

WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

April 2026

Volume 42, Issue 3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Anaïs Carniciu, MD

Dear Colleagues,

As we move into Spring, I find myself reflecting on the shifting landscape of healthcare delivery here in Westchester and across the nation. We are currently witnessing an unprecedented wave of consolidation, as insurance conglomerates rapidly acquire Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and clinical practices. This trend brings a fundamental question to the forefront for every physician: Who is truly steering patient care?

There is a growing, bipartisan recognition that healthcare monopolies can threaten the physician-patient relationship. Several key pieces of legislation are currently being debated that aim to restore balance to our system:

- **At the National Level:** The Break Up Big Medicine Act is a bipartisan initiative gaining momentum in Congress. This act seeks to protect against vertical integration between insurance companies and Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs), where the entity paying for care also owns the entity providing it.

At the State Level: In Albany, we are closely watching bills aimed at strengthening the Corporate Practice of Medicine (CPOM) doctrine. These measures are designed to ensure that business interests do not interfere with a physician's independent medical judgment.

Our medical community in Westchester is a tapestry of different practice models. We have dedicated colleagues working in solo private practices, and equally dedicated physicians employed by large organizations. Regardless of where you practice, I encourage everyone to use this moment to educate themselves on these legislative shifts. It is vital that we, as a profession, reflect on our own employment models and ask:

- Does my current environment allow me to practice medicine in a way that is truly aligned with my personal and professional morals?

(Continued on page 6)



ANAÏS CARNICIU, MD
President, WCMS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Editor.....	2
Stop the Train.....	5
Westchester Soccer Discount.....	6
Disability Insurance Opportunity.....	7
Upstate Mental Health Workshop...	9
Annual Meeting Invitation.....	10

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WCMS/WAM
ANNUAL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2026
WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB
RYE, NY

WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

Published by the
Westchester County Medical Society
45 Beekman Avenue, Unit 727
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591
914.967.9100

PETER J. ACKER, MD
Editor

OFFICERS 2025-2026

ANAÏS CARNICIU, MD
President

DANEIL GOLD, MD
President-elect

BRUCE MOLINELLI, MD
Vice President

**KHAM ALI, MD, MBA, MPH,
FACEP**
Immediate Past President

THOMAS LEE, MD
Treasurer

RUBINA HEPTULLA, MD
Secretary

PETER ACKER, MD
President
Westchester Academy of Medicine

STAFF

JANINE MILLER
Executive Director

Kalli Voulgaris
Membership/CME Director

RHONDA NATHAN
Accounting

Articles published in the *Westchester Physician* represent the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Westchester County Medical Society or the Westchester Academy of Medicine. This publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced without the express, written permission of the WCMS. Publication of an advertisement is not to be considered an endorsement or approval of the product or service by the WCMS or the Academy, except where indicated. The WCMS reserves the right to accept or reject any advertising in this publication.

FROM THE EDITOR...***PUBLIC HEALTH & POLITICS***

PETER ACKER, MD



A number of years ago I wrote a column in these pages entitled **Gun-play** which chronicled the impact that America's lax gun laws have on public health: an outsize number of fatalities from guns when compared to other countries with stricter gun laws. A statistic I cited was the greatly increased likelihood of a successful suicide in a teenager if there is a gun in the household. As a pediatrician, I felt I needed to comment on this public measure, just as I would counsel the use of seatbelts, careful storing of medications, eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and getting all recommended vaccines in a timely fashion. A number of years ago, then Governor Scott of Florida signed into law a bill prohibiting physicians from asking about the presence of guns in the household. We could inquire about every other possible risk, such as having a swimming pool, but not about this one item that arguably posed the greatest risk to children in the household.

I got some pushback about that essay. One esteemed colleague argued that the Westchester County Medical Society newsletter should eschew the mention of politics. My response was that this was not really about politics (though unavoidably it was in a sense), but merely a discussion of an important public health issue. It seemed to me that our mission as physicians is to healing the sick, but perhaps more importantly, prevent illness and death.

