Penn State Health St. Joseph significantly expanded its reach in Berks County with the opening of the Spring Ridge Health Corridor in December 2016, and a satellite location for physicians and outpatient services in Robesonia in May 2017.

According to Mary Hahn, vice president of ambulatory services and business development, the locations offer patients a range of needed services in easily accessible locations.

The Spring Ridge Health Corridor, located at 2607 Keiser Blvd. in Spring Township, offers primary care services, mammography, physical therapy, ultrasound, wound care, X-ray and laboratory services.

Located in one of St. Joseph’s fastest-growing physician practice locations, the Spring Ridge facility is close to other specialty providers, making it easier for patients and doctors to interact.

“The location is highly visible, easily accessible, and gives us the space to bring services from three locations into one corridor,” Hahn said. “It meets many of the needs of our patients, all in one place.”

The Robesonia facility, located at 410 E. Penn Ave. across from Conrad Weiser High School, houses a three physician family medical practice.

Physicians Meredith Gable, Robert Mandel and Roland Newman were friends and colleagues prior to becoming partners in St. Joseph’s new medical practice.

“I came to Dr. Newman and Meredith and asked what they thought about us coming together as a group,” said Dr. Mandel. “It seemed like the timing was good, and we all thought we’d be good partners.”

The partnership has taken off, with their practice in Western Berks expanding. In addition to primary care, the facility offers EKG, X-ray, lab services and physical therapy.

“We work in a family-oriented and collaborative atmosphere,” said Dr. Gable. “We do everything from newborn to palliative and hospice care.”

The Western Berks location gives residents convenient access to services, close to home, according to Hahn.

“As a high quality, low-cost healthcare provider, we look forward to better serving the health and wellness needs of the communities in Western Berks,” she said.
Penn State Health St. Joseph a Key Supporter of...

Healthcare providers and staff at Penn State Health St. Joseph understand the strength that can be found in a community of women. That understanding, along with an ongoing, overall commitment to women’s health, were driving factors when St. Joseph stepped up to become a founding presenting sponsor of Women2Women (W2W), an organization managed by the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry that works to help empower women to become leaders in our community.

“We believe in the power of women connecting with each other and supporting each other,” said Julia Nickey, Director of Patient and Organizational Engagement at Penn State Health St. Joseph and a member of the W2W Advisory Board. “With that support and camaraderie, women can lead more satisfying and healthy lives.”

In addition to providing key financial support, St. Joseph is active in W2W programming and has provided presenters for events since the organization’s founding eight years ago.

Dr. Jessika Kisling, an Obstetrics & Gynecology Physician presented “Hey Ladies... Here are the Top Five Reasons You Need a Primary Care Physician and a Gynecologist,” and Dr. Krista Schenkel, Family Medicine Physician, Penn State Health St. Joseph Strausstown, spoke on “Women & Anxiety, What Your Body is Telling You.”

Karen Marsdale, President of the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry, praised St. Joseph’s commitment to the Women2Women organization.

“Penn State Health Saint Joseph was one of the very first W2W investors,” Marsdale said. “Not only do they believe in our goals to grow more women leaders, they have provided so many resources to help our organization grow and thrive, including experts to provide education for our members. We are truly grateful to this institution.”

Urgent Care Centers Cut Down Wait Times and Save Healthcare Dollars

AS in past years, a drive-through flu shot service was offered at no charge on four different days, Chamberlain said. “We do the drive-through to make it more convenient for first responders,” he explained. “They can stop while on duty, registering for and receiving the shots. People do not need to schedule appointments at Penn State Health St. Joseph Urgent Care centers, and all the facilities are open until 9 p.m. to accommodate people who work during the day. You can learn more about our Urgent Care Centers, including exact location, hours and when urgent care is appropriate at http://www.thefutureofhealthcare.org/urgent-care.

