Exercise Essential to Delaying Progression of Parkinson’s

Varicose Treatment Becomes More Simple

Education Key When Buying CBD Products

WCHA Senior Initiative Receives National Award

MEDICARE UPDATE: Medicare Decision Time is Here, See pages 22-25 for Enrollment Advice
By Vanessa Orr

There’s been a lot in the news lately about cannabidiol products, also known as CBDs, and the information is often confusing, especially since its over-the-counter use is fairly new in Pennsylvania. While this legal, naturally occurring constituent of the hemp plant has many beneficial medical uses, it’s important for consumers to become educated about where to buy it and how to best use it.

“Unlike THC, which is found in marijuana, CBD products are not psychoactive; they don’t get you high,” explained Sue Schropp, RPh, owner of The Medicine Shoppe in Latrobe, which carries CBD products. “CBDs can be used to help relieve pain, both systemically or locally, for example, applying it to a knee; as well as to reduce anxiety and depression. It can also help with spasms, like those caused by Parkinson’s disease or multiple sclerosis, and also help with inflammation and pain from fibromyalgia.”

Perhaps even more important is that CBD products may also decrease a person’s dependence on pain pills so that they take fewer per day, which may help lessen the effects of the opioid crisis.

Studies have shown that CBDs can also help with skin problems, such as psoriasis and acne, and can even be used to help calm animals, who may have anxiety caused by loud noises or separation anxiety.

But like any medication, consumers need to know where their products come from, what forms are available, and how best to use them.

“A word of caution: when you’re purchasing CBD products, especially over the Internet, you need to find out how that product is extracted,” said Schropp. “A lot of places use solvents, which are not good for you; reputable companies use ethanol or carbon dioxide. You also want to make sure that the company uses the whole plant, that the THC levels are less than .3 percent, and that they use third-party lab testing.”

The Medicine Shoppe in Latrobe works with two U.S.-based companies, Ananda Hemp and Can-Tek Labs, to make sure that the products people are buying are legal and safe, and do what they are advertised to do.

“People purchase CBD balm on the Internet, but they’ve basically bought garbage for $30,” said Schropp. “We’ve researched all of our products, and carry the highest grades available.”

The Medicine Shoppe carries a wide variety of products, including tinctures, balms, capsules, massage oils, skin lotions and pet products. It also stocks a product similar to vitamin water and will soon be adding gummy bears to its inventory.

“We offer one on one consulation,” said Schropp. “There are a lot of different grades of product, and you want to start out low and gradually increase the dosage until you reach the strength that helps you.

“This also ensures that the CBDs won’t interfere with any medications they’re taking,” she added. “You can’t take CBDs with any kind of immunosuppressive drug, like those used by transplant patients, and CBDs may also react with blood thinners like Coumadin, Warfarin and Xarelto, as well as high doses of statins and other drugs.”

While CBDs can be beneficial for many people, education is key in finding a safe product that works.

Remember not all CBD products are created the same. We carry a high quality line with no THC.

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By Lois Thomson

Dr. Gennady Geskin, a cardiovascular specialist who is part of Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Associates, is an authority on varicose veins. He is familiar with the different procedures to care for them, such as EVLT (the Endovenous Laser Treatments), RF (radiofrequency ablation), and phlebectomies and sclerotherapies. But in speaking about it, he reduces the message to simple terms:

“I think the major point for the patients is that what we offer now (in the way of surgery) is all done in an outpatient setting in the office within one hour with just local anesthesia. There's very little pain involved, no real recovery time.”

He makes it sound so simple, and really, it is. And that's good news considering that varicose veins affect 50 to 55 percent of women and 40 to 45 percent of men, and nearly all of them need some type of treatment.

“The official recommendation is that you don’t do surgery if you don’t have symptoms,” Dr. Geskin said “but 99 percent of the patients have symptoms.” Those symptoms include pain, fatigue, and swelling in the legs.

Dr. Geskin said varicose veins are “those bulging veins you see on the surface of the skin. They measure from 2 or 3 mm up to 20 mm in diameter. What varicose veins represent are the branches of some deeper, leaky veins that you don’t see. Usually what happens is that one of the deeper veins inside is leaking and they are like tree trunks. So if the trunk leaks, the branches get bigger and bigger, and that's what you see.”

Dr. Geskin talked about two types of procedures used to treat the veins. “One is when we attack this leaky inside vein with the laser or radiofrequency. It's done under local anesthesia in the office, and we close it by using heat from the laser or by radiofrequency; usually used for larger, more leaky veins. The patient walks in, walks out. It usually takes 30 to 45 minutes, and there is very little discomfort involved.

“We also offer phlebectomy, where we actually take the branches out. We use numbing medicine, local anesthesia only. On the top of the bulging part we make a needle hole, and we use very small hooks to pull those veins out. Again, the only thing patients feel is the burning from the local anesthesia, they don't feel the rest of the procedure. The phlebectomy usually takes an hour.”

He said with the EVLT or RF procedure, patients could return to work the same day. With a phlebectomy, patients are urged to elevate their legs as much as possible for a couple of days. Simple? Yes.

For more information on Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Associates call (412) 469-1500 or visit www.GreaterPittsburghVascular.com.

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There may be some truth to the well-known cliché “feeling under the weather.” During the winter, some people may experience negative effects on their body due to freezing temperatures and changes in atmospheric pressure. Winter can exacerbate conditions that are not as troublesome in warmer months, causing debilitating aches and pains, particularly in people who suffer from arthritis and other inflammatory conditions.

In general, muscles that are warmed up tend to stretch better, and stronger muscles help to control the activity-related forces we put on our joints. These factors can help decrease the added stress our joints experience during the winter months, due to cold temperatures and changes in activity level.

“We can help people understand the impact of their conditions and why they are experiencing pain,” said Michael O’Donnell, DPT, a physical therapist at UPMC Centers for Rehab Services. “Once we identify the reasons, we can develop a program to relieve or help manage the symptoms.

Michael recommends light aerobic activity for approximately 30 minutes each day. Additionally, he suggests warm-up activity before working outside in the cold to strengthen your body for the activities you plan to do.

Along with aches and pains, winter brings lots of snow … and shoveling!

To help prevent muscle strain in your lower back and shoulders, Michael encourages you to follow these helpful tips:

- Lift smaller loads of snow rather than heavy shovelfuls. Be sure to bend your knees and lift with your legs rather than your back and push rather than lift when possible.
- Use a shovel with a shaft that lets you keep your back straight. You want to allow your back to be in an upright posture, so it can be optimally positioned to work.
- Also, position your midsection and move in the direction in which you are moving the snow. This will keep your lower back from twisting.
- Take frequent breaks when shoveling. Stand up straight and walk around periodically to extend the lower back.
- Backward bending exercises while standing can help offset the excessive forward bending that shoveling requires.

Visit UPMC.com/4CRS to learn more about how UPMC Centers for Rehab Services can help your wintertime aches and pains.

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To make an appointment, call 1-888-723-4277 (4CRS) or visit UPMC.com/4CRS.
Pain on a normal basis is not normal. It’s your body’s way of telling you something is wrong. Pain may limit the activity of daily living and create socioeconomic issues as well: you are unable to go to work or you may be limited at work. Additionally, pain over time can physically alter the brain and the disposition of a person.

At Legacy Medical Centers, they understand that you should not be in pain on a normal basis. Pain is a physiological mechanism that tells you something is wrong. It can occur from misalignment of the joint, inflammation from tissue damage, or tissue trauma. Any pain lasting longer than a couple of days when you are unable to identify the cause is a reason to be evaluated.

As an integrated medical, chiropractic and physical therapy practice, Legacy encompasses traditional medicine, chiropractic, and physical therapy but also uses more modern regenerative medical techniques such as stem cells, laser therapy, and hyperbaric oxygen to treat patients. Their goal is to reduce inflammation from the pain and take swelling off of the nerve and muscle and return them to normal function.

One modality used at Legacy to help patients recover from workouts or injuries is cryotherapy which uses subzero temperatures to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and increase mobility. Though the skin’s surface temperature can drop, the treatment’s short duration keeps your core

(Continued on following page.)
temperatures at normal levels.

Another newer modality that Legacy uses is dry needling, a technique that some physical therapists use for the treatment of pain. The technique uses a dry needle, meaning one without medication or injection. It is inserted through the skin into areas of the muscle to release inflammation and tension in the muscles.

Most of the conditions that the practice addresses include everything from strains and sprains to concussions and anything that is neuromuscular related. Not only will Legacy work one-on-one with patients, but also with several of the clinical staff, to reach an accurate diagnosis and develop customized treatment plans that will lead patients to the highest quality of life possible.

Their philosophy is to reduce the inflammation and reduce the pain below the pain threshold of the patient so they can get back to activities of daily living such as bathing, fixing their own meal, and participating in their own hobbies.

