

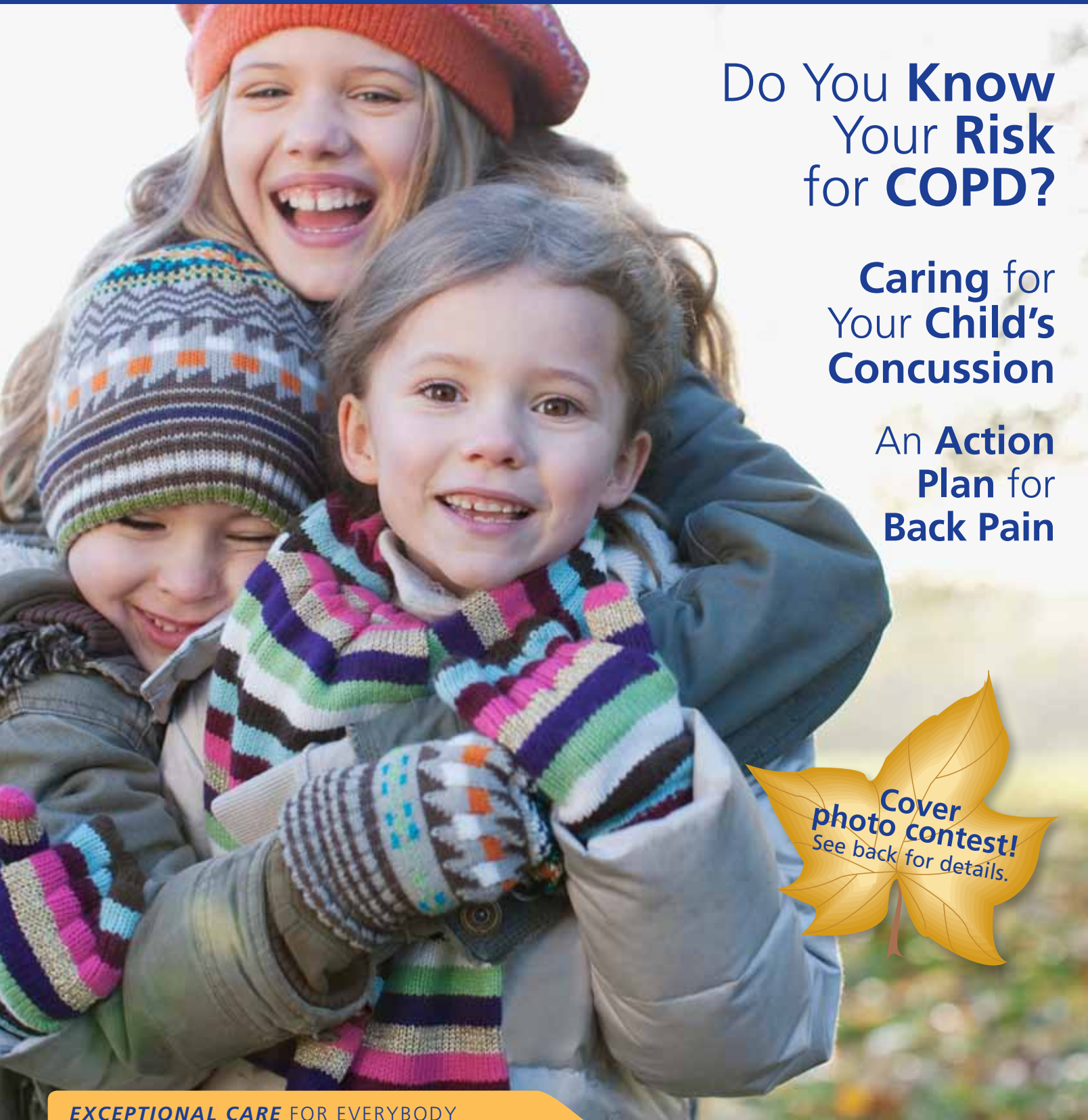
# Your Health Connection

Fall 2011



## HealthAlliance Hospital

A Member of UMass Memorial Health Care



### Do You **Know** Your **Risk** for **COPD?**

### Caring for Your **Child's** **Concussion**

### An **Action** **Plan** for **Back Pain**



**Cover  
photo contest!**  
See back for details.

**EXCEPTIONAL CARE** FOR EVERYBODY

[www.healthalliance.com](http://www.healthalliance.com)

# Do You Know Your Risk for COPD?



**M**ove over, stroke. You might still cause more than 130,000 U.S. deaths a year, but the latest national statistics suggest respiratory diseases — especially chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) — have taken over as the third-leading cause of death in America.