Event Advances the Mission of Opportunity House

A Wine, Women & Shoes event, featuring a fashion show, best in shoe contest, silent auction, designer shopping, dinner and, of course, wine, raised more than $100,000 for Opportunity House in its first two years.

A third Wine, Women & Shoes event, of which Penn State Health St. Joseph is a sponsor, is planned for April 19 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel.

According to Kate Alley, vice president of development at Opportunity House, an organization that serves the homeless population, Penn State Health St. Joseph and Opportunity House are likely partners in their efforts to assist members of the community.

“Penn State Health St. Joseph has a history of helping the underserved, and so does Opportunity House,” said Kate Alley, vice president of development at Opportunity House, an organization that serves the homeless population. “We are honored to partner with an organization that cares about the people of Reading and are willing to support our efforts to make their lives better.”

Alley said Opportunity House benefited from the generosity of Penn State Health St. Joseph about 10 years ago, when St. Joseph donated renovated space for Opportunity House to use for their Children’s Alliance Center, an organization that provides services for the victims of child sexual abuse.

“We remembered that generosity and approached St. Joseph again when we were looking for a sponsor,” Alley said.

Wine, Women & Shoes events have been held in cities across the country and have become popular fundraising events for non-profits.

“It’s a good chance to enjoy a fun evening with your friends while also making it possible for Opportunity House to help more than 1,500 people a year in Berks County to be housed, fed, educated and empowered to stand on their own,” Alley said.

Flu Shots Offered in Advance of Harsh Flu Season

People of all ages lined up in the main lobby of Penn State Health St. Joseph’s Bern Township hospital in October for free flu shots, helping to protect themselves from what would be the worst flu season in nearly a decade, according to federal health officials.

Nearly 1,400 shots were given in the lobby area, where people getting shots donated pet food and supplies for the Animal Rescue League of Berks County, and also canned good for St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Reading.

“People really respond to our request for donations,” said Man O’Rico, director of infection control and prevention for Penn State Health St. Joseph. “We assist in meeting the health needs of our community by providing free flu immunizations, and the people who get the shots respond by ‘passing it on’ and helping with canned goods and pet items.”

Response to the yearly flu shot clinic is always good, Discoll said. She attributes its success to good advertising of the event, a convenient location and a streamlined process for registering for and receiving the shots.

A separate free flu shot event for about 150 first responders was held later in October, according to Chris Chamberlain, EMS Liaison and Emergency Management Coordinator for Penn State Health St. Joseph.

As in past years, a drive-through flu shot service was offered at no charge on four different days, Chamberlain said. “We do the drive-through to make it more convenient for first responders,” he explained. “They can stop while on duty, get their shot and return back to service with very little to no delay.”
Penn State Health St. Joseph Offers Free Breast Screenings for those without Insurance

What began at Penn State Health St. Joseph as an annual event is now held monthly to provide breast health care for women who do not have access to health insurance.

Free screenings are provided one day a month at St. Joseph’s Downtown Campus, according to Lisa Spencer, Breast Care Patient Navigator. Most women get routine screenings, but if a problem is detected, further diagnostic screening is available.

Education about breast health also is provided.

“We’ve had a number of women who have had issues, and we were able to get them additional imaging,” Spencer said. “Several ladies have been diagnosed with cancer, and we’ve been able to get them into care so they receive the appropriate treatment.”

The program is administered by Penn State Health St. Joseph, and funded by a national grant from the Prevent Cancer Foundation®, based in Alexandria, Virginia. The program, which has been in place for about 10 years, formerly was funded by grants from Susan G. Komen – Philadelphia, Susan G. Komen – National, and the American Cancer Society.

For many women without health insurance, a mammogram would not be an option without such a program. The screenings are advertised on the hospital’s website, Facebook page, Hispanic radio and TV.

Mostly, word gets out when one woman tells another that they are available.

“A lot of news about our services spreads through word of mouth,” Spencer said.

In addition to the screenings, St. Joseph staff members can work with women who are uninsured to help them locate other services. Staff might help a patient apply for Medicaid, or identify another source of care.

