Rising Leaders, Future Change Makers in YoCo

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March was Women’s History Month! You’ve likely heard the saying, “the future is female.” I would like to spin that a bit and say, “Without females, there is no future.” As a gender, we continue to make incredible strides towards equity.

What we celebrate is largely owed to the many incredible female leaders who have come before us. I am reminded of that even more so with the recent passing of Katherine Johnson, the NASA mathematician immortalized in the movie Hidden Figures and who is largely responsible for the Apollo Moon Landing. In the annals of American history, sadly too frequently the work of women who altered our country’s history is largely unknown.

Trailblazers such as Katherine Johnson demonstrated perhaps my favorite characteristic trait of a female leader: resiliency. Women are known for many great things—compassion, sensitivity, kindness. And the best of us are also known for grit, grace, determination, and ass-kicking resiliency.

There are many things that one is not taught as a little girl. For instance, you are not taught that regardless of how successful, smart, and driven you are, there are always individuals who will cease to respect you. They don’t tell you how you will reinvent yourself a dozen times over on your journey to find your footing. Nor will they share that in most circumstances, it is incumbent upon the woman to exit and reenter the workforce to shoulder the duties of motherhood. A blogger, Nikita Gill, says, “The ghosts of all the women you used to be are all so proud of who you have become.” Embrace it. Own it. Thrive from it. We are resilient.

I’m fortunate. My mother remains a strong female influence. My father championed all my causes and consistently believed in me. I built my tribe—both women and men who I aspire to be, who teach and challenge me, who open my eyes, who are a steady source of inspiration. They push me beyond my comfort zone, knowing when I need it. I know they will always have my back. Sometimes you fail. And you are only as resilient as the company you keep. Ladies, we are resilient.

Gentlemen, you’ve made major strides. The sexes are as close to equal as they have ever been. And that would not be the case if men were not part of the solution. To the men, I raise a glass and salute you. In this issue, you’ll read the stories of four rising leaders. Women with fierce passion, determination, and drive. Women who will soon be “the” leaders on the scene. Women who will lead others, inspire many, and impact even more.

When you meet them, congratulate them. But don’t stop there. Do more. Ask what their vision for the future holds. Ask them where they want to be in five years. Inquire how you can support them to get there. When you are part of the solution. To the men, I raise a glass and salute you. In this issue, you’ll read the stories of four rising leaders. Women with fierce passion, determination, and drive. Women who will lead others, inspire many, and impact even more.

Fortunately, women are biologically programmed to do so, whether you’re a mom or not. It’s in our DNA to be resilient and to kick ass.
On the following pages, we introduce you to women in YoCo who are demonstrating leadership in their schools and applying what they’re learning to create a more vibrant YoCo business community.

INSPIRING WOMEN LEADERS IN YoCo

Izzy Oropeza
Hanover High School

Izzy Oropeza is a senior at Hanover High School and has been involved in a myriad of activities at the high school since she walked through the front doors. She has gained leadership positions such as class president, student council president, and overall chair of Mini-THON, an event in which Hanover High School raises over $30,000 each year in support of pediatric cancer and the Four Diamonds Fund. Izzy is also part of the National Honor Society, International Thespian Society, and Tri-M Music Honor Society. She also takes much pride in her involvement in Hanover High School’s Theatre Department. She has performed in shows such as Cats (Grizabella), The Hunchback of Notre Dame (Esmeralda), West Side Story (Rosalina), Aida (Elisheba), and many more. Izzy has worked at Dunkin’ Donuts for almost three years—no she doesn’t eat doughnuts only. After she graduates, Izzy plans to attend Temple University or Penn State University to receive her bachelor’s degree in elementary and early childhood education.

