SPECIALIZED HEART CARE
People with congenital defects are enjoying longer, healthier lives.

MANAGING MENTAL ILLNESS
Finding new ways to meet this great need in our community.

Bundles of Joy

Providence’s Maternal-Fetal Medicine is uniquely equipped to care for high-risk pregnancies.

Read Heart Beat on your tablet or smartphone. Just go to phc.org/heartbeat for the latest issue or to sign up for email delivery.
Features

6 Special Deliveries
Expectant mothers have convenient access to a wide range of advanced services.

8 Heart Partners
Specially trained providers are improving the lives of adults with congenital heart disease.

10 Peace of Mind
Managing mental illness starts by extending the reach of resources in the community.

Departments

4 Healthy Living
The best for beating bacteria; staying active when it’s cold; fresh veggies versus frozen.

13 Health Tip
A cardiologist shares six straightforward steps to a healthier heart.

14 Community
Providence House of Charity Clinic expands to serve more people.

16 Calendar
Save the dates for these winter/spring 2018 classes and events.

ON THE COVER: Jed and Amy Nelsen take comfort in the specialized maternal-fetal care that Amy needs for her high-risk pregnancies. Photo by Dean Davis.
The new year is a time to look forward with hope. Personally, I’m optimistic about the new and expanded services coming to our community, which you’ll see highlighted in this issue of Heart Beat. A significant focus in 2018 is increasing mental health resources so they are more widely available for all in need. Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experiences mental illness in a given year. Those statistics are similar for our youths. It’s time for more collaborative action.

One of our feature stories focuses on strengthening our community through improved mental health care access. This includes Providence’s part in the development of a 100-bed mental health facility with Fairfax Behavioral Health that will provide emergency and short-term inpatient care, as well as outpatient services. We can’t do it alone. So many community partners have come together to successfully address mental health needs.

In this issue, you’ll also read about how our experts help moms and their babies during high-risk pregnancies, giving babies their best possible start. That care continues at Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital, where kids receive the most compassionate care at the only comprehensive children’s hospital in the region. Our care extends to teenagers and adults, as well, through the award-winning Providence Adult and Teen Congenital Heart Program.

As you review this issue of Heart Beat, I invite you to relish in the amazing resources we have and to identify more ways we can come together as a community moving forward. Here’s to a healthy and happy new year.

Elaine Couture
Chief Executive, Providence Health Care
Executive Vice President, Providence Health & Services

Copyright 2018 © Providence Health Care. Published by MANIFEST LLC. Send comments to heartbeat@providence.org or Marketing & Communication, 101 W. Eighth Ave., Spokane, WA 99204. For more information, visit phc.org.
**SOAP OPERA**

If plain-old soap is good, the antibacterial kind is better, right? Not according to the Food and Drug Administration, which ruled in 2016 that most liquid, foam and gel hand soaps, bar soaps and body washes that contain antibacterial ingredients can no longer be sold.

At issue is the safety of certain chemicals, including triclosan, which has been shown in animal studies to alter the way certain hormones work in the body. Lab studies have also raised red flags that the chemical might contribute to making bacteria resistant to antibiotics.

So, while stores have washed their hands clean of antibacterial soaps, consumers can feel safe with a bit of old-school wisdom: To prevent getting sick and spreading germs, just wash, rinse and repeat with standard soap and water.

What’s the difference between generic and name-brand medications?

**In short: the cost.** Manufacturers of generic drugs typically don’t pay for clinical trials and marketing, making generics 80 to 85 percent less expensive than their name-brand counterparts.

But lower cost doesn’t equate to lower quality. The Food and Drug Administration holds manufacturers of generic and brand-name medications to the same quality standards, which means both have the same active ingredients, strength and performance. No wonder generics account for 8 in 10 prescriptions filled in the U.S.

