

# PRIME

Winter 2011

## Seeing Stars:

Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center  
Recognized for 5-Star Care

## New Year's Resolutions

A Healthier You  
Finding Dr. Right

The **DOMINO Effect** of  
**DIABETES**

Kerry Barefoot, Bedford, PA  
Cardiac Patient



[www.conemaugh.org](http://www.conemaugh.org)

It's  
**PRIME**  
time!



William Carney, MD

**Lose weight, exercise, stop smoking...**

chances are health conscious thoughts like this topped your list of New Year's resolutions. But don't forget to add health screenings to your list this year. There are a number of screenings that you should have each year depending on your age and

**Prime** [prahym] *adj.*- of first importance; demanding full consideration

**noun** - 1. most flourishing stage or state 2. the best choice or part of anything

gender. Some are very simple, others require a little pre-preparation, but all can help identify potentially serious health related conditions that, if caught early, can be treated. For a complete list log on to [www.conemaugh.org](http://www.conemaugh.org) and click on the *Health Screenings* button. **Make this year the healthiest yet!**

*William M. Carney*

William Carney, MD  
Medical Director  
Conemaugh Physician Group



Look for the video camera throughout **PRIME** for related web videos available at [www.conemaugh.org](http://www.conemaugh.org)

# A Healthier You all year through!

Each year brings with it a fresh start and a time to plan out your health calendar... so talk to your doctor about the recommended health screenings that should make your list this year. The screenings change based on your age, gender, health history and lifestyle.

We can help with the screening guidelines. Contact us for a **free scroll pen** that includes screening recommendations based on gender and age. Call 814-534-3121 or log on to [www.conemaugh.org](http://www.conemaugh.org) and click the *Health Screenings* button.



## Getting to the Bottom of it!

There's **GOOD NEWS** and **BAD NEWS** when it comes to **Colorectal Cancer**.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** between 1985 and 2005 the incidence of colorectal cancer fell by a third, which has been attributed to screenings - a major focus of Conemaugh's March Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month campaign.

**THE BAD NEWS:** it still remains the second-leading cause of cancer deaths.

"If patients who are 50 or over or at risk of the disease are vigilant about their screenings, often times, polyps or cancer can be diagnosed in the early stages and effectively treated," says **Premnath Narahari, MD**, board-certified gastroenterologist, **Conemaugh Physician Group (CPG) Gastroenterology**. "Talk to your doctor about a screening, or if you experience an onset of any new symptoms."



Dr. Premnath Narahari

# The **DOMINO** Effect of **DIABETES**

If you or a loved one are among the 23 million Americans with diabetes, then you're no stranger to the complications that can arise. In honor of Diabetes Alert Day on March 23, caregivers at Conemaugh want you to be 'on alert'! "Diabetes is extremely serious," says **Amy Reynolds, DO**, board-certified **CPG Family Medicine** physician with offices in Richland and Davidsville. "As the leading cause of blindness, kidney disease and lower extremity amputations, the complications can come on gradually, but can also be life threatening."



"When blood sugar is too high, it can cause major damage to the kidneys, heart, nerves, eyes and blood vessels."  
**Dr. Amy Reynolds**



"We help motivate each other to stay on track with diet and exercise," says Ila.

Husband and wife, **P.J. and Ila Shah** of Ebensburg know the dangers of diabetes all too well. Both diabetics, they turned to each other and to the **Conemaugh Diabetes Institute** for support. "We help motivate each other to stay on track," says Ila. "The diabetes class we took was very helpful in teaching us the importance of diet and how to read food labels to keep your blood sugar in check."

"Diabetes can have a devastating domino effect on the body. The best advice is to follow a nutrition and exercise plan and get regular check-ups. For those with diabetes, please take advantage of programs that can help you effectively manage your condition," says **William Pruchnic, MD, Medical Director, Conemaugh Diabetes Institute, Conemaugh Physician Group.**



**Diabetes Self Management Education Classes** are available at these locations.



**Conemaugh Ebensburg**  
 236 Jamesway Road  
 Ebensburg, PA



**Miners Medical Center**  
 290 Haida Road  
 Hastings, PA



**Meyersdale Medical Center**  
 200 Hospital Drive  
 Meyersdale, PA

To learn more about diabetes screenings, classes or Conemaugh's new **Right Weigh Program**, call **Carol Harding, RN**, Manager, **Conemaugh Diabetes Institute** at 814-534-6800.



