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Western Pennsylvania **Guide to Good Health**

Health News You and Your Family Can Use



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Improve
Health**



As you plan your family's health care needs, refer to this guide...

Hospitals

Doctors

Medical Profiles of the area's best physicians

Cutting Edge Medical Procedures

Innovative Joint Treatment

Fitness & Wellness Centers

Rehabilitation

Schools & Services

for Special Needs Children and Adults

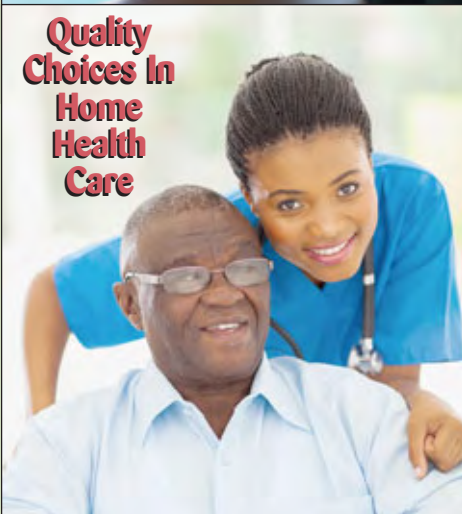
Senior Care Providers

Independent Living Communities

Health Tips

Weight Management, Healthy Eating, Medication Management, Dental Care for Kids & Teens, Summer Camps, Incontinence, Holistic Lifestyle Coaching, Fall Prevention, Caring for Diabetic Children & Teens, Kidney Smart

Healthcare Directory



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**Helping
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INSIDE: 2016 Annual Healthcare Guide (See Pages 17-64)

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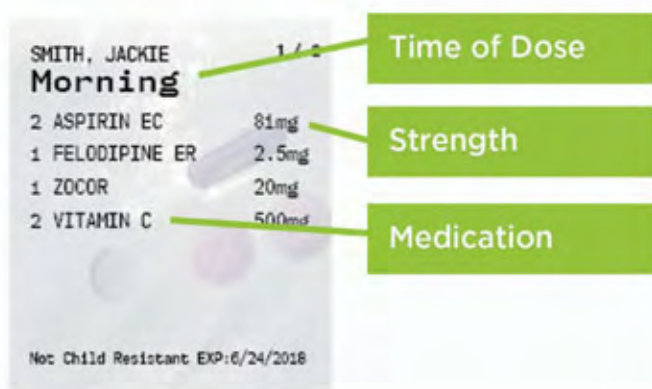


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DentalCare for Kids and Teens

By Gateway HealthSM

Kids often balk when asked to clean their room, take out the trash and brush their teeth. While it might be more of a challenge to get them to do their chores, teaching your child proper dental care when they are young encourages them to develop healthy habits that last a lifetime.

The truth is that cavities and gum disease remain the single most widespread problem among children today. Unfortunately, more families are having a difficult time finding affordable care or convenient access to dental services. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, children in households with an annual income of less than \$20,000 are three times more likely to have untreated cavities than children in households with an annual income of more than \$100,000. That is why seeing your dentist for preventive care is important before problems develop.

Two times a day and two times a year

Dental professionals recommend brushing teeth for a total of two minutes because tooth brushing is the best line of defense against cavities. Fortunately for kids and teens, today's modern toothbrushes come in myriad of themes and designs. To be certain you're using the right products, parents should look for the seal of approval by the American Dental Association, including toothpaste products. While there are several different categories of toothpaste on the market today, be sure that fluoride is one of the active ingredients. Fluoride provides extra protection to tooth enamel by reducing the incidence of cavities.

Flossing is also important because it not only cleans the food between your teeth but also the bacteria that leads to tooth decay and gum disease. You can encourage your children that if they don't floss regularly, the yellow film on their teeth will harden into tartar, which can only be removed by a dental professional.

Regular dental visits are also important. Most insurance companies will pay for two preventive check-ups each year, so take advantage of the free cleanings and exams. There are also sealants that should be put on children's teeth at various ages to further help prevent cavities.

If your child has crooked teeth or a bite that

Tips for Today's Fast-Paced Kids and Teens

FACT - A typical 12-ounce can of regular soda contains approximately 10 teaspoons of sugar.

FACT - The average male in the 12- to 19-year age group drinks the equivalent of 868 cans of soda a year.

Water is a better choice for hydration than sweet juices and sodas. Be careful with sports drinks because while they are heavily marketed to teens, they are also high in calories and sugar and salt.

Also, encourage your kids to carry a travel sized toothbrush and toothpaste with them in their locker or gym bag. They don't have time to brush? Give them a pack of sugarless chewing gum after meals or snacks to help keep their mouth clean.



doesn't match well, he or she may benefit from braces. If needed, your dentist will refer you to a specialist known as an orthodontist; an orthodontist is someone who specializes in advanced care of the teeth. If your child needs braces, they must take extra care of their teeth with regular brushing and flossing. The brackets and wires have many nooks and crannies that can trap food and plaque. Avoid hard, sticky and chewy foods such as caramels, toffee and nuts; these foods can bend or break the wires.

For healthy teeth, eat healthy foods. This will help reduce plaque acids that form along the teeth and promote tooth decay. Healthy food choices for teeth include dairy, calcium and vegetables. Fruit is also good but in moderation as acid erosion can occur from eating too much.

Teens and smokeless tobacco

Teenagers who think that chewing tobacco isn't as dangerous as smoking are kidding themselves. Smokeless tobacco is not a safe alternative. According to the National Cancer Institute, there are chemicals in smokeless tobacco that have been found to cause various mouth and throat cancers. Cigarette smokers and smokeless tobacco users also have similar levels of nicotine in their blood. Regardless, it is important for teens to know that any form of nicotine is highly addictive. Teens are also more likely to use tobacco if their peers do, but as parents, you can encourage them to quit.

The national Smoking Quitline is
1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848).

Tongue and mouth piercings

Tongue and lip piercings remain a trend, but it's not always a healthy choice for oral care. People chip teeth on tongue piercings while eating, sleeping, talking and chewing on the jewelry. Infections are also common with oral piercings and they cause more pain.

Then, there's the process itself that can cause problem. If a teen goes to an unclean shop, they are more likely to pick up other infections such as blood borne hepatitis.

Tooth injuries

For kids in contact sports, a mouth guard to protect the teeth is a must. Mouth guards cushion blows that would otherwise cause injuries to the lips and face. There are many different kinds of mouth guards depending on the age and sport, so be sure to ask your dentist which one is best for you.

If your child chips, cracks or breaks a tooth, try and get to the dentist immediately. If it's a permanent tooth, then place the tooth in water or milk and call the dentist's office; some have after-hour appointments for emergency dental care.

Article Sources:

Pa. Department of Public Welfare
Sources: The American Dental Association
Oral Health for Kids: U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration



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Allegheny Health Network offers innovative joint treatment

Allegheny Health Network (AHN) is offering solutions to those suffering from joint problems with innovative treatments such as one-day knee replacements, bilateral (or dual) knee and hip replacements, and the use of the MAKO™ robotic-arm system.

These advancements offer shorter recovery time and shorter hospital stays, allowing patients a quicker path to mobility.



“We are anticipating a growing demand for advanced orthopaedic care in the community by further enhancing and expanding our joint replacement program, and making it one of the premier services in the country,” said **Patrick J. DeMeo, MD**, Professor and Chair of AHN’s Orthopaedic Institute, and Medical Director, Pittsburgh Pirates Baseball Organization.

Doctors at AHN have already performed more than 100 procedures using the MAKO™ Partial Knee Arthroplasty and MAKO™ Total Hip Arthroplasty.

The knee procedure involves resurfacing the diseased portion of the knee, followed by an implant that is secured in the joint. Hip replacement involves total reconstruction of the hip’s ball and socket joint with an artificial implant.

In both procedures, the MAKO™ Robotic-Arm System creates a 3-D model of a patient’s hip or knee, based on a CT scan. During surgery, MAKO™ gives real-time data to the surgeon, who controls a robotic arm, to give the best positioning for an implant.

“Accuracy is key in planning and performing both partial knee and total hip procedures,” said orthopaedic surgeon **Robert Lupo, MD**, of AHN’s Saint Vincent Orthopaedic Institute. “For a good outcome, you need to align and position the implants just right. MAKO™ enables surgeons to personalize partial knee and total hip arthroplasties to achieve optimal results at a level of accuracy and reproducibility previously unattainable with conventional instrumentation.”

Some of the benefits of MAKO™ Partial Knee Arthroplasty and Total Hip Arthroplasty include:

- Less implant wear or loosening.
- Better alignment of a hip implant reduces the likelihood of hip dislocation or other complications, including rubbing or reduced range of motion.
- Less invasive surgery, and a quicker recovery and shorter hospital stay than traditional surgery.

AHN surgeons are also performing one-day knee surgeries, allowing patients to return home within 24 hours of surgery. Advanced pain management techniques without the use of narcotics get patients into rehabilitation faster.

“It’s really revolutionized a patient’s length of stay, as well as postoperative pain management, and the ability to be mobile,” said **Thomas Corkery, DO**, Chief Medical Officer at AHN’s Canonsburg Hospital. “It speeds up the process of being functional and mobile.”

For more information about any of AHN’s innovative joint treatments, call **412.DOCTORS** or go to **www.ahn.org**.

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WEIGHT MANAGEMENT TIPS



By **Amanda Budzowski**

You can't say that managing your weight is easy, but a basic understanding of what's required certainly is. Simply put: To lose weight, you need to burn more calories than you consume.

Achieving that requires two steps:

- Reduce the extra calories you consume from food and beverages.
- Increase the number of calories you burn through exercise.

Easy? Not really, but these tips can help:

Don't look for shortcuts – Soup diets, pills, carb cutting, and other fad diets can wreak havoc on your metabolism. Before starting a weight-loss program ask: "Can I do this forever?" If not, find another way.

Eat real foods – Try to eat a diet rich in whole foods with no added sugars or refined grains. Focus on fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, nonfat dairy and whole grains.

Eat breakfast everyday – Eating a well-balanced breakfast can help reduce the likelihood of overeating later in the day.

Sleep more – It's more difficult to manage your weight when tired. Sleep influences hormones which can affect weight loss and gain.

Reduce sitting time – Less sitting time means more time for activity.

Don't fear setbacks – They happen. Just make sure you have a plan to get back on track.

Make shopping lists – You're more likely to make poor grocery decisions if you shop on an empty stomach, including buying foods that will tempt you later. Have a plan and keep "bad" foods out of the house.

Have a snack attack – Packing small meals you can eat on the go is important if you're traveling, or if you go to meetings throughout the day. If you're hungry and have a snack available, you're less likely to overeat. Recommended snacks include hard-boiled eggs, rice cakes, almonds and protein bars.

Drink up – Water, that is. Dehydration is often mistaken for hunger. You are drinking enough water if you have lemonade-colored pee.

Have a meal plan – Planning meals ahead of time helps prevent being derailed when the week gets busy. Planning meals ahead and having them ready to prepare makes you less likely to stop for takeout or fast food on the way home.

The Colors You Choose



By **Claire Marshall, MS, RD, LDN**

Knowing if you're getting balanced nutrition from your fruits and vegetables, can be as simple as knowing your colors. You can be sure you are getting a wide range of beneficial nutrients if you choose a variety of different-colored foods on a daily basis.

The pigments that color fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, are indicative of different phytonutrients. Phytonutrients are found only in plant foods and can help prevent diseases such as cancer, heart disease and stroke.

A quick guide to the positives of eating a more colorful diet:

BLUE AND PURPLE FOODS contain anthocyanin, a powerful antioxidant. Anthocyanin has been shown to have protective health effects against cancer, neurological diseases, and inflammation.

Some of the highest levels of this antioxidant are found in plums, dark cherries, raspberries, prunes, eggplant (with skin), pomegranates, and blueberries.

GREEN FOODS from the cabbage family, or cruciferous vegetables, like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and bok choy, can help break down cancer-causing compounds. Dark greens, like spinach, asparagus, green beans, or green peppers are rich in folic acid (essential during pregnancy).

Other green vegetables, such as collard, mustard, or turnip greens, are high in Vitamin K, which helps blood to clot.

RED FOODS with high lycopene content, like tomatoes, can help reduce the risk of some cancers and promote heart health.

Vitamin C and folate are also found in many red fruits and vegetables, such as tomatoes, grapefruit, watermelon, guava, and cranberries.

YELLOW AND ORANGE FOODS, high in beta-carotene (which is converted in the body to Vitamin A), is crucial for eyesight and anti-inflammatory responses.

You can find beta-carotene in carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, apricots, and cantaloupe.

LIGHT GREEN OR WHITE FOODS from the onion (or allium) family contain antioxidants and Vitamin C, which can help slow damage to cells and prevent disease.

Foods with these benefits include garlic, onions, scallions, shallots, and leeks.

Don't forget snacks:

Smoothies are a quick way to increase your fruit (and vegetable) intake. Use frozen fruit like peaches, berries, or bananas with some yogurt and milk or juice for blending. Try adding a handful of fresh spinach – it will change the color but not the flavor!

> **Claire Marshall** is a Senior Health Coach and nutrition specialist at **UPMC Health Plan**. For more information about health coaching, visit upmchealthplan.com/health/coaching.html.

> **Amanda Budzowski** is Senior Manager of Clinical Training & Development for **UPMC Health Plan** and **UPMC WorkPartners**. For information about how to lose weight with a health coach visit <https://www.upmchealthplan.com/members/learn/benefits-and-services/health-wellness.aspx>.

