

Bethlehem Township

Northampton County, Pennsylvania



FALL 2024



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Bethlehem Township Municipal Building

DIRECTORY

Administration	610-814-6405
Community Center	610-332-1900
Construction	610-814-6430
Finance/Billing	610-814-6460
Physical Plant/Sewer	610-814-6420
Planning	610-814-6440
Police (Admin)	610-814-6426
Police (Dispatch)	610-759-2200
Public Works	610-814-6442

Holidays

The Municipal Offices will be closed

Thursday, November 28th 2024

Friday, November 29th 2024

Wednesday, December 25th 2024

Thursday, December 26th 2024

Wednesday, January 1st 2025

The Municipal Offices will be open

8am-12pm

Tuesday, December 24th

Tuesday, December 31st

Board of Commissioners

Jan Beatty

John Gallagher

Michael Hudak

DeAnn Lawrence

John Merhottein



Message from the Board of Commissioners

It is our pleasure to present to you Bethlehem Township's fall newsletter. This document contains valuable information regarding local government operations and services.

This newsletter is the result of a partnership between Bethlehem Township and Hometown Press, a Perkasie-based company specializing in municipal newsletters. In this format, you will find not only information on township government, but also advertisements from local businesses and organizations.

If you have any questions about township services, we encourage you to visit the township's website at bethlehemtownship.org. This website is an ideal starting point to search for Bethlehem Township contacts, information, events, and news.

And please check out the Bethlehem Township Community Center's website at www.bethlehemtownship.org/btcc/ for full information on recreation activities, fitness classes, and other offerings.

We wish you a safe and happy fall season.

The Township of Bethlehem Board of Commissioners and staff

MEETING SCHEDULE

Board of Commissioners	1st and 3rd Monday	Monthly	7:00 pm
Recreation Committee	2nd Monday	Monthly	6:00 pm
Planning Commission	4th Monday	Monthly	7:00 pm
Zoning Hearing Board	Last Wednesday	Monthly	6:30 pm
Environmental Advisory Council	3rd Thursday	Monthly	7:00 pm
BTMA*	2nd Wednesday	Monthly	6:30 pm

*Meeting held at 3535 Orth Street, Bethlehem, PA

BUDGET HEARINGS

Thursday, October 24, 2024	6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Tuesday, October 29, 2024	6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Thursday, November 7, 2024	6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

All meetings are open to the public and are held in the meeting room at the Bethlehem Township Municipal Building: 4225 Easton Avenue, Bethlehem, PA

Important Updates

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Keystone Collections Group collects your Earned Income Tax – you may choose to file online www.KeystoneCollects.com. Their tax support line may be reached by calling **888.328.0565**.



We receive calls from residents that are concerned about postal delays and receiving timely credit for their payments. Postmark dates are honored for timely credit. Also, we retrieve items placed in the municipal drop box on a daily basis and you will receive same day credit.

STORMWATER FEE

Effective 2022, a new Stormwater Fee will be mailed out annually to all residents and businesses. The Township is utilizing Berkheimer to process and collect the fees.

All billings are sent to the property owner. Discount, Base and Penalty Due Dates and Amounts are printed on all bills. All payments are to be directed to Berkheimer, not the Township.

Unpaid bills sent for delinquent stormwater fee collection as of January 1st each year

Stormwater fee bills are mailed out by February 1st each calendar year.

- For more information, visit bethlehetownship.org/stormwater, email stormwater@bethlehetwp.com, or call (610) 814-6491.
- Make your check or money order payable to: HAB-MISC. no cash payments accepted.
- You may pay using the berk app or online at WWW.HAB-INC.COM/PAYMISC by credit card, checking or savings account or via phone at 866-225-8451 (a third-party fee will apply)

SEWER PAYMENT OPTIONS

Pay directly at municipal office, by mail or drop box (in front of municipal office main entrance)

Online Bill Pay Service for Sewer Bills*****

We have launched new features that allow you to access and manage your Bethlehem Township sewer bills online at your convenience. View and pay bills online, receive email reminders when a payment is due, enroll in Auto-Pay, receive Paperless Billings and even Pay by Text. You will be asked to either register as a new online customer or simply "Pay Now." If using Pay Now you may always register at another time to take advantage of more features as mentioned above.