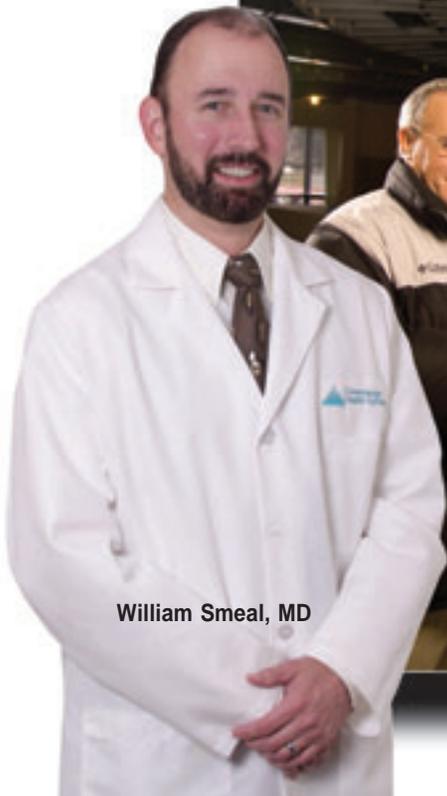
# Seeing Stars

Our Vision: **Excellence. Every Patient. Every Time.** is helping us reach great outcomes for our patients, including **5-star** ratings in a number of clinical areas from **HealthGrades**, the Nation's leading independent healthcare ratings organization.

"My father passed away at 54 and my grandmother on my mom's side was only 58 when she died." His family history of heart disease is what made **Kerry Barefoot**, a retired high school principal in Bedford, see a doctor at the age of 52 when he noticed that he was becoming tired while walking. Since then, Barefoot has had two cardiac catheterizations to treat blocked arteries. "Dr. Smeal makes me feel like I'll live to be 100," chuckles Barefoot. "He always takes his time, answers all of my questions, and he also explained that this is a lifelong condition. With heart disease, you always need to stay on top of your health."



Kerry Barefoot supervising renovations at Bedford Middle School



William Smeal, MD

"Plain and simple, heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women," says **William Smeal MD, FACC, Cardiologist, CPG Cardiology**, who has offices in Everett and Johnstown. "We can use our knowledge, as physicians, and offer the most advanced technology, but at the end of the day, patients who are committed to their health, like Kerry, have much better outcomes."

Barefoot is one of thousands of success stories for Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center's Cardiac Services program, which recently celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. "It's more than about how long we've been around, it's about how far the program has come and how many lives we've been able to touch in 20 years," says **Samir Hadeed, MD, FACC, FSCAI, CPG Cardiology, Medical Director, Memorial Cardio-Vascular Services**. "Our vision is *Excellence. Every Patient. Every Time.* and the dedication of the physicians and staff to this vision is what makes it a national award-winning program."

★★★★★ Coronary Intervention Procedures

## 2011

- ★★★★★ Valve Replacement Surgery
- ★★★★★ Coronary Intervention Procedures
- ★★★★★ Treatment of Heart Attack
- ★★★★★ Joint Replacement surgery
- ★★★★★ Total Knee Replacement
- ★★★★★ Total Hip Replacement
- ★★★★★ Repair of Abdominal Aorta
- ★★★★★ Appendectomy
- ★★★★★ Pneumonia
- ★★★★★ Overall Pulmonary Care
- ★★★★★ Pulmonary Embolism
- ★★★★★ Respiratory Failure
- ★★★★★ Maternity Care

*Based on HealthGrades 2011 study, patients at 5-star rated hospitals had a 72% lower risk of dying when compared with patients at 1-star rated hospitals.*



 Justin Boccardo, MD

In April 2010, **V. Joyce Marsh** of Ebensburg was enjoying a snowbird lifestyle in South Carolina, when she decided to participate in a health screening. “I believe in preventative medicine,” says Marsh, a retired emergency room nurse. “The screening discovered Marsh had an abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA). “I was shook up when they told me because, as a nurse, I know how dangerous AAAs are,” says Marsh.

“AAAs occur when the large blood vessel to the abdomen and legs weakens in one area, ballooning out,” says **James Tretter, DO, FACS, Board-certified Vascular Surgeon, CPG Vascular Surgery**. “If the vessel becomes too weak, it can rupture— which is fatal in more than 60 percent of cases.”

“I knew Dr. Tretter and I wanted him to do the surgery, so we packed up the car and returned home.” While men are more likely than women to develop AAAs, risk factors for both genders, include smoking, high blood pressure or cholesterol and obesity. “If you are 65 or older, especially if you’ve ever smoked, talk to your doctor about a screening,” says **Justin Boccardo, MD, Vascular Surgeon, CPG Vascular Surgery**. Following surgery for her AAA, Marsh is back to enjoying retirement. “There are many people out there like me walking around with this condition, and they have no symptoms; that’s why it’s so important for people to get screened.”

★★★★★ Repair of Abdominal Aorta



V. Joyce Marsh enjoying retirement in South Carolina

 James Tretter, DO

Conemaugh Memorial also earned recognition for the surgical removal of a mysterious little organ—the appendix. It may be small, just about four inches in length, but it can be deadly.

For 24-year-old **Tracey Jeske** of Johnstown stomach pain turned from mild to agonizing. She suffered for two days before heading to Memorial’s emergency department. Once there doctors quickly diagnosed the problem and Tracey was headed to the operating room.

“The majority of appendectomies in this country are done on a semi-urgent basis in order to minimize the risk of perforation and the complications associated with it,” says **Russell Dumire, MD, Board-certified General and Critical Care Surgeon, CPG Conemaugh Valley Surgeons**, who sees patients at Memorial and Conemaugh Meyersdale Medical Centers. “Although the function of the appendix is not fully understood, it appears to have to been more important in early embryonic development and has minimal to no significant function later in life. It can be safely removed and the laproscope minimizes the scarring and shortens recovery time in some patients.”