Spring Into A Healthy, Active Lifestyle



By **Dr. Marylou Buyse**

As you grow older, regular exercise and physical activity becomes more important than ever to your overall health. No matter your age, staying active is one of the healthiest things you can do for yourself. In fact, regular physical activity can add years to your life by preventing many of the health issues that are often associated with aging.

While starting or maintaining an exercise routine may seem challenging as you age, studies have shown that older adults have a lot to gain by staying physically active. Not only does regular physical activity help you maintain your independence, it can also help control blood pressure, prevent or delay disease, ward off depression and prevent osteoarthritis. To get the most health benefits from an exercise program, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources recommends that seniors engage in at least two and a half hours of moderately intense physical activity each week.

With the arrival of spring weather, there are many fun outdoor activities that can provide opportunities for exercise. Walking, biking and playing tennis are all great aerobic activities that increase your breathing and heart rate. Other activities like gardening, fishing and bird watch-

ing have been shown to reduce stress levels and promote relaxation. Exercise doesn't have to be a chore, so pick activities that you enjoy to help you stay active. The benefits and rewards you'll reap from an active lifestyle will make it easier for you to stay motivated.

If the weather is not ideal for outdoor activities, consider taking an indoor fitness class. Many local community centers, YMCAs, churches and schools offer classes specifically designed for seniors. Water aerobics, yoga, tai chi and dance are just some of the options to consider to help you incorporate physical activity into your weekly routine.

Highmark's Medicare Advantage members receive a complimentary SilverSneakers Fitness Program membership and can use it at any of thousands of participating locations across the country. To learn more about SilverSneakers, visit www.silversneakers.com or call the number on the back of your Highmark member ID card.

If it's been a while since you've exercised or if you have any preexisting conditions, it's always a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

> **Dr. Marylou Buyse** is senior medical director of senior markets for **Highmark Inc.**



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Physical Therapy for Female Incontinence

By Amy Cline

Female incontinence can be a very stressful and embarrassing condition, but it helps to know that you are not alone. Approximately 25 to 45 percent of women nationwide suffer from this condition, which affects women of all ages and races.

"One of the main causes of incontinence is weakened pelvic floor muscles, which support the internal organs of the pelvis and prevent urine or stool leakage," explains Susan George, PT, DPT, MS, OCS, WCS, director of women's rehab for UPMC Centers for Rehab Services. "Pelvic floor muscles in spasm can contribute to this condition and can cause pain in the rectal or pelvic region."

Types of incontinence include:

- **Stress urinary incontinence:** the involuntary loss of small amounts of urine while coughing, laughing, or participating in a physical activity. Weakened pelvic floor muscles may be ineffective in preventing leakage.
- **Urge urinary incontinence:** the involuntary loss of large amounts of urine associated with an abrupt and strong desire to urinate often due to an oversensitive bladder.
- **Mixed urinary incontinence:** stress and urge urinary incontinence symptoms coexist.
- **Fecal incontinence:** may result from weakened external anal sphincter and pelvic floor muscles. This is often seen in women during the postpartum period, and in the elderly.



Susan George

Physical therapy is available to treat female incontinence and help improve your overall quality of life and happiness.

"During your initial evaluation, your physical therapist will determine the type and extent of incontinence you are suffering from, the strength of your pelvic floor muscles, and if you have other musculoskeletal issues affecting your pelvis," says Susan. "Your therapist then works with you to develop an individualized exercise treatment program. By following this program, many patients are able to avoid medication or surgery."

Some methods of treating female incontinence through physical therapy include:

- **Pelvic floor exercises,** sometimes called Kegel exercises, which tighten and tone the pelvic floor muscles. Learning to use these muscles during activities that cause your leakage is key to success.
 - **Bladder training,** with the help of your therapist, will teach you to extend the time between voiding, develop a schedule to use the bathroom, and manage overwhelming urges to urinate.
 - **Biofeedback** involves becoming attuned to your body's functions in order to gain control over your muscles and suppress urges.
- "The good news is that incontinence is treatable and generally does not require surgery," says Susan. "Through physical therapy treatment, you can learn how to effectively use these muscles to address incontinence, urgency, and resolve muscle spasms."



UPMC Centers for Rehab Services' women's rehabilitation program provides specialized physical therapy for women. To make an appointment or for more information, call 1-888-723-4CRS (4277) or visit UPMC.com/4CRS.

Is Your Life Out of Control? Do You Feel Out of Balance?

By Kelly Haywiser

We all experience stress in our lives. The majority of stress comes when we cannot meet the expectations of others in our relationships as well as our careers. We also place unachievable expectations on ourselves. For example, "I'm going to lose 20 pounds in 4 weeks by going to the gym every day and avoiding eating out." Then life hits us. The moment we make this declaration, our lives get busier and we cannot make it to the gym. And we are invited to go out with friends for dinner.

By taking control of our life and situations, we can create balance. This is easier said than done. It is not always easy to back away from a problem and look at the big picture. This is where a Holistic Lifestyle coach can assist you.

A Holistic Lifestyle coach can provide tips, tools and techniques. The Circle of Life is a great tool for mapping out where you are in 12 main areas of your life, such as Finances, Career, Health, Eating, Relationships and Spiritual Life. A coach can help create hope, desire, inspiration and motivation from a "Whole-Body" approach. For example, you may desire to eat healthier, but you are dealing with cravings, stress-eating and a mother who sends you home with cookies every week. So how do you reach your goal with these roadblocks?

A Holistic Lifestyle coach looks at your Big Picture and takes a "Whole Body" approach in identifying what stops you from achieving your goals and how to create a plan of action. As a team, you and your Holistic Lifestyle coach use a Mind, Body and Spiritual perspective in achieving goals that lead to overall health and wellness in all dimensions of a your life.



Here are 8 methods a Holistic Lifestyle coach uses to help you take control:

- Identify areas you are motivated to change
- Inspire you to take responsibility and find self-love
- Ask the right questions for self-awareness
- Explore opportunities for deeper meaning in your life
- Help you find ways to connect better in relationships
- Discover a higher level of health and wellness as well as life's purpose
- Actively manage steps for continuous improvement

A Holistic Lifestyle coach may also provide various Holistic Modalities in their practice, such as Affirmations, Meditation, Breath Work, Self-Awareness Exercises, Mindful Movements, Integrative Nutrition, and Energy Work like Reiki or EFT.

If you need motivation and encouragement from a "Whole-Body" approach, consider a Holistic Lifestyle coach to take control and create overall balance in your career, relationships and health, as well as your spiritual life.

Kelly Haywiser is a Board-Certified Health Coach by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners and a Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach and Wellness Inventory Facilitator, providing one-on-one coaching, workshops and retreats for women. For a FREE Consultation, call (412) 221-0700 or visit her website www.holisticapproach4life.com



Coming in our Summer issue! Special Focus - **Women's Health**

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Breast Thermography: Radiation-Free and Painless

By Bethany Narey

Breast thermography is a medical imaging tool that has been FDA approved as an adjunct to other diagnostic tests since the early 1980's. Although thermography is not widely known throughout Pennsylvania, the state-of-the-art technology is used throughout the country and the world as a non-invasive health screening tool.

WHAT IS 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 breast pathology, whether it is cancer, fibrocystic disease, an infection, or a vascular disease. Thermography is radiation-free, painless, and requires no contact with the body.

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

WHO CAN BENEFIT?

All women can benefit from thermography breast screening. However, it is especially appropriate for women 23-55 whose denser breast tissue makes it more difficult for mammography to be effective. It is also used by 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 as 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, mammography looks for physiological changes or how the body is functioning. Medical doctors analyze heat temperature differences and patterns that indicate cell change and vascular dysfunction. Thermography allows for an earlier look at your breast tissue and can potentially identify dysfunction before a structure has developed. Your doctor can then plan accordingly and lay out a program to further diagnose and monitor your health.

With 1 in 8 women developing breast disease, 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.

Thermography can aid in the detection of subtle physiologic changes that accompany breast pathology, whether it is cancer, fibrocystic disease, an infection, or a vascular disease.

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Caring for Children and Teenagers with Type 1 Diabetes

By Daniel Casciato

If you're a parent of a child who was diagnosed with diabetes, you're not alone. About 13,000 children annually are diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, while more than one million American children and adults deal with this disease daily. For people who are living with diabetes, their body either is unable to produce or respond to insulin properly.

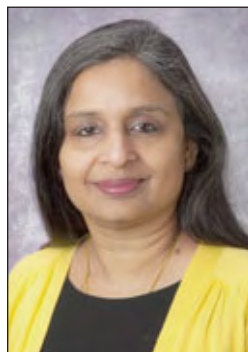
"Type 1 diabetes is still the most common diabetes in children," says Radhika Muzumdar, MD, chief of the Division of Pediatric Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC. "Children with type 1 diabetes need to monitor and control their glucose levels; receive insulin injections or use an insulin pump; eat a balanced, healthy diet; and get regular exercise."

Dr. Muzumdar, who was born and raised in India, which has among the highest rates of diabetes in the world, lost her father to the disease. Several other family members also have diabetes.

"All of us has that one moment in our life that define us—and losing my father to this disease was my defining moment," says Dr. Muzumdar.

Dr. Muzumdar trained at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine—one of the leading centers in the world for molecular mechanisms of diabetes—and did her fellowship at The Children's Hospital at Montefiore in Bronx, N.Y.

"I got exposed to an excellent environment and



Dr. Radhika Muzumdar

The Diabetes Transition Program at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC equips teenage patients with confidence, knowledge, and support that can foster successful lifelong disease management.

people who asked very inspiring questions about diabetes," she says. "I enjoyed being in the field and contained studying this disease."

Dr. Muzumdar brought her expertise in basic research in endocrinology to Children's in Pittsburgh, and as the principle investigator for seminal

research on the role of insulin-like growth factors and novel peptides that regulate glucose homeostasis during aging, she is supported by National Institutes of Health (NIH) R-01 funding. She also has an appointment within the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine as associate professor of Pediatrics and Cell Biology.

As a member of the Society for Pediatric Research, Dr. Muzumdar has been elected to various leadership roles in national and international subspecialty societies. She also has been recognized for her teaching abilities and mentoring in clinical medicine and biomedical research, and is currently leading Children's NIH T32 fellowship training grant.

As part of her clinical research, Dr. Muzumdar's lab is interested in examining the cellular and molecular mechanisms of diabetic complications and investigating any new medications in the treatment of diabetes.

"In addition to my research interest in diabetes, as a pediatric endocrinologist, I want to take care of children with diabetes," she adds. "What we do every day in clinical care is very relevant in the care of children with type 1 diabetes. That's how the two arms in my life come together."

Dr. Muzumdar calls diabetes a tough disease for anyone to live with.

"Compared to cancer, you have a disease and you treat it, and in some cases it may go away," she says. "But with diabetes, it always stays with you. It's in every aspect of your life. It affects the foods you choose, the events you attend, the exercise you do, and even the sports you decide to play. It's always there. But the good thing is if you take care of it properly, you can keep the disease well under control."

While type 1 diabetes is a struggle for anyone, it's especially challenging for teenagers. Teens with diabetes experience significant physical, psychological, and situational demands, according to Dr. Muzumdar. They typically seek independence from parents who have been managing their diabetes at the time that hormonal changes contribute to unstable glucose levels. These upheavals can be compounded by variables such as driving, drinking, sexual issues, and learning to

(Continued on page 35.)

Perspectives



Therapy for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders



Are you age 16-45 with an autism spectrum disorder? Do you have problems with:

- Interpersonal Skills
- Fitting in with the group
- Time Keeping and Work Routines
- Adapting to Change
- Making Friends
- Managing your Emotions
- Teamwork Skills
- Organizing or Planning

If so, the Perspectives Program at the University of Pittsburgh may be able to help. If you are between the ages of 16-45, verbal, and can come regularly to the University of Pittsburgh, you may be eligible to participate in this research-based intervention program at no cost to you.

For More Information Contact:

1-866-647-3436 or

autismrecruiter@upmc.edu

Quick Tips for Summer Camps

By Bryan Braunlich

Oftentimes parents dread the end of the school year with the daunting task of figuring out what to do with their children over the summer break. It can be challenging researching camps, babysitters, and summer school while hoping that their kids are enjoying physical activity and intellectual stimulation with the fun, school-free spirit staying at the heart of the summer experience. While some parents will place more emphasis on academic activity and others will push their kids into sports training, the overarching and ultimately most important key is finding a safe and secure environment that fosters growth for your children.

As Fit Kids Summer Camp approaches at the Washington Health System Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center, parents often come to us with questions about our camp as well as how we view summer camps. In our camp children will learn the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through group activity, focusing on self-esteem, self-awareness and teamwork. It is fundamental to our mission, to empower children to pursue a healthy, balanced



The Fit Kids Summer Camp at the Washington Health System Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center is designed to enhance the physical, social, and emotional wellness for youth.

lifestyle. We believe through education, awareness, encouragement and motivation we can create the habits necessary to sustain optimal health.

While we wish that everyone could experience our camp – we know travel time and distance play a factor – here are 5 tips to make sure that you kids are having a wonderful summer experience.

- **Research. Research.** Make sure the camps have excellent reviews in safety, experience, and staffing. Call ahead to speak to the person in charge. He/she should be able to answer any questions you have.

- **Plan ahead.** Most camps give an early bird special which can save you money. Also, signing up for camp early ensures that your kids get a spot.

- **Make sure there is plenty of physical activity for the kids.** Whether you are sending them to a math camp or dance camp, make sure your children are provided with some sort of exercise throughout the day. You can be sure at our camp we keep our kids active through sports, climbing, hiking, swimming and games.

- **While it is important to stay active, make sure there are**

“down” times where the kids get to rest. Whether they are making a craft or reading a book off their summer reading list, camps should provide some inactive time to help rejuvenate and revive kids for their active periods.