Links are provided on <https://bethlehetownship.org/payments>. No fee for EFT payments via checking/savings account. There is a "convenience fee" of 2.95% for credit/debit card payments (\$3.95 minimum fee). Pay by phone using 1-855-985-1094.

SEWER BILLINGS

*****Important Sewer Meter Read Reminder***:** Please ensure proper access/clearance for routine sewer meter readings; bushes, flower beds, animals, etc. Not only is the removal of obstructions appreciated it may reduce further costs should additional staff time be required to schedule follow-up reads.

Sewer Rates – ***Quarterly Rates ***

- Current rates (read dates on/after 01/01/24) \$55.75 1st 6,000 gallons plus \$7.50 for each 1,000 additional gallons
- Current rates are published on the township website Finance section. Current rates also printed on sewer billing.

Payable to "Bethlehem Township". Penalty of 10% applied if paid after due date

continued on page 6

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Behind Wawa

SEWER DEDUCTION METERS

Deduction Meters should be considered if you use a lot of water for outside purposes (i.e. - filling a pool, watering a lawn). These meters will deduct the water consumption units used outside the home from your total water consumption, thereby reducing your sewer bill to account for water that did not enter the sewer system directly.

Rentals are \$5.00 per week, plus a \$100 deposit, which will be returned to you when the meter is returned in good condition. Purchase of a meter is \$229, charge subject to current pricing. The homeowner must install the meter. Questions about deduction meters can be directed to the Physical Plant office at 610.814.6420, or download the information packet from our site. Please check with The Department of Environmental Protection's Drought Information Center before renting a meter.

REAL ESTATE TAX PAYMENT OPTIONS

Pay directly at municipal office, by mail or drop box (in front of municipal office main entrance)

Online Bill Pay Service for Real Estate Tax Bills*****

Links are provided on <https://bethlehemtownship.org/payments>. No fee for EFT payments via checking/savings account. There is a "convenience fee" of 2.95% for credit card payments (\$1.00 minimum fee). This new online tax payment option operates on a "Pay Now" basis. No registration.

REAL ESTATE TAX BILLS (Payable to "Bethlehem Township")

- All billings are sent to the property owner. Discount, Base and Penalty Due Dates and Amounts are printed on all bills.
- 2024 tax millage rate – 7.74 mills (7.59 general purpose mills plus 0.15 fire tax mills)
- Unpaid bills sent for delinquent tax collection as of January 1st each year
- Tax bills are mailed out by February 1st each calendar year.
- Please contact Finance Dept. if you are concerned you have not received annual tax bill.



Finance Customer Support Line 610.814.6460

Finance related questions may be directed to the following email addresses:

taxes@bethlehemtwp.com finance@bethlehemtwp.com billing@bethlehemtwp.com

BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP YARD WASTE RECYCLING CENTER

Bethlehem Township Recycling Center Regulations:

UPDATE: Beginning January 1, 2020 Contractors and Landscapers will no longer be permitted access the yard waste center. The center will also not allow trailers larger than two axle that are longer than 10 feet or large trucks. Residential use only. Must show documentation of residency.

- The Center only accepts tree branches, shrubbery trimmings, vegetable plants, and flower plants
- Tree stumps, and shrub roots with dirt as well as grass clippings are NOT accepted.
- Branches up to 12 inches in diameter are accepted. Branches should be no longer than 4 feet.
- Residents are responsible for unloading their materials and emptying any containers.
- Containers must be taken home with the resident.
- Composted leaf mulch and fresh wood chips are available for residents to take home and use. The Township does not guarantee the quality of the recycled materials.
- The Township is not responsible for the loading of any of the recycled materials.

The Bethlehem Township Recycling Center is located behind the Public Works Facility at 4450 Falmer Drive.

Questions regarding the Recycling Center should be referred to: 610-814-6442.

Yard Waste Drop-off Facility Hours

Monday— Wednesday—Friday
Noon to 4PM

Saturday—10AM to 3PM

Sunday—1PM to 4PM

Hours of operation may be dependant on weather conditions.

Contact the Publics Works Department (610-814-6442) during bad weather for any changes or cancellations.

