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Publisher's Note

In Loving Memory: Lynette Tomasetti

The world grew a little dimmer on September 21, 2018. On that day, Lynette Tomasetti, a loving wife, mother and friend, lost her long battle with cancer.

For those of us who knew and still love Lynette, today there remains a hole in our heart that can never fully heal. She was that rare, special person who brought joy into the lives of those lucky enough to call her a friend.

I met Lynette when she came to work for the *Western Pennsylvania Guide to Good Health* as an account executive. Before long, the employer-employee relationship was superseded by one built on friendship, a friendship that grew brighter and stronger over the years.

And how could it not? Always quick with a smile and a kind word, Lynette's good humor and faith was apparent to anyone with whom she came in contact. Lynette showed everyone she met how to live life with enthusiasm. And when the time came, she also taught us all how to leave this world with grace and dignity.

It was early in 2014 when Lynette's life changed. She felt a pain in her neck, a pain that soon moved to her shoulder. It eventually became so severe, she couldn't move her arm. She underwent an x-ray, followed by a CAT scan, which ultimately led to the diagnosis of multiple myeloma, a blood cancer that starts in the bone marrow's plasma cells. Eventually, Lynette underwent 10 radiation treatments, 12 rounds of chemotherapy and stem cell transplant.

Readers of the *Guide to Good Health* twice were able to glimpse Lynette's journey: once to describe the experience undergoing stem cell transplant, a second time to share the positive impact dog therapy had on her. In both stories, what came through most was her positive attitude and her faith.

Throughout her ordeal, Lynette was supported, first and foremost, by her beautiful, loving family: Phil, her husband of 29 years; her son, Matt, who lives in York, PA and works for Johnson Controls; and her daughter, Megan, a senior majoring in marketing at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Lynette also was surrounded by countless family members and friends who faced her ordeal with her. She touched them profoundly in life as she did with her death. Lynette was a member of South Hills Community Connect, an organization made up of individuals represen-



Lynette, her son Matt, husband Phil and daughter Megan.

tatives from healthcare/senior care businesses dedicated to providing educational, healthy-aging, and special community events to seniors living in the South Hills of Pittsburgh. It was through this group that Lynette met Betty Karleski.

And it was Betty who spoke for us all when Lynette's ordeal ended when she said, "We will miss her generous spirit and remarkable example of grace and goodness."

Another friend who knew Lynette well is Denise Minton, who is employed by Ruk Properties as administrator at Rosewood of the Ohio Valley. Before reuniting

at Ruk Properties, Denise and Lynette also worked together at Mission Pharmacy.

"We spent many hours together," Denise said. "She was always so full of life, so happy-go-lucky. Even while she struggled with her own illness, she always worried about me. She would always ask how the business was doing and how my family and I were doing."

"Lynette tried to make the world a better place. She was the most sincere, honest, caring and loving person I have ever known."

Lynette Tomasetti was only 53 years old when she left us. Far too young and with far too much left to give. Those of us who loved her are left to ask why and to commit ourselves to remembering her faith, her enthusiasm for life and her incredible smile that brightened the lives of everyone around her.

Hers was a life well lived. And we are all blessed for having shared it with her.

(Contributions in honor of Lynette Tomasetti can be made to the International Myeloma Foundation at www.myeloma.org. To learn more about the organization, please see article below.)

Nancy Carroll Lammie, Publisher

We will miss her generous spirit and remarkable example of grace and goodness.

The International Myeloma Foundation Works to Educate and Empower Myeloma Patients

When Brian D. Novis was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, he was just 33 years old, newly engaged, and told he would only have three to five years to live. Little was known about the cancer of the bone marrow at the time, and there was no place for patients or their families to go for support. So he created one.

The International Myeloma Foundation (IMF) was founded in 1990 by Brian Novis, his then-fiancée, and now IMF President, Susie Novis, and Brian's physician, Dr. Brian G.M. Durie. The organization's mission is to improve the quality of life of myeloma patients while working toward prevention and a cure. The four main areas of focus for the IMF are research, education, support, and advocacy.

"We wanted to help prevent future myeloma patients and their families from experiencing the same sense of isolation we had to struggle with," Susie Novis said.

The IMF also supports more than 250 support groups nationwide, including three in Pennsylvania: the Philadelphia Multiple Myeloma Networking Group, the Northeastern PA Multiple Myeloma Support Group of Wilkes-Barre, and the Pittsburgh Myeloma Support Group.

The IMF's multilingual website is a place for patients, their families, their caregivers, and doctors around the world to find the latest studies and

myeloma diagnostic and treatment guidelines issued by the IMF's research division, the International Myeloma Working Group (IMWG).

The world of myeloma has evolved greatly in the years since the IMF's founding. Though there is still no cure for the disease, novel therapies have improved outcomes for those who have been diagnosed, and everyone affected now has a wealth of knowledge available to them thanks to this invaluable organization. The IMF's Black Swan Research Initiative was launched in 2013 to find a pathway to a cure for myeloma. The initiative's team of international researchers will begin cure trials at the end of 2015.

If you have questions about myeloma and its treatment, a call to the IMF InfoLine, 800-452-CURE puts you in immediate contact with an IMF Information Specialist who can provide information and support. Or you can visit the website <http://www.myeloma.org> or email TheIMF@myeloma.org.

> For more information on the **Pittsburgh Multiple Myeloma Support Group**, please contact Yvonne Yaksic at **412-527-2702** or by e-mail at pittsburgh@imfsupport.org. You can also visit their website at <http://pittsburgh.support.myeloma.org>.



BREAST CANCER

Saving Lives with Screening Mammograms at Magee's Breast Imaging Centers

By Nancy Kennedy

Getting the recommended screening mammograms is critically important for women, says LaJuana Fuller, director of Womens Imaging at UPMC Magee Womens Hospital, and Magee is making it as convenient and comfortable as possible for all women throughout the Pittsburgh region to do exactly that. Magee offers excellence in every aspect of mammography: state-of-the-art technology that produces the highest possible diagnostic accuracy, the most efficient processes, and the utmost in patient safety and comfort. At Magee, the Breast Imaging staff is experienced, compassionate and driven to deliver the best care possible.

"Our expert healthcare professionals are dedicated and committed to providing excellent service," says Ms. Fuller. "We are well aware of how difficult mammograms are



"Fear can sometimes be attributed to lack of understanding; many are afraid to have a mammogram even though they know that early detection means a greater chance of survival. We seek to dispel myths and misconceptions through education."

-LaJuana Fuller

for many women; it can be an emotional experience with a lot of anxiety. We understand this and our goal is to make women comfortable with having mammograms. We are doing more than providing radiology services: we are caring for women and helping them stay healthy. You will get the best care here at Magee."

There are numerous benefits to having your mammograms at Magee, Ms. Fuller says. Magee has the most advanced imaging equip-

ment and offers three-dimensional mammograms, also called tomosynthesis, to every woman. Tomosynthesis is an imaging technology that enables radiologists to obtain a 3-D view that is clearer and far more accurate than conventional mammography, improving the ability to detect breast cancer and also reducing the need to call women back for additional imaging. Magee's radiologists and technologists are specialists in breast imaging, with utmost expertise in obtaining and interpreting images and identifying abnormalities.

Magee has nine Breast Imaging centers throughout the region, making it possible to get your mammogram done close to home. For added convenience, Magee will schedule appointments in the evening, early morning and weekends, in addition to traditional weekday times. Many of these centers offer free parking and some even have valet parking.

Magee's Breast Imaging service is extending its reach into the community in other, innovative ways, particularly in an effort to improve mammogram screening rates and reduce breast cancer death rates among African American women. Breast cancer is the leading cause of death from cancer among African American women; studies have shown that there is significant disparity in breast cancer screening and in treatment for African American women in this region. Led by Steven Evans, M.D., a UPMC surgical oncologist, and a coalition of supporting organizations, they are directing specific work to eradicate this disparity.

"One branch of this work is due to generous support from Diana

Napper, founder of Glimmer of Hope and PNC bank, who have provided funding to hold special breast cancer screening and education events at our mammogram centers, offering information about breast health, breast disease, imaging services and ways to reduce your risk," Ms. Fuller says. "Our speakers include physicians and a dietitian. If needed, transportation to the event is provided as well as coverage for the mammogram. If the participant does not have health insurance, enrollment in the Healthy Woman Program is offered. Any woman is welcome to attend and anyone with questions can call me directly at 412 641 5837.

"Fear can sometimes be attributed to lack of understanding; many are afraid to have a mammogram even though they know that early detection means a greater chance of survival. We seek to dispel myths and misconceptions through education. By addressing fears and concerns, we hope to improve mammogram rates and ultimately eliminate the disparities completely.

"A screening mammogram is the single most powerful tool for the early detection of breast cancer," says Ms. Fuller. "Early detection means that treatment can be initiated early in the course of the disease, and that means a more successful outcome is likely to be achieved.

"At Magee, we believe that it is a privilege to care for our patients. We care deeply about the work that we do and we offer the best services and highest quality of care possible. Magee has cutting edge technology that assures the greatest accuracy, and we provide this in an environment of compassion and support. Screening mammograms save lives."

To schedule a mammogram, call (412) 641-4700 or 1-800-649-4077. To contact LaJuana Fuller about the Mammography Screening Outreach events, call (412) 641-5837. For more information about breast cancer services at UPMC Magee Womens Hospital, visit www.upmc.com/locations/hospitals/magee/services.



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To learn more, visit UPMC.com/BreastCancerAwareness.

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St. Clair Hospital's State-of-the-Art Breast Care Center

By Nancy Kennedy

Every October for the past 34 years, Breast Cancer Awareness Month has taken place across the United States, with the goal of getting people to discuss, think about and learn more about breast cancer. At the St. Clair Hospital Breast Care Center, Breast Cancer Awareness Month is also an opportunity to remind women that excellence in breast cancer prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment is available to them close to home. At the Breast Care Center, an experienced staff will care for them and support them with highly coordinated, comprehensive, and individualized services, whether they need a screening mammogram or treatment for breast cancer.

St. Clair's Breast Care Center, which opened in 2012, has been meticulously designed to be responsive to the entire range of a woman's needs related to breast care. Raye J. Budway, M.D., a board-certified surgeon who specializes in breast surgery and serves as the Center's Medical Director, says the Center offers top-notch, advanced diagnostics and clinical management:

- An integrated team of expert specialty physicians including Dr. Budway and Tara L. Grahovac, M.D., plus oncologists, radiation oncologists, radiologists, and breast reconstruction surgeons;
- A multidisciplinary team of registered nurses, physician assistants, radiology technicians and others who are



"We recognize that a diagnosis of breast cancer is a life changing, emotionally overwhelming event for a woman. We fully understand that and we are here to care for her through the entire journey."

-Dr. Tara L. Grahovac

- experienced in breast cancer prevention, screening and care;
- Two dedicated nurse navigators, Jill Gramm and Chris Conley, to guide each patient along the continuum of care;
- The most advanced imaging technology;
- Comprehensive, cutting-edge treatment including the most advanced surgical approaches and advanced chemotherapy and radiation therapy options, individualized to patient need;
- Second opinions from nationally recognized experts at the renowned Mayo Clinic;
- A Survivorship Program that provides a typed plan of care for each patient to take to all her future medical appointments; the document summarizes her breast cancer history and treatment and addresses every aspect of her continuing health issues and wellness needs;
- The most advanced breast biopsy system, the Hologic Affirm Prone Breast Biopsy system, a technology that has transformed breast cancer diagnosis while offering a superior patient experience;
- Efficient completion of pre-surgery work, so that a patient can have her biopsy, surgical consult and diagnostic radiology, with MRI, PET scan, and sometimes additional biopsies, within 30-60 days, a significant measure of quality;
- Radioactive seed localization, an advanced procedure in which the radiologist places a marker at the site to localize the cancer and facilitate the surgical procedure.

Dr. Grahovac cites radioactive seed localization as an example of the attention given to the patient's experience: "Radioactive seed localization offers a superior experience in comparison to wire localization, which has to be done at the hospital on the day of surgery. This meant several more hours at the hospital, plus the stress of two procedures, one with the radiologist and one with the surgeon, in a single day. With radioactive seed localization, the localization is done in the comfort of the Breast Center a few days pre-op, so that on the day of surgery, the patient can go straight to the O.R. and can get home faster."

Supportive services have also been strengthened to meet the personal, holistic needs of women at every stage of the breast cancer journey:

- An aesthetically pleasing and relaxing environment of care featuring spa-like amenities and an emphasis on patient privacy
- Private counseling with a Social Worker
- Individualized nutrition counseling
- Educational and social support events
- Complementary therapies such as yoga for cancer patients
- A wig salon, with expert consultation
- A Breast Cancer Support Group that meets regularly
- Great attention to convenience, with free parking, valet parking and ease of access

According to Dr. Grahovac, St. Clair's Breast Care Center continues to evolve. She cites the expansion and integration of the team as a major factor in the delivery of the highest quality care. "Our team is fully integrated with a shared sense of mission. We meet regularly and we are all committed to constant improvement. We recognize that a diagnosis of breast cancer is a life changing, emotionally overwhelming event for a woman. We fully understand that and we are here to care for her through the entire journey. Women can feel confident that they will receive excellent, state of the art care at St. Clair's Breast Care Center."

> To learn more about the services available at the **Breast Care Center**, visit www.stclair.org/31/services.

ST. CLAIR HOSPITAL HAS TWO BREAST CARE CENTER LOCATIONS.

The primary center is in Bethel Park at the **St. Clair Hospital Outpatient Center – Village Square**; a second location is in Peters Township at the **St. Clair Hospital Outpatient Center, McMurray**.
To schedule a mammogram, call (412) 942-7800.

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BREAST CANCER

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 for 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 indicate early stage dysfunction or disease.

Who Can Benefit?

All women can benefit from thermography breast screening. However, it is especially appropriate for women ages 23-55 whose denser breast tissue makes it more difficult for mammography to be

effective. Thermography is also for women of all ages who do not want exposure to radiation, 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 doc-

tor can then plan accordingly and layout a program to further diagnose and monitor your health. With one in eight 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**

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Mammograms Can Save Lives! HealthPlex Imaging Introduces 'Bring a Friend Fridays'

Mammograms can save lives — often by detecting cancer as early as possible. Some women delay having their annual mammograms for a variety of reasons ranging inconvenience to fear. HealthPlex Imaging knows most people feel more comfortable when they are with their friends and that's why they are offering "Bring a Friend Fridays." Anyone who makes an appointment to have a screening mammogram for a Friday will be asked if they have a friend who would like to schedule with them. In addition, any woman who walks in without an appointment for a mammogram on a Friday is welcome to bring a friend to have her screening too.

"Women share so many things with our friends at our side. At HealthPlex Imaging, we feel that taking the step to better health and wellness should be one of those activities too," said Mary Ann Konsugar, manager of HealthPlex Imaging.

HealthPlex Imaging offers 3-D mammograms that are more effective in detecting invasive cancer at its earliest stages than traditional two-dimensional mammograms. The 3-D mammogram, which is also known as digital breast tomosynthesis, captures a series of consecutive images from different angles across the arc of the breast to produce three-dimensional slice images. The slices enable radiologists to examine breast tissue one layer at a time instead of viewing all of the layers together as a flat image. An abnormality that is hidden behind tissue in one image may be visible in another image at a slightly different angle.