Legacy treats a wide range of patients of all ages, but has an overall special niche in the athletic world treating high school, collegiate and professional athletes. The practice recently partnered with a company called SportGait to conduct baseline and post-concussion evaluation as well.

While all patients differ in terms of their medical needs, the one thing that Legacy encourages is activity. They encourage their patients to be active on a more consistent basis. That doesn’t mean going to the gym and spending an hour on the elliptical. But there are simple things you can do such as walking which is a great activity.

Finally, they also encourage their patients to eat right and hydrate because many people don’t drink enough water.

Legacy Medical Centers has locations in the Pittsburgh area: Peters Township and Irwin. Coming soon, a third location in McCandless.

For more information, visit the website www.legacymedicalcenters.com.

*Measure Your Neck!*

Did you know that measuring your neck circumference is a simple way of assessing your health? In fact, neck size may be more accurate than waist size in predicting your risk of cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes; it is also a factor in the development of sleep apnea.

**For men,** a healthy neck circumference is 15.2 inches or less; **for women,** it’s 14.2 inches or less.

To measure your neck:
- Stand up, relax your shoulders and exhale
- Place the tape measure just below the Adam’s Apple, and not on top of it
- Record the number and measure it monthly – every additional inch increases your risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes

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Jacobs Helps Advance Breast Cancer Research

By Christine Haines

Highlands Hospital is one of three hospitals in the nation partnering with the Clinical Breast Care Project, a repository of more than 100,000 donated tissue samples for the study of breast cancer.

The center is located in Windber, Pa., near Johnstown and was started in 2000 by Dickerson Run native Nick Jacobs in conjunction with the Department of Defense utilizing a grant obtained through the late Congressman Jack Murtha.

Connelsville is the third hospital to partner with the research center, joining Anne Arundel Hospital in Maryland and the Walter Reed-Bethesda Medical Center. To date, Jacobs said, 97 percent of the women asked have participated in the study.

Jacobs said he wanted to bring this program to his hometown as well. “People from this area will be participating in the effort to stop breast cancer or to cure breast cancer,” Jacobs said.

Women going to Highlands Hospital for mammograms will be asked if they want to participate in the study, Jacobs said, and if they agree, a blood sample will be taken. The partnership between the hospital and the Windber research center began a year ago, with the final stages of training and equipment installation just wrapping up now, said Vicki Meier, the hospital’s director of community and professional relations.

“It’s pay it forward. The information is being used for a cure, which is what we’re all about,” Meier said.

Because the original repository was set up in conjunction with the Department of Defense, Jacobs said, it offered in-depth information over time. Jacobs said in the past, tissue samples weren’t necessarily handled well or in a uniform manner and did not come with information about the person they came from.

Jacobs said nurses were hired to conduct an 800-field survey with those who were donating tissue samples so more was known about lifestyle, diet and family backgrounds.

That information is placed in a database and can be analyzed from many perspectives.

“We started seeing a correlation between drinking coffee and a low incidence of breast cancer. It created a treasure trove of information.”

-Nick Jacobs

(Continued on following page.)
armed forces. All military personnel have blood testing done every two years, so that information is also provided to the Windber site.

When Jacobs found his research scientists becoming distracted by the amount of data available and heading in a multitude of directions not necessarily related to the human body and cancer, he hired foreign doctors for the research team who had medical training but were unable to practice in the United States because their licensing was obtained elsewhere, keeping the research focus on the medical applications. Jacobs retired in 2009, which is the same year the National Cancer Institute conducted an assessment of the Windber facility, ranking it as the only Platinum facility in the United States.

"They began using the tissue to map the human breast cancer genome," Jacobs said.

"Seventy five percent of what we’re dealing with is not genetic," Jacobs said. Jacobs said there are numerous environmental and even cultural issues that can lead to higher cancer mortality rates.

Jacobs said a nearly epidemic proportion of breast cancer cases were found in an area near a municipal waste incinerator in one area. When African-American women in the military were found to be in later stages of breast cancer than their caucasian peers, all with the same access to the same health care, it was found that culturally, fewer black women breast fed or conducted monthly self-examinations, leading to later diagnoses and more advanced cancers, Jacobs said.

While the repository provides a wealth of information, because it has been primarily from U.S. military personnel, it contains few samples from either Hispanic or elderly women.

Jacobs said he has started a second research institute in Florida which studies 300 genes to determine how medications are metabolized, so drug therapies can be more efficient, especially in treating cancer where the wrong drug can be as damaging as the disease.

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Is it true that yoga lowers blood pressure?

Yoga has many positive effects but if you want to lower your blood pressure with exercise, you are better off to do aerobic exercise, says the American Heart Association. Aerobics lowers blood pressure when it is done for 40 minutes three times a week. Second best is strength training (weight lifting).

Breast Cancer Research (Continued from previous page.)

Yoga has many positive effects but if you want to lower your blood pressure with exercise, you are better off to do aerobic exercise, says the American Heart Association. Aerobics lowers blood pressure when it is done for 40 minutes three times a week. Second best is strength training (weight lifting).

Water, Water Everywhere!

Did you know that thirst is a LATE symptom of dehydration? It’s true. Most of us won’t feel thirsty until we are already dehydrated. Many people are walking around in a state of chronic mild dehydration, because we are “too busy” to pay attention to this vital need. Our bodies are mostly composed of water, and every cell needs water to function well. We eliminate water all day, in urine, stools, sweat and breath and it has to be replaced. Some signs of dehydration include dark urine, less frequent urination, constipation, fatigue and headache. Urine should be nearly colorless, or the color of pale lemonade – not cider or beer!

The National Academy of Sciences recommends that men drink a minimum of 15.5 cups of fluids per day, and that women drink 11.5 cups. This can be plain water, or water based fluids such as tea and coffee. Eating watery foods, like watermelon and spinach, helps.

If you have a medical condition that affects your fluid balance, like kidney disease, or you take a diuretic, your fluid needs are a matter to discuss with your physician.

Tips for increasing your water intake:

- Drink a big glass first thing in the morning;
- Keep a carafe of water on your nightstand and take a sip if you awaken during the night;
- Have a water based beverage, or water, with every meal;
- Make your water more appealing: add sliced cucumber, strawberries, lemon or mint
- If you don’t like to drink water, try sipping it frequently, rather than trying to down a whole glass. Keep an attractive water bottle at your desk or nearby.
Our Clubhouse Provides Camps and Fun for Children with Cancer and Their Families

by Dani Wilson

At Our Clubhouse, we know that when cancer happens, it happens to the whole family. That is never truer than when a child is diagnosed with cancer. One special family illustrates this so well. The parents, who have two children, recently sat down with us to talk about their experience with cancer and how Our Clubhouse has impacted their lives.

On April 3, 2016, we took our typical life for granted. Our day-to-day lives consisted of going to work and running our boys around to their various afterschool activities. We were a regular, every day, busy family.

Then, on April 4th, we took our four-year-old to the pediatrician because his arm had been hurting for a couple days. After a few tests, they sent us to a children's hospital. By the end of the night, we were told that our son had to be admitted. I remember hearing the doctor say “cancer” and I remember being on the ground outside the glass door of his emergency room. It was earth-shattering. There is no control. As a parent, you want to fix things for your kid, but sometimes you have to trust others to do that.

The beginning was traumatizing for my son. He was stuck so many times for so many tests. Every time someone came in his room, he was petrified that they were going to hurt him. He didn’t even leave his room the first week we were there. The second week, Our Clubhouse was there with arts and crafts for the kids. We told him about the activities and were finally able to get him out of his room!

Later on, we were looking for day camps for kids with cancer. We couldn’t find options that were overnight— which is important, because families often must administer medication around the clock. Then we found Camp Clubhouse and thought, “This is great!”

The first year was wonderful! Both of our boys had so much fun. When camp was over, all they could say was, “When is camp again? When are we going back?” And this past year was wonderful too! They had a great time. And for us, meeting other families who are on a similar journey really helps. In such a terrible time, you realize you have common struggles with others. You are not alone.

Our Clubhouse including everyone is key. Our older son attending camp with our four year old was so important. As an older brother, he sees everything his little brother goes through and he worries just like we do. We even learned from a teacher that our older son was afraid he’ll come home one day, and his brother won’t be there. You know, kids can’t always express their emotions like adults. We are sure our older son feels alone because there is no one else at school who has a sibling with cancer. Being with other kids at Camp Clubhouse who have similar experiences was big for both of them.

The last treatment is scheduled for June 9, 2019. We are looking forward to that day, but we know that even then, it won’t be over. Our son will continue to get checked for recurrence. We will continue to worry. This is now part of our lives. But so are places like Our Clubhouse.

At the beginning, we felt alone. Now we realize we are supported and cared for. We found so many people willing to help that truly wish the best for our son and our family. That is why we love Our Clubhouse so much. We want to repay that and ensure other families get the same opportunities. If they have a child in this situation, we want them to feel the same way that both of our boys have.

