



ISSUE 1 / 2021

# Stay Healthy

YOUR RESOURCE  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
AND WELLNESS

## Care Where You Need It

UHS' Hospital Care at Home Program  
brings physician monitoring  
to community households

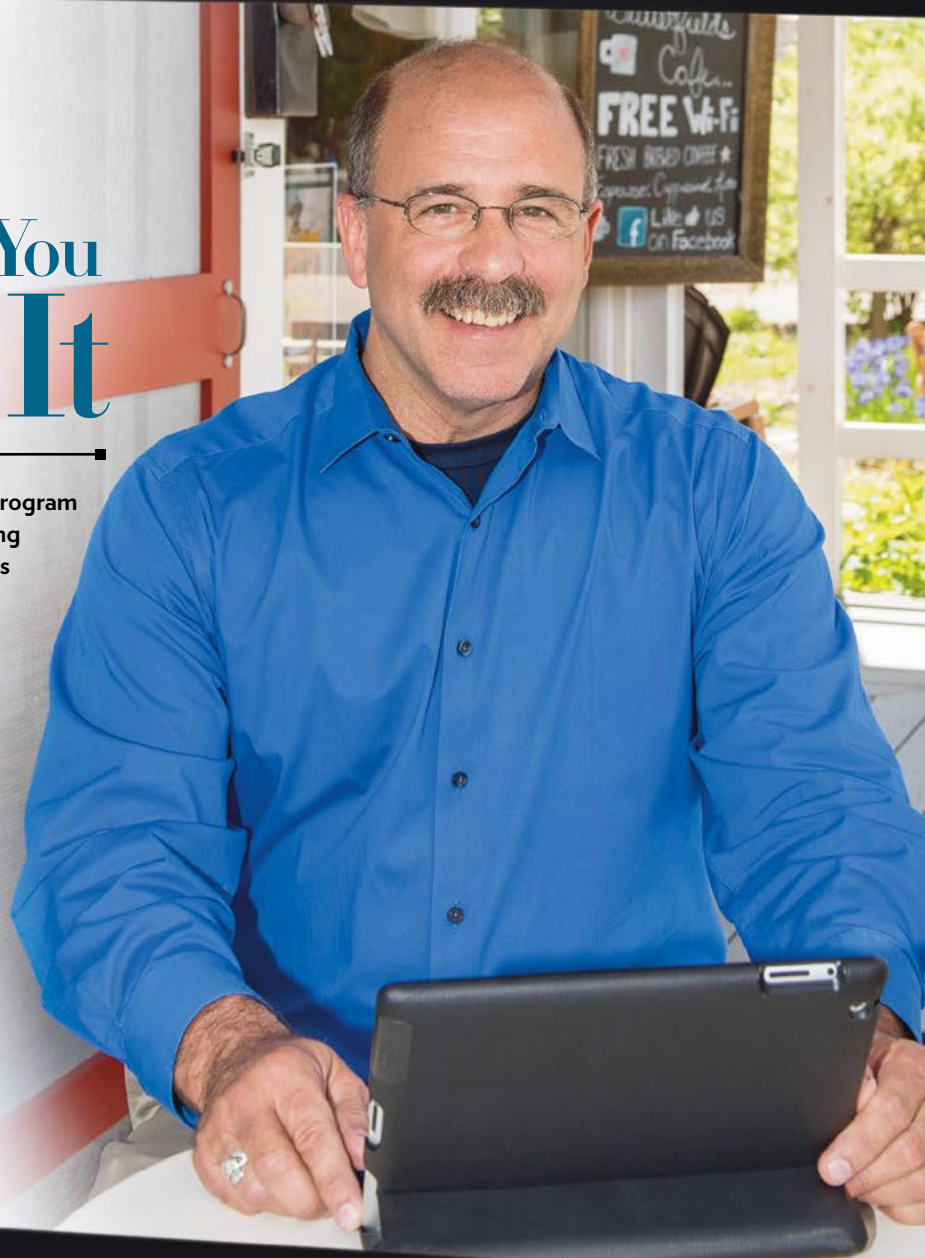
### **DON'T DELAY**

Make up for skipped  
screenings and  
missed checkups

### **IT'S YOUR BEST SHOT**

Stay on schedule  
with childhood  
immunizations

✦ UHS rural medical  
director John Giannone, MD,  
and his team work with  
patients where they are most  
comfortable: at home.