- **Most importantly, make sure the camps are fun.** The curriculum should be centered on kids and kids like to have fun. If the camp is fun, your kids will be excited to get there every morning!

Kids camps are a great way to keep your kids engaged over the summer. They bring children together, keep them active and most importantly provide a safe haven for parents to leave their kids while they are at work. As summer begins and camps start, we hope that any camp, Fit Kids Summer Camp included, fosters a healthy lifestyle for our children. After all – the children are our future.

For more information about the **Washington Health System Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center Fit Kids Summer Camp**, please contact Brenda Young at (724) 250-6251 or at byoung@whs.org.



JUNE 13, 2016 – AUGUST 18, 2016
MONDAY – THURSDAY

Full/Half Days Available | Registration Begins April 4, 2016
Contact Brenda Young: 724.250.6251 or byoung@whs.org


WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM
Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center

St. Clair Hospital is First in the Region to Provide Cost Transparency to Patients

By Nancy Kennedy

Thanks to healthcare reform and the Affordable Care Act, more people have health insurance in 2016. They may also have increased responsibility for the cost of their healthcare, with higher deductibles, co-payments and co-insurance. This added financial responsibility is driving healthcare consumers to demand more information, upfront, about the quality and the cost of the care they receive and pay for.

It's a growing and valid trend, one that St. Clair Hospital welcomes and supports. St. Clair is the first hospital in the region to offer consumers "pricing transparency" – meaning clear, detailed, individualized information about the true out-of-pocket costs of medical treatment. With a new, interactive, user-friendly tool on the hospital's website, www.stclair.org, patients can now determine the likely out-of-pocket costs of tests, treatments and procedures that they need to have, before they receive the services. All the information is right at their fingertips.

"Patients are becoming smarter healthcare consumers," says Richard C. Chesnos, St. Clair Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. "This new service empowers the patient to make more informed decisions for themselves and their families, within their healthcare budgets. St. Clair is a regional leader in patient safety and clinical quality, and is one of the highest rated hospitals in the nation for patient satisfaction. St. Clair provides high-value healthcare, with cost-effective services; we want our patients to feel secure knowing, in advance, how much their care is going to cost them."

The new pricing transparency tool is called Patient Estimates. To use it, one simply goes to the home page of the hospital website, www.stclair.org, selects the option "Financial Tools," and follows the easy-to-use prompts. The tool includes a listing of over 150 clinical services (with more to come) including diagnostic tests, procedures, and treatments. It only takes a few minutes to acquire the cost estimate information, which is presented in a clear, easy-to-understand format.

The service is completely private and confidential, and the information is very specific and customized to the individual patient, based on the most recent infor-

"Patients are becoming smarter healthcare consumers. This new service empowers the patient to make more informed decisions for themselves and their families, within their healthcare budgets."

-Richard C. Chesnos

mation provided to the hospital by one's health insurance company.

Patient Estimates is simple and fast to use and is conveniently available 24/7 at www.stclair.org. Self-pay cost estimates for those without insurance are also provided. The estimates remain in the system and can be recalled by the patient for future reference.

St. Clair's web site is an efficient "one-stop shopping" online option for busy people; they can find the medical service they need, learn what their costs will be, schedule their appointment, arrange a payment plan and pay

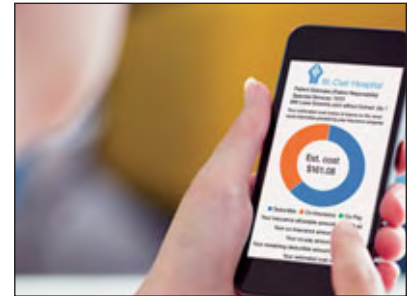
their bill, all in one place.

Traditionally, patients have not had access to cost information prior to their medical procedures and this remains the case at a majority of hospitals. Across the nation, however, more hospitals are expected to begin providing cost transparency to patients.

It may well become standard practice and even law as consumers become aware of the trend and demand it from their own providers. Pennsylvania currently does not require that hospitals and other healthcare facilities provide cost transparency but it is a goal, says the Hospital and Health System Association of Pennsylvania, and facilities must provide the information when patients request it.

St. Clair Hospital's Patient Estimates tool is an excellent new resource for patients, says Chesnos. "Patients today are more educated and informed, and are eager to have this information," he says. "They appreciate it. It enables them to comparison shop and investigate what their financial responsibility will be before they schedule a test or procedure. With this tool, the patient plays a more active role and has an opportunity to make an informed choice. It's empowering for the patient."

Chesnos believes that knowledge of the cost estimates for medical procedures reduces stress for patients. It eliminates surprises when the bill arrives. It can help guide decision making for patients. It can also provide greater peace of mind as they face a medical test or surgery – they can focus on their health and recovery, without added anxiety about unknown costs.



What Will You Pay for Healthcare Services? St. Clair Hospital Has the Answers

It's simple to use St. Clair's new Cost Estimate Tool.

First, gather your information: the name of your insurance provider, group number, member number and the name of the test or procedure you need to have, such as a screening mammogram, listed on your physician's order.

Next, go to www.stclair.org Select "Financial Tools."

Four options will appear; choose "Patient Estimates."

Follow the prompts to enter your information.

Choose a clinical service category, such as "Mammogram," and click on the specific procedure.

Click "Submit" and within seconds, your estimated costs will appear.

First Ever Pittsburgh Recovery Walk Planned For September 2016

On Saturday, September 10, 2016, the City of Pittsburgh will host the first annual Pittsburgh Recovery Walk through Downtown Pittsburgh. The Recovery Walk will celebrate people in recovery, professionals who support recovery, family members, community members, and anyone whose life has been touched by addiction or recovery. The event is part of Pittsburgh's Bicentennial Celebration and will also be held during National Recovery Month recognized during the month of September.

Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto will lead the Recovery Walk down Liberty Avenue, which will be followed by a Recovery Expo in Market Square with speakers, music, shopping, wellness activities, workshops and more.

Stigma is an unnecessary barrier to finding help for addiction. The Pittsburgh Recovery Walk aims to counteract that stigma and encourage dialogue about the process and possibility of recovering from addiction.

Over 20 million Americans have overcome addiction, and during a time when deaths from painkillers and heroin are rising dramatically, sharing recovery stories is particularly important. Experts agree that there is no one-size-fits-all addiction treatment. Therefore, Pittsburgh's 2016 Recovery Walk celebrates the diversity of recovery experiences.

"Public recognition of recovery means a lot to me. It reminds me of how far I've come and motivates me to keep striving and gives me confidence that I can be who I really am without fear of disapproval," said Jordan Pearlman, a Pittsburgh resident who is in long-term recovery. "It's a chance to have a positive effect on someone else's life by being open about my own process."

The event is free and everyone is welcome to attend. To learn more, please visit pghrecoverywalk.org.

Washington Hospital Receives Coveted Honor for Quality Cardiac Care

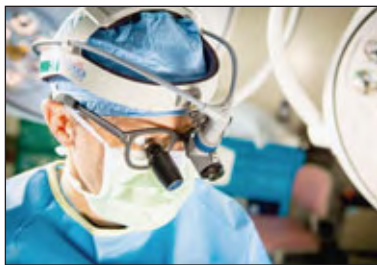
by Ron Cichowicz

Some hearts are beating a little more proudly at the Washington Health System-Washington Hospital lately, and with good reason: it recently received a three-star rating, the highest bestowed by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) for quality related to Isolated Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) or heart bypass surgery.

It is a well-deserved honor, earned by a team of dedicated professionals all committed to providing the highest level of quality to their patients.

“From the first day I arrived at WHS-Washington Hospital, we have worked to streamline our program, to communicate better and to coordinate our care with everyone involved,” said Dr. A. Reza Abrishamchian, MD, MPH, FACS, chief of cardiac surgery who joined Washington Health System four years ago. “It is a privilege to work with such a strong team, all of whom wanting to see the program grow. This award is not the result of one person’s efforts but a team approach, with everyone contributing to our success. And that success ultimately benefits our patients.”

The STS award would seem to affirm Dr. Abrishamchian’s assessment. The ranking compares a hospital’s program to those at approxi-



“To receive the highest rating by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a great accomplishment for our open heart surgery team.”

-Dr. A. Reza Abrishamchian

mately one thousand other heart surgery programs across the nation where heart surgery is performed. The STS Adult Cardiac Surgery Database is the world’s premier clinical registry for cardiac surgery. It gathers information from more than 90 percent of the groups that perform cardiac surgery in the United States. For the year 2015, only 10 percent of the 1,041 participating hospitals across the country achieved a “three-star” rating—the highest category of quality achieved under the STS quality rating system.

The STS composite quality rating is based on a combination of 11 National Quality Forum-endorsed CABG (Coronary Artery Bypass

Graft) processes and outcomes measures. These measures rate the performance of heart surgery programs in four areas: Avoidance of Operative Mortality; Avoidance of Major Morbidity; High Quality Intra-Operative Care; and Appropriate Perioperative Medication Usage.

“To receive the highest rating by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a great accomplishment for our open heart surgery team,” said Dr. Abrishamchian. “This further indicates that our patients are receiving the best heart care possible here at WHS-Washington Hospital.”

Gary B. Weinstein, president and CEO of Washington Health System, agreed. “This outstanding achievement demonstrates the quality of our cardiac services and the high caliber of medical and surgical experts, nursing and support services personnel at Washington Health System.”

Dr. Abrishamchian said he hoped that awards such as the one received from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons will demonstrate to the communities the health system serves the quality care it offers. Washington Health System, which employs more than 2,300 medical professionals, provides healthcare services at more than 40 off-site locations throughout three counties.



For the year 2015, only 10 percent of the 1,041 participating hospitals across

the country achieved a “three-star” rating—the highest category of quality achieved under the STS quality rating system.

In addition to its flagship 260 licensed bed hospital in Washington, PA, WHS recently added Washington Health System Greene, a community-centered 49-bed hospital, to its integrated system of care. Washington Health System also consists of diagnostic centers, outpatient care facilities, the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center, Greenbriar Treatment Center for Recovery and Wellness and hospice care, all seamlessly working together to provide excellent patient-and-family-centered care.

“Looking to the future, as we gain these kinds of positive results, it gives greater confidence about our health system to the people and providers in our service area,” said Dr. Abrishamchian. “They see that we offer a wide variety of services and that we can handle more complex cardiac needs. As their confidence in us grows, that will lead to more referrals and more collaboration with healthcare providers in our region.”

Technology Advances Help Ohio Valley Hospital Stay Ahead

By Daniel Casciato

As a regional leader in healthcare technology, Ohio Valley Hospital (OVH) understands the importance of offering state-of-the-art medical imaging services to their patients, by ensuring their medical staff is equipped with the best tools for diagnosing conditions. Recently, the hospital’s radiology department purchased an Optima 660 64 slice CT (computed tomography) scanner made by General Electric. The new scanner allows for a radiation dose reduction of 25 to 40 percent without compromising image quality.

The dosage amount is important, even though radiation exposure for medical purposes has been proven to be very safe. It is of utmost importance to limit that exposure as much as possible, while still being able to gain the diagnostic value of medical imaging. Dose reduction software is also becoming increasingly important due to the increased utilization of CT scanners in hospitals. These scanners are invaluable in diagnosing and observing patient ailments, as well as the effectiveness of treatments.

“Low dose scanning is paramount for physicians to be able to more closely monitor disease progression and effectiveness of treatment for their patients,” says Mike Brunner, RT®, Director, Imaging Services for OVH. “Patients should have a greater comfort knowing that we have state-of-the-art equipment and a well-trained technologist waiting to fulfill their imaging needs.”



This state-of-the-art technology, which resides in a spacious new suite on OVH’s second floor, will allow the hospital to offer new services and programs to patients.

“This capability will enable OVH to provide low dose lung screenings to our patient populace who are deemed at high risk for lung cancers. In addition to low dose lung screening, this technology allows us to provide other new services, including Cardiac Calcium Scoring and Coronary CTA,” says Brunner.

Optima 660 will also provide new benefits to programs the hospital has offered for years.

“It also enhances something we had already been doing—CT Angiography, a CT study of the arteries and blood flow,” adds Brunner.

The new scanner will also offer faster scan times, which is another way for patients to be exposed to smaller amounts of radiation. In fact, the importance of this new CT scanner in health care and medical imaging has never been greater.

“(This) CT’s ability to acquire and manipulate 3D anatomical information allows for quicker diagnoses and treatment of many medical conditions,” Brunner explains. “The manipulated data can be reviewed by the interpreting physician on multiple planes: coronal, sagittal and oblique. CT also plays a significant role in patients who are unable to tolerate or safely undergo MRI scanning.”



For more information, visit <http://ohiovalleyhospital.org>.

Education Through Kidney Smart Classes

By Lois Thomson

TWO OF THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO KIDNEY DISEASE ARE DIABETES AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.

Yet according to Bernadine "Bernie" Trunzo, "So many of us are prone to those factors, or there's just such a prevalence in our society, that many folks don't even realize that having diabetes or high blood pressure puts them at risk for kidney problems. We really stress how important it is to control those two health conditions, through diet, medications, routine doctor visits and exercise."

Trunzo provides patient education through no-cost Kidney Smart classes. The 90-minute classes are designed to be one-time, although people may attend more often if they like, and they are broken into two parts: "In the first section we focus on how to keep your kidneys healthy. Our target audience for that class is people who are at risk either through being a diabetic or who have high blood pressure, or if there's a family history of kidney problems. Also anybody who has been newly diagnosed and is just in the early stages of kidney problems – the ultimate goal is to keep the kidneys healthy."

