC

ACTION STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS:

1. Learn why people delay or forgo emergency care and why they are doing so in greater numbers during the pandemic.
2. Understand stroke risks and signs, including increased risk of stroke in COVID-19 patients.
3. Review benefits to ensure appropriate coverage for urgent and emergency care.
4. Evaluate health plan benefits and services to promote cardiovascular health and prevent heart disease and stroke.
5. Educate and involve employees.

Visits to the hospital emergency department (ED) declined for strokes, 29% for heart attacks, and 18.6% for high blood sugar crises between March 27 and May 25, 2020, compared to the previous 10 weeks, according to the CDC. "Disproportionate declines" from COVID-19 suggest that many patients suffering from serious conditions are forgoing care as a result of isolation or not seeking care as the outbreak progresses and overwhelmed emergency departments. With stroke the leading cause of long-term disability in the US, there is an urgent need to continue and encourage people to seek emergency care, even during these uncertain times. "Of additional concern is that fact that COVID-19 is an independent risk factor for acute ischemic stroke, according to the first major peer-reviewed study on the subject. "Patients with COVID-19 should be evaluated early for acute neurological changes," says Dr. Roger Szeles, coauthor for the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. "Timely medical intervention is suspected to have either may reduce morbidity and mortality."



Stroke Facts for Employers

- Stroke is the leading cause of death and disability in the United States.
- Stroke costs the US an estimated \$76 billion each year.
- Stroke is the leading cause of death and disability in the United States.
- Stroke is the leading cause of death and disability in the United States.

"The striking decline in ED visits for acute life-threatening conditions might partially explain observed excess mortality not associated with COVID-19."

—CDC Researchers



Leapfrog Updates



LVBCH continues to develop its relationship with the Leapfrog Group, serving as a Regional Leader. In this role, LVBCH invites and encourages hospitals across Pennsylvania to complete the annual Hospital Survey that assesses hospital safety, quality, and efficiency based on national performance measures.

Leapfrog Fall 2020 Hospital Safety Grades 57 PA Hospitals Earned an "A" Letter Grade (December 2020)

[Read the News Release](#)

Leapfrog Award for Pennsylvania Hospitals 11 PA Hospitals Receive National Recognition (December 2020)

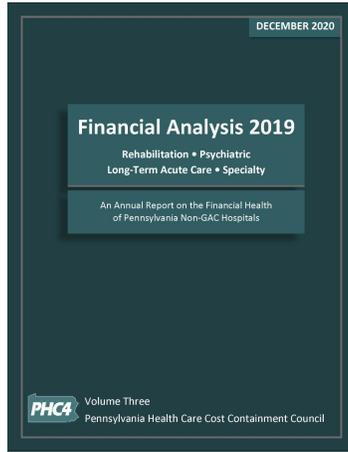
[Read the News Release](#)

Top Hospitals and Pandemic Heroes Awards (December 2020)

[Read the News Release](#)

Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4) Updates

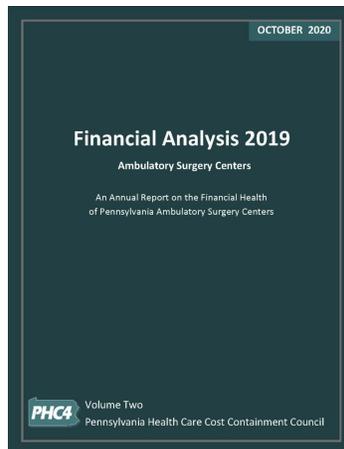
Long-Term Acute Care, Specialty (December 2020)



[Read the News Release](#)

[Read the News Release](#)

Financial Analysis 2019 - Volume 2 Ambulatory Surgery Centers (October 2020)



[Read the News Release](#)

Three-Year Trends in Hospitalizations Related to Substance Use (October 2020)

[Read the News Release](#)

Research Brief:
**Maternal Stays with Opioid Use
and Newborn Stays with Neonatal
Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)**

Research Brief:
**Opioids, Alcohol, Cocaine, and
Amphetamines**

October 2020

PHCA Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

Three-Year Hospitalization Trends: Maternal Stays with Opioid Use and Newborn Stays with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

The three-year trends shown below include maternal hospital stays for Pennsylvania residents (age 15-50 years) where opioid use was present. Three-year trends are also shown for newborn birth admissions including neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). Data reflect maternal stays and birth admissions in Pennsylvania general acute care hospitals in calendar years 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Maternal Stays with Opioid Use
In understanding maternal stays with opioid use, some opioid drugs may be prescribed as part of medication-assisted treatment to relieve withdrawal symptoms and psychological distress often associated with opioid use disorders.

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) is an array of withdrawal symptoms that develops once a child is in contact with opioid or addictive drugs (e.g., opioids) while in the mother's womb. This newborn experience those symptoms of withdrawal because they are no longer exposed to the drug to which they have become physically dependent.

