

# Valleywise Health

Magazine | March 2025

## *Elise's Journey*

*Overcoming  
Schizophrenia*

**A New  
Chapter  
Begins**

**Meet Our  
Manikins**

**Educating the  
Next Generation  
of Physicians**







# A Message from Steve Purves

Valleywise Health President & CEO

The past year has been a historic one for Valleywise Health, with the opening of a new 10-story hospital and two new outpatient mental health clinics. We launched a Mobile Health Clinic to better serve the community and earned initial accreditation for our first dental residency program, beginning in 2025.

We also received our first “A” Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group, a recognition of Valleywise Health’s dedication to delivering high-quality, safe patient care.

As Arizona’s leading safety net healthcare organization, we provide lifesaving and life-sustaining care daily. We treat persons challenged by serious mental illness. And we look for ways to improve access to our services for those in our community who are most at risk for chronic illnesses.

As you turn these pages, you will learn how we’re writing the next chapter of care for our community and how we’re reaching more residents through innovative efforts.

You will meet Elise Lampley, who bravely shares her struggle with mental illness and her recovery with help from our innovative First Episode Center.

You’ll also learn about burn survivor Robert Woolley, one of a rising number of Arizonans who are treated at the Diane & Bruce Halle Arizona Burn Center for contact burns from hot surfaces like asphalt and concrete during our extreme summer temperatures.

There are many stories of patients who have benefited from Valleywise Health’s services, and I am proud of all the Valleywise Health and District Medical Group caregivers who play a role in making our community healthier.

It’s an exciting time to be part of Valleywise Health, where our mission is to provide exceptional care, without exception, every patient, every time.

I want to thank you for your support in helping us to carry out our mission as a public teaching hospital and safety net care system. I am proud to say I am part of an organization that is making a difference in our community.

## Valleywise Health Leadership

**Steve Purves**  
President and CEO,  
Valleywise Health

**Lisa Hartsock**  
Interim CEO, Valleywise  
Health Foundation

**Sherry Stotler, RN**  
Chief Nursing Officer

**Michael White, MD**  
Chief Clinical Officer

**Claire Agnew**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Lia Christiansen**  
Chief Administrative  
Officer

**Michelle Barker**  
CEO of FQHC Clinics

## Magazine Credits

**Michael Murphy**  
Writer

**Cherie Black**  
Editor

**Chencho Flores**  
Photographer

# A Historic Move

## Opening the New Valleywise Health Medical Center

After many months of preparation and planning, Valleywise Health’s staff safely transferred more than 200 patients to the new Valleywise Health Medical Center on June 13, 2024.

Steve Purves, President and CEO, was among many hospital leaders who gave high praise to Valleywise Health and District Medical Group employees, plus some 250 volunteers for safely and efficiently moving patients from the legacy hospital while still taking care of patients as they were admitted to the new hospital.

As the move took place, patients were arriving by foot, by ambulance, by helicopter and being taken care of as if it were a normal workday at Valleywise Health, Purves said. “That couldn’t happen without a workforce that is extremely dedicated to the health and well-being of our community,” he said.



“It is our staff and our DMG partners who made the completion of this move possible, and I am proud to be able to say I work with them.”

The new Valleywise Health Medical Center replaces a legacy hospital that has served the community for more than 50 years.



“IT IS OUR STAFF AND OUR DMG PARTNERS WHO MADE THE COMPLETION OF THIS MOVE POSSIBLE, AND I AM PROUD TO BE ABLE TO SAY I WORK WITH THEM.”

Beginning at 2 a.m., staff began preparing to move the first Emergency Department patients before completely transferring the entire ED to the new hospital at 3 a.m. Other departments followed in practiced order, with the move completely finished at 3:30 p.m.

Countless hours of planning and preparation contributed to the smooth transfer, said Lia Christiansen, Chief Administrative Officer, who oversaw the operation.

“We prepared for this move for well over a year and challenged ourselves to plan for every possible scenario that could potentially arise,” said Christiansen. Preparations included multiple “Day in the Life” and mock move exercises.

The opening was a day of many firsts for the new hospital. Purves greeted the first patient admitted into the new 34,550-square-foot emergency department. The first baby was delivered a few hours later in the new Labor and Delivery suites.





## Valleywise Health Welcomes Four New Members

The Maricopa County Special Health Care District Board welcomed four new members, including three who ran unopposed in the November 2024 election. Virginia L. Korte, Earl Wilcox and Martin Demos will each serve a four-year term on the Board that oversees Valleywise Health.

In addition, the Board appointed Barbara Mundell in February to fill the unexpired term of Kate Brophy McGee, elected in November to the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

"We are delighted to welcome Ms. Korte, Mr. Wilcox, Mr. Demos, and Ms. Mundell," said Steve Purves, President and CEO. "They each bring extensive experience and leadership in business, government and community advocacy. Their service will be an asset to our unique health system and the patients we serve." They join Director Woody Thomas, who is serving his second term.

In a December 2024 meeting, the Board elected Virginia Korte as the new chair and Earl Wilcox as vice chair.

"Serving on this board is an incredible honor for me," said Korte, "I look forward to working with leadership, our District Medical Group partners and all the remarkable employees who make up this great community asset.

For over 140 years, Valleywise Health has provided a health care safety net for the residents of Maricopa County, and I am honored to be part of the system's ongoing mission."

Korte, a native Arizonan and former Scottsdale City Council member, is owner of Korte Group, a property management and outdoor consulting firm. From 2007 to 2014, she served as President/CEO of Scottsdale Training and Rehabilitative Services (STARS), a nonprofit organization providing services and programs for developmentally disabled individuals. She was the Dealer/General manager in the family's car business, Ray Korte Chevrolet, until it was sold in 1998.

Wilcox served as a member of the Arizona House of Representatives from 1976–1990; Justice of the Peace for the Maricopa County Maryvale Justice Court from 1990–1992; and special assistant to Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano from 2003–2008. He is married to outgoing Board member Mary Rose Wilcox.

Demos is former General Counsel and Senior Vice President for Valleywise Health. He spent 20 years as an attorney for Valleywise Health and in 2022 was honored with a Counsel of the Year Award by AZ Big Media. Mundell, a third

generation Arizonan, is the first female and first Hispanic to serve as presiding judge of Maricopa County.



## Valleywise Health Earns "A" for Quality and Safety

Valleywise Health Medical Center in 2024 received the highest safety grade from The Leapfrog Group, a recognition of Valleywise Health's dedication to delivering high-quality, safe patient care.

"This is the first time Valleywise Health has received an 'A' grade in the Leapfrog rankings, and I am extremely proud of every member of our care team for this achievement," said Steve Purves, President and CEO. "It's extremely gratifying to see their hard work and laser focus on quality and safety recognized with an 'A' rating by Leapfrog."