New Complaint Form Available for Pennsylvania Consumers with Airline Issues

Rep. Joe Emrick (137th District)

HARRISBURG – A new, online complaint form for Pennsylvania consumers encountering hardships with airline travel, ranging from flight delays and cancellations to boarding problems, is now available, according to Rep. Joe Emrick (R-Northampton).

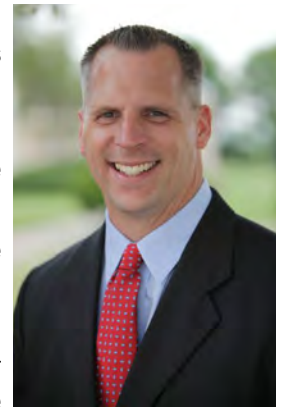
The form is available on the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General website, at www.attorneygeneral.gov, by clicking the "Submit a Complaint" tab at the top of the page. A printable version of the form is also available.

According to the attorney general's office, the form was created in response to a nationwide uptick in consumer complaints regarding air travel and is the product of a partnership with the U.S. Department of Transportation to better assist Pennsylvania travelers.

Consumers may file complaints whether they purchased tickets directly, or through an agent or third party. Residents of Pennsylvania or those who faced airline issues in Pennsylvania are eligible to use the new complaint form.

The forms require information, such as a ticket number, flight itinerary, flight date, date of ticket purchase, ticket price and form of payment. The forms also require specifics on what issues were encountered by the traveler. This information will be useful when reviewing and resolving complaints.

The U.S. Department of Transportation expects to launch a modernized system for handling air travel service complaints later this year. This system is intended to improve the customer experience for the tens of thousands of consumers who file air travel service complaints with the department each year. The attorney general's office will provide information on how to submit complaints directly to the department in the future.



THANK YOU TO THE BUSINESSES

This publication is produced at no cost to Bethlehem Township residents thanks to the generous sponsorship of the businesses listed throughout the newsletter. The Township recognized these businesses as community supporters and encourages residents to also suggest these local businesses with their patronage.

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Why are permits required?

Permits are required to confirm improvements meet Bethlehem Township and Pennsylvania regulations. They also ensure construction is safe by meeting minimum construction standards.

When is a building permit required?

The Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code and Bethlehem Township require permits for many types of improvements. Activities requiring a building permit include:

- Any structural change or alteration
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Mechanical/HVAC
- Water heater
- Roof changes (residential reroofing-only not included)
- Replacement windows (residential like-for-like not included)
- Deck 30 inches high or more
- Pools 24 inches deep or more (temporary and permanent)
- Additional living space
- Roof over existing deck or patio
- Retaining wall over 48 inches high
- Egress (entry doors, bilco doors, or egress windows)
- Demolition
- Fire protection or alarm
- Fireworks
- Tent (commercial only)

When is a zoning permit required?

The Bethlehem Township Zoning Ordinance require permits for other improvements. Activities requiring a zoning permit include:

- Fence
- Patio and walkway
- Pavilion or gazebo
- Shed, accessory structure or detached garage under 1,000 square feet
- Deck under 30 inches high
- Driveway (new, expansion, or addition)
- Retaining wall or seating wall 48 inches high or less
- Home occupation
- In-home daycare
- Sign (political signs not included)

What happens if I don't get a permit?

Due to increased review and administrative obligations, permit fees are doubled for after-the-fact improvements. Often times unpermitted improvements become an issue for property owners at resale or in tax disputes. Unpermitted improvements are also identified through 'abandoned' permit applications, unrelated permit applications, and by complaints. Unpermitted improvements are also a violation of one or more adopted codes. If an unpermitted improvement is not resolved properly, it's subject to a violation notice and associated fines, which can go up to \$500 per day.

Where can I get more information?

The Community Development Department handles permitting and is available to answer questions prior to and during the permitting process. You can reach us here:

Online: <https://www.bethlehemtownship.org/community-development>

Call: 610-814-6435

In-Person: Municipal Building, 4225 Easton Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18020



BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

Did you know?

A child under 13 years old is involved in a car crash every 33 seconds, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The Bethlehem Township Police Department wants to make sure the children in our community are safe.