You know, as parents, we will worry about our kids until the day we are gone. But places like Our Clubhouse will be a constant. It will always be here for us, for him, for others. It is invaluable.

Dani Wilson is the Executive Director at Our Clubhouse. For more information, contact Our Clubhouse at (412) 338-1919, dwilson@ourclubhouse.org or www.ourclubhouse.org.
**A:** Although most people develop and grow 32 permanent adult teeth, many times their jaws are too small to accommodate the four wisdom teeth. When inadequate space prevents the teeth from erupting they are called impacted wisdom teeth. This indicates their inability to erupt into the proper position for chewing and cleaning.

If you do not have enough room in your mouth for your third molars to fully erupt, a number of problems can happen. Impacted wisdom teeth should be removed before their root structure is fully developed. In some patients it is as early as 12 or 13, and in others it may not be until their early twenties. Problems tend to occur with increasing frequency after the age of 30. Some of the possible problems related to not removing your wisdom teeth include infection, cyst formation, possible crowding, or damage to adjacent teeth.

If you do not have your teeth removed as a teenager or young adult, as wisdom teeth develop, the roots become longer and the jaw bone more dense. When it is necessary to remove impacted wisdom teeth in your thirties, forties or beyond, the post-operative course can be prolonged and there is a higher complication rate. Treating these complications is often more difficult and less predictable than with a younger patient. Healing may be slower and the chance of infection can be increased. If your impacted wisdom teeth are not removed in your teenage years or early in your twenties and they are completely impacted in bone, it may be advisable to wait until a localized problem (such as cyst formation or localized gum disease and bone loss) develops. In general, you will heal faster, more predictably and have fewer complications if treated in your teens or early twenties.

Call 724-837-7770 if you would like a wisdom teeth consultation.

www.westmorelandoms.com
Parkinson’s disease is a dreaded diagnosis and there is no cure for it, but medical science has made significant advances in the treatment and management of the disorder. One of the most important findings is that exercise, specifically designed for those with Parkinson’s, plays a primary role in limiting the degenerative effects of the condition, slowing its progression. It’s welcome news for those with Parkinson’s and their families, and it’s an invigorating development for healthcare professionals who specialize in their care, including Casey Rodak, occupational therapist, Director of Therapy Operations for HealthSouth Harmarville Rehabilitation Hospital.

In response to the research findings regarding the positive effects of exercise, Rodak and a team of highly qualified physical, occupational and speech therapists have created a dynamic and comprehensive program that improves function and slows the progress of the disorder.

“HealthSouth Harmarville has adopted a program called Parkinson’s Wellness and Recovery, or ‘PWR!Moves,” says Rodak. “It was developed in Arizona by Becky Farley, P.T. We have provided intensive training to six therapists who conduct the program, which incorporates aerobics, resistance and functional task-specific exercise. Research has shown that vigorous, consistent exercise can improve motor symptoms associated with Parkinson’s, including rigidity, balance problems, coordination and small motor movement. The exercise program also addresses depression, anxiety and cognitive problems that are also symptoms of Parkinson’s.”

Rodak notes that Parkinson’s Disease has received increased media attention in recent months, as public figures like Alan Alda and Neil Diamond have revealed that they have been diagnosed. Despite the attention, however, misconceptions about the disorder persist. “For many people, the image associated with Parkinson’s is of a person with tremors, a shuffling gait and a high risk for falls,” he says.

“The truth is that Parkinson’s is a complex disease that affects many of the body’s systems, not only the nerves and muscles. Symptoms can include reduced vocal volume, sensory problems in the feet and cognitive changes.”

Parkinson’s Disease is a degenerative neuromuscular disorder that affects the brain cells which produce a chemical called dopamine, which plays a key role in movement and mobility. It involves physical and non-physical symptoms that frequently lead to isolation and reduced activity, two factors that are predictive of how rapidly the condition will worsen.

“Social isolation and reduced activity are related, and our PWR!Moves program targets these two factors along with motor function. We define ‘wellness’ broadly; it includes physical, emotional, cognitive and social functioning. People who participate in our program gain so much: the exercise itself, which improves neuromuscular symptoms; peer support; socialization opportunities and education. We include information about nutrition, lifestyle management and other relevant topics. The group aspect is the key; people are more likely to exercise with a group than on their own.”

PWR! Moves sessions are offered twice a week, for one hour and are free. The groups include eight to ten participants, and each session lasts for eight weeks. Participants are encouraged to keep up the exercise program at home. In addition, HealthSouth Harmarville hosts a monthly educational support group that focuses on helping people to live well with Parkinson’s.

Persons who wish to participate in the PWR!Moves program initially come in for an individualized Physical Therapy evaluation in the Outpatient Therapy department, to establish a clinical baseline. After the evaluation, opportunities include group PWR!Moves sessions of high or moderate intensity, outpatient physical therapy, and/or creation of a personalized home exercise program.

“Our HealthSouth Harmarville Parkinson’s Program,” says Rodak, “is getting great outcomes and is a game changer. Persons with Parkinson’s disease want to have a good quality of life and independence, as much as possible, for as long as possible. They are aware that their disease will eventually get worse, but there is reason for hope, with many excellent new medications and with the improvements they can achieve through exercise. All the research shows that exercise is the #1 key to staving off the degenerative effects. Our PWR! Moves program gives people a sense of control and improves the depression and anxiety that are common to the disorder.”

It’s empowering and energizing.”

HealthSouth Harmarville is a rehabilitation hospital that includes inpatient, outpatient and home health services. It is part of HealthSouth’s national network of hospitals and rehab facilities. To learn more, visit www.healthsouthharmarville.com. To learn more about PWR!Moves or to register, call (412) 826-2717. To learn more about HealthSouth Harmarville, visit www.healthsouthharmarville.com.
Toenail fungus plagued John Caruso of Irwin for much of his adult life. "He had it for a long time, ever since he was in the service," says John’s wife, Susan. "They just looked terrible. The toenails were thick and hard to cut. All ten toes were involved."

After using an over-the-counter toenail fungus preparation for over a year, John sought help for the problem from Dr. Patrick D. Roberto at Achilles Foot Care. "We were doing treatment at home before that where you put the medicine on every day, kind of like a nail polish," Susan says. "There wasn’t much improvement at all."

Achilles Foot Care offers the LunulaLaser® by Erchonia for non-invasive, pain-free treatment of onychomycosis, or toenail fungus. "Onychomycosis is a wide-spread condition that affects up to 10 per cent of the world’s population," says Dr. Roberto. "Erchonia’s FDA-approved LunulaLaser is an ideal treatment because it offers effective, pain-free, non-thermal treatment—without side effects or dangerous smoke plumes as other hot lasers used to treat onychomycosis."

John had four treatments with the LunulaLaser in March and April of this year – once a week for four consecutive weeks. Susan says it was easy. "You just walk in, sit down and they put your foot in the LunulaLaser one at a time."

"Within two months, we started to see from the nail bed that John’s nails were improving," she says. "And, from the top, you could see several of the nails were clearing up rapidly. The nails are starting to look normal."

Patients can expect to wait for up to a year for complete recovery as the toenails grow out. Susan says that John started to show improvement in just weeks. "You can see remarkable improvement in a couple months," she notes. "Yes, it’s working really well. Some of the toes are actually clear now."

"The LunulaLaser treatment involves four, 12-minute sessions per foot," explains Dr. Roberto. "You just keep your foot in the machine for 12 minutes and it focuses two wavelengths of light on your toenails. The light penetrates the nail fungus and creates two different types of reactive species that combine to create one chemical within the mitochondria of the fungus that kills it."

"I’ve seen much quicker results with the LunulaLaser than any other treatment plan I’ve used for 25 years," notes Dr. Roberto. "The LunulaLaserclinical trial proved 89 per cent of patients respond to treatment."

John and Susan are so happy with the results that they have recommended the LunulaLaser treatment to others. "We really like Achilles Foot Care," says Susan. "Dr. Roberto did an excellent job and we’re really pleased with the LunulaLaser treatment of John’s toes.

For more information about Achilles Foot Care, visit www.achillesfootcare.com or call (724) 468-5368 in the Delmont area or (412) 372-7100 in the Monroeville area.

FOOT CARE

Achilles Foot Care Patient Sees Results in Just Weeks

By Kevin Brown

Treat your feet RIGHT at Achilles Foot Care

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Dr. Patrick D. Roberto, Podiatrist

At Achilles Foot Care, Dr. Roberto helps patients get the custom treatment solutions they need to relieve their foot and ankle pain and other symptoms, including both acute and chronic issues.