---

**Getting a ‘D’ Isn’t Always a Bad Thing**

You’ve probably heard about the importance of getting enough vitamin D. It helps your body make and maintain proper levels of calcium and phosphorus, which create strong bones and muscles. The vitamin also helps your blood pressure stay at normal levels, and it battles cancer and other diseases. Talk to your doctor to find out how much you need, as requirements vary based on factors like gender, age and diet. Exposure to even a little bit of sunlight might be enough, but you should ask whether a supplement would be beneficial.

---

**PROVIDENCE: A TOP HEART HOSPITAL**

Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center has been named one of the nation’s 50 top cardiovascular hospitals by IBM Watson Health for inpatient cardiovascular services.
TRUE OR FALSE: Frozen fruits and vegetables aren’t as nutritious as fresh produce.

**FALSE.** Frozen “freggies” are picked and frozen at peak ripeness, which preserves nutrients. Plus, frozen produce lasts several months in the freezer, compared with several days for fresh fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator. But avoid frozen fruits with added sugar and vegetables with sauces or seasonings (read: extra calories and sodium).

67,000

Each year, the flu vaccine prevents an estimated **67,000 flu hospitalizations**, equal to the number of seats in the Seattle Seahawks’ stadium. It’s not too late to get your flu shot. Flu activity peaks in January or later. Call your doctor’s office or check with Spokane Regional Health District at [srhd.org](http://srhd.org) or **509-324-1500**.

**Source:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014–15 flu season)

3 WAYS TO STAY IN SHAPE WHEN IT’S COLD OUT

1. **Turn on a video.** Whatever you like to do in warm weather to stay active, you can find a fitness video that will help you develop skills in the off-season. Runners might like increasing flexibility with a yoga session. Start with a quick search on YouTube for free options.

2. **Dance.** Whether you’re jitterbugging, waltzing or two-stepping, dancing is a fun way to burn a hundred calories or more in a half-hour. Grab a partner or blast tunes solo, and dance the night away!

3. **Hula-hoop.** To keep the hoop from hitting the ground, you’re sure to feel the burn—and, trust us, your abs will feel it, too. Want an additional challenge? Look for a weighted hoop. Don’t have a hoop? Imagine one.

Foods to Boost Brain Health

Though there is no guarantee a specific diet can prevent Alzheimer’s disease, what you eat might play a role in either accelerating or delaying the development of it. Learn what foods to eat on Providence’s To Your Health blog: [blog.providence.org](http://blog.providence.org). Search for the title of this article.

**HEALTHY RECIPES YOU CAN TRY TONIGHT**

For a variety of recipes with fruits and vegetables, visit [wellness.inhs.org/recipes](http://wellness.inhs.org/recipes). Download your favorites!
SPECIAL DELIVERIES

PROVIDENCE’S MATERNAL-FETAL MEDICINE SUPPORTS FAMILIES NEEDING EXTRA CARE DURING PREGNANCY AND BEYOND.

Amy Nelsen is returning to her specialty care team, at Providence Center for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, for the support and guidance she needs during her high-risk pregnancy. The expectant mother has an inherited connective tissue disorder that could complicate her pregnancy, labor, delivery and postpartum period.

“I have complete confidence in Providence’s varied specialties and know how well they work together to give me individualized care for my unique case,” says Nelsen, 33, of Nine Mile Falls.

Nelsen discovered her condition in 2015 when she arrived at Providence Maternal-Fetal Medicine for her first pregnancy. It was then that Tanya Lehfeldt, MS, CGC, a licensed genetic counselor, reviewed Nelsen’s family history and questioned a condition that Nelsen and her mother were told they had, based on a diagnosis nearly 20 years ago.
All this time, Nelsen thought it might be Marfan syndrome, but Lehfeldt believed she did not meet the criteria. With Lehfeldt’s guidance, Nelsen had genetic testing done, and a mutation was found in a gene that causes Loeys-Dietz syndrome, which poses a greater risk than Marfan on her children, who would have a 50 percent chance of the same gene mutation.

“She’s monitored very carefully by Maternal-Fetal Medicine, cardiology and the whole team,” Lehfeldt says. “We have her pregnancy and birth plan, working with obstetricians, and will test the baby’s cord blood after delivery to see if the baby is affected.”