HealthPlex Imaging has hours Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Saturday from 7 a.m. to noon. Appointments and walk-ins are welcome every day. Most insurance plans are accepted.



HealthPlex Imaging is located in the Mon-Vale HealthPlex at 800 Plaza Drive, Suite 150, in Rostraver Township. For more information, call (724) 379-1900.

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Role of Exercise as We Age

By Lisa Reutzel

Everyone has their own idea of what exercise means to them. For some it may be a means of keeping off weight so they can eat what they want, or to build muscle so they can participate in a sport or competition, or a way of releasing stress. When we are young, we may be participating in sports and we need to build strength, agility and speed. We may also have ambitions of moving on to participating in college sports.

When we are young, our bodies are also capable of handling more stress. Our workouts can be longer in duration and more frequent and we may need less time to warm up and cool down. Disciplines such as yoga and Pilates are not typically practiced by younger individuals. Their goal is to hit it hard and go nonstop, typically with a “no pain no gain” attitude.

Many senior individuals are not interested in “working out.” They

don't find it fun and have no interest in walking into a gym. While training senior clients I hear some of the same questions, what happened to my balance, I can't carry my groceries up a flight of stairs or I am unable to (easily) get up off the floor. I also hear, I don't enjoy exercising, I don't want to bulk up or I already walk 3 miles a day, I bike twice a week, why do I need to do more?

One reason is as we age we begin to lose our balance. This occurs for a variety of reasons, our muscles may be weaker, our posture begins to decline, we don't work all of our muscles, and we don't play like we did when we were kids. In addition, possible health issues may affect our balance, thus we need to incorporate balancing exercises into our daily routine. We need to strengthen the leg muscles; we need to continually challenge ourselves by progressing our balancing movements. Yoga and balance classes become important (great for socializing as



Lisa Reutzel

well) and should be incorporated into our weekly routines.

Also, as we age our desires and needs begin to change. For some individuals, we may still lead active lifestyles, some may still be running marathons, others may golf regularly, while still others may walk, hike, bike, work in the garden, or simply play with their grandchildren. The goal as we age is to be able to continue to participate in the activities that we enjoy for as long as we can. In order to do so we need to keep our muscles strong, joints flexible, improve our balance and keep our hearts healthy and let's not forget good nutrition (another topic) and this takes a little extra work.

A prime example is with my husband. He loves to be outdoors, he hikes (lots of hills), hunts, and bikes. When I tried to encourage him to begin lifting weights, he was not interested. He told me my legs are strong because I walk a lot, my upper body is strong from carrying a pack and chopping firewood. When I asked him to perform a 1-minute wall sit, I thought he was going to collapse to the floor. His legs were shaking and it was much more difficult than he expected.

I try to explain to my senior clients that the role of exercise as we age is to make these tasks easier and to allow them to complete certain tasks quicker. The stronger our legs become, the easier it is to walk that hill, carry your groceries up the steps. I am not talking about putting 100# on bar and perform a squat! I am talking about performing the basic moves such as sit to stand,

lunges, push and pull movements which help to make your daily activities easier. This may be as simple as sitting into a chair without arms, easily getting up from the floor after playing with your grand-

child, or making your bed.

The rewards of establishing a solid strength, cardio and balance/flexibility routine is to make your life more enjoyable. There is nothing that makes me happier than to hear a client say “I carried my groceries up two flights of stairs, it wasn't easy, but I never could have done that if I haven't been working on my cardio routine and weights” or for the individual, like my husband, who is able to chop three loads of firewood in two hours instead of five hours.

So continue to keep yourself strong and healthy and vary your exercise routine. If you are unsure of what exercises to perform, reach out to a fitness professional for advice. Keep your focus of enjoying the view from the top of the mountain during your 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's and then, only then, allow yourself to slow down the pace as you move into your 90's and 100's.

Happy and healthy living!

> Lisa Reutzel is the Fitness Supervisor at the **Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park.**

Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park is open to USC residents and surrounding community residents. For more information, visit www.twpusc.org/crc/crc-home or call (412) 221-1099.

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BRING A FRIEND FRIDAYS

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Bacon vs Sausage

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A New Wave in Wellness ... **WATER EXERCISING!**

Exercising in the water has become increasingly popular for all ages and abilities. The water allows exercisers to enjoy the health benefits without added pressure on their joints. Water exercises are low impact and great for cardiovascular endurance, strength training, calorie torching and rehabilitation. Exercise, both on land or in the water can also help delay the aging process significantly.

The water generates constant resistance on the muscles and because the water lessens the effect of gravity on the human body, one can move through their entire range of motion to greatly improve their flexibility. Water exercising/swimming takes pressure off of one's hips, knees and back up to 90% and can significantly minimize pain. This lessened force of gravity also helps to promote greater blood from the extremities back to the heart.

For anyone who has been diagnosed with arthritis or joint

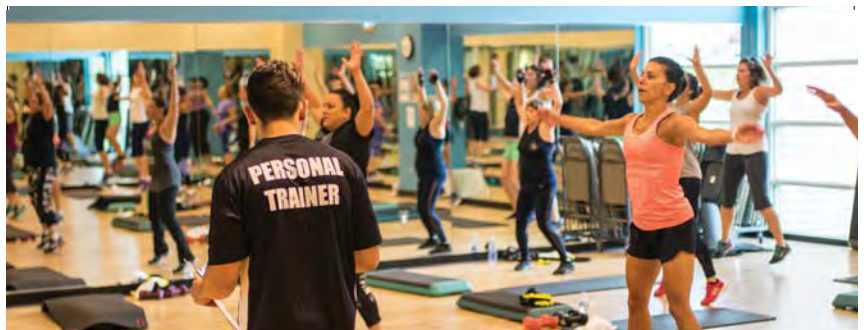
dysfunction, the water can help relax sore and inflamed muscles while building strength and support.

Water exercise is also becoming more popular with younger populations and athletes. We see more personal training done in pools by engaging in higher intensity movements with low impact to the body. New equipment such as bands, medicine balls, weights, paddles, parachutes and kettlebells are making their way into the pool area. These workouts involve interval training with weight training exercises and cardiovascular moves which may include water running/drills. Athletes are also taking to the pool for both active and recovery workouts.

Workouts in the water can help personal trainers to reinforce movements done on land, work on proper breathing techniques and increase strength training efforts by placing consistent resistance on the muscles throughout the entire exercise.



Water exercising/swimming takes pressure off of one's hips, knees and back up to 90% and can significantly minimize pain.



“Come meet us, so we can
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Pear Almond Oatmeal

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


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Weight Loss & Diet Plans

The 'Skinny' on Carbs

By Kevin Brown

If you've ever been on a weight-loss diet, or if you have diabetes, you're probably familiar with counting carbohydrates. However, if you're new to dieting or have been recently diagnosed with diabetes, counting "carbs" may seem like a foreign language. We posed some questions about carbs to Susan Zikos, RD, LDN, CDE, a registered dietitian and diabetes educator at Ohio Valley Hospital, and she gave us the "skinny" on what it exactly means.

SO, WHAT ARE CARBS AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

"Carbs, or carbohydrates, are molecules that have carbon, hydrogen and oxygen atoms," Susan explains.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CARBS?

Susan notes that dietary carbohydrates can be split into three main categories: sugars, starches and fiber.

"Sugars are sweet, short-chain carbohydrates found in foods. Examples are glucose, fructose, galactose and sucrose. These are broken down into simple glucose in the digestive system," she says.

"Starches are long chains of glucose molecules, which eventually are broken down into glucose in the digestive system."

"Humans cannot digest fiber, but fiber can feed the growth of good bacteria in the digestive system, much like the probiotics that we pay extra for. Fiber is an exception. It does not provide energy directly, but it does feed the good bacteria in the digestive system. These bacteria can use the fiber to produce fatty acids that some of our cells can use as energy."

WHICH FOODS CONTAIN CARBS?

According to Susan, carbohydrates are in all the sugary or starchy foods we eat. "Carbs are in starchy items like breads, rice, potatoes, macaroni and noodles. Carbs are also in some less obvious foods like milk and yogurt. And, of course, fruits and fruit juices are excellent sources of simple sugars. Pies, cakes, cookies and donuts, though they are made with flour, have added sugars which make them sweet," Susan explains.

WHAT DO NUTRITION LABELS TELL ME ABOUT CARBS?

"Right now, the Nutrition Facts Label tells us many things. It tells us what the serving size is for the product and how much protein, fat and carbohydrate are in a product. It also tells us about other nutrients like sodium and some vitamins. The Total Carbohydrates per serving is expressed in grams, which is helpful for people with diabetes who may want to limit their intake of carbohydrates," she says.

"The label also lists the Dietary Fiber content, which is helpful if you want to increase fiber intake. Recommended levels are 18 to 35 grams of fiber per day. Americans as a whole do not reach those levels because of the amount of processed foods in our diets," she says.

Susan notes that the Nutrition Facts Label is now in the process of revision and most labels will change by Jan. 1, 2020 to more accurately reflect the serving size and nutritional content of each food. "Additional sugars" will reflect sugars that are added, rather than natural sugars that are in foods. These changes will help us to make better choices."

WHAT ARE GOOD CARBS AND BAD CARBS?

Susan says that no food or carbohydrate should be classified as 'good' or 'bad'.

"This just makes us feel guilty as we eat it. And, we all eat foods that we know are not good for us from time to time, however, some carbs are more 'worthy' than others. Carbohydrates in their less processed forms - vegetables, whole fruits, whole grain breads, cereals and pastas - have more fiber in them and also more nutritional value," she explains.

WHAT DO CARBS HAVE TO DO WITH DIGESTION?

"The fiber associated with healthy carbohydrates helps to speed along the digestive process, and prevent constipation. Some fiber, especially those from fruits, vegetables and whole grains, also contain prebiotics which are the 'food' for the probiotics or 'good bacteria' in our digestive systems," Susan notes.

"Fiber also helps us to feel full faster and for a longer time. Another benefit of fiber is that it can also help cut your risk of certain cancers, lower your cholesterol, and help keep your blood sugar balanced."

I'm trying to lose weight. Which carbs should I avoid?

"In general, we should avoid the carbohydrates made from white flour and white rice," recommends Susan.

"Many of the nutrients and most of the fiber have been removed from those foods. A good number of popular diets, including Atkins, Keto, Paleo and South Beach, limit carbs to some extent, with some eliminating them totally for a period of time. They tend to work because they eliminate those low fiber and high calorie snack and comfort foods that we gravitate to when we are tired or bored. However, these are not sustainable eating patterns for long periods of time, so people go back to their old eating patterns and regain the weight."

WHAT ROLE DO CARBS PLAY IN DIABETES?

Susan notes that this could be an article in itself. "In short, diabetes happens when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin to clear out glucose (from carbs) from the blood and put it into the cells for energy. It can also occur when the insulin that is in the blood is not effective in helping the glucose get into the cells," she says.

WHAT CARBS SHOULD I AVOID IF I HAVE DIABETES?

Susan wants people, including those with diabetes, to change their lifestyle choices so they eat healthy foods, like those recommended by the USDA's My Plate.

"For people with diabetes, as well as the rest of us, this entails limiting concentrated sweets - 'white foods', like those made with white flour, white rice and even white potatoes, while increasing the amounts of higher fiber fruits and vegetables and whole grains, lean meats and beans," Susan says.

HOW CAN I DEVELOP A HEALTHY DIET PLAN?

Susan recommends following the "My Plate" guidelines from the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (www.choosemyplate.gov). They have excellent suggestions to eat the right foods, limit portion sizes, and improve health.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CARBS?

"All three major nutrients (protein, fat and carbohydrate) are important, so any further reading should be about all of them in conjunction with building a healthy diet," Susan says. "If high blood glucose levels or obesity are a problem, a person can see a registered dietitian or certified diabetes educator for further information on diet and exercise."



Susan Zikos, RD, LDN, CDE, a registered dietitian and diabetes educator at Ohio Valley Hospital



For those seeking outpatient nutritional services, **Ohio Valley Hospital's Nutrition Services** offers an **Outpatient Dietitian, Nutrition Counseling services, and Diabetic Counseling**. More information is available at www.ohiovalleyhospital.org or by calling (412) 777-6205.

Guide to Healthy Eats

Chaga Mushrooms: The King of Medicinal Mushrooms

By *Kate Safin*

There are a variety of mushrooms whose compounds have been proven to help boost immune function; these include some familiar varieties like shiitake and reishi. But there is one medicinal mushroom whose healing properties have been counted on since the stone ages: the chaga mushroom.

Chaga mushrooms have numerous documented health benefits, from aiding allergies, balancing blood sugars, and detoxifying. In Russia, chaga is an approved treatment for certain cancers. The fungus is anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and contains a host of minerals and amino acids.

Chaga mushrooms grow on hardwood trees, especially birch trees, in Asia, Russia, Canada, and the United States. The chaga grows on the sides of the tree, creating a symbiotic relationship that allows the fungus to absorb nutrients from the tree. The fungus is dark and looks a bit like charcoal, with a rich golden interior. It can be harvested from a tree repeatedly.

Once harvested, the chaga mushroom is dried and broken into chunks or ground into a fine powder. It can be placed in capsules or formed into a tincture, but the most common way to take chaga is by brewing it into a tea and drinking it. Adding some honey and coconut milk makes a delicious Chaga Chai Latte.



Chaga Chai Latte

Ingredients:
1 teaspoon Chaga
Extract Powder
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
8 oz hot water
1 teaspoon raw honey
or coconut sugar
1/4 cup coconut milk

Instructions:
Add the ingredients into a
blender. Blend until well com-
bined and frothy. You can also
stir the ingredients together in a
mug. It won't have the same
frothiness but it will still taste
delicious. Sip and savor.

Locally-harvested chaga mush-
rooms are available at the East
End Food Co-op in the Bulk
Herbs Department. You should
consult your physician or other
health care professional before
trying any alternative health
treatment plans.

Submitted by Kate
Safin, Marketing &
Member Services
Manager, at **East End**

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Weight Loss Tips

from The Washington Health System
Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center

Set Goals that are Attainable

Rise and Dine: Break the Fast

- Eat your first meal within 30 minutes of waking up.
- Your first meal helps buffer stress hormones and revs up your metabolism, which can help you control your weight, stress levels, and mood.
- Skipping meals can lead to eating extra calories at the end of the day

Hydrate Your Body: Aim to Sustain

- Proper hydration can help you think clearly, increase productivity, reduce stress, and regulate appetite.
- A simple tip to increase water intake is to drink a tall glass of water first thing in the morning and keep drinking all day.
- It's recommended to consume 0.5 - 1.0 oz of water per pound of body weight each day to stay optimally hydrated

Be Mindful of Portion Sizes

- Reducing your portions sizes by one-quarter is a great way to jump start your weight loss journey.
- Aim to make a 1/4 of your plate protein and a grain/starch, and 1/2 of your plate a fruit/vegetable.
- Eat slowly.
- Share meals when dining out, or take the rest home.



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St. Clair Hospital to Undergo \$142 Million Expansion

St. Clair Hospital announced a \$142 million expansion at its main campus, the centerpiece of which is a new 280,000-square-foot comprehensive outpatient center.