Leapfrog, an independent national nonprofit watchdog organization, assigns an "A," "B," "C," "D" or "F" grade to general hospitals across the country based on over 30 performance measures reflecting errors, accidents, injuries and infections, as well as the systems hospitals have in place to prevent them.

"Achieving this top recognition of high-quality, safe patient care is a true testament to the skill, dedication and commitment of our healthcare professionals,"

said Dr. Michael White, Chief Clinical Officer. "Our teams are working tirelessly to care for a high burden of patient needs and we are so proud and appreciative of their efforts."

"Achieving an 'A' Hospital Safety Grade is a significant accomplishment for Valleywise Health," said Leah Binder, President and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "It reflects enormous dedication to your patients and their families, and your whole community should be proud. I extend my congratulations to Valleywise Health, its leadership, clinicians, staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts to put patients first."

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade stands as the only hospital ratings program focused solely on preventable medical errors, infections and injuries that kill more than 500 patients a day in the United States. This program is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring. To explore Valleywise Health's full grade details and to find valuable tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit [HospitalSafetyGrade.org](https://HospitalSafetyGrade.org).



### Maricopa County Special Health Care District Board of Directors

**Virginia L. Korte** — Chairman, District 2  
**Earl V. Wilcox** — Vice Chairman, District 5  
**Martin C. Demos** — Director, District 1  
**Barbara Mundell** — Director, District 3  
**J. Woodfin Thomas** — Director, District 4

### Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council

**Scott Jacobson** — Chairman, District 3  
**Eileen Sullivan** — Vice Chairman, District 1  
**Earl Arbuckle** — Treasurer, District 3  
**Nelly Clotter Woods, Ph.D.** — District 4  
**Chris Hooper** — District 3  
**Salina Imam** — District 1  
**Norma Munoz** — District 5  
**William O'Neill** — District 2  
**Essen Otu** — District 3  
**Wayne Tormala** — District 3  
**Jane Wilson** — District 3



# Valleywise Health Celebrates Opening of Two New Mental Health Clinics

In 2024, Valleywise Health celebrated the opening of two new behavioral health clinics — one in Maryvale and another in Mesa — that provide comprehensive mental health services to some of the Valley’s most vulnerable populations.

The Maryvale outpatient clinic, located within the Valleywise Behavioral Health Center — Maryvale, serves people challenged by serious mental illness. It will ultimately serve up to 700 individuals and includes a new forensic assertive community treatment team to help individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system.

The Mesa outpatient clinic, located within the Valleywise Health Behavioral Health Center — Desert Vista, will also serve up to 700 individuals with a serious mental illness and includes one assertive community treatment team.

“The opening of these clinics marks a new chapter in Valleywise Health’s long history of providing high-quality behavioral health services to the community,” said Steve Purves, Valleywise Health President and CEO.

Valleywise Health purchased the decommissioned Maryvale hospital in 2018 and converted it into an inpatient behavioral health facility that also houses a full-service medical emergency department. It re-opened in 2019



and provides 150 court-ordered inpatient beds with the remaining 42 beds expected to open in 2025.

These new outpatient clinics will contribute to a faster discharge of patients from Valleywise Health’s three psychiatric hospitals into its own clinics, thereby enabling the health system to maximize inpatient capacity by reducing length of stay and reducing readmissions.

“The benefit to the community is that more individuals with a serious mental illness will be receiving high quality outpatient treatment,” said Gene Cavallo, Valleywise Health’s Senior Vice President of Behavioral Health. “Our commitment to supporting the mental health well-being of our community is stronger than ever, and we are proud to offer new clinics that reflects that dedication.”

## Valleywise Health Boasts Among the Lowest Psychiatric Readmission Rates in the U.S.

Valleywise Health has some of the lowest readmission rates nationwide among inpatient psychiatric facilities, according to data from U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The highest readmittance rate nationally is 35%, while Valleywise Health’s rate is only 13.4%.

Patients are far less likely to be readmitted within 30 days of an inpatient stay at a Valleywise Health behavioral health facility — a credit to the health system’s skilled behavioral health staff and the organization’s holistic approach to treatment.

“Our dedicated team knows how to work with the seriously mentally ill to give them the best chance at success,” said Gene Cavallo, Senior Vice President of Behavioral Health. “We’re so proud to be recognized for our decades of devoted work in this area, because we know how much it means to patients and their families.”

# New Diabetes Program Helps South Phoenix Residents

Valleywise Health launched a diabetes education program in 2024 to help residents of South Phoenix take control of their diabetes and reduce the risk of complications.

The Diabetes Empowerment Education Program, known as DEEP, began with a \$2.1 million grant from CVS Health to connect with patients in Valleywise Health’s Federally Qualified Health Centers who are disproportionately impacted by diet-related chronic diseases.

Led by Program Coordinator Oscar Solis, the program encourages patients who are at risk, pre-diabetic, or diabetic to integrate food as medicine and empowers them to take charge of their health needs.

“We believe that the right resources can transform health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities, greatly reducing or eliminating generational health inequities for improved quality of life for patients in the greater South Phoenix community,” said Dr. Michelle Barker, Senior Vice President of Ambulatory Services and Chief Executive Officer of FQHC Clinics.

Over the course of eight weekly sessions, attendees learn how to communicate with their doctor, check and manage their blood sugar levels, and create lifestyle

changes such as exercise, meal planning, and cooking with healthy foods. Graduates receive diabetic-friendly food boxes for a year to help support dietary changes while addressing food insecurity.

The DEEP model affirms the connection between diet and health and recognizes that access to high-quality nourishment is essential for individuals and communities to thrive.

Preliminary DEEP data shows 80% of patients with uncontrolled diabetes improved after participating in the program.

“Food as medicine is intuitive for most of us, but when faced with the lack of access to affordable food, use of unfamiliar or unhealthy foods, or lack of understanding about nutrition, food becomes a necessity driven by need and hunger rather than a means to improved health outcomes,” Barker said.

DEEP also seeks to develop trusting relationships by exhibiting respect, concern, and encouragement with participants. Many participants remain engaged after completing the 8-week course, keeping connected with fellow DEEP participants through a WhatsApp group.

The first DEEP cohort included more than 60 participants and is expanding to Avondale in 2025.



## Mobile Health Clinic Launched

In a significant development for community healthcare, the Valleywise Health Mobile Health Clinic was launched in 2024 as a new Federally Qualified Health Center on wheels. This innovative initiative aims to bridge the gap for individuals facing challenges in accessing traditional healthcare services, while also engaging new patients with Valleywise Health.