Understanding the Stakes
Loeys-Dietz syndrome is characterized by an enlarged aorta, which can stretch and weaken, often causing an aneurysm, which could burst. The condition is life-threatening: The risk of aortic dissection (tearing) and uterine rupture become greater during pregnancy and directly after, requiring increased monitoring of mother and baby.

Nelsen and her husband, Jed, welcomed a healthy baby boy, Josiah, two years ago at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center & Children’s Hospital. Her second pregnancy ended tragically; the increased monitoring she received due to her condition allowed the care team to quickly discover the pregnancy was ectopic, where the fetus grows outside the uterus and can’t survive. The team helped the family through the traumatic experience.

Now, they are waiting for Josiah's sibling to be born.

Caring for Mother and Baby
Nelsen says the supportive care she receives at Providence for Maternal-Fetal Medicine includes specialists monitoring any aorta enlargements, uterine distress or fetal complications. And if it’s needed, Nelsen’s newborn will have access to Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital, the only Level II pediatric trauma center and highest and only Level IV neonatal intensive care unit in eastern Washington.

Douglas Barber, M.D., medical director for Providence’s Maternal-Fetal Medicine, says people like Nelsen can, in one day and in one clinic, visit a genetic counselor, a cardiologist and a high-risk obstetrics and gynecology physician and get an ultrasound and echocardiogram.

“For a patient like Amy, that’s empowering,” Dr. Barber says. “Providing this level of care in Spokane for patients and their primary care providers—those are a lot of tools and a lot of skilled people talking about you. I am proud of what we’ve done to make this available in our region.”

Making Informed Decisions
Lehfeldt says Nelsen’s condition highlights the role of maternal-fetal medicine and genetics.

“Genetic counseling provides personalized care to patients to help make decisions,” Lehfeldt says. “We work in different areas including cardiology, prenatal, neurology and cancer clinics. The end goal is placing patients like Amy in the middle of a coordinated care plan.”

As Nelsen anxiously awaits the arrival of her baby, perinatal care after delivery becomes crucial with genetic cases, Dr. Barber says. “It’s our job to make sure testing takes place when and how it’s appropriate.”

Adds Nelsen, “Genetic testing confirmed my diagnosis and has prepared me for my pregnancy and birth. Once they had my specific family gene, it was then easy to get everyone in the family tested because of mine—changing our family’s medical needs and outlook for generations.”

APP GIVES MOMS PEACE OF MIND
Download Circle by Providence to your smartphone at no cost and tap into a vast network of local Providence-approved resources and tools for moms and moms-to-be. From pregnancy through the teen years, Circle has answers to your questions. Go to providence.org/our-services/circle-by-providence.

World-Class Care for Women and Babies, Close to Home
Mothers find comfort in being close to the region’s only Level II pediatric trauma center and Level IV neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital.

▶ Skilled NICU physicians, nurses and therapy teams are trained in caring for acutely ill babies.

▶ A ‘rooming-in’ program gives parents the option to stay in the hospital overnight.

▶ While parents are away, a NICView camera allows them and their loved ones to see the newborn by logging in to a secure website.

▶ In-depth training and education prepare parents to bring their newborn home.
cortes reyes, 37, was born with a heart defect. “my type of congenital heart disease [chd] is called transposition of the great arteries,” he explains. at 16 months old, he underwent a complicated surgery to redirect the flow of blood through his heart, in hopes he would live to adulthood. at the time, it was the best that modern medicine could offer.

he has only one regret: that he didn’t capture his mother’s life story and precious moments on video before she passed away. but it is this regret that inspires award-winning videographer daniel cortes reyes to create legacy documentaries for others, so that their life stories can be shared with future generations.

his own story is one of survival, which he hopes will serve as inspiration to children and adults living with congenital heart disease to get the specialized care that will help them live long lives.

cortes reyes, 37, was born with a heart defect. “my type of congenital heart disease [chd] is called transposition of the great arteries,” he explains. at 16 months old, he underwent a complicated surgery to redirect the flow of blood through his heart, in hopes he would live to adulthood. at the time, it was the best that modern medicine could offer.

adults with congenital heart disease fare better with continuous care from cardiac specialists.

heart partners

adults with congenital heart disease fare better with continuous care from cardiac specialists.
“Through advancements in diagnosis, surgical techniques and long-term management, people born with heart disease are now surviving well into adulthood.”

