

Via teams with LVH for second marathon

5-mile walk,
20-mile training
run new this year

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Any of the 820 runners who panted to the finish line of last year's Via marathon shouldn't fear signing up for this year's 26.2 miles.

Due to a partnership with Lehigh Valley Hospital, the marathon may feature more medical professionals running than in any other race.

Officials from Via of the Lehigh Valley announced April 9 the hospital as the title sponsor of the newly named Lehigh Valley Hospital Marathon for Via presented by 69 WFMZ-TV.

Set for Sept. 7, the marathon course along the Lehigh River Canal Towpath will remain much the same, guiding runners from downtown Allentown to Sand Island in Bethlehem to Freemansburg and Bethlehem Township before ending at Riverside Park in Easton.

To encourage more participants at varied activity levels, a 5-mile walk and 20-mile training run at Sand Island have been added. Last year Sand Island was the location for the marathon's kick-off event.

Ron Rucker, president and CEO of Via, said the marathon was essential in raising awareness of Via, a nonprofit organization that provides services for devel-

To register for the marathon or to serve as a volunteer, visit www.vianet.org.



PRESS PHOTO BY BEKAH RUSNOCK

Dr. Andrew Miller, an emergency room physician at Lehigh Valley Hospital, will serve as the marathon's medical director.

opmentally disabled adults and children.

He said Lehigh Valley Hospital is a natural choice for a partnership.

"Just as the marathon is a true Valley-wide event, Lehigh Valley Hospital is a true Lehigh Valley organization, covering the same footprint of the marathon from city to city," Rucker said.

The hospital is the largest employer in the Lehigh Valley and the largest health care provider.

Dr. Andrew Miller, an emergency room physician at Lehigh Valley Hospital, will serve as the marathon's medical director.

While his main concern will be for the safety of runners, Miller also said the marathon matches the hospital's mission of promoting healthy living for the

community.

EMS teams from Lehigh and Northampton counties, physicians, medical assistants and sports trainers will be stationed throughout the relay course as well as at the finish line.

Some medical professionals will also be participating in the race.

Anne Marie Crown, program coordinator for Heart Help for Women, is already signed on as captain of the hospital's regional heart center relay team. The "Heart of Lehigh Valley Hospital" team is comprised of men and women ages 30 to 60 in order to show that at any age, you can do something to help your heart, Crown said.

Bart Yasso, the marathon race coordinator and chief running officer of Runner's World Magazine, stressed the need for volunteers. Last year, 250 people helped by passing out water or cheering on runners.

The Lehigh Valley marathon is a Boston qualifying marathon and the race legs vary in difficulty from the most difficult, a 4.9 mile hill, to the least difficult, a 5.1 mile downhill stretch.

Mayor John Callahan, who ran his first marathon at the event last year, said he will again participate.

Joking with Miller about the need for doctors at the race, Callahan quipped, "You may have to carry me the last three miles."

The marathon begins 6:45 a.m. at Ninth and Hamilton streets in Allentown and the relay begins 15 minutes later at the same location. The 20-mile training run begins 6:45 a.m. at Sand Island and the 5-mile walk follows there at 8:15 a.m.

For more information, to register for the marathon or to serve as a volunteer, visit www.vianet.org.