UHS

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ISSUE 3 2026



A Great Save

Timely screening and excellent care saved Jes Huggins

Nursing at the Heart of Care

UHS Chief Nursing Officer shares her vision for nursing excellence

A Decade in Motion

UHS Orthopedic Center celebrates 10 years

A Compassionate Partner for Every Step of Your Healing Journey

At UHS, we are proud to provide expert, compassionate care close to home, helping our patients meet a wide range of healthcare needs.

We also know that exceptional healthcare is not only about treating illness. It is about preventing it whenever possible, detecting concerns early and ensuring patients receive the right care at the right time for the best possible outcomes.

Early detection can make all the difference. In this issue's cover story, you will read about a patient whose return to annual screening led to a breast cancer diagnosis, allowing treatment to begin promptly and paving the way for recovery. While a cancer diagnosis is something no one wants to receive, routine screenings and personalized treatment plans from our trusted care teams can play a vital role in achieving a cancer-free future.

When the need for specialized care arises, UHS is here to be your partner throughout the healing journey—caring for you not only as a patient, but as a person. That's the type of care you can expect to receive at any location across the UHS System, including at the UHS Orthopedic Center, which this year celebrates a decade of providing coordinated, patient-centered care that is truly tailored to each individual's needs.

You'll also hear from Chief Nursing Officer Peggy Thomas, whose vision for nursing reflects a commitment shared across UHS: delivering compassionate, exceptional care that always puts patients first.

Whatever your healthcare journey may bring, UHS is honored to walk alongside you every step of the way.

John M. Carrigg
President and CEO of UHS









The new UHS Delaware Valley Medical Neighborhood will transform rural healthcare for families across Delaware County and the surrounding region.

UHS Delaware Valley Medical Neighborhood Takes Shape in Walton

UHS Delaware Valley Hospital's Medical Neighborhood is taking shape in Walton, bringing the next generation of rural healthcare closer to home for families across Delaware County and the surrounding region.

The $80 million, four-story expansion will feature a new medical unit with 25 private patient rooms and full en suite bathrooms, expanded primary and specialty care with additional exam rooms, an updated laboratory, a simulation lab, community collaboration space, and a larger physical and occupational therapy area with a state-of-the-art skills lab.

These innovative features are just one part of a larger commitment to strengthening rural healthcare. In many rural communities, access to quality healthcare remains a significant challenge. By bringing a wide range of services and coordinated care teams into one convenient, connected location, the Medical Neighborhood will make it easier for patients to access the care they need and navigate their healthcare journey with fewer obstacles.

What comes next

As the project advances, significant work has been completed to prepare the campus for uninterrupted care during construction, including the strategic relocation of the main entrance and other important behind-the-scenes improvements designed to support a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff.

Major construction milestones are anticipated throughout the fall, including crane mobilization, steel erection and a beam topping-out celebration.

Floor construction is expected to continue into December, followed by exterior work, elevator installation and other major phases throughout next year—working toward an expected project completion in 2028.

When complete, the Medical Neighborhood will help ensure that high-quality, patient-centered care remains close to home—not only for today's patients, but for generations to come.

Read More
To learn more about DVH and the Medical Neighborhood project, visit **nyuhs.org/give-back/enhance-delaware-valley-hospital-fund**

Nursing Excellence

Nursing at the **Heart** of Patient Care

Nursing touches every patient, every family and every care setting across UHS. As the new chief nursing officer for the UHS System, Peggy Thomas, MSN, RN, CENP, is helping shape the future of nursing while advancing the organization's journey toward nursing excellence.

"To me, nurses are the heart of the patient experience at UHS," Ms. Thomas said. "We are with patients and families during their most vulnerable times, helping them feel safe, supported and heard."

Ms. Thomas joined UHS in 2022 as vice president for nursing and chief nursing officer of UHS Hospitals. In her expanded role, she now oversees nursing practice across the entire UHS System.

A key focus of her leadership is the organization's pursuit of Magnet recognition, the nation's highest designation for nursing excellence. The Magnet journey at UHS is supported by an interdisciplinary team, with nursing teams collaborating with partners across the organization, including providers, pharmacy and more.

Formally launched at UHS in 2025, the Magnet journey has empowered nurses to take a more active role in advancing patient care, according to Ms. Thomas, implementing evidence-based practice that enhances quality outcomes and strengthens the care environment for both patients and staff.

"When nurses are empowered to lead, innovation follows," she said.

That spirit of innovation is reflected in UHS' new virtual nursing program, which provides an additional layer of clinical support for patients and care teams.

"Importantly, virtual nursing does not replace bedside nurses," Ms. Thomas said. "Instead, it allows experienced nurses to assist with tasks such as patient education, documentation and triage, giving bedside nurses more time to focus on hands-on patient care and critical tasks."





