

Western Pennsylvania

# Guide to Good Health

Health News You and Your Family Can Use



**FREE**  
FALL 2017



**Preparing Your  
Child for Puberty**

**Flu Season Is Here:  
Why You Need A Flu Shot**

**Could You Have  
Prediabetes?  
Take the Test Inside**

## Senior Guide

Senior Living Options, Memory Care,  
Home Care, Hospice, Senior Resources  
See pages 45-61



**& Hospice  
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See page 59

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**MEDICARE UPDATE:** Medicare Decision Time is Here, See pages 21-30 for Enrollment Advice



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# Give Good Health a Shot This Fall

by **Rebecca Cochran,**  
MSN, RN, CPHQ

As the leaves begin to change colors and we start to bundle up for chillier weather, it's a great time to make sure you and your loved ones are ready for upcoming holidays and other get-togethers.

Every year, tens of thousands of Americans become sick, are hospitalized and even die from diseases that could have been prevented with a vaccine. It is important to know that vaccines aren't just for children. Even if you received all of your childhood immunizations, protection can wear off over time.

Getting your recommended vaccines is an important part of staying healthy. Being sick is never fun and for adults it can mean medical bills, missed work and not being able to take care of yourself or your family.

Certain conditions such as heart disease and diabetes can make it harder to fight illness and can increase your risk for complications. For example, the flu can increase your risk of heart attack and raise your blood glucose lev-



els. Chronic lung conditions put you at risk for developing pneumonia. Vaccination is the best prevention.

### The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following vaccines for older adults:

- A yearly flu vaccine
- Two pneumococcal vaccines beginning at age 65
- A shingles vaccine for those aged 60 years and older
- Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (also called Tdap or Td)

You may need other vaccines based on your age, health conditions, job, lifestyle, or travel habits.

You have the power to protect yourself and those you love. Not sure which vaccines you've had and which you need? Talk to your healthcare professional today to find out which vaccines are recommended for you.



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to learn more.

**Rebecca Cochran, MSN, RN, CPHQ,**  
is Quality Insights Quality Innovation  
Network Director.

## Who needs the shingles vaccine?

You do, if you are 60 years of age or older. The CDC recommends getting the vaccine even if you have had shingles, because it can recur. Shingles is not only very painful, but also capable of causing long term complications. Zostavax is the vaccine used in the U.S. and is available from your physician or pharmacist.

— Centers for Disease Control

## THIS FALL, GIVE GOOD HEALTH A SHOT

This is the perfect time to make sure you and your loved ones have all of the vaccines needed to stay healthy.

As we get older our immune systems begin to weaken, which puts us at risk for vaccine preventable diseases such as flu and pneumonia.

Talk to your doctor about which vaccines are recommended for you. Vaccines are safe, prevent disease and save lives.

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## FITNESS

# Washington Health System Announce New Partnership with EXOS!

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EXOS, a leader in human performance, started in the late '90s with the belief that human performance is for all of us. They have a number of experts in the fields of exercise science, nutrition, and overall human performance who have worked to develop top-level training and certifications for EXOS team members.

These educational pieces and trainings have been made available to all of Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center's degreed and certified Exercise Physiologist and team members.

The Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center combined with EXOS has been able to clearly state its methodology through a four pillar approach of Mindset, Nutrition, Movement and Recovery. The years of research and experience at EXOS are now the foundation for the

Wellness Center's team. Our Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center has already been upgrading the lives of our members and the community of Washington for the past 17 years. Now we are able to have the leader in the industry as our trainer and resource to ensure every service we deliver is of the highest caliber.

The primary goal of our new partnership is to enhance the quality of our services by consistently educating our staff with knowledge and



➤ Please call or visit the **Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center** and experience the Four Pillar methodology of Mindset, Nutrition, Movement and Recovery. The Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center will help you balance your life. For more information on the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center call **(724) 250-5208** or visit **wrcameronwellness.org**. Join today and receive four free pillar appointments!

experience from the top professionals in the fitness industry. We are also able to constantly stay on top of industry trends and ensure what we are delivering is best to meet our members' needs.

The EXOS system and methodology dovetails perfectly with the Wellness Center's goal of upgrading lives in the Washington community. By drawing on the expertise and knowledge of top industry professionals, the Wellness Center is able to ensure a quality of service unmatched by any in the area and an unbeatable member experience.

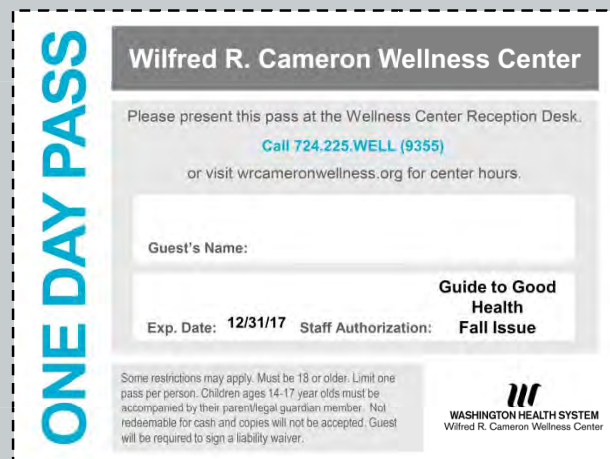
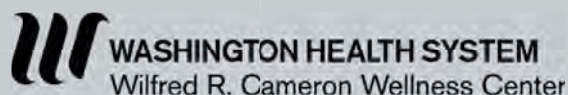


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<sup>1</sup> "Region" is Pittsburgh, PA CBSA as defined by the federal government's Office of Management and Budget.



# DIABETES

## PREDIABETES- Could You Have It? How to Prevent It

By Susan Zikos, RD, LDN, CDE

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, roughly 86 million people in the United States have prediabetes. This diagnosis occurs when a person's blood sugar level is higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes is also usually defined as fasting blood glucose of 100-125 mg/dl. Nine out of ten Americans do not even know they have prediabetes! This is especially concerning because without intervention, a person with prediabetes has a 15-30% chance of developing diabetes within five years.

If you have prediabetes or the risk factors for it, a combination of diet and exercise will decrease your chances of developing diabetes by half. For example, a modest weight

loss of 5-7 % (10-14 pounds for a 200 pound person) will decrease the chance of getting diabetes by 58%!

The American Diabetes Association recommends a blood test to detect prediabetes and type 2 diabetes in adults without symptoms who are overweight or obese, and who have one or more additional risk factors, such as:

- Being physically inactive.
- Being over the age of 45.
- Having a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes.
- Having a family background that is African American, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, or Pacific Islander.
- Giving birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds or being diagnosed with gestational diabetes, which is diabetes that occurs

in pregnant women.

- High blood pressure
  - o 140/90 mmHg or above
- Having HDL, or "good," cholesterol below 35 mg/dL, or a triglyceride level above 250 mg/dL
- Having polycystic ovary syndrome, also called PCOS

So to further decrease your changes of prediabetes or diabetes, you can follow these guidelines for healthy living:

- If you are overweight, lose weight. A loss of 5-7 % of body weight offers you great health benefits.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods; indulge in fewer processed foods.
- Eat lean meats and fish.
- Eat fewer saturated fats from animals and replace them with olive oil and canola oil.
- Get at least 150 minutes of

moderate aerobic activity each week, such as cycling or walking.

• Perform strengthening exercises two days a week which work all of your major muscles (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).

• Please remember, you do not have to do this alone! Your doctor, alongside a dietitian, can help you achieve your weight loss and healthy eating goals!!

**Susan Zikos, RD, LDN,**

CDE is an outpatient dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator at **Ohio Valley Hospital.**

She can be reached at **(412) 777-6205.**



**Nine out of ten Americans do not even know they have prediabetes. This is especially concerning because without intervention, a person with prediabetes has a 15-30% chance of developing diabetes within five years.**

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## Reduce the Risk with Washington Hospital System's Diabetes Prevention Program

By Nancy Kennedy

Pre-diabetes is a condition in which one's blood glucose level is higher than normal, but not yet in the diabetic range. Being pre-diabetic raises the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, but it doesn't mean that this is inevitable. The best news is that there are plenty of strategies that can prevent or delay the development of Type 2 diabetes – and anyone can do them.

Washington Hospital System's Diabetes Education and Management Program has launched an initiative to help people identify their risk for Type 2 diabetes and reduce it. Developed by the CDC, the Diabetes Prevention Program consists of a series of classes held over the course of a year. To qualify for the free program, you must be 18 or over and have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 24 or higher, with a score of 9 or higher on the CDC Prediabetes screening test, or a history of gestational diabetes. For the first six months, participants attend 16 sessions, one each week, and then monthly classes after that.

Dana Stainbrook, RN, MSN, is a Certified Diabetes Educator who manages the program and teaches many of the classes. She says that the CDC conducted a major research study which demonstrated that, among adults at high risk, moderate weight loss and exercise can make a big difference in diabetes prevention. In the study, moderate weight loss was defined as 5-7% of body weight; thus, a person who weighs 200 pounds would need to lose 10-14 pounds, which is not nearly as daunting as one might imagine. In regard to exercise, the CDC study found that 30 minutes of exercise, five days a week, was sufficient, and that could mean walking, biking, swimming or other activities. "Most of our participants have stayed with the program and have lost weight," Stainbrook says. "We had some people who lost 12-14%; the average was 5%. Even a modest weight loss makes a big difference by reducing your insulin resistance, in which your body doesn't manufacture or use insulin properly."

At each class, the 18-20 participants get weighed and take part in a discussion of the evening's topic, which may range from cooking techniques to health topics. One of the many benefits of the program is the friendships that have formed, so that peer support has become an integral part of it. Participants are given a food scale, pedometer, calorie counter and recipes.

So who is at risk? One of the primary risk factors for developing Type 2 diabetes is obesity, which can lead to insulin resistance. If you have a parent or a sibling with diabetes, your risk is elevated, and if you had a baby who weighed nine pounds or more, you are at risk. Persons who are African-American, American Indian, Hispanic American, American Asian or Polynesian are at higher risk, as are those who have had chemotherapy or an organ transplant. Heart health matters too. A blood pressure of 140/90 or higher puts you at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes, as does abnormal cholesterol levels. If your "good" cholesterol (HDL) is at or below 35, and your triglycerides are 250 or higher, your risk is increased.

Pre-diabetes and insulin resistance have no symptoms, so seeing your primary care provider for regular check-ups, including monitoring of blood glucose and lipids, is essential. Dana Stainbrook recommends that those

### CDC Prediabetes Screening Test



#### COULD YOU HAVE PREDIABETES?

Prediabetes means your blood glucose (sugar) is higher than normal, but not yet diabetes. Diabetes is a serious disease that can cause heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, or loss of feet or legs. Type 2 diabetes can be delayed or prevented in people with prediabetes through effective lifestyle programs. Take the first step. Find out your risk for prediabetes.

Yes	No
1	0
1	0
1	0
5	0
5	0
5	0
9	0

#### TAKE THE TEST—KNOW YOUR SCORE!

Answer these seven simple questions. For each "Yes" answer, add the number of points listed. All "No" answers are 0 points.

Are you a woman who has had a baby weighing more than 9 pounds at birth?

Do you have a sister or brother with diabetes?

Do you have a parent with diabetes?

Find your height on the chart. Do you weigh as much as or more than the weight listed for your height?

Are you younger than 65 years of age and get little or no exercise in a typical day?

Are you between 45 and 64 years of age?

Are you 65 years of age or older?

Add your score. See box below to see what it means.

#### AT-RISK WEIGHT CHART

Height	Weight Pounds	Height	Weight Pounds
4'10"	129	5'7"	172
4'11"	133	5'8"	177
5'0"	138	5'9"	182
5'1"	143	5'10"	188
5'2"	147	5'11"	193
5'3"	152	6'0"	199
5'4"	157	6'1"	204
5'5"	162	6'2"	210
5'6"	167	6'3"	216
		6'4"	221

who are pre-diabetic discuss their individual need for monitoring glucose levels with their PCP, but says it should be checked at least annually.

"Being told that you have diabetes is very tough, and if you are at risk, you should do everything you can to lower your risk," Stainbrook says. "People who attend the Diabetes Prevention Program get all the information and tools they need to lower their risk. Our program is a great way to improve your health and stay healthy. Diabetes is a serious disease that can have terrible complications, including renal failure, blindness, heart disease and limb amputation when blood glucose is poorly managed."

The Diabetes Education and Management Program at WHS offers a range of services that are designed to improve health and quality of life for persons with diabetes and their families. Every patient receives a customized management plan and patient education from the programs Diabetes Educators.

If you have questions, or you would like more information about Washington Health System Diabetes Education and Management Program, call (724) 250-6262 For more information, visit the website [www.whs.org](http://www.whs.org).

**IF YOUR SCORE IS 3 TO 8 POINTS:** This means your risk is probably low for having prediabetes now.

**IF YOUR SCORE IS 9 OR MORE POINTS:** This means your risk is high for having prediabetes now.

Please make an appointment with your health care provider soon.

## First-of-its Kind Prone Breast Biopsy System at St. Clair Offers Exceptional Patient Experience and Diagnostic Accuracy

By Nancy Kennedy

St. Clair Hospital is the first hospital in the region to offer women an advanced breast cancer diagnostic technology that is changing the way breast biopsies are performed. The Hologic Affirm Prone Breast Biopsy System, located at St. Clair's state-of-the-art Breast Care Center, is a transformative innovation in breast cancer diagnosis and care and offers numerous advantages to the patient while enhancing the capabilities of the radiologist. "This system combines leading-edge technology with the best possible patient experience," says Andrea Sanfilippo, M.D., a board-certified radiologist and Director of Breast Imaging for St. Clair. "We can biopsy lesions that are difficult to access. It allows us to use 3-dimensional imaging to locate and target the area of concern for biopsy with great precision. Some lesions are a challenge to detect and



The Hologic Affirm Prone Breast Biopsy System, located at St. Clair Hospital's state-of-the-art Breast Care Center, is changing the way breast biopsies are performed.

reach using conventional imaging technology; this prone system is ideal and gives us new capabilities. Including 360 degree access."

The standard for breast biopsy

has been stereotactic biopsy, which means that the patient's breast is compressed between two plates while x-rays are taken to produce multiple images from different angles. The new prone biopsy system takes this further, enabling the radiologist to obtain three-dimensional images. "We had extensive experience with stereotactic biopsy; now we can do the biopsy in 3D if we see a lesion under tomography. We can reproduce that identical image," explains Darrie Cosban, R.T. (R)(M) (BD), A.R.R.T., C.B.D.T., supervisor of The Breast Care Center. Having this level of precision makes it possible for the radiologist to locate the lesion and precisely guide the biopsy needle.

For the patient, the advanced prone system offers many benefits. Number one, says Cosban, is patient comfort. "The patient has to lie prone, on the stomach, for the biopsy, and we are able to make them very comfortable. The system supplies a collection of ergonomic, memory foam pads of various sizes and shapes that we use to help position, support and comfort the patient. It facilitates a customized experience for each individual patient. Getting the patient positioned correctly is key: once that is done, the actual biopsy is a 15-minute procedure." The patient receives a Lidocaine injection to numb the area, so that there is minimal discomfort. Additional numbing agents are provided during the biopsy, and a registered nurse is with the patient the entire time.

St. Clair's Breast Cancer Center team is sensitive to the anxiety involved in having a breast biopsy. When a lesion is identified on mammogram, Dr. Sanfilippo sits down with the patient immediately and explains that something indeterminate has been seen and will require further evaluation. The biopsy is scheduled for a separate day, and the patient is guided through the entire experience by the Breast Center's nurse navigator, Chris Conley, R.N. Conley calls the patient the day before the procedure, sees them during the procedure, calls her the following day, and calls her when the pathology report is ready. If breast cancer has been detected, she provides the names and phone numbers of breast surgeons.

In keeping with St. Clair Hospital's patient-centered philosophy, the Breast Care Center team focuses on the patient experience. "We make this experience as easy on the patient as possible," says Cosban. "There is less anxiety because the patient is positioned in a way that blocks her view of the biopsy instruments. The procedure is quick, there is a shorter period of breast compression and there is less radiation exposure. This is a minimally invasive procedure that does not require anesthesia or a recovery period."

Feedback from women who have experienced the new prone biopsy system has been positive. "We are so pleased to be able to offer this advanced technology to the women of our community," says Dr. Sanfilippo. "We are committed to providing the best possible care, and the ability to biopsy small areas of breast tissue with this superior system represents a major advantage in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer, for the patients and for our physicians. It demonstrates St. Clair's commitment to bringing the latest technology to the people of the community."

To schedule a mammogram appointment at **St. Clair Hospital's Breast Care Center**, call **(412) 942-8150**. The Breast Care Center is located at the St. Clair Hospital Outpatient Center - Village Square at 2000 Oxford Drive in Bethel Park.



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# Metastatic Breast Cancer Calls For Innovative Support Systems

By Dani Wilson

Metastatic breast cancer (also called Stage 4) is the most advanced stage of the disease and means that the cancer has spread to other organs in the body. Although it is considered incurable, treatment continues because excellent care and support can extend lives by several years. Once a person is diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, the goal of their treatment plan changes from eradicating the cancer to prolonging the life of the patient in the most comfortable manner. Likewise, supportive services must change.

Most support groups focus on helping people cope during their treatment and then move beyond cancer, therefore those who will be in treatment for the rest of their lives can feel isolated and unrelatable. They are often wary of sharing their story in a room full of people working towards



remission.