The outpatient center is targeted to open in fall 2020 and will result in the employment of 150 additional health care professionals at St. Clair, the South Hills' largest employer with 2,500 employees. Groundbreaking is scheduled for later this year. The investment represents the largest expansion at the Hospital's main campus in four decades and is in response to the 130 percent growth in St. Clair's outpatient volume since 2006.

"As a leading health care organization, we are dedicated to providing state-of-the-art medical care in our region," says John T. Sullivan, M.D., MBA, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer at St. Clair Hospital. "Advancements in medical science have dramatically changed how medical care will be delivered in the future, and we are addressing that evolution by creating a facility in which next generation treatments can be provided in a convenient, easy-to-access, patient-focused setting. The new outpatient center will prove to be a transformative experience for patients by consolidating high-quality clinical and support services under one roof."

Dr. Sullivan says the new six-story building will offer comprehensive diagnostic and therapeutic outpatient services, including: laboratory; medical imaging; cardiodynamics; physical and occupational therapy; an infusion center; outpatient surgery with 10 operating rooms, two procedure rooms, and 51 pre- and post-surgical rooms; a spacious endoscopy (GI) suite with six exam rooms; other multidisciplinary clinical programs; conference space; multiple seating options; a café serving chef-prepared offerings; underground parking; and a commercial pharmacy.

"All of these clinical services and amenities will be complemented by the



addition's modern architectural features, including a two-story atrium that will flood the building with natural light," Dr. Sullivan says.

"This truly represents 'groundbreaking growth' for St. Clair Hospital," says James M. Collins, President and Chief Executive Officer at St. Clair Hospital. "St. Clair is already a national leader in patient safety, quality, patient satisfaction and value. With

this addition, St. Clair will have forward-looking facilities commensurate with its growth and the rapid changes in how health care will be delivered in the future."

The new outpatient center will be constructed on property that spans Mt. Lebanon and Scott Township on N. Wren Drive and will be connected to the existing Hospital. The project also includes the construction of a new employee parking garage (opened in May) and a new central power plant that will modernize the campus' infrastructure. For added public safety, the project includes realigning N. Wren Drive to better connect with Bower Hill Road and Firwood Drive, as well as the installation of new traffic signals and sidewalks.

The expansion will also increase the Hospital's already significant contribution to the economic vitality of the southwestern Pennsylvania region. An impact study conducted by the Allegheny Conference's Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh estimates the project will add 1,632 direct, indirect and induced jobs to the region, and contribute approximately \$262.4 million in direct revenue and \$145 million in value-added services to the region's economy.

Funding for St. Clair's \$142 million building project is being supported by philanthropy, government grants, tax exempt bonds, and Hospital funds.

Gateway Health Donates Mattresses, Box Springs, Bedding to St. Joseph House of Hospitality

Gateway Health, a leading Medicaid and Medicare Advantage MCO in Pennsylvania, recognizes the needs of those who struggle. As part of their effort to help individuals overcome barriers that might prevent them from taking care of their physical health, Gateway Health recently donated mattresses, box springs and bedding to St. Joseph House of Hospitality. St. Joseph House of Hospitality is a program of Catholic Charities. Founded in 1937, St. Joseph is a 60 room single residential facility for men who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

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



Gateway Health executives (right) pose with a homeless Vietnam veteran, who said he couldn't wait to sleep in his new bed. "I'm undergoing treatment at the VA and my back has been bothering me sleeping on a saggy mattress. This will be a huge relief."

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Mon Valley Community Welcomes GI Doctors

Spartan Health Surgicenter and the Mon Valley community welcome Pittsburgh Gastroenterology Associates (PGA) to Monongahela. PGA is an eight-physician practice, offering state-of-the-art care, a full range of diagnostic and therapeutic options in digestive health and nutrition. All PGA physicians are board certified in gastroenterology. Among the members is, Nick Bellicini, D.O., Monongahela native. Dr. Bellicini and PGA are seeing patients Mondays and Thursdays at the Spartan Health Surgicenter. For more information, call (724) 565-5164.

Email your news items to goodhealthmag@aol.com

KIDNEY DISEASE

Washington Health System Nephrology Opens ADPKD Clinic

By Daniel Casciato

Autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD) is a common, life-altering genetic disease affecting one in every 400 people. In this disease, cysts develop and replace healthy kidney tissues in both kidneys which can lead to kidney failure. Once a person has kidney failure, dialysis or a transplant are the only options.

ADPKD is the fourth leading cause of kidney failure. More than 50 percent of people with ADPKD will develop kidney failure by age 50 according to the PKD Foundation.

“About half of those people who carry this genetic mutation do not necessarily show signs of the disease, but the other half can have fairly significant clinical consequences,” says Dr. Chris Gisler, a nephrologist with Washington Health System Nephrology. “Their kidney function gradually declines and, ultimately, they are at risk of requiring dialysis.”

Symptoms of ADPKD

The average kidney is about the size of your fist. Polycystic kidneys are larger and could weigh up to 30 pounds.

“ADPKD patients develop pain because these cysts are growing and, in some cases, can rupture,” says Dr. Gisler. “Some patients have pain in their abdominal cavity and blood in their urine. It is a disease that progresses over time.”

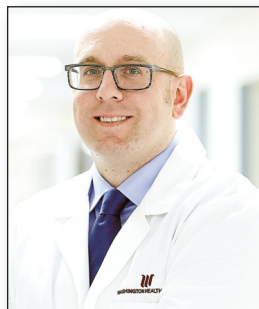
Unfortunately, most patients are asymptomatic at first. Many are never diagnosed with ADPKD because they have few or no symptoms. These are the signs to be aware of:

- High blood pressure
- Blood in the urine
- Pain in the back or abdomen
- Urinary tract infection
- Kidney stones

Treating the disease

Dr. Gisler and his colleague, Dr. Shirley Dopson, who both trained extensively to treat ADPKD, recently formed the ADPKD Clinic to help treat patients with this disease.

“Our main goal is keeping patients off dialysis and keeping their kidneys healthy,” says Dr. Gisler. “Patients in Washington and Greene counties were traveling to Pittsburgh or Cleveland to receive specialty care. We wanted to provide them a local option.”



If you have a family history of kidney disease, Dr. Chris Gisler recommends getting screened because the sooner you start treating it, the better your outcome.

The clinic focuses on pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies. Dr. Gisler and Dr. Dopson will diagnose ADPKD by performing an ultrasound and pay special attention to people with a family history of kidney disease.

“The ultrasound gives us enough information, along with the family history, to make the diagnosis,” says Dr. Gisler.

Earlier this year, a new medication was approved by the FDA—Jynarque. This pill taken twice a day has been shown to slow the growth of cysts and can preserve kidney function. While it doesn’t completely cure ADPKD, it extends the time before a patient needs dialysis or a transplant.

“Patients have access to cutting-edge therapies like Jynarque at our clinic,” says Dr. Gisler. “Additionally, we will counsel and monitor fluid intake because drinking at least 2-to-3 liters of water daily has been shown to slow cyst progression. We will obtain ultrasounds to monitor cyst progression and help patients with genetic counseling such as determining whether family members should be screened.”

If you have a family history of kidney disease, Dr. Gisler recommends getting screened because the sooner you start treating it, the better your outcome.

“Don’t wait until your kidneys are near failing,” he says. “Once your healthy kidney tissue is gone, our options are limited. We want to keep your kidneys healthy and keep you off dialysis.”

> For more information or to schedule an appointment call the **WHS Nephrology** office at (724) 228-1303 or visit whs.org.

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Advanced Surgical Hospital Offers Patient-Friendly MRIs

By Daniel Casciato

When your physician needs a noninvasive way to examine your organs, tissues and skeletal system, he or she will recommend an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging).

An MRI scan is a safe and painless test that uses a magnetic field and radio waves to create detailed images of your tissues and organs. It can help your physician to better diagnose a variety of problems.

An MRI is often performed to help diagnose:

- Orthopedic injuries and disorders
- Spinal cord abnormalities
- Brain abnormalities such as tumors, stroke aneurysms, dementia, multiple sclerosis and others
- Internal organ conditions

"One of the advantages of an MRI is that there's no radiation involved with an MRI scan as opposed to an X-ray or CT scan," says Daniel Jones, MRI director for Advanced Surgical Hospital (ASH). "An MRI also offers extremely fine tissue resolution meaning we can better see tissues, cartilage or muscles—basically any body part."

At ASH, they are committed to obtaining the most diagnostic study while simultaneously putting you at ease. These are some of the reasons why ASH invested in a General Electric Optima MR450W MRI. This MRI uses much newer technology than other models and produces the high-quality images. In



The MRI Team at Advanced Surgical Hospital include (l-r): Dan Jones, Imaging Director; Alisia Berg, Patient Registration Specialist; and Carly Orion, MRI Technologist.

fact, the image quality is greatly improved for smaller body parts such as wrists, ankles, and knees.

"This MRI also contains a shorter and wider bore than a typical configuration so patients who are claustrophobic may feel less so," says Jones. "Everything about this scanner was designed to be more patient-friendly."

An MRI can last anywhere from 30 minutes to more than an hour. Most people get through an MRI exam without any trouble. However, Jones adds that the staff wants to make sure patients are comfortable and feel safe during their scan.

"We have a very professional and

dedicated staff committed to patient satisfaction and that is reflected throughout the hospital," he says. "We will work with any patients, who may feel uncomfortable or are claustrophobic. We want patients to get through the exam whether it's by playing music or staying in the room during the MRI and chatting with them. We also provide an emergency call button that patients can press, and we can expedite their exit from the machine."

ASH offers expedited MRI appointments with a typical results turn-around in 24-to-48 hours.

ASH sends your test results electronically to your physician before

your follow-up visit. No matter where your doctor is located, the protocol is the same. In addition, upon your request, the ASH medical record team can also provide you a CD of your study.

For anyone who needs to get an MRI, Jones adds that you do not have to be a patient at ASH to have an MRI done there. Referrals are accepted from any physician.

"All you need is a doctor's order for the exam," he says. "If your insurance requires it, an authorization is required as well."

Advanced Surgical Hospital is a Physician Owned Hospital. For more information, visit the website <http://ashospital.net> or call (724) 884-0754, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm.

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Rotary Provides Free Medical Equipment

By Lois Thomson

A successful project in Ambridge is now being brought to Turtle Creek. Melissa Allenbaugh, current president of the Turtle Creek Valley Rotary Club, is implementing a program that will provide free medical equipment to people who need it. The equipment includes everything from wheelchairs (both manual and battery operated) and walkers and crutches, to tub benches and toilet seat risers and electric stair lifts.

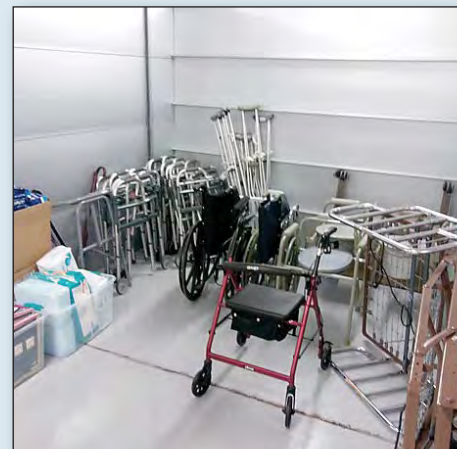
According to Allenbaugh, "One of our sister rotaries in Ambridge started this program about 15 years ago, and they have been collecting these items. When I became president (in Turtle Creek) we talked about it and decided to start a chapter on our side of town, so that we would be able to serve more people."

Allenbaugh is a social worker who works with the geriatric population, and she said, "I see seniors all the time who can't afford a piece of equipment, or who can get one device from Medicare but not another. I also see people who have things they don't use any more, and we don't want those to go to waste."

The club seeks donations of various items, stores them, and then loans them to people for as long as they need. Allenbaugh said the Rotary is just starting this program, but the items collected have already filled a ware-

house. "Express Storage in Turtle Creek donated a unit, and within a month it was filled; and we haven't even advertised, it's mostly been word of mouth." She said if somebody wants to donate an item, they can call her and she will make arrangements to either go and pick it up or meet them somewhere; likewise for making a delivery.

The person may keep the item as long as they like, but she hopes that if it is no longer needed, it would be donated back to the Rotary if it's still in good shape. The service is available to anybody, even, say, a 20-year-old who broke his leg and needed crutches. "There are no age requirements, no income requirements. The service is free to anybody who needs it."



> For more information or to make a donation, call (412) 425-5513.

SPOTLIGHT

Ain't No Mountain High Enough FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL DOUBLE LUNG TRANSPLANT SURGERY, BILL STRICKLAND SET TO SCALE EVEN GREATER HEIGHTS

By Ron Cichowicz

Bill Strickland has been climbing mountains—at least the metaphorical kind—his whole life. Very soon he hopes to climb real ones. The lower Himalayas, in fact.

And when he does, it will be a triumph of his indomitable spirit and his refusal ever to give up whatever the odds.

Once a young and self-described disengaged African American man from Pittsburgh's North Side, Strickland's life began to change when he met Pittsburgh public high school teacher Frank Ross in the 1960s. Ross mentored Strickland throughout his teen years, and kindled in him an appreciation for the power of art, education and community. Ross also helped Strickland gain entrance to the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned a bachelor's degree in American History and Foreign Relations, graduating cum laude in 1969.

In 1968, Strickland founded Manchester Craftsmens Guild, assumed leadership of Bidwell Training Center, in 1972 and started the National Center for Arts and Technology in 2007. His organizations have positively impacted the lives of thousands of mostly underserved individuals, received local—and in some cases, national and international—recognition and are being replicated in the United States and abroad.

These and other accomplishments weren't without challenges. But few would compete with the one Strickland faced two years ago, when he was told he needed a double lung transplant.

"I was born with asthma and started smoking at a young age," Strickland, 70, said. "I was cruising along fine until I got to be about 65 years old. Then I developed early stage COPD and put on oxygen. My pulmonologist said, 'You're a pretty sick guy.'"

That was something Strickland already knew. The COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, had severely limited his ability to breathe.

"I got to the point where I was literally suffocating every time I took a breath," he said. "You can't inhale enough oxygen to survive and you literally suffocate on your feet. They put me on oxygen and steroids and none of it worked. That kept me alive, but that's all it did. I knew from the pain I was feeling that I probably had six months to live."



Bill Strickland

Strickland said his doctor provided another option: a double lung transplant.

"I said to him, 'I'm gonna beat this, so let's get started,'" Strickland recalled. "So he suggested I contact UPMC."

As with every transplant candidate, Strickland was interviewed and underwent a series of tests to confirm his eligibility and ability to undergo the procedure. In preparation for the procedure, Strickland said he went to physical therapy for two years before the surgery to strengthen what muscle tissue he had left. Strickland credits his trainer, Raj Sawhney, with giving him the stamina to withstand the surgery.

"Several of the docs told me that my work in physical fitness prior to the surgery is what probably saved my life because I was strong enough to go through it and healthy enough that I could withstand the violence of the procedure," he said.

Strickland said that he was told part of his brain stopped functioning during the surgery causing some muscle paralysis and compromising of his vision, which continues to repair themselves. Once back home, Strickland said his wife Rose's help and support were invaluable.

"My wife turned out to be a very good doctor," Strickland said. "I can't emphasize enough that you need a good caregiver. That's almost as important as having a good doctor because recovery is no cakewalk. It's major surgery and you are incapacitated and can't do anything for yourself. I couldn't even walk and I had also lost a big chunk of my memory."