“I think it is really cool how they did it laparoscopically,” says Tracey. “They used three tiny holes and now you can’t really even see where they were.” **D’Arcy Duke, MD, FACS, General and Bariatric Surgeon**, also of **CPG Conemaugh Valley Surgeons** adds, “People can overlook symptoms of appendicitis, so it’s important to know what to look for. Pain that can start as dull and become sharp, settling in the lower right abdomen is common, along with loss of appetite and nausea. If you experience these symptoms, see a doctor immediately.”

★★★★★ Appendectomy



Tracey Jeske celebrating the holidays with son Landon

 D’Arcy Duke, MD

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# SAFE SURGERY



The new Drager Apollo Anesthesia workstations at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center

Surgery just got even safer at Memorial following the \$1.3 million purchase of 23 new Drager Apollo Anesthesia workstations. “We are very excited about this new technology and the benefits it brings to our patients,” says **Dr. Daniel Meenan, Medical Director and Chairman of Memorial’s Department of Anesthesia.** “Apollo has the ventilation technology to care for patients of any age, size and level of sickness—technology previously only available in an Intensive Care Unit.” All 12 operating rooms at Memorial’s Main Campus have been outfitted with the Apollo machines, in addition to the Lee Ambulatory Surgery Center located at Memorial’s Lee Campus. “With this technology, we can do an even better job of ‘breathing for people’ while they are undergoing surgery,” says **Bill Brady, CRNA, Respiratory Therapist and Supervisor, Anesthesia Department.** “The machines also include special modes for larger-built people, those with compromised lung function and allow for easier awakening from general anesthesia.”

## Finding Dr. Right

- ☑ Gender
- ☑ Age
- ☑ Office Location
- ☑ Training

*Just as we look for certain characteristics in a mate, “Mr. or Mrs. Right,” there are also characteristics to consider when selecting your **Dr. Right.***

Many criteria could be on your checklist, but the most important thing is that you ultimately connect with a physician that can fulfill your healthcare needs. “A recent study supports the notion that patients with an ongoing relationship with a physician perceive their quality of care to be higher and overall healthcare experience to be better than those without an established physician,” says **Dr. David Carlson, Chief Medical Officer, Conemaugh Health System.** “There are plenty of ‘Dr. Rights’ out there, the goal is to find the one that is perfect for you.”

Visit *Find A Physician* at [www.conemaugh.org](http://www.conemaugh.org), where you can search physicians by name, specialty and location or call, 1-800-587-5875.



Lauren Trimeloni, MD  
Primary Care/OB  
Conemaugh Physician Group  
Ligonier, PA



# WARNING:

## WINTER MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH!



**Winter** is upon us and with it comes its own season of health hazards. "Many injuries we treat this time of year are caused by snow removal," says **Kevin Messner, MD, Director, Emergency Medicine, Miners Medical Center**. "With shoveling, there are slips and falls, strained backs and even heart attacks." Dr. Messner advises: keep your back straight, push snow as opposed to lifting it, when using a ladder make sure it's level and not resting on ice and most importantly, pace yourself. "If you never exercise then suddenly grab a shovel and begin intense cardio activity, you can increase your risk of heart attack."



**Paul Rollins, MD, CPG Plastic Surgery**, says snow blowers are also a danger and can cause permanent, life changing injuries. "We see an increase in hand reconstruction surgeries this time of year," says **Dr. Rollins**. "When removing a jam, even if the machine is turned off, don't use your hand. Instead, use a wooden handle or another object to remove jams."



When it comes to winter sports - prepare yourself. "Whether you're skiing, snowmobiling or snowboarding, dress appropriately for the conditions and wear protective gear including helmets," says **David Holsinger, MD, Medical Director, MedWELL Ebensburg**. If you're escaping the cold, remember, there can also be indoor hazards. "Carbon monoxide poisoning can occur if you have a malfunctioning gas water heater or furnace or space heater. Have these checked annually, along with functioning carbon monoxide detectors," adds **Dr. Holsinger**.

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### In the next issue of *PRIME...*

*Sweet Dreams* - How a Sleep Study can get to the bottom of your daytime sleepiness.

*Life after Stroke* - Patients making strides through rehab.

*Top 5%* - Learn why your healthcare is among the Nation's Best.



# The Nation's Best Caregivers Make Housecalls!

Conemaugh  
Home Health  
has once again been  
named a **HomeCare  
Elite Top 500 Agency.**

This ranks Conemaugh Home Health  
among the **Top 5% in the nation!**

- Designated one of the best agencies in the country
- Outstanding patient outcomes
- Excellent patient satisfaction scores

Johnstown .....	814-534-7500
Bedford .....	814-623-2820
Boswell .....	814-629-5653
Ebensburg .....	814-472-4521
Meyersdale .....	814-634-5400
Philipsburg .....	814-342-6670
Portage .....	814-736-4280