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<td>Delmont, PA 15626</td>
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<td>(724) 468-5368</td>
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Fall 2018  www.guidetogoodhealth.com  GUIDE TO GOOD HEALTH 13
Substance abuse remains a major public health problem in Westmoreland County, as it is across much of the country, but things are looking up due to the diligent collaborative efforts of public health, public safety and social service agencies in the region.

There is reason to have hope: recovery from substance abuse is possible and Westmoreland County provides a broad range of services that are easily accessed by anyone who needs them.

Substance abuse, including both alcohol and drugs, is still at epidemic proportions in Westmoreland County but overdose deaths have decreased, largely due to the availability of Naloxone. Alcohol continues to be a major issue and is the number one reason that people come to the hospital seeking recovery care and assistance.

The Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc. (WeDAC) is the Single County Authority (SCA) for Westmoreland County and provides oversight to prevention, intervention, treatment, Case Management and Recovery Support Services. It is also the source of funding for those who are uninsured and underinsured, to help them access treatment services.

The Drug and Alcohol Case Management Unit provides 24/7 access to treatment services, for anyone in need of it. All it takes is a single phone call to 1-800-220-1810 and the phone is answered 24 hours a day. They provide screenings, level of care assessments, referral to treatment, overdose prevention training and naloxone distribution, plus assistance with non-treatment, practical needs such as housing, childcare, healthcare and transportation. Individuals can come into any SPHS treatment office in Westmoreland County to access this service or they can meet with a Drug and Alcohol Case Manager in a community setting.

The Drug and Alcohol Case Management Unit employs Certified Recovery Specialists (CRS) who are individuals in long term recovery who offer peer support and engagement to people before, during and after treatment services. Because they have experienced substance abuse and have been through recovery, they have personal expertise and empathy to offer. They are community-based and act as advocates and guides, fully prepared to help individuals navigate the recovery process by accompanying them to meetings, and connecting individuals to the recovery community and supports within the county. They facilitate a family support program, funded by the SCA, free of cost to attendees. To access CRS, contact 1-800-220-1810.

WeDAC is an administrative office and its direct services are subcontracted to Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services (SPHS) Drug and Alcohol (D&A) Case Management Unit.

Elizabeth Comer, MSW, is the Director of Clinical and Case Management Services for the Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission. She can be reached at 724-243-2220 Ext. 4450. For more information, visit www.wedacinc.org.

Opioid Overdose Advice

Opioid overdose can occur when a person misunderstands the directions for use, accidentally takes an extra dose or deliberately misuses a prescription opioid or illicit drug such as heroin. Also at risk are those who take opioid medication intended for someone else, or those who combine an opioid with alcohol or certain other medications that depress the central nervous system.

How to Avoid Opioid Overdose:

1. Take medication only if it has been prescribed by your doctor.
2. Do not take more medication or take it more often than instructed.
3. Call your doctor if your pain gets worse.
4. Never mix an opioid with a sleeping pill, alcohol or illicit substances.
5. Store medication in a safe place away from children and pets.
6. Learn the signs of overdose.
7. Get Naloxone from your pharmacist and learn how to use it.
8. Teach your family and friends how to respond to overdose.
9. Dispose of unused medication properly.

Signs of overdose:

1. Unconsciousness, unable to awaken the person.
2. Respiratory depression: breathing has slowed or stopped, nails and lips are bluish.
3. Pinpoint pupils.
4. Skin is pale and/or clammy.
5. Body is limp.

Opioid overdose is a life threatening emergency. Call 911 and tell them you suspect an overdose.
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1-800-400-WARM | PEOPLES-GAS.COM/HELP
Green Cleaning FOR HEALTHY HOMES

By Kate Safin, East End Food Co-op

Keeping a clean home is obviously important for your health, but what if the cleaning products you are using are toxic? The Clean Water Fund estimates the average American uses 40 pounds of toxic household cleaning products each year, including bleach, formaldehyde, phosphates, and phthalates.

Many of these chemicals have been found to be endocrine disruptors; they linger in our homes, in our air, on our clothes, and can even be harmful to our pets. Research recently published in the Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine found that regular use of cleaning sprays impacts lung health in ways comparable to smoking a pack of cigarettes every day. Yikes!

So what can you do to keep a healthy home and a healthy body? Try switching to some greener alternatives! Soon you’ll see harsh chemicals aren’t necessary for real results.

There are several brands of eco-friendly cleaners available, or you can create some tried-and-true cleaners with regular household items. Baking soda and vinegar are a powerful team that work well to scrub sinks, tubs, and other surfaces. These alternatives are just as powerful as harsh cleaners and have the added benefits of being cheaper and better for you and the environment.

Submitted by Kate Safin, Marketing & Member Services Manager, at East End Food Co-op. East End Food Co-op is the last natural foods co-op left in Pittsburgh from those original, back-to-nature stores. The Co-op offers all of the products of a full-service grocery store, but with a natural and local touch. For more information, visit www.eastendfood.coop

How to Protect Your Lungs

By Dr. Mark Gloth

ManorCare Health Services Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Centers would like to share with Westmoreland County Guide to Good Health readers information on respiratory health, since it is key to maintaining healthy lungs. Lungs supply oxygen to the blood and remove carbon dioxide and other gasses from the body. The lungs are protected by many defenses, but that doesn’t mean that they don’t need their “person” to take care of them. It’s important to consider the ways that a person can care for their lungs, bronchi, trachea, and diaphragm. A few simple considerations can lead to a much healthier respiratory system.

To protect your lungs, consider what you are breathing in and take the following steps:

1) Quit Smoking: Smoking is the main cause of lung cancer and COPD. Smoke narrows the air passages in the lungs and makes breathing more difficult. It’s never too late to quit.

2) Second Hand Smoke: Lung cancer and COPD can happen to you from inhaling smoke from other people who are smoking.

3) Air Pollution: Irritation, inflammation and damage to lung tissue are all possible due to airborne irritants. Proper clothing, masks and ventilation should be used.

4) Wash Your Hands: Common colds and flu are spread by hands through touching infected surfaces and then touching your mouth, eyes and nose. By using proper handwashing techniques and washing your hands regularly, the risk of infection is greatly reduced.

5) Keep the Air Inside your Home Clean: Dust, chemical cleaners and moisture can pollute the air inside your home. Use exhaust fans in your bathroom and kitchen to vent moisture, keep areas dry and wipe away dust.

6) Use Caution during Cold and Flu Season: If illness is going around, avoid large crowds and use proper handwashing techniques and hand sanitizers.

7) Get Vaccinated: Vaccinations help prevent influenza and other serious infections caused by the flu. Getting vaccinated protects the lungs by preventing the infections that can cause damage.

8) Get a Physical: Visiting your doctor for check-ups is a proactive way to prevent lung disease and detect problems in the early stages. Being honest will help your doctor order the correct test and prescribe the best treatments.

Here are a few homemade green cleaners you can try:

LEMON OIL DUSTER

INGREDIENTS:
- 10 drops pure lemon oil
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- A few drops olive oil

Put all ingredients in a bottle and shake to blend. Use a clean, recycled flannel cotton cloth to mop up dusty surfaces.

WINDOW CLEANER

INGREDIENTS:
- ¼ cup vinegar
- ½ tsp. natural liquid soap (such as Ecover dishwashing liquid or Dr. Bronner’s)
- 2 cups water

Put all ingredients in a spray bottle and shake to blend. Spray directly onto glass and wipe clean with newspaper, squeegee, or cotton cloth.

LAVENDER & TEA TREE CLEANING SPRAY

INGREDIENTS:
- ½ tsp. lavender essential oil
- ½ tsp. tea tree essential oil
- 1 tsp. unscented liquid soap
- 15 fluid ounces water
- 16-ounce spray bottle

Combine soap and essential oils in a bottle. Top with water, replace lid and shake until well blended. To use, spray on surface and wipe clean with a damp cloth.

Dr. Mark Gloth is Chief Medical Officer at HCR ManorCare. For more information, visit www.hcr-manorcare.com.
Gateway Health, a leading Medicaid and Medicare Advantage MCO in Pennsylvania, recognizes the needs of those who struggle. As part of their effort to help individuals overcome barriers that might prevent them from taking care of their physical health, Gateway Health recently donated mattresses, box springs and bedding to St. Joseph House of Hospitality. St. Joseph House of Hospitality is a program of Catholic Charities. Founded in 1937, St. Joseph is a 60 room single residential facility for men who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Gateway Health is hoping to provide a stable situation for those who struggle to find a place to sleep. These beds will benefit the homeless and at-risk by providing them an opportunity to stay in a safe and comfortable environment.

Highlands Hospital Announces Appointment of Chief Executive Officer

On September 26, 2018, Highlands Hospital announced that its Board of Trustees has appointed John Andursky as President and Chief Executive Officer. “We are fortunate to have someone of John Andursky’s caliber and experience step up to lead Highlands Hospital” said Michael Jordan, Board Chairman.