People with metastatic breast cancer may not look like they have cancer, but it remains at the forefront of their minds. They know that treatment will extend their lives, but they also know they will eventually die from the disease. They may experience daily pain, depression, anxiety, and various side effects from the long-term use of prescribed medications. These issues are very different from those with early stage breast cancer, and that is why support groups specifically for people with metastatic breast cancer are so important.

Targeted support groups make an enormous difference in the ability to cope and find understanding, camaraderie, and solace. They connect people facing similar decisions, struggles, and fears. They have been shown to improve the mental wellbeing and quality of life for people with metastatic breast cancer, in part by allowing participants a safe place to discuss the process of dying and to improve communication with family members.

Over 150,000 people in the United States are living with metastatic breast cancer, and that number is growing (National Cancer Institute, 2017). Supportive services specifically designed for their needs must grow as well.

> Dani Wilson is the director of strategic advancement at **Our Clubhouse**. For more information on supportive services for people with metastatic breast cancer, contact Our Clubhouse at (412) 338-1919, [dwilson@ourclubhouse.org](mailto:dwilson@ourclubhouse.org), or [www.ourclubhouse.org](http://www.ourclubhouse.org).

## Is 25 the New 40?

By Bethany Narey

Women are being diagnosed with breast disease at younger ages. It is imperative we have breast health screening options available to younger women. The standardized age for a woman to receive a mammogram is 40 years old, this leaves a potentially dangerous gap in breast health care. Posing the question, is 25 the new 40? And what options are out there?

### Thermography

Digital infrared thermal imaging also known as thermography is a 15 minute non-invasive test of our bodies' physiology. In short-thermography studies how your body is functioning. The detection of disease is achieved by displaying thermal abnormalities and patterns present in the body. Thermography can aid in the detection of subtle physiologic changes that accompany pathology, whether it is cancer, fibrocystic disease, an infection, or a vascular disease. Thermography is; radiation-free, painless, and requires NO contact with the body.

This makes thermography a valuable procedure for alerting your doctor to changes that can early indicate early stage dysfunction or disease.

### Who Can Benefit?

All women can benefit from thermography breast screening. However, it is especially appropriate for women 23-55 whose denser breast tissue makes it more difficult for mammography to be effective. Also for women of all ages who do not want exposure to radi-

ation, have implants, are fibrocystic, have had a mastectomy, or are unable to undergo routine mammography. Thermography can provide a clinical marker for a specific area of the breast that needs particularly close examination OR a general baseline for your overall breast health.

### Why Thermography?

Thermography can see activity and changes outside of other tests such as mammography and ultrasound. Where mammography looks for anatomical changes or structure, thermography looks for physiological changes or how the body is functioning.

Medical doctors analyze heat temperature differences and patterns that indicate cell change and vascular dysfunction. Thermography allows for an earlier look at your breast tissue and can potentially identify dysfunction before a structure has developed. Your doctor can then plan accordingly and layout a program to further diagnose and monitor your health.

With 1 in 8 women developing breast disease and the percentage of women under the age of 40 being diagnosed it is important to have additions to our breast health screening.

Thermography offers the opportunity of earlier detection of dysfunction in any area of the body than has been possible through self-examination, doctor examination, mammography, ultrasound, or x-ray alone. Thermography is not a stand-alone test. When thermography and mammography are used together the best possible evaluation can be made.

> **Bethany Narey** is a Certified Clinical Thermographer at **Health Enhancing Thermography**. We invite you to visit Health Enhancing Thermography at our Ft. Couch Bethel Park location. Call Health Enhancing Thermography at (855) 254-4328 to enquire about pricing or visit us online at [www.heat-images.com](http://www.heat-images.com).

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# The Balance and Fall Prevention Center at Ohio Valley Hospital

By Nancy Kennedy

Good balance is one of those things that we take for granted – until we lose it. A balance disorder makes it difficult to navigate and function in daily life, and can cause secondary problems such as loss of appetite, depression and a diminished quality of life. The greatest problem, though, is that loss of normal balance increases the risk of falling, and a bad fall can be devastating, especially for seniors, leading to serious injury, loss of independence, disability and even death.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in four people age 65 or older will experience a fall this year, and one in five falls will cause a fracture, head injury or hip injury.

Falls are common, but they are not an inevitable part of aging, says Virginia Renegar, P.T., M.S., a staff physical therapist at Ohio Valley Hospital's Rehabilitation Service and an expert in balance disorders, vestibular rehabilitation and fall prevention.

"My focus in the Balance and Fall Prevention Center is primarily balance," she explains. "The vestibular system ages just like the skin and the eyes, but you can improve your balance through exercises and special training, which we provide to each patient with an individualized plan.

Even if you are fit and healthy, anyone can get a disease that causes problems in the vestibular system. Inner ear problems, ear infections, neurological conditions, concussions and stroke are some of the



**"Even if you are fit and healthy, anyone can get a disease that causes problems in the vestibular system. Inner ear problems, ear infections, neurological conditions, concussions and stroke are some of the conditions that can impact the vestibular system."**

*-Virginia Renegar, P.T., M.S.,  
physical therapist,  
Ohio Valley Hospital*

conditions that can impact the vestibular system."

Balance is complex. It's defined as the ability to maintain the body's center of mass over its base of support, and the body achieves and maintains balance through an intricate system of sensory input, musculoskeletal and central nervous system mechanisms. Poor balance

is often caused by a combination of problems that affect several of the systems that control balance. There is often not a clear cut answer or single diagnosis to explain poor balance, which can be frustrating for people. People with balance disorders may experience vertigo, dizziness, nausea, anxiety and depression; some will become sedentary due to their fear of falling. A sedentary lifestyle leads to deconditioning, loss of stamina and an increased risk for heart disease. It also leads to increased fall risk.

Vestibular rehabilitation is a specialized branch of physical therapy that aims to alleviate or improve problems related to vestibular disorders. Renegar has additional training in vestibular rehabilitation and works one-on-one with her patients.

Patients first have a comprehensive evaluation of their needs and abilities, then a customized exercise program to strengthen muscles and improve balance is developed. Patients learn to negotiate uneven surfaces, curbs, and stairs and to maintain balance while making directional changes.

Strengthening the muscles in the legs is one component, and is critical to healthy aging. "People lose 1% of their leg strength every year after age 50, and ½% of their bone density. Loss of strength can be addressed," Renegar says.

The key, she says, is consistent exercise. Most people respond positively to the program and will gain increased strength and balance. "I get a sense of satisfaction when a patient tells me, 'I walked up the stairs without even thinking

about it,'" Renegar says.

A common cause of chronic balance problems is benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, or BPPV. BPPV is a sudden sensation of spinning that occurs when a person changes directions quickly or moves the head abruptly. It is not a serious condition but it can lead to falling. BPPV is treated with repositioning maneuvers, most commonly the "Epley" maneuver. This type of vertigo usually responds quickly to treatment.

For those with balance issues, the CDC has a program called STEADI: Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injuries, which healthcare professionals can use for screening for balance problems.

The Otago Exercise Program is an evidence based exercise program that is available through physical therapy providers. It includes exercises for balance and strengthening as well as a walking program.

In addition to the specialized Balance and Fall Prevention Program, Ohio Valley Hospital's Rehabilitation Service offers a broad range of programs designed to return people to their optimum state of mobility and functioning following injury, illness, surgery or a decline in health. Physical therapy, therapeutic Pilates, speech therapy and occupational therapy are offered for both inpatients and outpatients.

To learn more about Rehabilitation Services at Ohio Valley Hospital, visit [www.ohiovalleyhospital.org](http://www.ohiovalleyhospital.org).

## Fighting Coronary Artery Disease

by Kevin Brown

Our "Advances in Medicine" series looked at some of the latest advances in heart care in western Pennsylvania. In our last column in the series, we spoke with doctors at Allegheny Health Network (AHN) and UPMC on medical advances in fighting Coronary Artery Disease.

Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the most common type of heart disease in the United States according to the CDC. CAD is caused by the buildup of plaque deposits inside the walls of the arteries that supply blood to the heart.

Over time, the plaque deposits cause the arteries to narrow, reducing the flow of blood. CAD can cause chest pain, or angina, and can lead to heart attack and heart failure.

The non-surgical placement of stents inside the arterial walls has been a common treatment for a number of years. However, the

metal stents restrict vessel movement and limit future treatment options. Furthermore, late re-narrowing of the artery can occur in the segment caged by the metalizing implant.

Doctors at AGH and UPMC are using a new implantable stent called the Absorb GT1 Biodegradable Vascular Scaffold System (BVS), a first-of-its-kind device recently approved by the FDA.

The Absorb GT1 BVS is made of naturally resorbable material that disappears in about three years, leaving behind a restored vessel, free of a permanent implant. The

## HEART HEALTH



BVS is coated with a drug that prevents the re-narrowing of the vessel over time.

"The most effective and safe means of restoring natural blood vessel function in the setting of coronary disease is ultimately a treatment that leaves nothing behind in the vessel," said David Lasorda, D.O., director of Interventional Cardiology at AGH. "There has always been a desire to find a better way to accomplish the pivotal short-term function of stents, without the possible long-term complications of permanent stents. The Absorb stent moves us toward that goal."

Catalin Toma, M.D., director of Interventional Cardiology at the UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute and assistant professor of



Dr. Catalin Toma



Dr. David Lasorda

medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, said "The results obtained with the Absorb BVS are excellent and comparable to the current generation drug-eluting stents platforms with proper implantation technique. Current metallic stents, although performing exceedingly well, result in a permanent solution which has been linked in some cases to late events and re-narrowing of the vessel in the stented area."



# Ohio Valley Hospital Offers Inpatient and Outpatient Psychiatry

## Outpatient Psychiatry and Therapy Services

Our Psychiatry and Therapy services are for men and women over the age of 40.

### These Services Include:

- Psychiatric Evaluations
- Medication Management
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Left to Right:

Medical Director, **Mahe Ayyash, M.D.**,  
Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse  
Practitioner, **Michael Marek D.N.P., C.R.N.P.**,  
Therapist, **Alexandra Mattina, L.S.C.W.**



## Inpatient Psychiatry

Our Willow Brook Geropsychiatric Unit provides short-term inpatient services to men and women over the age of 55 who have mental health needs. Our unit is unique and one of the only Geropsychiatric facilities in Western Pennsylvania.



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Dr. Matt enjoys making patients feel comfortable at each visit. He likes to think his calmness, his sense of humor, and his fish tank has something to do with that.



View of the Physical Therapy Gym, looking down the hall to the chiropractic wing in McMurray.



Pictured is the Legacy Medical Centers McMurray location. Legacy has additional locations in Irwin and Robinson.

### By Daniel Casciato

At Legacy Medical Centers, everyone is treated like family.

“We’re not an assembly line,” stresses Dr. Matt Burnett, D.C., CCSMS, FST, who runs the Peters Township-based practice along with his brother Thomas Burnett, MD. “We take our time with patients one-on-one. You will see the doctor you make an appointment with. In this era of healthcare, the doctor-patient relationship has been lost because of the time required and the documentation. Here at Legacy, you will feel at home and develop a relationship with your doctor. You’re part of the family.”

Legacy combines the best of both traditional medical and chiropractic care to form a cohesive multi-disciplinary health system. Its team is comprised of chiropractors, physical therapists and medical doctors. Its patient-centered approach utilizes innovative and progressive technology, nutrition, physical medicine, and rehabilitation.

“We just don’t manage your pain. We have the most advanced modalities in western Pennsylvania by far and because of those technologies we can obtain superior results,” says Dr. Burnett, adding, “We’re like the Tesla of medicine.”

Most of the conditions Legacy 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 they also work 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.

Patients at Legacy will go through a comprehensive exam but more importantly, notes Dr. Burnett, they want us to listen to their story. “You can’t treat everyone the same because you won’t receive the results you are looking for,” says Dr. Burnett. “We take our time with our patients. Once we identify the problem at hand we will go through a series of modalities that can decrease inflammation and swelling within the patient. That will help alleviate that initial onset of pain. We’ll then go through another series of procedures that will correct those problems. If it’s a joint that is restricted, we will manipulate it. If it’s a nerve that is damaged, we will laser it to regenerate the nerve itself.”

Dr. Burnett, who started his career at Wheeling Jesuit University—where he received a Bachelor’s Degree in Nuclear Medicine and graduated summa cum laude—attended National University in Chicago where he earned an additional degree in biology as well as his Doctorate of Chiropractic.

At Legacy, Dr. Burnett treats a wide range of patients, but has an overall special niche in the athletic world treating local as well as professional athletes. His experience started as an athlete himself at Wheeling Jesuit University, where he was a four-year varsity letter winner and NCAA Academic All-American with the men’s soccer team. Dr. Burnett continued his soccer career as the assistant men’s and women’s soccer coach at Illinois Tech in Chicago while earning his doctorate degree. Upon graduation, Dr. Burnett stayed on with

Illinois Tech as their Strength and Conditioning Coach until the 2010 season. After moving to Pittsburgh in 2004, Dr. Burnett quickly got involved in the soccer community. He started his local coaching career as the assistant coach for the girls Norwin varsity soccer team. After three years on staff, he transferred schools, serving as the assistant coach of the Peters Township High School girls varsity soccer team from 2010-2013.

In addition to his successful coaching career, Dr. Burnett has worked with over a hundred NFL athletes from nine different teams. He continues to see athletes from MLB, NHL, LPGA, PGA, and professional boxers.

“With my athletic background, I have had the same injuries some of my patients have had,” he says. “That background, and working with athletes at all levels, has had an influential impact on my career and specialty. It also helped me better relate to our patients.”

While all patients differ in terms of their medical needs, the one thing that Legacy encourages is movement.

“We want our patients to keep moving,” says Dr. Burnett. “Our goal is to get them back up and running. Movement kills pain. The lack of movement enhances the pain that these chronic patients are having. When we move, high intensity exercise releases a cascade of endorphins and natural hormones that kill pain.”

**Legacy Medical Centers** has three locations: Peters Township (724) 941-0707, Irwin (724) 382-5626, and Robinson (412) 480-6036. For more information, visit [www.legacymedicalcenters.com](http://www.legacymedicalcenters.com).

**Legacy combines the best of both traditional medical and chiropractic care to form a cohesive multi-disciplinary health system. Its team is comprised of chiropractors, physical therapists and medical doctors. Its patient-centered approach utilizes innovative and progressive technology, nutrition, physical medicine, and rehabilitation.**

# Celiac Disease: A Serious but Manageable Condition

By Nancy Kennedy

At the supermarket, the aisles seem to be filled with more and more products labeled “gluten-free.” Without a doubt, this is a trend within the food industry, in response to consumer demand for such products. But don’t assume that “gluten-free” is merely the latest food fad. Gluten intolerance, also known as celiac disease, is in fact a serious, life altering, chronic autoimmune disease that causes pain, diarrhea, weight loss, and anemia and can lead to major complications including permanent damage to the small intestine.

Gluten is found in numerous food products: bread, crackers, cereal, pasta, pizza crust and many others; it is also found in non-food products, including chewing gum, medicines, vitamins and lip balms. When a person has celiac disease, it means that they cannot digest and absorb gluten, the protein found in wheat, rye and barley.

If a person with celiac disease consumes these products, the immune system responds by destroying the villi – the tiny finger-like projections all along the small intestine. This process damages the lining of the small intestine so that

nutrients cannot be absorbed through the walls and into the bloodstream; instead they pass rapidly through the body and are expelled. As a result, the person becomes malnourished.

Symptoms of gluten intolerance include diarrhea, constipation, weight loss, fatigue, muscle weakness and dermatitis. As a result of the malnutrition that celiac disease causes, anemia, osteopenia, lactase deficiency may eventually develop. In children, growth and development can be delayed.

For Brenda Confer, celiac disease hit like a speeding train. “I got very sick very quickly,” she recalls. “It was four years ago. I had suddenly begun to feel exhausted, and then I developed severe diarrhea. I felt like I was dying – the pain was terrible, like shards of broken glass passing through my intestines. I lost fifteen pounds and ended up hospitalized, for IV fluids to rehydrate me. I was diagnosed by a gastroenterologist, who said my lab work was ‘off the charts’ – the diagnosis was celiac sprue.”

Brenda learned after her diagnosis that there were family members with the condition – a common finding, as celiac disease is a genetic disorder that runs in families.

**Symptoms of gluten intolerance include diarrhea, constipation, weight loss, fatigue, muscle weakness and dermatitis. As a result of the malnutrition that celiac disease causes, anemia, osteopenia, lactase deficiency may eventually develop.**

People who have a first-degree relative with celiac disease have a 10% chance of developing it. The onset can be triggered by severe stress, such as childbirth, surgery or emotional trauma.

Celiac disease is common, affecting 1 in 100 people worldwide. The Celiac Disease Association estimates that two and one-half million Americans are undiagnosed and therefore at risk for long term health problems. There is no cure for celiac disease, but once the diagnosis is confirmed, it can be treated, with strict adherence to a gluten free diet.

“Go gluten free,” says Brenda Confer. Following a gluten free diet helps manage the symptoms and allow healing of the injured small intestine. Although improvement for some will begin within a few

weeks, for others it may take much longer.

Confer, a wife and mother, says that she is vigilant about feeding her family healthy foods and monitoring them for any signs of food intolerance. She has had to learn to eat differently, avoiding the flours that contain gluten.

She believes that the transition has been somewhat easier for her, because she has a healthcare background, she enjoys cooking and has always cooked from scratch. “There are many options, and you learn to read labels and pay attention,” she says.

“There are cookbooks and very helpful web sites. It does take some effort, but it has made me much more aware of food and health. I miss Italian bread and pasta. But I am feeling so much better now!”