Deaths from stroke have actually been in decline since the 1950s, thanks to advances in the diagnosis and treatment of stroke and related conditions, particularly blood pressure.

In contrast, deaths from respiratory diseases rose almost 8% this past year. One person dies of COPD every four minutes. Luckily, there are ways to protect yourself; here is how to keep breathing easy.

## What Is COPD?

COPD refers to two lung diseases: chronic bronchitis and emphysema. They often go hand in hand. Both are serious conditions that get worse with time, blocking airways with swelling and mucus.

About 12 million Americans have been diagnosed with COPD, and experts think about 12 million more may have it and do not yet know it. The condition often develops slowly, taking your breath away before you realize it. Eventually, activities like walking and cooking become too strenuous.

There is no cure for COPD, and doctors do not know how to reverse lung damage. But they do know smoking accounts for up to nine of 10 deaths from COPD. Prolonged exposure to chemicals at work or other pollutants can also contribute to its development.

## Kick the Habit, Protect Your Lungs

Here is another way to run the numbers: Smokers are 12 times as likely to die of COPD as nonsmokers. Still, quitting is easier said than done. Willpower is not always enough to overcome addiction.

Talking with your doctor is the best place to start. He or she can recommend support groups, medications or nicotine-replacement products to increase your chances of success.

In addition, scientists continue to study ways to help smokers quit. The latest findings show the following:

- Electronic cigarettes — battery-powered sticks that deliver nicotine without smoke — helped some smokers quit after six months.
- Online and telephone counseling may be just as helpful as face-to-face sessions. Check [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) for links.
- Text messages delivered at tempting times could remind you not to reach for a light. Track your cravings for a week, then ask a friend to hit send when they're most likely to strike. \*



## November Is COPD Awareness Month

Smoking accounts for up to nine of 10 deaths from COPD and HealthAlliance Hospital is dedicated to helping you kick the habit.

HealthAlliance Hospital was recognized by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program for their efforts in reducing the incidence of smoking locally.



**Plutarco Castellanos, MD**

Mass Lung & Allergy, PC  
HealthAlliance Hospital – Leominster Campus  
50 Memorial Drive, Suite 113  
978-466-2692

# Caring for *Your* Child's Concussion

In cartoons, when someone gets hit on the head, twinkling stars can be seen circling his head. The scene gets a good laugh, and no harm is done. But in real life, a head injury that leads to a concussion can be more serious.

A concussion is a change in the way the brain functions that results from an injury to the head. Today, any injury to the head or neck that causes symptoms like confusion or dizziness that resolve on their own is considered a concussion. A child will not always lose consciousness. Parents need to look for certain symptoms in their injured kids before deciding how to act.

## What to Look For

Some of the immediate signs of a concussion include:

- appearing dazed
- responding slowly to questions
- confusion
- stumbling when walking

- difficulty seeing
- loss of consciousness, even if only for a few seconds.

Children may also complain of a headache, dizziness, vomiting or lack of awareness of surroundings hours after the head injury. Days or weeks later, other problems may pop up, such as light-headedness, poor concentration, blurred vision, frequent crying, fatigue and problems sleeping or with memory.

## What to Do

Parents should contact a hospital or doctor immediately if their child has lost consciousness for any amount of time or if any other symptoms get worse or start up days or weeks later. Otherwise, rest is the only way to care for a mild concussion. Children should not rush back into activities until all symptoms have cleared. A second concussion could lead to brain damage or even death.