Jordan added that “Andursky has been the hospital’s Chief Financial Officer for the last seventeen (17) years and in addition for the last seven months assumed the responsibilities of acting CEO. He did an outstanding job managing the responsibilities of these two demanding positions, insuring steady progress with the hospital’s plans to expand its services in the Laurel Highlands region. John is a proven leader with excellent communication skills and the ability to bring people together to improve the image of the organization. His business vision and leadership skills will allow Highlands Hospital to successfully implement its current plans to open the Center for Health and Community Impact to improve the health status of the community it serves and develop long range plans to upgrade services offered by the hospital.”

Highlands Hospital Proud to Sponsor the Stand Up & Choose Tour

The program was presented to Connellsville Middle School students with a message of anti-drug, anti-bullying, and life-affirming messages. The hospital also made a donation to the school’s Caring Closet and Impact Kindness Club. Keep up the great work Mary Dreliszak and Connellsville School District. Highlands Hospital supports your efforts!

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Travel - An Inspired Education

By Patti Romig

My first trip to Europe was in 1997. A friend and I spent 10 days in Greece exploring Athens, Delphi and a handful of islands. I was awestruck at the history, architecture, culture, people, cuisine - everything was new to me, so different and inspiring. I officially had the European travel bug.

Travel provides an education like no other. Viewing pictures, reading books, or watching videos, although entertaining and informative, are no comparison to seeing Paris from the top of the Eiffel Tower, strolling through Winston Churchill’s London or viewing Athens from the Acropolis.

Kelley and I formed The Relaxed Explorer because we feel strongly that travel experiences should be available to all. Many individuals, particularly those with mobility concerns, think travel is out of the question or overly burdensome. We’re here to change your mind! There are so many great destinations in Europe, within everyone’s reach. Here are a few amazing destination options, to whet your travel appetite.

Ancient and artistic Italy
Ah, Italy. For many people, this boot-shaped country occupies the top spot on their vacation wishlist. It’s time to make your dream a reality! Experience Italy by traveling through the rolling vineyard steeped hills, exploring postcard perfect cities and towns and tasting the local cuisine. Florence (one of my personal favorites), a true renaissance city, has museums, palaces, and churches that house some of the greatest artistic treasures in the world. There are so many exciting sites to discover in Rome. Explore its many archaeological remains and monuments, while only steps from appetizing cafes and gelato stands. Have your camera ready for this photogenic metropolitan wonder!

Romantic, chic, delicious France
Take the trip of a lifetime, filled with culinary sensations, glamorous fashion, unforgettable architecture and magnificent history. Paris is one of the primary art and cultural centers in Europe, and many of the popular attractions are accessible. Wander through the Louvre museum, the most visited museum in the world, and immerse yourself in the artistic splendor. Enjoy a romantic, candlelight dinner for two in a city renowned for its intimate vibe. Stroll through the hall of mirrors in Versailles, just like the Sun King did centuries ago. So, what are you waiting for? Indulge your senses as you visit this unforgettable country!

Her Majesty’s Great Britain
Are you looking for timeless landmarks, stunning countryside and unparalleled heritage? Are you interested in following the path of royalty through a land shrouded in ancient legends and rich history? Then this noble area is for you! From the land that brings us Shakespeare, golf, Harry Potter, Jane Austen, etc., the cultural experiences in Great Britain are nearly endless. And who knows? Maybe you’ll get a glimpse of royalty!

Our company, The Relaxed Explorer, includes the above destinations in our guided tours. We spend a lot of time, research, and our personal experiences to design relaxed pace, fully accessible tours of amazing European destinations. We love to travel and believe travel opportunities should be available to all - this is both our vision and personal passion.

Come join us on an upcoming relaxed pace guided tour – we’d love to be part of your inspired travel education!
Bacon vs Sausage
The healthier choice is actually bacon. A side of sausage with your eggs adds 277 calories to breakfast, while three slices of bacon adds just 120. As for sodium, bacon contains 1/3 less sodium than sausage, and half the saturated fat.

Roasted Ratatouille
Here is a healthy, easy and delicious recipe for a great side dish:
Preheat oven to 425.
1 pint cherry tomatoes
4 cloves garlic, halved
Cut into ½ inch chunks: 2 small zucchini or yellow squash, 1 red bell pepper, 1 small eggplant, 1 small yellow onion
¾ cup olive oil
½ tsp. each salt and pepper
Toss all ingredients well on a large sheet pan. Roast until all vegetables are tender, 20-25 minutes.
Serves 6, 133 calories per serving

Pear Almond Oatmeal
3/4 cup cooked oatmeal
1/2 medium pear, chopped
1-1/2 Tbsp sliced almonds, (toasted)
1 pinch ground cinnamon
Top hot oatmeal with pear and almonds; sprinkle with cinnamon.
(Submitted by the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center)

Golden Milk
Ingredients:
2 cups milk of choice (dairy, unsweetened coconut or almond all work)
1 tsp ground ginger (or 1 tablespoon fresh, grated)
1 tsp ground turmeric (or 1 tablespoon fresh, grated)
1 tsp ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 to 5 peppercorns, cloves, or combination of both
1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup
1 dash of vanilla (optional)
Instructions:
1. Wisk milk and spices together and add to a small pot.
2. Simmer together for 10 minutes over low heat.
3. Remove from heat and add sweetener and vanilla.
4. Enjoy immediately, or allow to cool and serve over ice.
Yields two 8-ounce servings

Pumpkin Smoothie
Fall is here and that means pumpkin-flavored everything – and pumpkin is good for you. If you love pumpkin, try it in a smoothie. Here is a recipe that is creamy, delicious and very healthy:
In a blender, combine
• 1/2 cup pumpkin pie filling (Not plain pumpkin)
• 1/2 ripe banana
• 3/4 cup vanilla yogurt or milk
• 1/4 tsp vanilla (optional)
• Sugar to taste

Every kitchen needs a meat thermometer
Every kitchen needs a meat thermometer. What we often think of as “stomach flu” is more likely food poisoning: 1 in 6 Americans will experience food poisoning symptoms from contaminated food or undercooked meat. Cooking to the correct temperature takes the guesswork out of it. There are fancy expensive high tech meat thermometers, and there are simple instant-read ones that work just as well and cost under $10. Insert the probe at the thickest spot, be sure not to touch bone, and give it 30-60 seconds to stabilize and give you a reading. The correct desired temperature reading can usually be found on the food label, but if you’re not sure, aim for 160 degrees. (CDC)

Slow Down and Lose Weight
Most people eat a meal in 10 minutes or LESS! Double that time by taking smaller bites, chewing more thoroughly, putting your utensils down and pausing now and then. Eat more slowly and you will probably eat less, because slower eating gives your satiety hormones a chance to kick in and let you know that you are full.

Simple, Speedy Sauteed Chicken
Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Saute 1 pound of boneless skinless chicken breasts, about 4 minutes each side. Remove chicken from pan, and saute 4 sliced garlic cloves and (if you have it) ½ teaspoon fresh thyme for 30 seconds. Top the chicken breasts with the garlic and thyme and add a squeeze of lemon. Delicious and fast!
Did you know that your tax dollars can be directed toward tuition to a private school? Did I get your attention?

Pennsylvania has a program called EITC (Earned Income Tax Credits). Here is how it works. Any business that earns a profit in Pennsylvania can send money to a private school, such as Aquinas Academy in Greensburg. In return, they will receive a tax credit for their state taxes. Individuals are also able to participate as long as they qualify, so this is not just for businesses. These funds must be used as tuition, and students must qualify for them. Are you intrigued?

Your EITC contribution can be given to Aquinas Academy, and this contribution can benefit a student in need right away. Many parents wish to provide a Catholic education to their children, but they don’t think they can afford the tuition. Generous donors who participate in this program allow students to attend a Catholic School.

We are continuing our search for donors. We are looking for businesses and individuals who feel strongly about families having a choice in their education. We are looking for those that might want to help a student realize a dream of attending Aquinas Academy. Are you ready to help a student realize that dream?

If you are able to contribute to the EITC program, please contact the school office and speak to our principal, Mr. Joseph Rice. Remember, your contribution will come back to you in tax credits, so this program costs very little to the donor. Every gift size will be valued and appreciated.
CHILDREN’S HEALTH

Implementing a Token Economy

By Justin Gerwick

When working with children with special needs, it can often be helpful to utilize as many options as possible when attempting to encourage desired behaviors and/or decrease the frequency of undesirable behaviors. At New Story West Region schools, one new tactic that is being implemented into the school day is the use of a token economy.

A token economy is built around the idea of rewarding desired behaviors with a form of currency. In New Story’s case, the behaviors will be rewarded with tokens, which can be exchanged for items or activity time. Some examples of desired behaviors can include: remaining seated, raising your hand instead of speaking out, and keeping hands and feet to yourself.

