



NNY Health

*Your connection
to the north
country's health
world.*

A Watertown Daily Times and
Malone Telegram publication

Daily updates: NNY360.com

Nov. 2025

FREE

2025 Health Heroes Page 7

■ Samaritan Medical
Center welcomes
new staff.

PAGE 4

■ How to improve your
health at any age.

PAGE 5

■ Malone moving its adult
center, offering warming
location.

PAGE 6

■ St. Lawrence Region
recognizes employees
of the quarter.

PAGE 9

■ Woman regains
freedom after
hip replacement
at Canton-Potsdam Hospital.

PAGE 11

*Learn more
inside*



Jessica Sheldon, owner, FAITH Riding Center, and pediatric occupational therapist, Building Blocks Family Services. Provided photo

Professional Connection Page 8

How to get cheaper health care, utilities or rent with one phone call

By **JULIE ZAUZMER WEIL**

The Washington Post

Most times, the price you see is the price you pay. But sometimes, all it takes is a phone call to get a better deal.

While some people have honed the art of negotiation, eager to bargain down the cost of a new car or streaming service, others are mortified at the very thought. But many consumers simply don't realize that rent, medical visits and other bills are not as fixed as they might appear.

"You should always just ask. Most people just don't think these things are possible or available, or it's too scary," said Jessica Chan, whose company Trim will negotiate your cellphone or internet bill for you if you'd rather not do it yourself. "Assume there are savings available. Don't be afraid to ask. I think a lot of customers have emotional resistance to asking for discounts or going through this negotiation. It's less scary than you think."

Here are some expenses that you might be able to negotiate - and some that you probably can't or shouldn't.

CABLE AND INTERNET

Internet, cellphone and cable bills are some of the most common charges that services like Trim negotiate, and for good reason. Phone and internet providers have wide discretion when it comes to setting prices, and you can often get a better deal. Major service providers like AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon generally charge \$60 to \$65 per phone line per month for an unlimited data plan, but the range is huge. Bills can add up quickly, depending on the number of people on your plan and data use.

Barry Gross, who founded the bill negotiating service BillCutterz, said consumers should make sure they're speaking to someone in a "loyalty" or "retention" department, not the customer service department, before asking: "What can you do to lower my monthly bill?"

"Do not accept the first offer, no matter what it is," Gross said. Simply asking what other discounts are available will pay off most of the time. "Don't let them offer you free stuff," he added, just hold out for the price break. Services like his typically take a cut of any savings they find; BillCutterz collects 50 percent.

Holly Hammersmith, a Cleveland-based lifestyle blogger who's written about the ways she saves money, calls her internet provider once a year to negotiate her bill. "Usually I call and just say, 'Here's what I'm paying. Can you do anything better?' Or 'Here's the current rate you are offering on your website for new customers. Can you match this?'"

UTILITIES

The ability to negotiate electricity, natural gas or water

bills is largely dependent on the utility and where you live. In 13 states and the District, you can compare costs between energy providers. That means you can potentially switch to a different electricity or gas company for a better rate, or ask your current provider if they'll match the lower price of a competitor.

Energy prices are soaring, partly because of the power demands of data centers running artificial intelligence and other technologies, driving up power costs for everybody. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently said that natural gas bills are 13.8 percent higher than a year ago and electricity bills are 6.2 percent higher, both far outpacing inflation.

You can ask about any discount programs that your utility companies offer, such as loyalty programs or discounts for conserving energy at certain times of day. You also may be eligible for help paying energy bills through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LI-HEAP) or other public benefits in your state.

CREDIT CARD DEBT

Americans collectively owe more than \$1.2 trillion on their credit cards, an all-time high, and carry an average balance in excess of \$6,000.

If you have substantial credit card debt, talk to your credit card company about ways to reduce any interest and penalties that have been piling up. "Commonly what they do is they negotiate a lower interest rate," Gross said. "If you charged up \$15,000 [on the card], you're still going to owe the \$15,000. It's very uncommon for them to decrease that. But they will lower your interest rate."

The average credit card interest rate is above 20 percent, so interest adds up quickly. It's worth noting that if you negotiate a partial repayment, the account will be marked "settled" instead of "paid in full" on your credit report, which can substantially lower your credit score.

RENT

Some landlords are willing to negotiate; some aren't. Since housing is the largest expense for most people - nearly half of all renters are spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent each month, according to the Census - it could be worth finding out if yours is one of them.

Gross said he personally negotiated when he moved into his home. He offered to pay about \$125 less per month than the landlord was asking, but to pay a year's rent upfront. His landlord agreed.

If you are faced with a big increase when you renew your lease, you can consider asking your landlord to negotiate. Find out also whether there are any local laws on how much your landlord can legally raise your rent. In D.C., for example, most housing built before 1975 is covered by

rent control laws, which prohibit rent increases above a certain percentage, which is set annually; this year, it's 4.8 percent, or 2.5 percent for elderly and disabled tenants.

HEALTH CARE

Unlike most purchases, consumers often don't know the cost of a medical procedure up-front. If you're surprised by a medical bill, you may be able to negotiate a lower amount. Contact the hospital or medical practice's billing department to discuss whether you can access any discounts or financial assistance.

Negotiating with a hospital can take time, and if your bill goes unpaid for long, the health care provider might send it to a collections company. If you get a collections notice, the collections company will often be willing to accept a lower amount to satisfy the debt.

