



THE INAUGURAL

AORTIC SYMPOSIUM

Awareness, Detection & the Single Pathway

A half-day CME program for providers and caregivers of patients with aortic diseases

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

Magovern Auditorium | Allegheny General Hospital | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

PRESENTED DURING AORTIC DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

This activity has been approved for 5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™.

Want to learn more?



Visit us on our AHN website

A Message from the Program Director

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for joining us for the inaugural Aortic Symposium of the AHN Center for Aortic Diseases. We built this morning around a simple truth: aortic disease is usually silent, often heritable, and almost always more treatable when it is found early. The clinician who orders the right imaging, recognizes a syndromic feature, or manages blood pressure well is doing aortic care; long before an aortic surgeon is ever involved.



This program follows a four-topic framework. We begin with what our Center does and how a multidisciplinary team approaches these patients. We then turn to detection and surveillance: which imaging to order to prevent delays, how often to repeat it, and how to manage disease medically while it is being watched. The third hour addresses heritable aortopathies and the role of genetic evaluation for patients and their families wrapped around critical inpatient management of aortic patients. We close with acute aortic syndromes: how they present, how they are missed, what appropriate care looks like once the diagnosis is made and how to expeditiously get patients to treatment. Each hour ends with a brief moderated panel. I encourage all of you to bring your own cases and questions.

In the final session, we will hear from the patients. We are fortunate enough to have two amazing individuals who have lived through the spectrum of this disease. They will share how their disease presented, what was recognized and what was not, how their journey and experiences were and what ongoing care means to them. It is, perhaps, the most important hour of the day.

You will leave with a few valuable tools: two surveillance-interval cards, important outpatient and emergent direct contact information, a genetic screening guide, along with an algorithm for detecting and managing acute aortic syndromes. Our hope is that this symposium helps you find aortic disease sooner and manage it with confidence.

On behalf of the entire Center for Aortic Diseases team, welcome.

Scott Halbreiner, MD

Surgical Director, AHN Center for Aortic Diseases
Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery
Allegheny Health Network

ABOUT THE AHN CENTER FOR AORTIC DISEASES

The Center for Aortic Diseases at Allegheny General Hospital brings cardiothoracic surgery, vascular surgery, aortic-focused cardiology, cardiovascular genetics, advanced imaging, critical care, and cardiac anesthesia together in a single multidisciplinary program.

Procedural breadth includes open arch repair, frozen elephant trunk, valve-sparing aortic root repair, TEVAR, open thoracoabdominal and abdominal, fenestrated and branched EVAR, and complex hybrid approaches.

Purpose

A regional half-day CME symposium for all providers and caregivers of patients with aortic diseases, designed to (1) strengthen early detection of aortic disease through appropriate imaging, surveillance, and recognition of heritable risk; (2) provide actionable, guideline-based education on the medical management, genetic evaluation, and acute care of patients with thoracic and abdominal aortic disease; and (3) introduce the multidisciplinary capabilities of the AHN Center for Aortic Diseases as a resource for coordinated, lifelong care of these patients and their families.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Primary care physicians
- General, noninvasive and invasive cardiologists
- Emergency medicine providers
- Advance practice providers
- Internal medicine and family medicine providers
- Trainees of all specialties
- Allied AHN partners: imaging, genetics, critical care, and nursing

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be able to:

- Select the appropriate imaging modality and surveillance interval for patients with aortic disease.
- Apply current guideline thresholds for medical management and surgical referral of aortic aneurysm.
- Recognize syndromic and familial aortopathy presentations and initiate genetic evaluation, including cascade screening of at-risk relatives.
- Implement evidence-based blood-pressure control and lifestyle counseling for patients with aortic disease.
- Apply knowledge on assessments to determine risk and avoid common imaging pitfalls in suspected acute aortic syndrome.
- Describe the initial stabilization and time-critical management of patients with acute aortic syndrome, including when to engage a multidisciplinary aortic team.
- Identify the resources of the AHN Center for Aortic Diseases available to support the life-long care of patients and families.

PROGRAM FORMAT

The program runs from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM in four hour-long sessions. Each session pairs focused presentations with a moderated panel discussion covering all talks in the hour, followed by a short break. The morning concludes with a combined lunch and Patient Voice Panel and brief closing remarks.

ACCREDITATION & CREDIT DESIGNATION

Allegheny Health Network is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for providers.

Allegheny Health Network designates this live activity for a maximum of 5.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Disclosure: All faculty, planners, and others in control of content have disclosed relevant financial relationships, and any relationships have been mitigated in accordance with accreditation standards.