Avoiding a head injury is the best way to prevent a concussion. Children should wear helmets for most physical and sports activities. Have your children learn the right way to head a soccer ball. Finally, when going for even a short drive, make sure your kids wear seat belts or sit in car seats. \*



**Charles Myers, MD**

Medical Associates Pediatrics  
HealthAlliance Hospital – Leominster  
Campus  
100 Hospital Road, 4th Floor  
978-514-6300

## Concussion Lecture

Presented by:

Katherine Riggert, MD

Tuesday, November 29 • 6 pm

Physical Therapy Plus at Whitney Field  
21 Cinema Boulevard, Leominster

To register, call **975-466-2191**

**FREE**



# An Action Plan for Back Pain



**W**hat do you do when back pain occurs? How do you deal with the pain, and when does it warrant a trip to the doctor?

## Signs to Watch For

There are some symptoms associated with back pain that require a doctor's evaluation right away. These red flags could indicate a pinched nerve or other serious condition. Call your doctor immediately if you have back pain accompanied by:

- fever or loss of bladder or bowel control
- trouble urinating
- pain when coughing
- progressive weakness in the legs
- numbness in the groin or rectum
- significant pain following a fall or injury.

## How to Practice Good Self-Care

Good self-care techniques can help:

- Apply cold compresses to the pain site for five to 10 minutes, several times a day. After two or three days, switch to heat. Use a heating pad or take warm showers or baths.
- Rest for a day or two to reduce pain and avoid aggravating an injury. But try to resume normal activity as soon as possible. Staying immobile too long can actually prolong your recovery.
- With your doctor's approval, take an over-the-counter pain reliever like ibuprofen.

If the pain does not get noticeably better within 72 hours, call your doctor.

## Helpful Therapies to Explore

Discuss with your doctor integrating therapies such as massage, acupuncture, yoga or tai chi to strengthen back muscles, reduce pain and facilitate the healing process. (See page 7 for classes & services available at the Simonds-Hurd Complementary Care Center).

## Early Treatment Important

Seeking treatment for back pain that does not improve within a few days is important because it may reduce the risk for long-term pain.

Back pain is classified into two groups: acute and chronic. Acute pain comes on suddenly, such as from an injury, and goes away within six weeks. Chronic pain, which lasts for three months or more, can be difficult to diagnose. It may be caused by a degenerative disease like arthritis but also can stem from untreated acute back pain.

## When to See Your Physician

Since back pain usually resolves on its own, you may not need to see a doctor. However, if your pain is unbearable or you have numbness, tingling, weakness, fever or unintentional weight loss, make an appointment with your primary care physician. Although you cannot prevent all back pain, maintaining a healthy lifestyle may reduce your risk of developing back issues. Exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, practicing good posture, reducing stress and avoiding cigarettes can help. \*

HealthAlliance Hospital orthopedic surgeons and physiatrists offer evaluation as well as nonsurgical and surgical treatments for spine problems. Call our Physician Referral Line **978-665-5900** for a full listing of our orthopedic surgeons and physiatrists.

## Patient Family Advisory Council Seeks New Members

Every opinion counts, which is why HealthAlliance Hospital is inviting community members to share their opinions and experiences through the hospital's newly established Patient Family Advisory Council.

For more information, visit [www.healthalliance.com](http://www.healthalliance.com) or call **978-466-4012**.



**Robert Deters, MD**

Interventional Pain Management and Spine Care  
HealthAlliance Hospital –  
Leominster Campus  
50 Memorial Drive, Suite 207  
978-466-2421

**Did You Know?**



HealthAlliance Hospital and UMass Memorial Medical Center are partnering to open a new Spine Center on the HealthAlliance Hospital — Leominster Campus. Stay tuned for more details!

# What to Expect After a Breast Cancer Diagnosis

A breast cancer diagnosis is just the beginning of a path through treatment and toward recovery. Each woman's journey will be different. You and your oncologist will consider your age, health and family history. Tests such as X-rays and CT or PET scans, which are all available at HealthAlliance Hospital, will determine how far your cancer has spread.

After your oncologist suggests a course of treatment, you may want to get a second opinion. Learning about your options can boost confidence in your decisions.

## Facing Surgery

Though treatment plans vary, most women will have surgery to take out their tumor. Early-stage cancers can usually be treated with a lumpectomy, which removes only the lump and some surrounding tissue. Most of your breast will be spared.

For larger or advanced cancers, surgeons may perform a mastectomy, removing the entire breast. Newer methods preserve your nipple or other natural breast tissue. You can often have your breast reconstructed during the same operation.

During your operation, your surgeon may also take out lymph nodes from under your arms to check for cancer cells. A new study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggests most women with early-stage cancer need only one or two lymph nodes removed. This lessens side effects, such as arm pain and swelling.