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## Natural Ways to Sleep Without Medicating Yourself

Americans use sleeping pills, which have additional troublesome side effects. If you want to achieve restful sleep without medication, here are some simple, safe and natural solutions:

### Change Your Diet

Many sleep issues are the result of imbalances within your digestion or adrenal system. Keep a food journal for a few weeks to track and see if certain foods cause trouble sleeping. Sometimes eating too close to bedtime causes sleeplessness. Try and have your last meal of the day at least three hours before going to sleep. Avoid caffeine after 1pm and include plenty of healthy fats and proteins in your meals throughout the day. Avoid sugars, vegetable oil, gluten, grains and processed foods. Instead of sugary

snacks, enjoy antioxidant-rich fruits, vegetables and herbs such as clove, cinnamon and turmeric.

### Adjust Your Lighting

Adults and children today are starving for sunshine. It's recommended that you enjoy 30 minutes of sunshine each day for optimum melatonin levels at night. Avoid artificial light, especially after the sun goes down. This includes the TV, computer, night lights, alarm clock lights, phones and other electronics. If needed, use blackout curtains to keep your room dark.

### Reduce Stress

Disengage from negative news and social media to help you relax in the evenings. Take a soothing bath, read a book, pray, meditate or write in a journal to relieve stress before bed.

### Consistent Sleep Routine

Create routines to let your body know that it is time to rest. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, including weekends.

Naturopathy is not a magic cure, though many do report rapid results.

by Dr. Tracie Yautz

Adults in America sleep 20% less than 100 years ago. The effects of drowsiness include irritability, memory loss, difficulty concentrating, depression, weight gain, impaired judgement, irregular heartbeat, increased risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, and decreased immunity. According to the CDC, more than 9 million



Dr. Tracie Yautz, ND is a

traditional naturopathic doctor at **Divine Health Naturally Wholistic Wellness Center**

located just north of Pittsburgh in Harmony. Learn more at [www.DivineHealthNaturally.com](http://www.DivineHealthNaturally.com).



## Too Busy to Breathe

By Debra Myers

When you.... stare at a computer screen, listen intently to a conversation, drive through traffic, or perform a task, do you remember to BREATHE?

If you find yourself feeling tired, out of breath, jaw and shoulder muscles sore, this can be evidence of holding the breath and keeping the face and chest tense.

When we focus intensely on a subject and unknowingly hold our breath, face and chest muscles tense, it registers to the nervous system we are anxious. In other words, our breathing pattern and tension in the body accurately reflects our experience of stress.

Since breathing happens automatically, we can develop an unconscious habit of shallow

breathing due to clenched jaw muscles and tense chest muscles; which over time may prove detrimental to our health.

Practicing Stress Management techniques can bring awareness to where we are holding tension, how we are breathing, and if we are holding our breath when stressed or busy. It is important to lay the foundation of developing awareness or otherwise tension takes over.

The following exercises are designed to release tension and jumpstart better breathing:

Bring the shoulders up high, close to the ears.

Hold the shoulders up for 5-6 seconds; feel the tension in the jaw, neck, and shoulders.

Now let the shoulders come down and release.

Observe the feeling of the shoulders in this released position for 5-6 seconds.

Repeat 3-5x's.

With each repetition, observe the dynamic between sensing tension and sensing release.

Allow the jaw to relax and the mouth to soften as you continue the exercise.

When this exercise feels more comfortable, add the breathing technique of inhaling for 5-6 seconds when raising the shoulders up, and exhaling for 5-6 seconds when releasing the shoulders down.

As you periodically practice, you will develop the awareness of when tension arises and how to let it go. This physical practice will enable you to relax mentally, as well as gain more energy because you will be breathing more freely.



Debra Myers is a Stress Management Consultant. For more information, visit [unwrappingstress.com](http://unwrappingstress.com)

or contact Debra at [debramyers@unwrappingstress.com](mailto:debramyers@unwrappingstress.com).

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# Flu Season Is Here: Why You Need a Flu Shot

By Nancy Kennedy

Want to do something wonderful for your family, neighbors and co-workers? Get a flu shot, and encourage them to do the same.

Flu season is fast approaching, and millions of people will become infected with this highly contagious respiratory virus. Hundreds of thousands of them will become so ill that they require hospitalization, and thousands will die from the disease. Most of those who get the flu will just be very sick – but the flu is a preventable disease. An annual flu vaccine is the best way to avoid getting sick with the flu.

“Classic influenza causes abrupt fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat and cough,” says Amanda Michael, D.O., infectious disease specialist at St. Clair Hospital. “Many viruses cause flu-like symptoms and it can be difficult to distinguish between a mild case of the flu and some of the other viruses that cause upper respiratory infections. When there is a lot of documented circulating influenza virus in the community, and you have those symptoms it is most likely flu.”

Flu is a common disease, but that does not make it any less serious. Infection with the influenza virus can lead to complications such as pneumonia for high risk groups that include infants and young children, pregnant women and those who have recently given birth, the elderly, persons with weakened immune systems due to illness or medication, and those with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, COPD, or heart disease.

Dr. Michael recommends that everyone should get the annual flu vaccine, beginning at six months of age and throughout the remainder

of life. Parents should get their children and themselves vaccinated. Flu vaccine is safe, with low risk of adverse effects. Possible side effects are soreness at the injection site, low grade fever, mild headache and general achiness.

Unlike some vaccines whose effects last for years, flu vaccine is essential every year because every flu season is different. Dr. Michael explains: “Each year, the strains of circulating influenza virus can differ. Influenza is constantly changing. Updated vaccines are made each year to try and anticipate which strains will likely be needed for the coming season. Immunity wanes over time, too, particularly if someone has a chronic health problem, or a weakened immune system, or is elderly. These individuals may not make the same robust amount of antibody to begin with, compared to healthy young people.”

Even though the flu vaccine may not exactly match the circulating flu viruses, Dr. Michael says it is still essential to get a flu shot. “We can’t tell in advance exactly which virus strains will be circulating, and so any protective advantage is worthwhile given how many days of work are missed each year from influenza and how many people develop influenza-related illness (including secondary bacterial infections after getting influenza) requiring hospitalization. The CDC tracks seasonal flu outbreaks and performs vaccine effectiveness studies each season to estimate flu vaccine effectiveness.

“Each year, it is estimated that millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and thousands to tens of thousands of deaths are prevented with the influenza vaccine.”

Although flu vaccine is safe for the majority of people, some should not get it: those who have had a severe anaphylactic reaction in the past to the flu vaccine or one of its components, and those who have had Guillain Barre syndrome less than six weeks after getting an influenza vaccine in the past. Those with severe egg allergy should get a version of the flu vaccine that does not use chicken eggs in the production process.

Flu season generally begins in October and lasts until May, according to the CDC. Many pediatricians and primary care physicians start offering the vaccine in late August. It can usually be obtained at doctor’s offices, clinics, pharmacies, senior centers and sometimes at supermarkets.

The more people that get the vaccine in a community, the less flu virus there will be in that community, and that helps to protect the vulnerable people. So be a good neighbor, and be a good friend – get your flu shot.



**“Immunity wanes over time, too, particularly if someone has a chronic health problem, or a weakened immune system, or is elderly. These individuals may not make the same robust amount of antibody to begin with, compared to healthy young people.”**

*-Dr. Amanda Michael, D.O., infectious disease specialist, St. Clair Hospital*

➤ For more information or to reach **Amanda Michael, M.D.**, an infectious disease specialist at **St. Clair Hospital**, visit [www.stclair.org](http://www.stclair.org).

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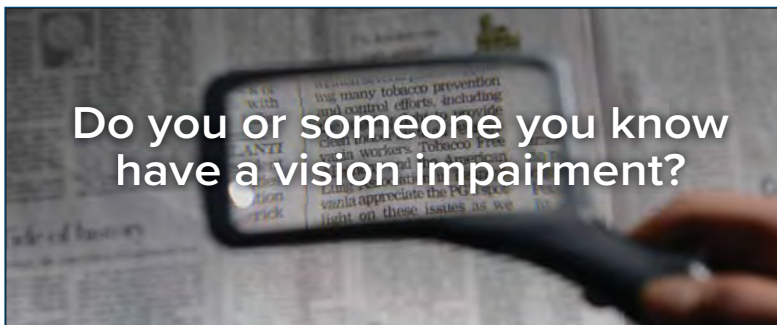
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## LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

# Individuals with Disabilities Thrive at ARC Human Services

By Nancy Kennedy

If one word could capture the essence of ARC Human Services, that word would have to be thrive. To thrive is to grow, flourish and bloom; when we thrive, we gain strength, make steady progress and find the success that we seek. At ARC Human Services, that describes both the agency and the clients that it serves. In an environment of respect, encouragement and inspiration, ARC Human Services is helping individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illness fulfill their dreams, reach their potential and gain independence. In other words, to thrive.

Based in Washington, PA, ARC Human Services serves 450 individuals across eight western Pennsylvania counties. With an approach that emphasizes advocacy and respect, the 700-member staff helps them find meaningful work, develop relationships at home, at

work and in the community, and find fulfillment, enjoyment and satisfaction in their lives. ARC Human Services clients have many options: they go to camp, attend sporting events, compete in sports, take classes, and participate in the arts. They volunteer, acquire work skills, learn homemaking skills in order to live independently and meet with community leaders to advocate for themselves. They enjoy outings to the Aviary, the Zoo, Kennywood and many other sites.

The clients, says MaChal Forbes, Development coordinator, are an energetic and amazing group of people who meet whatever challenges confront them. "They have often been underestimated in their lives, but that does not happen here," she says. "They inspire the staff. It's very satisfying to work with these individuals."

ARC provides a wide range of innovative services tailored to individual need:

- **Residential Services:** This pro-



Arc Human Services clients attend camps, sporting events, compete in sports and (pictured above) attend a river cruise on the Gateway Clipper.

gram provides a continuum of services, from 24 hour care community homes to independent living apartments. Placements are individualized to each person's needs, abilities and preferences.

- **Specialized Services:** Several programs provide innovative supports including Behavior and Individualized Supports that help those with intellectual and developmental disorders and mental health disorders. These programs address the trauma that many have experienced.

- **Employment Services:** Community Employment, Student Transition and Vocational Training

Programs encourage self-sufficiency and success in the workplace. These programs help individuals develop skills so that they can find employment, earn a living, contribute to the community, learn and gain self-esteem.

- **Self-Advocacy and Mentorship:** This program provides resources and opportunities to help clients find their voices and advocate for themselves, and provides peer support to build skills such as problem solving, teamwork and decision making.

➤ For more information, visit [www.aadvantageinc.org](http://www.aadvantageinc.org)

## Arc Human Services, Inc.

AHS serves people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illness in a manner that allows them to fulfill their ambitions, protect their rights and foster meaningful relationships at home, at work and in their communities.



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Maintain one-on-one services for people in their homes, schools and communities. Living arrangements include:

- Community Homes
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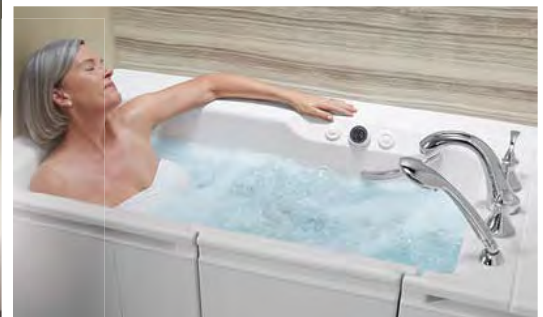
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# Ask The Experts

## EXPERT / *Hypnosis*

### Jan Lee Hypnosis

#### Q: Can hypnosis be part of the solution for the 'Opioid Crisis?'



**A:** Yes, hypnosis is part of the solution for the "opioid crisis." The subconscious mind needs to be accessed to reprogram thinking, responding and behaving. Addiction (opioid in this case) is an escape and a destructive habitual cycle - the psychological and physical dependence together are a constant push on the "hamster wheel." How does one get off this hamster wheel?

Reprogram your mind with hypnosis.

Because substance abuse is about escaping pain (the pain of abuse, trauma, self-degradation, poor physical health) the unhealthy "messages" or beliefs that fuel this pain must be deleted. Find your way into your deeper mind (through hypnosis) and you will be able to delete the program (messages and beliefs) that are causing your awful habitual ritual of opioid abuse.

Imagine some of the programs that may be running in your subconscious mind.

- I'm worthless, stupid; I have no value.
- Drugs just relax me so I can survive. No big deal.
- I can stop any time I want.
- I need to keep using or I'll flip out!
- I'm not going through withdrawal. No way.
- If I stop, I'll have to get it together. Who is going to take care of me?
- I'm young and I can handle this.
- I'm calm and cool when I'm using. No one knows.
- I'm not an addict. These are prescribed.
- I can deal with the pain as long as I use.

You may know some of your "triggers." (the experiences, the situations that render you too weak to consciously fight the urge to use.) Hypnosis will delete unhealthy programs and plant powerful positive suggestions (suggestions you WANT) in your subconscious mind.

What happens? The "triggers" have lost destructive power as you automatically think and react and behave in positive ways.

**Example:** Karen is addicted to opiates. Her trigger is "anxiety." The hypnotist guided her into a "trance" state; her deeper subconscious mind was engaged. Her busy conscious mind "drifted away." Positive suggestions were spoken to her in this receptive state and destructive programs were deleted.

Karen no longer has the urge to grab a few Vicodin because "this will calm me down so I don't go nuts!" When hypnotized, she visualized the damaging effects of this drug. She imagined being in a safe healing place (the ocean) being "unchained" from this habit; as if free like a sea gull to "fly" above problems that once made her anxious; she was able to "land" on solid ground now with a plan for wellness.

This is not meant to imply that hypnosis is simplistic, but it is powerful and dramatic. We are not made of stone. We are fluid, flexible and able to make changes when we WANT to. We can create new pathways in our minds that help us think, react and act in healthier ways.

Yes, hypnosis is part of the solution for the "opioid crisis."



**Jan Lee CH, RN**

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## Why is Letting Go of our Stuff so Hard?

Submitted by Iris Valanti

When doing research about downsizing - that is, adults/seniors moving to smaller quarters - the most common articles that came up were actually about how the younger generation, the millennials, are products of their online life, and don't seem to set much store by owning things.

"Your Kids Don't Want Your Stuff," the headlines all declared. Today, memories are preserved digitally, and younger people enjoy being more flexible and mobile.

As an adult who is currently selling a large house where I have lived for twenty-five years and moving to a much smaller place, it set me thinking about my relationship with and attachment to stuff, and how I will feel without it. And to thinking about my 88 year old father, a "collector" by nature, and what on earth to do with all his stuff. Going about my own downsizing has given me some perspective on how to encourage him to let go of both excess stuff, and of the expectation that anybody else will love our stuff as much as we have.

### So between me and my dad, here's what I've learned about downsizing:

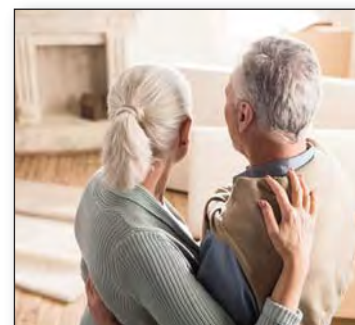
**1. If you are older, do it now.** Don't wait till you move, and don't leave it all for your kids to deal with.

**2. Start wherever you can start.** Perhaps the least sentimental stuff: old sheets, pots and pans you never use, all the creepy stuff in the basement. If you run into anything sentimental, set it aside for now if it bothers you. Do one box a day if that's the pace that keeps your anxiety down, but do the one box every day.

**3. Invite family and friends in to take whatever they want.** This is stuff that will be appreciated. And make sure everybody takes whatever old boxes of theirs you've been storing.

**4. Get used to the idea that other people don't value your stuff the way you do.** My dad was a chemistry professor and thinks his old chemistry books are valuable (they're not - I checked).

**5. Attach your memories to smaller things.** I'm parting with my grandma's dishes, but I will keep



her filigree garnet ring.

**6. Accentuate the positive.** Revel in the sense of freedom and the weight, literal and figurative, that is leaving your life. Fewer things means less cleaning. Look forward to actually knowing where things are. Tending things uses precious time; think of all the time you will have to go places, or read, or visit friends and family.

**7. If you are helping somebody else downsize, such as your parents, you will need an abundance of patience and loving acceptance.** If the dynamic is too stressful, consider finding help. Apparently "senior move management" is a booming business, but having a professional who understands the underlying issues of seniors could relieve a lot of tension and anxiety for everybody.

**8. Understand that the tendency to cling to stuff may not be about the particular stuff at all.** My dad's sphere of influence, his circle of friends and his mobility are all shrinking. Can I blame him for wanting to exercise control over his belongings?

My own move is different in that I'm excited to be leaving big house maintenance and upkeep behind, and I'm pretty zen about belongings in general, unlike the rest of my family. The article I read about millennials said they prefer having experiences to having stuff. I like that idea for all of us.



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ment, home care and more. JF&CS is also a partner in the AgeWell Pittsburgh Collaborative. AgeWell helps locate resources (call the **AgeWell Resource Hotline at 412-422-0400**), and sponsors lots of enjoyable activities. For more information, visit [www.jfcspg.org](http://www.jfcspg.org).



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# Monongahela Valley Hospital Introduces the Community Care Network

As part of Monongahela Valley Hospital's (MVH) mission to enhance the health of the residents of the mid-Monongahela Valley, MVH has created a new initiative called the Community Care Network (CCN).