Our current political estrangement between the left and the right is particularly fraught at this time. I would argue that we physicians, stewards of individual and public health, to use science and persuasion to wade into the political debate. The New York Times recently published an essay by Rebecca Archer, a woman and mother from England, entitled **Measles Took My Daughter: This is what I want everyone to know.** It chronicles the experience she had with her first born who contracted measles at the age of 4 months during an outbreak which was precipitated by the falling vaccination rate as a consequence of a British physician, Andrew Wakefield's fraudulent study linking autism to the measles vaccine. The infant recovered, only to fall prey to subacute sclerosing panencephalitis at the age of ten.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has rightly taken a strong position on the vaccine question and pushing back at the latest CDC vaccination policies. The argument of freedom to choose is used to justify the current policy on vaccinations, similar to the use of guns. These policies can have dire consequences such as what happened to Rebecca Archer's daughter. Unfortunately the current outbreak of measles will reverberate years down the road as delayed consequences of this disease continue to emerge.

On a broader front, I would argue that as physicians, we need to take a stand on these public Issues and strongly advocate in favor of rigorous

(Continued on page 8)

Attention Westchester County Medical Society Members



SAVE 10%
on your medical liability
insurance



Acadia Professional, Doctor.com, A Press Ganey Solution, and MLMIC Insurance Company are working together to offer you bigger savings. This is an opportunity for qualifying physicians to get the highest quality liability insurance at an even lower cost - thanks to an **exclusive 10% discount for Doctor.com members**.

For more information on this program, please contact MLMIC's Doctor.com Program Administrator, Acadia Professional, at info@acadia.pro or (862) 325-5929. You may also contact MLMIC at (800) ASK-MLMIC or your broker.

MLMIC offers a range of discounts that when combined, can yield potential savings of up to 30%.

The RPG discount amount is reviewed annually and is subject to upward or downward adjustment (including removal altogether) pending approval by the NYS Department of Financial Services, and is based on the overall loss experience of the RPG's members.

All references to MLMIC refer to MLMIC Insurance Company, P.O. Box 1287, Latham, NY 12110.



Garfunkel Wild

GENERAL COUNSEL TO THE
WESTCHESTER COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

**NAVIGATE THE COMPLEX
REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT
WITH MORE THAN 85
HEALTH CARE ATTORNEYS
ON YOUR SIDE.**

Our health care focus allows us to deliver unparalleled experience and cost effective solutions to your most intricate problems and opportunities, including:

- OPMC Defense
- Compliance Issues
- Employment Disputes
- Real Estate Leases and Purchases
 - Corporate Transactions
 - Litigations and Arbitrations
 - Audits and Investigations

LEARN MORE AT GARFUNKELWILD.COM

FULL-SERVICE, ONE FOCUS: HEALTH CARE

STOP THE TRAIN Elliot Barsh, MD

(Links to articles mentioned are found in the body of this piece)

“Those who have a ‘why’ to live, can bear with almost any ‘how’.” — Viktor E.

Frankl, Man’s Search for Meaning

Hi everyone.

“Why” seems like a magic word.

The magic is not in the word, but in how it drives learning, deepens understanding, and connects us.

Getting to our patient’s “why” isn’t about asking the one perfect question.

Understanding our own “why” is even trickier, since we have to do it from the inside out.

How can we get our patients to talk about what really matters to them, even when it is uncomfortable, or contradicts our advice?

Where do we find the time, or space, for our patients to *think, feel, and talk*?

We can find it in the *relationships* we create with them.

Not the transactional relationships where we write a prescription for an illness they have.

The ones we make the time for, nurture intentionally, and choose to create.

Over time it becomes easier for our patients to say what they feel, and easier for us to understand why they are saying it.

Patience and compassion naturally become trust.

This is not healthcare that is quick or easy.

It is honest and effective.

Thanks for reading.

Bye for now.

E

“Emotions — both his and others’ — were things he worked around rather than worked through.”

Goals of Care and the Importance of Being Polish

“See if you can learn at least one fact about each patient’s life outside of the hospital by what you observe in their rooms.”

Getting to Know Our Patients

Listening to patients is a critical part of a doctor’s education.

“A mix of powerlessness, shame, and exhaustion, made me question myself as a physician.”

My Brother’s Sister

“...a woman who never tired of talking about the daughter wh was her reason for being.”

Where Do I Put This?

The World I Live In

by Mary Oliver

I have refused to live

locked in the orderly house of reasons and proofs.