# Advancing care in the face of a pandemic

The past many months have been challenging and difficult for everyone—for our patients, our community and our front-line healthcare professionals. Yet



across UHS, our teams have stepped up amid the COVID-19 pandemic to provide outstanding care.

In this issue of *UHS Stay Healthy*, you will learn about some of the key actions we are taking to provide exceptional service and ensure that our

community has the healthcare resources that are in critical need. For example, we have developed a Hospital Care at Home Program, allowing COVID patients to receive comprehensive at-home monitoring and care after they've been discharged from the hospital. We've launched a Specialty Pharmacy, designed for patients with complex medical issues who need rare and highly specialized medications. And we've gone 24/7 with our conveniently located Wilson Place pharmacy in Johnson City.

From the start of the pandemic, we responded by creating a number of negative-pressure rooms at our hospitals to care exclusively for COVID patients, and now, as a vaccination hub, we're leading the way in making sure our community has access to the COVID-fighting vaccines at multiple locations. We're also looking to the future, as we begin renovation work at UHS Wilson to make way for a new medical tower on the campus.

As you read through this issue, you will learn that you don't need to delay your care out of any lingering concerns related to the coronavirus. Our healthcare facilities are open, sanitized and safe. So please feel free to seek medical care as you need it, either in person at one of our many locations around the Southern Tier, or through Virtual Health.

Thank you for taking the time to stay informed about your own care and the many resources offered at UHS. It's our pledge to ensure that this magazine is useful to you as you make those all-important choices about your health and well-being.

*John M. Carrigg*  
PRESIDENT & CEO OF UHS

# Specialized Care



*UHS launches new, 24-hour Specialty Pharmacy*

UHS is always looking for opportunities to provide enhanced care for those in need. To aid in this mission, UHS recently developed a new Specialty Pharmacy designed especially for people with cancer, diabetes, HIV, hepatitis C, rheumatologic conditions and other serious illnesses. The Specialty Pharmacy operates as a single, central point of care for UHS patients and their physicians. Services are offered 24/7, so there are no delays in providing treatment or care to those who need it urgently. Services offered include:

- On-call pharmacist support
- Financial assistance support
- Insurance prior authorizations
- Free home delivery
- Refill coordination

“Our Specialty Pharmacy offers patients additional care to help manage many chronic conditions,” says Bob Schmidt, vice president of Clinical Services at UHS. “When patients have easier access to affordable prescription medications and the support of an integrated care team, the overall health of our communities improves.”



✦ Through the Specialty Pharmacy, UHS provides necessary and hard-to-find medications for a wide range of serious conditions.

Enhanced clinical pharmacy services are also available, allowing patients to receive support from clinical pharmacists. These pharmacists have access to detailed medical records and drug panels, which enables more personalized interactions.

## WILSON PLACE PHARMACY IS NOW 24/7

The UHS Outpatient Pharmacy at Wilson Place, at 52 Harrison St. in Johnson City, has expanded its operating hours to ensure access to pharmacy services at all hours of the day, seven days a week. The expansion allows UHS to provide medications and services for an increased number of patients. It is the closest 24-hour pharmacy to hospitals in the Greater Binghamton area, and one of only two in the area that are open evenings and weekends.



## THE RIGHT CARE

For more information about the UHS Specialty Pharmacy, visit [nyuhs.org/care-treatment/pharmacy/specialty-pharmacy](https://nyuhs.org/care-treatment/pharmacy/specialty-pharmacy).