The CCN, which is available free of charge, has been developed to help people receive the best health care possible through a comprehensive series of care coordination and educational strategies. The CCN helps people transition to the next step of care and avoid readmission to the hospital. Whether it's home or to a skilled nursing facility, rehab center or another hospital, MVH works to ensure a seamless continuity of care.

The CCN consists of an interdisciplinary team made up of a medical director, CRNP, pharmacist, dietitians, social worker, behaviorist, and patient navigators. The team focuses on the signs and symptoms of chronic diseases and works with current care providers to help people understand and manage their care.

The team also works with other community agencies to utilize all available resources to take medical follow-up care to a new level. The team, under direct medical supervision, can help ensure that people are following treatment plans and actually taking medications as prescribed.

In addition, the CCN focuses on eliminating missed appointments with PCPs and specialists. With an emphasis on early detection, in-home monitoring can be provided to help identify changes in symptoms early on, which could eliminate unnecessary readmissions.

"Personally, I like all aspects of this program," said Louis J. Panza Jr., president and CEO of Monongahela Valley Hospital. "One of the best benefits of the CCN is that we can begin care coordination during hospitalization, especially those with challenging conditions or circumstances that result in readmissions or multiple emergency room visits."



The Community Care Network Team of Monongahela Valley Hospital. (from left to right) Cheryl Brazelton, social work, Laine Greenawalt, nutritionist, Rhea Regul, navigator, Pam Suehr, RN, care coordinator, Kristen Graney, pharmacist, Lynda Nester, executive director, Megan Murphy, behaviorist, Susan Flynn, CEO Vale-U Health, Hailey Wiant, intern, Sarrah Park, navigator. Missing from the picture is Deborah Holman, RN, care coordinator and Kristen Cunic, CRNP.

**Close to you  
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Have you heard about our new Community Care Network? At Monongahela Valley Hospital once you are our patient you are always our patient. We never stop caring for you — we help to transition you to the next step of care. For people who need closer monitoring, the Community Care Network helps them receive the best health care possible through care coordination and education that supports their physicians' plans. Our team of physicians, registered nurses, dietitians, social workers, counselors and health coaches partner with other care providers to ensure a seamless continuity of care. And best of all — there is no charge for this high level of care.

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To learn more, visit [monvalleyhospital.com](http://monvalleyhospital.com).

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## Shopping for Rehabilitation is Like Comparing Apples to Oranges

If you or a loved one needs rehabilitation after an illness, injury or surgery, you have a choice in where to go. Although facilities offer rehabilitation services, the quality and amount of these services can vary. It is important to know that all rehabilitation is not the same.

When comparing inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRFs) like Health-South Rehabilitation Hospitals of Pittsburgh in Harmarville and Sewickley to skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), research concludes that long-term outcomes for inpatient rehabilitation facility patients are superior—they return home two weeks earlier, have 8% lower mortality rate, 5% fewer emergency room visits and significantly fewer hospital readmissions per year\*.

Patients treated in an inpatient setting like HealthSouth Harmarville or Sewickley also receive a mandatory minimum of three hours of physical, occupational and speech therapy level of services a day, five days a week and benefit from 24-hour nurse over-



*Proper wheelchair fit is important not only for comfort and ease of use, but also to reduce the risk of developing sores and other injuries. That's why HealthSouth offers wheelchair seating pressure mapping technology to identify and remedy problem areas.*

sight and availability. Additionally, IRF patients get frequent physician visits and increased nursing hours per patient.

HealthSouth Harmarville and HealthSouth Sewickley are also Joint Commission Accredited for several of their therapy programs. Harmarville is accredited for stroke, brain injury, Parkinson's



*HealthSouth utilizes a variety of therapeutic exercises to help improve strength and range of motion.*

disease, amputee, diabetes and spinal cord injury while Sewickley is accredited for stroke, brain injury, amputee, hip fracture, Parkinson's disease and Multiple Sclerosis.

This means the rehabilitation programs underwent an extensive, unannounced, on-site evaluation by a team of Joint Commission reviewers and were evaluated against Joint Commission standards. To earn the certification, both hospitals successfully demon-

strated compliance with national standards and effective use of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines to manage and optimize care for patients.

Both HealthSouth hospitals also utilize a variety of technology services to complement traditional therapy. These technologies help improve patient functional independence measures and are a beneficial and complimentary component to the patient's overall care plan.

In many ways, comparing HealthSouth Harmarville and Sewickley to SNF facilities is like comparing apples and oranges. When in need of any kind of rehabilitation care, it's important to shop around and compare what facilities have to offer.

For more information, visit [demandhealthsouth.com](http://demandhealthsouth.com) or call 877-937-7342.

*\*Dobson\DaVanzo analysis of research identifiable 20% sample of Medicare beneficiaries, 2005-2009*

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# Medicare Decision Time is Here

by Frank MacNeil, Agency Manager, Focus Senior Benefits

The last three months of the year bring many things to the people of Western Pennsylvania. Steelers football, the changing color of the leaves, Christmas music on every radio station, and relentless Medicare advertisements assault our senses through every possible medium. It is an annual rite of passage prior to the Holiday season.

For seniors on Medicare, these advertisements prompt several questions to arise:

- Am I satisfied with my plan?
- Are my drugs still going to be covered?
- Will my doctor still accept my plan?
- Do I need to shop?

This should not be a time of anxiety or panic. Medicare consumers should feel excitement in the air! The various insurance companies have had an entire year to figure out how to position their benefits to be attractive to their customers. Consumers now have the ability to shop these new plans and make decisions for next year.

**Here are a couple of key things every consumer on Medicare should do in advance of December 7th:**



## Don't Forget the Drugs

Many times, consumers will focus in on the premium of the plan that they are on, and if they see that it hasn't changed – or changed very little – they will assume that their plan is the same as the previous year. The most significant area where subtle changes can happen and have a significant impact on cost is with prescription drug coverage.

## Know What's Out There



It may be that the plan a consumer is on was appropriate last year, and may still be appropriate this year. However, new plans could have entered the market that would offer lower costs or richer coverage. If someone isn't looking at Medicare options, then it could cost them in the end.

## Get Some Advice



If you were going to put thousands of dollars into an investment, would you do it without the advice of a professional advisor? If you needed an annual check-up done on your car, would you do it yourself? Assessing Medicare coverage on an annual basis is no different.

At the end of the day, the Annual Election Period offers an opportunity for consumers to adjust their coverage to suit their ever-changing needs. It's important to be a full participant in that process to ensure that the coverage continues to provide adequate protection.



To meet with an experienced agent from **Focus Senior Benefits** in your neighborhood to review your Medicare options in 2018, call **(412) 446-2491**. For more information, visit our website at **FocusSeniorBenefits.com**.



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## Revisit Medicare Plan Every Year to Ensure the Right Coverage

By Vanessa Orr

Every year, changes are made to Medicare supplements and to Medicare Advantage Plans, which is why it's always important to review your plan to see if you could be getting better coverage or saving money. According to Licensed Specialist Shari L. Leckenby at Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh, that's even more important if you live in the Pittsburgh market.

"While people often chose advantage plans in the past, they are now revisiting Medicare supplements and buying more of these plans than ever," she said. "With the ending of the contract between UPMC and Highmark in 2018, people are very concerned about what doctors they can see."

One of the problems with Medicare Advantage Plans is that they restrict the physicians that patients can see to those in their own networks. "If you buy a

UPMC plan, you can only see UPMC physicians, and it's the same with Highmark plans," Leckenby explained. "With a supplement, you're not limited to being in a network, so you can see any doctor, at any hospital, anywhere in the country."

While Medicare supplements can allow greater freedom of choice, the fact that they are medically underwritten raises some concerns about patient enrollment. "There is a misconception that someone with cancer, for example, can't get a Medicare supplement," said Leckenby. "It can be done, but you have to find the right plan."

Those people who are new to Part B don't have to answer any medical questions, and those who are losing health care, for example, through a job loss, are guaranteed issue as well. However, applicants who have applied for Part B before must go through the underwriting process, answering

medical information and supplying the names of their doctors.

"While some people will be automatically denied, others will just be rated higher because of their medical conditions," said Leckenby.

If all of this sounds confusing, that's because it is. At Medicare Specialists, Leckenby walks clients through a basic 'Medicare 101' course, explaining how original Medicare works including coverage, deductibles and copays. She then explains the differences between Medicare supplements and Medicare Advantage Plans so that clients can make more informed decisions.

"Basically, you look at who is paying," she explained. "With a Medicare supplement, Medicare pays first. They are making decisions about what treatments you can and cannot get. With an advantage plan, Medicare reimburses another company for taking care of you."

**"With a supplement, you're not limited to being in a network, so you can see any doctor, at any hospital, any hospital, anywhere in the country."**

*Shari L. Leckenby, Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh*

The most important feature, said Leckenby, is prescription drug coverage. "This is hugely important, especially if you're on a limited income," she explained. "Some supplements offer cheaper prescription drugs, and some advantage plans offer cheaper prescription drugs—it depends on what you're taking." Leckenby tells all of her clients to bring a list of medications they're on, and the names of their doctors to make sure that all of these are covered

*(Continued on following page)*



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**Evaluate:** We discuss your individual situation so you can make an educated choice in Medicare coverage.

**Service:** We have become one of the fastest growing Agencies because our clients have referred their friends and families to us because of our service. Our Agency is based purely on service and helping individuals and families.

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## CLASS Can Help With Medicare Costs

By Shannon McCarty,  
CLASS Development Director

Community Living And Support Services (CLASS) has been serving the Pittsburgh region since 1951. CLASS believes that all people, regardless of ability, have a valuable role to play in the community.

### What does CLASS do?

CLASS offers a variety of individualized in-home and community-based services for men and women of varying abilities. Services include, but are not limited to: Community Skill Building, Community Partners, In-Home Services, Residential Services, the Multiple Sclerosis Exercise and Support Program, PIAT (Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology), and the Alliance for Community Respite Care. The goal of the programs at CLASS is to connect individuals with local supports and resources, so they may live as independently as possible in their own homes and communities.

### I heard CLASS can help me lower my Medicare costs. How can CLASS help me?

CLASS is currently offering two programs that help individuals alleviate some of their Medicare costs. Extra Help may lower your prescription



Friends of CLASS, (left to right) George Owens, Teri Owens, and Jack Snook, support the organization's mission of "Working Toward A Community Where Each Belongs."

co-payments and premiums and cover the cost of the average gap ("donut hole"). The Medicare Savings Program can help with the payment of your Part B premium and possibly the payment of your Medicare Part A and Part B cost-sharing.

### Am I eligible for these programs?

You may qualify for Extra Help if you are:

- Single and have a total monthly income less than \$1,508 per month and less than \$13,820 in resources
- Married and have total monthly income less than \$2,030 per month and less than \$27,600 in resources

You may qualify for the Medicare Savings Program if you are:

- Single and have a total monthly income less than \$1,357 per month and less than \$7,390 in resources
- Married and have total monthly income less than \$1,624 per month and less than \$11,090 in resources

### I think I am eligible for the Medicare Savings Program. How do I apply?

To apply for the program, contact Christina Vasquez at [cvasquez@classcommunity.org](mailto:cvasquez@classcommunity.org) or call (412) 683-7100 extension 2243. To learn more about CLASS, visit [www.classcommunity.org](http://www.classcommunity.org) or call (412) 683-7100.

## Revisit Medicare Plan Every Year to Ensure the Right Coverage

(Continued from previous page.)

on the plans they choose.

"It is especially important to review your plan every year because the formularies change," she added. "New drugs come on the market, others drop off, and some medicines move from brand name to generic."

Medicare Specialists provide this service for free, because as a broker, they are paid by the insurance companies. "We work with everyone, so we're not pushing one plan or another," said Leckenby.

The company also works with the health exchange set up as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), as well as many other programs, including Social Security and programs designed to help people in need.

"There are many programs available, from the federal government's Extra Help program to the PACE program provided by the Department of Aging, to Medicare Assistance and Medicare Savings Plans," said Leckenby. "Our goal is to help people—especially those with limited resources—find the right plans."

> To learn more, visit Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh at [www.medipgh.com](http://www.medipgh.com) or call (412) 343-0344.

## Four Behaviors that Harm Your Brain and Cause Faster Aging

- 1) sleep deprivation
- 2) lack of exercise
- 3) chronic stress
- 4) social isolation

Source: Prevention Magazine

## Need HELP with MEDICARE costs?

## Can Help!

Community Living And Support Services (CLASS) is currently offering two programs to assist individuals in lowering their Medicare Costs.

Extra Help can help lower your prescription co-payments and premiums and cover the cost of the coverage gap ("donut hole").

Medicare Savings Program can help with the payment of your Part B premium and possibly the payment of your Medicare Part A and Part B cost-sharing.

For more information and to apply, contact Christina Vasquez at 412.683.7100 ext. 2243 or [cvasquez@classcommunity.org](mailto:cvasquez@classcommunity.org)

## Choose a Medicare Plan for 2018 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 2018 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."



**"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."**

*-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 expensive and will go up over time. The plans also have deductibles and coinsurance that can be expensive. However, there are no network restrictions. 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 onetime-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.

### 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?
- 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?

### 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 2018 could be more noticeable. For example, some prescription drugs might have a cost increase or may no longer be covered by your plan. That's why it's so important to make sure you review your current prescriptions and compare against your 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. Keep in mind, just because the drug is covered by the plan's formulary, it doesn't mean there won't be a cost associated (such as deductible or copay). 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."

### 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](http://www.aetnamedicare.com).

*Aetna Medicare is a PDP, HMO, PPO plan with a Medicare contract. Their SNPs also have contracts with State Medicaid programs. Enrollment in their plans depends on contract renewal. See Evidence of Coverage for a complete description of plan benefits, exclusions, limitations and conditions of coverage. Plan features and availability may vary by service area.*

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## UPMC AnywhereCare – 'Patients Like It'

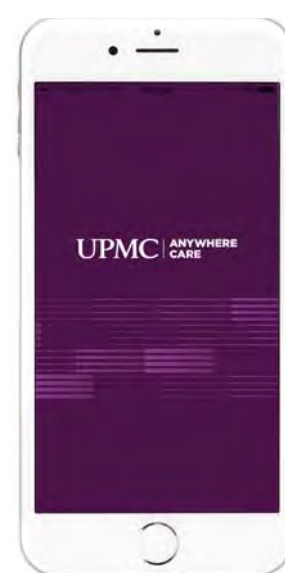
By Lois Thomson

UPMC AnywhereCare offers convenient, quick, and high-quality care from UPMC providers, and according to Melinda Schriver, "Patients like it." And why wouldn't they?

With AnywhereCare, people now have the option of using the video camera on their electronic devices 24/7/365 to receive diagnoses and treatment from health care professionals for a range of non-emergency health symptoms.

Schriver, senior director of telehealth strategic solutions at UPMC, said, "What's really innovative about this service delivery is that patients can have the visit in their home, or while they're out running errands; if something were to happen, they don't have to go anywhere. From the convenience of being able to log onto their smartphone or their tablet or computer, they can initiate a visit with one of the UPMC emergency room doctors who are staffing the AnywhereCare service." The average wait time to be seen by a physician is six-and-a-half minutes.

Natasa Sokolovich, executive director of telehealth services, explained how such treatment is possible. "When you talk to our providers, they'll often tell you that they are able to diagnose and provide treatment recommendations to patients just by being able to see them, to interact with them visually and via audio; and because we tie in AnywhereCare for patients that have been seen at UPMC to their electronic health record, they also have access to historical clinical or medical information, which allows



them to really be able to effectively diagnose and treat patients online."

Schriver continued by saying, "We recognize that we can't do everything remotely through this on-demand model, so we have worked with the providers and have a limited set of conditions that they will see."

Those conditions range from sore throats to upper respiratory illnesses to back pain. Doctors have indicated that they are able to complete about 90 percent of the visits; but they can use their discretion to schedule a patient for an in-person visit if they feel they don't have enough information, or if they're not certain about their clinical diagnosis, according to Sokolovich.

Launched in November 2016, the enhanced UPMC AnywhereCare services are available to

patients across the country, and are seen by UPMC providers when the patient is located in Pennsylvania.

Sokolovich explained that during the day, doctors are emergency medicine physicians positioned at multiple locations. "Overnight, we utilize advance practice providers, nurse practitioners, who are also oftentimes covering the emergency departments. That clinical skill-set lends itself well to these types of visits, because emergency-trained physicians and clinicians are used to diagnosing and treating a variety of conditions."

The UPMC providers could be located anywhere and treat patients from Pennsylvania because they have a license to practice in Pennsylvania.

Fast, convenient help from professional health care providers. What's not to like?

The cost for a UPMC AnywhereCare on-demand visit can range from \$10 to \$49, depending on the patient's insurance coverage. If a prescription is needed following the evaluation, the health care professional is able to send it directly to the patient's pharmacy so treatment can begin immediately. Any prescriptions must be paid for separately by the patient.

For more information, visit <https://upmc-anywherecare.com>.

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The good news is you can help avoid falls by doing targeted strength exercises and balance training. Plus, as a bonus, you'll also be strengthening your bones, which can help prevent osteoarthritis.

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Before you begin, remember that you also want to prevent a fall from happening while you exercise, so make sure your space is free from tripping hazards and that you have something secure to hold onto, such as a

sturdy chair or a partner.

Also, keep in mind that even though it may seem more logical to exercise your lower body only, you need to exercise both your upper and lower body. Remember, you pull, reach and lift using your arms, and if they are weak, they could contribute to a fall.