Program Director

Scott Halbreiner, MD

Surgical Director, AHN Center for Aortic Diseases

Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery | Allegheny Health Network

Faculty

All faculty are members of the Allegheny Health Network Cardiovascular Institute and/or the medical staff of Allegheny Health Network

Nael Aldweib, MD

Cardiology

AHN Cardiovascular Institute

Kileigh Barnes, BSN RN

Aortic Program Coordinator

AHN Center for Aortic Diseases

Bart Chess, MD

Vascular Surgery

AHN Cardiovascular Institute

Aryan Meknat, MD

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AHN Center for Aortic Diseases

Tim Mickus, MD

Cardiovascular Imaging

Allegheny General Hospital

Amelia Morgan, MD

Critical Care Medicine

Allegheny General Hospital

Michael Popeck, MD

Medical Director, AHN Center for Aortic Diseases

Cardiology

AHN Cardiovascular Institute

David Sharpe, LCGC

Cardiovascular Genetic Counseling

AHN Cardiovascular Institute

Sean Siow, MD

Vascular Surgery

AHN Cardiovascular Institute

Masaki Tsukashita, MD

Cardiac Surgery

AHN Center for Aortic Diseases

Jason Wong, MD

Emergency Medicine

Allegheny General Hospital

Patient Voice Panel

The closing session brings two patients into the conversation: each with a very different journey with their diagnosis and treatments. Moderated by Dr. Halbreiner, they reflect on how their disease first presented, what might have been recognized earlier, and what ongoing care means to them today. Their stories are a reminder that behind every imaging threshold, every referral, and every hour in the operating room is a person whose life depends on the disease being recognized and treated with timeliness and prudence.

Friday, September 25, 2026

7:30 am **Registration, Continental Breakfast & Exhibits**

Magovern Auditorium Lobby

8:00 am **Welcome & Endowment Recognition**

Scott Halbreiner, MD

SESSION I: THE AHN CENTER FOR AORTIC DISEASES: ONE CALL, ONE TEAM

Moderator: Michael Popeck, MD

8:10 am **The AHN Aortic Center: Program Overview**

Aryan Meknat, MD

8:30 am **The Single Call: The Referral Pathway in Practice**

Kileigh Barnes, BSN RN

8:40 am **The Aortic Call: The Emergent Transfer**

Scott Halbreiner, MD

8:55 am **Panel Discussion with Session Faculty**

Moderator and session faculty

SESSION II: DETECTION, SURVEILLANCE & MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

Moderator: Anita Radhakrishnan, MD

9:00 am **Imaging Modality Selection: What to Order and What Not to Order**

Tim Mickus, MD

9:15 am **Thoracic Aortic Disease: Detection, Surveillance, and Medical Management**

Michael Popeck, MD

9:30 am **Abdominal Aortic Disease: Detection, Surveillance, and Medical Management**

Sean Siow, MD

9:45 am **Panel Discussion with Session Faculty**

Moderator and session faculty

9:55 am **Break & Exhibits**

SESSION III: BEYOND SURVEILLANCE: INHERITED RISK AND ACUTE ILLNESS

Moderator: Daniel Davies, MD

10:05 am **Recognizing the Syndromic Patient: Marfan, Loeys-Dietz, Vascular Ehlers-Danlos, Turner, and Familial TAA**

Nael Aldweib, MD

10:20 am **Genetic Testing in Practice: Ordering, Interpretation, and Cascade Screening**

David Sharpe, LCGC

10:35 am **When Risk Becomes Reality: Critical Care of Acute Aortic Disease**

Amelia Morgan, MD

10:50 am **Panel Discussion with Session Faculty**

Moderator and session faculty

SESSION IV: ACUTE AORTIC SYNDROMES: RECOGNITION TO TRANSFER

Moderator: Scott Halbreiner, MD

11:00 am **Unmasking Acute Aortic Syndromes: Rapid Recognition and Imaging Pitfalls**

Jason Wong, MD

11:15 am **After the Diagnosis: Type A Management and Transfer Pathway**

Masaki Tsukashita, MD

11:30 am **After the Diagnosis: Type B Management and Transfer Pathway**

Bart Chess, MD

11:45 am **Panel Discussion with Session Faculty**

Moderator and session faculty

11:55 am **Break & Exhibits**

PATIENT VOICE PANEL: LIVING WITH AORTIC DISEASE

Magovern Room, 2nd Floor | Lunch served

12:15 pm **Lunch & Patient Voice Panel**

Moderator: Scott Halbreiner, MD

Two AHN patients sharing their story, followed by questions from the moderator and audience.

12:50 pm **Closing Remarks & Adjournment**

Scott Halbreiner, MD | CME sign-out and evaluations

TAKE-HOME TOOLS

Referral pocket card • Criteria cards with the Transfer Center hotline

Venue

Magovern Auditorium, Allegheny General Hospital

320 East North Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Registration, exhibits, and breaks are located in the auditorium lobby on the first floor. The Patient Voice Panel and lunch take place in the Magovern Room on the 2nd floor.

PARKING & DIRECTIONS

Free parking will be available at the James Street garage. Validation for parking will be available at the registration counter during check-in. For directions follow the signs from the garage to the Magovern Auditorium.

REGISTRATION & CME CREDIT

- Sign in at the Magovern Auditorium registration desk on arrival.
- Text the code **JULGUH** to **(412) 301-9919** to record attendance.
- More information will be available at registration

EXHIBITS

Industry partners will be available in the lobby during registration and scheduled breaks. Exhibitor presence does not influence program content.

Special Thanks To Our Sponsors



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CONTACT

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ONE CALL. ONE TEAM. 24 / 7.

TO REFER*

412-442-7650

TO TRANSFER**

412-352-9008

* You can also use Epic's Referral order to Cardiovascular Specialty Services (Select Center for Aortic Disease)

** Notify transfer center that this is an Aortic Alert

SAVE THE DATE

Second Annual Aortic Symposium

Fall 2027 | Allegheny General Hospital, Pittsburgh | September 18, 2027 (Tentative)

AHN Center for Aortic Diseases

Inaugural Aortic Symposium | September 25, 2026



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