Customers often worry, if the bill does go to collections, that it could affect their credit score. Former President Biden tried to block medical debt from being included in credit reports, but a federal judge struck it down in July. Still, any medical debt under \$500 will not affect your credit score.

There are also services that specialize in navigating medical bills. Your employer or your health insurance company might offer you access to such a service.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

When you attempt to cancel a subscription - such as a gym membership, satellite radio or news media - some companies will offer you a lower price to retain your business. "It's not a hard line between negotiating something and canceling it," Chan said.

INSURANCE

If you think you're paying too much for your car insurance or home insurance, you might be able to negotiate with your insurer to pay less, especially if you're willing to adjust the terms of your coverage. Ask whether there are any discounts available - for safe driving, for instance - or consider a higher deductible in exchange for a lower premium. You could also shop around; many customers can get a break if they're willing to switch carriers.

AND SOMETIMES, YOU PROBABLY OUGHT NOT TRY

Sometimes, of course, you can't negotiate. There's no haggling over egg prices at the grocery checkout.

And sometimes, even if you can, you shouldn't. While some artists, tradesmen and service providers are willing to bargain, you should have a sense of the going rate for their services - be it housekeeping, plumbing, gardening, or a DJ for your anniversary party. When you're paying for someone's expertise or skill, you might just want to pay the asking price. Try to pay a reasonable rate, not undercut the value of the services being provided.

SUNY launches 'Outdoors for All' program to get college kids outside

By **ALEX GAULT**

agault@wdt.net

Some SUNY campuses are getting cash to build up their outdoor programs and clubs, part of a system-wide initiative launched by Chancellor John B. King, Jr. this year.

This year, the SUNY 'Outdoors for All' program is providing grants of up to \$8,000 to 13 SUNY cam-

puses who pitched a plan to develop something that encourages students, faculty, staff and nearly residents to engage in outdoor spaces, learn about the environment and participate in nature.

At SUNY Canton, the money will go towards providing equipment, training and programming focused on the outdoors, includ-

ing a student training program that touches on wilderness first aid and outdoor skills. The campus will also purchase winter gear and first aid kits to provide as rentals for students looking to get outdoors.

At SUNY Plattsburgh, the money is going towards an improvement project for the Rugar Woods Trail, building a new trail entrance

and improving signage and maps.

At SUNY Oswego, the campus will resurface trails and replace amenities at the Rice Creek Field Station, and improve signage on the trail network.

"With the launch of SUNY's Outdoors for All program, we are working to ensure that our students have access to inclusive, wel-

coming, and accessible outdoor spaces on- and off-campus," King said. "Through this program, more students and New Yorkers of all ages will have access to hands-on and engaging experiences that will hopefully inspire a life-long love of nature and demonstrate that there is a place at SUNY every New Yorker — both indoors and outdoors."



From Screening to Support. We're with you.

Early detection saves lives. If you are due for a screening mammogram, make the call today. North Star Health Alliance brings together local teams to support you from screening through treatment and survivorship, so you can stay near home and the people who matter most.

Talk with your primary care provider or OB/GYN to schedule your screening mammogram. Claxton-Hepburn Medical Campus offers breast MRIs and a High-Risk Breast Cancer Program led by Dr. Lucille Alston of the R.E. Winter Cancer Center. For more information, call 315.394.9663.

Screening. Diagnosis. Treatment. Support.

Keeping healthcare local across the North Country.

Samaritan Welcomes New OB/GYN, Dr. Emma Marquez

WATERTOWN, NY – Samaritan Medical Center is pleased to welcome OB/GYN Emma Marquez, MD, MPH, to its medical staff.

She will care for patients at Samaritan's Women's Wellness and Breast Care, 1575 Washington St., and Samaritan's Car-Freshner Center for Women and Children, 830 Washington St. The Center for Women and Children is the region's only Level II Perinatal and Level II Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and the only local Children's Miracle Network Hospital.

Dr. Marquez specializes in pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum care, as well as female reproductive health for women of all ages. She completed her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City, followed by an OB/GYN residency at University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. She is board eligible with the American Board of Obstetrics & Gynecology.

Dr. Marquez joins fellow Sa-



Emma Marquez, MD, MPH

maritan OB/GYNs John P. Barrett, MD; Kenya Cain, MD; Jonathan R. Oliva, MD; and Diane I. Shumbusho, MD. Together, with a team of nurses, advanced practice providers and other caregivers, they deliver approximately 1,500 babies per year — more than any hospital in the local area.

Historically, Samaritan's OB/GYN physicians and providers have been assisted by military physicians at Fort Drum OB/GYN, a clinic located in the Samaritan Medical Office Building. On October 7, 2025, this clinic

closed as the Defense Health Agency has decided to stop all obstetric care for Fort Drum soldiers and dependents. This ends a longstanding maternity care partnership between Fort Drum and Samaritan. Only gynecological services will be provided at the Guthrie Army Health Clinic on Fort Drum.

Dr. Marquez helps fill a vital need for OB/GYN care for military families at Samaritan, and other new providers will soon join the Samaritan team to meet the community's needs. Samaritan is actively recruiting, and current physicians are here to ensure all Fort Drum families have maternity care.