Maternal Stays with Opioid Use
The hospitalization rate of maternal stays with opioid use **decreased 2%** between 2017 and 2019. The number of maternal stays with opioid use dropped from 2,709 to 2,650.

Newborn Stays with NAS
The hospitalization rate of newborn stays with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) **decreased 12%** between 2017 and 2019. The number of newborn stays with NAS dropped from 1,875 to 1,610.




PHCA Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

October 2020

PHCA Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

Three-Year Hospitalization Trends: Alcohol, Opioid, Cocaine and Amphetamines

This research brief examines three-year trends in hospital admissions related to alcohol, cocaine, cocaine and amphetamines (combined) from 2017, 2018 and 2019, in relation to Pennsylvania residents, age 15 and older, who were admitted to a Pennsylvania general acute care hospital. This analysis does not include substance-related admissions that did not result in a hospital admission such as those treated in the emergency department and not admitted to the hospital and substance-related deaths that occurred outside the hospital setting.

Key Notes

- Among the admissions analyzed in this brief, the largest decrease in hospitalization rates was for opioid overdoses (25.7% decrease).
- The largest increase in hospitalization rates was for amphetamine overdose (66.6% increase) although the number of hospitalizations for amphetamine overdose was relatively small (10) in 2019 when compared to opioids and cocaine.
- The number of hospital admissions for cocaine overdose rose from 14 in 2017 to 1,204 in 2018 and dropped to 1,075 in 2019.
- The highest number of hospitalizations was for those who were admitted and treated from 48,000 a year for each of the three-year period.

Alcohol Overdose
The hospitalization rate for alcohol overdoses **decreased 28.7%** between 2017 and 2019 (graph 1). The number of hospital admissions dropped from 3,500 in 2017 to 2,487 in 2018 and 1,448 in 2019.

Opioid Use Disorder
The hospitalization rate for opioid use disorder **decreased 6.5%** between 2017 and 2019 (graph 2). The number of hospital admissions dropped from 3,232 in 2017 to 3,056 in 2018 and 3,162 in 2019.




PHCA Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

Partner Articles & Season Greetings

Capital BlueCross Wishes You Good Health in the New Year

The oft repeated message of “trying times” is wearing thin, but as we reflect on this past year, there is no phrase that fits better. Yet despite this year’s challenges, we’d prefer to end the year with positivity and enthusiasm. Our business partners, employees, and communities rose to the occasion and let their humanity shine countless times. We’ve long known what we can do when we work together toward common goals, and 2020 exceeded our wildest expectations of cooperation and selfless hard work.

Still, we are looking forward to the new year and the times when we can see others in person again. Sitting down to a business lunch will have never been so appreciated. We are proud we could continue to support Coalition members and their employees despite the challenges of 2020, and we’re excited to be there for you—both virtually and physically—in 2021. From everyone at Capital BlueCross, we wish you a very happy and healthy holiday season, and continued success in the new year!



With Gratitude, From Your Geisinger Health Plan Team

It’s no secret that change is the theme of the year. With so much uncertainty, we’re counting our blessings more than ever this holiday season. And with so many reasons to be thankful, we can’t help but think of you – our LVBCH family, and your loved ones. We wish you a joyful holiday season and a very happy new year.

All our gratitude, Your Geisinger Health Plan team



Happy Holidays!

FROM ALL OF US AT



Wishing You a Safe Holiday & Successful New Year from Express Scripts

We are proud to continue the Pharmacy Benefit Manager work for the Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare. Express Scripts has a local, committed team in Pennsylvania that understands state regulations and the demands of hard-working Pennsylvanians and continuously provides direct support to all members of the coalition – no matter the size of their company.

We look forward to getting together in person again but until then please reach Alan Langlois, Vice President of Sales alan_langlois@express-scripts.com 732-742-4161.



EXPRESS SCRIPTS®

Zoom-Worthy Smiles for the Holidays

UNITED CONCORDIA®
DENTAL

We're Raising Our Glasses in Thanks for Partners Like You

Here's to you, to a peaceful and prosperous 2021, and to vision care everywhere for everyone.

It's a big, bold, beautiful world out there. So much to experience, so much to

see. And because eyes are the windows to it all, vision benefits play an important role.

Our over 60 million members know a good thing when they see it. With America's largest vision network, our independent and national and regional retail providers offer choice and convenience. And our benefits redefine expectations with flexibility and savings — without restrictions.

That's why we're America's fastest growing vision benefits provider. With EyeMed, more employees enroll, more employees use their benefits and more employees stay in-network.

To learn more, contact Pete Sarpong at psarpong@eyemed.com or visit eyemed.com.