She said when someone who is newly diagnosed, and is dealing with an illness and hears the word "chronic" – it can be a little overwhelming for them, and that's another benefit of the Kidney Smart classes. "We really just want to help people be able to deal with chronic kidney disease

by understanding that it is manageable, particularly if identified early. There's a lot that can be done at that point to protect the kidney function."

The second portion of the class is geared toward those who may need dialysis or transplants, although Trunzo admitted that many people aren't ready to hear about that. "They want to keep themselves healthy so they never have to get to the second part of the class."

Despite all of the information available about diabetes and kidney disease, Trunzo doesn't find it unusual that many are unaware of the potential danger. As she explained, "Many people don't have any symptoms with chronic kidney disease, and often by the time they begin to get symptomatic, there isn't always a lot that can be done except prepare them for transplant and dialysis. That's really why those in the renal community are trying to get the word out, to let people who are at high risk know the risks, have their physicians monitor kidney function, and get early recommendation to a specialist if a kidney problem is identified."

Trunzo has been involved in patient education for about eight years, and she went on to say, "It is so rewarding whenever you see people (who have been to class), whether they're walking out and they give you a hug and say 'Wow, this really helped me,' or if I just run into them on the street, and they say how well they're doing. It's really nice, it's very rewarding to be able to provide this service, and we're trying to reach many more people."



For more information, call (724) 591-4723 or visit www.kidneysmart.org



"We're here to be a resource for the patients, to provide unbiased information so they can talk through concerns with their doctor and make the best choices for themselves. At the same time, when you're dealing with chronic illness it affects the entire family dynamics. It's important to pull the family and others in so that they understand what's going on. We encourage families to attend the classes."

-Bernie Trunzo, Kidney Smart Educator

Learn How to Manage Your Kidney Health

In-person classes are available in your area at no-cost.

RSVP today at KidneySmart.org/class or call **855-343-4951**.



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2016 Annual Healthcare Guide

This section of leading health, wellness and fitness providers and organizations who excel in their chosen specialties is designed to help you in your search for quality care. The following profiles capture the philosophy and expertise of each featured physician, organization and providers practice. As you search to fulfill your healthcare needs, we hope this will serve as an invaluable guide.

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Bringing Healthcare Home

AHN's Healthcare@Home offers one-stop, personalized, home-based healthcare

There's no place like home. It's where we feel safe and comfortable. Being at home – wherever home may be – can make all the difference in the world when dealing with an ongoing medical condition, injury, or accident.

Allegheny Health Network is making it easy to get the care you or your loved ones need at home with several integrated services called Healthcare@Home. With just one phone call, personalized, home-based health care can be arranged by physicians so you or your loved ones can maintain independence and continue the healing process at home for as long as possible.

"Healthcare@Home is a great enhancement for patients and their caregivers," says Dr. Brian Holzer, Senior Vice President, Home and Community Services for the Allegheny Health Network. "Patients and their caregivers not only have access to the medical services needed to deliver high quality, personalized care in the home, but everyone is working together to create a differentiated patient experience."

After discharge from a hospital stay or simply when recovering at home, patients were typically referred by their physicians to several different and unconnected providers of home-based medical services and equipment. Caregivers were often tasked with setting up the care and, when needs changed, the providers, services, and equipment changed, which resulted in frustration for the patients and caregivers and poor care for the patient.

"With the Allegheny Health Network Healthcare@Home program, you're working with just one organization," says Holzer. "We provide patients and their caregivers a dedicated and caring team that will work with their physician to facilitate the transitions from the hospital to home and personalize the care each patient receives. And when healthcare needs change, there is no added inconvenience to the patient (like switching out medical equipment). Our team will help manage the care plan to meet patients' needs – no one should ever feel like they are out there all alone."

Once a physician makes the phone call, a personal care coordinator will be your link to the services needed. A team of caring professionals – physicians, experienced nurses, social workers, etc. – is assembled and dedicated to making you feel safe, supported, and well cared for in your home and community. In addition to a personalized care team, you have access to Allegheny Health Network's team of more than 2,100 skilled physicians.



Services provided by Healthcare@Home include

- **Home Health** for patients who are older, living with ongoing medical conditions, disabled, or recovering from surgery who have difficulty keeping up with personal care and basic needs. Your personal care coordinator will help you transition from the hospital to the home and arrange home health care services designed to meet your needs. Healthcare@Home offers experienced nursing care with many specialties including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental health, and wound care; physical and occupational therapy for safety, mobility, independence, and fall prevention; speech and language services to help improve swallowing, speech, memory, and thought processing; home health aide services for bathing, shampooing, nail care, and hygiene; help with addressing social and emotional needs such as depression, coping, and anxiety; and help with accessing community resources.
- **Home Medical Equipment and Supplies** including walkers, hospital beds, oxygen, and more, improve or enhance your comfort and independence so you can continue your recovery at home. Highly trained technicians will deliver, set up, and train you and your caregivers on the equipment.
- **Infusion Therapy** – the intravenous administration of medicine and nutrition – helps patients with an acute or chronic illness avoid hospitalization and recover in the comfort and privacy of their own home.
- **Palliative Care** provides patients with relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness – improving quality of life for both the patient and the family. Working with each patient's physician and their families, individualized plans are established for post-hospital care at home or an inpatient facility.
- **Hospice care** provides a full-range of services for patients with a life-limiting diagnosis. Coordinated teams of nurses, home health aides, physical and occupational therapists, and social workers provide pain management, medications, home medical equipment, education, family counseling, and emotional support. Patients can be treated at home or in one of our inpatient hospice locations.

Healthcare@Home services are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week and offer a seamless continuum of care, regardless of the setting: inpatient, long-term care facility, doctor's office, or home.

Learn more about **Allegheny Health Network Healthcare@Home** at www.healthcareathome.com by calling **1.800.381.8080**, or by e-mailing info@healthcareathome.org.



Joe Basile isn't ready to leave the Bridgeville home where he and his late wife raised three children.

Allegheny Health Network's Healthcare@Home allows Joe to maintain his independence, and offers his family peace of mind knowing that registered nurse Lynne Lloyd is checking on him twice a week. He also calls in his vital signs, including blood pressure, pulse, and oxygen level, to a registered nurse every day.

"My kids all want me to move in with one of them," Joe, a former South Fayette School District administrator and football coach, said. "I pray almost every day that I can be on my own here."

Joe has a pacemaker and is managing the symptoms of congestive heart failure, where a difference of just one pound from one day to the next can be a warning sign of a developing medical issue. Joe said he doesn't want any long hospital stays, so he's happy when Lynne intervenes before a serious problem occurs.

"The nurse is overly cautious with me," Joe said. "I gain a pound or two and she jumps on the phone and calls my cardiologist. He also doesn't want to see me in the hospital."

Joe still tries to meet friends at South Hills Village for coffee and a bit of exercise, even though there are days when his legs are swollen from fluid.

"We are monitoring patients more frequently than they would be if you they were going to the doctor's office once a week or twice a week. It's very useful. It helps protect patients, and helps them live a more fruitful life," Lynne said.

Said Joe, "It eases the mind of my daughter and my son, that they feel that someone is looking after me just about every day or every other day. And they're much more content when I keep telling them I want to be here by myself. I drive, and I want to pick up and go at my convenience. So it does give my family some sense of security."

Reinventing Home Care One Patient at a Time.

Introducing Healthcare@Home from Allegheny Health Network.

Getting the right care at the right time and in the right place — your home — is what matters most to us. Because it matters most to you.

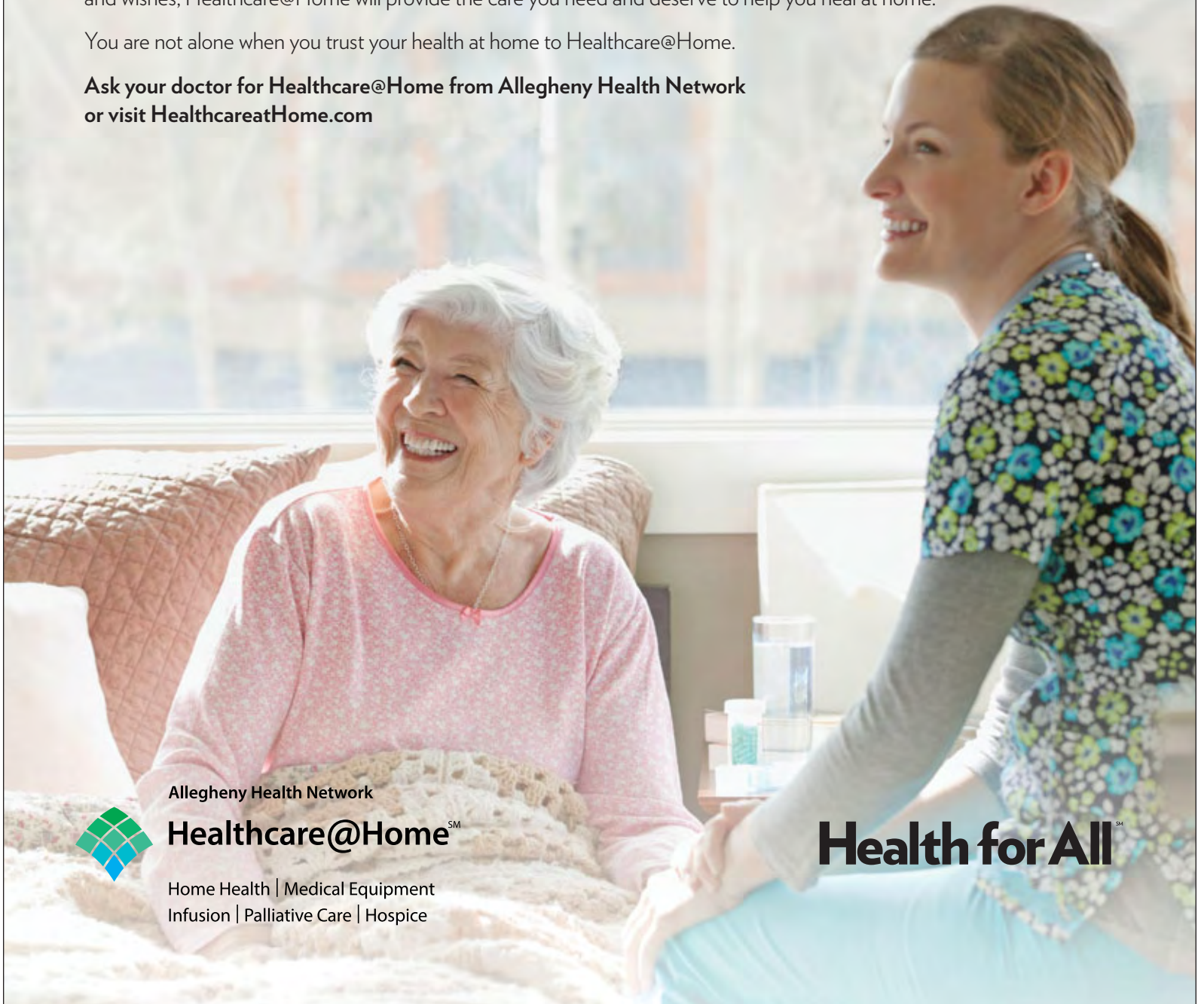
Whether you or a loved one needs in-home care, the Healthcare@Home team can coordinate and provide some or all of the following services for you:

- Skilled nursing care
- Medical equipment and supplies
- IV medications or nutrition
- End-of-life care

Working in partnership with your physician and care team and around you and your family's schedules and wishes, Healthcare@Home will provide the care you need and deserve to help you heal at home.

You are not alone when you trust your health at home to Healthcare@Home.

Ask your doctor for Healthcare@Home from Allegheny Health Network or visit HealthcareatHome.com



Allegheny Health Network



Healthcare@HomeSM

Home Health | Medical Equipment
Infusion | Palliative Care | Hospice

Health for AllSM

Dedicated to Providing Comprehensive, Accessible and Cutting-Edge Healthcare

By Daniel Casciato

Medicine has traditionally been practiced in a very reactionary manner—you see your doctor when you are sick, they run tests, then treat the underlying condition. With the advent of the electronic health record, today's physicians now have the ability to access a large pool of patient data which can then help them to identify and treat medical conditions in a proactive fashion.

"For example, we have evidence based protocols—derived from years of medical research—that tell us how to best take care of our diabetic patients," says Robert W. Koschik II, MD of WHS Primary Care- Lakeside, a primary care practice located in McMurray/Peters Township.

These include making certain blood sugars are running below a certain threshold every 3-6 months, screening for kidney disease on a yearly basis, and a number of other items. According to Dr. Koschik, they can then run reports on diabetic patients and identify those who have not kept up to date with the recommended screenings, or are not meeting thresholds and engage them to remedy the situation.

"This way we can keep our patients healthier longer and prevent complications rather than treat the complications that have already happened," says Dr. Koschik.

In addition to this systematic population-based care, there are several

other ways that WHS Primary Care-Lakeside, part of the Washington Health System, stands out. First, the practice provides convenience to its patients with extended office hours including early morning, evening, and weekend appointments.

"Same day appointments are always available, allowing us to provide continuity of care during acute illness," says Dr. Koschik. "We pride ourselves in excellent, friendly customer service from greeting our patients with a smile to returning phone calls in a timely manner and everything in between."

Lakeside also has extended acute care options including the ability to run intravenous fluids and an in-office pharmacy for convenient access to medications. The practice offers a number of unique services including osteopathic manipulations provided by Dr. Matthew DiIulio, a dermatoscope for better skin cancer screening, heart event monitors to help diagnose cardiac arrhythmias, a 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure monitoring system, and the ability to evaluate peripheral vascular disease using onsite ankle-brachial index equipment. Finally, for patient convenience an excellent team of cardiologists and pulmonologists offer appointments in the Lakeside office every week.