"I am thrilled to join such an experienced and caring team of OB/GYNs here at Samaritan," said Dr. Marquez. "The opportunity to care for women and families in the North Country, including active-duty service members and their spouses, brings me great pride."

On average, more than one-third of the babies born each year at Samaritan are from Fort Drum families.

Samaritan Now Offering Advanced Bladder and Bowel Treatments

Samaritan Urology is pleased to announce the availability of advanced, minimally invasive and long-lasting treatment for patients suffering from overactive bladder, urinary retention, stress urinary incontinence, and bowel incontinence.

Axonics Therapy® is an advanced treatment option that provides gentle electrical stimulation to the nerves that control the bladder and bowel, restoring normal communication and resulting in an improvement in symptoms. Axonics Therapy is clinically proven to regain bladder and bowel control and provide long-term symptom relief.

The Axonics System offers a long-lived miniaturized neurostimulator that is long-lasting in the body, eliminating the need for repeat surgeries over the patient's lifetime. The device is implanted into the pelvic area during a minimally invasive, outpatient procedure. Patients are provided with a discreet easy to use Remote Con-

trol that can be used to manage their therapy.

Benefits of Axonics Therapy

Clinically proven to help people regain urinary and bowel control

93% of patients experiencing clinically significant symptom improvements at 2 years post-implant.

Designed to provide patients with long-lasting relief

Allows patients to undergo Full-Body MRI safely without having to explant the device

High patient satisfaction at 2 years 294% of patients were satisfied with their therapy

Bulkamid is a minimally-invasive and long-lasting treatment option for bladder leaks caused by stress urinary incontinence (SUI).

Bladder leakage is common in women, with 1 in 3 suffering from SUI at some point in their lives. 2 SUI tends to develop as women get older, often during or after pregnancy. The leaks are caused

by weakness in the pelvic floor, preventing the urethra from closing fully when sudden pressure is put on the bladder. This can allow urine to leak out during normal daily activities such as coughing, laughing, exercising or lifting an object. Women who experience bladder leaks because of SUI can have severely decreased quality of life.

Bulkamid is a soft, water-based gel delivered via a series of small injections into the urethral wall. Once it is injected, the volume of the gel adds bulk to the urethra, supporting the closing mechanism of the urethra and providing better control of urine. Similar to some facial fillers, it remains in the body over time without causing reactions in the surrounding tissue, resulting in durable, long-lasting relief.

Walker Center for Cancer Care Welcomes New Medical Oncologist



The Walker Center for Cancer Care at Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown. Contributed.

Samaritan Medical Center is pleased to welcome Medical Oncologist Maksim Liaukovich, MD, to the team at the Walker Center for Cancer Care.

Dr. Liaukovich brings years of clinical experience and advanced training to the Walker Center. He received his medical degree from Grodno State Medical University in Belarus and later completed both his internal medicine residency and hematology/medical oncology fellowship at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY. He is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Medical oncology services at the Walker Center are provided through an affiliation with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, NY, as part of the Roswell Park Care Network. Dr. Liaukovich joins Roswell Park-affiliated medical oncologists Florence Arnold, MD, and Ihsan Haq, MD, in providing exceptional cancer care to North Country patients through this partnership. Services offered include:

- Chemotherapy
- Immunotherapy
- Anticoagulation therapy
- Bone marrow aspirate & biopsy
- Transfusions
- Diagnose and treat oncology and hematology disorders

"I am excited and honored to work with the teams at the Walker Center for Cancer Care and Roswell Park Care Network," Dr. Liaukovich said, "Most importantly, I am grateful to use my expertise to help families here in the North Country. My colleagues and I are committed to serving our community with the best possible quality of cancer care."

"Dr. Liaukovich is a welcome addition to the Walker Center's medical oncology team," said Dr. Mario Victoria, Vice President for Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer at Samaritan Medical Center. "His extensive training in medical oncology, hematology and internal medicine will enhance care for our patients and support our goal to stay at the forefront of cancer treatment. We are pleased to bring a full-time permanent position to the patients at the Walker Center."

Dr. Liaukovich comes to Samaritan from AR Gould Northern Light Health Hospital in Presque Isle, ME. His wife, Dr. Volha Liaukovich, will join the medical staff in October, working for Samaritan's contracted hospitalist group, Apogee Physicians.

For more information about medical oncology at the Walker Center for Cancer Care, visit samaritanhealth.com/cancer-care/.

How to improve your health at any age, even after setbacks

By **MAGGIE PENMAN**

The Washington Post

When Florene Shuber was around 82 years old, she noticed sometimes she'd trip and fall.

"One thing that old people don't realize when they fall, is they don't know they're falling until they're about this far from the ground," she said, holding up her fingers an inch apart. "I found it pretty frightening. It happened two or three times. And I thought, I have to do something about this."

There was a small gym near where she lived that she had walked past for years, and finally she went inside and asked to meet with a trainer. She started working out regularly.

Shuber is 91 now and said she feels younger and stronger than she did 10 years ago.

"You can improve. I see it in myself, for sure," Shuber said. But it is hard work, she adds. "You have to be consistent with it."

Some people see aging as a one-way decline. But new research in the journal PLOS One finds that it is possible for many adults over 60 to find their way back to strength and flourishing, even after health setbacks.

"It's never too late," said first author Mabel Ho, a recent doctoral graduate at the University of Toronto.