Angie Mateo
School District of the City of York

Angie Mateo, a school police officer for the School District of the City of York, is a wife and a mother of three children. She was raised in York City and is of Puerto Rican descent. Through her career, Mateo aims to make a positive impact on the lives of her students and community by building a solid rapport with them. She strongly believes that it takes a village to raise a child, and she is thankful to be in a position where she can help make a difference in the lives of so many. Working in the same schools that she attended and now serves and protects gives her the opportunity to be able to relate to her students and their families. Mateo looks forward to building positive relationships between law enforcement and our community as well as helping youth grow up to be successful adults.
RISING LEADERS, FUTURE CHANGE MAKERS IN YoCo

Hayley Hurt

Hayley Hurt is a senior graduating from Penn State York in 2020. She is a part of the Graham Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and a member of the Biology Club. She has participated in research at Penn State York and has presented her research at several scientific conferences. Hayley has volunteered at a local fish and game club for many years and aspires to become a doctor in the future. Hayley hopes to make a difference in the medical and scientific world.

Suzanne Ross

Working with her hands has always been a passion of hers, from working on an air conditioning unit to gardening, she enjoys it all. Suzanne Ross is employed as an HVAC service technician and also as an adjunct teaching faculty member at a local college. She holds associate degrees in both visual/fine arts and HVAC. Suzanne resides in York County with her husband, two dogs, cockatiel, and turtle. When she is not working, she enjoys gardening, fishing, hiking, cooking, and wood working, to name a few of her hobbies. She believes that anyone can do anything if they put their mind to it.

Angie Mateo

As a rising leader who was raised in the very same schools I police, it is important that I help all youth tap into their full potential and inspire the next wave of leaders despite color, gender, or religion. But when it comes to the young girls of this community, I pay a little extra attention. I want to be the example they see. I want to make it possible for those young girls to see a woman thriving in a male-dominated field and think, “Maybe I can do that, too!” My goal is to lead and guide through example and action.

Q: As a rising leader, what impact do you strive to have in the York community?

Hayley Hurt:

I have always wanted to become a doctor even from a very young age. Living in the southern end of the county—although I enjoy the rural life—I see a deficit in our healthcare system. The southern end of York County is underserved in primary care services. A 35- to 40-minute drive is needed to get to the nearest emergency care facility. As a doctor, I would strive to bring more convenient options to York County as a whole in the rural areas south of Red Lion.

Izzy Oropeza:

I want to be a Hispanic role model for students of all ages, whether it be at school, at work, on stage, or even on a personal basis. I believe that, in today’s society, it’s important to see representation of all sorts. I hope people can look up to me and want to one day achieve their goals and dreams.

I want to make it possible for those young girls to see a woman thriving in a male-dominated field and think, “Maybe I can do that, too!”

~ Angie Mateo
Q. What has been a learning experience or obstacle you have encountered and how did you overcome it? What has been the largest learning curve you’ve encountered in your journey?

Hayley Hurt: I struggled greatly with physics and organic chemistry in my experience as a college student. I was usually one of the top pupils in the course who would take on new topics with ease, yet no matter how many hours I spent reading the textbook and working through problem after problem, I seemed to drown in the concepts. I made a very good friend in my time who was struggling through physics and who showed me what I was doing wrong. That friendship may have been one of the only things that got me through those courses.

Suzanne Ross: The biggest obstacles I have faced are working in a male-dominated field, that is, getting equal pay as compared to a male’s pay rate and having to “prove” to coworkers or bosses that I am competent in the field and that I am not weak by any means—physically, mentally, or emotionally.

Angie Mateo: The common misconception in today’s society is that we, the police, are the “bad guys.” That perception creates turbulence and obstacles. We take pride in serving and protecting our community to create a safe environment so that our youth can succeed. The key to achieving this goal is by building a solid rapport with the students and our community and going “beyond the badge.”

Izzy Oropeza: Learning that I cannot do everything myself, even with sleepless nights or large cups of coffee. I learned that the hard way. Not everything fits into my brain, and I usually forget something big, which in turn ends up being the most important thing. However, that mess-up taught me I need to delegate jobs and communicate better with my committees. Communication is key to success, which has proven true many times.