"We work very hard to provide our patients with exceptional care, outstanding customer service, and convenience," says Dr. Koschik.

Three of the most common illnesses the practice is seeing are dia-



Primary Care- Lakeside, part of the Washington Health System, is located in McMurray/Peters Township.



Dr. Robert W. Koschik II, is pictured with a patient.

betes, hypertension, and depression.

"Diabetes and hypertension are to a large extent linked to our poor dietary choices and relatively sedentary lifestyles," explains Dr. Koschik. "In addition, these diseases are being diagnosed more commonly as we are screening for them more diligently. As research continues to show close links to these diseases and the risk for heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease, we have instituted protocols to screen for and manage these treatable conditions."

Depression has always been a prevalent disease as it affects 6-7% of the population at any given time. Fortunately over the past several decades, Dr. Koschik says that there has been a culture shift towards des-

"As research continues to show close links to these diseases (diabetes and hypertension) and the risk for heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease, we have instituted protocols to screen for and manage these treatable conditions."

-Dr. Robert W. Koschik II

tigmatization of psychiatric disorders along with much improved treatment options. "This has given depressed patients a much easier path to present to their doctors for care."

Dr. Koschik says that the practice is currently accepting new patients and, being a part of the independent Washington Health System, it accepts almost all insurance including both Highmark and UPMC products.

"We provide comprehensive primary care and we treat both well and sick patients of all ages," says Dr. Koschik. "Our goal is to deliver outstanding, comprehensive care in the most convenient and cutting edge fashion possible."

➤ For more information or to make an appointment, visit whslakeside.org

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The Importance of Having a Primary Care Physician

By Nancy Kennedy

Having a primary care physician is one of the most important ways to achieve and maintain good health. America's primary care physicians are the front line of the health care system, providing preventive care, acute care and chronic care to patients who often have lifelong relationships with them. Those relationships are the heart of primary care, according to Ashith Mally, M.D., of Preferred Primary Care Physicians, Inc., (PPCP) who believes that a strong relationship can help keep the patient healthy. "When you have a doctor-patient relationship based on trust and respect, the patient is more likely to turn to you for guidance," he states. "Guidance and good care from a primary care physician who knows you and your situation and has your best interests in mind can help you achieve good health, maintain good health, get through health challenges and age as vibrantly as possible."

Dr. Mally is a board-certified internal medicine and primary care physician (PCP) who has been in practice in the U.S. since 1994. Dr. Mally and his partners at PPCP provide preventive care, meaning health screenings, immunizations and annual exams intended to keep patients healthy – these measures help to identify risks and avoid problems by detecting early signs of diseases.

Early detection of disease enables physicians to intervene in the beginning stages, when it is often easier to manage a problem and in some cases, to even reverse or cure it. Early detection of a problem such as cancer or heart disease can prevent more serious disease or complications later, which could result in pain, disability, greater expense and reduced quality of life.

In addition to preventive care, Dr. Mally and his partners treat patients with acute medical problems, such as infections and injuries. They diagnose, treat and manage diseases, relieve pain, educate, counsel, order diagnostic tests and when necessary, make referrals to specialists. They coordinate care when multiple specialists are involved, and act as the patient's advocate. They help patients navigate the complexities of the healthcare system and direct their recovery when they have been ill. Ideally, says Dr. Mally, they view the patient as a partner, working collaboratively in order to individualize care as much as possible.



Pictured left to right: Dr. Stephanie Colodny, Dr. Walter Robison, Dr. Ashith Mally, and Dr. Supriya Shetty

"Patients seek someone to guide them through the maze of the healthcare system," Dr. Mally says. "Medical services are much more complicated today. I deal with patients in a personal way, and that is one of the best aspects of being a primary care physician. Relationships with patients are much stronger in primary care than in the other medical specialties, and I find this rewarding. So often, the patient just wants to talk – about their fears, losses, how things are going, and what worries them. These things are stressful; they can raise the blood pressure, cause GI problems or sleep disturbances. Maybe all the person needs is to talk it out and get reassurance. They have to trust me to be able to talk to me. When I know their situation and history, I can make a better diagnosis and be more helpful."

"I can also help more with preventive care. I'm big believer in eating nutritional foods and managing your weight. Eat correctly – it's the first thing I say to my patients!"

Ultimately, a PCP provides a patient with a "medical home" – a base for their medical care, a place where they are known and where they receive the bulk of their care from a physician with whom they have a relationship. In addition to medical expertise, says Dr. Mally, a good PCP offers the sanctuary of relationship, personal wisdom, human warmth and the emotional support that can make medical experiences more bearable.

Founded in 1995, PPCP has grown into one of the region's largest primary care practices, with over 40 physicians, all board-certified in internal medicine or family practice, and about 20 CRNPs, providing the highest quality care in 13 locations. Dr. Mally, along with

Walter Robison, M.D., Stephanie Colodny, M.D., Supriya Shetty, M.D., Jennifer White, CRNP and Sarah Urbanik, CRNP, practice at the Dormont-Brookline location and the McMurray location. PPCP physicians see patients at St. Clair Hospital, Canonsburg Hospital, McMurray Hills Manor Nursing Home, Friendship Village and Consulate of North Strabane. The

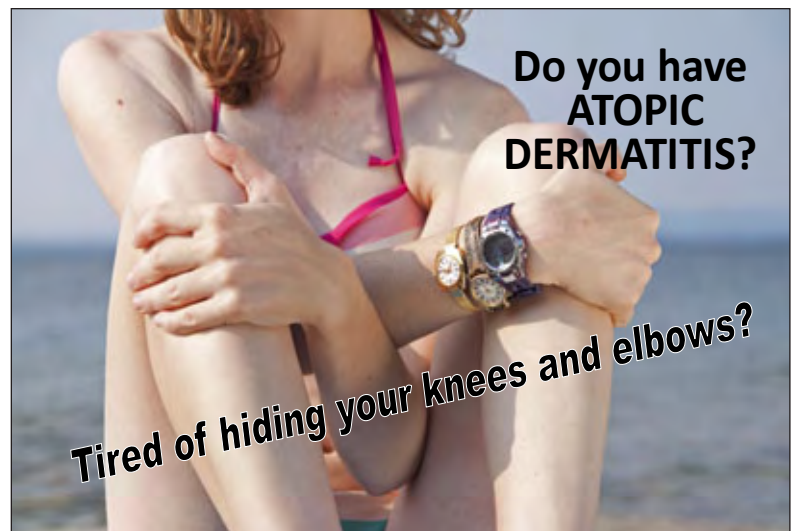
"Medical services are much more complicated today. I deal with patients in a personal way, and that is one of the best aspects of being a primary care physician. Relationships with patients are much stronger in primary care than in the other medical specialties..."

-Dr. Ashith Mally

practice also offers state-of-the-art outpatient centers for cardiac testing, sleep disorders, and headaches.

The McMurray location is in the St. Clair Hospital-Peters Township Outpatient Center at 3928 Washington Road. The Dormont-Brookline office is at 1039 Brookline Blvd.

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Providing Individually Focused Healthcare in a Caring, Patient Centered Environment

By Daniel Casciato

As the region's highest performing hospital, Advanced Surgical Hospital, a 14-bed fully licensed acute care hospital in Washington, PA, and its team of dedicated physicians, staff, and leaders is committed to delivering each of the patients and family members it serves with care that is compassionate and exceptional in every way. Earlier this year, the hospital was ranked by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as one of the 49 best overall patient-rated hospital in the nation—93 percent or more of patients gave an overall care rating of nine or 10 on their HCAHPS survey, a survey administered by CMS to measure patients' perspectives on hospital care.

Advanced Surgical consistently ranks high in overall patient satisfaction and quality outcomes, which has spurred its growth. In fact, Advanced Surgical is a 2013, 2014 and 2015 Recipient of the Press Ganey Guardian of Excellence Award in Patient Satisfaction—making it the only hospital in the region to receive this honor. The Guardian of Excellence Award recognizes top-performing facilities that consistently achieved the 95th percentile of performance in Patient Experience. Advanced Surgical has performed in the 99th percentile since opening in May of 2010, exceeding the threshold established by Press Ganey. Fewer than 5% of all Press Ganey hospitals across the nation reach and consistently maintain it for the one-year reporting period.

"Advanced Surgical Hospital is the region's premier elective orthopaedic surgical hospital. Receiving the Guardian of Excellence Award for three consecutive years is wonderful recognition for the unique patient care experience only available at Advanced Surgical Hospital," notes Anne S. Hast, DNP, RN, the hospital's CEO, adding that the award represents an important endorsement by the industry's leader in measuring, understanding and improving the patient experience. "It speaks to the commitment of our physicians, leadership, and staff to create and maintain a treatment environment centered on extraordinary levels of patient care and family comfort."

Hast attributes the hospital's



Advanced Surgical is an acute care hospital that performs inpatient and outpatient procedures. It specializes in orthopaedic surgery, but also has physicians on staff that perform other procedures as well.

accolades and success to its extraordinary surgeons and healthcare leadership.

"Our business has truly grown because we have an unwavering focus on our patients, their families, and their experience. It all starts with our surgeons and the dynamic leadership team and staff that we have in place here at Advanced Surgical," she says. "The doctors at the hospital are our leaders and visionaries of the care our community deserves. Our physicians are extraordinary and the entire staff is an amazing group of dedicated professionals focused on excellence in patient care. It's the perfect environment for patients to have a unique healthcare experience."

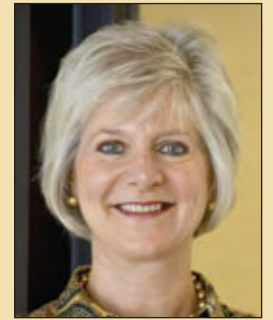
In addition to its outstanding performance for patient experience, Advanced Surgical has been recognized as recipient of the 2014 Pittsburgh Business Times Best Places to Work Award and the 2014 Physician Hospital of the Year by Physician Hospitals of America. Hast herself has been honored as well—named a 2015 Business Women's First Award Recipient by the Pittsburgh Business Times.

The physician-owned hospital was formed in May 2010 by a group of orthopaedic surgeons known as Advanced Orthopedics and Rehabilitation who wanted to create a new concept in health care—a dedicated specialty hospital for the care and rehabilitation of patients undergoing joint replacement and other orthopaedic procedures.

While Advanced Surgical is not an outpatient surgical facility, it is an acute care hospital that performs inpatient and outpatient procedures. It specializes in orthopaedic surgery, including knee and hip replacements, as well as other orthopedic procedures, but also has physicians on the staff that perform pain procedures, plastics, podiatric and general surgery procedures. The facility has a state-of-the-art MRI and a full range of rehabilitation services as offered through its Physical and Occupational Services.

Advanced Surgical also offers a Welcome Center, a concierge-like service that is designed to provide patients, and their loved ones, with an individualized preparation for surgery. Whether you are having an inpatient or outpatient surgery, you will be advised on all the necessary steps to get ready for your procedure.

Patients who are scheduled for outpatient procedures are contacted by the nursing staff to review their medical and surgical history along with a current review of their medication history. All testing is reviewed by an anesthesiologist and patients are given specific instruction so that the day of surgery is a smooth process. Patients having procedures that will result in an overnight stay will be contacted by the Welcome Center staff to begin the introduction process to all required elements that are needed for an interdisciplinary approach for the best patient outcome. Patients



"Creating an exemplary patient experience is really something that we do every day. We are in the 99th percentile overall in patient satisfaction—you can't get any higher than that."

—Anne S. Hast, DNP, RN

have one-on-one opportunities to have their questions answered as they prepare for the day of surgery.

"Once the patients have surgery and we are handing off the care to their family, we collaborate with our community providers so the transition is smooth," says Hast. "The patient knows exactly what will happen so there is no stress and they are able to move from one care setting to the next as their needs change."

In today's healthcare environment, Hast notes that hospitals are tasked by CMS to demonstrate what is called the Triple Aim—improving the experience of care, improving the health of populations, and reducing per capita costs of health care.

"You're balancing patient experience, cost and quality — and really reinventing the way healthcare is provided in the community," Hast explains. "I look at this as a wonderful opportunity because Advanced Surgical Hospital has demonstrated so repeatedly that we are an agile, entrepreneurial, mobile, patient-centric organization performing as the regions "best in class" hospital. Creating an exemplary patient experience is really something that we do every day. We are in the 99th percentile overall in patient satisfaction—you can't get any higher than that."



For more information, visit www.ashospital.net.

Making Treatment Accessible is Part of Patient-Centered Approach

By Vanessa Orr

When a person first visits a physical or respiratory therapist, they can expect to receive the clinical care that they need. But when they work with the staff at Lifeline Therapy, they receive much more—including emotional support and an individualized treatment plan focused on their goals, hobbies and passions.

“We want to make therapy a memorable experience that provides good outcomes for our clients; this philosophy guides all of our treatments,” explained Lifeline owner Chris Brehm, DPT. “We want them to want to come back.”

Lifeline is different than most physical therapy providers in that it also offers pulmonary rehab and cardiac therapy. Unlike most pulmonary rehab programs that are hospital-based, Lifeline is a free-standing outpatient facility that offers patients easier access, as well as a multidisciplinary treatment approach addressing the whole

patient.

“Our program includes registered respiratory therapists, physical therapists and a medical director, as well as a dietician and social worker available for consultations as needed,” said Brehm. He added that education is a key component in all of Lifeline’s programs as it provides a way for patients to learn to manage their symptoms, improve function, decrease disability and reduce the risk of further problems.

Lifeline also promotes the importance of continuing education for its clinical and support staff. “Most of our physical therapists are doctors of physical therapy, and I believe that this advanced training helps us to provide better clinical care,” said Brehm, adding that therapists also participate in continuing education as a way to keep up on the latest treatment approaches.