### 'A Few Exercises to Try

Here are examples of exercises that can help. Start with a few repetitions, then gradually increase. If you have questions or concerns, check with your doctor. Also, ask your doctor about more exercises that are appropriate for you.

#### BALANCE TRAINING

- Stand on left foot, holding secure chair or partner and hold for 10 seconds; repeat on right foot.

#### STRENGTH TRAINING

- **Lower Body:** Hold back of a sturdy chair; slowly raise up on tip-toes, hold for one second, come down.
- **Upper Body:** Stand and hold hand weights at your sides, palms inward. Raise both arms to the side, shoulder height. Hold for one second, then slowly lower.

Unfortunately, after age 65, more than one in three seniors fall. Avoid falls by doing strength and balance exercises daily. Plus, make sure your training goes hand in hand with making your home safer, too. Find and remove tripping hazards like loose rugs, electric cords or items left on stairs.



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## Preparing Your Child for Puberty

by Dr. Michael Faust and Dr. Ben Kleifgen

Puberty can be a weird time. Transforming from a "kid body" to an "adult body" involves physical and emotional changes that can make a kid feel out of control. These changes happen at different speeds in different people.

The first sign of puberty in girls is typically the development of breast buds around age 10 to 11, although it can be as early as 8. Pubic hair develops within the following year. A girl's first menstrual period usually happens 2-2.5 years after her breasts start to develop. The average age of the first period is about 12.5 years of age, but varies widely. Boys usually start with enlarging testicles, followed by penis growth, increased muscle mass, pubic and underarm hair, and a deepening voice. Both boys and girls experience a dramatic growth spurt during this time – up to 4 inches in a year.

Normal puberty begins between ages 8 and 12 years in girls and between 9 and 14 years in boys. Anything earlier is considered early or precocious puberty. Kids go through puberty at very different times and at different rates, and just about everyone comes out the other end perfectly normal.

Teenagers in earlier centuries tended to go through puberty much later than teenagers today, probably due to modern improvements in overall health and nutrition. We're not entirely sure why children are entering puberty earlier. Potential reasons may be that people in modern industrialized nations are often healthier. Increased rates of obesity may lead to early puberty. Some research suggests that environmental toxins could play a role, but the jury is still out.

Some factors may cause an early (but still in normal range) puberty. These include genetics (if your mother went through puberty early, you may too) and metabolic (obese children often go through puberty earlier). Racial and ethnic background also has an effect.

There's a difference between earlier-than-average puberty and precocious puberty. Precocious puberty is not normal and occurs before age 8 in girls and age 9 in boys (it's much more common for girls). Puberty may be triggered by hormonal abnormalities. In these cases, it is important to

talk to your pediatrician or family doctor, who may refer you to a specialist who deals with hormone abnormalities (an endocrinologist).

The main consequences of early puberty have to do with self-esteem issues. No one wants to appear different from their peers, so children who enter puberty early may feel self-conscious and embarrassed. It's important for parents to look out for signs of bullying or depression. The best way to prepare your child for early or average puberty is to be open and to talk about it. Start the conversation around fourth grade, or earlier if your child is showing early signs of puberty.

The best way to talk to your child about puberty is very matter-of-factly. Keep your own anxiety and embarrassment at bay and keep the lines of communication open. Remember, you only need to tell them what they need to know—it's not necessary to burden them with everything you know about sexuality in one conversation. The goal is to keep the conversation going throughout adolescence.



> You can reach **Dr. Michael Faust and Dr. Ben Kleifgen at WHS Washington Pediatrics.** If you need a pediatrician, call **(724) 250-6001.** Accepting new patients in Washington and Cecil locations.



Dr. Michael Faust and Dr. Ben Kleifgen



## Language Rich and Life Ready

At DePaul School for Hearing and Speech, we build a solid foundation of spoken language skills for our students, all of whom are deaf or hard of hearing. The process of acquiring language begins at birth, and establishing a robust language environment during early childhood development is critically important for all children, not only those with hearing loss.

According to a research study by psychologists

Betty Hart and Todd Risley—normally referred to as the 30 Million Word Gap Study—one of the greatest predictors of success in the classroom and beyond is exposure to a rich language environment from birth through age three.

**Parents are a child's first teacher, so a child's initial path to success is paved by their home environment. So, what can parents do to close the gap?**

Creating a language rich environment doesn't require special materials or extensive training. It requires time. It requires parents to be present

with their child and to open the doors to the "give and take" that conversation entails—starting long before the child can speak.

Reading to a child is a great way to share language, but it is by far the only way. Even the most mundane tasks can open the doors to building vocabulary. While cleaning up after dinner, talk about the water in the sink, and the fun of the bubbles, and the shapes of the dishes. When the child is playing, ask questions. "I see you have your toy car. Where are you going?" or "Puppy looks sad. Should we get him a treat?"

The opportunities to create a language rich environment are nearly boundless, and the payoff for a child is immeasurable. So, the only question is what will you be talking about today?

> For more information about great techniques to help create a language rich environment, visit the **DePaul Hearing and Speech** website at [www.DePaulHearingandSpeech.org](http://www.DePaulHearingandSpeech.org).

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## CHILDREN'S HEALTH

### How Can Bedtime Rituals Help Your Child Sleep?

teli's Pediatric Occupational Therapist Nathan Sharbaugh, provided information the importance of sleep for your child. "The single most important tool in getting your child to sleep is to establish a consistent calming nighttime routine," recommends Nathan. "Children respond to a routine, and with consistent practice, begin to accept and almost expect that bedtime ritual going forward."



Here are some of Nathan's most popular bedtime rituals he has provided to parents of children experiencing sleep problems:

- **Stick to a Schedule** – A consistent routine at bedtime is important to help a child prepare to wind down and get ready for bed.
- **Activity During the Day** – Keep your child active physically throughout the day so their body is ready for sleep
- **Comfort** – Be sure their bed and PJ's are comfortable
- **Tech Free Zone** – Your child should not use iPads, watch TV or use other electronics within 90 minutes of bedtime
- **Reduce Clutter** - Involve your child in a quick clean up in their bedroom to signal an end to a day and a preparation for a new day in the morning.
- **Calming Activities** – A gentle massage to a child's back and feet, quiet play and a bedtime story or two to begin the transition to relaxation. Tucking in their stuffed animals for the night can also help.
- **Calming Environment** - Cool room temperature, soft music and lighting from a small night light if your child is not comfortable in a dark environment can "set the mood". Blue light from electronic screens should be avoided.
- **Light Nighttime Snack** - Light snacks such as milk or fruit that is easily digested is perfect. Be sure to avoid foods that contain caffeine, chocolate for example, or significant amounts of refined sugar. A glass of water in reach may also be a good idea.

Being consistent with bedtime rituals is a doable, proactive step toward helping your child with sleep problems sleep better!



Nathan Sharbaugh

> For more information about Early Intervention and other services at teli, call (412) 922-8322 or [www.telipa.org](http://www.telipa.org). LIKE us on Facebook.

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## No More Accidents! How Pelvic Rehabilitation Can Help Your Child

By Amanda Moe, PT, DPT, PRPC

It can be hard on not only children but also parents when a child is experiencing difficulty with bowel or bladder control. The cause of urinary or fecal accidents is not always easily understood and can cause embarrassment and at times behavioral changes in children. The good news is that pediatric pelvic physical therapy is a non-invasive treatment intervention for bowel and bladder dysfunction in children.

### What is Pedi-Pelvic Rehabilitation?

Pediatric pelvic rehabilitation uses unique physical therapy techniques to treat disorders involving the pelvis and pelvic floor muscles that may cause bladder and bowel dysfunctions and pain. Common conditions that we treat include: urinary or fecal incontinence (leakage), day- or night-time wetting, constipation, encopresis (fecal accidents occurring as a result of constipation), urinary/fecal urgency or frequency, urinary retention, tailbone pain, groin pain, genital pain, or abdominal pain. Specifically, this type of physical therapy will look at the muscles of the pelvic girdle (including pelvic floor muscles) to determine if they are weak, tight, painful, or have the proper coordination associated with normal bowel and bladder functioning.

Treatment techniques may include pelvic floor relaxation and/or strengthening exercises, core muscle and breathing coordination exercises,

manual techniques for trigger points or myofascial restrictions, behavioral training on toilet habits/hygiene/hydration, coordination training of the pelvic floor and pelvic girdle musculature, occasional use of modalities for pain control, and external biofeedback/e-stim. Pelvic floor PT with biofeedback can retrain the pelvic floor muscles to contract, relax, and bulge or “push”—techniques that are necessary to have normal bowel and bladder functioning with no accidents!

### Getting Started

If your child has any type of dysfunction or pain such as discussed above, they may benefit from evaluation by our highly trained Pediatric Pelvic Physical Therapist. It is in the best interest of your child to be thoroughly evaluated by a physician to rule out potential medical conditions associated with bowel or bladder dysfunction prior to consultation at Restorations Physical Therapy.



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## Every Child is Seeking Foster Parents

“One hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, what kind of house I lived in, or what sort of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.” Forest Witcraft, teacher and Boy Scout executive

Caring for children as a foster parent is not easy, but the rewards are enormous, and the potential for making a lifelong positive impact is beyond measure. At Every Child, Inc., a dynamic regional non-profit that serves children and families, foster parents are special people, but they are also perfectly ordinary people, who come from all walks of life. What they have in common is a willingness to make an extraordinary commitment of time, energy and self to give a child the sanctuary of a safe place to call home.

Every Child is driven by a mission to provide safe and loving homes for vulnerable children, and one of the most effective ways they achieve this is through their Child and Family Support Services, which includes a foster care program. Holly Livingston, director of Child and Family Services, says that the need for foster parents is great, particularly in Westmoreland County where the opioid epidemic is taking a toll on families. “We get

calls every day for foster care placements, from all over Western Pennsylvania, and so recruitment of foster families is a constant process. We try to place children in homes that are as close as possible to their homes. Our goal is always reunification with the biological family.”

To become a foster parent for Every Child, one must be at least 21 years of age. Single people, empty-nesters, retired couples, same sex couples and others are welcome to apply. The process of becoming a foster parent begins with a face-to-face meeting with Alexa Crippen, foster care supervisor, to learn what foster parenting entails. “The need for foster parents is great but it is not something that can be undertaken lightly,” she says. “People come to us with big, open hearts, but they have to understand the reality of foster parenting. We frame it for them and dispel the myths so they know what they are getting into.”

Some of those myths are about motivation, Crippen says. “There’s a common belief that foster parents do it for the money. This is false – they do it for the love of kids. The money goes primarily to meeting the needs of the kids.” Another myth is that children in foster care have no ties to their biological families and are better

off with foster parents, but in fact, the opposite is true; they visit with their families and their foster parents are trained to nurture that relationship. “Children want to be with their parents- they love them. Biological parents are not necessarily bad parents. The kids may be in foster care because of a parent’s illness or something that happened unexpectedly.”

The reality is that foster parenting is both very hard and very rewarding, Crippen says. “As a foster parent, you have to navigate a lot of systems, including Children and Youth Services, the school system, the legal system and healthcare system. All children have a lot of needs, but children in foster care often have many more needs and more complex needs.”

New foster parents are screened carefully, with background checks and a thorough home study. They receive 24 hours of comprehensive training and become certified as, essentially, Crippen says, “professional parents.” “The entire process takes about 90 days. They are well prepared, with all the tools they need.”

Every Child’s foster parents are embraced by a strong network of supports. “Foster parents are never alone,” Livingston says. “We are

always accessible and supportive, 24/7, and if they call they will get a human voice. We provide trainings and a support group; these things create community among the foster parents so they have peer support.”

For Holly Livingston and Alexa Crippen, working at Every Child is gratifying. “When we see a successful reunification, when we see a child making progress, growing and gaining self-esteem, we feel rewarded. We love being advocates for children and knowing we have a long lasting impact,” Livingston says. “Children belong in safe stable homes and we will do whatever it takes to achieve that. At Every Child we change lives for the better, and our extraordinary foster parents are an essential part of that.”

Originally created in 1997 to provide services to medically fragile children, Every Child has expanded in scope and mission to include Child and Family Support Services and a comprehensive Clinical Services program. In all of Every Child’s services, the goal is to develop, preserve and strengthen the relationships to family and community that are essential to a child’s growth and development.

➤ For more information, visit [www.everychildinc.org](http://www.everychildinc.org) or call (412) 665-0600.

## Building a Personal Community For the Disabled

Feeling connected, understood, and having shared experiences is care that is necessary, but not always a priority, for the disability community. Equal rights, medical care, transportation, and recreational opportunities, are just some of the challenges that those living with a disability encounter daily. Having a community to talk to, share with, and learn from is essential to personal growth. Finding that community can be difficult. Many have success connecting through social media, websites, or support groups.

The Woodlands, a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of people with disability and chronic illness, fosters community through events, summer camps, weekend retreats, clubs, and social media. The Woodlands strives to not only give campers a fun experience, but an enriching one as well. If campers and their family members leave its campus, Facebook page, and events feeling understood and heard, they are another step closer to accomplishing its goals. Resources are listed on their website, share inspiring and relatable stories on its Facebook page, and educational events are hosted for campers and family members. Fostering



a community surrounded by positivity and helpful resources is an important part of their job.

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➤ For information on our year-round programs for people of all ages with disabilities visit [www.mywoodlands.org](http://www.mywoodlands.org).

## Raffa Joins Pediatric Alliance's Greentree Practice

By Vanessa Orr

When Chelsea Raffa, CRNP, FNP-C, joined Pediatric Alliance, PC, this past July, she was already familiar with the practice that provides comprehensive primary and specialty care (asthma, allergy, immunology and endocrinology) to infants, children and adolescents. Not only did she spend clinical time there as a nurse practitioner student, but she was also, at one point, a patient.

"I've come full circle; this is where I came to see the doctor while I was growing up," laughed the Greentree native. "Now I'm working with the doctors who used to take care of me."

After graduating from Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2013, Raffa earned her Master of Science in Nursing from Carlow University in May of this year. She is licensed as a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP) and a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP-C), certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. While attending school, Raffa worked in the emer-

gency department at West Penn Hospital, where she still works on weekends to keep up her emergency room skills.

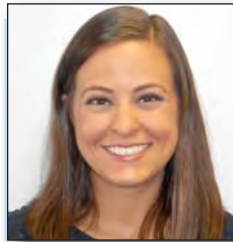
"I had the opportunity to work at Pediatric Alliance this past summer as part of my nurse practitioner training, which allowed me to get to know some of the patients and become more familiar with the practice," she added. "This made it a much easier transition."

As a full-time nurse practitioner, Raffa will be seeing patients from newborns to adolescents for both sick and well visits. "One of the areas that I'm really focused on is preventative health and wellness, including immunizing children to prevent illnesses," she said. "I'm also looking forward to providing a lot of patient and parent education."

To this end, Raffa talks with new mothers about their children meeting developmental milestones, though she cautions against taking those goals—or the news that other children have reached those checkpoints first—to heart.

"What I see with a lot of new moms is the tendency to compare

## Medical Profile



**"What I see with a lot of new moms is the tendency to compare themselves or their children to others...but the fact is, every child develops differently."**

-Chelsea Raffa, CRNP, FNP-C,

themselves or their children to others," said Raffa. "They measure how their newborns are feeding, eating, sleeping and developing in relation to other children, but the fact is, every child develops differently. It can be hard not to do, especially with social media—it seems like everyone shares everything anymore," she added. "But they shouldn't feel bad when they see that their niece is feeding X number of times a day, or that someone else's child started walking at 9 months when their child started at a year—developmental milestones are important, but they are not the end all be all."

One of the things that Raffa says she most appreciates at Pediatric Alliance is the focus on individual-

ized care. "During one-on-one visits, we can see how a child is progressing and see if there's anything we need to do to meet their specific needs," she said. "For example, some children may need formula supplementation in addition to breast feeding; it all depends on how the child is growing." Raffa says that she is looking forward to helping children and their families thrive. "I'm really excited about the opportunity to provide quality pediatric care to this great community where I grew up," she said.

> To make an appointment with Dr. Raffa at **Pediatric Alliance**, call **(412) 922-5250**. For more information visit [www.pediatricalliance.com](http://www.pediatricalliance.com).

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# Volunteer Opportunities Available at Child's Way

By Lois Thomson

"Mr. Peter" is a regular volunteer at Child's Way®, a center for medically fragile children that is one of the programs of The Children's Home of Pittsburgh & Lemieux Family Center. Abby Kirstein, Marketing and Outreach Manager, said that when Mr. Peter is there, "It's so cute because the kids fight over him, they love him so much." And Mr. Peter says, "Volunteering at Child's Way has been an extremely rewarding experience. I look forward to my visit to Child's Way every single week." Child's Way is looking for more volunteers like Mr. Peter.

Child's Way is a Pediatric Extended Care Center that serves children from newborn to age 21. It is designed to offer additional or supplemental care for children who need more attention than a regular day care might provide.

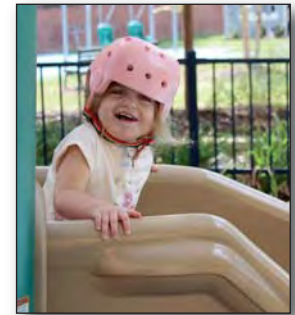
For the ones who spend their days at Child's Way, volunteers are needed to assist the teachers. Kirstein said the day care center is set up just like any other day care center would be. "It's divided into classrooms by age, and the staff is half teachers and half pediatric nurses. So on average we have a three-to-one, child-to-adult staff ratio, which is better than what the



Cooper and his nurse draw *The Three Little Bears* as part of Story Time



Patricia and her teacher, Holly, have fun during craft time



Payton enjoys the playground outside of The Children's Home

state requires."