The study began with Ho's research about successful aging in Canada. Working with her professor and co-author Esme Fuller-Thomson, she looked at data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging to see what factors contributed to thriving in older age - which they define as a self-reported sense of physical, psychological, emotional and social well-being, regardless of chronic conditions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, exercise and a healthy lifestyle were key.

The data is from a health and aging study that followed 51,338 Canadians for 20 years to assess what contributes to a long and

healthy life.

What caught researchers attention was that a group of older adults - 8,332 people - reported they were in poor health in one or more areas but had turned it around three years later when data was collected again. They had focused on their health and saw results.

"We noticed that some people actually improve over time," Ho said. "So that's how we came to this very encouraging finding we call 'reclaiming wellness.'"

The next step was to determine what factors are correlated with bouncing back to better health. The data showed a number of things older adults can do, some of which surprised researchers.

■ ■ ■

The biggest overall payoff? Tending to your mental health.

As researchers looked closely at who regained well-being, they noticed that people who reported having good mental health were nearly five times more likely to be back to optimal well-being three years later - meaning that sense of physical, psychological, social and emotional well-being.

"That is not what I had expected," Fuller-Thomson said.

It turns out that if you weren't depressed at baseline, you were much more likely to be able to find the motivation to do other things that were important for improving your health.

The finding emphasizes that older people who are struggling with physical health might want to address their psychological and emotional needs first when possible, especially if they are lonely.

"Social isolation is really problematic for every outcome," Fuller-Thomson said. She added that having good mental health and developing strong social connections means making an effort, but it doesn't mean you have to become a differ-



"You can improve. I see it in myself, for sure," Florene Shuber said. Florene Shuber

ent person.

"I don't want the message to be that you have to be a raging extrovert to age well. Social connection is how you define it. So if you have one or two dear friends that are all you need in life, but they are wonderful, that's really important," Fuller-Thomson said.

For Shuber, living in a retirement community has helped her stay connected, especially as she has lost friends and family as she ages.

"A lot of people don't want to come into a retirement home, and I get that," Shuber said. "But it gets harder when you're living alone."

Shuber said that for her, planning ahead and traveling with people has been key to staying connected.

■ ■ ■

You can get stronger at any age

Most of the factors that predicted whether an older person was able to regain optimal well-being came down to basic lifestyle choices: not smoking (or quitting if you do), eating well and sleeping

enough.

Exercise was also key, as Shuber found when she began working with a trainer. Exercise can change how rapidly we age, with both aerobic and strength training being important. It's never too late to start, they said, but emphasized that exercise has enormous benefits earlier in life, too. Just make sure you're doing appropriate exercise for your fitness level, and consult a doctor if you're not sure.

"I do think that we have a message for people of all ages," Ho said. "It's never too early to engage into an active and healthy lifestyle. Eat well, exercise, sleep well, and that would be something that we can all prepare for our own aging."

"I mean, these are all the things your mom told you," Fuller-Thomson said.

One limitation of this study that the researchers acknowledge is because it was done in Canada, all the participants had access to free medical care.

The researchers said their primary goal is to change the

narrative around aging: old age is not all about decline, it can also be a time when people get healthier and stronger, and the data shows that.

'Just keep learning somehow'

One of the things that many older people who are thriving have in common is a desire to keep growing and learning.

There's a program at the University of Toronto that brings seniors from a retirement community into a college class. Shuber participates and said both the younger people and the older people benefit from the others' perspective.

"Most people think the benefit comes from the young people. But I think that we older folks have a lot to teach them. We've been through everything you've experienced to date and will experience," Shuber said. "As my granddaughter would put it, young people get lost in the weeds sometimes."

Marion Gommerman, 82, also attended the classes, then decided to enroll at the University of Toronto, where she is now studying alongside her grandson. Her daughter is also a professor at the university. Gommerman's advice to seniors who don't have the opportunity to go back to school is to find a way to keep learning.

"Just keep learning somehow," she said, either through reading or just being connected to the community.

Shuber has always been a lifelong learner. After a career as an educator, she went back to school at 40 to become a lawyer. She had a second career practicing law, and then a third, creating a Montessori teachers college to train other educators.

"I retired at 86," Shuber said. "I think the big surprise about growing older is that there were a lot of things I find still very exciting, areas where I feel I can still contribute and have a full life."

Malone Adult Center moving

By ALEXANDER VIOLO

aviolo@mtelegram.com

MALONE — A local adult center will be relocating next month to a new location in the village, just over a mile from its current location.

The Malone Adult Center, currently located on State Route 30 in the town, will move into the village and open its doors at St. Andres Outreach Center, at 12 Homestead Park, in November, according to Paula Martin, director of the Malone Adult Center.

Martin said starting on Saturday, Nov. 8, the adult center will be moving to the old Holy Family School.

“We are going into the cafeteria that is in there,” she said, adding the adult center’s last day at its current location will be Friday, Nov. 7, with the center’s meal prep temporarily moving to Burke before going to the new location.

“Our last day of cooking here is the seventh and then we are going to start moving, my head cook and my assistant cook and two reliefs are going to Burke



The Malone Adult Center, currently located on State Route 30, in the town, will be moving to the village at St. Andres Outreach Center on Homestead Park, in November. The center’s new location is scheduled to open on Saturday, Nov. 8.

and they are going to be cooking out of the Burke Adult Center for about two weeks so we can still feed our people,” Martin said, “Then they will be joining us at Holy Family.”