The world I live in and believe in is wider than that. And anyway, what’s wrong with *Maybe*?

You wouldn’t believe what once or twice I have seen. I’ll just tell you this:

only if there are angels in your head will you ever, possibly, see one.



Articles published in the *Westchester Physician* represent the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Westchester County Medical Society or the Westchester Academy of Medicine. This publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced without the express, written permission of the WCMS. Publication of an advertisement is not to be considered an endorsement or approval of the product or service by the WCMS or the Academy, except where indicated. The WCMS reserves the right to accept or reject any advertising in this publication.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Anaïs Carniciu, MD

(Continued from page 1)

- Am I empowered to make clinical decisions based solely on the best interest of the patient, or are there administrative pressures that prioritize the bottom line?

How would the passage of current anti-monopoly bills affect the way I care for the families of Westchester?

Medicine is more than a series of transactions; it is a vocation rooted in ethics and autonomy. Whether you are navigating the complexities of a large health system or the challenges of independent practice, our shared goal remains the same: ensuring that the practice of medicine is governed by physicians. I urge you to stay informed about these legislative developments. Use this month to read the fine print, engage in dialogue with your peers, and ensure that your professional path remains a true reflection of your values.

Sincerely,

Anaïs Carniciu, MD



FROM THE EDITOR...

PUBLIC HEALTH & POLITICS

PETER ACKER, MD

(Continued from page 2)

scientific evidence. Unfortunately, there has been a full assault on established science. This is likely to have serious ramifications for the nation's health in general. Not only the reduction of vaccination, but the withdrawal of international aid may come back to bite us as some of these diseases will migrate back to the states. By not being part of the World Health Organization, we will be less privy to emerging diseases in other parts of the world.

I think it behooves us as stewards of health to consider getting involved with these issues. Interestingly, I've read that increasing numbers of pediatri-

cians are electing to run for office. I would love to hear from any of you about all this.

My email: peterrrba@aol.com



Articles published in the *Westchester Physician* represent the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Westchester County Medical Society or the Westchester Academy of Medicine. This publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced without the express, written permission of the WCMS. Publication of an advertisement is not to be considered an endorsement or approval of the product or service by the WCMS or the Academy, except where indicated. The WCMS reserves the right to accept or reject any advertising in this publication.

**WESTCHESTER SC HEALTH CARE
WORKERS NIGHT**
MAY 15TH 7PM

WESTCHESTER SOCCER CLUB VS COSMOS

**\$10
TICKETS**

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- DISCOUNTED \$10 TICKETS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS
- COMPANY WELCOME & STAFF PHOTOS ON THE SCOREBOARD
- SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS
- GROUP PHOTO OR PROMOTION ON THE FIELD

FRIDAY, MAY 15TH
GATES OPEN AT 5:30 PM
KICKOFF AT 7:00 PM

MEMORIAL FIELD
431 GARDEN AVE,
MT VERNON 10553

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

DISABILITY INCOME INSURANCE

- **GUARANTEED ISSUE**
- For Members under age 50 in active practice
- In District Branches Three through Nine
 - (All of New York State except the five boroughs and Long Island)

COVERAGE ISSUED REGARDLESS OF YOUR HEALTH IF YOU APPLY BETWEEN:

April 15 - July 15, 2026

NO HEALTH QUESTIONS, PHYSICAL EXAM, OR BLOODWORK

Up to \$3,000/mo. (\$36,000/yr.)
in Disability benefits
Pays up to 7 years
90-day waiting period



Charles J. Sellers & Co., Inc.

60 Main Street, Suite 4
Hamburg, New York, 14075
(800) 333-5440

www.sellersinsurance.com
insurance@sellersinsurance.com

Age	Semi-Annual Premiums \$3,000/month
Under Age 30	\$152.10
30 - 34	\$184.35
35 - 39	\$248.20
40 - 44	\$357.45
45 - 49	\$466.05
50 - 54	\$587.40
55 - 59	\$780.75
60 - 64	\$866.50
65 - 69	\$561.90
70 - 74	\$246.75