> **"When nurses are empowered to lead, innovation follows."**
>
> **Peggy Thomas, MSN, RN, CENP, chief nursing officer, UHS**

Beyond the bedside, UHS nurses are helping strengthen the future of healthcare throughout the region. The organization partners with local colleges and universities to support nursing education and provide hands-on clinical experience for students. Through programs such as clinical faculty opportunities and summer externships, UHS is helping prepare the next generation of nurses.

Looking ahead, Ms. Thomas wants UHS to be recognized as a model for nursing excellence, where nurses feel safe, valued and equipped to lead the future of healthcare.

"Ultimately, my vision is for nursing at UHS to reflect high standards of quality, professionalism and compassion," she said. "If every nurse and every patient feels seen, heard, supported and cared for, then we know we are fulfilling our mission."

Learn More
Read the full interview with Peggy Thomas at **stayhealthyuhs.org/nursing-at-the-heart-of-patient-care**



A Great Save

Timely screening, diagnosis and treatment at the UHS Breast Center helped Jes Huggins achieve the best possible outcome

For Jes Huggins, missing a yearly mammogram seemed like a minor delay. But when her provider encouraged her to get back on schedule, that routine screening led to a breast cancer diagnosis—and a treatment plan that moved quickly from detection to surgery and recovery.

Ms. Huggins, 45, of Binghamton, said she had previously known about a cyst in her breast. When she went for her mammogram and subsequent ultrasound, however, something was different, and additional imaging and a biopsy followed.

"I got another mammogram and a biopsy. When the biopsy came back, they confirmed it was cancer," Ms. Huggins said.

An effective, timely treatment plan developed quickly, centered on Ms. Huggins' unique needs. After receiving her cancer diagnosis in May, Ms. Huggins underwent a mastectomy on June 2 at UHS Wilson Medical Center. She recalled being told her cancer was in an early stage and, following surgery, she would not need chemotherapy or radiation.

For Ms. Huggins, the experience underscored the value of screening.

"Early detection is definitely key," she said.

That message is one UHS Breast Surgeon Therese Federowicz, MD, also emphasizes. Dr. Federowicz joined the UHS Breast Center in May 2026 and treats patients across the spectrum of breast disease, including benign conditions, high-risk or precancerous lesions and breast cancer.

The UHS Breast Center offers comprehensive breast care, including routine annual screening, risk assessment, and diagnostic workup for new findings on either breast self-exam or diagnostic imaging. What happens next depends on those imaging findings, pathology and each person's individual circumstances.

Improved screening

According to Dr. Federowicz, advancements in breast imaging are helping specialists detect subtle changes sooner.

"Mammography has advanced significantly. First with three-dimensional visualization of the breast tissue, and now with contrast-enhanced mammography, and the potential integration with artificial intelligence," Dr. Federowicz said. "Radiologists are able



to identify subtle changes that may have gone undetected in the past, leading to cancers being found at much earlier stages."

Early detection can often provide patients with more treatment options. Dr. Federowicz explained breast cancer treatment today is highly individualized rather than based on a single approach for every patient.

This approach is the standard for the compassionate, expert care that earned the UHS Breast Center accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers and designation as a Comprehensive Breast Imaging Center by the American College of Radiology. These professional acknowledgments mean that every patient can expect care that is scientifically sound, safe and supportive.

When the journey begins

When a patient receives a diagnosis, Dr. Federowicz reviews the pathology and imaging in detail and discusses the available surgical choices. Depending on the cancer and the patient, those choices may include lumpectomy or mastectomy. A patient undergoing mastectomy may also have options involving reconstruction.

"There's more than one path to long-term, disease-free survival," Dr. Federowicz said.

Her role, she explained, is to help patients understand those options and determine which approach leads to the best possible clinical outcome and meets the patient's needs and preferences.

"We have to look at the details. We have to look at the biology. We have to look at the genetics, and then at the end of the day, the patient has to be comfortable with the treatment moving forward," she said.

The extra mile

Ms. Huggins appreciated that thorough approach. She worked with Dr. Federowicz after her diagnosis and said the surgeon carefully walked her through her care.

"She's fantastic," Ms. Huggins said. "She's super thorough, and if I had any questions, I could just reach out to the UHS Breast Center and get the answers I needed."

Care at UHS extends well beyond surgery. Patients diagnosed with breast cancer may meet with Nurse Navigator Debbie Sweeney, who helps coordinate care and connects patients with other members of the treatment team.

Additional resources can include oncology social workers, nutritionists, chaplains and community programs that help with practical concerns such as transportation and financial needs. The goal is to prevent outside challenges from becoming barriers to necessary cancer treatment.

"It was a little bump," Ms. Huggins said. "I had a really good support system."