## UHS WILSON NEW ENTRANCE

Use Baldwin Street to enter  
UHS Wilson Medical Center

In preparation for the upcoming Wilson Project, a large-scale expansion of UHS Wilson Medical Center in Johnson City, renovation work has started on the Harrison Street side of the medical center. As a result, the entrance on the Baldwin Street side is the new main entrance. The Baldwin Street entrance is open and accessible to all pedestrian traffic, with COVID-19 safety guidelines in place. For the latest information on parking, access and directions to departments on the UHS Wilson campus, refer to [nyuhs.org](http://nyuhs.org) before your visit.

# Vaccine Central

What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine

The end of the COVID-19 pandemic appears to be within sight as vaccine production in the U.S. continues to increase and new vaccines come closer to approval. UHS is playing an important role in coordinating vaccine distribution in the Southern Tier.

The vaccines approved by the Food and Drug Administration for emergency use have been shown to be safe and effective, preventing serious illness more than 90% of the time. The vaccine will not give a person COVID-19, but if you do experience cold- or flu-like symptoms after getting the shot, they should dissipate within a few days. The vaccine is the ideal way to gain immunity to the virus because it is known to be safe, whereas contracting the virus can be deadly.

The Southern Tier's regional vaccine website, [southerntiervax.org](http://southerntiervax.org), has a wealth of information for residents on the virus and vaccines. You can locate vaccination facilities near you, check appointment availability and register for vaccines all online.

"A big part of what we're doing is developing health equity plans and making sure we're getting information out to communities of color and rural folks," says John M. Carrigg, president and chief executive officer of UHS. The Southern Tier has a population that skews older and more rural than the general population, so UHS has also prioritized making registration available by phone to serve those communities where internet access and use may be low. Pop-up vaccine clinics are also playing a crucial role in reaching underserved communities.

At the end of February, the Southern Tier was among the top two regions for vaccine distribution, administering more than 90% of the vaccines it received from the state, and about 5% more than the state overall.



## GET THE FACTS

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [southerntiervax.org](http://southerntiervax.org) or call 1-833-NYS-4VAX. For additional COVID-19 resources, visit [nyuhs.org/covid-19](http://nyuhs.org/covid-19).

# Have You Signed up for MyChart Yet?

MyChart is a secure portal that connects you to your UHS healthcare team and also provides access to information in your electronic health record.

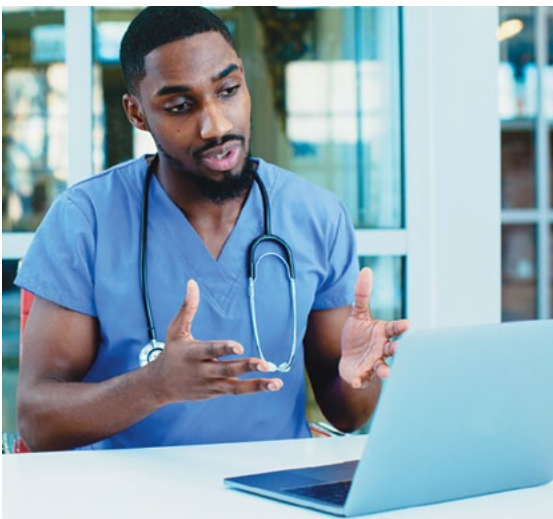
Through MyChart you can:

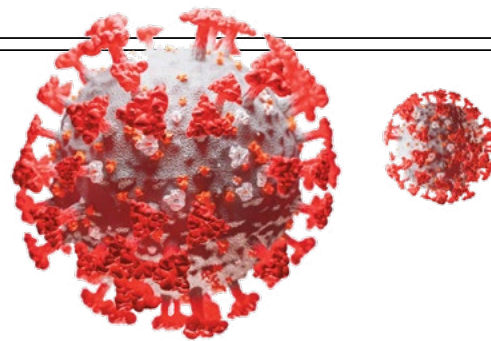
- View your medical record
- Request prescription refills
- View lab results
- Communicate with your provider
- Manage your appointments
- Pay bills



## CHECK OUT MYCHART

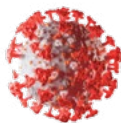
Take advantage of this great resource and learn more about MyChart at [nyuhs.org/MyChart](http://nyuhs.org/MyChart).