Martin said the move to the location in the village was prompted by expenses, adding more costs are covered at the new place than the center’s current location, adding the former school already had a cafeteria area that was a good fit for the center’s needs.

“That was basically the only location because of what was in there, once upon a time, and we didn’t have to do a lot of remodeling,” she said, “We can take our

equipment and just move it right in there.”

According to Martin, the adult center in Malone, has been located on State Route 30 for 10 years, moving there from a past location on Morton Street, near the church.

Martin said the adult center’s congregate meals and meal delivery will continue after the move.

“Everything will keep going from there,” she said, adding the center’s Thanksgiving meal is also planned for the new location, “Thanksgiving is a little ways off but with everything going on it’s going to come up on us quick.”

Malone plans warming/cooling center

By ALEXANDER VIOLO

aviolo@mtelegram.com

MALONE — The first warming/cooling center in Franklin County is scheduled to open next month on West Main Street.

The new resource, available to area residents this winter, is the result of Franklin County Department of Social Services and Franklin County Community Services entering into a contract with Community Connections.

Community Connections, a non-profit based in Malone, announced the opening of the county’s first warming/cooling center, in a press release Monday. The center will be located in Malone, at 209 West Main St., a building which houses Community Connections.

The warming center will provide a safe, warm, and welcoming space for individuals in need during the cold evenings of a North Country winter, according to Commu-

nity Connections, which and the center will operate nightly from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., offering shelter from the cold, light refreshments, and access to basic necessities.

“This warming center is a critical step toward ensuring that no one in Franklin County is left out in the cold and all Franklin County residents have a safe place during the night,” Lee Rivers, Community Connections CEO said, in the release, “Through strong partnerships and a shared commitment to our most vulnerable neighbors, we are creating a safer, more compassionate community.”

The center will provide additional safe space for community members, Michele Mulverhill, Department of Social Services commissioner, said in the release, adding in recent years there has been an increase in homelessness alongside a shortage of afford-

See WARMINGH10

Accepting New Patients at Family Health at Malone!

Where Compassion Meets Quality.

Award-winning health care right here in the North Country.



HHHN.org

Three North Country Residents Honored as 2025 Community Health Heroes

Individuals from Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties to be honored at Community Health Hero Award luncheon

In communities across the North Country, there are everyday people whose quiet dedication makes a world of difference. This year, three of those individuals are being celebrated for their compassion, service, and unwavering commitment to improving local health and wellness.

Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO) and the North Country Health Compass Partners have named the 2025 Community Health Hero Award recipients: Jessica Sheldon of Jefferson County, Brandy Kirch of Lewis County, and Michele Catlin of St. Lawrence County.

Each honoree has made a unique impact. Sheldon, owner of FAITH Riding Center and a pediatric occupational therapist with Build-

ing Blocks Family Services, uses equine therapy and hands-on care to help children grow in strength and confidence. Kirch, homeless care manager with Snow Belt Housing Company, Inc., works tirelessly to connect vulnerable individuals and families with housing and healthcare resources. Catlin, a diabetes program specialist at Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center, dedicates her work to helping patients manage chronic disease and lead healthier lives.

The Community Health Hero Awards are presented annually in honor of National Rural Health Day, celebrated this year on November 20, 2025. The awards recognize residents from Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties who go above and beyond to address health challenges and improve quality of life across the region.

"Each year, the Health Hero nominations remind us of how many extraordinary

people are making a difference in our communities," said Pat Fontana, Deputy Director of FDRHPO. "This year's nominees are incredibly dedicated, compassionate, and inspiring individuals who we are so pleased to recognize."

The award ceremony will also feature guest speaker Anna Platz, Community Services Director for Lewis County and a 2019 Community Health Hero herself. Platz was recognized six years ago for her work in suicide prevention during her time as a public health specialist with Lewis County Public Health.

A luncheon honoring the 2025 recipients will be held on November 19 at the Hilton Garden Inn Watertown/1000 Islands from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tickets are \$20, and registration is required. To register for the luncheon, visit www.fdrhpo.org. For more information about National Rural Health Day, visit nosorh.org/nrhd.



Michele Catlin, diabetes program specialist, Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center. Provided photo



Brandy Kirch, homeless care manager, Snow Belt Housing Company Inc. Provided photo

Degree Programs

Areas of Interest:
Allied Health & Biological Sciences*
Healthcare Management*
Nursing

Microcredentials:
Direct Support Professional I & II**
Healthcare Management I & II

Workforce:
Clinical Medical Assistant
Dental Assistant
Medical Billing & Coding

*50% or more may be completed online
**grant funded for qualified individuals

Jefferson
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

315-786-2200

**GREAT CAREERS
IN HEALTHCARE
START HERE!**

Transfer
Starting at Jefferson secures
your spot at a four-year college
& saves you money!

Potsdam
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Public Health

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

Medical Imaging Radiography (X-ray)
Medical Imaging Sciences/Ultrasound
Medical Technology
And More

sunyjefferson.edu/academicprograms

YOUR LOCAL PROFESSIONAL CONNECTION

Contact Angel
315-661-2457
or **315-782-0400**
email: **aspencer@wdt.net**

LANDSCAPING/SNOW REMOVAL

BLUESKYS LANDSCAPING & SNOW REMOVAL LCC

FREE
ESTIMATES

Spring clean up, Mulching, Fall clean up,
Lawn Maintenance, Mowing, Snow Removal

315-767-9552

Fully
Insured

TRACTORS & EQUIPMENT

JOYNER'S, INC.