"My recovery, from my doctor's point of view, was extraordinary. They were very taken by the fact I could get back to work in

five months."

Strickland attributed much of his ability to his surgery and ensuing recovery period to his attitude and his faith.

"Those were essential medicine that preserved me through all of this," he said. "If I did not have a belief in something, I don't think I would have done nearly as well as I did. I'm more grateful than ever for life. It's a gift. I believe I have an even deeper commitment to God than I probably did before the surgery because some people don't make it, man. So I felt God didn't have a desire to take me just yet."

"Also, without the love and support of people who mattered in my life, there's no way I could have done this. You can't do it by yourself."

Another motivator for Strickland's recovery is obvious to anyone who spends even a little time with him: His commitment to his work and his genuine belief that his work is not yet done.

"There are about 140 people who work for me and are counting on me to survive," he said. "There are potential students out there in this region, country and abroad that still need our help; and we need more centers to make that possible. They need a new chance at life. I felt that responsibility to get back here and recommit myself to the work."

And if Strickland has his way, what he has accomplished so far is only the beginning.

"I want to build more Centers all over the world," he said. "We're having active conversations with San Juan, Puerto Rico and Vancouver. We have a Center in Israel and we would like to present the idea about building one with his Holiness the Dalai Lama."

And about that other challenge, the one that involves climbing the Himalayas?

"Fact is, I'm doing better than some of the docs who gave me the transplant. I'm now breathing at 123 percent capacity," Strickland said. "My doctor says it's possible," Strickland said. "He's had other patients who have climbed 10,000 feet. Denver is 5,000 feet and I've jogged through Denver. I'm going to climb until I drop. If I'm at 10,000 feet and I drop, then it's 10,000 feet that I'll have climbed."

Anyone want to bet against there being a Manchester Bidwell Center flag flying on the side of a Himalayan mountain sometime soon?

Achilles Foot Care Patient Sees Results in Just Weeks

By Kevin Brown

Toenail fungus plagued John Caruso of Irwin for much of his adult life.

“He had it for a long time, ever since he was in the service,” says John’s wife, Susan. “They just looked terrible. The toenails were thick and hard to cut. All ten toes were involved.”

After using an over-the-counter toenail fungus preparation for over a year, John sought help for the problem from Dr. Patrick D. Roberto at Achilles Foot Care.

“We were doing treatment at home before that where you put the

medicine on every day, kind of like a nail polish,” Susan says. “There wasn’t much improvement at all.”

Achilles Foot Care offers the LunulaLaser® by Erchonia for non-invasive, pain-free treatment of onychomycosis, or toenail fungus.

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

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

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

look normal.”

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

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

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

John and Susan are so happy with



John Caruso

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

“I’ve seen much quicker results with the LunulaLaser than any other treatment plan I’ve used for 25 years.”

Dr. Patrick D. Roberto

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

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When Dealing with Concussions, It's Best to Use Your Head!



By **Joseph Dougherty, M.D.**

Most, if not all, of us have been there at some point: You hit your head pretty hard and you wonder, "Could I have a concussion?" This thought probably occurs even more often today with all the publicity given to concussions and their potential long-term effect.

While not every hit to the head results in a concussion, some do and so it's important to recognize the symptoms. These include headache, head pressure, neck pain, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, blurred vision, balance problems, sensitivity to light or noise, and ringing in the ear. Other symptoms could include feeling slowed down or in a "fog," difficulty concentrating or remembering, fatigue, confusion, irritability, sadness, anxiety, drowsiness, trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping more than usual.

While it's rare for someone who may have experienced a concussion to need a trip to the emergency room, some signs might warrant such a trip. These include excessive sleepiness; an inability to stay awake or being roused from sleep; a headache that gets worse and is not relieved with typical medications; increased nausea and vomiting; more confusion, agitation or restlessness; trouble talking, walking, or changes in vision; or seizures or convulsion.

When these more severe signs are absent, you can take the following steps to manage a concussion:

- **Remove yourself from the concussion-causing situation.**
If it occurred during a physical activity (such as sports), do not participate in that sport again until you see a physician. Do not take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), aspirin, or naproxen (Aleve) in the first 72 hours after the concussion.
- **Rest your brain.**
For 48 to 72 hours, you should rest at home with no TV, reading, video games, work or similar activities. Minimizing brain activity helps start the healing process. The earlier you start, the quicker you'll heal.
- **See your primary care physician or a concussion specialist.**
Your doctor will evaluate you to make sure there is nothing more serious and help treat your symptoms.
- **Listen to your doctor.**
Before okaying your return to sports, job or other activity, your doctor may order a "Return to Play" or "Return to Learn" program to ensure your concussion has healed. Most people fully recover from a concussion in 10 to 14 days, although this can vary from individual to individual. So if it takes you a little longer, don't be overly concerned. Trust your doctor and your common sense and follow these tips. Together, they'll ensure you get back in the game.



Dr. Dougherty is a primary care sports medicine physician in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is also Associate Program Director of the Forbes Family Medicine residency and Allegheny Health Network sports medicine fellowship.

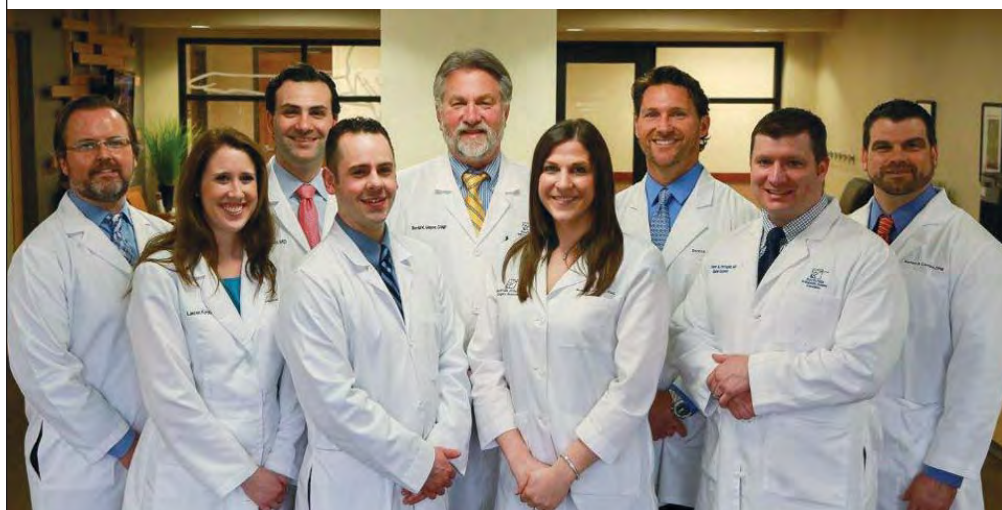


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HEALTH TIP
from ManorCare
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How to Protect Your Lungs

By Dr. Mark Gloth

Pittsburgh area ManorCare Health Services Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Centers would like to share with *Western Pennsylvania Guide to Good Health* readers information on respiratory health, since it is key to maintaining healthy lungs.

Lungs supply oxygen to the blood and remove carbon dioxide and other gasses from the body. The lungs are protected by many defenses, but that doesn't mean that they don't need their "person" to take care of them. It's important to consider the ways that a person can care for their lungs, bronchi, trachea, and diaphragm. A few simple considerations can lead to a much healthier respiratory system.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Dr. Mark Gloth



Dr. Mark Gloth is Chief Medical Officer at HCR ManorCare. For more information, visit www.hcr-manorcare.com.

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—Jennifer

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WHS Swing Bed Unit – 'A Great Way to Recover'

By Lois Thomson

Have you ever needed a little extra time to recover from surgery or wished you could have had a few more days of rehabilitation after recovering from an illness before resuming your normal daily activities? If so, Lynn Watson suggests that the Swing Bed Unit at the Washington Health System Greene facility could have been just what you needed. "It's a great alternative for people to recover if they don't want to go to a nursing home. The Swing Bed Unit is in a hospital setting, and is a combination of nursing, therapy and medical care."

Watson, RN, BSN, MBA and Director of Continuum of Care at Washington Health System, said the unit has several advantages over the typical nursing home. All patients have a private room with a private bathroom. All additional services are available on site includ-

ing emergency service if required. The team approach of nursing, therapy, physician, pharmacists and case managers coordinate the patient's care to achieve optimal patient focused outcomes.

Recreational activities are incorporated into occupational therapy, and the patients enjoy other pastimes as well, such as bingo, puzzles, crafts or watching movies.

Watson said the Swing Bed Unit has been in operation since Washington Health System acquired the Greene County hospital a few years ago. Patients can be admitted to the unit for multiple reasons: needing additional physical, occupational or speech therapy; requiring intravenous antibiotics; or wound care.

Patients are referred following discharge from a hospital, or can be directly admitted from home with prior authorization from the patient's insurance company, according to Watson. "The case



manager or social worker assisting the patient with their hospital discharge planning makes a referral to the unit; the Swing Bed Unit team then reviews the information, and if the patient meets the unit's criteria, coordinates admission to the unit." The stay on the Swing Unit is covered by the patient's skilled nursing facility benefit; any deductibles and copays for the benefit would apply to the patient's stay.

Watson said the feedback has been very positive. "Patients and families really like the care. The

big advantage is that it is in a hospital environment. We can have a physician available to see the patient at any time, and we have case managers who work with families and patients for discharge planning so there is a smooth transition back home.

"It's a great place for people who need a short stay. They can come here, stay, recover, and go home."

➤ For additional information, contact the **WHS Swing Case Managers** at 724-627-2455.

When Rehab Goes Right!

Six years ago Luke Lokay thought he'd never walk straight again. This October, Luke represented America as part of USA Karate Kickboxing team in Cancun, Mexico at the Pan American Championships. His story of determination is one that inspires his teammates and the community.

In 2012, Lokay was a fourth grader in the Norwin School District where he was recruited by Sensei Bill Viola Jr. to join "Team Kumite" (an all-star traveling karate team). Viola remembers, "I just saw something in Luke. He had the intangibles I look for. He had that eye of the tiger—heart." I wanted to work with him and get him ready for the big leagues."

Lokay was poised to compete for his first national karate championship when a fluke accident sent his body and dreams crashing. Lokay recalls, "I was riding my bike and my neighbor's dog (Kippie) charged at me. He knocked me to the ground awkwardly and pinned my knee. I was in pain." Luke's parents (John and Amy) took him to multiple specialists and hospitals in the area. Initial emergency rooms didn't treat him with urgency. He was told to "just rest" the injured

leg. John Lokay recalls, "I wasn't satisfied with what they were saying at all. I went out on a limb and ignored the prognosis. A friend of mine told me to get ahold of Dr. Freddie Fu. That call saved my boy. He got us in the next day."

Luke was rushed in for a 3rd Opinion where Dr. Fu (Chair of Orthopedic Surgery at UPMC) who confirmed Luke had in fact torn his ACL, meniscus and broke his tibia that pulled into the knee cap. The diagnosis was severe for anyone, especially for someone that young. Dr. Fu told the family that if he didn't perform surgery the next day, the leg may never straighten again. The Lokay's followed his advice, rehabilitation and course of action. At the time, karate was out of the picture but Dr. Fu was optimistic that if Luke followed the rehab he could someday make a return.

Luke underwent surgery and began the long journey of rehabilitation. Although he couldn't train, he still remained active with his karate school by attending tournaments to cheer on his teammates. His Sensei remembers, "Most kids would have quit, but there is something special about him. Everyone



Luke Lokay underwent extensive rehab after he tore his ACL, meniscus and broke his tibia.

was rooting for him. I've never seen a kid with such a serious injury be able to bounce back like he did."

Flash forward to 2018, and Luke has earned a spot on "Team USA" at the WAKO Trials in Kansas City, Missouri in February. In the upcoming months while other kids were enjoying summer break, 15-year old Luke was training for Gold. Lokay, now going into 10th grade at Norwin High School explains, "Representing my country is such huge honor. I wasn't supposed to be able to walk, let alone compete for a Gold medal. I'm making the most of my second chance."



About Luke Lokay: He has been training at Allegheny Shotokan "Viola" Karate in North Huntingdon since he was 5-years-old and is a goodwill representative for the Western PA Police Athletic League (PAL) where he serves as an advocate for disadvantaged youth. Lokay is also a "Junior Leader" for the University of Pittsburgh's PIND (Pittsburgh Institute for Neurodegenerative Disease) 5K Kick-a-thon where he and his team raise funds to "Kick Parkinson's Disease."

➤ For more information on the Pittsburgh Institute for Neurodegenerative Disease, visit www.pind.pitt.edu.



HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital's Brain Injury Program Achieves Remarkable Outcomes

By Nancy Kennedy

Andrew Beaulieu, 24, has no memory of the head-on collision that slammed him against a knob on the door in his girlfriend's car, shattering his skull and landing him in the Intensive Care Unit. The healthcare financial counselor and part-time graduate student from Steubenville does recall, however, his 14 day stay at HealthSouth Harmarville Rehabilitation Hospital, where superbly skilled therapists guided him through a rigorous, meticulous and highly individualized Brain Injury Rehabilitation program.

"Everyone at HealthSouth was super nice," says Andrew. "They pushed me and I pushed myself. I had occupational therapy first, then speech therapy in the morning; in the afternoon I had two sessions of physical therapy, with a rest in between. It was hard work."

Outcomes such as Andrew's depend on multiple factors: the type

and location of the injury; the patient's general health; the degree of engagement; the quality of the rehabilitation and the patient and family support.

"Rehabilitation is not something that a healthcare professional can do to you, or give to you. You have to do it.

We give you the tools and encouragement but rehabilitation is absolutely the patient's achievement," says Scott Bleakley, M.S.P.T., Ph.D., associate regional director of therapy operations at HealthSouth Sewickley.

At HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospitals in Sewickley and Harmarville, specialized therapy programs provide state-of-the-art treatment that helps patients achieve the best possible outcomes. The excellent quality of these programs has earned HealthSouth a



Scott Bleakley

prestigious credential: the Joint Commission Disease-Specific Care Certification, the gold standard of accreditation. This designation means that the hospital meets or exceeds national standards and uses evidence-based clinical practice guidelines in the delivery of care.

One program that is achieving such remarkable outcomes is the program that aided Andrew in his recovery, the Brain Injury Rehabilitation program, which serves patients who have experienced traumatic brain injuries resulting from car accidents, sports, stroke or other causes.

"Our Brain injury program is unique in several important ways," says Bleakley. "The program has a dedicated medical and rehabilitation program with a multidisciplinary, patient-centered approach.



Andrew Beaulieu has completed the Brain Injury Rehabilitation program at HealthSouth Harmarville.

Our team is diverse and includes physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, a psychiatrist, neurologist, physical medicine and rehabilitation physician, internal medicine physician, dietitian, pharmacist, rehabilitation nurses, social worker and case manager. The most important member of the team is the patient."

The Brain Injury team utilizes the most advanced technology and is deeply experienced, Bleakley says; the team provides an exceptional amount and intensity of therapy, tailored to each patient according to

(Continued on page 23.)

"I demanded HealthSouth because of their reputation."