The Mobile Health Clinic is committed to delivering exceptional care to a diverse population that includes those with recent incarceration histories, survivors of sexual and domestic violence in shelter services, and families at schools who struggle to find healthcare. Additionally, it reaches out to individuals experiencing food insecurity, and families new to Arizona who have yet to establish regular care.

This initiative represents a crucial step in ensuring that healthcare is accessible to all members of the community, reinforcing Valleywise Health’s role as a safety net hospital system serving those most in need of healthcare services.



# ELISE'S JOURNEY

## Overcoming Schizophrenia

**At 29, Elise Lampley appears to have it all — her own apartment, a full social life and a full-time job.**

She's come a long way since she and her family walked through the doors of the Valleywise Health First Episode Center — Avondale in 2019 after Elise began struggling with her mental health. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia and today



**THE FIRST EPISODE CENTER TEAM DEVELOPED A CARE PLAN INDIVIDUALIZED FOR HER NEEDS AND HER SUCCESS. WE FELT THEY REALLY HAD ELISE'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS.**



*First Episode Center, Avondale*

her remarkable recovery shows that a serious mental illness does not have to be personally or financially debilitating.

Valleywise Health has two First Episode Centers (FECs) designed to help teens and young adults like Elise facing their first psychotic break. Each center has about 90 members — from age 15 to 25. The goal? To get young people back on their feet as soon as possible.

"What I tell families, typically during their first appointment, is the team is here to walk this journey with them," said Dr. Aris Mosley, FEC Medical Director. "It's going to be tough; some days are going to be hard, there may be a lot of tears and fear and frustration, but it is our job to help them through it."

Elise's journey began in 2017 after she graduated from the University of Kentucky with an engineering degree. Proud to be the first engineer in her family, she was eager to enter the workforce. After receiving a job offer from a technology company in Chandler, Elise packed her bags and drove with her family to Arizona from Chicago.

After several months, Elise began having stress-related job issues. She told her parents she was struggling. Lemone and Angela Lampley encouraged their daughter to persevere, hoping things would gradually improve. They did not.

Lemone and Angela's concerns increased after a FaceTime call when Elise did not look or act like herself.

"Even though we were across the country, when I talked to our daughter that day and looked at her face, I could see something was wrong," added Lemone. "Later that night, we received an urgent call from Elise who was in extreme distress. That's where her brain health journey began."

After she crashed her hand through glass and 911 was called, Elise was hospitalized and eventually connected with the FEC.

"Having our child hospitalized in a medical and mental health crisis was stressful for us as a family, but Dr. Mosley and her staff were so helpful to Elise," said Lemone. "The First Episode Center team developed a care plan individualized for her needs and her success. We felt they really had Elise's health and well-being in their hearts and minds."

Today, Elise loves exercise, from weightlifting to hiking. She maintains an Instagram page dedicated to wellness, listens to music, and spends time with her family. She and her friends like to go to the movies, try out new restaurants, travel the world and attend concerts.

Elise's plans include working, checking off more countries on her bucket list, possibly going back to school for another degree/certification, and being an advocate for those struggling with mental health.



# Valleywise Health Opens New Labor and Delivery Unit

Just hours after the historic move of over 200 patients to the new Valleywise Health Center began on June 13, the first baby was born in the hospital's new labor and delivery unit.



The facility includes 18 spacious private rooms, with large walk-in bathrooms, lots of natural light, and comfortable sleeping accommodations for loved ones.

It's a sharp contrast from the legacy hospital, where new mothers shared showers and sometimes shared a postpartum room.

"Having a baby is a very special time in people's lives," said Dr. Dean Coonrod, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology. "Being in such a beautiful, modern space means families can experience this life-changing moment in a comfortable environment with access to the most modern technology and have the space they need to be a family while this is happening."

# Valleywise Health's New NICU Features Specialty Care With Comfort and Privacy for Tiny Patients and Their Families

The new state-of-the-art neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Valleywise Health Medical Center allows caregivers to provide the highest quality of care for our tiniest, fragile patients and their families.

The hospital boasts 12 single-family, private NICU rooms so parents can sleep and stay with their precious babies around the clock. The spacious rooms have private bathrooms and windows that provide natural light.

It's a dramatic contrast to the legacy hospital, where NICU babies were housed in one large dark room that didn't allow for family privacy.

"This has been a very exciting change for us," said Dr. Jodi Carter, Chair of Pediatrics. "This space is great, with private rooms designed to encourage families to be with their babies. We have seen that when the family is nearby, the baby heals faster and often goes home sooner."



"We are so grateful to be able to bring the latest in NICU technology and design to our community's growing families."

More than 2,600 babies are born at Valleywise Health Medical Center each year, and last year about 400 spent some time in the NICU.

A core team of neonatologists, neonatal nurse practitioners and nurses are especially trained and experienced at providing high-quality, expert care to premature and critically ill infants.

The new unit affirms Dr. Carter's wish to "help children in our community to become the best versions of themselves."

"The NICU plays a role in that by stabilizing and starting babies off to have the best outcome they can," she said. "Having a baby in the NICU is hard on the family. Our hope is to make their stay a little easier and feel more like home."

## OB/GYN Chair Plans to Step Down This Year

After 20 years of distinguished service as chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dr. Dean Coonrod has announced he will step down in 2025.

Dr. Coonrod will continue doing what he does best — caring for new mothers and training the next generation of physicians.

He began his career at Valleywise Health as a resident in 1990, became

an attending physician in 1994 and department chair in 2004.

Under Dr. Coonrod's leadership, Ob/Gyn has expanded physician training, established a nationally recognized women's refugee health program, launched a wide range of research projects, developed an in-hospital domestic violence prevention program and recently opened a new labor and delivery unit at the Valleywise Health Medical Center. He was named Physician of the Year in 2016.

"Dean has been a tireless advocate for women's health and a champion for the underserved," said Dr. Kote

Chundu, President and CEO of District Medical Group. "He has trained hundreds of clinicians, many of whom continue to practice within the region. He also has been a leader and mentor among his fellow department chairs."

He's also delivered thousands of babies, but he's not counting. "It's not a scorecard I've kept," Dr. Coonrod said.

"I'm very proud of the department's achievements over the last two decades," Coonrod said. "I'm also very grateful for the leadership that has continued to support me for the 20 years I've been chair."



## Valleywise Health Earns Highest Pediatric ED Preparation Certification

Valleywise Health in 2024 earned recertification as a Pediatric Prepared Advanced Care Emergency Department. This is a highly prestigious recognition presented through a collaboration between the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AzaAAP). This designation represents the highest level of Pediatric Prepared Emergency Care certification and signifies that 100% of our nursing staff have advanced pediatric emergency care training.