*UHS' Hospital Care at Home Program brings physician monitoring to community households*

# CARE *where you need it*



Coming home from the hospital after receiving treatment for COVID-19 can be understandably distressing. “COVID is such a new thing, and it affects everybody differently,” says Kim Zaverton, RN, nurse care manager at UHS. “No one knows exactly what to expect.”

For Bonnie and Jim VanAbs, a couple from Harpursville, N.Y., who tested COVID-positive in late January, recovery was complicated by a broken foot and concussion.

“My husband had a deep cough—we thought it was pneumonia—and I wasn’t feeling well either, so I decided to sleep on the couch, and Jim was on the other couch,” says Bonnie. “I got up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom and I fell down the stairs.”

The next day, Bonnie visited her orthopedic specialist and learned she had broken her foot. On that same day, COVID tests she and Jim took earlier in the week at their primary care provider’s office came back positive. Two days later, both she and Jim were feeling sick. After seeing how sick they were, Bonnie and Jim’s children took them to UHS Wilson Medical Center where they were treated for COVID for about a week.

Although Bonnie and Jim received close attention from UHS providers while staying in the hospital, it didn’t end there. The VanAbs were among the first patients to take advantage of UHS’ new Hospital Care at Home Program.

## **CONTINUING CARE**

“As a rural medical director, there are two guiding principles that I am always working to accomplish: getting patients home, whether that means to their

actual home environment or their local hospital, and keeping patients at home,” says John Giannone, MD, rural medical director and medical director of nyuhs.org’s Virtual Health. “The question we asked with UHS Hospital Care at Home was: Can we get patients who have been admitted with COVID-19 out of the hospital and back into their homes?”