AUTHORIZED KIOTI DEALER

KIOTI

2506 US RT. 11
MANNSVILLE, NY

315-465-6661

SILVER DOLLARS

WANTED SILVER DOLLARS

— Collector Not Dealer —



Paying top dollar for silver dollars dated 1935 & before, more for better dates, cc's, mint state, and certified. Highest cash paid for all other silver or gold U.S. coins pre 1965.

Buying complete estate or personal coin or note collections. Paying the most cash for paper money 1861-1957. \$1 bills thru \$1000 bills, large notes, small notes, national notes silver, or gold certificates. To get the most for your money. CALL RANDY 315-952-4004

PLUMBING / HEATING / AIR

BARTLETT AND SONS

✓ PLUMBING ✓ HEATING ✓ A/C

315-232-3280

★ 24 EMERGENCY SERVICE ★

✓ PLUMBING ✓ HEATING ✓ AIR

58 N. Main Street, Adams • 315-232-3280

STANDBY GENERATORS

AUTOMATIC STANDBY GENERATORS

GENERAC

24/7

AUTOMATIC
POWER PROTECTION

Back-Up Power
For Your Home Or
Business

KIERNAN
CONTRACTORS, INC.
ELECTRICAL AND UTILITY CONTRACTORS

**315
348-4049**

ANTIQUES

Serving You Since 1974

Barry L. Haynes Co.

Antiques

Dealers • Actioneers • Appraisers



We Buy, Sell & Appraise
Antiques, Collections & Estates

P.O. Box 900, Mexico, N.Y. 13114

315-963-0922 • 315-963-3749

CLOCK REPAIR

TIC TOC CLOCK REPAIR

★ Alex MacKinnon ★



All Kinds of Spring
and Weight
Driven Clocks

Pickups and
Delivery Available

Phone:
315-778-1287

ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES

SHERMAN ELECTRIC

Residential & Commercial
Electrical Supplies

Distribution Equipment, Conduit,
Lighting Fixtures, Wiring Devices, etc.

GREAT PRICES!

417 S. Clinton St.
Carthage, NY

315-493-3050

Over 100 years of knowledge and experience!

St. Lawrence Region Team Members of the Second Quarter



L to R: SLR President Donna McGregor; SLR Chief Nursing Officer Christina Latta; Alena Jacobs; CPH Nursing Manager of Operations Travis Dineen; and SLR Chief Information Officer Lyndon Allen. St. Lawrence Region photo



L to R: MH Associate Chief Operating Officer Brent Bishop; MH Nursing Operations Manager Michael Newtown; Meagan Lazore; MH Director of ED Nursing Peggy Truesdell; and SLR President Donna McGregor. St. Lawrence Region photo



L to R: MH Associate Chief Operating Officer Brent Bishop; Alexander Kot; SLR Director of Safety and Security Steve Evans; and SLR President Donna McGregor. St. Lawrence Region photo



L to R: GH Associate Chief Operating Officer Heather Rich; Serena Lafayette; GH Inpatient Nurse Manager Carrie Foster; and SLR Chief Nursing Officer Christina Latta. St. Lawrence Region photo



L to R: GH Associate Chief Operating Officer Heather Rich; Nancy Bice; GH Patient Access Manager Patty Rogers; and SLR Chief Nursing Officer Christina Latta. St. Lawrence Region photo



L to R: SLR Chief Nursing Officer Christina Latta; Lauren Prentice; SLR President Donna McGregor; and SLR Chief Information Officer Lyndon Allen. St. Lawrence Region photo



L to R: SLR Chief Operating Officer Sinéad Ingersoll; Mara DeCarr; SLR Director of Clinical Network Clinical Operations Rebecca Hall; and SLR Director of Clinical Network Ambulatory Operations and Finance Gretchen Strawser. St. Lawrence Region photo

RRH's St. Lawrence Region Welcomes FNP-C Hyneman

Rochester Regional Health is pleased to announce the addition of **Tara Hyneman, FNP-C**, to its growing provider team within the St. Lawrence Region. A North Country native, Hyneman brings more than 20 years of healthcare experience and a deep-rooted commitment to its services. While her primary location will be at 77 W. Barney Street in Gouverneur, she offers virtual care and services across the entire region.

Hyneman, who earned her **Family Nurse Practitioner** degree from **SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Utica**, has long considered this area her home. A graduate of Gouverneur Central High, she's built her life and career in the region having worked as an RN in numerous hospitals across the Region, including **Gouverneur Hospital**.

Hyneman's care philoso-

phy emphasizes dignity, respect, and patient autonomy, reflecting her strong belief that healthcare should be tailored to the individual, not just the diagnosis.

Hyneman and her colleagues offer compassionate and comprehensive **OB/GYN care** tailored to every stage of life. Whether you're planning a family, managing chronic pelvic pain, or simply due for a wellness exam, the team provides convenient access to high-quality, personalized care close to home and is committed to helping patients achieve their health goals with respect, expertise, and a patient-first approach.

Hyneman's appointment represents Rochester Regional Health's continued commitment to expanding access to care and specialized services in the region.