# Diane & Bruce Halle ARIZONA BURN CENTER



## Valleywise Health opened its new Diane & Bruce Halle Arizona Burn Center June 13, 2024, nearly tripling in size and opening a new era of burn care in Arizona.

The new facility, with 72,000 square feet in space, occupies the entire fourth floor of the Valleywise Health Medical Center, with 16 adult intensive care beds, 24 adult acute care beds, and 10 pediatric ICU/acute care beds. It also includes a dedicated wellness space for physical and occupational therapy, and playrooms for pediatric and teen patients.

The burn center was formerly housed in three different locations, on two floors, in the legacy hospital.

“What makes this space so unique is that from start to finish, it was specifically designed only for burn patients,” said Dr. Kevin Foster, burn center director. “It was made for them by those who care for them. It’s a very special place.”



**WHAT MAKES THIS SPACE SO UNIQUE IS THAT FROM START TO FINISH, IT WAS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED ONLY FOR BURN PATIENTS**

Established in 1965, the Diane & Bruce Halle Arizona Burn Center is the first and only adult and pediatric burn center in Arizona verified by the American Burn Association and the American College of Surgeons — a status we’ve maintained since 2000.

The new burn center stands out nationally with:

- Two hyperbaric chambers for improved wound care
- A dedicated burn emergency department
- A large and modern wellness area for current and former patients
- Outpatient clinic

Because burn patients are more comfortable when surrounded by loved ones, the new rooms and family waiting area can accommodate overnight stays by immediate family.

Multi-disciplinary teams address patients’ unique needs and distinct physical and psychological challenges. Since in-patient burn care can take weeks or months, physicians have the unique opportunity to get to know and understand their patients and remain in contact with them long after their discharge.

“Our patients are very special to us,” Foster said. “Beyond the physical pain, our patients often have to deal with emotional trauma as well. If we can ease some of that pain, then we’ve done our job.”



Dr. Kevin Foster

## Dramatic Rise in Contact Burns Poses New Challenge to Burn Surgeons

Robert Woolley is one of the rising number of Arizonans admitted to the Diane & Bruce Halle Arizona Burn Center for severe burns from hot surfaces like asphalt and cement.

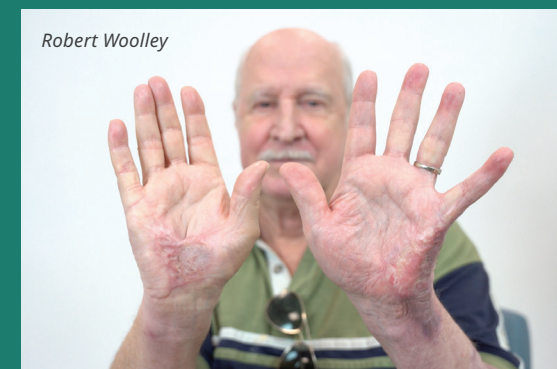
He joined burn center director Dr. Kevin Foster at a news conference in July to raise awareness of the dangers of extreme heat, particularly for older residents. Woolley, 71, suffered third-degree burns over 15 percent of his body in 2023 after falling on hot landscaping rocks in his backyard.

“The ordeal was extraordinarily painful,” said Woolley, a retired teacher and former U.S. Navy fighter pilot.

The burn center experienced a record number of admissions from contact burn related injuries in June, July and August of 2024.

During the three-month period, 152 patients were admitted with severe burns, up from 136 in 2023 and 85 in 2022. The dramatic increase is a challenge to burn surgeons.

Robert Woolley







## New ED Raises Level of Emergency and Trauma Care

The Emergency Department at Valleywise Health Medical Center is one of the busiest in Arizona. Thanks to the opening of a new facility, people brought to Valleywise Health's ED needing life-saving care today are treated in a new, state-of-the-art facility.

On June 13, 2024, the new Valleywise ED opened for business at 3 a.m. as patients were transferred from the 1970s era facility to the new building. Simultaneously, the legacy ED stopped receiving new emergency patients, as a new era in emergency and trauma care began.

"Over 85 percent of our patients enter the system through the Emergency Department," said Heather Burton, MSN, RN, Vice President of Acute and Emergency Services. "Our new ED is light years ahead of the old hospital."

The new Valleywise Health Medical Center ED — more than 28,000 square feet dedicated to an average of 220 patients who seek treatment each day — provides enhanced operational flow for staff and patients. It features 55 private rooms, including 15 pediatric rooms and 3 trauma/resuscitation bays, as well as 11 dedicated observation rooms, compared to 32 licensed beds in the old hospital.

"Along with more space, one of the features of the new ED is privacy, which is extremely important. Instead of being separated by curtains, each patient is treated in private rooms grouped together in pods to help expedite emergency care," Burton said.

Located within the new ED is the Level I Trauma Center where those patients who have life-threatening injuries receive care in one of the busiest and most recognized trauma centers in Arizona. Valleywise Health has 24-hour in-house coverage by trauma surgeons and prompt availability of specialties such as orthopedics, neurosurgery, anesthesiology, radiology, respiratory among many others.

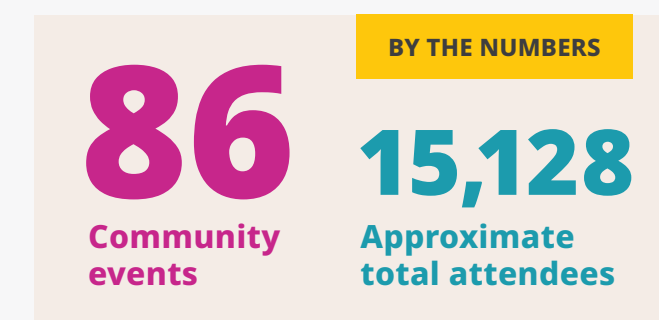
"Patients arriving via the helipad use special elevators that zip down 10 floors in less than 10 seconds to the Trauma Center," said Dr. Gaby Iskander, Valleywise Health Trauma Director. "When every second counts, it's critical that we get the patient to the Trauma Center as quickly as possible."



At Valleywise Health, community relations is more than outreach; it's about building bridges to improve health outcomes for individuals and families across Maricopa County. By connecting with people and organizations, we provide education, resources, and support that empower communities to take charge of their health.

Developing a robust community relations strategy is vital for a public safety-net hospital system like Valleywise Health. It begins with listening — conducting thorough assessments to understand the health needs, service gaps, and socio-economic challenges of underserved populations. From there, we form meaningful partnerships with community organizations, nonprofits, and local governments, working hand-in-hand to design programs that address both medical and social needs comprehensively.