We have multiple officers certified as child passenger safety seat technicians. A child passenger safety seat technician can help you install or simply double check that the safety seat is installed correctly. During the safety seat check, the officer will explain how to correctly install the seat, correct any errors in your installation, and provide information on best practices when it comes to installation and use of the seat, as well as when to upgrade to a new size. The checks are free of charge.

This is not a walk-in service. To schedule an appointment with a child passenger safety seat technician please contact our administrative office at 610-814-6426 during regular business hours

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NHTSA www.nhtsa.gov **Child Car Safety**



BETHLEHEM AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY



CHECK OUT OUR LIBRARY PROGRAMS!

This fall, BAPL is offering a variety of programs and events for adults, including exercise and computer classes, book, film, and knitting clubs, open mic nights, arts and crafts programs, and author events. Highlights at the Main Library include:

- Open Mic Night - Mondays, 5PM - 7:30PM
- 11Fest - a night of live music at the library: November 11, 5PM - 11PM
- BAPL Book Sale- December 4 & 7

There are also many exciting events for children, teens, and families -- all are free to attend with your library card! Join us for storytimes, STEAM events for all ages, Homework Help sessions with Moravian University tutors, and so much more. Check our website (bapl.org) for daily events and more information.

HAVE YOU VISITED BAPL COOLIDGE?

Housed in Bethlehem Township's historic Coolidge Building, BAPL Coolidge offers computers, WiFi, a curated collection of books, DVDs, audiobooks, and other library materials, as well as special events for all ages. It is located at 2740 5th St, right next to Comer Park. Storytimes and special events are held as well. Join us for "Strategies for Listening Across the American Political Divide" on Oct 16.

BORROW E-BOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY

Your library card provides access to a huge collection of free e-books to download on your smartphone, computer, or other device. The service is called cloudLibrary™, and it can be downloaded from the app store or at www.yourcloudlibrary.com. You just enter your library card number and begin borrowing free e-books right away!



There's always something going on at BAPL -- use the tools below to stay in the know about new and exciting offerings at your library.

Social Media: [@pabapl](https://www.instagram.com/pabapl)

FOLLOW US

Newsletter Signup: bapl.org/newsletter

Bookmobile Schedule: bapl.org/the-bookmobile



Bethlehem Area Public Library Locations

Main Library

11 W. Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018
610.867.3761

South Side Branch

400 Webster Street
Bethlehem, PA 18015
610.867.7852

BAPL Coolidge

2740 Fifth Street
Bethlehem, PA 18020
484.892.6267

Books on the Hill

Spiegel and Stanley Streets
Fountain Hill, PA 18015

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BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY



The "2024 Santa Day" is scheduled to occur on Saturday December 7th, 2024. Santa and his helpers will be traveling around the township between 9am-4pm.

Please follow us on Facebook by using the QR code in the picture for the most up to date information regarding sign ups, and gift drop off dates and times.

A festive poster for "Santa's Coming to Town!" featuring a cartoon Santa Claus on the left, a candy cane on the right, and a cloud-shaped text box in the center. The text in the cloud reads: "SANTA'S COMING TO TOWN! Along with the Bethlehem Township Volunteer Firefighters". Below the cloud, it says "Follow Us on Facebook Bethlehem Township Volunteer Fire Company" and includes a QR code. At the bottom, it states: "This event occurs annually around the holidays. Be on the lookout for when to sign up after Halloween." The background is decorated with green pine branches, red and white candy canes, and red and white ornaments.

**SANTA'S
COMING TO TOWN!**

Along with the Bethlehem
Township Volunteer
Firefighters

Follow Us on Facebook
Bethlehem Township
Volunteer Fire Company



**This event occurs annually around the holidays. Be
on the lookout for when to sign up after Halloween.**

STORMWATER SOLUTIONS

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT STATUS



PLANNING

EASTON AND SANTEE
FLOOD MITIGATION
PROJECT (Phase 2)



DESIGN

SCULAC STREAM
RESTORATION



PERMIT



BID

EASTON AND SANTEE
FLOOD MITIGATION
PROJECT (Phase 1)



CONSTRUCTION

WALNUT STREET
DRAINAGE
IMPROVEMENTS

COMPLETED PROJECTS

1. Bethman & Fairway Flood Mitigation ✓

Properties on Fairway Drive and Bethman Road experience consistent flooding and ponding of water. The Authority expanded the storm sewer system to this portion of the Township to reduce the frequency of flooding.