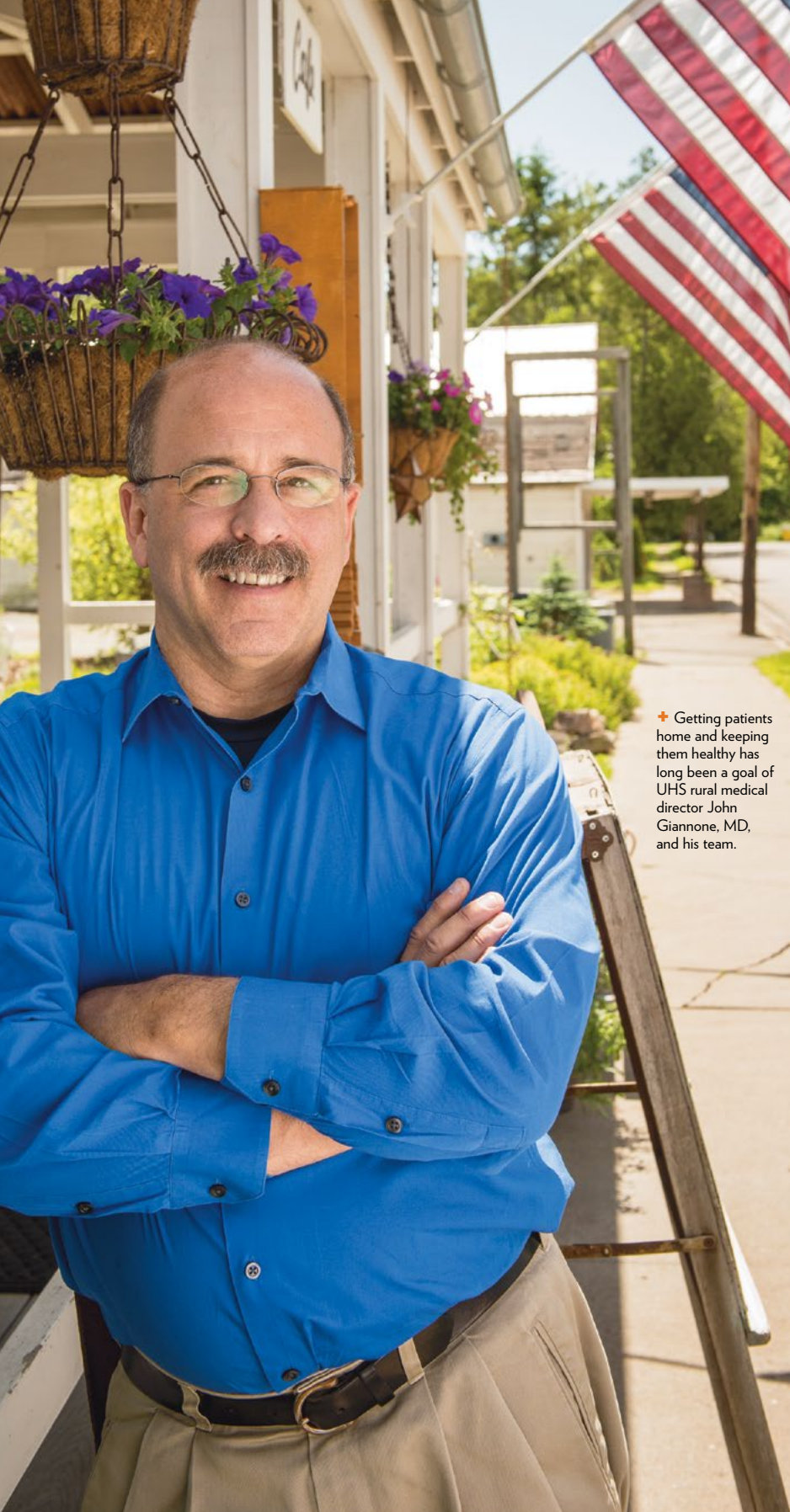
Dr. Giannone explains that the UHS Hospital Care at Home Program offers patients many benefits. “These are patients who may not be completely symptom-free,” says Dr. Giannone. “Some are still on oxygen, having never been on oxygen before. They have the comfort of knowing they will get a call and/or visit from a provider every day. There are constant touch points throughout the day between UHS providers and patients in the program.”

The providers working with Dr. Giannone and others at UHS experience firsthand how this program makes COVID-19 recovery easier.

“I haven’t had a patient yet who didn’t appreciate it—even patients who were leery at first,” says Karena Trimbull, RN, CEN, nurse in the UHS Wilson Care Management Department. “We talk to the patients and give them guidance. Recently, a patient was admitted to the program. The patient’s spouse was having COVID symptoms. We were able to coordinate someone going into the home to perform a COVID swab. She was negative, so I provided guidance on social distancing and safety. It becomes a family affair.”

The VanAbs were grateful for the follow-up care they received through the UHS Hospital Care at Home Program, even if it took Jim a day to warm up to the idea.

“The doctor would call us every day, and then we had a nurse that would come to visit us,” says Bonnie. “My foot was broken, and my husband was on steroids,



✦ Getting patients home and keeping them healthy has long been a goal of UHS rural medical director John Giannone, MD, and his team.



## HOSPITAL CARE AT HOME

Learn more about this new program at [nyuhs.org](https://nyuhs.org).

and he was a little out of it—he’s never taken drugs in his life. He was miserable until my daughter brought up hunting. We have a deer head in our living room, and Jim loves to hunt. The nurse started saying that she goes deer hunting with her husband and family. It was awesome because at first Jim was saying ‘I don’t need anyone,’ and after that he would say ‘Oh, she can come.’”

“It gets to be like you’re having a visit with a friend,” says Dr. Giannone. “For the patient, it’s a tremendous emotional support, and for the family, they’re not just left out there trying to care for their family member without support.”

### GROWING STRONG

For the dozens of patients who have participated since the UHS Hospital Care at Home Program started in December 2020, it has been a win-win situation: Patients get to stay home or stay local, where they feel comfortable, and still receive the benefits of physician monitoring like they would in the hospital. For the community, it means that more beds are open at UHS hospitals for people who need them.