Through events like health fairs, workshops, and collaborations with local schools, churches, and nonprofits, we raise awareness about preventative care, screenings, and treatment options.



Our efforts also go beyond our mission to deliver exceptional care to our patients. For example, through our Building Bridges to Health initiative with Maricopa County Public Health, we join forces with 23 partner agencies to improve communication and resource sharing for vulnerable populations. These partnerships ensure culturally relevant and timely information reaches those who need it most.

Valleywise Health has also implemented impactful initiatives such as free flu and COVID-19 vaccine clinics, Medicaid enrollment assistance events, and Farm Express, which distributes fresh produce to food-insecure families. Our Mobile Health Clinic expands access to care, and preventative health workshops empower individuals with knowledge to lead healthier lives. These programs address the social determinants of health, breaking down barriers and fostering trust within the communities we serve and reinforcing our role as a trusted neighborhood healthcare anchor.



# Grants Department Makes a Difference in Patients' Lives

The Grants Department plays a vital role in supporting Valleywise Health's mission by securing funding for innovative programs and services aimed at enhancing patient outcomes. Through strategic partnerships, effective grant management, strong compliance practices, and alignment with organizational goals, the department ensures the availability of critical resources to maintain high standards of care and drive continuous improvement.

**THESE GRANT FUNDS SUPPORT THE SALARIES OF 66 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES ACROSS THE SYSTEM, ENABLING THEM TO DELIVER IMPACTFUL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.**

The Grants Department actively seeks funding from various federal and state agencies by researching and applying for grant opportunities that align with the Valleywise Health's goals. The department currently oversees 50 programs with a total funding of \$44 million. Examples of current funders include the Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA), Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) and the Arizona Department of Health Services, and First Things First. These grant funds support the salaries of 66 full-time employees across the system, enabling them to deliver impactful programs and services. By transforming ideas and plans into successful initiatives, the department fulfills the needs of patients and communities through impactful and sustainable programming.

**BY TRANSFORMING IDEAS AND PLANS INTO SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES, THE DEPARTMENT FULFILLS THE NEEDS OF PATIENTS AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH IMPACTFUL AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMING.**

The department's efforts have delivered measurable impacts on patients' lives. Successes include programs that reduced A1C levels in diabetic patients and expanded HIV testing and outreach services. Funding has supported critical capital projects, enhanced behavioral health services, and expanded clinic services to improve accessibility and quality of care. Additionally, the department has successfully addressed adverse social determinants of health by funding guarantees for utility payments to prevent service disconnections for patients in financial distress. Grant-funded programs have also provided education and distributed car seats and bike helmets to children, promoting safety and reducing injury risks to the community.

Collaboration, transparent communication, and shared responsibilities among internal stakeholders have been key to maximizing the impact of grant funding. These efforts, combined with a strong focus on compliance, ensure that funding is managed responsibly and in accordance with all regulations, further strengthening the department's ability to achieve project goals efficiently and effectively.

By diversifying our grant funding sources, the department has reduced expenses while launching new programs to meet evolving needs in patient care and community health. Through its commitment to innovation, collaboration, compliance, and a focus on personal impact, the Grants Department continues to make a meaningful difference, transforming lives and supporting healthier, more resilient communities.

# Cancer Fighter Finds Support in Her Valleywise Health Colleagues

Stephanie Nelson is widely regarded as the driving force behind Valleywise Health's Imaging Department. As Director, she leads a team of over 160 staff members, fostering a culture of collaboration and support. Her leadership style is characterized by treating each team member as part of an extended family, ensuring a positive and inclusive work environment. "My team is very important. I really try to take care of them so they can take care of patients," she shared.

In the past several years, her teammates have had plenty of chances to repay her. Nelson has faced multiple serious health challenges, including brain and lung cancer and a tumor on her spine. Her first diagnosis of a large mass on her pelvis happened seven years ago at Valleywise Health.

She has undergone a difficult series of surgeries, radiation and other treatments, including wound therapy at the Diane & Bruce Halle Arizona Burn Center. Throughout it all, her colleagues at Valleywise Health have been like a support group, providing comfort and hope.

"I think I've grown with my team because they've done so much for me," she said. "They're definitely more than coworkers to me."

Today, Nelson, 51, is in post-treatment while doing physical therapy at Valleywise Health and undergoing gene therapy. Her mantra is "fight, fight" and a tattoo on her arm states, "Still breathing."

"There's so much more about me than cancer," she added. "I want to show that."



Stephanie Nelson

**THERE'S SO MUCH MORE ABOUT ME THAN CANCER. I WANT TO SHOW THAT.**

There's also nowhere else Nelson would rather be than Valleywise Health. She had her first experience with the then county hospital as a radiology student at age 27 in 2000. She began working full-time at Valleywise Health in 2001 as a Radiologic Technologist.

"When I got here, I fell in love. This is it. This is the place for me," she said. "I love that feeling when the patients need you. They're always so thankful. I just love helping anybody who is going through anything."

"Imaging truly became a lifesaver for me — first through those initial scans, and more recently, in detecting cancer, which ultimately saved my life. It's been incredibly inspiring to witness firsthand the vital role imaging plays — not only in my own journey but also in the lives of so many others."





# New, High-tech Simulation Center Improves Training and Health Outcomes

**Practice makes perfect, but how do you practice delivering a baby or operating on a car crash victim?**

The new Valleywise Health Simulation Center allows care teams to do just that — train for all kinds of medical scenarios using high-tech tools, including a manikin named HAL who can respond to questions and squeeze your hand.

The 5,000-square-foot facility provides a comprehensive, multidisciplinary learning environment for medical, nursing, and other clinical professionals. With innovative simulation rooms running real-life scenarios and procedures and skills labs, clinicians can perfect their skills before treating real patients.

“Our Simulation Center enables learners to master best practices in safe, simulated, real-life environments,” said Dr. Michael White, Chief Clinical Officer. “This investment demonstrates our historic commitment to attracting, training, and retaining the healthcare workforce that will best serve our community.”

Since its opening in August 2023, the simulation center has hosted over 500 events and over 3,000 participants have used the facility for training, classes, and tours for recruiting.



The center features six fully equipped surgical and medical simulation rooms, including an acute care room, intensive care unit, labor and delivery, OR suite, and multipurpose room. It is among the first clinical-based simulation centers to receive Gaumard’s high-fidelity manikin, HAL5301, which can demonstrate stroke signs and respond automatically to questions based on a patient profile.

There are trainers for surgery residents to practice laparoscopic skills in preparation for required testing. Simulation Center staff have worked with both internal and external customers to help improve training for those that serve the community.