Bilingual social workers and a “promotora” community health worker are available to help those who do not speak English.

“We are committed to helping these women and their families access the healthcare that they need,” Spencer said.

Hundreds of clinical breast exams, screening mammograms, diagnostic mammograms and breast ultrasounds have been provided, as well as biopsies, genetic testing and treatment.

Under the Prevent Cancer Foundation® grant, Penn State Health St. Joseph will work to reduce cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic barriers and improve breast health for Latinas. In addition to the monthly breast screenings, Penn State Health St. Joseph sponsors annual prostate and oral cancer screenings.

Penn State Health St. Joseph Again Title Sponsor of Guts & Glory Event

Penn State Health St. Joseph sponsored the fourth annual Guts & Glory Digestive and Wellness Expo in October, drawing hundreds of people to FirstEnergy Stadium to enjoy activities intended to increase nutritional awareness and health consciousness in a setting that is fun for the whole family.

As always, a big hit of the festival was a 40-foot replica of the human colon that attendees can crawl through to learn about digestive diseases.

Other activities included group fitness exercise presentations, healthy cooking demonstrations, lectures, personal health stories, salsa dancing and live music. The expo also featured a farmer’s market, vendors, massage tents and educational opportunities for kids.

The Guts & Glory event is presented by My Gut Instinct, Inc., a non-profit founded by Dr. Aparna Mele, a gastroenterologist with Digestive Disease Associates. Dr. Mele founded the organization in hopes of promoting digestive health and spreading awareness about the causes of digestive disease.

Penn State Health St. Joseph serves as title sponsor for the annual event.

Stoke Care Night Aims to Educate, Raise Awareness about Stroke and Stroke Prevention

Lucy was baby-sitting her nine-year-old grandson when she suffered a serious stroke. Fortunately, her grandson had been taught the signs of stroke, realized that something was very wrong and was able to make a lifesaving call to 9-1-1.

“The more that people of all ages are aware of stroke symptoms, the better,” said Wendy Clayton, a clinical program coordinator at Penn State Health St. Joseph who in August organized a Stroke Care Night at FirstEnergy Stadium in Reading. “Recognizing signs and symptoms means that someone will be able to get help fast, and that is critical.”

The event at the stadium was aimed at educating Reading Fightin Phils fans and others how to quickly recognize symptoms of a stroke and immediately call for help. Using the National Stroke Association’s ACT FAST model, staff members from the Stroke Center at Penn State Health St. Joseph advised people who suspect someone they are with is having a stroke to do the following:

- **FACE:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- **ARMS:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **SPEECH:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is her speech slurred or strange?
- **TIME:** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately. Remember to take note of the time that you first noticed symptoms, as that can affect treatment decisions.

They also educated visitors to the stadium that strokes do not only occur in the elderly, but that people of any age can suffer a stroke.

“Most people only think about stroke happening in older people, but, for a variety of reasons, it can happen at any age,” Clayton said.

Stroke Care Night was not all serious, however. Attendees enjoyed interacting with St. Joseph personnel and were able to meet physicians and emergency workers. They participated in a live radio broadcast, got a close-up look at St. Joe’s HealthOne RV and a LifeLion emergency transport vehicle, and received freshies such as pamphlets, stress balls and brain pins. All information was available in English and Spanish.

Dr. Kenneth Hill, a Penn State Health St. Joseph neurosurgeon, threw out the first pitch of the game.

Penn State Health St. Joseph and Penn State Berks Partner on Downtown Project

Penn State Health St. Joseph has joined forces with Penn State Berks to open a downtown Reading office that will serve as a center for innovation and social entrepreneurship aimed at enhancing public health in the City, while also increasing economic development.