Q. As a female leader in the community, what do you feel is the biggest opportunity and the largest challenge for women?

Hayley Hurt: Penn State York has been a huge opportunity for women to flourish. There are female professors in almost all fields of study as well as a decent portion of our faculty on campus. Having role models such as these professionals reinforces ideas of striving for goals and better careers for women. That being said, I cannot say that my success in college is due strictly to the female professors. I must pay some homage to the male professors and faculty who changed my perspective on knowledge.

My largest challenge thus far is gaining equality in science as my male counterparts. I have a very supportive and empowering research professor, and she advocates for women in biology by striving and surpassing goals and expectations.

Suzanne Ross: I feel the biggest opportunity for women is to get into a trade instead of the traditional jobs for females. The biggest challenge is getting there and staying there. You may doubt yourself because of your gender, being the only female in your workplace, and giving up or backing out.

Angie Mateo: The largest challenge for women is normalizing gender equality in the work field. When that confident female figure is missing in the everyday village it takes to raise a child, that child becomes difficult to influence and inspire, which is also where the biggest opportunity lies. Making ourselves available as a reliable source to the youth increases the chances of that child succeeding.

Izzy Oropeza: Endless support. I’ve lived in Hanover for most of my life, and I’ve never met someone who didn’t support anything the students have done. Someone is always in my corner and I feel at ease knowing that. The largest challenge, however, is learning to balance everything. In a very small community where students can do anything and everything, I’ve taken on a lot. Keeping up with all my activities and my personal life is a challenge, but I’m embracing the challenge.

Someone is always in my corner and I feel at ease knowing that.

~Izzy Oropeza
Q: What is the best advice you received and from whom did you receive it?

Hayley Hurt: My mother and father gave me some of the best advice when I was very young. They told me that I could do whatever or be whatever I wanted as long as I could answer the following questions with a yes: Does this job support you financially? Will this job be dependable? Are you happy doing what you’re doing? This last question changed my life dramatically because I was able to dream about what I would truly love doing—and what I love to do is help people.

Suzanne Ross: The best advice I have received was from my husband, Chris. He would always tell me that I need to do what makes me happy and not concern myself with what anyone else is doing—just keep on my own path and don’t ever give up on my dreams.

Angie Mateo: Pa lante, like my parents used to always say. It basically translates to keep going. When times are hard or rough, no matter what pa lante. I've used this advice to get me through different situations in life, and I'll encourage anyone else to do the same.

Izzy Oropeza: “Never be O.K. with just good enough.” My music teacher in high school, Deb Smith, would always say these words to me, whether during a performance or just doing our semester writing. I carry this quote with me every day. Reach for the stars, never take any opportunities for granted. You’re here for a reason.

Q: What advice do you have for female leaders?

Hayley Hurt: My advice to the female leaders out there is to dream big and fight hard. No matter what challenges you may meet in life, show them who’s boss.

Suzanne Ross: My advice for female leaders is to not give up on your dreams. Put your mind to your dreams and achieve them. They are not too far out of your reach. Go after your dreams, not what everyone else is doing or tells you to do.

Angie Mateo: Work hard. Don’t be afraid to ask for guidance and never give up. Believe in yourself and trust that you are in the situation for a reason.

Izzy Oropeza: You do not have to do everything yourself. Ask for help. Never feel like you’re alone when there are plenty of people who are willing to help. Most importantly, always have fun and never take any opportunities for granted. You’re here for a reason.

Q: What do you want to be doing in five years? What change would you like to see in our community in those five years?

Hayley Hurt: I see myself in medical school working toward my goal of becoming a doctor. I would love to see a couple of primary care facilities become established in the rural regions of York County. By building more primary care facilities, the people of York County would have better access to quality healthcare.

Suzanne Ross: The biggest change I would like to see in the community is more females in the trades and more females pursuing leadership positions.