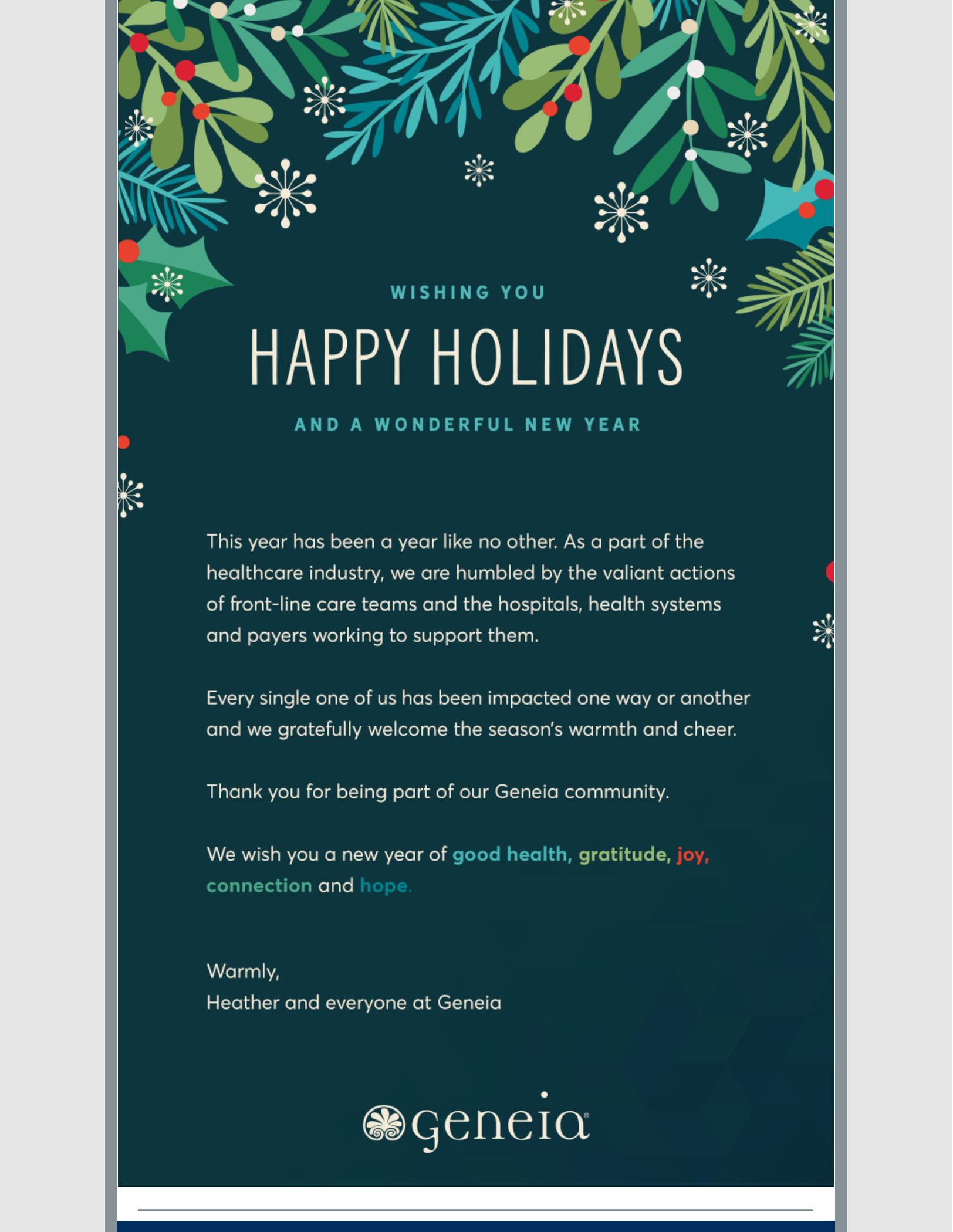
Managing Holiday Stress



Total Well-Being Transcends Your Plan



2020 Didn't Go According to Plan



WISHING YOU

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

AND A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR

This year has been a year like no other. As a part of the healthcare industry, we are humbled by the valiant actions of front-line care teams and the hospitals, health systems and payers working to support them.

Every single one of us has been impacted one way or another and we gratefully welcome the season's warmth and cheer.

Thank you for being part of our Geneia community.

We wish you a new year of **good health, gratitude, joy, connection** and **hope**.

Warmly,
Heather and everyone at Geneia

 geneia®

Caring for Your Organization's Caregivers by Jane Hamilton, Partners on the Path

COVID-19 Partner Resources

Select each partners link below to visit their websites'
COVID-19 & coronavirus related resources.

Capital **BLUE** 

Geisinger **Caring**
Health Plan 

 **EXPRESS SCRIPTS**[®]

UNITED CONCORDIA[®]
DENTAL

eye[®]
Med

 **IBH**

POPULATION HEALTH SOLUTIONS

BSI
CORPORATE BENEFITS
Meeting all your employee benefit needs

USI[®]

60 West Broad St. • Suite 306 • Bethlehem, PA 18018 • P: 610-317-0130

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