The volunteers assist the teachers with whatever is going on for the day. Kirstein said that, just like any other school, the children have their curriculum, along with their activities, such as circle time, story time, and different seasonal events, like harvest day for the fall and a Halloween parade. "We also have performances come in, we've had the Pittsburgh Ballet, the Science Center. We can't typically take our kids places because of their equipment, but we try to bring in as many performances as we can."

As for what the volunteers do, she said, "It's pretty general, but they would basically assist the teachers in whatever's going on that day, whether it's craft time or story time or just playing with

them." She emphasized that volunteers don't do anything medical for the children, the time is spent just interacting with them.

Those interested in volunteering at Child's Way must go through a training session, with the next one being offered in the spring. Kirstein said the session generally lasts four hours, and along with the training, participants must update all their clearances. Volunteers are asked to volunteer for at least four hours a month, and they can schedule whatever time fits their schedule. Child's Way is open from 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

> For more information, call (412) 441-4884 or visit [www.childrenshomepg.org](http://www.childrenshomepg.org).

## Donations Welcome

In addition to volunteers who can offer an onsite presence, Child's Way seeks donations of all kinds. Abby Kirstein, Marketing and Outreach Manager, particularly mentioned toys that have lights or make noises or play music, and/or have textures. "A lot of our kids have visual impairments, so anything like that is good for stimulation." She also listed **dolls, play kitchen items, larger Lego sets, and batteries**, as well as **infant care items**. For a complete list, visit the website [www.childrenshomepg.org](http://www.childrenshomepg.org). "We need everything, always," she said. "They play so much and go through things quickly."

## Be someone's perfect match. Be a living donor.

Erin Russell-Story was in perfect health – active, engaged in life and spirited, with no obvious signs or symptoms of illness. Then came the shocking diagnosis of IGA nephropathy, an autoimmune disease that destroys kidney function with no known cause. The disease most often affects children and youth and progresses slowly over several decades. In rare cases like Erin's, it suddenly strikes adults and rapidly depletes kidney function.

Within four months of diagnosis, Erin began dialysis at a clinic three times a week. While she continued to work, Erin had to significantly restrict her diet and fluid choices as well as limit exercise. She was weak, sick, tired and, often, in pain. A kidney transplant was her best option to give her back the active lifestyle she loved. She was added to the transplant waiting list, where she joined more than 118,000 people nationally waiting for a life-transforming transplant.

She told family and friends that she was exploring a match from a living donor, too. Several people stepped up, but no one was a match, so she made a sign and hung it in her car. Little did she know her future donor match shared a parking lot.

At the time Colleen Butcher worked with Erin at the U.S Department of Energy National Energy Technology Laboratory in Pittsburgh. After the death of her mother, Colleen was looking for something meaningful and life-affirming. When she saw the handwritten sign in Erin's

car, she decided to act. She reached out to Erin and that began a process.

After extensive medical testing, Colleen was approved as an excellent kidney match for Erin. Even cold and snowy weather the week of the surgery couldn't deter Colleen's determination to give the gift of life. Erin received her transplant in January 2015.

"I cannot overstate the personal sacrifice and tremendous and selfless gift that Colleen made to me," Erin said. "Her generosity is second to no one I know. Colleen gave me a vastly improved quality of life. Now, I not only have energy, focus and drive, I also have hope and expectations of a long and healthy life."

> Individuals interested in becoming a living donor can find more information on CORE's website, or they may call (412) 963-3550 and ask to speak with a living donor coordinator.

### About CORE

With headquarters in Pittsburgh and an office in Charleston, West Virginia, CORE oversees a region that encompasses 163 hospitals and almost six million people throughout western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Chemung County, New York. For more information, visit [www.core.org](http://www.core.org), or call 1-800-DONORS-7 or 1-800-366-6777.



Colleen Butcher



Erin Russell-Story post-surgery with her husband and mom.



## PARENTING ADVICE

### School Tip: Organization is the Name of the Game

By Christy McMillen, B.S.Ed

WE ALL STRUGGLE WHEN SOMETHING ARISES THAT IS OUT OF THE ORDINARY OR STRAYS FROM THE NORM. KIDS ARE NO DIFFERENT. MANY TIMES KIDS WITH AUTISM OR SPECIAL NEEDS FLOURISH WHEN THEY HAVE CONSISTENT, ORGANIZED SCHEDULES AND ROUTINES.



**Gathering snacks, water bottles, clothing items, and homework the night before is also a must for success.**

Part of having a consistent routine is knowing where your things are. Sounds simple, right? That's because it is.


Sometimes, though, as humans, we let life get the best of us. We complain about the hectic mornings we have to endure or the missing shoe that made us late for school or work. Sure, sometimes things come up and changes are inevitable, but keeping organized often helps to offset the daily bumps we may encounter. Although teaching our children with behavioral challenges or autism about flexibility is certainly important, keeping a consistent schedule is the key to a successful school year.


Keeping your child's things in a consistent place in an organized manner such as tote drawers, in baskets, or hanging on hooks will make both the evening and morning routines go smoothly and help to avoid meltdowns due to missing items. Gathering snacks, water bottles, clothing items, and homework the night before is also a must for success.

Knowing where your child's things are goes a long way when running out the door in the morning to catch the school bus. Get into the habit of checking your child's backpack and folders each evening several hours before bedtime so that all paperwork and homework can be ready for the morning. Your child, no matter his or her age, will learn quickly where to find their own items and will have them ready independently within days of getting organized.

Sometimes intentions are good at the start of the school year, but those intentions are lost as the year progresses. Taking 10 minutes a week to reassess, reorganize, and make any necessary adjustments will help you return to the consistent routine that promotes the success we want to see in our children's daily lives and routines. Mornings don't have to mean meltdowns and lost shoes anymore.

*Christy McMillen is a Middle School Special Ed Emotional Support Teacher at New Story.*

 New Story's private licensed schools offer an academic learning environment and multiple therapeutic services to help students achieve success while dealing with emotional, educational and behavioral challenges. For more information on **New Story**, call **(877) 622-7245** or visit the website **www.newstory.com**.



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New Story provides emotional support and autism support classrooms. We work to create an individualized program to meet the student's needs.

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# Dr. Michael Mulock Joins Jefferson Cardiology

By Nancy Kennedy

Michael D. Mulock, M.D., has a heart for Pittsburgh, and the board-certified interventional cardiologist is ready and eager to offer his specialized expertise to care for the hearts of the people of his hometown. Dr. Mulock, a native of Churchill, recently joined Jefferson Cardiology Association, the highly regarded group practice with three locations throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. Along with his colleagues, Dr. Mulock provides the most advanced cardiovascular care through a range of services that includes preventive care, state-of-the-art diagnostics and minimally invasive interventional treatment of the heart and peripheral blood vessels.

Interventional cardiology is a sub-specialty within cardiology that focuses on minimally invasive diagnostic and therapeutic interventions to treat coronary artery disease, heart valve problems, congenital structural defects of the heart, and conditions of the peripheral blood vessels that can cause poor circulation and varicose veins. Using tiny, thin catheters, physicians can access the heart through the blood vessels in the wrist or groin to place a stent, repair a leaky valve, or perform diagnostic studies. Dr. Mulock has extensive, top notch training in the specialty: after graduation from Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, he completed a residency in internal medicine at Cornell Medical Center followed by two fellowships at UPMC – one in cardiovascular medicine and one in interventional cardiology. He joined Jefferson Cardiology this summer.

There is nothing he would

rather do, he says, than help people with their hearts. "I love treating patients, helping to improve their quality of life and teaching them to care for their hearts. I still remember the first time I watched an open heart surgery," he recalls. "I thought it was the greatest thing in the world. I have always been interested in heart disease, as there has been a lot of it in my family. In college, I started out as a business major but about halfway through I realized I wanted to go into medicine. My father is a gastroenterologist and my uncle is a primary care physician, so I had good role models."

At Jefferson Cardiology, Dr. Mulock and his colleagues have access to an on-site, state-of-the-art outpatient catheterization lab where they can perform procedures on the peripheral blood vessels, in a setting that combines high-tech, sophisticated medical imaging and treatment capabilities with a safe, comfortable setting.

"The lab is a wonderful asset," says Dr. Mulock. "It's much easier on patients than going to the hospital. We provide a personal nurse to each patient, and we spend time talking with the patient before and after the procedure. We can do nearly all procedures on the peripheral venous and arterial vessels that can be done in the hospital."

The majority of Dr. Mulock's patients have a form of heart disease. "Unfortunately, heart disease is still prevalent and is the #1 killer of American adults. We have many treatment options; medications such as the statins have made a huge difference, and we have good antiplatelet medications. People are smoking less and that significantly reduces their risk. Smoking

# Medical Profile



**"I see many patients who have new symptoms but put off seeing their doctor. I remind them that they know themselves and when they feel that something has changed, they should at least have a discussion with their doctor. It might be nothing, but if it is significant, the sooner you get treatment, the better. Don't ignore symptoms."**

-Dr. Michael D. Mulock

is that it is best to keep it simple and avoid drastic measures. Simple changes are more likely to last. If you drink a 12-ounce cola every day, that's 250 calories a day. Skipping that one thing will give you a weight loss of one pound a week, or 52 pounds in a year, which is a substantial loss."

Dr. Mulock says that research in cardiology is rapidly advancing the science and technology, so that improvements are coming almost constantly. "Stents are getting better and better. We've advanced from propping open coronary arteries with simple balloons to using highly advanced stents that elute special medicine to protect against re-narrowing. The latest generation of stents is exciting: bioabsorbable scaffolds, which are made of a material that dissolves over time."

His best advice to avoid heart disease is basic: "Don't smoke, keep your weight at a healthy level, and exercise. The American Heart Association recommends exercise that raises your heart rate for 30 minutes, three times a week.

"As a physician, I see many patients who have new symptoms but put off seeing their doctor. I remind them that they know themselves and when they feel that something has changed, they should at least have a discussion with their doctor. It might be nothing, but if it is significant, the sooner you get treatment, the better. Don't ignore symptoms."

is associated with heart attack, stroke, lung disease and poor circulation to the legs, leading to amputations.

"When I see patients, we discuss their risk factors and how to modify them to lower their individual risk. We can refer you to a smoking cessation program or a weight loss program.

With weight loss, my experience

**> Dr. Mulock** is welcoming new patients. To make an appointment, call **(412) 469-1500**. For more information about **Jefferson Cardiology Association**, visit [www.jeffersoncardiology.com](http://www.jeffersoncardiology.com)

**"If you drink a 12-ounce cola every day, that's 250 calories a day. Skipping that one thing will give you a weight loss of one pound a week, or 52 pounds in a year, which is a substantial loss."**

## Don't Ignore These Heart Disease Symptoms

An essential part of heart disease prevention is knowing the symptoms of heart problems. Think beyond chest pain and be aware of these symptoms, says Dr. Shishir Mathur of Jefferson Cardiology.

1. Any chest discomfort – not just pain but heartburn, heaviness or unusual sensations.
2. Palpitations, or passing out – this can mean a heart rhythm problem
3. Shortness of breath
4. Leg swelling or leg pain





## Scott & Christie Eyecare: Patient Care on the Forefront of Cataract Technology

Today, eye care research and technology are constantly evolving. In Western Pennsylvania, Scott & Christie Eyecare Associates continues to set new standards in eye care through its commitment to acquiring and utilizing innovative and proven technology not only to diagnose and treat medical problems of the eye, but also to deliver a better quality of life for its patients.

### The Innovation of Cataract Laser Technology

Beginning in 2015, Dr. Christie and his team were one of the first eye care practices in the region to deliver cataract laser technology - the new standard in precision cataract surgery for patients undergoing cataract surgery.

With Cataract Laser Surgery, many key steps of the procedure that were manually performed can be completed with precision using the laser, leading to a customized vision treatment and a more gentle procedure.

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Traditionally, cataract surgery resulted in a patient only having access to a single vision implant lens, providing only good distance vision. This resulted in most patients still needing glasses for reading and viewing objects close up. It also left patients with astigmatism since the surgery didn't correct this. However, with the cataract laser and Multifocal Lens technology, the practice has the tools to optimize your best vision income. With this combined technology, Cataract Surgery becomes not just a medical procedure, but an opportunity for a better quality of life.

Because cataract surgery only occurs one time in a patient's life, it's important for cataract patients to be educated about current technology and to know that they have options. It is essential to find an ophthalmology practice that can offer these options, explain the tech-

**Because cataract surgery only occurs one time in a patient's life, it's important for cataract patients to be educated about current technology and to know that they have options.**

nology and have your procedures performed by an experienced surgeon. Choosing this technology does not negate your insurance coverage for cataract surgery, although you will be responsible for non-covered portions of the procedure. If you are facing cataract surgery, don't miss this opportunity to experience a fine tuned, full range of vision.

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## Guide to Healthy Eats

### Supporting Health and Healing with Bone Broth

By *Kate Safin*

#### Basic Bone Broth Recipe

Yields approximately 3 quarts.

##### Ingredients:

- 5 pounds of bones (a mix of meaty and joint bones)
- 4 quarts cold water
- ½ cup raw apple cider vinegar
- 3 of each: onions, carrots, celery stalks, all roughly chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 bunch fresh rosemary
- 1 bunch fresh parsley

##### Instructions:

Place the joint bones and vinegar into a large pot or crockpot, cover with water and let stand for one hour. The vinegar helps release minerals from the bones.

Meanwhile, roast the meaty bones at 350 degrees for 30-60 minutes. Once well browned, add the meaty bones (along with the juices) and vegetables to the pot. If necessary, add enough water to cover the bones. Bring to a boil and use a spoon to skim off the foam that rises to the top. Add fresh rosemary, cover, and reduce heat. Simmer for 12 hours. Add the parsley and simmer for 10 minutes.

Remove the bones and strain the broth into a large bowl.

Let cool in the refrigerator and remove the congealed fat that rises to the top.

Store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days or freeze for up to 1 year.

For centuries, traditional cultures have produced stock and broth from bones as an economical and sustainable practice that provides a very inexpensive nutrient-rich food.

Bone broth is made by simmering bones for an extended period, typically 12 hours. The long and slow simmering releases nutrients from the bones, forming an incredible healing food rich in protein, amino acids, minerals, and gelatin. Bone broth aids in detoxification, supports gut health, promotes healthy skin and bones, and has been reported to boost metabolism and immune system function.

The healing benefits come from the key components of the broth: gelatin and minerals.

Gelatin is a byproduct of collagen and is what makes the broth jelly-like when cooled. Gelatin soothes the digestive tract and restores the gut lining.

Those with leaky gut, autoimmune disorders, IBS, or acid reflux can benefit from the restorative power of gelatin found in bone broth. Collagen is also a basic building block of skin, so it naturally strengthens the skin from the

inside out. Vital minerals, such as calcium, phosphorous, magnesium, and potassium are readily available in bone broth and easily absorbed by the body. These compounds form and maintain strong bones, and can help relieve tendonitis, arthritis, and muscle cramps.

Try consuming at least 8 ounces of bone broth every day for optimal benefits. Many people simply sip cups of warm broth, but it also makes a wonderful base for soup, sauce, or gravy. You can also cook grains, such as rice or quinoa, in bone broth.

To make the most delicious and nutritious broth possible, begin with high-quality bones from organically-raised animals. You can use bones from just about any kind of meat; a variety of rib, marrow, and joint bones is best. You may start out by saving bones from roasts in a freezer bag until you have the quantity and variety you desire, or stop into a butcher shop. You can select the flavor profile of your broth by adding herbs and spices as the broth simmers. If you'd like to skip the process of making your own broth entirely, the East End Food Co-op has a variety of ready-made bone broths for you to choose from.



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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](http://www.eastendfood.coop)

#### High blood pressure” Reduce salt

Helpful  
Tips

Reduce your sodium intake to help maintain a healthy blood pressure. One idea: low salt snacks like unsalted nuts and 50% salt potato chips taste great and are less likely to cause the fluid retention that raises blood pressure.

#### Reluctant to give up pasta?

Hoping to lower your carb intake, but reluctant to give up pasta? There are now pastas made with vegetables and healthy grains at most supermarkets. Chickpea pasta, spinach pasta and black bean pasta are among the choices that provide higher fiber and lower carbs than traditional pasta.

# Senior Guide

- Memory Care • Rehabilitation • Caregivers
- Home Care/Hospice • Senior Living Options
- Senior Services that Support Independent Living



## Innovative Team Work Enhances Person-Centered Care Colorful Tool Improves Presbyterian Seniorcare Network Resident Transitions

Presbyterian SeniorCare Network is committed to community outreach and finding new and innovative ways to enhance the quality of life for those who we are privileged to serve.

That is why we provide training to other partners about dementia care when a resident transitions out of our direct care. Our modules educate registered nurses in the ER, nursing units and quality improvement teams at hospitals, as well as first responders such as local fire and police departments and EMS teams.

Our teams teach dementia basics, how to recognize common behaviors, effective communication and how to effectively work with families. A large part of this initiative is education on the use of a “resident history” form that has been designed to reduce transfer trauma, the stress that a person living with

dementia may experience when changing living environments. The form accompanies the resident during transitions from a Presbyterian SeniorCare Network community to the hospital.

The “history” form details any anxiety-producing situations, challenging behaviors and successful interventions. The form is on bright yellow paper and is the first page of the transfer paperwork that accompanies the resident during the transition.

All of the information is packaged in a purple cinch bag that has the Presbyterian SeniorCare Network logo on it, which the hospital team has come to recognize, prompting them to look for the yellow form.