Located in St. Joseph’s Downtown Campus, the office space was funded with a $50,000 seed grant through Invent Penn State, an initiative that supports education, entrepreneurship, research and community outreach throughout Pennsylvania.
A recent trip to Haiti left a trio of Penn State Health St. Joseph physicians humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

Dr. Jeffrey Zlotnick, a Family Practice Specialist, traveled with Dr. Riley Manion and Dr. Elizabeth Herrman, both residents in St. Joseph’s Family Medicine Residency Program, to the impoverished nation late last year on a week-long medical mission trip in partnership with St. Ignatius Loyola Roman Catholic Church.

They treated hundreds of patients, some of whom traveled for days to visit the free clinic. The doctors shared some of their insights about the island nation and the people they met there.

Devastation Remains
Hit by a massive earthquake in 2010 and again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.

“The place looked like a bomb hit it,” Dr. Zlotnick observed.

Dr. Manion and Dr. Herrman also were surprised by the extent of the remaining damage, although Dr. Manion noted that work is underway to restore conditions.

“It’s shocking that the island is still so damaged, but there is construction being done, which is promising,” she said.

Scope of Medical Need among Residents
Dr. Zlotnick estimated that the medical team treated about 850 patients over the course of the visit. He cited diabetes, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and untreated hypertension as the most common complaints. Other common conditions included skin infections, allergies, asthma, malnutrition and worm infestations, and doctors also treated patients affected by stroke, polio, spinal bifida and other conditions.

“I had never done anything like this before, and it was difficult because you wanted to be able to do more,” Dr. Zlotnick said. “To see people at the level of need these people were is just like, wow.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to help a lot of people and provide quality patient care, it was frustrating to see patients who they could not help.

It is those types of cases, she said, that she cannot forget.

“In particular, I saw a two-year-old boy with a spinal cord defect that could have been fixed at birth if he had been seen, but instead, I saw a two-year-old who will never be able to walk,” she said. “Cases like that, where our hands were tied or it was too late to intervene, are what will stay with me the most.”

The Haitian People
All three doctors were impressed with the kindness and sincerity of the patients they treated during the trip. Nearly everyone they treated thanked them profusely, even though, by U.S. medical standards, the doctors had little to offer to patients.

Some people who visited the clinic walked for days to get there, and many people dressed in their best clothing for their visit with American doctors. Dr. Herrman said she especially enjoyed treating the children who visited and learning about the culture of Haiti.

“We have so much available to us here in the U.S., and to see how appreciative the population was with the little we had to offer was humbling,” she said. “But, mostly, I really enjoyed just talking to patients and learning about their experiences.”

Dr. Manion agreed that the kindness of the people they treated was exceptional.

“The people of Haiti were so appreciative and welcoming,” she said. “They were constantly thanking us for coming, and praying for us to have a safe trip back home.”

A Sad Takeaway
All the doctors expressed mixed emotions about the trip and what they were able to accomplish or not accomplish due to limited resources. Dr. Herrman recalled a sad visit on their last day of the trip that has stayed with her since her return from Haiti.

“We visited a Mother Teresa orphanage on our last day, and while we were unable to treat any patients, we were able to interact with some of the babies and children,” she explained. “There was one child who clung so tightly on to me. It was clear he was seeking human contact, love and affection. When I put him down, he instantly began to cry. It was the hardest thing I had to do all week.”

Dr. Zlotnick recalled a sad visit on their last day of the trip that has stayed with him since his return from Haiti.

“Just the idea that there is, you know, a child who in a hospital bed or a bed in a clinic, and they could have been fixed at birth if he had been seen, and I can’t do anything about it,” he said. “I don’t have anything I can do for him.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to accomplish a lot, they were humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

“I didn’t love that about it, it’s just like, ‘Wow,’ ” she said. “It was just so hard to see that, to see a child that will never be able to walk.”

And again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.

Dr. Zlotnick said that, while they were able to help a lot of people and provide quality patient care, it was frustrating to see patients who they could not help.

It is those types of cases, she said, that she cannot forget.