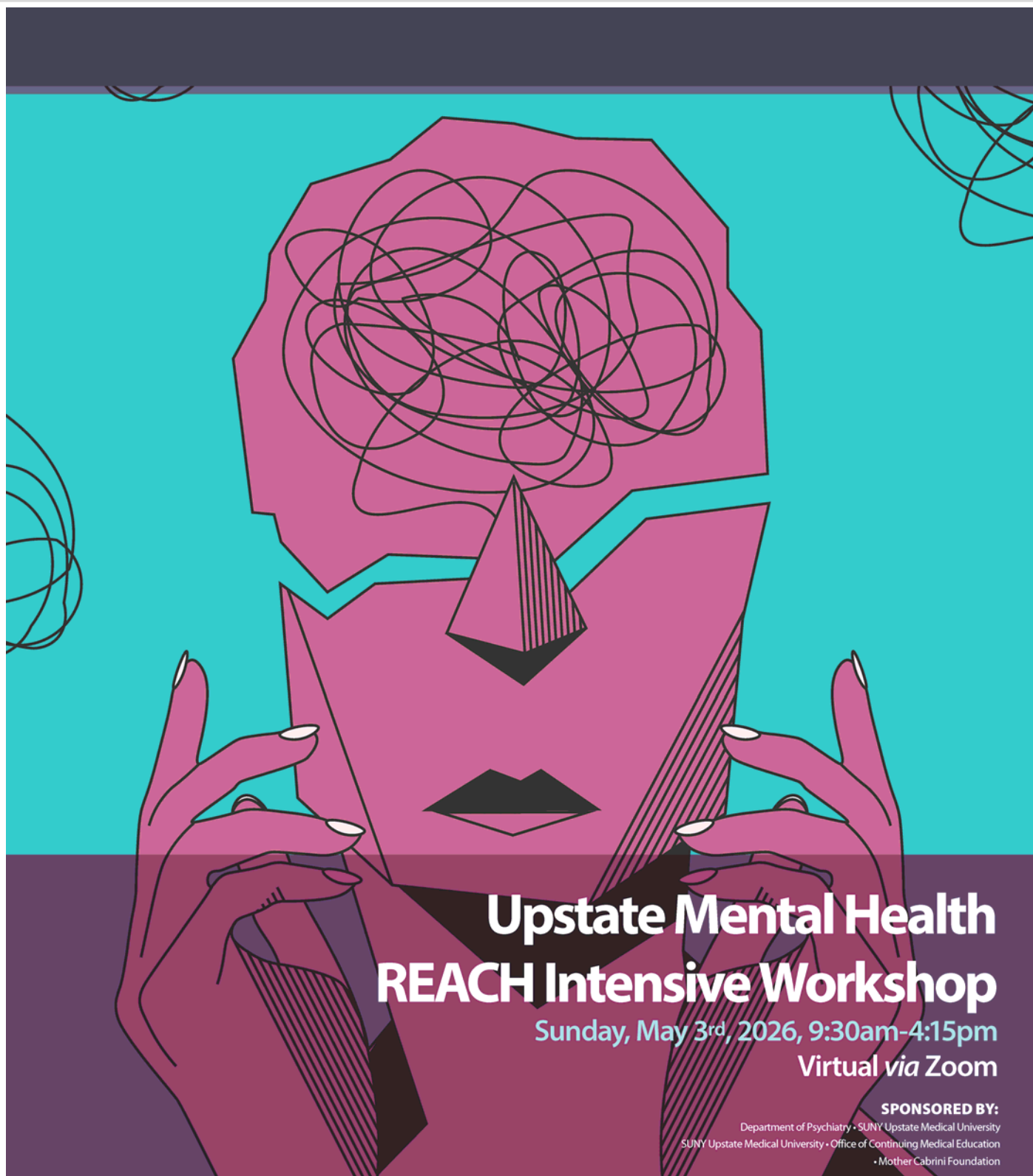
More information and a short application are available online at:

www.sellersinsurance.com/mssny-guaranteed-issue

- Higher amounts of coverage and longer benefit periods are available (medical underwriting required).
- Disability Income offer subject to financial guidelines.
- Rates are based on attained age.
- Underwritten by the Life Insurance Company of Boston & New York, 4300 Camp Rd PO Box 331, Athol Springs, NY 14010

This Policy provides Disability insurance only. It does not provide basic hospital, basic medical or major medical insurance as defined by the New York State Insurance Department. The expected benefit ratio for this policy is 60%. This ratio is the portion of future premiums which the company expects to return as benefits when averaged over all people with this policy. See the Product Brochure and/or Policy Form DIC-N (0900) NY for details concerning policy benefits, limitations and exclusions.