## Considering Other Options

You might have other treatments before, after or instead of surgery. These target cancer from the inside and include:

- radiation therapy: high-energy rays or particles destroy cancer cells



"Having quality cancer care located within their own community helps patients immensely. Easy access without the aggravation of traffic or parking issues in Boston or Worcester eliminates a lot of the stress of seeking treatment. The more we can do to alleviate the stress of individuals fighting this disease is all for the good."

—Gale Hurd, Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center Supporter, Middlebury, VT

- chemotherapy: medications either kill cancer cells or prevent them from dividing
- hormone therapy: medications block the action of hormones like estrogen, which causes most breast cancers to grow
- targeted therapy: drugs use genetic information to identify and attack cancer cells without harming normal cells; they work differently than chemotherapy and often have less severe side effects.

Your oncologist may also ask you about participating in a clinical trial. These are studies of brand-new therapies or approaches, and participants often get state-of-the-art treatment.

## After Treatment

After you've followed your plan, you may be relieved it is over and frightened your cancer will come back. You'll continue seeing your oncologist for follow-up appointments. He or she will ask how you're feeling and order tests that check for treatment side effects or or any spread or return of cancer. \*



**Madhavi Toke, MD**

Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center  
HealthAlliance Hospital – Burbank  
Campus  
275 Nichols Road, Fitchburg  
978-343-5048

## Exceptional Care. Close.

*Continued Investment in Cancer Care*

The Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center at the HealthAlliance Hospital's Burbank Campus in Fitchburg, the only comprehensive cancer center in North Central Massachusetts accredited by the Commission on Cancer for quality cancer care, is undergoing a significant expansion.

The \$13.5 million investment in cancer care will increase the center's size by nearly 30% and add a new state-of-the-art linear accelerator that offers image guided radiation therapy. This expansion will:

- improve patient privacy, convenience and safety
- enhance treatment capabilities
- minimize treatment side effects.

As part of the UMass Memorial Health Care Cancer Center of Excellence, our philosophy centers on hope as we treat our patients and their loved ones with compassion and commitment.

# RECENT NEWS AT HEALTHALLIANCE HOSPITAL

## WELCOME NEW PHYSICIANS

HealthAlliance Hospital welcomes the following new physicians, dedicated to providing high-quality care with excellent service.

### PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL MEDICINE



**Alexandra Evindar, MD**

HealthAlliance Hospital —  
Leominster Campus  
60 Hospital Road  
Leominster, MA  
978-466-2257

### FAMILY MEDICINE



**Erin O'Hara, MD**

Harvard Primary Care at UMass  
Memorial Medical Group  
198 Ayer Road  
Harvard, MA  
978-456-2355

For more information on our physicians, visit [www.healthalliance.com](http://www.healthalliance.com).



HealthAlliance Hospital is named to this year's list of the **Top Most Wired Hospitals** in the country. The survey is conducted annually by Hospitals & Health Networks, the journal of the American Hospital Association. The award recipients are selected based on progress in adoption, implementation and use of information technology in four areas: Clinical Quality and Safety,

Infrastructure, Business and Administrative Management and Care Continuum. For this year's award, HealthAlliance Hospital was selected from 1,388 hospitals nationwide for continuing to save lives with advanced technology. ✱

Learn more by visiting [www.hhnmostwired.com](http://www.hhnmostwired.com).



## HealthAlliance Hospital Ranks #4 for Surviving a Heart Attack!

HealthAlliance Hospital was recently ranked as the 4th leading hospital in Massachusetts for surviving a heart attack, according to data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Based on this health measures tool, heart attack patients at HealthAlliance Hospital received treatment considered best practice nearly 100 percent of the time for the second year in a row.

What does this mean for you? Simply put: We're experts in heart attack survival and have been extremely effective and efficient in saving patient's lives. ✱

## One of First Hospitals to Achieve Meaningful Use

HealthAlliance Hospital was recently granted Stage 1, Meaningful Use (MU) certification from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Only 12% of hospitals in the country have achieved MU to date. Through this recognition, HealthAlliance Hospital has successfully adopted and meaningfully used its certified electronic health record (EHR) to meet a set of core, quality objectives.

The certification demonstrates the hospital's commitment to implementing technology that

enables the HealthAlliance team to deliver quality health care and an exceptional patient experience for the community. HealthAlliance Hospital went above and beyond to meet and exceed the objectives put in place for MU.