- JIM
stroke survivor

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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Legacy Medical Centers: Using a Patient-Centered Approach to Treat and Manage Pain

By Daniel Casciato

Pain on a normal basis is not normal. It's your body's way of telling you something is wrong. Pain may limit the activity of daily living and creates socio-economic issues as well: you are unable to go to work or you may be limited at work. Additionally, pain over time can physically alter the brain and the disposition of a person.

"You should not be in pain on a normal basis," says Pete Vercilla, CEO of Legacy Medical Centers. "Pain is a physiological mechanism that tells you something is wrong. It can occur from misalignment of the joint, inflammation from tissue damage, or tissue trauma. Any pain lasting you longer than a couple of days when you are unable to identify the

cause is a reason to be evaluated."

As an integrated medical, chiropractic and physical therapy practice, Legacy Medical Centers encompasses traditional medicine, chiropractic, and physical therapy but also uses more modern regenerative medical techniques such as stem cells, laser therapy, and hyperbaric oxygen to treat patients.

"We want to reduce inflammation from the pain and take swelling off of the nerve and muscle and return them to normal function," says Vercilla.

One modality used at Legacy to help patients recover from work-outs or injuries is cryotherapy which uses subzero temperatures to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and increase mobility. Though the skin's surface temper-



ature can drop, the treatment's short duration keeps your core temperatures at normal levels.

Another newer modality that Legacy uses is dry needling, a

technique that some physical therapists use for the treatment of pain. The technique uses a dry needle, meaning one without

(Continued on following page.)





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(Continued from previous page.)

medication or injection. It is inserted through the skin into areas of the muscle to release inflammation and tension in the muscles.

Most of the conditions that 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 also with several of the clinical staff, to reach an accurate diagnosis and develop customized treatment plans that will lead patients to the highest quality of life possible.

"Our philosophy is to reduce the inflammation and reduce the pain below the pain threshold of the patient so they can get back to activities of daily living," Vercilla says. "Are they able to bathe? Fix their own meal? Participate in their own hobbies?"


Legacy treats a wide range of patients of all ages, but has an overall special niche in the athletic world treating high school, collegiate and professional athletes. In fact, several members of the

Pittsburgh Steelers and NFL players around the league fly in to be treated at Legacy. The practice recently partnered with a company called SportGait to conduct baseline and post-concussion evaluation as well.

"We also have a concussion therapy protocol that treats the athlete's post-injury," adds Vercilla.

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

"We encourage our patients to be active on a more consistent basis," says Vercilla. "That doesn't mean going to the gym and spending an hour on the elliptical. But there are simple things you can do such as walking which is a great activity. We also encourage our patients to eat right and hydrate. People don't drink enough water."

 Legacy has three locations in the Pittsburgh area: Peters Township, Irwin, and Robinson. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit the website www.legacymedicalcenters.com.

HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital's Brain Injury Program

(Continued from page 20.)

his or her needs and goals.

"The patient sets the goals," explains Bleakley. "When a patient is admitted, we begin with a complete assessment and discussion with the patient and family to identify goals. We help break down the overall goal into smaller, more achievable parts. We engage the family immediately, and schedule a family education meeting within five days of admission. The average length of stay is 18 days, and patients participate in up to 4.5 hours of therapy every day."

Still, though, there is enormous satisfaction for the Brain Injury professionals at HealthSouth, says Bleakley, who has worked there for 22 years.

"Most patients do very well; 90% of our brain injury patients are ready to return home at discharge," added Bleakley. "We celebrate our patient's achievements with an annual reunion event; we get to see their progress and share thanks for their accomplishments."

HealthSouth Sewickley and HealthSouth Harmarville provide exceptional rehabilitation services and are the facilities of choice for persons who are seeking rehabilita-

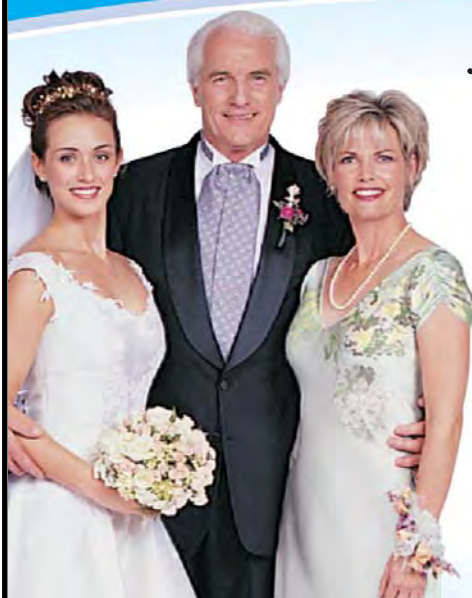
tion for themselves or a family member. While many healthcare facilities claim that they provide rehabilitation services, HealthSouth Sewickley and Harmarville are free-standing rehabilitation hospitals with programs specifically designed for Brain Injury, Parkinson's disease, Stroke, Amputees, Diabetics and others.

"Acute in-patient rehabilitation is a different level of care," says Bleakley, "and we are a Joint Commission-certified program, which indicates the highest level of care available. People in need of rehabilitation services should look for that credential to get the best rehabilitation services."

Andrew Beaulieu is grateful for his experience at HealthSouth Harmarville and the dedicated team of experts who helped him return to enjoying an independent life with his family and friends.

"I have only positive things to say about my time there. My recovery went faster than expected and they told me it was remarkable. A piece of my skull has been removed and will be replaced with titanium, so I still have surgery ahead of me, but I'm doing well thanks to the therapists at HealthSouth."

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CAREERS in HEALTHCARE

Washington Hospital Offers Program to Encourage High School Students to Consider Healthcare Careers

By Ron Cichowicz

Washington Health System has taken the lead in introducing a pilot program in Pennsylvania designed to encourage high school students from inner city and rural communities to consider careers in health care.

Called the Health Profession Affinity Communities (HPAC) Pipeline project, the initiative pairs healthcare organizations with local high schools to introduce students to the possibility of becoming a physician, nurse or other healthcare professional. It is an initiative of the Family Medicine Education Consortium (FMEC), a nonprofit organization that promotes family medicine in the Northeast of the United States.

Already flourishing in Ohio, HPAC is meant to spark big dreams among students while helping to meet a critical need in certain communities.

“Building pathways to the American dream for bright young people who are from rural to first generation to college families’ is a priority for our organization,” said Larry Bauer, FMEC chief executive officer. “Helping the students to achieve their dreams means that when they become well-trained healthcare professionals they will return to serve communities like those they grew up in. Long term, this is how we can address the

health services needs of rural America.”

The impetus for introducing HPAC to Washington came from Dr. Grant Phillips, Associate Director of Resident Education, after attending the 2016 FMEC conference in Pittsburgh.

“I was helping to judge posters HPAC participants are required to present and I met some high school students from inner city Cleveland,” Dr. Phillips said. “I was impressed by their work and their enthusiasm.”

Helping Dr. Phillips coordinate the program this year is Dr. Thivisa Rajagopal, a third year family medicine resident at Washington Health System, who contacted the administration at Washington High School to gauge interest and, ultimately recruit two students to participate in HPAC this year.

“So many students have dreams that they want to become a doctor or nurse but there is something preventing them from doing so,” said Dr. Rajagopal. “Often the reason is financial. But they need to know this is not a reason to stop pursuing their many dreams.”

“The two students we chose have big dreams about going into a scientific field. So why not give them a taste of it, especially at the conference where they are going to meet a lot of physicians, residents and even medical students and see a world outside of high school.”



Dr. Thivisa Rajagopal



Lilly Christy

According to Dr. Rajagopal, the students chosen—Letha Gordon and Lilly Christy—chose a topic and began working on them over the summer. Ms. Gordon’s is on depression and Ms. Christy is focusing on knee injuries, with an emphasis on injuries to the anterior cruciate ligament, or ACL.

For Ms. Christy, a standout athlete who plays soccer for a local club team and is the kicker for her high school football team, her choice of a

topic was an obvious one.

“I tore my ACL playing soccer a year and a half ago,” she said. “I hope to go to college to become a doctor of physical therapy. So my project is looking at ACLs and knee injuries in general, looking at gender differences, the impact of grass versus turf, and so on.”

The students were expected to research their topics and develop a poster to present at the 2018 FMEC conference to be held in Rye Brook, New York.

“It’s a lot of work on top of my school work and other activities,” said Ms. Christy, who estimated she devotes at least 45 minutes a day to the project. “But the topic really interests me and I’m excited to go to New York for the first time.”

According to Dr. Rajagopal, this program can have benefits beyond those gained by the two students participating this year.

“In our community there is a perception the richest kids go to medical school and become doctors,” she said. “But there are kids from inner cities, rural areas or poorer backgrounds who could offer the medical profession a great deal. Through this project, the students chosen can inspire other kids in their high school.”

Added, Dr. Phillips, “Even if the students in the program don’t become doctors, we’ve reached into the community and encouraged an interest in science.”

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Bouncing to a Different Beat How an Investment Banker Found His Calling As a CNA

For 25 years, Ralph Phillips woke up each day, put on a suit and tie, and went to work at an investment management firm, of which he was the proud owner. However, after his father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, that all began to change.

Ralph's father battled Alzheimer's disease for 10 years, and towards the end of his dad's life, Ralph became more involved in the medical and day-to-day aspects of his father's care. From doing things like taking vitals, administering medication and drawing blood samples, Ralph not only learned that he had a knack for providing care, but that he enjoyed that type of work. This realization changed his life. To spend more time with his father, Ralph sold his practice and some years after his dad's passing, Ralph made another life changing decision – he decided to become a certified nurse's aide (CNA).

"I wanted to find something that I thought would be particularly meaningful and useful, so I decided to become a CNA," said Ralph.

In order to begin his new career, Ralph needed to properly prepare for the job, so he enrolled in the CNA Training Classes offered at Presbyterian SeniorCare Network. After completing the course and graduating, he began working at The Willows, the skilled nursing community at the Presbyterian SeniorCare Network Oakmont campus, where he has been part of the team for almost one year.

Since his career change, Ralph has found his life's purpose, easily recognizing the importance of the work that is done by Presbyterian SeniorCare



Ralph Phillips

Network employees, noting, "We have a real opportunity to fundamentally affect the lives of our residents and their families, and to improve their quality of life."

He believes that working as a CNA is both a rewarding and impactful career, and he wishes that more people would recognize that and consider a job as a CNA. "Be compelled to help others for a living," urged Ralph. "Our residents have lived through and experienced so much in their lives - they deserve the best care that we can possibly give them."

Ralph's life has certainly changed over the last few years, but he's not slowing down. His passion for caring for others and his love for the job led him to the decision of returning to school to become a registered nurse. He began school at UPMC St. Margaret on September 4.

As he pursues licensure as an RN, Ralph is reflective of his work and how he got to this point in his life. "Peace of mind is a very important part of this work. I've been in their (the families) seat, so I know what it's like to have to try and manage care for someone that you love," said Ralph. "You lose perspective when dealing with your own loved one. Here, I get to keep perspective and make a positive impact on the residents and their families. That's why I love my job."

> To learn more about career opportunities at **Presbyterian SeniorCare Network**, visit CareersAtSrCare.org or call (412) 435-8953.

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MONONGAHELA VALLEY HOSPITAL ANNOUNCES LPN TO RN PROGRAM

As part of its commitment to the residents of the mid-Monongahela Valley, Monongahela Valley Hospital (MVH) has announced it will now hire licensed practical nurses (LPN) who are enrolled in or are intending to enroll into a registered nurse (RN) program. Successful applicants to this program must be nurses with active nursing licenses and no pending or current disciplinary actions.

LPN candidates can participate in the tuition reimbursement program, which will assist in paying for their classes for an approved LPN to RN program. The tuition reimbursement program pays 100 percent of tuition for up to 9 credits per school year (Sept. 1 to Aug. 31). Nurses hired into the program agree to take sufficient classes to complete their RN degree within 24 months of their hire date and also agree to work for MVH as an RN for a period of 24 months after they receive their RN license, or after the last tuition reimbursement payment made by MVH, whichever is longer.

Pumpkin Smoothie

Fall is here and that means pumpkin-flavored everything – and pumpkin is good for you. If you love pumpkin, try it in a smoothie. Here is a recipe that is creamy, delicious and very healthy:

- In a blender, combine
- 1/2 cup pumpkin pie filling (Not plain pumpkin)
 - 1/2 ripe banana
 - 3/4 cup vanilla yogurt or milk
 - 1/4 tsp vanilla (optional)
 - Sugar to taste

LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

The Arc of Washington County Brings Families Together

By Jennifer Petrie Signore

When a family member has a disability, one of the biggest challenges can be the sense of isolation felt by caregivers. At the time of diagnosis, some families immerse themselves in gathering as much information as possible to help the individual receive the best possible care. Other families may not know where to turn or even where to begin. In many cases, the unique challenges faced by an individual with a disability mean that simple tasks can become complex. Minor outings can become major undertakings. And a family's natural supports can become less available. All of these factors (and more) could create the impression that a family is facing these particular types of challenges alone.

The Arc of Washington County understands that while families need information about how to best care for their loved one with a disability, they also need to overcome the sense that they are alone in this journey. Monthly Connecting Families meetings provide a hearty helping of both. Recent meetings have covered topics like funding and services, available resources, and building a new natural network of support. Meetings always include a guest presentation during the first hour and an opportunity to network and connect over light refreshments during the second hour. Upcoming presentations may include IEP clinics, information on special needs trusts and guardianship, transition employment services, and tools for charting the life course.

Given the inherent challenges of caring for an individual with disabilities, the Arc of Washington County knows that finding the flexibility to attend an in-person meeting can be difficult. To this end, the organization has established a Facebook group called "Connecting Families" to encourage networking in a virtual environment. The Facebook group is a new addition to the Arc of Washington County, and as the group continues to grow, educational materials and webinars will be included in the offerings.



You can follow the **Arc of Washington County** online at www.facebook.com/Thearcwashpa and from there you can request membership in the Connecting Families virtual group. For more information on upcoming Connecting Families meetings, contact Darrilyn McCreedy at mccrereyd@arcowashpa.org or 724-745-3010 x 109.

For more information on living with a disability, visit www.guidetogoodhealth.com.

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Where We Work

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Arc Human Services is hiring! Visit www.archumanservices.org/careers to apply today.

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Your World • Your Pace

Travel - An Inspired Education

By Patti Romig

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

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

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

Ancient and artistic Italy

Ah, Italy. For many people, this boot-shaped country occupies the top spot on their vacation wishlist. It's time to make your dream a real-

ity! Experience Italy by traveling through the rolling vineyard steeped hills, exploring postcard perfect cities and towns and tasting the local cuisine. Florence (one of my personal favorites), a true renaissance city, has museums, palaces, and churches that house some of the greatest artistic treasures in the world. There are so many exciting sites to discover in Rome. Explore its many archaeological remains and monuments, while only steps from appetizing cafes and gelato stands. Have your camera ready for this photogenic metropolitan wonder!

Romantic, chic, delicious France

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



Her Majesty's Great Britain

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

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

Come join us on an upcoming relaxed pace guided tour - we'd love to be part of your inspired travel education!



> Patti and Kelley are the co-founders of **The Relaxed Explorer**, specializing in accessible, guided small group tours. Call at **(412) 386-8730** or visit us online at www.therelaxedexplorer.com.