In addition to being the owner of Lifeline, Brehm, a doctor of physical therapy, still treats patients and uses the opportunity to become more familiar with their needs. “We have

always taken a patient-centered approach,” he explained. “We don’t just talk about customer service, it is very important to us. We realize that our clients have a choice, and that people are now, more than ever, shopping for the best care that they can get. They are going through a lot of changes in their lives, and we want to make this the most enjoyable experience possible.”

Patients in need of physical therapy can self-refer or be referred by a physician, though cardiac and pulmonary patients must have a physician’s prescription. “Patients come to us from a very diverse referral base, including specialists, primary care physicians, hospital discharge managers, nursing homes and home health care agencies,” Brehm explained. “As evidence has shown that pulmonary rehab reduces the cost of care, reduces symptoms and reduces readmission rates, we’re receiving more referrals.”



Lifeline physical therapists Jeanette and Kala assisting patients with their exercise program.

To make it easier for patients to access care, Lifeline accepts all insurances, offers free parking, and also offers free transportation for patients. “Transportation is one of the biggest barriers to treatment; either patients aren’t allowed to drive after a hip or knee replacement, or they have to work around a family member’s schedule,” said Brehm. “It started off casually, but now we have three vans that transport patients.”

➤ For more information, visit www.lifeline-therapy.com or call (412) 829-2450.

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Streamlined, State-of-the Art Treatment for Problem Veins is Changing Lives

By Nancy Kennedy

When Amy Aiello began to experience fatigue and aching in her lower legs, she attributed her discomfort to her occupation. As a critical care charge nurse at St. Clair Hospital, she has spent years caring for patients who have undergone cardiovascular surgery. When the pain and fatigue worsened to the point that they kept her from doing the things she enjoyed, she decided to take action. Aiello took advantage of a new specialty care clinic at her workplace: the Vein Care Center at St. Clair Outpatient Center – Peters Township. There, she found a state-of-the-art clinic dedicated to the most advanced diagnostic and therapeutic care for vascular disease.

The Vein Care Center at St. Clair was largely developed by Jason Andrus, M.D., a board-certified interventional radiologist at St. Clair Hospital. Dr. Andrus wanted to provide the community with the most progressive clinical care for venous conditions in an outpatient setting that offered convenience and comfort.

“When I came to St. Clair Hospital, I saw that the hospital was already performing a high volume of venous insufficiency ultrasounds and had a top-notch Medical Imaging department,” says Dr. Andrus, a graduate of Chicago Medical School who completed his residency and fellowship at Allegheny General Hospital. “Venous disease is more common in older adults. With the aging of the population, the incidence of venous

insufficiency conditions is likely to increase, and the need for such a service was clear. The Vein Care Center is designed to meet the needs of the growing number of people who require treatment for conditions such as varicose veins and spider veins. These are common forms of chronic venous insufficiency.”

At the Vein Care Center, Dr. Andrus performs minimally invasive, outpatient endovascular procedures. For most procedures, no sedation is needed and the entire process takes just a few hours, from arrival to discharge. The most commonly performed procedure is percutaneous endovenous ablation, or vein ablation, done with local anesthesia.

Dr. Andrus says that chronic venous insufficiency is a common condition but it is undertreated. Two factors contribute to this, he says: “This is a disease process that is underdiagnosed by physicians and misunderstood by the public. It is not a normal part of aging; it is not benign; and it is not a cosmetic problem, but a medical one. Risk factors for chronic venous insufficiency include gender (it is more common in women); pregnancy; age; and heredity. About 70 percent of people with varicose veins have a parent who had them. Obesity doesn’t cause varicose veins but it can make them worse.”

In addition to causing pain and swelling, varicose veins can lead to leg ulcers and infection. “You can get superficial thrombophlebitis,” Dr. Andrus says. “Too often, I find that people have been willing to tol-



Dr. Jason Andrus treating a patient in the St. Clair Vein Center.

erate it, but once they have a vein ablation done, they can hardly believe the difference it makes.

Dr. Andrus states that as much as 2 percent of all healthcare spending in the U.S goes to the care of venous insufficiency ulcers. “Twenty million work hours are lost annually to this disease. More people need to be referred to the Vein Care Clinic for an assessment and consultation. If you have varicose veins or spider veins, they may be the tip of an iceberg; see your primary care physician and ask for a referral to the Vein Care Center.”

Treatment at the Vein Care Center not only improves one’s comfort and appearance, but also has long term benefits. “Varicose veins can keep people from walking,” says Dr. Andrus. “The ability to walk is critical to health and quality of life. Treatment of varicose veins promotes mobility, which in turns promotes healthy aging.”

The Vein Care Center at St. Clair Outpatient Center offers diagnostic ultrasound studies, consultation with medical specialists and multi-

ple minimally invasive procedures, including endovenous (vein) ablation; removal of incompetent veins; phlebectomy and micro-phlebectomy; sclerotherapy (injections) and venous surgery.

Nurse Amy Aiello had an entirely positive experience and an excellent outcome. “I had wonderful, attentive care at the Vein Care Center, from the ultrasound to the post-op follow-up care. I was given thorough explanations. There was no pain and I was walking right away. I was off work for a week, with some lifting restrictions, but I felt much better right away. The fatigue in my legs is gone; I’m back working 12-hour shifts and I feel like I can do things after work again.

“It’s no exaggeration to say that the Vein Care Center at St. Clair changed my life.”

> The Vein Care Center is located at the St. Clair Hospital Outpatient Center – Peters Township, at 3928 Washington Road. Parking is free and plentiful. Call (412) 942-8400 to arrange an appointment.

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Sleep Apnea and Jaw Pain Sufferers Find Relief

By Vanessa Orr

Despite getting a full night's sleep, many people wake up feeling unrefreshed, spend their days feeling excessively sleepy and have trouble staying alert. Oftentimes, these symptoms are attributed to Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), which, if left untreated, can leave them at a much higher risk for cardiovascular problems.

"A research study showed that OSA has two times the risk factor of smoking, and three times the risk factor of high blood pressure and obesity for causing a heart attack," explained Michael Hnat, DMD, DABDSM, dental director of Progressive Dental Solutions for Sleep and TMJ. "Patients with cancer have five times the risk of dying from the disease as the result of untreated severe sleep apnea."

Dr. Hnat specializes in Dental Sleep Medicine (DSM) and the use of oral appliances in the treatment of snoring and OSA. At his practice in McMurray, PA, which is nationally accredited by the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine and is the only facility in western PA to hold that credential, Dr. Hnat treats patients with sleep-related breathing problems as well as those suffering from TMJ (temporomandibular joint disorders) issues.

"Oftentimes, sleep-related breathing disorders present as TMJ disorders or jaw problems," he explained, adding that there is frequently crossover between the two conditions.

Despite the fact that OSA is a growing problem among American adults, research shows that less than 5 percent of people who have the condition are successfully diagnosed and treated. "A qualified dentist can identify this medical condition, and refer patients for a diagnostic sleep study that will confirm or rule out the issue," Dr. Hnat explained. "If the study, which is interpreted by a board-certified sleep physician, shows that an individual has OSA, we can create a custom-designed appliance that fits over the teeth to keep the patient's airway open while they sleep."



Dr. Michael Hnat

Despite the fact that OSA is a growing problem among American adults, research shows that less than 5 percent of people who have the condition are successfully diagnosed and treated.

These repositioning devices are designed to advance the lower jaw in order to prevent the palate and tongue from falling back against the back of the throat during sleep and collapsing the airway. The dental device prevents snoring, breathing stoppages and gasping episodes during sleep. "A person wears this every night, just like they'd wear contacts during the day," said Dr. Hnat, adding that such devices are first-line treatment options for mild to moderate cases of sleep apnea, and an alternative for those who can't tolerate CPAP therapy. He adds that the custom-fabricated, FDA-cleared devices should be made by licensed, qualified dentists who are board-certified in dental sleep medicine, or who have had sufficient continuing education and training in the field.

For individuals with jaw joint or jaw muscle pain, which is most often caused by the cumulative effect of grinding and clenching one's teeth over the years, custom-fit appliances can be made to fit over the teeth to relax the jaw muscles or reposition a displaced disc in the jaw joint. "These patients typically present with symptoms including morning headaches, the inability to open their mouths completely, pain chewing, sore jaw muscles, especially on awakening, or clicking and locking jaw joints," said Dr. Hnat.

"Our primary goal is to resolve the symptoms so that our patients can function without pain," he added. "Our secondary goal is to improve the anatomical problem or restore the normal anatomy of the joint."

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Helping New Parents Get Ready for Baby



By Nancy Kennedy

Expecting your first baby? Prospective parents have many decisions to make, and one of the most significant is the choice of a pediatrician to oversee their precious newborn's health, growth and development. When parents choose a pediatrician, they initiate a relationship – one that will hopefully last for

years and serve as a guide and a knowledgeable and caring resource. From the earliest days of infancy, through the toddler years, school years and teenage years, every child's needs will change and many challenges will undoubtedly emerge – but with an expert pediatrician at their side, parents have a reliable and capable support system.

Expert pediatricians abound at Pediatric Alliance, Western Pennsylvania's largest physician-owned pediatric practice, with 43 board-certified pediatricians, six nurse practitioners and three physicians' assistants. With 16 offices in locations throughout the region, and one new one due to open this summer, Pediatric Alliance is a strong presence that prides itself on the excellence of the primary pediatric care it provides to children and adolescents, and on its exceptional availability to parents. Physicians are on call for urgent and emergency calls 24/7, and many of the office locations have both evening and weekend hours. All Pediatric Alliance physicians are on the medical staff of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh as well as at all other Pittsburgh-area hospitals with pediatric services.

Pediatric Alliance offers new parents unparalleled support as they embark on the great life adventure of raising a family. "New parents can be reassured about the expertise of our physicians," says Jim Troup, chief executive officer for Pediatric Alliance. "We provide the highest quality, state-of-the-art

pediatric care, including well-child care, care of children with special needs, health promotion, injury prevention and parent education. This practice is independent and physician owned: the doctors that you see at your location own that location, thus they are deeply invested in the quality of the care and services."

Troup recommends that prospective parents take several steps to guide their decision-making. "First, visit our web site, www.pediatricalliance.com. It is packed with a wealth of information. You can browse through the profiles of our physicians; you can sign up for our newborn classes, which gives you an overview of the practice and of what to expect. You can see the many locations and find the one that will be most convenient for you.

"We strongly urge expectant parents to make a prenatal appointment with us, to meet the physician and have a tour. That can go a long way toward helping them feel more prepared; it's an easier transition when you have already met your baby's doctor. Parents should also check out PediaBlog on our web site, which has numerous topics of interest to parents. You can go back in the archives and find just about any topic. Another idea is to visit our Facebook page, where you will see postings from some of our physicians as well as from other parents."

Pediatric Alliance was formed twenty years ago, when eight private pediatric practices merged. In addition to the pediatricians, there are pediatric nurse practitioners, registered nurses, physician assistants and lactation con-

(Continued on following page.)



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PEDIATRIC ALLIANCE

(Continued from page 26.)

sultants on the staff. Pediatric Alliance has two specialty offices, one for children with asthma, allergies and immunologic conditions, and one for those with endocrine conditions such as diabetes.

At Pediatric Alliance, families will find a “medical home” for their child, meaning an approach to care based on the concept of partnership between parents and primary care providers. Developed originally for children with special medical needs or chronic conditions, the “medical home” approach involves mutual sharing of information and collaboration, in the best interest of the child. At Pediatric Alliance, technology is selectively employed to improve services to busy families, including sending appointment reminders.

In the South Hills, there are Pediatric Alliance locations in Green Tree, Chartiers-Bridgeville, St. Clair Hospital and Jefferson Hills. At every location, parents will find the highest quality care and advocacy for children and adolescents; convenience and availability; and strong relationships between physicians and families. At Pediatric Alliance, each newborn receives the expert care he or she needs in order to grow and develop, as their mothers and fathers receive the support and resources they need to grow in confidence as parents.



“This practice is independent and physician owned: the doctors that you see at your location own that location, thus they are deeply invested in the quality of the care and services.”

~Jim Troup

> To learn more or to schedule a prenatal visit, visit www.pediatricalliance.com

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What questions do patients most often ask?
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Can you do anything to relieve my recurring headaches?
What massage technique is best for fibromyalgia.

Tell us about your most compelling case?
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What is the biggest myth you deal with and what is the truth?
Myth: Pain pills will resolve the muscular pain
Reality: Pills mask the pain and often have side effects. Massage relieves the particular muscles that are in spasm, allowing for a better flow of blood into the region, a better range of motion, and more fluid movement. The best outcomes occur when a doctor, a physical therapist and a massage therapist work together to provide effective treatment with the minimum amount of pain medication.

> For more information, you can reach James Stark at **Beaufusion Massage** at (724) 255-6610 or visit the website at www.beaufusion.com



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WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR BLIND CHILDREN

Serving Children, Youth and Adults Throughout 33 Counties With Broad Array of Programs and Services

By Nancy Kennedy

Founded in 1887, the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children has long been known for excellence in the education of children with blindness and visual impairment. For more than a century, WPSBC has not only endured but evolved, continually growing in size and expanding its range of services. Rooted in a long and distinguished history and guided by a firm commitment to mission, WPSBC in 2016 is a multifaceted, shining and unique jewel among the region's institutions, serving children, youth and adults throughout 33 counties with a broad array of programs and services. With a national reputation for educational excellence and a dynamic, progressive spirit, the WPSBC is a model program that sets the bar very high.