Desirable behaviors are built off of the STARS system. STARS stands for: Set Goals, Be a Team Player, Be Accountable, Be Respectful and Be Safe. While the STARS system should guide behaviors, some basic rules can be followed when selecting target behaviors. Targeted behaviors must be observable and measurable, students must be aware of the behaviors that will result in receiving a token, don’t target too many behaviors at once, and ensure the student is capable of engaging in the desired behavior.

The token economy encourages desired behaviors in two ways. First, by obtaining a reward for acting appropriately, students receive immediate feedback on which behaviors are or are not desired. Second, the rewards give the students something to work toward. In order to maintain effectiveness of the token exchange, highly preferred items and activities must remain at a higher price.

This will keep the student motivated to continue earning tokens. For example, 10 tokens may be able to purchase five minutes of computer time, while 50 tokens may be able to purchase ice cream and 15 minutes of play time.

As students become familiarized with the token economy, desired behaviors should become a more natural occurrence than inappropriate behaviors. As students continue to show success, fading of the token economy should begin to take effect. New Story’s hope is always to be able to improve a student’s behavior to the point where the student is able to return to his or her home school district.

Fading of the token economy can be done several ways, including gradually increasing the purchase price of items, decreasing the amount of time per day that the token economy is in effect, and/or increasing the number of responses emitted required to earn a token.

Hopefully, the students will respond to the token economy to the point where they will display desired behaviors even when the token economy isn’t in effect or even outside of school time.

New Story is a licensed, private school which offers a special education academic learning environment and multiple therapeutic services to help children achieve success while coping with emotional and behavioral challenges. For more information, visit www.newstory.com or call (412) 373-5235.
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Fall 2018

Guard Your Medicare Card

You probably know that Medicare cards are changing to help protect your identity. Your new card will have a new Medicare Number that’s unique to you, instead of your Social Security Number. Unfortunately, con artists may still try to steal your personal information.

So what can you do to protect yourself? Guard your card, like a credit card. And don’t give your Medicare Number over the phone or email. Remember, Medicare never calls you unless you’ve asked us to.

Get Your Free Flu Shot

Flu season is back — did you get your free flu shot yet? Flu viruses change from year to year, so it’s important to get a flu shot each year. It’s free for people with Medicare, once per flu season, as long as you get the shot from a doctor or from other health care providers (like senior centers and pharmacies) that accept Medicare.

Don’t delay in protecting yourself and your loved ones this season — get your free flu shot as soon as possible!

Don’t Miss Your Medicare Enrollment Period!

According to the Social Security Administration, the biggest mistake people make regarding supplemental Medicare insurance is that they believe they have enough coverage when they’re 65 if they are still working, or if they have health insurance through a spouse. They think they don’t need to sign up and as a result, they miss their open enrollment period.

Be sure to sign up for Medicare Supplemental Insurance within the six month window after you turn 65!

Medicare Beneficiaries Urged to Pay Special Attention to their Medicare Advantage and Part D Plans During Open Enrollment

Beneficiaries are well on their way to Medicare’s Annual Open Enrollment Period, which runs from October 15th – December 7th. During this time, Medicare beneficiaries have the option to compare or switch their Medicare Advantage Plans and/or Part D Prescription Drug Plans. Open Enrollment occurs once a year, so it’s important that Medicare beneficiaries take advantage of this opportunity to ensure that they have a plan that meets their needs.

It’s a smart idea to review your health insurance options during each open enrollment period. It’s important to find the right plan to fit your healthcare needs and budget.

Here are some things to look at when comparing your plan:

• **Premium Prices**: Plan prices may or may not increase for the upcoming year. Check to make sure your plan is still affordable for you.

• **Deductibles**: In order to fully understand your costs, check to see if your plan has a deductible associated with it.

• **Cost-sharing changes**: Plans can change the copayments and coinsurance associated with services yearly.

• **Network Changes**: It is especially important to check that your preferred doctors, providers and hospitals will be in-network for the upcoming year. Seeing in-network providers generally costs less than seeing out-of-network providers. Provider networks can change yearly.

• **Covered Medications**: It’s important to double-check to make sure all of your current prescription drugs are covered on the plans formulary, and what the costs of your medications will be for the year. Most plans use a five tiered cost sharing design; medications in each tier can have different out-of-pocket costs, ranging from set copayments to sharing a percentage of the cost with the beneficiary.

• **Preferred Pharmacies**: Some plans offer beneficiaries lower cost-sharing requirements if they fill their prescriptions at selected network pharmacies. It’s important to see if the pharmacy you are using is considered “preferred” to ensure you are getting the best possible price for your medications.

• **Medication Restrictions**: Some plans require beneficiaries to get prior authorization before they will cover certain drugs, engage in step therapy, which would require patients to try a lower-cost drug before paying for an expensive medication, or, impose quantity limits, where they can limit the amount of medication a beneficiary can buy at one time. It’s important to know if your medications have any restrictions on them.

If you are interested in having a free, confidential plan comparison done, please contact APPRISE at 1-800-783-7067 to schedule an appointment to meet with a certified Medicare counselor to discuss your needs. APPRISE is the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) in PA; a free service through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

Westmoreland County Housing Authority

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WCHA Westmoreland County Housing Authority

For more information, contact Lynn at 724-562-2249
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Choose a Medicare Plan for 2019
That’s Right for You

By Daniel Casciato

Medicare is the national health insurance program for U.S. residents 65 and older. It also can cover some people under 65 with certain illnesses and disabilities. The overall program is quite complex, and often premiums and other details can change from year to year. That’s why it’s important to review changes to your Medicare plan each year. This way you’ll be better prepared when 2019 arrives.

“Everyone should look at their health care decision-making as part of their overall planning for retirement,” says Bob O’Connor, executive director of Medicare for Aetna in Pennsylvania. “Those who are already a Medicare recipient should review the plan on a recurring basis to make sure the plan they have today still meets their needs. With changes in provider networks, researching options is more important than ever.”

Here are some key things you should consider:

• Does the plan’s formulary (drug list) cover your medications?
• Are your doctors and pharmacy in-network?
• How is out of network handled?
• What are the plan’s out-of-pocket costs? (Review the premium, deductible, copays and/or coinsurance.)
• Is a Medicare Supplement plan right for me?
• When can I enroll?
• What hospital would you use if needed? What would that cost?

Know what your plan has to offer

Many insurance companies update their formulary (drug list) annually. According to O’Connor, some of these changes for 2019 could be more noticeable. For example, some prescription drugs might have a cost increase or a tiering change. Make time to review current prescriptions and compare against 2019 plan’s formulary. This will help you see what’s changing next year.

“When you review your out-of-pocket costs, like plan premiums, don’t forget to factor in the cost of drugs,” says O’Connor. “Often, this is an expense that gets overlooked. The best thing to do is to discuss your coverage with a licensed broker or agent.”

The more you know, the more likely you are to get the plan that’s right for you. For example, know if your doctors are in the plan’s network. Know if your plan requires you to have a primary care physician (PCP), O’Connor recommends you review all of your options, recognize what your budget will allow and understand what benefits you can expect to use each year.

“Some companies differ in terms of network,” he says. “Understand which facilities, hospitals and doctors you want to access. Make sure your doctors and hospital are in the plan’s network. Consider a $0 premium plan – and bank the money. Pay yourself instead of the insurer.”

Some insurance companies are changing or reducing provider networks this year while others are adding a national network. Beneficiaries should make sure their doctors and hospitals are in their network and how they are covered when travelling.

-Bob O’Connor, Executive Director of Medicare for Aetna in Pennsylvania

Is Medicare Supplement coverage the right choice for you?

“Medicare is a nice safety net, but it still has significant cost sharing, and some people might want help covering those significant costs,” says O’Connor.

Once you have Original Medicare (Parts A and B), see if a Medicare Supplement plan is right for you. Although these plans work alongside your Original Medicare coverage, the premiums can be very expensive and will go up over time. The plans also have deductibles and coinsurance that can be expensive. However, there are no network restrictions and most medical costs are covered without cost sharing. So you can use any physician or hospital that accepts Medicare.

If you want to sign up for a Medicare Supplement plan, you can do so during the initial enrollment season. This is a one-time-only, 6-month period when federal law allows you to buy a policy you want that’s sold in your state. It starts in the first month that you’re covered under Medicare Part B, and you’re 65 or older. During this period, you can’t be denied a Medicare Supplement policy or charged more due to past or present health problems. Keep in mind, if you miss this period, Medicare Supplement Insurance plans may check for medical conditions and your premium could be higher.

When to enroll in a Medicare Advantage or prescription drug plan

The initial enrollment period for Medicare lasts for seven months—the three months before you turn 65, your birthday month and the three months following your birth month. You can sign up for Part A and/or Part B during that time.