Angie Mateo: I want to continue to be a positive influence, impacting the lives of the youth in our community for years to come. If I could inspire even one child to work hard with passion and love, then my job is complete, which is why building a solid rapport is extremely important. Hopefully, within the next five years the relationship between law enforcement and the community will be so natural it becomes second nature.

Q: Who has had the largest impact in your career and professional journey and life path?

Hayley Hurt: A bunch of people have made large impacts in my life. My parents helped me discover my true calling in life. They showed me what ambition was and how to work hard for what you want. But the two most influential people in my career and professional journey are my biology professors, Dr. Jessica Petko and Dr. Anne M. Vardo-Zalik. They have helped me get started on my way to become a doctor and showed me parts of biology that are cutting-edge, new, and exciting.

Angie Mateo: My mother has had the greatest impact in my life. She showed me values that include hard work, respect, punctuality, accountability, and, above all, love.

Izzy Oropeza: My mom, for sure, has made such an impact on my life. As a single mother with two crazy teenagers, she never complained. Instead, she continued to work hard for me and my brother. I aspire to be half the woman she is. She taught me to work hard for everything I want and how to persevere and not let the hard times keep me down. My mom is my hero.
We-Centric Culture for Women in Construction

A full-service mechanical, electrical, and plumbing contractor, Genesis Corporation also touts another success—being a woman-owned business in a male-dominated field. Owner and President Michelle Wittig opened a Pennsylvania division of Genesis in 2019 and runs a “We-Centric” culture based on whole-team collaboration.

Michelle has a proven track record of creating, growing, and sustaining successful award-winning commercial construction firms serving Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Genesis serves both York and Maryland markets, with offices in New Freedom and Towson, Maryland.

Q: Genesis is recognized as being a company with open dialogue. How did you decide to focus on that quality?

A: In my late 20s, I was on a district management team in Baltimore for a large corporation. We had a shipping issue that was costly and needed immediate attention. The managers spent several days in a meeting room coming up with workaround solutions. During a break, I walked through the warehouse. An employee called me over and identified the root cause and solution. He hadn’t spoken up. He replied, “Because you didn’t ask me.” I have applied that life lesson at Genesis, which embodies a We-Centric culture based on whole-team collaboration using an open dialogue platform that encourages ideas and success sharing.

Q: As a female leader in a largely male-dominated industry, what do you feel is the biggest opportunity and the largest challenge for women?

A: Over 300,000 construction trades jobs go unfilled each year. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, that number is expected to more than double in just six years. Compounding the issue are the dwindling numbers of new apprentices entering the skilled trades. Recently, I attended an apprenticeship graduation where fewer than 85 apprentices walked across the stage for HVACR, sheet metal, electrical, plumbing, sprinkler fitting, and carpentry. As a business owner, that number was alarming. What really stood out for me was that none of the graduates were women. Changing the mindset that attending college is a must and education through to completion takes skill and education. Women are an untapped resource that can help fill the trades gap. Companies like Genesis that are committed to paying for apprenticeship training and implementing successful diversity outreach programs will have a competitive advantage.

Q: As a rising leader, what impact do you strive to have in the York community?

A: With the redevelopment of York is and will be experiencing, strides need to be taken to ensure that the residents of York County are included in that economic growth through job creation coupled with local hiring efforts, local workforce development, and use of local business enterprises. It takes more than new or renovated buildings to revitalize a city. There must be a collaborative effort to engage local residents and support the local economy. Genesis is committed to be an integral part of that conversation.

Q: You have blazed your own trail. What would you tell other women as they look to do the same?

A: As we continue to work toward equitable inclusion, remember to bring others along for the journey, treating all people with dignity and respect.

Q: What do you want to be doing in five years? What change would you like to see in our community in those five years?

A: I would like to see an all-inclusive economic revitalization of York that has a mantra of live here, eat here, play here, and work here that engages, supports, and grows its local businesses and residents. Genesis wants to be a part in that process.