—Jeremy Nicolarsen, MD, FACC

At 16 years of age—the last time Cortes Reyes saw a cardiologist until last summer—he was told he no longer needed to see a specialist and could live a normal life, so long as he avoided contact sports that might put sudden pressure on his chest, such as football.

What Cortes Reyes, like thousands of people living with CHD, didn’t know is that ongoing follow-up care with a team of specialists dramatically improves chances of survival.

Childhood Heart Issues Return

When Cortes Reyes became ill last summer, neither he nor his doctors knew the details of his CHD, and a cardiologist was not consulted. After all, he’d felt healthy most of his adult life. Following a monthlong hospitalization and several invasive procedures, Cortes Reyes returned home, only to fall sick again.

A second hospitalization, this time at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, connected him with cardiac specialists trained in the care of adults with CHD. Soon, he was able to go home with a greater understanding of his heart disease and the complexities of living with CHD.

And while that is good news, Cortes Reyes’ long stretch without specialized medical care has taken a toll, and he might need a heart transplant in five to 10 years.

His cardiologist, Jeremy Nicolarsen, MD, FACC, says that if Cortes Reyes had been getting regular care for CHD throughout his adult life, it is possible he would have had a shorter, less-complicated hospital stay last summer and perhaps even avoided his current declining health.

Special Care for Special Needs

“Through advancements in diagnosis, surgical techniques and long-term management, people born with heart disease are now surviving well into adulthood,” Dr. Nicolarsen says. “In fact, there are now more adults than children living with CHD.”

The key, according to the American College of Cardiology, is that treatment for adults with CHD should be delivered by, or in collaboration with, clinicians trained in treating adult congenital heart disease, or ACHD.

Cortes Reyes now knows how important it is to describe his congenital heart disease to health care providers and to get regular care with his ACHD cardiologist.

“You don’t know what you don’t know,” Cortes Reyes says. He wants others who were born with heart disease to know the importance of ongoing care from specially trained providers and to benefit from recent medical advancements.

By Dr. Nicolarsen’s estimations, there are roughly 3,000 adults in Spokane and surrounding communities living with CHD, only half of whom are receiving regular care by ACHD-trained specialists.

More people getting proper care for congenital heart disease means more life stories to be shared.

Adult Congenital Heart Disease: Developments in a New Field of Medicine

2008
American College of Cardiology/ American Heart Association task force releases first guidelines on adult congenital heart disease (ACHD).

2012
American Board of Medical Specialties approves physician certification for ACHD subspecialty.

2017
Providence Adult and Teen Congenital Heart Program (PATCH) at Sacred Heart Medical Center & Children’s Hospital is among the first centers in the country to be accredited by the Adult Congenital Heart Association as an ACHA ACHD Comprehensive Care Center. Accreditation requires comprehensive services provided by specially trained pediatric and adult cardiologists, in coordination with multiple subspecialists, technology and wrap-around services.

THE RIGHT CARE FOR YOUR HEART

If you have congenital heart disease (CHD), it’s important that you advocate for yourself and establish regular visits with providers who have dedicated training for adults with CHD. For more information, call the Providence Adult and Teen Congenital Heart Program at 509-474-6707.
Peace of MIND

Providence finds new ways to address the community’s growing need for behavioral health services.

STORY BY CINDY DECKER AND LIZ DERUYTER | PHOTOS BY DEAN DAVIS
Our community is no longer sweeping mental health issues under the rug. We’re talking about mental health, we’re giving those who are suffering a voice and we’re improving access to the care they need.”