The Simulation Center also played a pivotal role in ensuring a smooth transition to the new Valleywise Health Medical Center in June 2024. By providing a realistic training environment that mirrors the new hospital, the center allowed staff to operate new equipment and navigate unfamiliar spaces of the modern facility.

# Valleywise Health Launches New Dental Residency Program

Valleywise Health in 2025 will launch its first independently accredited dental residency program focusing on oral health care for underserved populations.

“Our goal is to influence the next generation of dentists to be community-service minded, and to really follow the Valleywise Health mission and vision. We want to build a group of dentists who are connected to the community, who are lifelong learners, and who are passionate about serving the most vulnerable of our populations,” said Dr. Christopher Brendemuhl, Director of Dentistry at Valleywise Community Health dental clinics and Chair of the Department of Dentistry.

The first cohort of residents are anticipated to begin in July 2025, rotating through Valleywise Health’s Federally Qualified Health Centers and the Valleywise Health Medical Center.

“Our residency uniquely integrates dentistry with broader medical care, offering a holistic view of health that extends beyond the dental chair,” Brendemuhl said. “This experience is enriched through rotations in specialized clinics, including our Comprehensive Health Center–Phoenix for diverse medical collaborations, Comprehensive Health Center–Peoria for ambulatory surgical care exposure, and the McDowell clinic, focusing on comprehensive care for patients living with HIV/AIDS.”

The Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) residency program is the result of years of planning and hard work, with support from the Creighton University School of Dentistry, Valleywise Health leadership, Maricopa County Special Health Care District Board and Valleywise Health Governing Council.

Planning for the program began in 2021 with a grant from Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program, which helps communities grow their health workforce by training physicians and dentists in community-based settings. The HRSA-backed organization also provided technical support.

While Valleywise Health has a long history of medical and surgical residencies dating back to 1952, this AEGD program is the first dental residency created and solely sponsored by the organization.

The residency program received initial accreditation by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) in August 2024.



## Four Impressive Partners. One Exceptional Alliance. A Healthier Arizona.

In 2017, Valleywise Health, District Medical Group, Creighton University and Dignity Health — St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center joined together to form Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance. To strengthen and expand graduate medical education in Arizona, the Creighton Alliance provides learners with essential patient

care experiences in prominent, mission-focused Phoenix facilities. Together, we are training the next generation of physicians and healthcare providers. With a hands-on experience and a commitment to caring for a diverse community, we are increasing the number of compassionate healthcare professionals in the region.



# Valleywise Health Foundation Letter to the Community

Since 1995, Valleywise Health Foundation has supported Valleywise Health in its mission to provide exceptional care, without exception, every patient, every time. This shared purpose has fueled our efforts to provide resources that enhance care, improve outcomes, and uplift our community. For nearly three decades, we have partnered with Valleywise Health to ensure that this commitment to compassionate, world-class healthcare is more than just a promise — it's a reality.

Through philanthropy, we empower Valleywise Health to expand its services and improve its facilities while meeting critical community health needs. Philanthropy is a vital driver of healthcare quality and patient experience. It provides more than financial support — it fosters innovation, builds trust, and enhances the overall patient experience.

The generosity and dedication of our donors and community partners have provided funding for essential programs, cutting-edge research, educational resources,

and critical patient services. While Valleywise Health's clinicians and staff are the heart of this work — providing unparalleled care to those who need it most — it is the philanthropic support of our community that propels our shared mission forward.

## WE CANNOT DO THIS ALONE.

Together with our board, leadership, and the unwavering support of our community partners, every story in this report becomes possible. Each success represents a collective commitment to care and compassion. Thank you for being a part of the Valleywise Health mission. The accomplishments shared in this magazine show that it takes all of us, united in purpose, to make exceptional care a reality.

**Lisa Hartsock, MPH, CFRE**

*Interim CEO, Valleywise Health Foundation*

*Foundation Relations Executive, Valleywise Health*

[valleywisehealthfoundation.org](http://valleywisehealthfoundation.org)

## Foundation 2025 Board Officers

**Sel Nutor**, Chairman

**Tim Louis**, Treasurer

**Warren Whitney**,  
Vice Chairman

**Charles Brown**, Secretary

# District Medical Group: Providing a Full Spectrum of Care

Physicians with District Medical Group (DMG) were front and center during the historic move of over 200 patients to the new Valleywise Health Medical Center on June 13, 2024.

In fact, DMG providers have had a longstanding, mission-based commitment to Valleywise Health and underserved communities since the non-profit, multi-specialty academic group practice first formed under a different name in 1993.

"We are joined at the hip," said Dr. Kote Chundu, DMG President and CEO. "We've got a great partnership, and our goals are very much aligned."

The sentiment is shared by leadership at Valleywise Health.

"DMG physicians not only serve the healthcare needs of our community's most vulnerable, but also share their expertise and passion as teaching faculty for tomorrow's healthcare leaders," said Steve Purves, Valleywise Health President



and CEO. "DMG physicians have provided exceptional, passionate care at Valleywise Health for nearly 30 years. We value their partnership."

The group practice includes 580 physicians, including part-time, and 165 advanced practitioners offering a full spectrum of care, including behavioral health, for individuals and families across Maricopa County. DMG physicians and providers specialize in the care of patients with the most complex chronic health conditions, especially those from vulnerable populations.

Many DMG physicians also are Creighton University School of Medicine faculty members, training the next generation of physicians through the Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance. This teaching role allows our physicians to share their vast medical knowledge and experience with resident physicians and medical students, while inspiring them to remain at the forefront of their medical specialty.

Dr. Chundu, a pediatrician who has been caring for children at Valleywise Health since 1992, was a key driver in the creation of a new hospital and network of health clinics.

"I'm really excited for our patients. I know we provide excellent care, that's never in doubt," he said. "It is really the physical environment that makes a difference. As you know, it's not just the medication — the environment is really important to the health of patients and to the comfort of families."