As one of the first hospitals to achieve this certification, along with being one of the Most Wired Hospitals in the country, HealthAlliance Hospital is ranked among the very best in terms of integrating technologies to provide high quality care, patient safety, and customer service. ✱

# HealthAlliance Happenings Fall/Winter

## EVENTS

### Guild Basket Raffle

**Wednesday, November 16 • Thursday, November 17 • 10 am-4 pm; Friday, November 18 • 7 am-3 pm**  
HealthAlliance Hospital–Leominster Campus. For more information, call **978-466-2778**.

### Concussion Lecture

Presented by Katherine Riggert, MD

**Tuesday, November 29 • 6 pm • FREE**  
Physical Therapy Plus at Whitney Field, 21 Cinema Boulevard, Leominster. For more information or to register, call **978-466-2191**.

### Lovelight Tree Ceremony

**Wednesday, December 7 • 6 pm • FREE**  
Donate a light on the LoveLight tree and honor, remember and celebrate the life of someone who has been special in your life. Tree lights may be purchased for a donation of \$10 each or 3 for \$25. HealthAlliance Hospital–Leominster Campus, Guild Conference Room, Entrance F. For more information, call **978-466-4187**.

### Breakfast with Santa

**Saturday, December 10  
8 am, 9 am, 10 am • FREE**  
HealthAlliance Hospital–Leominster Campus, Cafeteria. To purchase tickets, call **978-466-2778**.

### Back Pain Lecture

Presented by Robert Deters, MD

**Coming in January • FREE**  
HealthAlliance Hospital–Leominster Campus, Guild Conference Room, Entrance F. For more information or to register, call **978-466-2191**.

### The Cat's Meow Speakeasy 8th Annual HealthAlliance Tasting Gala

**Thursday, March 8 • 5:30-9:30 pm  
\$50 per person**  
Four Points by Sheraton  
99 Erdman Way, Leominster. For more information, call **978-466-2258**.

## SERVICES

Each service is held at HealthAlliance Hospital–Burbank Campus, Simonds-Hurd Complementary Care Center, 275 Nichols Rd., Fitchburg. Each service requires a fee and

registration/appointment. For more information, call **978-655-5800**.

### Acupuncture/Walk-in

**Acupuncture Clinic  
Wednesdays, 2-5 pm**  
Wendy Lehnert, licensed acupuncturist  
For more information, call **978-665-5800**.

### Massage

**Tuesdays and Thursdays**  
Lynn Rochefort, by appointment only.  
Call **508-816-3994**.

### Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday

Dawn Girard, by appointment only.  
Call **978-973-3135**.

### Reflexology/Prenatal/Hot-Stone & Cold-Stone Massage

**Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday**  
Dawn Girard, by appointment only.  
Call **978-973-3135**.

### Reiki and Guided Imagery

Lynn Gerrits, by appointment only.  
Call **978-665-5800**.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

### Postpartum Support Group

**Wednesdays, November 16, 23, 30 and  
December 7, 14, 21, 28 • 10:30 am–  
noon • FREE**  
HealthAlliance Hospital–Leominster  
Campus, 4th Floor. For more information,  
call **978-466-2346**.

### Patient Family Cancer Support Group

**Third Thursday of each month,  
5-6:30 pm • FREE**  
HealthAlliance Hospital–Burbank  
Campus, Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer  
Center, Brian Bergevin Conference Room.  
For more information, call **978-343-5442**.

### Stroke Support Group

**Third Thursday of each month,  
3-4 pm**  
Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center,  
Brian Bergevin Conference Room. For  
more information, call **978-343-5005**.

### Smoking Cessation Support Group

**Wednesdays, January 4, 11, 18, 25,  
February 1, 8 • 6-7:30 pm • FREE**  
HealthAlliance Hospital–Burbank  
Campus, Simonds-Sinon Regional

Cancer Center, Brian Bergevin  
Conference Room. For more  
information, call **978-343-5048**.

## CLASSES

The following classes are held at HealthAlliance Hospital–Burbank Campus, Simonds-Hurd Complementary Care Center. Each class requires a fee and registration. For more information about classes, call **978-665-5800**.