Elaine Couture, chief executive of Providence Health Care in Washington and Montana and a leader in the Spokane community, knows firsthand how gaps in mental health services affect individuals, families and entire communities.

“We see it all too often—individuals whose mental illness has destroyed a promising career and left a family divided, now in our emergency department, hoping for care and compassion and needing long-term treatment,” she says. In many cases, she adds, early intervention might have prevented hospitalization.

And the impact doesn’t stop there. In 2013, mental health was estimated to be the costliest condition in the world. At $201 billion in direct costs, combined with $200 billion in lost productivity, mental health issues cost more than heart conditions, trauma, cancer and pulmonary problems.

“It’s estimated that more than 26 percent of adults have a diagnosable behavioral health disorder in a given year, and 20 percent of children suffer from mental illness, yet fewer than half of those adults and children will receive treatment,” says Kirk Rowbotham, M.D., chief executive of Providence Medical Group in eastern Washington.

That’s why Providence is collaborating with community partners in expanding access to outpatient services, building new inpatient facilities and reaching out to youths in the community with a mental health educational campaign.

Personal Connection
The key is to help those who struggle with mental health issues or substance abuse find accessible, affordable care to live healthy lives.

One approach is to screen patients in primary care settings for common disorders such as anxiety and depression. A simple questionnaire helps identify potential for mental health issues. Patients are given the chance to speak to a counselor, a nurse or a social worker about their concerns; in turn, that care manager works with psychiatrists and primary care providers on matters such as medication.

This approach is less intimidating because the setting and the caregivers are familiar, explains Tanya Keeble, M.D., director of the psychiatry residency program at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center & Children’s Hospital.

Many people don’t want to see a specialist, she says, partly because of the stigma and partly because of the cost.

“It’s reassuring to hear, ‘I’m a social worker. I’m working with a psychiatrist, but you don’t have to see him or her in person.’ You’re going to continue the established relationship with the person you trust, your primary care provider,” she says.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO WELL-BEING
Share your experiences with mental health on social media using the hashtags #BeWell or #BeHeard. Tell us how you strive to #BeWell. Talk about it when you need to #BeHeard. For more information, visit wellbeingtrust.org.

Gabriel Williams, M.D. (from left), Amy Burns, M.D., and Tanya Keeble, M.D., discuss the day’s behavioral health priorities at the Spokane Teaching Health Clinic.
Outreach in Action

Another approach is collaboration with community partners to increase access to services and provide care in the most appropriate setting.

Providence, in partnership with Northeast Washington Alliance Counseling Services, opened a 16-bed outpatient facility at Mount Carmel Hospital in Colville last year. The evaluation and treatment center is designed to keep people close to home during care.

“Keeping people near their friends and family gives them a better chance of success, by maintaining a feeling of inclusion in the community,” says Tamara Sheehan, regional director of behavioral health for Providence Health Care.

This spring, Providence will launch a new outpatient program on the Holy Family Hospital campus in Spokane. RISE, the name of the program for both adults and adolescents, is an acronym for the tools it hopes to impart: resources, insight, support and empowerment.

People will attend full-day group and private counseling sessions three to five days a week, depending on the need. In the evening, they will go home, where they will have a chance to put what they've learned into action.

“The next day, they can talk in group therapy about how the previous night went,” Sheehan says. “They can actually talk through their situation and learn how to deal with stressors, whether it’s family, job or addiction.”

This fall, Providence and Universal Health Services/Fairfax Behavioral Health are set to open a 100-bed hospital on the Sacred Heart campus in Spokane. The facility will provide emergency and short-term inpatient care for children and adults in eastern Washington, increasing the number of behavioral health hospital beds in the community. It will also provide outpatient services. The new hospital will help address a significant need. Today, emergency departments struggle to find beds for people coming in for mental health services.

'Together We Are Helping People'

Through all of these initiatives, Sheehan notes that Providence is working to make mental health care more accessible in the region.