After a couple weeks of monitoring through the UHS Hospital Care at Home Program, Bonnie and Jim VanAbs felt much better.

“The COVID part is completely gone, and if it wasn’t for my foot, I’d be in great shape,” says Bonnie. “Jim is doing really well—he even went out this morning and cleared the driveway of snow, so the nurse who is visiting us could get in. He’s also helping take care of my foot, helping me get up and down the stairs and waiting outside while I take a shower to make sure I’m OK.”

Both Bonnie and Jim would recommend the program to other patients, which is a good thing because UHS Hospital Care at Home will only expand from here. While it is currently only available to COVID-19 patients, the success of the program has UHS physicians and administrators eyeing an expansion into chronic disease management and more.

“It was always the intention to expand this program into a larger disease management program,” says Dr. Giannone. “And we are really looking to broaden the whole concept. I remember, not more than two years ago, [President of UHS Medical Group] Dr. Alan Miller said, ‘There will come a time when the hospital is going to be in the patient’s living room.’ That idea was a seed, and we have grown from there, but there is a lot more room to grow.”

# don't DELAY

*Make up for skipped screenings and missed checkups*



✦ Richard Vick delayed care for his heart symptoms due to the coronavirus pandemic. After being encouraged by his wife, Linda, to visit the doctor, he underwent open-heart surgery in July 2020.



**L**ike many people in the UHS community, in July 2020 Richard Vick was wary of going to the hospital due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “I was concerned because you heard these conversations about hospitals being loaded with COVID-19,” he says. Even as Richard experienced extreme symptoms such as being unable to breathe and having a heavy pressure on his chest, he was reluctant to go in. “I couldn’t do any work, I couldn’t drive, I couldn’t do anything,” he explains.

## VIRTUAL VISITS

Start a virtual visit today, and learn more about the program, at [nyuhs.org/virtualhealth](https://nyuhs.org/virtualhealth).

As his condition worsened, Richard’s wife, Linda, finally persuaded him to go to the emergency room on July 20, 2020. There, doctors diagnosed Richard with a serious heart condition that would require surgery in the next few days. And this wasn’t the only surprise in store for Richard and Linda at the emergency room.

“When I finally got to the emergency room, I realized I had nothing to worry about,” says Richard. “It was clean, everybody was very helpful, and they took care of me in a perfect manner.”

Richard found out he needed open-heart surgery, and four days later, he was on the operating table. About two weeks after his surgery, he was already feeling better.

“Now I’m feeling really, really well,” he says. “I’m going to be back to normal. Through this whole thing, I’ve never had any pain from the operation. I can’t say enough about [my experience]. It was terrific.”

## PREVENTION PLAN

You're not alone if you skipped a primary care provider visit—or two—in the past year due to COVID-19. Fortunately, now is the time to take action and make sure you're up-to-date with preventive care and screenings. Here are some general guidelines for common recommended screenings:

- **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING** – Regular screenings starting at age 18. Adults should have their blood pressure checked at every well visit.
- **CARDIOVASCULAR RISK COUNSELING** – Adults with cardiovascular disease risk—such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or obesity—should talk with their doctors about taking preventive action against heart disease.
- **BLOOD GLUCOSE SCREENING** – Regular screenings starting at age 40 through 70 for adults who are overweight or obese. This can be part of a larger cardiovascular risk assessment.
- **COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING** – Regular screenings starting at age 50 through 75. Screenings can be done via colonoscopy or less-invasive tests such as at-home stool tests. Ask your provider about the right option for you.
- **BREAST CANCER SCREENING** – Screenings every two years for women who are between 50 and 74 years old and are at average risk for breast cancer.
- **CERVICAL CANCER SCREENINGS** – Pap smear every three years for women who are between 21 and 29 years old. Then, Pap smear and HPV tests every five years until age 65. For women with a history of normal Pap smear results, testing can end at age 65.