Warming

From H6

able and appropriate housing. This new center will provide the area with an additional resource not only offering a warm place to stay during inclement weather, but also providing on-site services and care coordination to better support this vulnerable population and streamline access to needed assistance, according to Mulverhill.

"There is such a significant need for this type of service in Franklin County. Everyone deserves a safe and warm place on a cold winter night, where they can rest, have a meal and obtain warm clothing," Suzanne Lavigne, the county's director of Community Supports, said in the release, "A significant aspect of the warming center will be the availability of staff who can assist an individual in accessing services through the referral process. I am grateful to Community Connections for taking the lead on this import-

ant project. There are services and resources available in our community that lend a helping hand to those in need."

The warming center is scheduled to open for its first night on Wednesday, Nov. 5.

The center will be open to anyone in need of a warm, safe place to stay during the night, according to Community Connections, and guests must arrive between 6 and 7 p.m., with staff on hand to assist guests and connect them to additional support services as needed.

Community Connections, in the release, thanked the Adirondack Foundation, Hudson Headwaters and Alice Hyde Medical Center for their assistance with funding to help obtain supplies for the warming center and offer education.

For more information or to inquire about volunteer opportunities, contact Denise Saunders by phone at 518-521-3507 or email at dsaunders@communityconnectionsfcny.org.

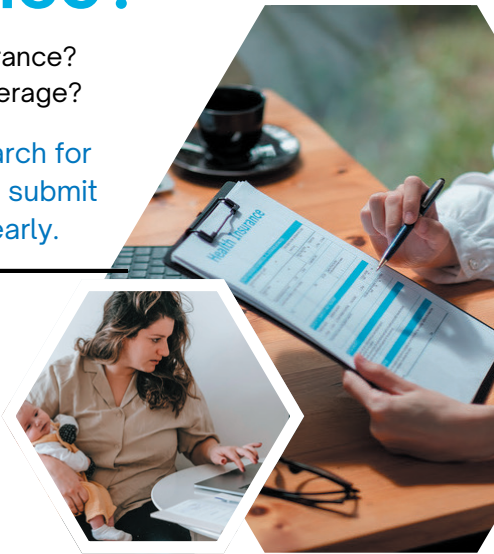
Need Affordable Health Insurance?

Need help applying for health insurance?
Is it time to renew your current coverage?

Certified Assistors can help you search for coverage, complete the application, submit needed documents, and renew yearly.

▶ Health Plans Include

- ✓ Medicaid
- ✓ Child Health Plus
- ✓ Essential Plans
- ✓ Qualified Health Plans



Services are free, confidential, and conveniently located with multiple in-person enrollment sites in Franklin County. Contact MILC today!

Contact



518-483-2151 or
1-877-397-9613 Toll Free



Website:
milcinc.org/insurance

Pediatric Expansion

At our Ogdensburg Health Center!

Medical Check-Ups
Vaccinations
Care Coordination
WIC Referrals



Community Health Center
of the North Country

102 Ford Street | 315.713.9350



Sunny Patel, MD
Pediatrician

Woman regains independence after hip replacement surgery at Canton-Potsdam Hospital

POTSDAM, NY – A local woman trusted one of Canton-Potsdam Hospital's (CPH) orthopedic surgeons and has noted she absolutely made the right decision to have her hip replacement surgery performed locally.

Susan Hart of Potsdam highly praised every aspect of her surgical procedure through Rochester Regional Health's St. Lawrence Region (SLR), and by Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon Dragos Macelaru, MD, FRCPC, or Dr. Mac as he is known to his patients.

"The whole experience has given me my independence back," Ms. Hart said. "I think Dr. Mac is a wonderful surgeon; you just couldn't find a better doctor. I will have to have my other hip done eventually, and I'll be going back to him for sure!"

Hart had been suffering from constant hip pain for over two years, and it was when her mobility became even more limited that she spoke to her Board Certified Rheumatologist, Eyal Kedar, MD, about it. He advised her to seek Pain Management services, which she did through Board Certified Pain Specialist David Abbatematteo, MD. Hart received cortisone shots and physical therapy through an initial conservative approach.

"I was very limited. I couldn't put my own shoes and socks on, and I used a cane. It was getting pretty debilitating. So when the shots didn't work, Dr. Abbatematteo said I needed to see an orthopedic surgeon, but we needed to do an x-ray first. I had the x-ray and they found I had a torn labrum and pretty signif-



Canton-Potsdam Hospital Orthopedic Surgeon Dragos Macelaru, MD, conducts a follow-up exam with Susan Hart who had her right hip replaced by him in December 2024.

icant arthritis in my right hip," Hart said.

The Surgical Experience

"I made an appointment with Dr. Mac, and it was just the beginning of greatness. Even though I had people telling me to go to Syracuse or Saranac Lake, I didn't want to do that. I'm a true believer in supporting my community, and I absolutely made the right decision," she added.

Hart had a list of questions in hand when she went to her initial appointment with Dr. Macelaru, and after their discussion she realized he had answered everything on her list.

"He explained everything to me and told me the significance of my injury and situation, and said I really needed a total hip replacement," she said. "He gave me a real sense of ease. He was very informative and compassionate, and listened to everything I had to say. Dr. Mac explained things to me very thoroughly and told me it was going to be painful, but he pre-

pared me in a way that I knew what to expect."