“We know there is a need,” she says. “We are working closely with our community partners, and together we are helping people get back to the lives they want to live.”

SPOTTING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN CHILDREN

Adolescents are no strangers to mental health issues. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 children ages 13 to 18 has a serious mental health condition.

Identifying the problem early is important, says Tanya Keeble, M.D., director of the psychiatry residency program at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center. But depression in adolescents looks different from depression in adults.

Dr. Keeble advises watching for a change in behaviors.

“Adolescents and children don’t know they are depressed,” she says. “They don’t come up to you saying ‘I’m depressed.’ They usually act in ways that are off-putting, like being irritable and wanting isolation.”

Both behaviors are indicative of suffering.

Take note, too, if a child:

- Gets into more trouble at home or school
- Is more argumentative with family members
- Changes social groups
- Starts to use drugs and alcohol

As a parent, if you see such signs, call your primary care provider, Dr. Keeble says.

“Don’t wait until the situation deteriorates, until it’s a crisis,” she says. “We can help right from the first signs of struggle. The longer you have an illness, the harder it is to treat.”
Give Your Heart a Makeover

Revamp your lifestyle and lower your risk of heart disease with these six steps.

It doesn’t take much to improve your heart health. In fact, heart disease is about 80 percent preventable when you make the right choices. Ready to make over your heart? Let’s get started.

1. Stop smoking right now. The reasons are clear: Smoking contributes to the buildup of fatty substances in the arteries, increases blood pressure and lowers good (HDL) cholesterol. Plus, a double whammy for the heart, smokers also tend to have more difficulty exercising.

2. Move more. People who are active are better at controlling their weight, keeping blood pressure low and managing cholesterol levels. You don’t need to huff and puff to reap the benefits—a daily 30-minute brisk walk (or three 10-minute walks) is a good start.

3. Taste the rainbow. A healthy diet is essential to a healthy heart. Start by avoiding processed foods and loading up on fruits and vegetables. Include a variety of colors to get the maximum benefits, as plant compounds that give produce its bold colors also help your body fight disease.

4. Suppress stress. One key to a healthier heart is managing stress. Although researchers are still trying to understand the exact link, they do know that stress raises blood pressure levels. And for some people, it might invite unhealthy coping mechanisms, like drinking alcohol or smoking. So, relax: You’ll feel better with just 10 minutes of daily laughter, meditation, yoga or deep breathing.

5. Hit the hay. When we don’t get enough sleep, we see increases in the stress hormone cortisol and blood pressure levels. When these are constantly elevated, they damage the lining of the blood vessels of the heart. Try to aim for seven to eight hours of shut-eye each night.

6. See your doctor. High blood pressure and elevated blood sugar and cholesterol levels raise your risk of heart disease. But you won’t know whether your numbers are high without seeing your primary care provider. So, schedule an appointment! If your levels are out of range, your doctor might prescribe medications that can help control these important risk factors.

By Sean Spangler, M.D.

MORE HELP ONLINE

As the local Go Red For Women and Heart & Stroke Walk sponsor, we’ve partnered with the American Heart Association to educate you on ways to lower your heart disease risk. Visit heart.org/lifeiswhyeasternwa to take a heart-health quiz and access free resources.
Healing for the Homeless

Providence House of Charity Clinic offers medical care—and much more—to the area’s most vulnerable.

A newly expanded Providence clinic aims to help our region’s most vulnerable population by bringing health care to a location where the need is greatest: one block from the House of Charity, in downtown Spokane. The new clinic was paid for by a generous grant from Providence Health Care Foundation, as well as Providence Community Benefit funds and proceeds from the Providence Sacred Heart Gift Shop.

Most patients can be treated right at the clinic rather than in a hospital emergency department.

“Our goal is to offer the right care in the right place,” says Kelly Piger, senior director of physician practice for Providence Medical Group. Homeless people typically seek medical care in the emergency department. “Not only is that setting far costlier, but it crowds the ED with patients who could be treated elsewhere,” Piger says.