“We visited a Mother Teresa orphanage on our last day, and while we were unable to treat any patients, we were able to interact with some of the babies and children,” she explained. “There was one child who clung so tightly on to me. It was clear he was seeking human contact, love and affection. When I put him down, he instantly began to cry. It was the hardest thing I had to do all week.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to accomplish a lot, they were humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

“I didn’t love that about it, it’s just like, ‘Wow,’ ” she said. “It was just so hard to see that, to see a child that will never be able to walk.”

And again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.

Dr. Zlotnick said that, while they were able to help a lot of people and provide quality patient care, it was frustrating to see patients who they could not help.

It is those types of cases, she said, that she cannot forget.

“We visited a Mother Teresa orphanage on our last day, and while we were unable to treat any patients, we were able to interact with some of the babies and children,” she explained. “There was one child who clung so tightly on to me. It was clear he was seeking human contact, love and affection. When I put him down, he instantly began to cry. It was the hardest thing I had to do all week.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to accomplish a lot, they were humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

“I didn’t love that about it, it’s just like, ‘Wow,’ ” she said. “It was just so hard to see that, to see a child that will never be able to walk.”

And again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.

Dr. Zlotnick said that, while they were able to help a lot of people and provide quality patient care, it was frustrating to see patients who they could not help.

It is those types of cases, she said, that she cannot forget.

“We visited a Mother Teresa orphanage on our last day, and while we were unable to treat any patients, we were able to interact with some of the babies and children,” she explained. “There was one child who clung so tightly on to me. It was clear he was seeking human contact, love and affection. When I put him down, he instantly began to cry. It was the hardest thing I had to do all week.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to accomplish a lot, they were humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

“I didn’t love that about it, it’s just like, ‘Wow,’ ” she said. “It was just so hard to see that, to see a child that will never be able to walk.”

And again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.

Dr. Zlotnick said that, while they were able to help a lot of people and provide quality patient care, it was frustrating to see patients who they could not help.

It is those types of cases, she said, that she cannot forget.

“We visited a Mother Teresa orphanage on our last day, and while we were unable to treat any patients, we were able to interact with some of the babies and children,” she explained. “There was one child who clung so tightly on to me. It was clear he was seeking human contact, love and affection. When I put him down, he instantly began to cry. It was the hardest thing I had to do all week.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to accomplish a lot, they were humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

“I didn’t love that about it, it’s just like, ‘Wow,’ ” she said. “It was just so hard to see that, to see a child that will never be able to walk.”

And again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.

Dr. Zlotnick said that, while they were able to help a lot of people and provide quality patient care, it was frustrating to see patients who they could not help.

It is those types of cases, she said, that she cannot forget.

“We visited a Mother Teresa orphanage on our last day, and while we were unable to treat any patients, we were able to interact with some of the babies and children,” she explained. “There was one child who clung so tightly on to me. It was clear he was seeking human contact, love and affection. When I put him down, he instantly began to cry. It was the hardest thing I had to do all week.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to accomplish a lot, they were humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

“I didn’t love that about it, it’s just like, ‘Wow,’ ” she said. “It was just so hard to see that, to see a child that will never be able to walk.”

And again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.

Dr. Zlotnick said that, while they were able to help a lot of people and provide quality patient care, it was frustrating to see patients who they could not help.

It is those types of cases, she said, that she cannot forget.

“We visited a Mother Teresa orphanage on our last day, and while we were unable to treat any patients, we were able to interact with some of the babies and children,” she explained. “There was one child who clung so tightly on to me. It was clear he was seeking human contact, love and affection. When I put him down, he instantly began to cry. It was the hardest thing I had to do all week.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to accomplish a lot, they were humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

“I didn’t love that about it, it’s just like, ‘Wow,’ ” she said. “It was just so hard to see that, to see a child that will never be able to walk.”

And again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.

Dr. Zlotnick said that, while they were able to help a lot of people and provide quality patient care, it was frustrating to see patients who they could not help.