Linda agreed. “I think he’s on a very good road to recovery,” she says. “He’s 10 times better than where he was at. And the staff made us feel very comfortable. When I was in the hospital with him, they came in and explained everything to me and took exceptional care of him.”

While Richard and Linda’s story has a happy ending, Richard’s initial reticence to get checked for his symptoms is understandably common during the COVID-19 pandemic. “The fear that was created because of the pandemic has substantially delayed healthcare across the board,” says Ahmed Khan, DO, cardiothoracic surgeon at the UHS Heart & Vascular Institute. Just as in Richard’s case, many patients who would have received screenings and checkups in 2020 missed them, which could set them up for health issues down the road.

“Preventive medicine has been proven to be successful: It saves lives and promotes life,” says Dr. Khan. “It’s simple science: If you get regular healthcare, get your A1C [blood sugar] checked, get a breast exam—you’re going to find that you live longer. If you aren’t seeking healthcare when you need it, the long-term outlook can be grim.”

So what can you do to take preventive care of yourself during the pandemic? Dr. Khan explains that it is safe to visit the hospital or your primary care provider for a checkup or screening. “We’ve implemented a very appropriate policy in patient infection control, and I think we’ve done an immaculate job,” he says. However, Dr. Khan also recommends virtual care to anyone who may still be nervous about an in-person visit. And, in the case of an emergency, call 911.

“I believe telehealth can be a solution for preventive care, even beyond the pandemic,” says Dr. Khan. “I think the hardest part is the patient taking that initiative to reach out and start the virtual visit. If they take the time to have a virtual visit, we will find any issues and help them create a plan to manage or prevent disease.”

For Richard and Linda, Dr. Khan’s words ring true. Looking back, Richard wishes he would have taken the initiative for himself sooner. And his advice for anyone in a similar situation is clear: “If you have any kind of pains or symptoms that you think are bad, don’t hesitate to go into the hospital. They’re ready and prepared for you.” 🌱



✦ An echocardiogram uses ultrasound technology to take a picture of your heart. It is one way to screen for heart disease.

iStock.com: Korawig

# it's your best shot

Stay on schedule with childhood immunizations

This past year, it's understandable that many people were wary of going to the doctor's office unless it was absolutely necessary. However, that means that many children did not receive the vaccines they needed last year. Preliminary data from last year shared by the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows vaccination coverage declining for children across the board.

If you think your child may have missed a vaccination, call your child's primary care provider, and ask them. For vaccines to be effective, it's important that children get them on the correct schedule. If your child is out of date on vaccinations, schedule an appointment right away. UHS follows all recommended public health guidelines, and visiting the hospital to receive vaccinations is safe.

If you're unsure about your child's vaccination status, refer to this chart for the recommended milestones:



THE LATEST FROM UHS ONLINE

Sign up for our e-newsletter, and receive the latest UHS updates and stories from our community direct to your inbox. Visit [stayhealthyuhs.org](http://stayhealthyuhs.org).



## GET CHECKED

Schedule your child's vaccination today. Find a location or a provider at [nyuhs.org](http://nyuhs.org).

## CHILD & ADOLESCENT IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

### Months

BIRTH	2	4	6	12	15	18	Influenza vaccine – Get this every year starting at 6 months
Hep B	Pediarix™ HIB Prevnar13™ Rotavirus	Pediarix™ HIB Prevnar13™ Rotavirus	Pediarix™ HIB Prevnar13™ Rotavirus	MMR Varicella Hep A Lead Level	HIB Prevnar13™	Dtap Hep A	

### Years

2	4	10	11	12	16	Pediarix™ = Hep B, Polio, Dtap Kinrix™ = Dtap, Polio ProQuad™ = MMR, Varicella Menveo™ = Mening ACWY
Lead Level	Kinrix™ ProQuad™	Tdap	Menveo™ HPV	HPV	Menveo™ MenB	

Stock.com: Fireofheart