40 YEARS OF OUTREACH

The Providence House of Charity Clinic, the oldest outreach facility in the state, was launched in 1976 in collaboration with Catholic Charities. Sister Peter Claver, Sacred Heart’s administrator at...
the time, saw a need to serve the chronically homeless, and Catholic Charities was—and remains—an ideal partner. The original clinic was in a small room inside the House of Charity and was staffed two half days a week by a group of dedicated volunteers.

The complex medical needs of Spokane’s poorest citizens have increased significantly over the last few years, so when Catholic Charities acquired a building near the House of Charity, the decision was made to relocate and expand this vital community resource. The clinic is now open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., offering everything from treatment for common medical conditions to a comprehensive array of screenings, tests and immunizations.

SUPPORTING THE MISSION
Clinic volunteers work hand in hand with House of Charity staff to identify patients and ensure their needs are being met. In fact, sometimes they don’t wait for patrons to show up at the clinic, but instead head over to the House of Charity and walk patients back to the clinic for much-needed care.

“This clinic is the epitome of the Providence Mission,” Piger says. “It truly goes back to the roots of why we were founded.”

Volunteer physicians, registered nurses and advanced registered nurse practitioners remain the cornerstone of the new clinic but are now supplemented by three full-time paid Providence staff. “The volunteers are essential, but the full-time staff help us provide a continuity of care that is especially important for this population,” Piger says.

The new clinic offers the same quality, comprehensive care that people receive in more than 50 Providence locations throughout Spokane and Stevens counties. Access to electronic medical records allows staff to quickly review patient history and determine cost-effective treatment options, as well as avoid redundant care and ensure appropriate follow-up.

People come to the clinic for medical care but often end up receiving much more. “Our patients are usually on Apple Health [Washington state’s name for Medicaid], but if not, we have the ability to get them signed up while they are here,” Piger says.

Natalie Jackson, patient navigator, explains that clinic staff help patients access services including housing, transportation, and behavioral health and substance abuse programs. They also try to match patients with primary care providers, often at the Spokane Teaching Health Clinic.

“We may not offer all the necessary resources under this roof, but we can get them plugged into the right areas,” Jackson says. “There are so many pieces to the puzzle—we’re trying to look at the bigger picture.” One recent patient left in tears of gratitude after Jackson provided her with a job lead.

“I tell every person who comes through the door about different services that are available to them,” Jackson says. “Some are ready, some are not, but when they’re ready, they know where to find us and we’ll be here for them.”

HOW YOU CAN HELP
You can support this and other Providence programs that help the poor and vulnerable by giving to Providence Health Care Foundation at phc.org/giving. The clinic is also seeking volunteer medical staff. Call Volunteer Services at 509-474-3166 for more information.
Classes, Events and Activities

COMMUNITY WELLNESS CLASSES
Visit courseregistration.inhs.org for dates, times and locations for all upcoming classes.

GROUP LIFESTYLE BALANCE
Time to take charge of your health! This program helps you make lasting changes to reach your weight-loss goals. You’ll meet weekly with a trained lifestyle coach and receive the support and tools you’ll need for success. Offered in person or through live, interactive webinars.

LIVING WELL WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS
This free, six-week program helps you take control of your ongoing health condition. Family members or support people are encouraged to attend.

COMMUNITY FORUMS AND EVENTS
Visit phc.org for dates, times and locations.

FREE BLOOMSDAY TRAINING CLINICS
As the official training sponsor of the largest timed race in the world, we invite you to bring your friends and family to get in shape for Bloomsday with help from health and fitness experts.

Saturday mornings, March 17–April 28
Spokane Community College Gymnasium
» 8:30 a.m.: Start time
» 8:30–9 a.m.: Learn from health and fitness experts, and warm up with a personal trainer
» 9 a.m.: Start your walk or run
Register at phc.org/bloomsday.

Our Mission is to reveal God’s love for all, especially the poor and vulnerable, through our compassionate service. Our values are respect, compassion, justice, excellence and stewardship.