Take time for you

Today, Ms. Huggins is feeling well and looking ahead to her next follow-up appointment.

Her experience also carries a message for other women who may be tempted to postpone screening.

> **"If I had any questions, I could just reach out to the UHS Breast Center and get the answers I needed. I had a really good support system."**
>
> **Jes Huggins**

Dr. Federowicz stresses that breast cancer risk is not limited to women with a strong family history or other obvious risk factors. Understanding personal risk can help women and their healthcare providers determine when screening should begin and whether additional screening may be appropriate.

She also encourages women to pay attention to changes in their breast health and seek medical advice when something doesn't seem right. "If you're noticing something new, if you're seeing or feeling something, don't assume it's nothing," Dr. Federowicz said. "Bring it to the attention of your provider."

For Ms. Huggins, getting back on track after missing one mammogram made all the difference. Early detection led to prompt treatment and the best possible outcome.

Screening Time
Talk with your provider about the mammogram screening schedule that's right for you. If you have any concerns about your breast health or would like to learn more about breast cancer screening and treatment, visit **nyuhs.org/location-search/uhs-breast-center**

Orthopedics

A Decade in Motion







Celebrating 10 years of collaboration, growth and patient-centered care at the UHS Orthopedic Center

One icy February morning, Binghamton resident Lisa Reitz was walking her dog when she slipped and fell. While the pain did not seem overwhelming at first, when she tried to stand, she could not move her right leg. An ambulance brought Ms. Reitz to UHS Binghamton General Hospital, where an X-ray revealed a fractured right hip, complicated by injuries she had sustained in a car crash decades earlier.

Tram Tran, PA, of the UHS Orthopedic Center evaluated Ms. Reitz and explained she would need a total hip replacement. Benjamin Villacres Mori, MD, UHS Orthopedics, was already operating that day and added her to his afternoon schedule. Using a minimally invasive, muscle-sparing approach, Dr. Mori replaced the damaged joint. Ms. Reitz began physical therapy the next day, continued her rehabilitation at home and returned to work in just six weeks, far ahead of her anticipated recovery timeline. Today, she is back to walking her dog each morning with restored mobility and confidence.

Her experience is just one example of the patient-centered, coordinated care the UHS Orthopedic Center spent the past decade working to make possible.

Ten years of growth

As the UHS Orthopedic Center celebrates its 10th anniversary, the milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on its growth and how musculoskeletal care has evolved. Lawrence Wiesner, DO, vice president, Orthopedic Services, UHS, joined UHS in 2002 and



remembers when the orthopedic practice was considerably smaller. Today, the group includes orthopedic surgeons, physician assistants and nurse practitioners, all focused on specific areas of orthopedic expertise. “Because we’re subdivided with subspecialists, we can offer very directed care for the body part that needs it,” Dr. Wiesner said.

Over the past decade, the UHS Orthopedic Center has brought together orthopedics, sports medicine, rheumatology, podiatry, chiropractic care, physical and occupational therapy and other services that support patients throughout their musculoskeletal care journey.

For patients with a shoulder, hip, knee, foot, ankle or other musculoskeletal concern, having specialists and services closely connected allows the care team to guide them through the treatment that best fits their individual needs. “There’s a lot of coordination between the therapists and the doctors, because the patient’s care team is under one roof,” Dr. Wiesner said.

More than a building

The UHS Orthopedic Center was created to bring services together in one location, but proximity alone does not create integration; it is the relationships among providers that make coordinated care possible.

Douglas J. Taber, DC, MBA, director of quality for UHS Medical Group, has watched that culture develop since the site opened. His department provides individualized chiropractic care, while also working closely with other disciplines. “The strength of an integrated orthopedic center isn’t any one specialty or treatment,” Dr. Taber said. “It’s the ability to bring different areas of expertise together and provide the right care, from the right provider, at the right time.”

That philosophy extends throughout the practice. Sports medicine specialists care for high school, collegiate and recreational athletes dealing with acute injuries, overuse conditions and other musculoskeletal concerns. Podiatry expands that continuum to patients with a wide range of foot and ankle needs, including diabetic foot care, orthotics, biomechanics and gait analysis. Rheumatology adds another important dimension by caring for patients with complex rheumatic and musculoskeletal conditions while collaborating with other specialists.

For the specialists at the UHS Orthopedic Center, being part of that multidisciplinary environment supports easier collaboration and communication between providers and improved access for patients. As Dr. Taber explained, “Buildings bring specialties together. Trust, communication and a shared commitment to each patient are what brings care together.”







In 2016, the UHS Orthopedic Center staff hosted a welcome reception to showcase the new building and what it would offer patients in the region.

Building the next decade of musculoskeletal care

The UHS Orthopedic Center’s 10th anniversary is both a celebration of what has been built and an opportunity to look ahead.