CJS834 4/26 Exp. 4/27



Upstate Mental Health REACH Intensive Workshop

Sunday, May 3rd, 2026, 9:30am-4:15pm

Virtual via Zoom

SPONSORED BY:

Department of Psychiatry • SUNY Upstate Medical University
SUNY Upstate Medical University • Office of Continuing Medical Education
• Mother Cabrini Foundation

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

SUNY UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY
750 EAST ADAMS STREET, SYRACUSE, NY 13210

Upstate Mental Health REACH Spring ECHO series

Cycle 8 – April– Jun 2026

Wednesday's at 12 pm



4/1/2026	When SSRI's Fail to Treat Depression and Anxiety: Treatment Resistant Strategies in Anxiety and Depressive Disorders Thomas Schwartz, MD, Distinguished Teaching Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University
4/15/2026	Prescribing and Monitoring Psychiatric Medications: A Guide for Primary Care Cecilia Zemanek, MD, Assistant Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University
4/22/2026	Integrating Psychiatric Rating Scales into Primary Care Practice Nevena Radonjic, MD, PhD, Associate Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University
4/29/2026	Managing Side Effects of Psychiatric Medications in Primary Practice Christopher Lucas, MD MPH, Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University
5/6/2026	Recognizing and Responding to Suicide Risk in Primary Care Rebecca Shields, DO, Assistant Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University
5/20/26	Genetic Myths and Misconceptions About ADHD Stephen Faraone, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Neuroscience and Physiology, SUNY Upstate Medical University
5/27/2026	Managing Insomnia in Primary Care Thomas Schwartz, MD, Distinguished Teaching Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University
6/3/2026	Culturally Sensitive Psychiatric Interviewing for the Primary Care Setting Nayla Khoury, MD, Associate Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University
6/17/2026	The Psychiatric Review of Systems: What Primary Care Providers Need to Know Ismet Yesilada, MD, Assistant Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University
6/24/2026	Psychotropic Medications in Older Adults: Practical Guidance for Primary Care Provider Kristina Zdanys, MD, Associate Professor, UCONN Health

Link to join:

<https://echo.zoom.us/j/735931981?pwd=Tk5VYmNyMndOZmM2V1NIQkpSdFMxZz09>



The Medical Society of the County of Westchester
and

The Westchester Academy of Medicine

Cordially Invites you to Attend our

Annual Meeting and Program

Tuesday, June 23, 2026

Westchester Country Club

99 Biltmore Avenue

Rye, NY 10580

6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Networking Reception

7:00 p.m. Buffet Dinner

Installation of 2026-2027 Medical Society & Academy Officers

Remarks of Anaïs Carniciu, MD

Outgoing WCMS President

Remarks of Daniel Gold, MD

Incoming WCMS President

Sudeep Chaudhuri, President & CEO

DataMatrix Medical

"Friend of the Society" Awardee

Robert Amler, MD, MBA

Vice President for Government Affairs, New York Medical College

"Career Achievement" Awardee

No Cost for WCMS Members & Spouse or Guest;
Additional Guests of Members \$175; Non-members & Guests \$350/per person
Guest non-member Tables of 10 - \$2500

RSVP TODAY!



No high-risk event goes unnoticed

with smarter alerts from HealtheConnections.

Statewide Encounter Alerts provide secure, real-time Admission, Discharge, and Transfer (ADT) notifications from every hospital in New York State—no matter which health information exchange you currently use.

- Avoid readmissions
- Close care gaps
- Save time and reduce costs
- Support quality measures



Being able to see all the current hospitalizations for a member and the admission diagnoses - this is amazing already, but also being able to download it is a godsend! This is so helpful for my teams and my company as a whole.

- Real Encounter Alerts User

To learn more about Statewide Encounter Alerts, or to get started, visit healtheconnections.org/alerts.

Smarter Alerts. Better Outcomes. **Trusted Statewide.**



healtheconnections®

healtheconnections.org