Q: You are very community-minded. What is your current focus in the community?

A: I have served on the Board of Directors, chaired the Women’s Committee, and currently serve on the Diversity Council of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Greater Baltimore Chapter. I was also a recipient of ABC Baltimore’s Woman of the Year award and have also been recognized by ABC National for exemplary diversity leadership. Genesis sponsors ABC National’s annual Diversity & Inclusion Summit held in Washington, D.C. With Genesis recently joining the ABC Keystone Chapter, I’m excited about sharing our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the York County market.

Outside of the office, I’m a member of the York Audubon Society and enjoy photographing birds and wildlife at York County’s Lake Redman, Lake Williams, Lake Marburg, and Nixon Park. When needing to recharge, I attend Grace Fellowship Church in Shrewsbury, York County.
On October 31, 2019, Gov. Tom Wolf signed Act 77 into law, creating significant election reform for the state to improve access to voting for many Pennsylvania residents. The changes are in place and set to go into effect for the Primary Election on June 2, 2020 (new date). As June 2 approaches, you’ll want to be aware of a number of improvements to the state election code.

BY DAVID GONZALEZ
MANAGER, ADVOCACY
YORK COUNTY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

1. No-excuse Mail-in Voting:
The law creates a new option to vote by mail without needing an excuse, which is currently required for voters using absentee ballots.

2. New 50-day Mail-in Voting Period:
Voters can request and submit their mail-in or absentee ballot beginning 50 days before the election.

3. Permanent Mail-in and Absentee Ballot List:
Voters can request to receive applications for mail-in or absentee ballots for all primary, general, and special elections held in a given year. Requests can be made online at www.votespa.com or through the York County Voting & Elections Office. For voters who request these options, ballot applications will be mailed to them by the first Monday in February of each year. Absentee Ballots will automatically be mailed if you have a permanent disability or illness when submitting an application.

4. Voter Registration Deadline Reduced:
The deadline to register to vote is now 15 days, previously 30 days, before an election.

5. Same Day Mail-in and Absentee Submission Deadlines:
Voters can submit mail-in and absentee ballots until 8 p.m. when the polls close on election day. The previous deadline was 5 p.m. on the Friday before an election.

6. Shortcut Straight-Party Voting Eliminated:
A shortcut straight-party option to vote for all candidates of one party is no longer available. This change doesn’t prevent voters from selecting candidates from one party; it simply removes the shortcut option.

7. $90 Million Bond for Voting Systems:
This bond reimburses counties for 60 percent of their actual costs to replace voting systems.

The changes noted all build on previous updates such as options for voters to request absentee ballots online and online voter registration, which more than 1.5 million Pennsylvanians have used since 2015.

DID YOU KNOW?
The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women’s constitutional right to vote.

“Who were the two leaders of national suffrage organizations during their final years? (see answer at the bottom of the page)

Answer: Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt
In these difficult and unpredictable times, there is a resource for your and your business.

PREPARED YORK

In effort to assist York County navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, along with assistance from a bevy of government, civic, and community partners, this resource is a compilation of information to assist businesses, non-profits, and employees with resources and information.

Visit PreparedYork.com for support on:

- Community Resources
- Small Business & Non-Profits
- Tips for Employers
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Employees Impacted
- Webinars & Virtual Events

For direct information on COVID-19, we direct you to CDC, PA Department of Health, or other healthcare agencies and organizations.
On the following pages, see how our community has stepped up in a time of crisis.

ALLEGHENY YORK

STEPS UP IN TIME OF CRISIS

Since 1972, Allegheny York has been a leading distributor of high quality hydraulic and pneumatic seals, gaskets, packings and components for commercial, industrial and military applications. Located in Manchester, York County, they’ve been dedicated to customers and the community.