Having these two colorful identifiers help to build a relationship with the hospital, which in turn supports the hospital team in more



*A resident “history” form in a purple cinch bag accompanies a resident during transitions from a Presbyterian SeniorCare Network community to a hospital providing for a safe transfer.*

quickly getting to know the patient. This person-centered approach by not only the Presbyterian SeniorCare Network team, but by the medical teams and first responders, focuses intently on the welfare of

the patient and helps to provide a safe transfer.

Pre- and Post-tests are given to those who participate in our training. Over the past year, the results reflected 100% improvement in comfort level and/or competency of the training participants when interacting with individuals living with dementia.

Our teams continue to replicate these education efforts at local hospitals and amongst first responders, proving our commitment to being socially accountable and to sharing our dementia expertise.

> For more information on dementia care training, please contact Carrie Chiusano, executive director of the **Presbyterian SeniorCare Network Dementia Care Center of Excellence**, at (412) 826-6065 or [cchiusano@srcare.org](mailto:cchiusano@srcare.org).

## Good Advice... from Shandra

# FALLING IS FOR LEAVES! Your Living Space and Personal Safety

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.

> For more information, you can reach **Shandra Harcarik, RN, BSN**, at **Gallagher Home Health Services** at (412) 279-7800.



Shandra Harcarik

## Pick the LIFE Program for Your Community HealthChoices Option.

### New Guidelines for prostate screening

There are new guidelines for prostate screening, and every American man needs to have a good conversation with their PCP about PSA screening in order to receive the most appropriate level of treatment for their individual situation. Informed, individualized decision-making about risks versus benefits is essential.

-Shailen Sehgal, MD,  
Center for Urologic Care

Community HealthChoices (CHC) is Pennsylvania's new Medicaid healthcare plan. Under Community HealthChoices, adults who are 21 years or older and have both Medicare and Medicaid, or adults who receive long-term supports through Medicaid, must select either the local LIFE Program (if eligible) or a managed care organization to coordinate their healthcare by November 15, 2017.

Senior LIFE is the local LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly) Program that provides healthcare and personal support services for seniors living in their homes. Services include medical care, home care, medications, and much more.

LIFE provides and coordinates all Medicare and Medicaid benefits. Plus, there are no costs to enroll in the LIFE Program for those who are receiving or eligible for Medical Assistance. If you are receiving Aging Waiver services, you are eligible for the LIFE Program. You may be able to transition to Senior LIFE and maintain your same homecare providers.



Now is the chance to enroll in your local LIFE Program. Eligible individuals will need to choose a new plan by November 15.

Pick the proven provider — pick the LIFE Program for your Community HealthChoices Option.

➤ For more information, call **SeniorLIFE** at **1-877-998-5433** or visit the website **SeniorLIFEPA.com**. SeniorLIFE has locations in Washington, Greene, Uniontown and Greensburg.

**Now is the chance to enroll in your local LIFE Program.  
Eligible individuals will need to choose a new plan by November 15.**

## Confused about Community HealthChoices?

*Attend an informational meeting and learn about the changes in Medicaid.*

As your neighbor, we want to provide you with the opportunity to learn more about Senior LIFE and Community HealthChoices, Pennsylvania's new Medicaid healthcare plan. You can attend an informational meeting or call for a home visit. Senior LIFE and Community HealthChoices Informational Meetings:

### Senior LIFE Washington

2114 N. Franklin Dr.,  
Washington, PA 15301

**November 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**1:00 p.m.**

### Senior LIFE Greene

100 Evergreene Dr.,  
Waynesburg, PA 15370

**November 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**1:00 p.m.**

### Senior LIFE Uniontown

89 W. Fayette St.,  
Uniontown, PA 15401

**November 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**12:00 p.m.**

If you can't attend, Senior LIFE will provide transportation to a center when it's convenient for you.

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# Senior Living

## Top 3 Reasons to Consider Senior Living This Winter

For many parts of the country, winter's low temperatures, potentially dangerous weather conditions, and early nightfall are enough to make it America's least favorite season. But for seniors, Jack Frost's hijinks can do more than cost him a popularity contest. Here are the top 3 reasons why winter is the perfect time to consider senior living:



### 1 Safety

Winter can mean rain, frost, ice, and snow, all of which can lead to hazardous driving conditions and an increased fall risk. According to The National Institutes of Health, 1.6 million older adults go to the emergency room each year due to fall-related injuries, and chances for falls in cold weather increases significantly after age 65. And, it should come as no surprise that, according to the Journal of Community Health, seniors who live alone face a higher fall risk than those who live in a community setting, potentially because of senior living communities' maintenance-free lifestyle, and on-site staff.

### 2 Nutrition

Raise your hand if you want to trudge out into the cold to go to the grocery store! No takers? .... That's what we thought. In the winter, keeping a kitchen stocked with healthy food becomes even more of a chore, especially if you live in an area that doesn't have easy access to fresh produce year-round. As a result, seniors face an even higher risk of malnutrition in the winter months. Most senior living communities take the guess-work out of staying well-fed by including meals that are prepared with senior nutrition guidelines in mind and served on-site.

### 3 Socialization

After multiple studies on the impact of socialization on seniors' mental and physical health, the results are in: socialization leads to a better quality of life.

So what does that mean for seniors who "get out" less during the winter months? Seniors who live alone face heightened risks of seasonal affective disorder and clinical depression.

Compare that to senior living options that offer full activity calendars and a myriad of social opportunities that can lead to a heightened sense of purpose and improved physical and mental health. (Plus, who doesn't love beating their neighbor at a game of Bingo?)

To learn more about **Locust Grove Senior Living**, call Christine Panepinto at **(412) 461-7210** or email

**DSM@LocustGroveSRLiving.com**. Locust Grove is conveniently located just up the hill from Kennywood in West Mifflin. Locust Grove offers meals, housekeeping, medication administration, 24/7 caregiver assistance as needed and an abundance of social, recreational and educational programs – all at an affordable monthly rent!

Email your health tips to [goodhealthmag@aol.com](mailto:goodhealthmag@aol.com).



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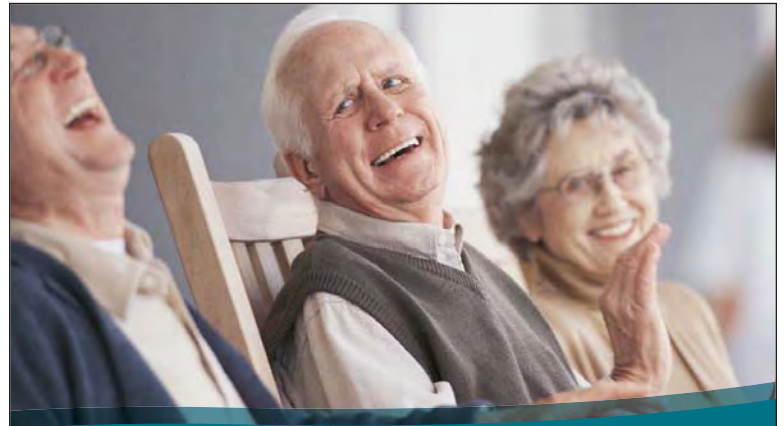
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# Senior Guide

## Tips for Caregivers During the Holiday Season

*Submitted by Arden Courts of Jefferson Hills*

During this very special time of year, family and friends will gather together to celebrate holiday traditions. The holiday seasons can be a very challenging time of year for an individual living with memory loss. Here are some suggestions to help you and your loved one to have a safe and happy season together.

In the midst of putting up decorations and rearranging furniture, the person with memory loss will do better in an environment that is as consistent as possible. Try not to move the furniture more than absolutely necessary. Avoid using blinking lights or decorations that look edible. Use your loved one's best-loved decorations to spark memories and increase their ability to enjoy the festivities.

Think about inviting a few guests at one time, and avoid large crowds of people. Name tags are very helpful and will keep your loved one from feeling frustrated



**Think about inviting a few guests at one time, and avoid large crowds of people. Name tags are very helpful and will keep your loved one from feeling frustrated.**

and embarrassed when they can't remember people they should know. If you notice signs of increased confusion or agitation, encourage your loved one to go to a quiet part of the house, or maybe take a small rest from the festivities.

Holiday stories from years past will help keep your loved one involved in the celebration. Play familiar holiday songs and fix traditional foods that they will enjoy. Photos of past holidays will help them reminisce with the visitors. It's much easier for people with memory loss to remember things that happened long ago than something that happened yesterday, so reminisce! Look at catalogs together and help your loved one to order gifts for people they care about. This could be just what they need to reconnect and

From all of us to all of you... Arden Courts wishes each of you a happy and healthy holiday season.



For more information about how to make the holidays more memorable and less worrisome, please contact Terrie Eger at Arden Courts of Jefferson Hills at (412) 384-0300.

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## Overlook Green Filling a Need with Memory Care in South Hills

By Lois Thomson

Overlook Green Senior Living saw a need, and is taking steps to fill it. Located in the Whitehall area of South Hills, Overlook Green is a senior living community that offers personal care apartments, along with opportunities for short-term stays when caregivers might need a respite. Soon, it will also be offering Memory Care.

"We saw a need for it," said Executive Director Michelle O'Donnell. "The biggest reason we were seeing people leaving our community was because we couldn't keep them safe." As O'Donnell explained, there's a stigma that the only people who need to be in memory care are those who are considered to be an "elopement risk" – meaning they have a tendency toward unsupervised wandering, and therefore need to be in a secured unit.

While O'Donnell agreed that is true to an extent, she added there is more to it than that. "There's something to be said for residents with dementia who are in a specif-

ic dementia-based community, where everything is structured for them. We have some residents who we can certainly care for in a regular personal care environment, yet they're not thriving because they might be over stimulated, or it might be too big for them. But when you get them into a smaller unit, the activities are based around residents' memory impairment, and they do thrive a lot more."

The program is called the Bridge To Recovery and is Five-Star Senior Living's memory care line. BTR presents a program of living, rather than a generic set of activities. Each day's program is specifically designed for the residents' abilities and likes. For example, if a resident enjoys music or sports or gardening, this unit will provide relevant activities or books that would interest them. They can also participate in walking groups and have access to exercise classes: through such therapy, some of their functionality can be restored, and by building on their strengths, they are kept engaged.



Overlook Green Senior Living's Memory Care Center is currently under construction and is scheduled for completion by the beginning of November. Michelle O'Donnell, executive director, said, "It is going to be a 23-bed secured memory unit. We took an existing structure and basically took it down to the ground and rebuilt it; it's being completely renovated." The unit should be available for occupancy by late December or early January.

O'Donnell commented, "Bridge To Rediscovery has been recognized nationally and is such a great program, so we're excited to implement it at Overlook." She added that all of the staff who will be in the unit will be completely trained in dementia care – training that is different from the kind that staff receives for residents who are

just in regular personal care.

"There is such a need for it," O'Donnell said, "a need not just for a secure unit, but also for a program that goes along with it, and that's what Overlook is going to be offering; what is going to set us apart is a specific program that's completely tailored around residents with memory loss."



For more information, call 412-881-8300 or visit [www.overlookgreen seniortliving.com](http://www.overlookgreen seniortliving.com)

## Regular Eye Exams Critical to Early Diagnosis, Treatment of Glaucoma

By Louis A. Lobes, Jr., M.D.

Primary open angle glaucoma is a chronic and progressive eye disease occurring mostly in adults. It is the second leading cause of blindness worldwide affecting approximately 2 percent of adults 40 years and older. The 2.2 million patients affected in the United States are expected to rise to 3.3 million by 2020.

The disease occurs when increased pressure within the eye, combined with currently unknown other factors, leads to damage to the optic nerve. The optic nerve is the large nerve at the back of the eye that carries the entire message of vision back to the region of the brain that allows us to see what the retina has recorded. It most often affects both eyes, but the severity of the damage may be different in each eye.

Most patients with glaucoma do not have any symptoms, but as the disease progresses the ongoing damage to the optic nerve gradually reduces the peripheral field of vision which, in its severe form, can significantly restrict mobility and quality of life. Because of its silent presentation, the only way to detect it in its early stages is to have a comprehensive eye examination every two years, and perhaps yearly after the age 65.

There are many treatments that have proved successful



Dr. Louis A. Lobes, Jr.

in helping to preserve the visual fields and optic nerve of patients with glaucoma. These include daily drops, laser treatments and various types of surgery.

As with other chronic and progressive diseases, the best outcomes are possible when the disease is diagnosed in its earliest stages, and the patient is able to persist with the continued, accurate use of the medicines prescribed by the treating physician, even though the patient has no actual adverse visual symptoms during that time.

Therefore, the best way to discover if you are a glaucoma patient and the best way to diagnose the disease in its early stages is to regularly have comprehensive eye exams even if you have no visual symptoms. And, if you are diagnosed with glaucoma, you must follow up as recommended by the treating ophthalmologist, and accurately and persistently use the prescribed medications.

Louis A. Lobes, Jr., M.D., a board certified ophthalmologist in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is board chairperson of Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh. The 105-year-old private nonprofit, is a leader in programs and services for people of all ages who are blind, vision impaired, or have other disabilities. Its mission is to change the lives of persons with vision loss and other disabilities by fostering independence and individual choice.



**Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services** offers comprehensive and personalized computer instruction, employment and vocational services, personal adjustment to blindness training, in-home instruction, low vision services, vision screenings for children and adults, and an industrial employment program.

Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services also offer employment support services in Fayette, Greene, and Washington counties, and in Somerset County we offer vision screening and transportation services. BVRS is accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services (NAC).

For more information, you can reach **Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh** at (412) 368-4400.

# Senior Guide

## LIFE Pittsburgh is Your Option with Community HealthChoices. Enroll in the LIFE Program today.

By Jennifer Sestina

Pennsylvania is changing the way Medicaid services are delivered through a new program called Community HealthChoices. The program launches in January 2018 and requires Medicaid and Medicare individuals to select one of three Managed Care Organizations or the LIFE Program to receive long-term services and support.

While Managed Care Organizations begin providing care on January 1, eligible individuals can enroll in the LIFE program today and begin to receive their services without a prolonged wait.

Additionally, anyone that is currently receiving or eligible for Aging Waiver services is eligible for the LIFE Program and can transition to LIFE.

“LIFE Pittsburgh has been honored to serve hundreds of seniors with complex medical, social and economic challenges over the last 18 years,” says Joann Gago, RN, MSN, and Chief Executive Officer of LIFE Pittsburgh.

The LIFE Program is a proven model of care that allows the elderly to live independently while receiving the services and support they need. LIFE Pittsburgh not only offers all Medicare and Medicaid services, but



LIFE Pittsburgh’s healthcare network includes doctors, specialists, home care, and more.

the program also has many additional services, in the LIFE Centers, in one’s home and, if needed, in a hospital or facility. Services include medical care, home care, personal care, medications, transportation and more for people age 55 and older. Plus, there are no costs for those who qualify.

According to Joann Gago, “Our goal is to support the older adult through their senior years with care and compassion. Importantly, we partner with our seniors in a personal way to provide all the care and services they need. We want all eligible older adults to know about our program as strong, experienced and an available option in this new Community HealthChoices program.”



To learn more about **LIFE Pittsburgh** and **Community HealthChoices**, visit [LIFEPittsburgh.org](http://LIFEPittsburgh.org) or call **412-388-8050 TTY:711**.

### About LIFE Pittsburgh:

LIFE Pittsburgh is a local, nonprofit organization that is part of the national PACE Association and provides comprehensive care to elderly seniors who may not otherwise be able to live independently at home. LIFE Pittsburgh serves seniors in Western Allegheny County and operates six centers.

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Baptist Homes and Providence Point are sponsored by Baptist Homes Society, a faith-based not for profit organization serving seniors of all faiths since 1910.

## Senior Guide

### Personal Care Can Enrich Your Life



These women who live in the Baptist Homes residence enjoy socializing and seeing Pittsburgh's entertainment centers and cultural treasures.

Many older adults believe that living on their own is a sign of independence, and tell family that they want to stay in their home despite their declining health. At times, with support from a care provider or two, the elderly may be able to age in place for a while.

For many, however, there comes a point when safety and quality of life become a factor. Those who live alone frequently suffer from loneliness and the lack of socialization; they have poor diets and risk dehydration; they perform dangerous acts in attempting to keep the home clean; and they lack mental stimulation and exercise. All of these factors take their toll as time goes by.

What families often do not realize is, there are quality, caring, personal care communities in the area, and if you're waiting until the move is 'necessary' your loved one might be missing out on a fulfilling, socially rich opportunity to enjoy his or her senior years—and possibly add quality years to their life.

Communities such as Baptist Homes and Providence Point offer an active, person-centered lifestyle in their Personal Care residences. The team of care providers includes direct care staff as well as a dietician, a wellness director, a fitness coordinator, an activity director, a chaplain, and others who focus on providing a meaningful and engaging lifestyle for residents. There are daily activities, outings, entertainment and wellness programming available. Families often comment that their parent or spouse 'thrives' once they are in this supportive environment.

There may never be a perfect time to make the switch, but here are a few warning signs that may indicate that a move to a Personal Care community could be benefi-

cial:

Is your elderly parent becoming more forgetful and putting their own health and safety at risk? Occasional forgetfulness may not be a big deal, but as it progresses and you notice the state of their home and hygiene declining, it may be time to step in.

Is your loved one having more trouble getting around, maybe frequently has new bumps and bruises? Within the Personal Care setting, assistance is available for bathing, dressing and other acts of daily living. If they fall, someone can respond more quickly.