### Mondays

**Zumba: 5:30-6:30 pm**

### Tuesdays

**Gentle Morning Yoga: 10-11am**

**Tai Chi Easy: 5:15-6:15 pm**

**Qigong: 6:30-7:30 pm**

### Wednesdays:

**Nia: 5:15-6:15 pm**

### Thursdays

**Peace: 9:30-10:30 am**

**Yoga for Everyone: 5:45-6:45 pm**

### Fridays:

**Ab/Core Workout: 4:45-5:45 pm**

**Resistance Band Workout: 3:30-4:30 pm**

### Joint Replacement School

**Saturdays: December 17, January 21,  
February 11, March 10, 9-10 am • FREE**  
HealthAlliance Hospital – Leominster  
Campus, Lobby D. For more information,  
call **978-466-2550**.

**Childbirth/Parenting Classes  
are available at HealthAlliance  
Hospital - Leominster Campus.  
Please call 978-466-2354 for more  
information.**

*Please note: Dates of Events, Services, Support Groups and Classes are subject to change. Please call designated number below your selected program listing to confirm.*

Community Health & Education sponsored by:

**RBT**  
**Rollstone**  
**BANK & TRUST**

# Your Health Connection

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**Mary Lourdes Burke**  
Chief Communications Officer

**Kelli Rooney**  
Marketing and Public Relations Specialist

HealthAlliance Hospital is committed to improving the health of the people of our diverse communities of Central New England through culturally sensitive excellence in clinical care, service, teaching and research. Your Health Connection is published by HealthAlliance Hospital, a member of UMass Memorial Health Care, to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a physician. © 2011.



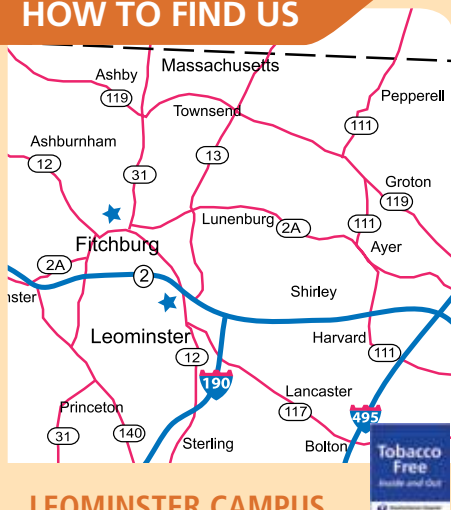
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978-466-2000

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## HOW TO FIND US



### LEOMINSTER CAMPUS

60 Hospital Road, Leominster

- From Route 2 East or West:
- Take Exit 31A Route 12 South.
- Go through two sets of lights.
- Hospital is on your right just after McDonald's.

### BURBANK CAMPUS

275 Nichols Road, Fitchburg

- From Route 2 East or West:
- Take Exit 31B — Route 12 North.
- Continue on Route 12 North through four sets of lights.
- At the fifth set of lights — Central Plaza on your right — take a right over the bridge; stay in left lane.
- Take a left onto Main Street at the lights.
- At the end of Main Street (Common on the left), turn right at the lights onto Mechanic Street.
- The Burbank Campus is approximately ½ mile on your left.

If you have an address change or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please email [yhc@healthalliance.com](mailto:yhc@healthalliance.com) or call 978-466-2191.



## \$10,000 Challenge – Your Dollars Count!

HealthAlliance Hospital is raising money to help support the Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center expansion project, and we need your help! **Fidelity Bank has pledged to match all donations to the HealthAlliance Foundation from November 2011 through January 2012, of up to \$10,000.**

### How Can You Help?

We've made it easy! To make a donation, simply visit [www.healthalliancefoundation.org](http://www.healthalliancefoundation.org) and follow the directions to donate online.

What is the Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center Expansion Project?

The expansion project will cost approximately

\$13.5 million and will include adding a second linear accelerator, expanding and renovating the existing cancer center building, and launching a new patient centered care program to include a patient navigator program, survivorship program as well as expanding the complementary care and wellness program. The entire project is slated to be completed by summer 2012.

The Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center provides community-based, coordinated care for adults with various types of cancer and blood disorders. \*

## Fidelity Bank

HELPING YOU GET WHERE YOU WANT TO BE



**Photo Contest!** Submit your family photos for a chance to be featured on the cover of the Spring 2012 issue of *Your Health Connection*! Send photos to [yhc@healthalliance.com](mailto:yhc@healthalliance.com) and please be sure to include your name, address and phone number. Questions? For more information, call 978-466-2191.

**EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR EVERYBODY**