Hart was then on her way to preparing for a December 2024 surgery. She completed a CPH joint replacement class, and the orthopedic team provided her with a book that outlined all aspects of the surgery, which she said she read over and over.

"I was very prepared and I was excited because I was ready to move on with my life. I wanted to get in and out of my car and the bathtub, and be able to move about freely without being in pain," she said.

From pre-surgery to the day of surgery and through post-surgery, Hart was impressed how everyone she encountered from so many offices was well-informed about her as their patient. "They knew what the other person had already talked to me about. The day after my surgery, someone called me and knew exactly what to ask me. I just think that's really important, the communication, and it is was very person-



Susan Hart.

able," she noted.

Following several weeks of therapy, Hart's hip was pain-free. She knew the importance of completing the sessions set forth by her surgeon, and even worked with a trainer on her own and received massage therapy. During her post-surgical appointments, Dr. Macelaru was extremely pleased with Hart's progression and overall improvement.

Getting Her Life Back

She noted there are so many simple tasks that we all take for granted simply because we've always done them. But losing the ability to go up and down stairs, putting on socks, tie your shoes, and clip your own toenails, and then to get those abilities back is life-changing.

"The biggest thing is, I don't have the fear of falling anymore. My leg used to give out, and I'd be on the floor. Also, I'm not turning down invitations to go places and do things, and I'm no longer checking my watch all the time to see if I can take ibuprofen again. The pain is gone," Hart said.

Hart believes that having her surgery five minutes from where she lives and being able to recover at home helped with the speed and quality of her recovery.

"I didn't have to worry about a long ride home, and if I needed to see my doctor, he was minutes away. It really meant a lot to me that the hospital was close by and I was in my community," she said.

"I would definitely recommend the St. Lawrence Region for the whole thing. It was a positive experience, and I felt supported all the way through from pre-surgery appointments, being in the hospital, and throughout my follow-up care - everyone was very supportive. There was no need to go outside this system. We have wonderful practitioners here, and everything you need is available," Hart said.

Learn more about orthopedic and joint replacement services available through Rochester Regional Health: <https://www.rochesterregional.org/services/orthopedics>

Support group for Suicide Loss Survivors

Rochester Regional Health's Gouverneur Hospital and the St. Lawrence County Suicide Awareness Coalition is inviting community members who have lost someone to suicide to join its Suicide Loss Survivors Support Group, a safe, compassionate space designed to help individuals connect, heal, and find hope alongside others who understand their grief.

The group is facilitated by Clinical Social Worker Mary Dousharm, LCSW-R who has extensive experience supporting individuals through traumatic loss. "In St. Lawrence County alone, we lost 25 people to suicide last year," said Dousharm. When you consider how many family members, friends, coworkers, and neighbors are affected by each one of those deaths, the

need for a dedicated support group becomes clear."

Research shows that for every person who dies by suicide, as many as 135 people can be deeply affected by the loss.

Losing someone to suicide can feel isolating in a way that's hard to put into words. This group exists so no one has to navigate that pain alone. There is comfort in talking with people who truly understand.

The support group meets the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 pm at the Gouverneur Community Center. Additionally, people can participate via Zoom. Sessions are free to attend, and participants are welcome regardless of how long ago their loss occurred.

"We create a judgment-free, confidential space where people can share at their own pace," said Dousharm.

The group focuses on connection, healthy grieving, and helping participants find meaning while honoring their loved ones. Attendees may include spouses, parents, siblings, adult children, extended family members, and close friends.

How to Join

Those interested in attending can contact Mary Dousharm at (315) 261-5638 or mary.dousharm@rochesterregional.org. Walk-ins are welcome.

Lung Cancer Awareness Event

November 5, 2025 • 5 – 7 p.m.
at the Walker Center for Cancer Care

Featuring the **MONARCH™ QUEST** Robotic Bronchoscopy Platform

What Can You Expect at this Lung Cancer Awareness Event?

- Learn about why early screening is important
- Meet our pulmonology and oncology teams
- See the new **MONARCH™ QUEST** robot
- Start the screening process for lung cancer

Open and Free to the Community
Refreshments Served
RSVPs Appreciated

Who Should Get Screened for Lung Cancer?



Have a 20 pack-year or more smoking history²



Smoke now or have quit within the last 15 years²



Are between 50 and 80 years old²

A pack-year is smoking an average of one pack of cigarettes per day for one year. For example, a person could have a 20 pack-per-day history by smoking one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years.¹

References 1: CDC. Who Should Be Screened for Lung Cancer?, 11 March 2021, https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/lung/basic_info/screening.htm. Accessed 20 Oct. 2021.
2: Choi, Elle; Land, Erin 2021, Nearly twice as many patients are now eligible for lung cancer screenings—here is what you need to know, 14 Sept. 2021, AstraZeneca with the Lung Ambition Alliance, <https://www.advisory.com/sponsored/lung-cancer>. Accessed 20 Oct. 2021.



The MONARCH™ QUEST Platform is the first flexible, robotically assisted platform for bronchoscopy. It provides access to and visualization of airways to enable healthcare providers to biopsy suspicious lung nodules. **Samaritan is currently the only hospital in New York State utilizing the MONARCH™ QUEST.**

Walker Center

830 Washington St., Watertown, NY
(Use Woodruff Street entrance)

To RSVP:
315-785-4584
or online (scan the QR code)



Samaritan
Health