2. Pollution Reduction Plan Basin Retrofits ✓

The Township's MS4 permit requires the Township to meet certain pollution reduction requirements. Basin retrofits at four existing basins were completed to meet the regulations imposed by the state, and allow for greater stormwater retention in the Township. Additional reduction projects will be implemented to fully meet the pollution reduction requirements of the current 5-year permit from DEP.

Completed basin retrofits at these basins:

1. Washington Street Basin near Freemansburg Ave
2. Washington Street Basin at Oliver Court
3. Long Court Basin
4. Vintage Drive



Washington Street at Oliver Court Basin Retrofit



Long Court Basin Retrofit

To learn more about these projects and other stormwater projects identified in the Bethlehem Township 5-year stormwater capital improvement plan, visit the Township's stormwater projects page on our website:

<https://bethlehemtownship.org/stormwater-projects>



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Leaf Collection Program – 2024

The Public Works Department has announced its 2024 Leaf Collection Schedule. Leaf collections are set to begin **MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2024 and conclude by Mid – December, depending on weather.** All Township residents are required to abide by the following regulations governing leaf collections.

Leaves are to be recycled through the Township's collection program. Residents must place their leaves along the edge of the street or curb for the Township to collect. It shall be the responsibility of the residents to protect their leaves along the street so that they do not blow throughout the neighborhood. Leaves **will not** be collected on private property. Also, collection crews **will not** rake piles of leaves from between or under parked cars.

Collection crews **will not** empty plastic bags or containers; this is the responsibility of the resident. Branches, grass clippings, shrubbery, garbage and building material will not be collected. These items will be left behind and are also the responsibility of the resident.

With the increasing number of maturing trees each year in various areas of the Township, it is impossible to guarantee a specific pick-up day for any one location. If leaves are not in place when the crew goes by, they will be picked up on the next rotation. The crews will not make special trips back to an area until that section is completed and the route is started over. This schedule is subject to

inclement weather, mechanical breakdown, and Township emergencies requiring the Public Works personnel and equipment. Your area could be skipped at any time should these situations occur.

The Township has been divided into three (3) collection areas. There will be one (1) collection crew assigned to each area. The crew will rotate throughout the area during the collection season. If one crew completes their assigned area, they may be moved over to help another crew in their area. The following is a breakdown of these areas.

AREA 1 – The area from Farmersville Road east to Palmer Township

AREA 2 – The area NORTH of William Penn Highway/ Easton Avenue and west of Farmersville Road

AREA 3 – The area SOUTH of William Penn Highway/ Easton Avenue and west of Farmersville Road

Questions regarding leaf collection can be referred to the Public Works Department 610-814-6442.

Please don't use bricks, rocks, etc. to hold tarps on top of your leaf pile. They can get mixed into the pile and be vacuumed up by the machine, causing timely and costly repairs! If these items are found holding your tarp down, your pile may not be picked up.

Let's Talk Trash

Taking out the trash is simple, but sometimes our daily rush prevents us from fully completing this task. There are a few best practices to ensure your carts are properly placed each week. Correct placement of trash and recycling carts helps carriers provide effective and efficient service to Township residents. So, let's keep curbs clean by following these simple steps:

1. No waste or recycling carts should be placed at the curb or in the front yard except during the collection period.
2. Place cart at the curb beginning at 6:00pm the evening prior to your collection day.
3. Ensure the carts are clear from all objects and overhead hazards.
4. Empty carts should be removed by 11:59pm on collection day.



Not only are these best practices, Township Code §212-12 requires it. Be a responsible resident and help us keep Bethlehem Township beautiful and clean.

A Message From Senator Lisa Boscola

I hope everyone had a nice summer. A reminder that my Bethlehem District Office at 1 E. Broad St., Suite 120 in Bethlehem is open M-F from 9 am – 5 pm (610.868.8667) and my office in Wilson at 1701 Washington Blvd is open M-W-F from 9 am – 5 pm (610.250.5627) to assist you.