A Stress-Free Holiday Can Be Yours with a Little Preparation

By Carole A. McKelvey

The winter holidays are coming, and with the right perspective and some advance planning, they can truly be the "most wonderful time of the year." Too many of us approach the holidays with unrealistic expectations and that ends up creating unnecessary stress. Many people drive themselves crazy, trying to do everything and to do it perfectly. They don't get to enjoy it because they exhaust themselves and end up feeling overwhelmed. It's essential to keep in mind that the whole point of the holidays is not the lavish home cooked meal,

the gorgeous table setting or the extravagant gift, but the gathering of the people we love, spending time with each other.

Here are some strategies to minimize holiday stress:

- **Be easy on yourself.** If you have to stay up all night baking pies, then you're going to be irritable. Your family wants your company more than a perfect dessert.
- **Accept help.** If someone offers to bring a dessert or appetizer, let them.
- **Don't try to use the holiday to try to bring together people that don't get along.** That may work in the movies, but in real life,

it's unlikely. Instead of one event with everyone, try several small ones, separating the parties that always have conflict.

- **Simplify!** Don't underestimate the importance of simple fun. Do things as a family: hayrides, holiday parades, caroling, or simply driving through the neighborhoods to see the beautiful decorations.
- **Don't put yourself into debt** - you will surely regret it, as you end up paying all year for the previous holiday expenses.
- **Practice moderation in everything:** food, alcohol and even partying. You don't have to go to every party!

• **Set boundaries:** no discussion of politics or other divisive topics!

Friction with loved ones can create emotional pain. If you know that friction is likely, prepare yourself. Have a response ready so that you are not caught off guard and forced to react. Respond, don't react. And keep your focus on time with the people you love, enjoy and cherish.

> **Carole A. McKelvey, M.S.**, is the owner and president of **Solutions West**, a private therapy service that offers counseling for a variety of needs. For more information, visit www.solutionswest.org



“

The Washington Physician Hospital Organization is always looking for ways to collaborate with other organizations to improve the quality of our services and the health of our community members. Our goal is to develop new products, facilitate an exchange of health information and find new ways we can work with local health plans to deliver convenient, cost-effective care.”

—CHARLES R. VARGO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WASHINGTON PHYSICIAN HOSPITAL ORGANIZATION

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The ever-changing, complex nature of health care can be tough on our patients and the physicians who care for them. That’s why Washington Health System and physicians throughout the region formed the Washington Physician Hospital Organization (WPHO).

“The mission of the WPHO is ‘to strengthen the local provider community by creating and maximizing opportunities to improve the delivery of quality, cost-effective health care,’” says John D. Six, MD, Co-medical Director of the WPHO. “Your WPHO physician and WHS work hand in hand to improve your health and simplify the complexities of health care.”

THE BENEFITS OF COORDINATION

The WPHO is the largest organization of its kind in southwestern Pennsylvania and boasts a roster of roughly 275 physicians. Behind the scenes, the WPHO works quietly performing a variety of necessary tasks, such as promoting clinical integration.

If you are admitted to the Emergency Department, for example, your WPHO-affiliated primary care physician receives an alert in real time. A second alert goes out as soon as you’re discharged, and your physician receives information about the care you received and your post-discharge instructions. This better enables your provider to perform follow-up care and answer any questions you may have.


Additionally, the WPHO collaborates with local insurers to develop products and programs that keep medical costs low.

“The WPHO’s emphasis on clinical integration helps improve the value of care,” says Matthew Stantspainer, DO, Co-medical Director of the WPHO. “When people see an affiliated physician, they benefit from high-quality care.”

» **TO FIND A WPHO PHYSICIAN NEAR YOU, CALL THE PHYSICIAN REFERRAL LINE AT (724) 250-4310 OR VISIT WHS.ORG AND SELECT “PHYSICIAN FINDER.”**

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CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Why Is My Child Biting?

You just got the call from your child's day care regarding a biting incident involving your child. You are not exactly sure what caused the behavior or what to do about it. Take heart, Karen Bowman, a Teli Developmental Specialist with years of experience in Early Intervention has helped numerous parents and their children to address the issue of biting. "While it is little comfort, biting is very common during the early years from ages 1-3, when a child has not fully developed an ability to communicate. But most importantly, there are strategies a parent can use to address the issue."

Babies and toddlers may bite for many reasons. "At this young age a child does not bite to be mean or cause pain. Instead the major reasons they bite may be closely tied to how they learn about their world, communicate as well as react to situations." explains Karen. Some of the typical reasons for biting Karen sees when working with toddlers include:

- Exploring their environment through their mouths
- Getting attention through biting as a way to take back a toy from their playmate or sibling, or in order to gain an adult's attention
- Unable to use words as they lack language skills to express strong feelings such as anger and frustration.
- Frustration whether due to a lack of sleep, fear in a new unfamiliar or stressful situation, they may act out through biting to relieve their stress.
- Seeking sensory input in which a child has an intensive craving for oral sensory experiences (biting, chewing, or sucking).

What can I do to stop my child from biting?

While each child and the reason they are biting is different, it is important that open communication and positive problem solving is used when dealing with your child's behavior.

To help understand what is causing the behavior and how to address it, Karen has shared the following strategies with parents:

- Observe and shadow your child – Do you notice the behavior occurring in specific situations such as



Karen Bowman

new people, new environments, or when your child is particularly tired? If you see a pattern, begin to anticipate the situation and if possible prevent it. Making sure nap time routines are followed can be an enormous help. Additionally, using redirection techniques such as providing your child with more personal space and gradually introducing them to the new environment, can reduce the tension they may feel.

• **Deal with the situation when it happens** – Remove your child from a potential stressful situation to a place where they have time to calm down. Insure you are calm, but firm, using facial expressions such as frowns to communicate your concern along with simple phrases to express displeasure such as a firm "No" or "Stop, biting hurts."

• **Alternatives** – Dependent on your child's developmental stage, consider a tool box of alternatives such as suggesting the children "give each other space" or use of phrases such as "Please stop" or "That's mine".

When should you be concerned that the strategies aren't working?

Karen's strategies require repetition to help your child understand and adjust their behavior. If you are concerned that there is a more serious issue, you should share your concerns with your pediatrician.



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Teachable Moments

By Ned Ketyer, MD

I was fortunate enough to be raised in a house cluttered (a generous understatement) with books, magazines, and newspapers, by parents who read them and expected their two children to own the same passion for lifelong learning by reading. We also watched a good bit of television (all seven channels, in black and white), and since we only had two TVs in the house — one in the master bedroom and a small one in the kitchen to watch Walter Cronkite read us the news every evening over dinner — we tended to watch and discuss our favorite programs together. Needless to say, there was no shortage of teachable moments — and opportunities to discuss them — when I was growing up.

Today, it is clear that people get their information from a diffuse array of sources and often not from network TV and the few “newspapers of record” that informed practically everyone back in the day.

Whether one thinks this is a good development, a dangerous one, or a double-edged sword, it seems to me that recent events might make us want to hit “pause” and ask ourselves: “What are the children seeing?” “What do they think?” And, then: “What should we parents be teaching them?”

Let's begin here. Without getting into the specifics of what may or may not have happened in the lives of some people who find themselves in the headlines and in the crosshairs of public opinion:

- It is never appropriate or acceptable (and, in fact, it is illegal) to jump on top of another person and touch them sexually without their consent. That includes touching them over clothing. It doesn't matter the age, the place, or the situation, what's wrong is wrong; if someone wants to defend that sort of behavior, they can call their mother first.

- Underage drinking by minors with the purpose of getting drunk is ill-advised, inappropriate, unac-

ceptable and illegal (whether or not an adult is present in the house where the underage drinking occurs).

- Drinking to the point of inebriation by anyone at any age is dumb and ill-advised and almost always leads to trouble. Always have your wits about you in every situation.

- Don't lie. We all make mistakes. Own them, even if the consequences of disclosure are severe.

- All mistakes matter no matter when in our lives they occur. Some mistakes, whenever we make them, will impact us forever. It's not always fair, but that's the way it is.

- Apologizing after making a mistake is not a sign of weakness; making the same mistake twice is.

- It is easier to ask for and receive forgiveness if you tell the truth.

While they might not discuss current events with parents, know that most children and teenagers see what is going on around them. They hear opinions of others —



Dr. Ned Ketyer

especially their friends — and may even be forming some of their own. Talk to them. Ask them what it is that they have seen and heard. Ask them what they think and how they feel about it. And make sure they learn the lessons you want them to learn from it.

After all, a teachable moment is a terrible thing to waste.

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CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Printing Possibilities: 3D Printers Enrich Learning for Students with Visual Impairment



WPSBC Student Davonte (left) explores a model of plant and its root system which was made on a school 3D printer to help our students with visual impairment understand the concept.

By Jillian M. Pritts, CFRE

A fact of life for students with visual impairment is that they have to deal with the burden of getting accessible materials before they can even tackle the content. For years, our educators and team members have invented, crafted or modified items by hand to help our boys and girls learn a concept and give them tactile access to whatever they need.

But the advent of 3D printing has created a new world of opportunities for visually impaired learners. The technology turns abstract ideas into tactile teaching aids for the visually impaired that can be modified exactly to the individual's visual needs, abilities and preferences.

Thanks to generous support from the community, the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children currently has eight 3D printers which will be a featured part of our newly established accessible STEM Lab. Assistive Technology Specialist Cecelia Manning and Equipment Specialist Molly Eads are trained to operate the machines and are excited about how equipment will benefit our students as well as the wider population of the visually impaired community.

"This technology directly impacts how we teach students who are blind or visually impaired. 3D printers are allowing us the opportunity to create precise, durable objects and diagrams that our students can interact with throughout the school day as they work on

building their tactual and braille reading skills," Manning said.

Our assembled teams of educators, therapists and health professionals recognize the limitless possibilities 3D printing presents for our students who confront significant challenges in addition to their visual impairment. Customized tools and objects help with basic concept development, aiding communication, fine motor training and encouraging increased literacy.

Staff can now create tactile maps and book pages that include 3D objects and braille in order to create a more accessible learning experience. Therapists are creating adapted tools and parts for wheelchairs and other positioning equipment that doesn't exist or are discontinued but necessary for our students.

This customization allows us to create exactly what each student needs, enhancing their daily lives and learning. Plans also include increasing student involvement by using 3D printing to challenge them to imagine and create their own solutions. WPSBC is eager to harness this potential to create innovative solutions that have a lasting impact our students.



To learn more, contact the **Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children** at (412) 621-0100, email prittsj@wpsbc.org or visit www.wpsbc.org. Jillian Pritts is Coordinator of Development and Communications, Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children

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CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Implementing a Token Economy



By Justin Gerwick

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

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

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

The token economy encourages desired behaviors in two ways. First, by obtaining a reward for act-

ing appropriately, students receive immediate feedback on which behaviors are or are not desired. Second, the rewards give the students something to work toward. In order to maintain effectiveness of the token exchange, highly preferred items and activities must remain at a higher price. This will keep the student motivated to continue earning tokens. For example, 10 tokens may be able to purchase five minutes of computer time, while 50 tokens may be able to purchase ice cream and 15 minutes of play time.

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

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

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



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CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Easing School Anxiety in Children

By Joel Shaul, LCSW

With the beginning of a new school year, anxiety can have a way of settling in and troubling young students. Many children become acquainted with schoolmates smoothly and easily, while other children, whether due to anxiety, temperament, or other issues may struggle with establishing a peer social network.

Anxiety can take many forms and occur in young students for a variety of reasons, especially when encountering changes such as returning to school after a summer break.

An effective way to manage anxiety is to encourage your child to engage in positive social connections such as joining a club, sports team or engaging in extracurricular activities. Studies confirm the importance of and the need for children and adolescents to form social bonds with their peers.

Here are a few additional ways parents and professionals can support children who are experiencing anxiety as they prepare to return to school:

Try obtaining a copy of last year's school yearbook, or visit the school's website, to review with your child. Go over the photos of staff and students to become familiar with names and identify common interests.

Make a list of students or teachers your child may already know and come up with useful facts about each individual and write them down. A fun way to do this activity is to print out an outline of a head (available in free online images) and draw words and pictures inside the outline to represent facts and interests of each student.

In particular, students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may struggle with forming meaningful social connections. These students may also ben-



efit from a review of basic questions and conversation starters. It may be helpful to create a short list of words and phrases your child can use to start a conversation if they feel uncomfortable or anxious about making a social connection. For some children, a group organized for the purpose of building social skills may also be helpful.

All of these activities can ease anxiety for the child, and help support the bond between parent and child.

> Joel Shaul is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker at the Watson Institute, an organization providing special education and behavioral health services. **The Watson Institute** is a special education organization which offers licensed, approved private school programs as well as outpatient mental health services such as social skills groups, therapy, and evaluations. For more information, visit www.thewatsoninstitute.org or call (412) 749-2889.

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MEDICARE



It's Annual Enrollment Time: Know Your Options

By Vanessa Orr

With the annual enrollment period for Medicare quickly approaching, it's important that individuals who will be choosing new health plans or prescription plans know what their options are. Unfortunately for those who live in western Pennsylvania, those choices aren't exactly clear.

"During the annual enrollment period, which runs from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, individuals who want to choose a new health plan or prescription plan for 2019 may be facing some confusion," explained John Wells, owner of Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh. "Tens of

thousands of people who have certain plans may not be able to utilize all provider networks. What I've seen at recent meetings where we discuss the upcoming year and highlights of new plans is that it is still really unclear as to whether or not people on Highmark plans will be able to use UPMC at all."

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court recently ruled that Highmark Medicare Advantage members' access to the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) network will end in 2019. It is expected that seven UPMC hospitals will leave the Highmark network, with UPMC

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh remaining in the network through 2022.

The good news is that there are other options. "I highly recommend that people look into going back to original Medicare and picking up a supplement that will allow them to still have access to the networks across the country that they would like."

One of the best ways to determine what plan to enroll in is to for individuals to sit down with a broker and discuss their health care needs, including the medications that they're taking, to determine what insurance coverage will meet their needs for the com-

ing year.

"People should be setting up those appointments now so that they can get in during October and November," said Wells. "We will be able to tell them what options are available to them across their provider network, so they know if they can see what doctors they need to see. There are a lot of carriers out there, who provide very good coverage."

To learn more, contact Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh at www.medipgh.com or call (412) 343-0344.



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Choose a Medicare Plan for 2019 That's Right for You

By **Daniel Casciato**

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

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

Here are some key things you should consider:

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

Know what your plan has to offer

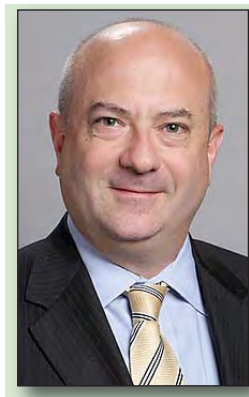
Many insurance companies update their formulary (drug list) annually. According to O'Connor, some of these changes for 2019 could be more noticeable. For example, some prescription drugs might have a cost increase or tiering change. Make time to review current prescriptions and compare against 2019 plan's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

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

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

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

O'Connor recommends people also view and compare the plans supplemental benefits such as dental, vision, fitness membership and hearing aids. Some companies added coverage for transportation, over the counter medications and post-hospital needs.



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

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

Is Medicare Supplement coverage the right choice for you?