Is there food in the refrigerator? Can they get their shoes on and get dressed? These are all examples of activities people are expected to do when living on their own. If they're having trouble keeping themselves or their home clean, more support may be necessary.

Has your loved one stopped meeting up with friends or going to their favorite diner? Within a Personal Care community, older adults remain more social and stay involved in activities they enjoy. Isolation can lead to depression and other concerns.

No one really likes the process of moving, and saying good bye to the past can be hard. But the right move at the right time is a smart thing to do. Often, Personal Care residents feel MORE independent because they do things without having to ask family for help; they make new friends, and discover new interests.



If you'd like information about **Baptist Homes** or **Providence Point Personal Care** residences, call **(412) 350-9654**.



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-Ed Bires, retired postmaster

At UPMC Senior Communities, we focus on improving and enriching each resident’s life. From independent living and personal care, to assisted living and skilled nursing, we make every resident feel cared for and at ease. For more information or to schedule a tour, call 1-800-324-5523, or visit [UPMCSeniorCommunities.com](http://UPMCSeniorCommunities.com).

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Avalon Springs Place - Mercer  
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**Personal Care:**

Canterbury Place - Lawrenceville  
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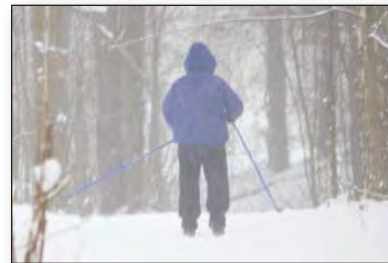
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## Senior Guide

### Hypothermia and Frostbite Risks in Older Adults this Winter

Submitted by Comfort Keepers

The winter season presents specific risks and challenges that can be critical for older adults. When the temperature drops, older adults run a higher risk of health problems and injuries related to the weather. It is important that they, and their caregivers, take certain precautions during the winter months. Hypothermia and frostbite are among the most common risk factors for older adults this time of year.



sure to cover up all parts of the body with layers before going outside. If the skin turns red, dark or starts to hurt, it is time to go inside right away.

#### HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia occurs when the body temperature falls below 95 degrees and can't produce enough energy to stay warm enough. A drop in body temperature in older adults increase the risks associated with limited ability to communicate, impaired mobility, less subcutaneous fat, and a diminished ability to sense temperature.

#### Symptoms of hypothermia include:

- Shivering
- Cold skin that is pale or ashy
- Lack of coordination
- Increased mental confusion
- Slower reactions
- Unsteady breathing or heart rate
- Weakness
- Sleepiness

#### Symptoms of frostbite include:

- White, ashy or grayish-yellow skin
  - Skin feels hard or waxy
  - Skin feels numb when touched
- Winter poses challenges for seniors, but with awareness and planning, they will stay healthy, happy and ready for spring!

Comfort Keepers trained caregivers provide older adults with the highest quality of life possible using our Interactive Caregiving philosophy – a system of care that addresses safety, nutrition, mind, body, and activities of daily living (ADLs) all year round. Comfort Keepers has set out on a mission to provide the care and services necessary to maintain the independence and quality of life for the elderly and seniors in the community throughout every season of the year.

#### FROSTBITE

Frostbite can cause grave damage to the frail skin of older adults and progress to the bone. Frostbite usually affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes. Older adults with heart disease and other circulation problems are at higher risk. To prevent increased risk of frostbite in older adults, be

For more information on **Comfort Keepers**, call (412) 653-6100 or visit **Pittsburgh-247.ComfortKeepers.com**

AgingCare.com. "Little-Known Winter Dangers for Elders". Web 2015.

HealthInAging.org. "Winter Safety Tips for Older Adults". Web 2011.

National Institutes of Health (NIH). "When the Weather Gets Cold". News in Health. January 2009.

MedicineNet. "Winter Can Pose Hazards for Seniors, Expert Warns". Web 2013.

### Ever get hiccups?

Everybody does. Hiccups are involuntary contractions of the diaphragm, followed by sudden closure of the vocal cords, which produces the classic "hic" sound. They can be caused by overeating, alcohol, stress and drinking carbonated beverages. In some cases, there may be a medical cause. The best remedy for a short bout is to swallow water or a spoonful of sugar, but most often, hiccups stop on their own. If hiccups last more than 2 days, see a physician, as there may be a medical cause. – Mayo Clinic

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## Senior Guide

### Why Does Breathing Get Harder in Autumn?

For most people, autumn means cooler temperatures, shorter days and a riot of colors as trees begin to shed their leaves. But for people who suffer from respiratory diseases such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or who are prone to allergies, the fall weather can increase the risk of chest infections and exacerbate existing symptoms. These problems can cause a host of symptoms such as nasal congestion, runny nose, itchy or watery eyes, chest congestion, cough, wheezing and labored and shallow breathing.



dust mask

- Close your doors and windows, especially at night and early morning, when pollen count is at its highest

- Use a dehumidifier and a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your bedroom

Approximately 70 percent of hospice patients have difficulty breathing. Their respiratory symptoms

need to be monitored closely and their status updated regularly, as conditions can change daily. At VITAS Healthcare, we offer comprehensive respiratory therapy to help our patients breathe more easily. This includes 24/7/365 advanced disease management, a respiratory therapist to make home visits, instruction to caregivers about respiratory treatments and techniques, and respiratory equipment such as CPAP and BIPAP.



As the nation's leading provider of end-of-life care, VITAS has provided exemplary care to hospice patients throughout Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas since

2005. To learn more about end-of-life care, call (412) 799-2101 or visit [VITAS.com](http://VITAS.com).

By *Evalisa McClure*,  
VITAS Healthcare  
General Manager



Helpful  
Tips

### Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

The holidays are approaching fast. Here are three strategies for avoiding holiday weight gain:

1) Eat throughout the day so that you aren't starving when you arrive at an event.

2) Don't drink your calories! Try sipping flavored or sparkling water instead of egg nog and sugary punch.

3) Don't deny yourself—that can backfire. Taste everything but don't overdo it!

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 This article was submitted by **Harmony Home Healthcare**. For more information please call **1-888-772-8959** or visit [www.homewithharmony.com](http://www.homewithharmony.com)

- 1. Always be sure to select an agency that is licensed through the state.**  
This ensures that the agency is meeting state standards to protect clients and their families.
- 2. Verify that the caregivers are trained, qualified, and have passed their background checks.**  
The best agencies will provide training and continuing education checks for their employees, as well as perform extensive background checks ensuring they are qualified to care for your loved ones.
- 3. Know that the agency's caregivers are bonded and insured.**  
This should include professional and general liability, Worker's Compensation, and bonding.
- 4. Ask how the agency evaluates what type of care your loved one needs.**  
Become familiar with the agency's divisions or programs and what specific services they are able to provide for your loved one.
- 5. Find out which caregivers will be in your home.**  
Understand the agency's process for assigning a caregiver or caregivers to your loved one, so that you know who and what to expect.
- 6. Know the agency's emergency care policy.**  
Inquire how the agency and its caregivers are trained and prepared to handle any emergency situations that may arise.
- 7. Know how the agency handles issues and concerns.**  
The best agency will have detailed procedures for dealing with any complaints or concerns in order to resolve them in a timely manner.

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[www.seriousillness.org/washington](http://www.seriousillness.org/washington)

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- Professional Nursing
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### For Family Caregivers of Aging Parents...

If you're looking for helpful tips and information, please visit our educational website.

[www.elderpagespittsburgh.com](http://www.elderpagespittsburgh.com)

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## November is Home Care & Hospice Month

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# Salute to Home Care Nurses



## Susan Helo, BSN, RN Advantage Home Health Services

Susan Helo, BSN, RN, started with Advantage Home Health Services, LLC in March 2016 as a PRN employee. Susan has shown that her hard work and dedication to the company makes her a true advocate for our patients between doctors. Her passion to succeed in her position has transitioned her career. She has since become a full-time case manager and most recently a clinical manager of the Altoona, PA office in less than a year. Susan has strong communication, managerial and organizational skills. Her passion to learn all aspects of her job to have a well-rounded knowledge of home care shows in the educational pieces that she has shared with our staff and during orientations. Susan is always looking for ways to improve her processes which is why patients are constantly requesting her and receiving many company addressed compliments. She has excelled in caring for our HHOME model, a patient-centered service delivery model based on coordinating patient care through team-based care pathways and creating evidence-based practices to gain maximum patient benefits at minimum costs. As of late, Susan has volunteered her time on the weekend to travel to our Pittsburgh office and help cover patients. Susan Helo is a true asset to our team.



## No Detail Too Small for VITAS Patient Care Administrator

Jayne Clements, RN, CHNP, sees her work in hospice work as more than a job. She says it is a career that allows her to meet the needs of patients at the end of life and offer them support, compassion and dignity.

Jayne is VITAS Healthcare's patient care administrator and a strong hospice advocate, but she has more than 30 years of experience in clinical management and patient care. Jayne joined VITAS as a case manager 16 years ago and worked in different roles, including team manager and admissions manager, before becoming patient care administrator in 2016.

"My main objective is to make sure that our patients and families in crisis have all the information and support they need to make educated decisions," says Jayne. "For me, no detail is too small if it can help give more comfort to our patients."

"Jayne has devoted her career to serving patients and families," says VITAS Healthcare General Manager Evalisa McClure. "Her vast experience in the healthcare field makes her a valuable member of our team."

Jayne earned an associate degree in nursing from Westmoreland Community College in Youngwood, Pennsylvania. She is a member of the American Nephrology Nurse Association.

Jayne heads outdoors for fresh air and exercise. She does a lot of landscaping work in her yard, goes for long walks and is exploring a new bike path in her community.



## For Kristin Prycl, Hospice Was the Right Choice

When VITAS Healthcare Admissions Manager Kristin Prycl, RN, BSN, joined the company in 2007, she knew she had made the right decision.

With a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Pittsburgh, Kristin had been providing care on the medical/surgical floor of a local hospital, where she interacted with many patients who were at the end of life.

"I loved the one-on-one time I spent with patients, and I saw the value of hospice in my interactions. I also realized that many people needed to be educated about the benefits of hospice when curative options are no longer viable," says Kristin. "So when I got the chance to work with VITAS, I didn't hesitate." Starting as an admissions nurse, Kristin worked closely with patients and families, making sure that they received all the services they could get. For her, being able to help patients and families transition to hospice care, and navigate their last days with dignity and comfort, is very rewarding.

"Kristin is a great communicator and relentless in her effort to make sure that our patients and families get the best possible end-of-life care," says VITAS Healthcare General Manager Evalisa McClure. "She truly believes in the value of hospice care and it shows in her daily work."

Outside work, Kristin spends a lot of time with her two daughters and a menagerie of animals, which includes dogs, cats, bunnies and goats.



## Concordia Salutes Home Care and Hospice Nurses

During November Concordia Visiting Nurses and Concordia Hospice of Washington honors our nurses, home care aides, therapists, and social workers who make a significant difference for the patients and families they serve. We believe these special caregivers play a key role in our health care system and in homes across our region. We're so proud of these dedicated servants and we wish to recognize their work in caring for others in need.

This month, take a moment to thank the compassionate, skilled caregivers who work in the home care and hospice professions. Anyone who has ever been by a loved one's side and seen the dedication and commitment home care and hospice workers bring to their jobs knows how much the field demands. All of us at Concordia Visiting Nurses and Concordia Hospice of Washington are grateful to these professionals, and we give thanks for their contributions to the healthcare industry!

For well over 20 years, Concordia Visiting Nurses has provided high-quality skilled nursing and a variety of therapy services to people in the communities we serve. We offer in-home hospice care as well as inpatient hospice care, offered exclusively at the standalone Donnell House.

For more information, visit [www.concordiavn.org](http://www.concordiavn.org) for office locations and contact information, an overview of services, and current career openings.

# Salute to Home Care Nurses

## Kelli McClain, LPN Harmony Hospice

Since Kelli McClain, LPN began her journey with Harmony last September, she has consistently gone above and beyond to help us fulfill our purpose of building stronger communities by enriching the lives of others through memorable connections and extraordinary care.

"Kelli has really been an asset to Harmony," says Patient Care Coordinator, Shannon Gutwald. "She is a constant advocate for patient rights and ensures daily that their needs are met."

In Kelli's current role at Harmony, she has moved from the traditional home health setting to Private Duty, and she says that absolutely loves it. She takes her role as a private duty nurse very seriously, and prides herself in solving any problems necessary in order to help her client. "I feel I'm best at trying to get my clients what they need," Kelli says. "I feel that I'm a good liaison between the client and their doctors and pharmacies." She also values the contributions she can make in her client's lives each day by being able to make sure they are happy and well cared for. Kelli clearly values relationships, and it shows in her work. We are lucky to have her in the Harmony Family!



## Courtney McKenna, LPN Harmony Hospice

During Courtney McKenna, LPN's tenure at Harmony Home Healthcare, she has proven herself to be committed by choice to her clients and colleagues alike. "Courtney has really shown a passion for compassion throughout her employment with Harmony," says Patient Care Coordinator, Shannon Gutwald. "She is always willing to go above and beyond to help her patients and co-workers, oftentimes rearranging her schedule and working long hours to accommodate the needs of others."

Courtney describes herself as helpful and friendly, which are qualities that certainly shine in her everyday work. Making her clients or patients happy gives her genuine happiness in return. "I am compassionate regarding my patient's comfort and care," she says. "When I arrive for my shift and say 'good morning' to my patient, the smile he gives me warms my heart." She also prides herself in being attuned to her patient's needs, enabling her to solve any issues quickly and correctly. These are all traits of a truly exceptional nurse.


We appreciate all of Courtney's hard work, and are very grateful to have her in the Harmony Family!



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## An Innovative Way to Keep You at Home

MARY JANE WAS STRUGGLING WITH MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND TIRED OF STARING AT THE FOUR WALLS OF HER APARTMENT. SHE DECIDED TO TAKE THE ADVICE OF HER APARTMENT MANAGER BY CALLING COMMUNITY LIFE. "THEY CAME OUT AND TALKED TO ME. THEY EXPLAINED THAT I COULD COME TO THE CENTER AND HAVE FUN." IN MAY OF 2008, MARY JANE ENROLLED INTO COMMUNITY LIFE.



Mary Jane will be celebrating her 80th birthday in October. "If I didn't have Community LIFE, I may not be here."

A little over a year ago, Mary Jane did not feel well, but luckily, she was able to call Community LIFE. "I was coughing and couldn't breathe." Mary Jane's nurse came to her apartment, assessed the situation, and immediately took Mary Jane to the Community LIFE Day Center to be seen by her doctor.

Mary Jane was in need of a procedure but because she was an older lady suffering from multiple chronic conditions, a normal valve replacement surgery was not an option. A doctor at the hospital recommended a new procedure called Trans Catheter Heart Valve Therapy (TAVR). "This procedure is a minimally invasive surgical procedure that repairs the valve without removing the old, damaged valve, instead, it wedges a replacement valve into the aortic valve's place. TAVR is completed without surgically opening the chest, but through very small openings that leave all the chest bones in place. The benefit is shorter hospitalization and faster recovery time." ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org))

When ready for discharge, Community LIFE was there for Mary Jane by providing a personal care assistant who would visit her in her apartment to help her bathe and dress. At the center, she would meet with the physical therapist to do exercises. "They told me that it was going to take two weeks, but it only took me one week. I love going to the center, it helps me." Mary Jane feels so much better knowing she has the support of Community LIFE. "I told my friend to join because she was sick all the time, couldn't get to her doctors, and couldn't afford the costs of her medications. I told her to come and they would care for you, just like they care for me."

Mary Jane is living her life in her own apartment. She attends Community LIFE several times a week for lunch and fun activities. She continues working hard with therapy. Not only is she active at Community LIFE Day Center, she drives herself to the Salvation Army using her scooter she received from Community LIFE. "Community LIFE makes my life easier."

She tells everyone, "I also have three other families: The Salvation Army, my Methodist Church, and Community LIFE." "I am so happy I did it, join Community LIFE."

> For more information on **Community LIFE**, call **1-866-419-1693** or visit the website **[www.commlife.org](http://www.commlife.org)**

#### References

What is TAVR? (2017, February 17). Retrieved April 14, 2017, from [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/More/HeartValveProblemsandDisease/What-is-TAVR\\_UCM\\_450827\\_Article.jsp#.WPDg4E11qY0](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/More/HeartValveProblemsandDisease/What-is-TAVR_UCM_450827_Article.jsp#.WPDg4E11qY0)

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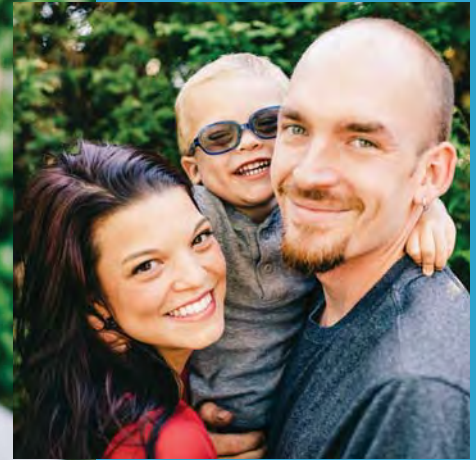
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*Shaka M. Walker, M.D. specializes in orthopedic surgery. He earned his degree at Georgetown University School of Medicine, Washington, D.C. Dr. Walker completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at University of California San Francisco, with a subspecialty in Sports Medicine. He is board-certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. He practices with St. Clair Orthopedic Associates, a division of St. Clair Medical Services. To contact Dr. Walker, please call 412.942.7262.*