It is those types of cases, she said, that she cannot forget.

“We visited a Mother Teresa orphanage on our last day, and while we were unable to treat any patients, we were able to interact with some of the babies and children,” she explained. “There was one child who clung so tightly on to me. It was clear he was seeking human contact, love and affection. When I put him down, he instantly began to cry. It was the hardest thing I had to do all week.”

Dr. Manion said that, while they were able to accomplish a lot, they were humbled to have been able to help many patients, but also frustrated by what they were unable to accomplish.

“I didn’t love that about it, it’s just like, ‘Wow,’ ” she said. “It was just so hard to see that, to see a child that will never be able to walk.”

And again by the devastating Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the island has yet to recover.
There was nothing but smiles last month as 15 students graduated as new Community Health Workers during a ceremony at the Langan Allied Health Academy at Penn State Health St. Joseph’s Downtown Campus in Reading.

The graduating class was the 10th cohort to complete the 100-hour training program, a collaboration of Penn State Health St. Joseph, the East Central Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center (AHEC), the Literary Council of Reading-Berks and other local partners.

While in training, students study a variety of topics, including basic diseases, behavioral health, tobacco cessation, healthcare access and reimbursement, first aid, and basic medical terminology. While some of the work occurs in the classroom, much of it is conducted in the field, as students are encouraged to be out in the community, learning about local resources, making contacts, and exploring what opportunities may be available to them.

Although the program is not set up as training for any particular position, completing it can help lead to a job, explained Laura M. Welliver, a Penn State Health St. Joseph’s Community Health Workers Program. “It isn’t offered as a job training program, but those who complete the program report that it really helps them with career change or advancement,” Welliver said.

Ahely Espinosa Ramos of Reading said she hopes that graduating from the program will help her to find a job in which she can assist young mothers who are alone, a situation that she had experienced.

“I was that person who needed help and didn’t know anyone,” she said. “I’d love to be able to help someone else who is in that same situation.”

Sherian L. Henry of Spring Township has a background in teaching, but wanted to complete the Community Health Worker training in order to be a more effective helper in her community.

“I really wanted to find a way to use my skills in the community,” Henry said. “Completing the program really opened my eyes to the opportunities that are out there.”

A Community Health Worker is defined by AHEC as a “trusted member of the community with a gift for helping people prevent or manage disease or other physical or mental health issues.”

Penn State Health St. Joseph has hired Community Health Workers to assist with its Diabetics, Prenatal, Family Practice and Breast Cancer programs, explains Welliver. Graduates of the program also have been hired by agencies such as Berks Counseling Center and Centro Hispano.

“It works well to have Community Health Workers in settings that require a lot of patient follow up or intensive case management,” Welliver said.

Since Penn State Health St. Joseph began the trainings nearly four years ago, more than 120 students have graduated. The group that graduated in December was one of the largest cohorts in the program’s history.

“It’s so exciting to see how this program has grown and the students have blossomed,” Welliver said. “There is a dramatic need for Community Health Workers in our community, and every one of these graduates can make a difference.”

Henry O. Mateo Mendoza, the only male to complete the training with this cohort, also is a student at Reading Area Community College and works a full-time job. While finding time for the training program was difficult, he said that having earned the designation of Community Health Worker is rewarding.

“I’ve been through a lot in my life, and if I can help someone with the skills that I’ve acquired, then that’s what I want to do,” said Mendoza, of Reading.

The Community Health Worker training program is offered at least twice a year, explained Laura M. Welliver at 610-378-2474 or lwelliver@pennstatehealth.psu.edu. Since December was one of the largest cohorts in the program’s history, it may be impossible to gauge the degree to which Penn State Health St. Joseph’s Downtown Campus impacts the lives of residents in the City of Reading and beyond.

Ahely Espinosa Ramos, Community Health Worker graduate, addresses the class about her experiences.

Since Penn State Health St. Joseph acquired the former Community General Hospital in 1997, however, the facility has in every way become a true Community Health Center.