## DMG Board of Directors

**Dan Hobohm, MD**, Chairman

**Kote Chundu, MD, MMM**,  
President & CEO

**Phyllis Biedess**

**Carol Olson, MD**, Division Chair,  
Psychiatry

**Tom Manos**

**James Marovich**

**Lee Ann Bohn**

**Alan Rawls, PhD**

**David Wisinger, MD**,  
Chair of Medicine

## Quotes from Supporters

*"We are forever grateful to all who stepped in to change the future of community health in Arizona. The critical need for philanthropy at Valleywise Health doesn't end here, but this significant community investment, along with modern new facilities, signals to the country that metro Phoenix believes community health matters."*

**Nita and Phil Francis**, ALL IN for  
Valleywise Health Campaign Co-Chairs

*"Piper Trust is grateful for the leadership of Valleywise Health in its establishment of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Pavilion, the new and progressive simulation and clinical learning facility. In addition to providing a dynamic and life-like environment for healthcare practitioners to advance their knowledge and skills — these sophisticated training methods can ultimately improve patient outcomes."*

**Steve Zabilski**, President and CEO,  
Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

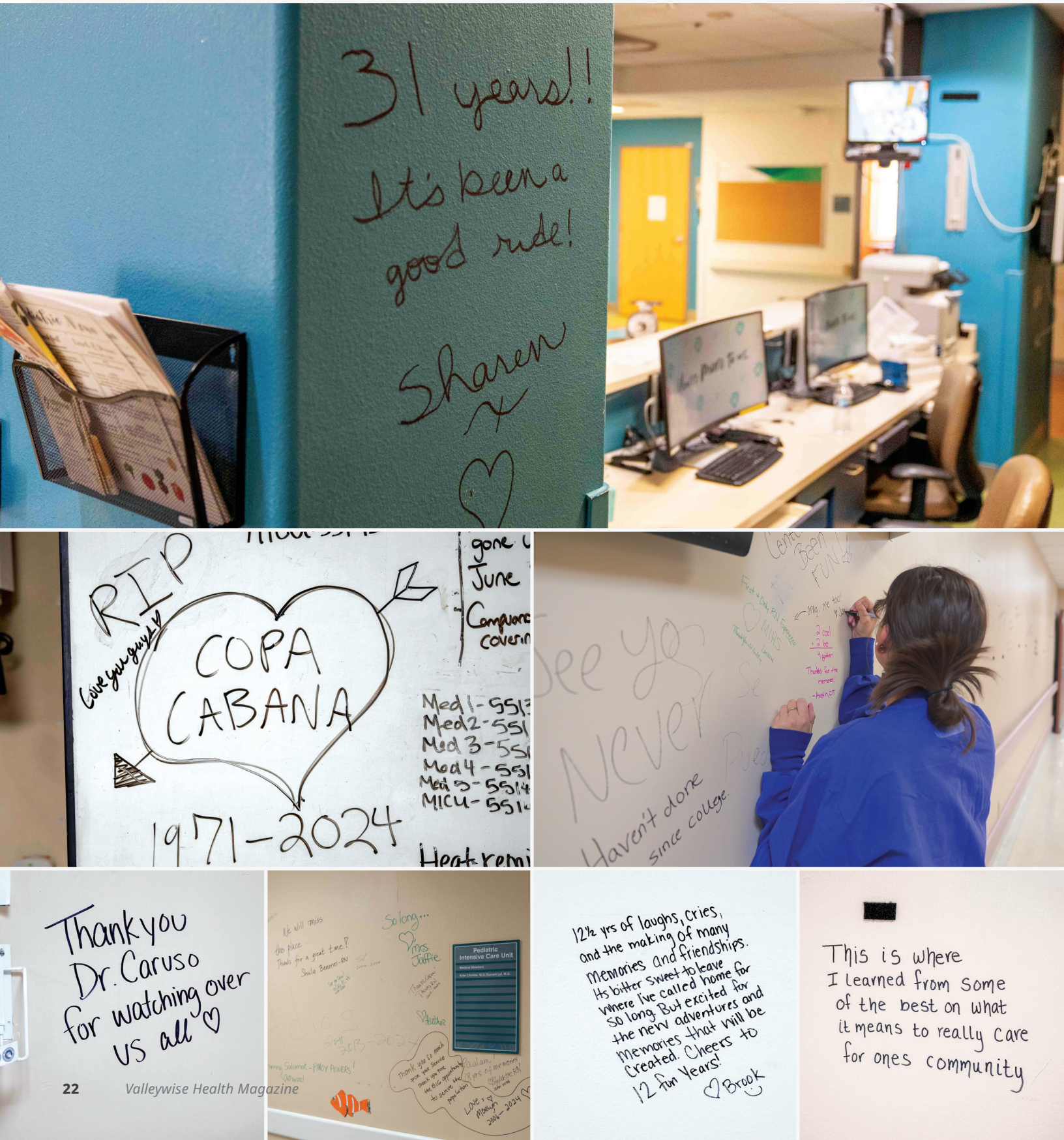
*"We are proud to pledge our financial support to critical programs for our community's most vulnerable patients... we are grateful for the expertise, compassion and care DMG providers invest each day, and are especially thankful for this truly impactful investment in Valleywise Health."*

**Kote Chundu, MD, MMM**,  
President and CEO, District  
Medical Group



# Goodbye Copa

Dozens of employees left heartfelt goodbye messages on the walls of the legacy hospital, which opened in 1971. The old facility had several names over the years, including Maricopa County General Hospital and Maricopa Medical Center, but longtime employees and many first responders affectionately referred to it as “the Copa”. The building is scheduled to be torn down.



# Valleywise Health Awards

**VALLEYWISE HEALTH 2024 NURSE LEADER OF THE YEAR**  
**Piedad Blake**, Behavioral Health Nurse Manager, Maryvale Behavioral Health

**VALLEYWISE HEALTH 2024 NIGHTINGALE NURSE OF THE YEAR**  
**Ani Joseph**, Advanced Clinic Nurse — Operating Room

**2024 PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR**  
**Sandra K. Yuh, M.D.**

**2024 ADVANCED PRACTICE / ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**  
**Lauren Brooke Robel, P.A.-C**

**2024 SUPPORT SERVICES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**  
**Dennis Kracht, HTM**

**2024 ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**  
**Manuel Soto-Griego, HIM**

**2024 CLINICAL ANCILLARY EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**  
**Jacaranda “Jackie” Cervantes**, Lab, Blood Bank

**2024 NURSING SUPPORT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**  
**Refugio Baltazar**, Interpreter

## Organizational Awards

**WESTMARC “BEST QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT” AWARD**  
Valleywise Health First Episode Center — Avondale

**AZHHA 2024 QUALITY AWARD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD AND 2024 PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY AWARD**

**GUIDESTAR 2024 PLATINUM SEAL OF TRANSPARENCY**  
Valleywise Health Foundation

## Arizona Capitol Times

**2024 LEADERS OF THE YEAR IN PUBLIC POLICY**  
**Lia Christiansen**, Chief Administrative Officer

**2024 WOMEN ACHIEVERS OF ARIZONA**  
**Shasa Jackson**, Senior Manager of Outpatient Specialty Behavioral Health Services

## AZ Big Media

**2024 MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN ARIZONA BUSINESS**  
**Lia Christiansen**, Chief Administrative Officer