When COVID-19 struck our community, and the world, Allegheny York stepped up. They prototyped the N95 face shields, a tool beyond valuable in the healthcare industry right now. It takes only a few minutes to manufacture one shield, and they are able to produce hundreds to a thousand a day. “With more manpower, we can make thousands a day,” explained Elisha Weir, Vice President of Business Development for the company. Once they have the commitments to produce bulk orders, they are ready to get to work.

“We felt like we wanted to be part of the help in our community,” said Weir. “We have the capacity to manufacture them and the tools to do it. Why not help? We have many family members in the healthcare system and we see there is a need and we wanted to make a solution.”

She also shared it’s a scary time to be in businesses, and the employees are helping follow the guidelines and stay healthy. “Team work makes the dream work!” she added. Weir has a special teammate with her, “Shout out to my husband Aaron Weir for being strong and pushing through the engineering part of this while helping me run a company. He is a veteran and I am super proud of him!”

To learn more about Allegheny York:

alleghenyork.com
facebook.com/alleghenyork

2020 has brought unprecedented times to our community, our country, and the world. In times of great crisis, we also witness great leadership, great giving, and great generosity. When two phenomenal leaders took the reigns in York County, they had no way of knowing the extent of leadership that would be needed so soon.

We asked President Commissioner Julie Wheeler and Roxanna Gapstur, Ph.D., R.N., President and CEO of WellSpan Health, for their thoughts on leading in a time of crisis, especially one with health and economic impact.

Both local leaders. Both female leaders. Both started 2020 with a different perspective. Commissioner Wheeler stepped into her role January 2020, after a successful election, and Dr. Gapstur celebrated one year at WellSpan Health after joining the team in January 2019.

Q: Commissioner Wheeler, how do you feel leading the community in the most unprecedented of times?
A: Humbled. Grateful. Challenged. Talk about a humbling experience. This is not the challenge I anticipated, but I am grateful that my life experiences in business and community service helped prepare me. And, I’ve never been one to shy away from tough situations. I am grateful for the team of professionals that I am surrounded by and those on the front lines of our community. There are constant lessons to be learned as we manage these difficult times. Our character is tested when we are up against adversity. Leadership has many facets to it, so too does this crisis.

Q: Dr. Gapstur, what’s on your mind as a leader right now?
A: The safety and well-being of our 20,000 WellSpan team members, especially those who are working on the front lines, is constantly top of mind. It’s evident by the outpouring of generosity from our community that many are holding our teams in their thoughts as we move forward. Each individual team member at WellSpan is giving in their own way to ensure our community is provided with the safest, highest quality care—and it’s absolutely essential we do everything we can to support the safety and well-being of WellSpan caregivers and support teams throughout this journey.

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER:

WOMEN LEADING A COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

ON LEADERSHIP

Q: What has been the greatest challenge in this time of crisis for you as a leader, as a government official, and as a citizen?
A: The decisions made will never be universally popular. The speed in which this has evolved is unprecedented. There is literally no playbook to combat these challenges. And each day, in many cases each hour, brings an evolution of new challenges and decisions to make. Our county leaders are adapting quickly as the daily circumstances change. Among the greatest daily challenges is making the best decisions given the information we know at the time. God challenges us in many unique ways, and many are impossible to anticipate. My faith has been a beacon of light for me.

Q: What is on your mind as a leader right now?
A: The safety and well-being of our 20,000 WellSpan team members, especially those who are working on the front lines, is constantly top of mind. It’s evident by the outpouring of generosity from our community that many are holding our teams in their thoughts as we move forward. Each individual team member at WellSpan is giving in their own way to ensure our community is provided with the safest, highest quality care—and it’s absolutely essential we do everything we can to support the safety and well-being of WellSpan caregivers and support teams throughout this journey.

“Women leading a community response to COVID-19.”