During your initial enrollment period, you can enroll in:

1. Part C (Medicare Advantage), with or without prescription drug coverage, once you have Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B
2. Part D (prescription drug coverage only) once you have Part A or Part B

Just remember, if you wait to enroll in prescription drug coverage, you may have a lapse in coverage and will have to pay a late enrollment penalty (LEP).

If you didn’t enroll during the initial enrollment period, or you want to select a new plan, you can do so during Medicare’s Annual Election Period (AEP). This begins on October 15, and runs through December 7, each year. However there may be other times when you may be able to join, switch, or drop a Medicare Advantage Plan.

If you’d like more information visit www.aetnamedicare.com.

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By Kevin Bean

As we head into the cold weather months here in Western Pennsylvania, I wanted to take a moment to encourage everyone to keep an eye on our neighbors who may not be able to manage in the ice and snow as well as they used to. It’s easy to get wrapped up in our incredibly busy lives, but I have found that, at the end of the day, I am never so happy as when I am doing for others.

Here are some great ways you can help out those around you:

• If you’re planning to make a trip to the grocery store, check in to see if there’s anything you can pick up for them while you’re there.
• Breaking out the snow blower? Consider paying it forward by clearing a neighbor's driveway and sidewalks as well.
• VISIT! Never underestimate the power of a kind word, and an hour of your time. It’s easy to hibernate for the winter, but often people don’t want to be a burden and won’t ask for the help that they need. Cold weather and a lack of sunshine can bring on depression for some of us, and just knowing that someone cares enough to check in can do wonders.
• When inclement weather hits, sometimes something as simple as walking to the end of a driveway to pick up the mail can end in a life threatening situation. Offer to pick it up for those who may have difficulty navigating in icy conditions.

Lastly, there are many wonderful Personal Care and Nursing Homes in the area that offer Respite stays – short visits that can be as little as one day. During times of severe weather, essential services like Meals on Wheels and various in home nursing agencies may not be able to reach people.

Encourage your friends and loved ones who depend on these types of services to consider a short stay to keep safe until the weather clears. May God bless and keep you in the months ahead.

Kevin Bean is the Nursing Home Administrator of Harmon House Care Center, Mt. Pleasant, PA. For more information regarding Harmon House Care Center or Respite Care opportunities, feel free to contact Kevin Bean at KBean@myharmonhousecarecenter.com, 724-547-1890, or visit www.myharmonhousecarecenter.com

Medication Safety Tips

• Use the same pharmacy for all your prescriptions
• Use a pill organizer if you take a lot of medications; they really are helpful
• If you take a new medication, take note of any symptoms that may be side effects – write down what they are, and when they occur. If the side effect persists, or worsens, call your doctor.
• Be careful with over-the-counter products: they can interact with your prescriptions. Before taking an herbal supplement or vitamin, check with the pharmacist.
• Do not skip doses, reduce the prescribed dose, or discontinue a prescription on your own
• Most important: take the medication exactly as prescribed!

From Highmark
By Faith Sobel for Senior LIFE

See why seniors and caregivers trust Senior LIFE.
Seniors today want to live at home—not in a nursing home. In the past, the only options many seniors had were to take care of themselves or go to a nursing home. Now there is a better choice. For those who need some help and supportive services to live at home, Senior LIFE can help make that happen. And there is NO COST for services for eligible seniors receiving Medical Assistance. Through the LIFE Program, members receive all medical, social, and personal support services needed for them to remain in their own homes and avoid placement in a Skilled Nursing Facility.

Your local Senior LIFE Health and Wellness Center
The local LIFE Health and Wellness Center is more than just a senior center. It’s staffed by local doctors and nurses and other healthcare professionals from your community and features a medical clinic, exam rooms, therapy and rehab center, recreational room, and personal care facilities. It’s a warm and inviting place where LIFE members can socialize, enjoy hot meals, see the doctor, receive therapy services, obtain personal care, speak to their social worker, and so much more.

A one-stop shop for all senior health and support services.
Members of the LIFE Program receive all medical and support services through Senior LIFE. That means Senior LIFE is a one-stop shop for all senior health and supportive services. No more driving to and from different doctors’ offices and trying to keep track of where you need to take your loved one for an appointment.
Senior LIFE members have access to a wide range of services including:

• Transportation
• Social activities and events
• Meals
• Nutritional counseling
• Exercise
• Personal care and grooming
• Specialty care
• Occupational therapy
• Physical therapy
• Speech/language therapy
• Social Services and more

Members may also receive in-home services as part of their individualized care plans. These are coordinated through a member’s social worker at the LIFE Health and Wellness Center.

See for yourself why more seniors are selecting Senior LIFE. Call (724) 838-8300 today to schedule your free lunch and tour. Complimentary transportation provided. For more information, visit SeniorLIFEPA.com.

All of the care you need at our LIFE Health and Wellness Center. And in your home.

Senior LIFE is the local LIFE Program that provides all of the healthcare and personal support services seniors need to continue to live in their home and not a nursing home. Services include access to the LIFE Health and Wellness Center, medical care, transportation, and much more. Senior LIFE also provides and coordinates all Medicare and Medicaid benefits through a single network.

No cost to enroll for those who qualify.

Call today to schedule a FREE LUNCH and TOUR of your local LIFE Health and Wellness Center.
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Home Today. Home for LIFE.
123 Triangle Dr., Greensburg, PA 15601
WCHA Senior Initiative Receives National Award

Westmoreland County Housing Authority (WCHA) wants its senior residents to lead healthier, happier and longer lives. That’s why in 2017, WCHA introduced a three-pronged initiative to its residents age 60 and older. It was this initiative that was recently recognized with a 2018 Award of Merit from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO).

The NAHRO Awards of Merit program was created 19 years ago to recognize agencies who found innovative ways of making a difference in their communities and in the lives of the people they serve by creating affordable housing, revitalizing their neighborhoods, and developing initiatives to create new opportunities to the people they serve.

“I want to thank NAHRO” for the award, said WCHA Executive Director Michael L. Washowich. “Our senior initiative is an important component in assisting our seniors in living a longer, healthier lifestyle through exercise, diet and nutrition.”

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PART I

The first portion of the WCHA initiative, “Elderly Wellness,” is being presented in conjunction with nearby Seton Hill University.

Seton Hill’s Science and Coordinated Program in Nutrition/Dietetics’ students work onsite with senior residents to educate them on the benefits of better nutrition/diet. In turn, university students gain insight into the aging process and get a better understanding of how rewarding it is to work with people of this age group.

With the major of WCHA senior residents having incomes at or below 50 percent of the median income, many have been forced to make the difficult decision between purchasing quality food and medication.

“Our elderly residents will greatly benefit from onsite nutrition/dietetic. A well-balanced diet is critical for older adults and their overall health,” said Washowich. Many are also managing chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer, and are relying on cheap, processed foods for quick and easy nutrition.

The program offers seniors a much-needed alternative. For example, through the program, residents can learn such things as how to use Senior Food Boxes that they receive from the local Food Bank, and other low-cost foods to create simple, yet nutritious meals that are well balanced and healthy.

Participants also get the opportunity to attend a class at the university, giving them an enhanced campus experience.

PART II

“Flex Fit” is an exercise wellness program that provides physical and mental stimulation.

A physical trainer works with the seniors, some who use walkers and wheelchairs, in developing a routine based on the individual’s physical ability. The hour-long weekly routines include a variety of breathing and stretching exercises while also incorporating elements of yoga and tai chi to improve senior’s balance and flexibility.

The program follows the four exercise guidelines recommended by the National Institute on Aging – endurance, coordination, relaxation and education.

Through Flex Fit, residents have noticed the benefits of increasing their level of activity.

PART III

The “Pen Pal” program is offered through a partnership between WCHA and Hempfield Area School District. The program pairs first-grade students with seniors to form a “pen pal” relationship.

Over the course of several months, the students and seniors interact through letters and cards. At the end of the program, the seniors are taken to the local school to meet the students face-to-face.

The program offers social stimulation to the senior participants, but according to the students’ teacher, it also has proven to be a valuable learning tool for the students as they practiced their writing and reading skills and learned things about different people.

OVERALL

According to U.S. Census figures, Westmoreland County has a larger population of 65 and older than any other county in the state of Pennsylvania, and the numbers are increasing.

In 2012, 19.6 percent of the county’s estimated 363,000 residents – or about 72,000 people – were age 65 or older, while statewide that year, 16 percent were in that age bracket, according to Census figures. In 2000, only 18 percent of the residents in Westmoreland County were age 65 or older.

While there is a cost to WCHA to offer these programs, it is minimal thanks to the authority’s unique partnerships with the university and school district.

“Our health and wellness programming stress the importance of aging in place and doing it well,” said Washowich. “We want our residents to be as healthy and risk free as they possibly can.”