The largest ambulatory care facility in the City, the Downtown Campus is a hub of activity, every day of the week. Located in a federally and state qualified Weed and Seed district at Sixth and Walnut streets, the campus is bustling with a diverse blend of patients who stop by to pick up prescriptions at the pharmacy, parents who bring children for sick or well visits and moms-to-be who gather for Centering on Pregnancy classes. Dental patients filter in and out for screenings and treatment, while doctors who are part of St. Joseph’s Family Medicine Residency Program hurry in to work at the Family and Women’s Center.

The two-building campus has undergone renovations and expansions to better serve the healthcare needs of the community, with plans in place for continued changes. Currently, in addition to offering primary care during more than 220,000 visits a year, the Reading campus also provides specialty clinics for the under-served, who cannot access specialty care at private practices.

Over the course of a year, tens of thousands of patients encounter services within the Downtown Campus’s five main areas of practice: Family Practice, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Pediatrics, Family Practice Residency and Dentistry.

In addition, the campus is home to integral community partners, including the Migrant Farm Workers and Haven Behavioral Healthcare. Care is taken to address the needs of immigrants, and many programs and classes are offered in both English and Spanish.

With plans for further renovations and updates to its Downtown Campus, Penn State Health St. Joseph is focusing on the big picture concerning the future for the people of Reading.

“lt’s no longer about healthcare services in the City,” said Mary Hahn, Vice President of Ambulatory Services and Business Development for St. Joseph. “It’s about the overall health of the City.”
Penn State Health St. Joseph Partners with Giorgio to Bring Healthcare to Employees

Many employees of the Maidencreek Township-based Giorgio Group of Companies experience long work days. They commute back and forth to their work sites, and have busy schedules outside of their jobs. All that can make it a challenge to schedule and receive regular, routine medical check-ups.

With that in mind, Penn State Health St. Joseph has partnered with Giorgio to bring healthcare services right to the work places of Giorgio employees. Care is provided in a 32-foot recreational vehicle that’s been equipped to serve as a medical facility.

The idea, according to John Morahan, President and CEO of Penn State Health St. Joseph, is to increase access to health-care, and to get employees to make primary care a priority.

Too often, continued Morahan, primary care is not obtained, and treatable or preventable conditions go unchecked.

This can lead to more serious health problems, which, in addition to affecting quality of life, can result in lost work time and increased expenses.

According to Gina Delillo, Vice President and Director of Human Resources at Giorgio, many employees do not take advantage of yearly and age-related physicals provided for them in Giorgio’s benefits plan.

The hope, is to increase employee participation in healthcare services available to them, and to improve the overall health of employees.

Stuffed with nurse practitioners, a medical technician and an assistant, the healthcare van makes regular visits to five Giorgio companies in the Berks County region. The company’s health care plan pays a per diem for employees to get their wellness visit with no copays.

Despite the convenience of the service, however, employees have not responded as positively as Giorgio and St. Joseph had hoped.

With the program in place for about a year, fewer employees than hoped have taken advantage of its services, explained Jolene Frymoyer, practice manager of St. Joseph’s Muhlenberg Medical Group, which oversees the van’s operations.

“We think that it’s an awesome service, but we need to keep working and making people aware of why they should take advantage of it,” Frymoyer said.

Hospital and Giorgio officials are working on a plan to get more employees to schedule well visits and checkups with the mobile medical facility. Currently, employees are primarily using the van for worker compensation follow-up visits and for sick visits.

“We believe in the program, so we’ll keep trying to raise awareness and have employees take better advantage of the services offered,” said Debra Wingenroth, Director of Ambulatory Sites for Penn State Health St. Joseph.

St. Joseph’s free program helps public to “flag” potential health issues

HEALTH4cast offers 4 biometric studies that can provide health clues

Members of the public can get a free check on their body mass index, blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol at Penn State Health St. Joseph. A program designed to uncover early warning signs of possibly larger health issues. The program began in February and is available monthly on St. Joseph’s Bernard Township campus at a community event.