## AzPHA Public Health Awards

**2024 CELE COHEN NURSING AWARD**  
**Deanna Grabill**, Manager of Population Health

## Becker’s Hospital Review

**160 COMMUNITY HOSPITAL CEOS TO KNOW**  
**Steve Purves**, President & Chief Executive Officer

**180 HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SYSTEM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICERS TO KNOW**  
**Michael White, MD**, Executive Vice President & Chief Clinical Officer

**160 CFOS TO KNOW**  
**Claire Agnew**, Senior Vice President of Financial Services & Chief Financial Officer

**213 CNOS TO KNOW**  
**Sherry Stotler, MSN, RN, NEA-BC**, Chief Nursing Officer and Sr. Vice President of Patient Services

**EMERGING LEADERS: RISING STARS AND 50 HEALTHCARE LEADERS UNDER 40**  
**Ijana Harris**, Senior Vice President & General Counsel

**63 HISPANIC AND LATINO LEADERS TO KNOW**  
**Jose Luis Madera, SC, LPC, MBA**, Senior Manager Integrated Behavioral Health

**156 WOMEN HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SYSTEM CFOS TO KNOW**  
**Claire Agnew**, Senior Vice President of Financial Services and Chief Financial Officer

**BLACK HEALTHCARE LEADERS TO KNOW**  
**Jeanne Nizigiyimana**, Director of the Valleywise Health Center for Refugee and Global Health

## Phoenix Magazine

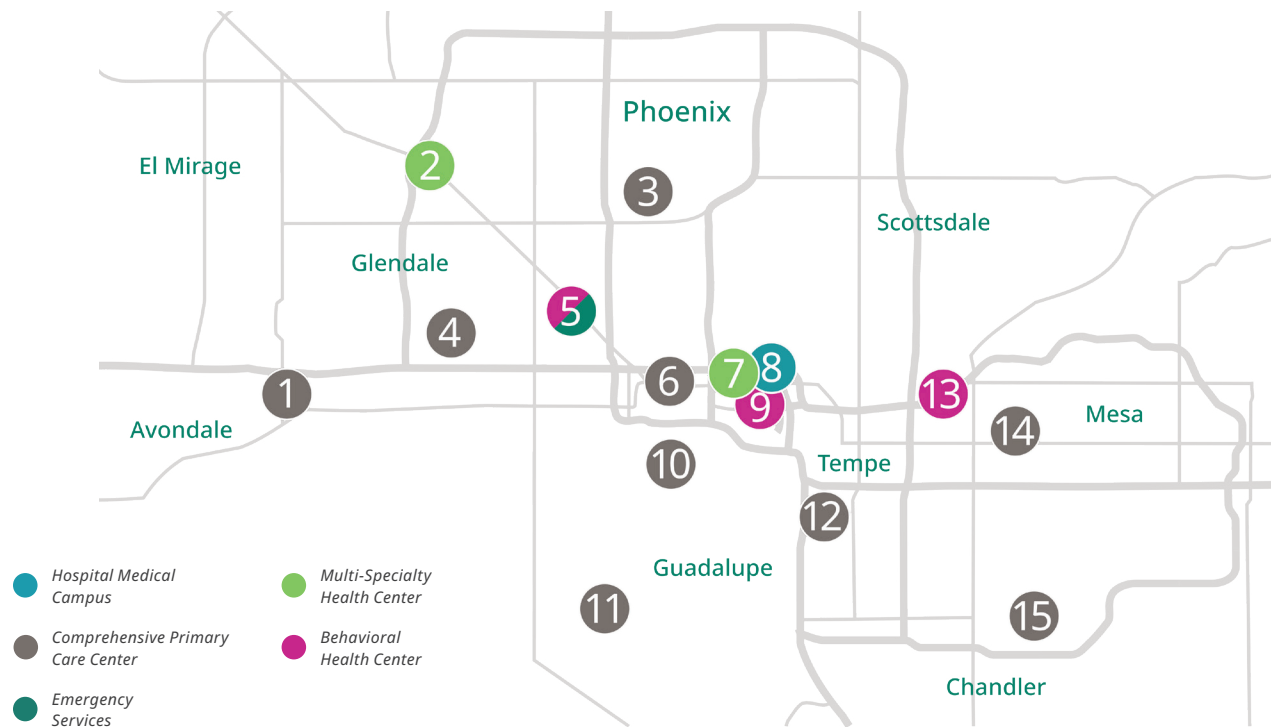
**HEALTHCARE HEROES**  
**Jeanne Nizigiyimana**, Manager of Valleywise Health’s Center for Refugee and Global Health

**Danika Hines**, Physical Therapist, Diane & Bruce Halle Arizona Burn Center





# Locations



## 1. Valleywise Community Health Center — Avondale

950 E Van Buren St  
Avondale, AZ 85323  
623-344-6800

## 2. Valleywise Comprehensive Health Center — Peoria

8088 W. Whitney Ave  
Peoria, AZ 85345  
602-655-2000

## 3. Valleywise Community Health Center — North Phoenix

2025 W Northern Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85021  
602-655-6300

## 4. Valleywise Community Health Center — West Maryvale

7808 W. Thomas Rd  
Phoenix, AZ 85033  
602-655-6900

## 5. Valleywise Behavioral Health Center & Emergency Room — Maryvale

5102 W Campbell Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85031  
602-655-1000

## 6. Valleywise Community Health Center — McDowell

1101 N Central Ave  
Suite #204  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
602-344-6550

## 7. Valleywise Comprehensive Health Center — Phoenix

2525 E Roosevelt St  
Phoenix, AZ 85008  
602-344-1015

## 8. Valleywise Health Medical Center

2601 E Roosevelt St  
Phoenix, AZ 85008  
602-344-5011

## 9. Valleywise Behavioral Health Center — Phoenix

2619 E Pierce St  
Phoenix, AZ 85008

## 10. Valleywise Community Health Center — South Central

33 W Tamarisk St  
Phoenix, AZ 85041  
602-344-6600

## 11. Valleywise Community Health Center — South Phoenix/Laveen

5650 S 35th Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85041  
602-655-6400

## 12. Valleywise Community Health Center — Guadalupe

5825 Calle Guadalupe  
Guadalupe, AZ 85283  
480-344-6000

## 13. Valleywise Behavioral Health Center — Mesa

570 W Brown Rd  
Mesa, AZ 85201  
480-344-2000

## 14. Valleywise Community Health Center — Mesa

950 E Main St  
Mesa, AZ 85203  
602-655-6200

## 15. Valleywise Community Health Center — Chandler

811 S Hamilton St  
Chandler, AZ 85225  
480-344-6100

## Valleywise Mobile Health Clinic

Visit our website at [ValleywiseHealth.org](http://ValleywiseHealth.org) for our calendar of events and locations around Maricopa county.

For an appointment, call:  
1-833-855-9973