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

Once you have Original Medicare (Parts A and B), see if a Medicare Supplement plan is right for you. Although these plans work alongside your Original Medicare coverage, the premiums can be very expensive

and will go up over time. The plans also have deductibles and coinsurance that can be expensive. However, there are no network restrictions and most medical costs are covered without cost sharing. So you can use any physician or hospital that accepts Medicare.

If you want to sign up for a Medicare Supplement plan, you can do so during the initial enrollment season. This is a 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.

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.

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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MEDICARE

Get Your Free Flu Shot

Flu season is back — did you get your free flu shot yet? Flu viruses change from year to year, so it's important to get a flu shot each year.

It's free for people with Medicare, once per flu season, as long as you get the shot from a doctor or from other health care providers (like senior centers and pharmacies) that accept Medicare.

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

Guard Your Medicare Card

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

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

Don't Miss Your Medicare Enrollment Period!

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

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

MEDICARE RESOURCES

Choosing a Medicare Supplemental Insurance plan is one of the most important health and financial decisions you make for your retirement. Fortunately, there are numerous helpful resources. The best is the federal government's Medicare site, www.medicare.gov, where you will find tons of information about every aspect of Medicare. The web site is simple to use, and you can download or order any of their helpful brochures, in large print and in any language.

Another good resource is the State health Insurance Assistance Program: www.shiptacenter.org



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Covered Medications:** It's important to double-check to

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

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

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






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

New to Medicare? Get personal help and support.



UPMC *for Life* makes it easy to get the information and answers you need about Medicare. Visit us online, attend a seminar, or call to speak with a Medicare Advisor for personal help and support with your Medicare plan choice. With plans starting at \$0 for your monthly plan premium,* prescription drug coverage, and in-network access to doctors and hospitals you trust - don't wait.

UPMC *for Life* UPMC Health Plan Medicare Program

-  **Speak to a Medicare Advisor toll-free at 1-866-786-7036 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. TTY users should call 1-800-361-2629.**
-  **Visit us online at www.upmchealthplan.com/medicare**
-  **Find a seminar near you, call us at the phone number above or visit www.upmchealthplan.com/medicare/learn**

*You must continue to pay your Medicare Part B Premium.

This information is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits, premiums, and copayments may change on January 1 of each year. UPMC *for Life* has a contract with Medicare to provide HMO and PPO plans. Enrollment in UPMC *for Life* depends on contract renewal. UPMC *for Life* is a product of and operated by UPMC Health Plan Inc., UPMC Health Network Inc., and UPMC Health Benefits Inc.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-877-381-3765 (TTY: 1-800-361-2629).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-877-381-3765 (TTY: 1-800-361-2629)。

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Senior Guide

- Laser Cataract Surgery • Senior Living Options
- Senior Resources • Home Care • Hospice
- Senior Services that Support Independent Living

See Why Seniors and Caregivers Trust Senior LIFE

By Faith Sobel

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

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

Your Local Senior LIFE Health and Wellness Center

The local LIFE Health and Wellness Center is more than just a senior center. It's staffed by local doctors and nurses and other healthcare professionals from your community and features a medical clinic, exam rooms, therapy and rehab center, recreational room, and personal care



facilities. It's a warm and inviting place where LIFE members can socialize, enjoy hot meals, see the doctor, receive therapy services, obtain personal care, speak to their social worker, and so much more.

A one-stop shop for all senior health and support services.

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

Senior LIFE members have access to a wide

range of services including:

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

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

See for yourself why more seniors are selecting **Senior LIFE**. Call **1-877-998-LIFE(5433)** today to schedule your free lunch and tour. For more information, visit www.SeniorLIFEPA.com. Complimentary transportation provided.

Call today to learn about our Paid Caregiver Program.

Care in your home and at the LIFE Health and Wellness Center.

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

No cost to enroll for those who qualify.



SeniorLIFEPA.com
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This simulated picture is for illustration purposes only. Actual results may vary depending on each individual patient's surgical experience.

Innovative Cataract Technology

Under most insurance plans you can select any surgeon to perform your cataract surgery.

With new innovations in cataract surgery, it is important to know your options before selecting the right surgeon.

femtosecond laser technology (laser cataract) designed to optimize vision. Combining this technology with 10 years of cataract Multi-Focal Lens Implant technology experience, Scott & Christie Eyecare Associates can offer cataract surgery as a **once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for patients to achieve better vision, removing cataracts and correcting refractive error all in one precise procedure**—thus leaving patients with a fine-tuned full range of vision.

Traditional vs. Laser Cataract Surgery

Traditional cataract surgery, which is covered by Medicare and other insurances, involves the implantation of a single-vision lens, which provides good distance vision but most often results in patients wearing glasses for reading and intermediate tasks.

With today's innovative technology, cataract surgery can not only restore vision, but actually improve a patient's quality of life.

Scott & Christie Eyecare Associates is one of the region's most innovative and experienced eye physician and surgeon groups, delivering advanced, customized medical treatments with state-of-the-art ocular diagnostics and

It also leaves patients with astigmatism, since the surgery doesn't correct it. **With laser cataract surgery**, many key steps of the procedure that were manually performed can be completed with precision using the laser (including simultaneous correction of astigmatism, if needed), leading to a customized vision treatment and a more gentle procedure. Surgeons with access to and experience in these combined technologies can offer patients a full range of vision, reducing the dependency on or even eliminating the need for eyeglasses after surgery.

Selecting a Surgeon

Cataract surgery has become a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. When selecting a surgeon to perform cataract surgery, patients should ask these important questions: Can my surgeon explain to me all of my options? Can my surgeon provide me access to the latest FDA-approved technology? Is my surgeon experienced with both traditional and innovative cataract surgical techniques and eyecare? For patients of Scott & Christie Eyecare Associates, the answer to these questions is a resounding yes.

The physicians and staff walk patients through all of their options based on their individual needs and desires, offering them a customized procedure to meet their individual lifestyle.



William C. Christie, M.D.

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Fox Chapel | Fox Chapel Plaza | 1101 Freeport Road, Fox Chapel | 412.782.0400**

From Burundi, Africa to LIFE Pittsburgh: One Couple's Journey!

By Caitlin Bartley
and Abigail Mason

Severino Nsaguye and Melida Bucumi are a married couple from Burundi, a small landlocked country in eastern Africa. They were farmers and were displaced when civil war broke out in their country in 1993, which lasted until 2006. They and their children fled by foot to a refugee camp in neighboring Tanzania. Eight of their children are still in Africa. One son, and his family, were brought to the United States. Severino and Melida joined them in 2015.

With the help of the United Nations and NAMS, Severino and Melida were settled in Pittsburgh in 2015 with their son and his family. In the summer of 2016, Severino was referred to LIFE Pittsburgh. Melida was referred shortly afterward. When they arrived in America, neither of them spoke English.

During their time at LIFE Pittsburgh, Severino and Melida are accompanied by a translator from ECHO International for both their regular center days and doctor

appointments outside of the day center. The Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) and Registered Nurse at LIFE Pittsburgh translated the couple's pill box to their native language of Kirundi. The CTRS also made pictures of body parts on labels to be placed on medications to help with the language barrier. Shortly after they enrolled, the CTRS made a Kirundi-to-English dictionary available to staff to be used in both the center and at home. Staff was also provided with a website for online translations.

In 2017, with the translator's help, the social worker wrote a translation chart with commonly used phrases. The social worker also found a medical picture board to assist with communication. Both resources were used to build upon the Kirundi dictionary.

In the beginning of 2017, the CTRS started the Kirundi "Word of the Week". A Kirundi word was introduced to staff and other participants each week. While amongst their peers in recreation, the other participants would learn the Kirundi word while Severino and

Melida would practice the English word. That word is a way to communicate with the couple in their language, while also encouraging them to learn English.

The social worker also assisted the couple in obtaining their own apartment. The couple was living with their son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren in one house and needed a more accessible and appropriate place to live. The social worker was able to assist the couple to obtain a senior apartment. The social worker and translator went with the couple to review and sign the lease. Upon moving in, the social worker made a referral to 'Off the Floor' charity to obtain furniture. The Life Pittsburgh Chaplain was also able to assist with obtaining basic household items through various charities. The social worker and Chaplain assisted in setting up the apartment and teaching the couple how to use some of their new items. When Severino was asked about his new apartment, he said "I feel like I am home."

Both Severino and Melida have expressed their gratefulness for

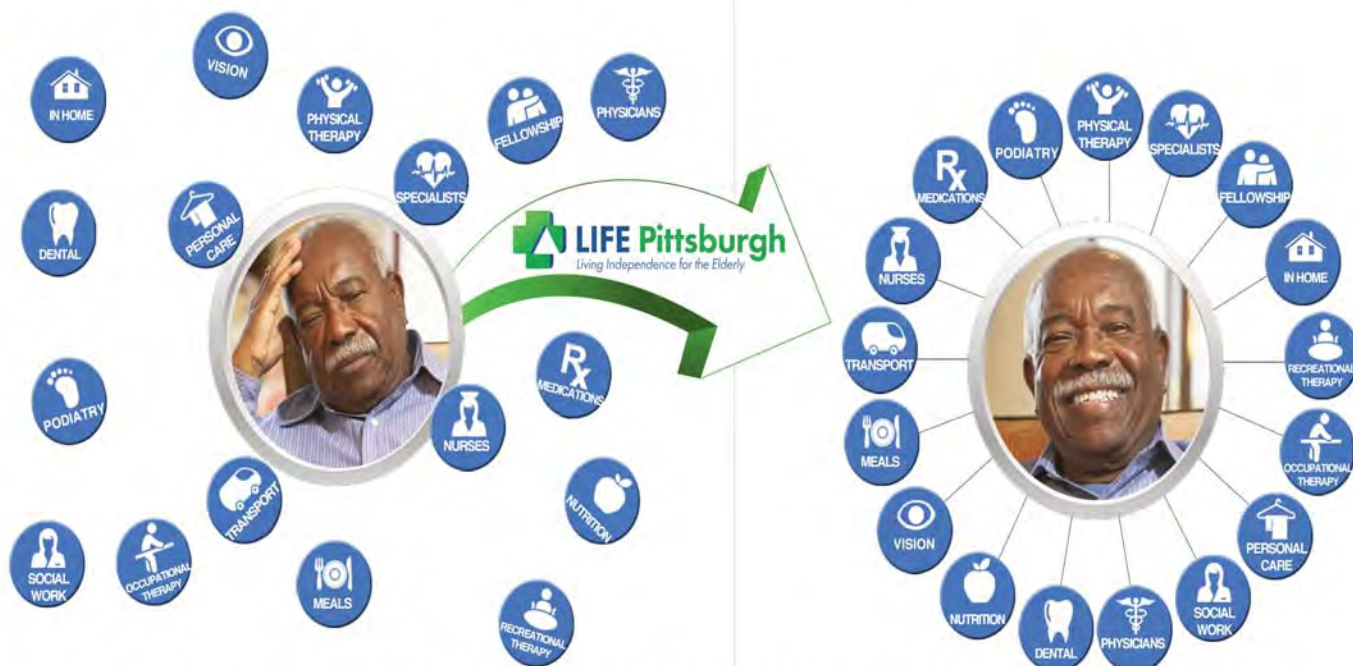


Severino Nsaguye
and Melida Bucumi

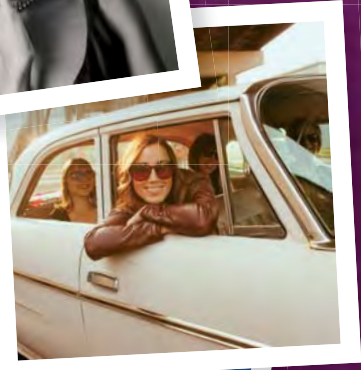
LIFE Pittsburgh and the center programming. Recreation staff has provided activities that would fit their cultural needs. For example, an African drum circle will be scheduled during their center time. Severino quickly takes the lead in the drum circle with the other participant's following his lead. The couple was also quick to learn the word 'Bingo!' They are pleased with the medical care and are happy that they can come to LIFE Pittsburgh staff with their concerns.

➤ For more information about
LIFE Pittsburgh, call
(412) 388-8050.

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Senior Living

*Western Pennsylvania Guide to
Senior Living Options*

Understanding Your Options for Senior Living

Aging is a time of transitions, and as one's needs change, there is often a need to consider a change in living arrangements. There is a continuum of senior living options to choose from, and choosing well means considering all of one's current needs as well as anticipated future needs. Here are some brief definitions of the terms used to describe senior living options

Aging in place:

Remaining in one's home, with adaptations and supports to ensure safety and comfort; such adaptations may include a stair lift, step-in shower and personal safety monitors.

Assisted Living:

A care alternative that typically consists of small apartments with kitchenettes and private baths; services include meals served in a dining room, activities, and assistance with activities of daily living as needed

Continuing Care Retirement Community:

An option that combines many of the senior living options, CCRC are a flexible living option in which residents generally start out living independently, but may later transfer to a higher level of care as their needs for medical or functional support change

Independent living:

Living in an apartment within a community for adults age 55+, with no support services such as meals; usually there are activities and other amenities offered.

Memory Care:

Licensed assisted living or personal care settings that specialize in care of those with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia; these places have specially trained staff and are usually locked for resident safety. Holy Family Manor, Artis Senior Living South Hills, Baptist Homes, Presbyterian Senior Care and several UPMC Senior Communities are a few of the facilities who provide care for Alzheimer and dementia patients here in Western Pennsylvania.

Personal care:

A supportive option for those who are mostly independent but need assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing; residents have rooms and meals and medications are provided as well as social activities

Senior Housing:

Affordable apartments for seniors age 62 or older.

Skilled Nursing Care:

24-hour skilled nursing and medical care, along with needed rehab and other therapies, for those who need continuous care, medication and monitoring

“There’s always something to do here to keep you occupied. You’ll never be bored.”

-Jim Quinn, retired Marine Machinist



At UPMC Senior Communities, we focus on improving and enriching each resident’s life. From independent living, personal care, assisted living and memory care to skilled nursing and rehabilitation, we make every resident feel cared for and at ease. For more information or to schedule a tour at any of our campuses, call 1-800-324-5523, or visit UPMCSeniorCommunities.com.

Independent Living:

Asbury Heights - Mt. Lebanon
Avalon Springs Place** - Mercer
Beatty Pointe Village - Monroeville
Cumberland Woods Village**- Allison Park
Hampton Fields Village - Hampton
Lighthouse Pointe Village at
Chapel Harbor** - Fox Chapel
Seneca Hills Village** - Penn Hills
Sherwood Oaks** - Cranberry Twp.
Strabane Trails Village - Washington
Vanadium Woods Village - Bridgeville

Personal Care:

Asbury Heights* - Mt. Lebanon
Canterbury Place - Lawrenceville
Jameson Place - New Castle
Sherwood Oaks* - Cranberry Twp.