The Property Tax and Rent Rebate program's deadline has been extended until December 31, 2024. The income limit for both homeowners and renters is now \$45,000 with a maximum rebate of \$1,000. It's important to note when calculating your income for this program, that only half of Social Security benefits, count towards that limit. All other income will be added to that determine financial eligibility. Pennsylvanians over 65, widows or widowers between the ages of 50-64, or individuals who are permanently disabled between the ages of 18-64 that meet the income eligibility can apply. My District Offices have the applications and my staff can assist in completing them for you.

Earlier this summer the General Assembly completed work on the state budget. As part of the budget, we made much needed investments to improve Pennsylvania's economic future and workforce development programs. The Lehigh Valley, and specifically the Slate Belt, is well-positioned to take advantage of these investments to bring more family sustaining jobs to our region.

Initiatives such as the SPEED program, net-operating-loss carry forward, historic preservation tax credit, and PA SITES program represent our commitment to economic development. These initiatives are good for business and will make us more competitive in attracting businesses and fostering growth.

The Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development Program (SPEED) will expedite business projects through enhanced permitting processes, supported by additional staff and third-party reviews. The net-operating-loss (NOL) carry forward increase from 40% to 80% over four years provides critical financial stability for start-up businesses, encouraging innovation and growth.

Additionally, the expansion of the Historic Preservation Incentive Tax Credit and the infusion of \$500 million through the PA SITES program will improve infrastructure readiness, positioning Pennsylvania as a prime location for business expansion.

Regarding the budget's focus on workforce development, initiatives such as the Employer Child Care Contribution Tax Credit, which offers businesses a tax credit for child care expenses paid towards an employee's eligible child care costs. Additionally, the Grow Pennsylvania Scholarship Grant Program supports students who stay and work in PA with grants up to \$5,000 annually.

These programs not only support working families but also ensure that Pennsylvania retains its talented graduates in high demand fields. These initiatives are crucial for building a robust workforce that will drive our state's economy forward.

Alongside several important investments, this budget underscores our commitment to fostering economic growth while investing in our workforce. By supporting businesses and educational opportunities, we are laying a foundation for sustainable prosperity and competitiveness for the Lehigh Valley and across Pennsylvania.

This budget also makes important investments in public education. School districts in the 18th Senatorial District received nearly \$19 million in increased funding, with over \$2.3 million of that being reimbursement for district's Cyber Charter payment obligations. Our career and technical schools play a crucial role in workforce development and the grant program to provide needed equipment received a 22% increase.

Additionally, the legislature created a tax equity program with \$32 million dedicated to providing additional relief for homeowners in school districts with high property tax burdens. This tax equity program used a convoluted formula to dispense money. Less than half the money (\$13 million) went to school districts in counties in the top 5 of heaviest tax burdened and none went to districts in Northampton County. I am introducing legislation to ensure school districts in the counties with the highest tax burden, such as Northampton, receive priority funding from the tax equity program should it be used again next year.

As Co-Chair of the Community College Caucus, I was also pleased to see a 6% increase in funding to our community colleges, which play a critical role in workforce development along with being an affordable launching pad for many students as they begin their pathway to a career.

As a longtime advocate for school property tax reform, however, I am disappointed this budget missed out on providing significant property tax relief for homeowners. I will continue my push for property tax reform and offer amendments on the floor to make progress on this much needed initiative.

Have a great fall!

Lisa

Senator Lisa Boscola

18th Senatorial District



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Chief Executive Officer,
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Brian A. Nester, DO, MBA
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Operating Officer,
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Our combined health system is now one of the top 15 not-for-profit health systems in the country, creating a network of care that will positively impact generations to come. **We are stronger together.**

What does this mean for you? Together, we will bring an even stronger commitment to the Lehigh Valley and northeastern Pennsylvania, growing programs and services close to home. You have our word.

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We were two organizations with complementary areas of focus, a shared vision and aligned organizational approaches. Now, with the combined strength of our 65,000 dedicated professionals and our shared passion for exceptional service, we can do even more to improve lives.

Together, we will be driven to offer new education and professional development opportunities to our colleagues and recruit the best and brightest clinicians to provide the highest quality care. We'll tackle the most persistent challenges we face, such as health equity and behavioral health, which impacts all our communities.

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