The free, private screenings, called HEALTH4cast, is conducted by clinical navigators who are medical professionals who can explain health and wellness topics.

The navigators help each participant gain insight into their overall health through a review of the studies that can provide health clues.

The free, private screenings, called HEALTH4cast, is conducted by clinical navigators who are medical professionals who can explain health and wellness topics.

The navigators help each participant gain insight into their overall health through a review of the studies that can provide health clues.

The studies, known as Biometrics, offer information that can be an early warning of a health condition that can be more significant.

“These four tests can provide valuable insight on a person’s general health even though outward symptoms might not be present,” explained St. Joseph’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Chris Newman. “From these tests, we help people understand their risk for chronic, preventable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. We can also help them identify strategies for improved health and well-being.”

Pennatal Care Open House Connects Expectant Moms with Health Care

Emily, an Exeter Township woman who recently learned she was pregnant, found a health care home recently when she visited a Prenatal Care Open House at the Downtown Campus of Penn State Health St. Joseph.

“I just wanted to get some more information, because it’s like, ‘we’re pregnant, now what do we do?’” she said. “I didn’t expect to get all this help when I came here today.”

Hosted by Kimberly Hunter, OB Nurse Navigator with Penn State Health St. Joseph, Emily received a tour of the Downtown Campus OB/GYN facilities and learned about St. Joseph’s innovative Centering Pregnancy program.

St. Joseph’s Downtown Campus OB/GYN, Dr. Newman, now what do we do?’” she said. “I didn’t expect to get all this help when I came here today.”

Hosted by Kimberly Hunter, OB Nurse Navigator with Penn State Health St. Joseph, Emily received a tour of the Downtown Campus OB/GYN facilities and learned about St. Joseph’s innovative Centering Pregnancy program.

She was excited to hear about the program, which employs a group setting. With a group size of about six, women are due within the same month interact with one another by learning together, sharing information and supporting one another.

While participating in the Centering Pregnancy program, expectant mothers also receive private prenatal care from Penn State Health St. Joseph providers.

“Centering is unique because there’s a self-care aspect,” Hunter explained to Emily. “I’m really proud of this program, and the women who participate in it really love it.”

The small group setting enables women to bond with one another as they share ideas and concerns and keep each other up to date about what’s happening with their pregnancies.

“It becomes a real feeling of community,” Hunter said. “There’s lots of sharing and caring among another.”

Low-risk patients are given a choice of participating in the Center Pregnancy program or receiving traditional prenatal care. About 60 percent choose the Centering option, which is managed by midwives.

“Most women enjoy the bonding and fellowship that happens with that group,” Hunter said. “But the more traditional type of care also is available.”

Before she left the open house that day, Emily was signed up for an intake appointment with a nurse, and feeling far more assured than when she’d arrived.

“This is amazing,” said Emily, who with her husband moved to the Reading area from a small town in Massachusetts. “Everyone here is so friendly and helpful. This place feels like a really good fit for me and my baby.”

Emily was only one of about a dozen women who attended the open house, anxious to learn more about their options for pregnancy care.

“Any patient in the community who appreciates and wants the services of a midwife can come here for those services,” explained Kelly Johnson, Clinical Leader of the Downtown OB/GYN department.

The Downtown Campus also is staffed by physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, medical assistants, community health workers and other staff who assist women throughout their pregnancies.

“Women get to tell us what they need here, and then deliver at St. Joseph’s Bernard Township hospital,” Hunter explained. “It makes it nice for anyone who lives in the City and might have an issue with transportation. We’ve got a great facility right here, downtown.”

Anyone who wants more information about OB/GYN services at Penn State Health St. Joseph’s Downtown Campus can call Kimberly Hunter at 610-376-2569 or email khunter3@pennstatehealth.psu.edu.