According to Todd Reeves, J.D., M.S., executive director and superintendent of the school, "At WPSBC, we serve children with multiple disabilities and complex needs. We are an amalgam: a school infused with comprehensive therapeutic and medical supports, a child care center and more. We believe that, even for children with multiple and severe disabilities, the level of opportunity should never be less than what any parent would want for their child. We provide solid services that enable each child to fulfill their potential and reach their maximum level of independence, and we support and validate parents."

When Kristen Huijbregtse walked into the WPSBC for the first time, she immediately knew that she had come to the right place. Kristen had explored many facilities as she sought the one that could best meet the educational, developmental and medical needs of her son, Bennett, who was three at the time. Bennett,



"At WPSBC, we serve children with multiple disabilities and complex needs. We are an amalgam: a school infused with comprehensive therapeutic and medical supports, a child care center and more."

-Todd Reeves

who was born prematurely and had kidney problems that eventually led to two transplants, needed an array of services and support to help him grow, learn and thrive. Eight years later, Kristen is more convinced than ever that the WPSBC is the ideal setting for children with visual impairment, multiple disabilities and special medical needs. In fact, she serves as president of the Parent Teacher Organization, playing a significant role as parent, advocate, resource and liaison. "I felt it right away – the School for the Blind was the right school for Bennett," she says. "Everyone seemed so kind and warm. I felt I could trust the staff and Bennett would be safe! Bennett enjoys school and we have had a very positive experience."

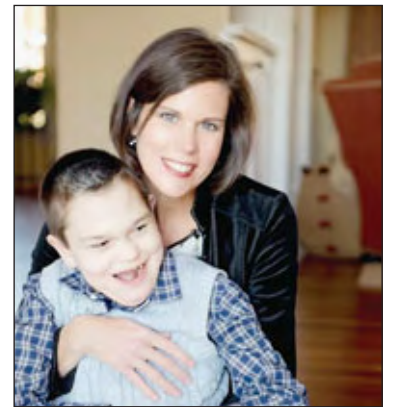
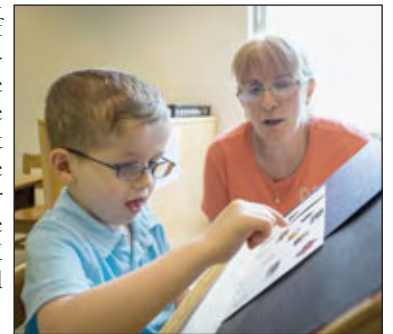
Centered in the historic and familiar main building on Bayard Street in North

Oakland, WPSBC serves children, youth and adults through a variety of services and programs, including a new transition to adulthood program. All services are individualized. Within the School, classes are small, with a maximum of seven students, and all teachers are certified to teach the visually impaired. Classroom teams include an occupational therapist; speech and language therapist; physical therapist; orientation and mobility specialist; behavioral support specialist; registered nurse and para-educators. Approximately 180 students are enrolled annually. The School's dormitories serve as a home-away-from-home for nearly 1/3 of the enrolled students.

"The school has received the designation of Blue Ribbon status from the federal Department of Education for our very strong educational and therapeutic services. We are the only school for blind children to receive this designation," says Reeves. "Our charge is to assist each child wherever he or she is. We partner with school districts to help them meet the needs of the children with disabilities who are mainstreamed. No medical challenge is too great for WPSBC; we have many children who need medical technology and medications. We have 12 RNs on the staff and private duty nurses who accompany children with medical needs to school.

Technology plays a huge role here, especially mobility technology, communication technology and instructional technology. Technology facilitates greater mobility and independence."

WPSBC is a private, independent, non-profit organization that receives 70% of its funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. All of the facility's programs and services are available at no charge to families of enrolled students.



Kristen Huijbregtse and her son Bennett who attends the School for the Blind. Bennett needed an array of services and support to help him grow, learn and thrive.

Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children



Programs Include

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"A Child's VIEW" Blended Child Care

Day and Residential Programming for Students 3 -21

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Located in the heart of Oakland, WPSBC is a one-of-a-kind educational facility committed to training visually impaired students with additional disabilities.

The School also provides vital early intervention and outreach services to visually impaired students, with or without additional challenges, throughout western PA.

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To learn more about the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, visit www.wpsbc.org or www.facebook.com/WPASchoolforBlindChildren.

NEW STORY

At NEW STORY School, Where Teaching Is an Art, Children with Challenges Can Write a New Future

By Nancy Kennedy

There are some extraordinary schools in Western Pennsylvania where teams of dedicated and visionary professionals are rewriting the book on the education of children with serious and complex learning challenges. These professionals are improving and even transforming the lives of children through a combination of innovative, measured strategies: a safe and nurturing learning environment; utilization of the most advanced and proven special education practices; a network of supportive human relationships, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Add the artistry of their skills, the fire of their passion for their work and their dedication to mission, and the result is a new kind of school that is gaining attention and accolades for outstanding outcomes.

Welcome to New Story: a private, licensed, alternative school for children ages 5 -21 who need special educational, behavioral and emotional support services in order to overcome academic and behavioral challenges so they can learn, grow and thrive. New Story has 11 schools throughout Pennsylvania, including ones in Monroeville, Indiana and DuBois. New Story offers individualized programs for each student, addressing specific behavior problems and needs for emotional or autistic support. Susan Griffith, M.Ed., regional education director for New Story, says that the school's mission is to help children and families write new stories of success.

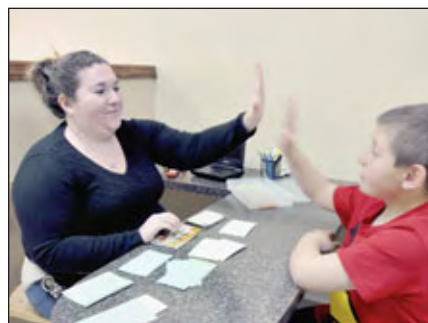
"New Story is set apart by the quality of the services we provide. Our staff of teachers, therapists, counselors and paraprofessionals are highly trained to respond to behaviors and help the children manage their behavior. We plan and coordinate interventions and preventive measures, and work closely with the family so that there is consistency in the home. Our teachers are all certified by the state of Pennsylvania in Special Education and many have advanced degrees. We have small class sizes; low teacher: student ratios and an environment that is safe and caring. There is a sensory room in each building and a transition program for teaching life skills and work skills."

In addition to teachers, the New Story staff includes speech therapists, occupational therapists and licensed counselors. Physical therapy is available, and there is an intense behavior program directed by a Behavior Analyst. Parents play a critical role and are an integral part of the team. The diverse composition of the team enables them to address the needs of the whole child, but according to Griffith, it is the New Story staff's approach to their work that is truly exceptional. "At New Story, we work in imaginative ways. We have a work environment that encourages everyone to think creatively, outside the box; that is what makes it possible for us to provide such individualized attention to each child. Here, the attitude is, 'where there's a will, we will find a way' – and we always do. The people at New Story care intensely; we live for our students and their families."

Students are referred to New Story from school districts throughout the region; New Story staff assess the student and review the Individualized Education Plan. Transportation and funding are arranged by the home school district. The goal is to help the student acquire essential social, behavioral and learning skills that they need to succeed at school and in life. Griffith states that the plan is to transition the child as quickly as possible



New Story Director, Rebecca Compardo and Assistant Education Director, Christina Price, celebrate with students as they recognize New Story School during National School Choice Week.



Classroom Support Staff, Meghan Stramaski, works on verbal behavior skills during an Intensive Teaching session with a student.



Star, the New Story mascot.

back to the home school district, which involves intensive collaboration among all parties.

"New Story students need a higher level of support that is best provided in smaller settings," Griffith explains. "The services each receives here depend on the diagnosis or needs. We enroll children with

emotional disability who receive group and individual counseling, while the child with autism might need a stronger focus on speech or other therapies. Behavior therapy is focused on counseling and working through situations; we work with foster parents and hospitals also."

At New Story, everyone can excel – students, families and the staff as well. It is a place of acceptance, positivity, and hope that represents a new paradigm in the education of children with special needs.



For more information, call (724) 463-5390 or email Susan Griffith at sgriffith@newstory.com.



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At New Story schools, our children are writing new chapters filled with hope and success for their future.

Check out our new website!

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MEDICARE SPECIALISTS OF PITTSBURGH

Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh's Expertise Makes Sign-up Process Easier

By Vanessa Orr

Every day, more than 10,000 baby boomers turn 65, which makes them eligible to sign up for Medicare. And while that may seem like a simple thing to do, the fact is, figuring out what the right plan is for your particular needs in Pennsylvania is anything but easy, which is why it's important to find an expert to help.

Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh, established in 2013, takes pride in the fact that they focus only on Medicare issues, ranging from how to sign up to the options available to those new to the program or looking to change plans. "We believe in doing only one thing and doing it really well," explained John A. Wells, president. "Our job is to educate our clients on how Medicare works, find out what their needs and wants are, and guide them toward a product that meets those requirements."

"If they have problems affording particular drugs, we may be able to get them coverage through manufacturer assistance programs."

-John A. Wells

Because Medicare Specialists is licensed with every major carrier in western Pennsylvania, they are able to recommend a wealth of options to clients, instead of products only carried by one company. "The way the industry is, if you're a company that is only licensed to do Medicare through Highmark, you sell Highmark as the best plan," explained Wells. "You don't

have any knowledge about Medicare supplements, even though a supplement might be a better fit for a particular client. For example, if an individual owns a house in Florida and lives outside western Pennsylvania for part of the year, they'll want a plan that gives them access to doctors in Florida. When you work with all of the carriers, you can work through the system to

guide them to the right products."

Education is a huge part of what Medicare Specialists does, starting out with explaining what the difference is between a Medicare supplement and a Medicare Advantage Plan. "There are also complexities in Medicare as it relates to an individual's health and financial issues," said Wells. "We try to help those who have financial issues with assistance through a variety of programs including PACE/PACENET, LIS and Medicaid. If they have problems affording particular drugs, we may be able to get them coverage through manufacturer assistance programs."

"Lately, we've been seeing a lot more people who are not enrolled because they're confused about what they need; they don't know if they need Medicare Part A or B, and they didn't realize that they would be fined if they didn't sign up," explained Sales Manager Shari Leckenby. "I work on sorting things out; getting them enrolled, answering questions about Social Security, helping them find help with drug

costs, medical assistance, even financial assistance if they can't afford hospital bills.

"Medicare is my passion," added Leckenby. "I love the political part, the changes made every year—I just enjoy doing it. And if someone asks about something that we don't know about, we'll find the answer."

Medicare Specialists is conveniently located in the same building as the South Hills Social Security office, which is very convenient when assisting individuals with issues in regards to Medicare. "Over years of dealing with Medicare, we've developed a lot of knowledge," said Wells. "In western Pennsylvania, there are 24 different stand-alone prescription drug plans, 26 Medicare Advantage plans, and who knows how many supplemental plans—60, 70, 80? We help people figure out Medicare so that it is simple to make a choice."

 To learn more, visit **Medicare Specialists at www.medipgh.com** or call **(412) 343-0344**.



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WILFRED R. CAMERON WELLNESS CENTER

Join Cameron Wellness Center and Give Yourself the Gift of Health and Fitness

By Nancy Kennedy

For most people, the process of becoming healthy and fit is a personal journey, and at the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center in Washington, PA, it is the trip of a lifetime.

Cameron Wellness Center is an extraordinary health and wellness center that offers exemplary services and benefits that are often life-transforming for its members. As a medically based wellness center, Cameron is unique; it is affiliated with Washington Health System and offers health, nutrition and fitness programs that are based on cutting-edge science in medicine and exercise physiology. All services and classes are provided by highly credentialed and dedicated professionals. Many members are referred by their physicians, who encourage them to take advantage of the facility's numerous opportunities to feel better, improve their strength, increase their stamina, reduce their weight, manage stress and learn to eat nutritiously. In contrast to the gyms and fitness centers that are ubiquitous in strip malls and shopping centers, Cameron provides meticulously individualized attention to every client, focusing on the whole person: mind, body and spirit.

It is that highly individualized approach that is Cameron's signature and its strongest asset. "We work hard to integrate new members, and that means giving each one personal attention," explains Bryan Braunlich, sales and marketing manager. "When you initially join, you have a private consultation with one of our exercise physiologists, to discuss your medical history, specific needs, goals and any limits you might have. You have fitness testing to assess your current status, and a customized plan is developed for you. It includes a schedule of recommended classes and exercises. In addition, all new members receive cardio and strength orientations, nutrition consultation and personal training session. We focus on all aspects of wellness – social, mind/body, mental and physical health. We believe in setting realistic goals and spend a lot of time on goal setting. The personal attention continues throughout your membership; we continue to meet with you and establish new goals when the initial ones have been met."

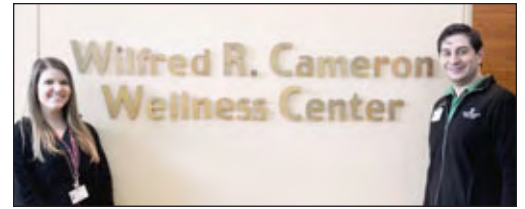
Cameron Wellness Center features a bounty of programs and services in the modern, 70,000 square foot facility located minutes from the Washington Hospital. Among these features:

- Spa Harmony – a day spa open to the public featuring massage, skin and nail care, acupuncture, Reiki and reflexology
- Over 85 group classes in cardio, strength training, Zumba, kickboxing and many other forms of fitness
- Aquatics programs, including private or group swim lessons
- Private and semi-private personal training
- Live Well studio – a variety of yoga and Pilates classes
- Nutritional counseling
- Clinical programs, including weight loss, arthritis classes and smoking cessation

Equipment is state of the art. Cameron has three exercise studios; a five lane lap pool; a warm water therapy pool; whirlpool, sauna and steam rooms; indoor and outdoor walking tracks, with a labyrinth; a multi-sport gymnasium and all the latest cardiovascular and resistance equipment. There is free parking and a supervised child care center called Cameron Kids.