Roxanna Gapstur, Ph.D., R.N., President and CEO of WellSpan Health

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COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

It’s also imperative we continue to learn from different parts of our system in order to improve care and processes which make a difference in the outcomes for our community. WellSpan serves five separate counties and many communities. Our system-wide approach to this public health crisis has driven our ability to take swift and decisive action from the onset of COVID-19—and has allowed us to implement a single integrated response, leveraging our 1,600 physicians and advanced practice clinicians, eight hospitals and more than 200 ambulatory care locations.

And finally, maintaining open communication with our elected officials and business and community leaders is critically important to our response as a southcentral Pennsylvania community. The incredible support from our partners is making all the difference—and it will be important for us to sustain that engagement going forward.

ON POSITIVITY

There are a multitude of challenges in our current COVID-19 climate.

Q. Commissioner Wheeler, of the positive things York County has been able to accomplish, what brings you the most pride?

A: I am most proud of our ability to demonstrate continued commitment in delivering the safest, highest quality care when our friends and neighbors need it most. WellSpan was one of the first in the nation to commit to covering all out-of-pocket costs for anyone needing COVID-19 screening, testing or treatment. This goes beyond the mandated legislation of free testing to relieve the potential financial burden of any needed treatments related to COVID-19 for our friends and neighbors. I am also incredibly proud of our team’s innovation in response to COVID-19, including work by our “MacGyver team”—a small army of our own experts with manufacturing and engineering backgrounds. They are collaborating with local businesses to develop creative solutions for materials and supplies compassionate through this all. There are so many who simply step up and wish to help. There are a multitude of challenges, and there are a multitude of incredibly talented people and organizations answering the call to meet these challenges directly.

Q. Dr. Gapstur, and on the WellSpan side of accomplishments, what brings you the most pride?

A: I’m most proud of our ability to demonstrate continued commitment in delivering the safest, highest quality care when our friends and neighbors need it most. WellSpan was one of the first in the nation to commit to covering all out-of-pocket costs for anyone needing COVID-19 screening, testing or treatment. This goes beyond the mandated legislation of free testing to relieve the potential financial burden of any needed treatments related to COVID-19 for our friends and neighbors. I am also incredibly proud of our team’s innovation in response to COVID-19, including work by our “MacGyver team”—a small army of our own experts with manufacturing and engineering backgrounds. They are collaborating with local businesses to develop creative solutions for materials and supplies compassionate through this all. There are so many who simply step up and wish to help. There are a multitude of challenges, and there are a multitude of incredibly talented people and organizations answering the call to meet these challenges directly.

Q. And Dr. Gapstur, what is the most important thing for our friends and neighbors to know right now?

A: I want everyone to know how much the caregivers, support teams and leaders at WellSpan care about our communities in southcentral Pennsylvania. At times, a health system as large as WellSpan can seem impersonal or uncaring. But our organization is made up of individual people who have a passion for caring about others, and who are willing to share that passion to improve the health of our friends and neighbors, even at great risk to themselves. The best thing we can do to honor the dedicated service of our caregivers is to remain vigilant and adhere to the social distancing guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. We are beginning to see good news nationally that social distancing may be flattening the curve, and this is absolutely essential to our own communities and our nation’s ability to manage this crisis.
If you have flu-like symptoms, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath, you may call your doctor or use a UPMC Video Visit* — a virtual care visit that uses telemedicine from home. Visits are available at UPMCpinnacle.com/VideoVisits.

If you are experiencing severe symptoms such as trouble breathing, you should visit an emergency department in your community for immediate care. If you can, call ahead so they may prepare for your arrival and prevent the spread of any illness. But do not delay if you have severe breathing problems.

For the latest information and resources on how we're managing COVID-19, please visit UPMCpinnacle.com/COVID19.

If you believe you have been exposed to the coronavirus and have no symptoms, you may contact your doctor for advice. Practice routine precautions such as social distancing.

*Now through June 11, the upfront $49 fee will be waived. Billing will be submitted to the patient’s insurer.