Assisted Living:

Cumberland Crossing Manor - Allison Park
Seneca Manor - Penn Hills
Strabane Woods of Washington - Washington
Weatherwood Manor - Greensburg

Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation:

Asbury Heights* - Mt. Lebanon
Avalon Place - New Castle
Avalon Springs Place* - Mercer
Canterbury Place* - Lawrenceville
Cranberry Place - Cranberry Twp.
Heritage Place - Squirrel Hill
Jameson Care Center - New Castle
Seneca Place - Penn Hills
Sherwood Oaks - Cranberry Twp.
Sugar Creek Station* - Franklin

*Memory Care Also Available
**Continuing Care Retirement Community and monthly rental options available

UPMC | SENIOR COMMUNITIES



Senior Living

Unique Activities, Homelike Feel Set the Community at Holy Family Manor Apart

By Vanessa Orr

For many seniors, it can be a difficult choice to move to a personal care facility because it's such a change from the way they used to live. But at The Community at Holy Family Manor (CHFMAN), residents can take part in many of the same activities that they enjoyed in their previous neighborhoods—including an active exercise program, daily religious services and visiting with the children next door.

"A lot of times, seniors have a hard time transitioning into a facility because of the loss of independence; they feel like they can take care of themselves but unfortunately, they cannot, and this can result in depression," explained Administrator Melissa Armienta.

"But at Holy Family, we have many activities in which they can become involved, including Silver Sneakers, Tai Chi, a bookmobile, pet therapy, guided art painting, trivia games, and an annual spelling bee. We also have live entertainment, take-out days when we order from residents'

favorite restaurants, and daily Mass every weekday in our in-house chapel."

One program truly unique to CHFMAN is its partnership with Mt. Nazareth Learning Center, which is located in the former Motherhouse for the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth. Each week, preschool children from the center visit with residents, and also take part in different activities including a Halloween parade and celebrating Grandparents' Day.

"When you're dealing with young kids, it's hard not to smile and laugh," said Armienta. "Our residents spend time reading to them and playing the grandparent role. It really brightens everyone's day."

At the state-certified personal care facility, staff provides individualized, around-the-clock care and offers assistance with activities of daily living, meal preparation, medication management and more. Its 12-bed Memory Care Unit is specially designed for residents with memory loss, and includes life skills

stations designed to stimulate the memories of those affected by Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

"Residents with memory impairment are often unaware of their current surroundings and revert to a child-like or former state," explained Armienta. "We have a Gentlemen's Room with a workbench and tools that allows them to build things; the Ladies' Room features clothing, costume jewelry and more to engage their interest." Other stations include a movie theater-themed living area, a replica 1950s diner and a patio for residents who like to garden. There is also a sensory room within the unit that includes soothing lights, heat and massage chairs and relaxing music.

Unlike many other facilities, Holy Family has a family-like feel. "We are not a 'facility' in a sense," said Armienta. "While other places



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and live our values.

"Our staff really values their relationships with the residents; they like spending time with them, hearing their stories, and learning from what they've accomplished in their lives," she added. "They seem more like family members than paid professionals."

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What are your best options for living well as you age? Taking liberties with a quote from William Shakespeare, the answer goes something like this: Some have the opportunity to choose wisely, some have limited choices, and some have their senior living options thrust upon them.

Most people do not want to consider the possibility of developing a chronic ailment or disability. Yet, the truth is that almost 70 percent of the population turning 65 today will require long-term services and supports in their remaining years. (US Dept. of Health & Human Services). Though 30% of the population may never require long-term services, about 20 % will need care for longer than five years.

What does that mean for you and your family? By planning wisely, you may be able to avoid having decisions thrust upon you. You may also be able to:

- Relieve your children of the burden of making tough decisions, selecting your care, or becoming caregivers.
- Make a plan that fits your financial, social, and health situation.
- Be informed and have peace of mind where your health and lifestyle are concerned.

Providence Point is recognized as Pittsburgh's premier retirement community. It is a Life Plan Community, offering a variety of LifeCare contracts that provide the guarantee of care within the community no matter how a resident's healthcare needs might change. Providence Point residents often involve their children in their decision to move, but for the most part, it is the seniors themselves who choose the community as their retirement address. Their reasons vary – from the great amenities to the 5-star healthcare – but frequently it also involves being near to children and grandchildren as well as not being a burden to them.

Residents Bill and Linda Dempsey see their decision as a gift to their children because a difficult decision was taken out of their hands and made simpler.

"It is the country club of living conditions with every amenity desired," said William Dempsey. "We wanted to come to Providence Point, and we made the decision that much easier and timely for our children."



Bill and Linda Dempsey did their research to find the security and freedom they were seeking before moving to Providence Point.

Frequently, when healthcare needs arise later in life, the individual may not be capable of managing the necessary decisions, and choices may already be limited. If a family decides home care is an option, there will likely be expenses for modifying the home and coordinating care with aides and nurses, as well as a commitment from family to be caregivers.

Understanding what Medicare and other insurance covers is an important lesson to learn so that you can be prepared—not only for your choices - but for how much those decisions will cost.

According to Motley Fool, if you remain healthy at age 65, you have a good chance of living until you're 80, 90, even 95. You can increase those odds by living a life that is imbued with wellness - addressing the spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, dietary, monetary and emotional aspects of your well-being.

"Reports claim that people living in a CCRC tend to live longer. They have opportunities to socialize and exercise. They live in an environment designed to protect their health and safety as they age," said Marilyn Walsh, Director of Marketing & Public Relations for Baptist Homes Society. "Currently, some Providence Point residents are participating in a study with Mather Lifeways to prove this claim. Five years from now, when the results are in, I believe they'll get that proof."



For more information, contact
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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.



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Look How Far We've Come: 40 Years of Hospice Care

By **Evalisa McClure**

Death and dying is a part of life. It's still a taboo topic here in Pittsburgh and throughout the United States, but as a hospice advocate, I know we've come a long way. Hospice was inspired by the concept of improving quality of life at the end of life by providing comfort to patients in order to preserve their dignity in the face of terminal illness.

Pioneering the American hospice movement, VITAS Healthcare—the nation's leading provider of end-of-life care—is celebrating four decades of compassionate care for hospice patients and their families. Founded in 1978 in Miami, VITAS was one of the nation's first hospice programs.

The company's story began in 1976, when Hugh Westbrook, an ordained United Methodist minister, and Esther Colliflower, a registered nurse, saw a gap in the treatment of people with terminal ill-

nesses. Shortly after establishing their hospice company in 1978, they teamed up with Don Gaetz, a Florida hospital administrator, to pass the first-in-the-nation hospice licensure law in 1979, defining hospice care in Florida, which immediately became a model for other states and the federal government.

VITAS was part of the Medicare National Hospice Demonstration Project, which led to the passage of hospice reimbursement legislation in 1982. As a result, Medicare, Medicaid, and virtually all private insurers and managed care plans provide coverage for hospice patients.

VITAS ensures that terminally ill patients of all lifestyles and their families have access to compassionate and high-quality hospice care. Since its founding, VITAS has cared for more than 1.6 million patients.

Today 115 VITAS professionals provide care to 220 patients daily throughout Pittsburgh and

Western Pennsylvania. Nationally, it's 12,000 employees and nearly 18,000 patients each day. Our employees are the hearts, hands and experts of the VITAS way of doing hospice. They are the reason families have invited VITAS into their homes for 40 years.

The opportunity to provide dignity to people at the end of their lives is more than our work—it is our calling. The deep commitment and dedication of every employee is evident, from the visionaries who founded this company to those who provide compassion and care every single day. I'm so proud of the work we do and the individual and team contributions that makes VITAS so special for our patients and their families.



Leading the American hospice movement, where patients and families come first, since 1978.




> **Evalisa McClure** is General Manager of **VITAS Healthcare in Pittsburgh**. For more information about end-of-life care options or employment and volunteer opportunities in hospice, call VITAS Healthcare at **866-759-6695** or visit **VITAS.com**.



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Maxim Healthcare Services Set to Launch New Program for Transitioning Pediatric and Adult Patients to Home Care

By Nancy Kennedy

For decades, Maxim Healthcare Services has been a highly-regarded healthcare service provider but Maxim does not rest on its laurels. As a national provider of home healthcare services, the company always seeks new ways to meet the needs of consumers, healthcare professionals and the healthcare industry, anticipating trends and solving problems, and the company is doing exactly that with an innovative new concept for patients needing home care.

According to Kevin Martincek, director of business for Maxim's Pittsburgh location, the new program, known as Maxim's Mobilization Team, will expedite and streamline the process of setting up the home care team for newly discharged patients in need of home nursing care. Applicable to both pediatric and adult patients, the Mobilization Team program will enable families to go home with the assurance of full coverage of their home care staffing needs. This is not often the case, Martincek explains, as families at the time of discharge are often left to find staff and put together a caregiver schedule for their loved one's home care – care that is often complex.

"This is stressful for families," Martincek says. "They have to piecemeal a schedule together and they don't know how to do this, so many families go home without full coverage. They end up having to do a lot of the caregiving themselves, filling in shifts and trying to find nurses. Maxim's Mobilization

Team eliminates this. We assure coverage for the first 90 days, and within that period, we are recruiting for this specific case and our mobilization nurses are gradually replaced with permanent nurses. Because we have been in there, we can train these nurses specifically to meet the needs of this patient and this family."

The Mobilization Team consists of two leaders, Shelly Hendricks and Danielle Doerfler-Maggert, plus 14 home care nurses who are experienced and broadly skilled. When a referral is received, the team leaders visit the referring hospital, evaluate the clinical needs, meet with the family and explain the entire process to them. A one month staffing schedule is developed immediately and the Maxim staff performs all the essential preliminary work, including authorizations, coordination with the durable medical equipment company, and preparation of the home environment.

For families, this approach offers something they badly need: peace of mind. "The family can trust that they will have the home care staff to care for the patient," Martincek says. "Trust is so important – when you're a patient, or when you go to the doctor, you have little control over things; we want to create trust with our families so that they know they can count on us. Bringing home a child who needs oxygen, monitors or a ventilator is extremely difficult, but if you can trust that you will always have the help you need, it eases the stress considerably."

The concept of the Mobilization



Transition Nurses at Maxim's Pittsburgh location include (l. to r.) Stephanie Eiler, LPN, Danielle Doerfler, LPN, Shelly Hendricks, LPN, Melissa Carr, LPN, and Charity Duplesis, LPN.

Team was created in Maxim's Pittsburgh office in 2016, and has expanded to other Maxim offices throughout the state. It is a timely strategy, as general trends indicate a growing shift from hospital-based to community-based care. "Care is definitely shifting to the home," Martincek says. "The goal of home care is to provide excellent quality care so that re-admissions and trips to the Emergency Room are avoided." This requires a high level of competency in the nurses, who must be able to function autonomously in a non-institutional setting.

In addition, Maxim requires flexibility in the home care nurses, as they must be willing to work all three shifts, preferably full time, and possibly to travel with the patient. "The nurses have to be knowledgeable, skilled, committed

to home care and reliable. Calling off is not an option, although we have float nurses for emergencies. We will train nurses and have Skill Advancement Programs if there is a specific skill they need."

The Maxim Mobilization Team is a unique concept that has advantages for every party involved: for the patient, family, referring facility and home care team. It's a solution to a long-standing problem in hospital discharge planning, and a relief to burdened families who are making the transition from hospital to home. With Maxim, these families make that transition across a strong, supportive bridge, with a home care program that understands their needs and meets them expertly.

➤ For more information, call (412) 208-6438.

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

From Highmark



November is Home Care & National Hospice Month

Salute to Home Care Nurses

SENIOR LIFE - Gwen Rishel

Gwen Rishel has always had a helping heart. She has served the country in the U.S. Army Reserves as an MP, has a degree in nursing, and has served seniors in nursing homes and home health settings.

Gwen eventually landed at Senior LIFE Uniontown where she has served as a nurse for seven years. Senior LIFE is a Medicare and Medicaid approved long-term care program that provides complete medical care and supportive services at no cost to eligible seniors so that they can remain living in their home.

One of Gwen's favorite memories as a nurse is the help she provided to Carolynn, a Senior LIFE member since 2011. "Before enrolling with us, Carolynn was unable to keep up with medical costs," said Gwen. "As a member of the program, Carolynn's medical and supportive services are covered at no cost to her! Her healthcare is managed and tailored to her needs, and, she continues to live at home! The LIFE Program was the right fit for her." What's Gwen's favorite thing about working at Senior LIFE? "At the end of the day, I know I made someone's life better."

In recognition of National Home Care and Hospice Month, Senior LIFE would like to extend a special thank you to all the nurses and care providers like Gwen!



VITAS HEALTHCARE

Melissa Jamison, RN

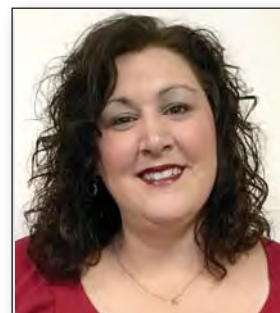
Melissa Jamison's heart led her to VITAS® Healthcare six years ago, after working 14 years as a patient care technician and RN at UPMC Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh.

During nursing school, a dying patient's family was so impressed by her compassion that they encouraged her to specialize in end-of-life care—an idea "I always kept in my heart," she says.

As a VITAS admissions nurse, Melissa is the first person to meet with hospice patients and their families, helping them understand hospice as a gift of time: time to spend with family and friends, time to manage symptoms and ease pain, time to pursue quality of life at the end of life. Her compassion is deepened, she says, because her father is enrolled in hospice.

"I can understand people and what they're going through because I'm in the middle of it myself, going through the exact same things they're going through. I think I have even more insight into what hospice care really means," she says.

"Sometimes, patients come to VITAS not having had someone who answered their questions or took the time to explain what's going on, what will happen next. I can tell them that VITAS is here to help them through whatever lies ahead. And I'm lucky to have an incredible team of doctors, nurses, aides, social workers, chaplains and managers to help me every day."



GALLAGHER HOSPICE - Cassie Alderson, RN

Cassie Alderson is a Hospice RN Case Manager for Gallagher Hospice. She brings her clinical nursing skills to the patients and families at end of life to provide comfort and dignity during their final months. This is what Cassie says about being a hospice nurse ...

"I love being a hospice nurse because I can provide comfort and dignity to patients, while helping to bring confidence and closure to families that their loved one will die peacefully.

I love being a hospice nurse because I can help patients and families realize that death does not have to be painful or scary, and it is okay to talk about it.

I love being a hospice nurse because I allow patients to have quality of life through symptom management, which allows them to spend meaningful time with the ones they love most before they leave us."



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St. Clair Hospital

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WHS The Washington Hospital

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South Hills Orthopaedic Surgery Associates

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www.southhillssortho.com

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¹Source: Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council

Raye J. Budway, M.D. specializes in breast surgery. She earned her medical degree at Hahnemann University in Philadelphia. Dr. Budway completed her residency training in general surgery at The Western Pennsylvania Hospital and a fellowship in surgical critical care at UPMC. She previously served as the Site Program Director for the Allegheny General Hospital General Surgery Residency Program, and Director of the Surgical Breast Disease Program and Surgical Intensive Care at West Penn Hospital. She is board-certified in surgical critical care and general surgery. She is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and serves on the Fellowship's Commission on Cancer.

TWO CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

St. Clair Hospital Outpatient Center – Village Square
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St. Clair Hospital Outpatient Center – Peters
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Tara L. Grahovac, M.D. specializes in breast surgery. She earned her medical degree at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Grahovac completed her residency in general surgery at Allegheny General Hospital, and a fellowship in breast surgery at UPMC Magee Womens Hospital. She is board-certified by the American Board of Surgery and is certified as a trained clinical fellow in breast surgical oncology by a Society of Surgical Oncology-accredited program.

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