The next chapter includes continued growth in orthopedic subspecialties such as hand, trauma and orthopedic walk-in care, expansion of rheumatology, the further development of its fellowship programs and the continued introduction of innovative technologies and capabilities.

Sarah DiFabio, director, Orthopedic Services, UHS, shared, “Our goal is to continue to provide a truly integrated musculoskeletal program where patients can access the expertise they need, when they need it, and feel like they are being cared for by one connected team.”

> **Because we’re subdivided with subspecialists, we can offer very directed care for the body part that needs it.**
>
> **Lawrence Wiesner, DO, vice president, Orthopedic Services, UHS**

For patients like Ms. Reitz, the impact of that model is ultimately measured in something much more personal: getting back to the people, activities and everyday moments that matter. Ten years after its doors opened, the UHS Orthopedic Center continues to grow around that purpose. “Our first decade established a culture of collaboration,” Dr. Taber said. “The opportunity for the next decade is to build on that foundation with new technologies, new capabilities and even better ways to serve our patients.”

The Big Picture
To read the full story of how UHS Orthopedics helped Lisa Reitz get back to doing the things she loved most, visit **nyuhs.org**



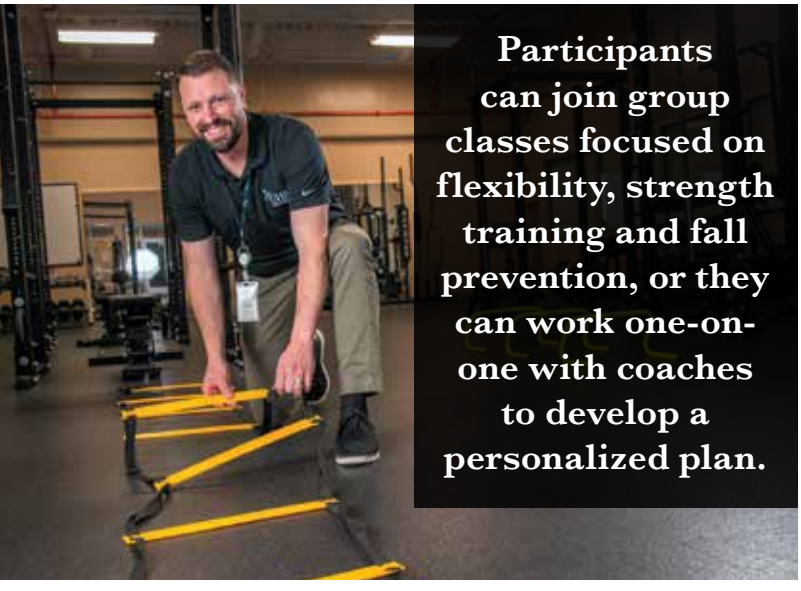


Strong and Flexible

The UHS Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation team helps area residents improve bone and joint health through exercise, education and community

For many people, as we age, our bones and joints may not function as well as they once did. Luckily, the team at UHS Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Vestal offers programs designed to help participants strengthen their bones, improve mobility and stay active.

According to Andrew Long, MS, CSCS, SCCC, RSCC*D, sports medicine field manager, UHS Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation, interest in maintaining and improving bone and joint health continues to grow. "Our patients often come to our gym from referrals for physical therapy following an injury. When they finished PT, they would ask, 'What do we do now? We like the exercises, but we do not know how to continue this on our own.' That prompted us to launch our performance program."



Participants can join group classes focused on flexibility, strength training and fall prevention, or they can work one-on-one with coaches to develop a personalized plan.

The program itself is very flexible and designed to meet a variety of needs and fitness levels. Participants can join group classes at UHS Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Vestal and Upper Front Street locations to focus on flexibility, strength training and fall prevention. Participants can also sign up for one-on-one classes and work on a personalized plan.

In addition to the physical benefits, Mr. Long said the social connections formed through the program are just as valuable. "A big benefit of the group is the social aspect. Coming into a class and being around other people has been phenomenal for our patients."

Coach Guilhem Cauchois agreed, noting that many participants look forward to exercising together and encouraging one another to stay consistent with their routines.

The program is not limited to older adults. Families are also taking advantage of the opportunity to improve their health together. "We offer family plans, so we have first and second graders exercising alongside their parents," Mr. Long said. In some cases, the program has become a true family tradition.

"We have seen three generations of the same family coming to work out," said Coach Cauchois. "We have grandparents, parents and children all exercising together."

For Coach Jakob Getchell, that ongoing participation reflects the relationships the team builds with clients. "It's a long-term partnership between us and our patients," he said.

Let's Move
Find the session that best fits your needs. Visit **nyuhs.org/sportsperformance** to learn more about the classes offered.