For more information, visit www.wchaonline.com.
Recovering from a medical condition such as a stroke or a hip fracture can be extremely difficult. One thing that can make it easier for patients is to get personalized therapeutic support in an inpatient setting.

“One of the biggest benefits of inpatient rehab is that there are staff members available to help residents with whatever they need; especially things that they would have trouble doing if they were home alone,” explained Shelley Meyers, rehab director for Allstar Therapies at Westmoreland Manor. “We also have a lot of resources available to us—not just weight equipment and Therabands, but also bikes, parallel bars and standing frames to help patients who need assistance while they build endurance.”

Westmoreland Manor provides short-term rehabilitation for patients recently discharged from the hospital as well as rehab services for the long-term residents of its skilled nursing facility. Families who need someone to care for a loved one while they are out of town can also take advantage of its respite program. “Our short-term residents have rehab six times a week,” said Meyers. “We also monitor our long-term residents for signs of decline and offer therapies to help them improve.”

Westmoreland Manor provides physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy to help patients improve to the best of their abilities. “We tend to see patients with multiple comorbidities—they may have diabetes, balance issues or a history of falls,” said Meyers. “We provide rehab so that they can get back home, or require a lesser level of care.”

Physical therapists work with patients on everything from dynamic balance or learning to use different assistive devices. “We do a lot of ‘high balance’ things,” said Meyers, giving the example of patients utilizing the Westmoreland Manor courtyard to re-learn how to walk outside on uneven surfaces.

Occupational therapy helps patients with activities of daily living. “If a person normally does a lot of cooking, we have therapists who work with them here in a kitchen that we use to simulate the home environment,” said Meyers. Speech therapy helps patients with speaking, memory, medications and swallowing, and even managing finances. “The residents love to use our iPad applications to practice paying bills,” said Meyers, adding that it also helps improve memory and attention span.

Through its home assessment and evaluation program, a staff member will visit a patient’s home to look at the living environment and bring that information back to the treating therapist. “If we know that a patient will have to walk up five stairs when she gets home, for example, we’ll work on her ability to do that,” said Meyers. “We also go with the resident and a family member to the house before discharge and run through their daily routine to make sure that they can return home safely.”

The company also contracts with many home health agencies, which is an advantage once the patient is ready to go home as it provides continuity of care.

“What we do here is centered around the care of the resident,” said Meyers. “Our dedicated staff works hard to make sure that they have everything they need to improve and to get back home with their loved ones.”

To learn more about rehabilitation services at Westmoreland Manor, call (724) 830-4000 or visit www.westmorelandmanor.org.
"DID I SCHEDULE MY TRIP FOR THURSDAY?"

“WHAT DID SHE SAY MY FARE WAS?”

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With this new feature, riders can schedule trips to preauthorized locations, cancel a trip, check their trip fare, and view trips they have scheduled online or through the call center.

In the future, GO Westmoreland is looking to integrate more technologies such as scheduling with a smartphone app, and using electronic fare payment.

Call our Reservationists at 724-832-2706 to sign up for this service. To register riders must have an email address. They will also need to create a user name.

Giving riders the ability to manage their trips through online scheduling should greatly improve their experience with GO Westmoreland.

Visit the website https://www.westmorelandtransit.com/go-westmoreland/ to learn more about online scheduling, and the many other services offered by GO Westmoreland!
by Shandra Harcarik, RN, BSN

Falls are one of the leading problems facing an older person. The latest reports indicate that one of every three persons aged 65 and over falls each year. Falls are the leading cause of death by injury. 87% of all fractures among seniors are due to falls. Half of all older people hospitalized for a fracture cannot return home or live independently after their injury.

**TIPS TO HELP YOU PREVENT FALLS**

**General Environment**
- Clear pathways of clutter and electrical cords
- Firmly attach carpet and rugs, eliminate scatter or throw rugs.
- Use a raised seat and safety rails for toileting
- Rearrange furniture so they are not obstacles
- Install sturdy handrails on staircases
- Provide adequate lighting, especially on walkways, stairs; use a night light where possible; Keep a flashlight handy in the event of a power outage.
- Try to use only chairs with armrests for assistance when getting up and down; do not use chairs with wheels.
- Have a slip-resistant rug next to your bathtub/shower; Use nonskid texture strips on shower floor

**Lifestyle Changes**
- Have your vision and hearing checked regularly
- Talk to your doctor/health care provider about your medications and the side effects;
- Try to use one pharmacy to obtain your medications.
- Wear supportive, rubber-soled shoes. Shoes should have low, even heels and firm shape. Be sure your slippers have a gripper sole.
- Use a cane or walker to help maintain your balance
- Maintain a regular exercise program to improve strength and tone; Ask your doctor if you would benefit from home physical therapy or occupational therapy.

**Dry Eyes? Home Remedies to Try**

Dry eyes can be due to medication, environmental factors, or medical conditions such as Sjogren’s Syndrome. They can be uncomfortable and may lead to corneal abrasions and infection. Your ophthalmologist can recommend a prescription or OTC drops, and you can improve your eye comfort with these simple methods:
- Use a humidifier in your home or workplace during winter;
- Increase your fluid intake;
- Try using lubricating eye ointments at night, when sleep keeps you from blinking;
- Take fish oil capsules every day;
- Don’t let your car’s heater blow towards your face; aim it at your feet;
- Review your drugs with your doctor or pharmacist, as dry eyes can be a side effect.
As your loved one’s memory dwindles and they become unable to do the things they once used to as a result of the effects of dementia or Alzheimer’s disease, you may have to make the difficult decision to place them in a memory care center. “A memory care center is a place where families can bring loved ones to know that they will be in a safe and secure environment,” says Ron Berlingo, administrator for the Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center, a licensed personal care home in Greensburg specializing in memory care for women.

According to Berlingo, their size—12 units—is one of the distinct advantages of their facility over other memory care centers because it makes it more personable. “We’ve created more of a small, homelike environment instead of an institution feel,” he says. “In addition, our staff likes to keep residents engaged with activities and they attend carefully to their activities of daily living and individualized activity of daily living.”

Nurses also provide medications as needed and cover all three shifts over a 24-hour period with the assistance of other direct care staff. Residents are free to have personal furnishings and wall hangings in their bedrooms that are fully equipped with adjustable beds, lift chairs, and flat-screen TVs. There is a single fee which covers services such as bathing, laundry, and incontinence care.

Whether you choose Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center or another memory care center for your loved one, the big task at hand is to prepare them for transitioning to a new level of care. “Change can be difficult and often is,” says Berlingo. “You have to be prepared for that. When you move someone with a memory issue to another place it can unsettle them. You need to be flexible and understand that there will be a time of change and adjustment for your loved ones.

Before selecting a memory care center, research different facilities as well as their amenities to see if it is the right choice for your loved one. Visit the centers and ask questions. “Some of the common questions we hear from people is how large is it, are the rooms private or shared, and whether there are bathrooms in the rooms,” he says. “All of our rooms are private, single rooms. While we have half bathrooms in each bedroom, we have a separate

(Continued on following page.)
common bathing area with showers and a whirlpool tub.”

Berlingo recommends touring different facilities before making a decision.

“When the families come in, they already know what they need at this point,” he says. “Many families want to come in and compare our center to other facilities.”

Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center promotes and supports the public charitable, educational and religious mission of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill by facilitating a compassionate environment where the aged, infirm and disabled can receive care that preserves their dignity and maintains the highest level of independence possible. Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center fulfills its purpose in accordance with the Vincentian-Setonian tradition of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. (Mission Statement)

Services to women are offered without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency) or age.

Employment is offered without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, sex, ancestry, national origin, or age.

Visitors are welcome at the Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center, where they can experience the personalized attention and welcoming environment provided to the residents. For more information or to schedule a tour of the facility, please call 724-853-7948 to arrange your visit with Mr. Berlingo, Administrator at Caritas Christi (ext. 1111).
Directory

In order to choose a health professional who is right for you, you need information. The following guide is a good place to start.

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CHIROPRACTIC
Legacy Medical Centers
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Need help with a substance abuse or dependency problem? Call 1-800-220-1810!

HEATING BILLS ASSISTANCE
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HOME CARE
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Gallagher Home Health Services
412-279-7800
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www.achillesfootcare.com

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demandhealthsouth.com
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UPMC Centers for Rehab Services
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UPMC.com/4CRS

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- JIM
stroke survivor

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demandhealthsouth.com
877-937-7342
Westmoreland County Housing Authority

There’s no place like a Home

The Westmoreland County Housing Authority is committed to providing, preserving, managing and maintaining quality, affordable housing that is decent and safe, to eligible individuals and families throughout Westmoreland County. We strive to make the best use of all available resources so that our residents may live in an environment that is clean, well-maintained and attractive, and one that they are proud to call home.

WCHA Communities

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For more information, call 1-800-WCHA-NOW or visit our website at www.wchaonline.com