"Some people come here in order to maintain their health; others come to improve it," says Braunlich. "We have many seniors who are interested in healthy aging. Many word-of-mouth referrals come from happy members who encourage friends and family to join. Whatever their reason for joining, we have programs that are tailor made for their needs. We have something for everyone, of every fitness level, age and health status." For those who are struggling with or at risk for a chronic or high-risk condition such as COPD, diabetes, obesity or heart disease, Cameron can be a godsend. It is strongly supported by the Washington-area physician community, who regularly recommend it to their patients and are often members themselves. When people are referred by their Washington Health System physician, they receive a discount on initiation fees.

Cameron Wellness Center has a warm, friendly staff who find satisfaction in helping people transform themselves and their lives. "Interacting with clients, seeing them getting healthier, is the best reward. I'm often the first person that new members meet, so they're proud to show me what they have achieved." His colleague, corporate wellness manager Louise Schultz, agrees: "I love the helping environment at Cameron Wellness Center. The staff is a true team and we love our work; that helps us to do our best for our members."



Cameron Wellness Center has a corporate program, Schultz adds, through which more than 30 regional organizations offer employees a discounted membership. In addition, the Cameron staff will go to workplaces and hold group sessions and classes on site. Cameron also offers community outreach programs, such as special events for Breast Cancer Month or the Go Red campaign for women's hearts.

Cameron Wellness Center was originally a gift from businessman Wilfred R. Cameron to the people of the Washington County region, and it remains a great gift today. Members can greatly improve their health and manage medical conditions more effectively by taking part in the fitness and nutrition programs at Cameron.

> To learn more about **Cameron Wellness Center**, visit www.cameronwellness.org or call (724) 225-WELL

Caring for Children and Teenagers with Type 1 Diabetes

(Continued from page 12.)

navigate the complicated health care system.

The Diabetes Transition Program at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC equips teenage patients with confidence, knowledge, and support that can foster successful lifelong disease management. Supported by the David Paul Diabetes Transition Care Research Initiative Fund, the program has four physicians, three nurse prac-

tioners, three diabetes educators, four outside consultants, and a psychologist.

Clinic visits are followed by a one-hour group session facilitated by a diabetes educator and a psychologist. Plans are under way to run a parallel session for parents to learn about transition from a teenager's perspective.

In addition to medical management, the impact of diabetes on teen issues such as relationships, recreational drug use, alcohol, and dri-

ving will be discussed in a group setting, notes Dr. Muzumdar.

"The young adults will meet the same group of peers every three months and serve as their own support group," she says. "This will help transition to independent care and better long-term control."

> To learn more about the **Diabetes Transition Program** at **Children's Hospital**, call (412) 692-5171.

The Community and Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park is the Heart of Upper St. Clair

By Nancy Kennedy

It's barely seven years old, but Upper St. Clair's sparkling and spacious Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park has quickly become the heart of the community. It's a busy, bright and bustling place with plenty to offer for everyone: classes, sports, swimming pools, workout spaces and social events. It's a place to learn and have fun, to celebrate, and to get healthy or stay healthy. According to Melissa Lindberg, M.S., supervisor of marketing and membership, the Community & Recreation Center is much more than an activities center: it's a community gathering place, where families spend quality time together and friends relax and enjoy each other's company. "The C&RC is a unique facility," she says. "It's a fitness and recreation center for all ages, from infants to older adults and everyone in between. It's very family-driven and family-friendly, and is also a great place for single adults. When you have a member-

ship here, it's like having a personal playground. You can gather here with friends and family, and it's a wonderful place to meet people and make new friends."

Set within the 475 acres of beautiful and bucolic Boyce Mayview Park, the Community & Recreation Center is a 90,000 square foot facility that was designed to blend in with its surrounding natural environment. The building was constructed with numerous "green" elements and natural materials. The C&RC takes full advantage of its impressive setting, incorporating the park's trails and hills into its fitness programs and offering participants broad views of the forests and fields to perhaps inspire them as they exercise and play.

There are three main divisions to the C&RC: fitness, aquatics and general recreation, which encompasses games, classes and other activities. The first floor contains two full size gymnasiums/basketball courts, two group exercise studios, one of which is focused on mind-



body exercise such as yoga and Pilates, a playroom/babysitting area, a large common space, and poolside party rooms. Fitness classes are offered in general aerobics, yoga, Pilates, cycling, boxing training, barre, and many other forms of exercise. Located on the second floor are a cardio area, free weight and weight machine area, and a low-impact, 1/8 mile indoor walking track. All cardio equipment, including Espresso Bikes, offer individual television/multi-media screens and virtual trainers with a multitude of workout options. Seniors are accommodated with a special set of classes and activities, including pickleball, the Seniors at Leisure series and group exercises that include water walking, gentle movement and senior fitness.

Aquatics is outstanding at the C & RC. With three pools to choose among, there is something for everyone: an indoor four-lane lap pool; an indoor leisure pool with a resistance channel, interactive water structure, whirlpool and toddler area; and an enormous 28,000 square foot outdoor leisure pool that has special features to match any ability level. It also features a sandbox, several slides, numerous lounge chairs and two outdoor covered pavilions. The indoor and outdoor pools have handicapped lifts which are self-operated, and a zero depth entry to the pool. There are even underwater benches for resting.

For children with special needs, the C & RC is a welcoming place. Every aspect is accessible and in compliance with ADA requirements. Across the parking lot, adults and children can visit a soft surface ball-field used by the Miracle League of the South Hills all-inclusive baseball program. In addition to the field,

there is also an all-access, inclusive playground, The Clubhouse, with lots of activities.

Currently, the Community & Recreation Center has 10,000 members, and Lindberg hopes to see those numbers grow. "About 60% of our members are Upper St. Clair residents, but we draw from all over the region. We encourage all interested people to come and participate; you don't have to live nearby. Membership can be annual or you can get a three month membership; we also offer a daily admission pass for individuals."

For Lindberg, a busy mother of two young children who has a master's degree in exercise physiology, the C&RC is a terrific resource for families and for the entire community. "For me, it's greatly rewarding to see people experiencing this center with their families. Everyone is enjoying themselves and getting healthy! In our large lobby, we have Wi-Fi, and you'll see kids eating lunch or doing homework, parents socializing while the kids are taking classes, neighbors gathering to meet for a workout. For many members, the center has become part of their daily life."

Upper St. Clair is renowned as a place of beautiful homes, excellent schools and gracious living, and the Community & Recreation Center further enhances the region's quality of life. Although a majority of members are from Upper St. Clair, the South Hills and southern Allegheny County, membership is open to people throughout the Greater Pittsburgh area.

➤ For more information about facilities, classes and events, or to become a member, visit www.twpusc.org/crc/crc-home.

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THE PILATES BODY

Build Strength, Improve Health

By Vanessa Orr

It's often intimidating to begin a new exercise program, especially when you may have health conditions that make it harder to work out, or feel uncomfortable attending a large gym. At The Pilates Body, located in Peters Township, staff members understand these concerns—because many of them have been there themselves.

"The instructors who work here set us apart—not only are they non-judgmental, but they really care about the people who come here and don't want them to feel awkward or embarrassed," said owner Colleen Dachille. "Several of them started doing Pilates because of physical issues and found out that it helped them to heal—and they liked it so much that they became instructors.

"Their goal is to make everyone feel welcome and comfortable because they know how difficult it can be to walk through the doors of a small fitness studio, especially if you don't feel really good about yourself," she added.

The Pilates Body specializes in

teaching classical Pilates, a system of exercises developed by Joseph Pilates in the early 20th century that is designed to improve strength, flexibility and posture. Even more important, these exercises can help with a myriad of health problems, ranging from neuromuscular conditions such as multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis, to illness or injury.

"Sixty-five percent of our clients are age 50 and over, and many of them have weight or other health issues," said Dachille. "They keep coming back because it makes them feel better."

Dachille gave the example of a woman in her late 50s with sciatica, fused vertebra and chronic back, hip and neck pain. "After several lessons, she was amazed at how much better she felt and how everyday movement no longer caused her pain," she said.

Clients build strength from the inside out by progressing through the exercise system, which strengthens the spine, increases flexibility and range of motion, and improves overall inner strength. To this end,



"Sixty-five percent of our clients are age 50 and over, and many of them have weight or other health issues. They keep coming back because it makes them feel better." -Colleen Dachille

many athletes also perform Pilates as a way to gain balance and improve strength in muscles overworked or injured through repetitive motion. "Looking good is a side benefit," Dachille said. "This therapeutic program can actually change your life."

In order to introduce clients to the exercise system, The Pilates Body offers one-on-one training, as well as specific classes geared toward beginning students. "It's an affordable way to learn the classical system of Pilates," said Dachille, adding that not many Pilates' studios offer beginner classes on the reformer and other equipment. "I wanted to open it up to a bigger population and make it more accessible to the community."

In addition to classical Pilates, the studio also offers fitness classes such as kettlebell and boot camp, and has recently added a spinning room. "Most of our classes are taught by

Pilates' instructors," said Dachille of the certification that requires more than 600 hours of training and can take up to three years to complete.

While most classes average four or five people with clients receiving individualized attention, private lessons are often recommended, especially for people with health problems or muscular and joint issues. "Our goal is to make sure that they have a well-rounded fitness experience, while staying true to the form and function of Pilates," said Dachille.

"Don't be intimidated," she added. "Come and give it a try. It could change your life."

To learn more, visit www.ThePilatesBody.org or call (724) 941-2411. The Pilates Body is located at 4000 Washington Road in Peters Township, just behind Juniper Grill.



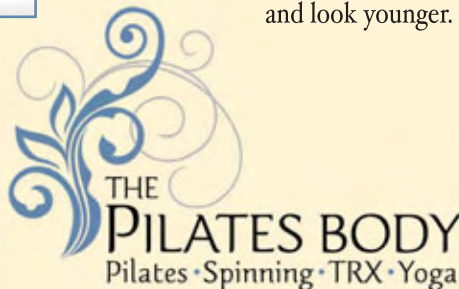
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Providing Compassionate and High Quality Innovative Patient Care

By Daniel Casciato

The mission at Washington Ear, Nose and Throat is simple—to provide University Quality care in the community. The team prides itself in providing a level of care commensurate with what patients would receive at an Academic Medical center. In addition to two board certified Otolaryngologists, the practice has three Doctors of Audiology, which is unusual for a practice of this size.

“The patient experience is designed to be as streamlined as possible, from the initial scheduling of the appointment, to the physician encounter, as well as any testing that we may perform within the office,” says Dr. Edward Stafford. “Our office at the Meadows landing location on Route 19 is ideally located, close to both I79 and I70, allowing us to draw patients from the Greater Pittsburgh area, Washington, Green, and Fayette counties, as well as parts of West Virginia and Ohio.”

One of the practice’s great strengths is its office staff, notes Dr. Stafford, most of whom have been

with the practice for many years. “From the front office staff to the physicians and audiologists, we genuinely love our jobs, and we believe this is reflected in how we care for patients.”

The physicians’ approach to caring for patients is centered on establishing a correct diagnosis for patients as quickly as possible, and instituting an appropriate treatment plan. A large portion of our practice involves the care of patients with head/neck and thyroid cancers.

“Often patients will come to the office with a new lump or swelling, and the physicians guide the patients through the process, from initial consultation and testing, to biopsy and establishing a diagnosis, and ultimately through treatment which can include surgery, chemotherapy and radiation,” says Dr. Howard Goldberg.

Drs. Stafford and Goldberg work closely with a variety of specialists in the treatment of their patients, including medical and radiation oncologists, endocrinologists, speech language pathologists, nutritionists, and other health care professionals,



Since its founding in 2002, Washington Ear, Nose and Throat has been a regional leader in the diagnosis and treatment of ear, nose, throat and balance disorders.

ensuring that patients are cared for in a comprehensive manner. Both physicians also pride themselves on personal communication with their patients. They will not rush you out of an exam room, and will often call patients with test results themselves. Finally, if surgery is needed, only Dr. Stafford or Goldberg, not a resident trainee, will be performing your surgery. In fact, their physicians often work together in the operating room, increasing speed and efficiency.

“Overall, our goal is to expedite the care of our patients, and to minimize stress in the process by ensuring open communication at all times,” says Dr. Goldberg.

The Audiologists at Washington Ear, Nose and Throat are committed to the long-term hearing health of patients as well. They strive to educate patients on hearing loss and make recommendations based on the patient’s lifestyle and listening needs. Dr. Nicole Wasel, one of the three clinical audiologists on staff, says the practice’s number one goal for hearing aid patients is to improve quality of life through better hearing and to provide individualized solutions for every patient regardless of budget.

“What separates us most from other hearing aid professionals in the area is the time and precision we use when fitting hearing devices to patients,” she says. “We not only use the latest technology, we also use the gold standard approach to fitting hearing devices. Our patients are involved in every step of the fitting

process. We measure the size and shape of a patient’s ear canal and use that measurement, along with the patient’s hearing loss, to calculate precisely how the hearing device should be set.”

After that, the audiologists fine tune the hearing device based on the patient’s perception of how it sounds. One of the biggest problems they see with patients who have hearing devices from other practices is that the hearing aids are either set too soft or too loud because the appropriate measurements were not taken at the time of the fitting.

Washington Ear, Nose and Throat’s new location near the Meadows is easily accessible, and one of its goals in both the short and long term is to draw more patients from the outlying areas outside the South Hills and Washington/Green counties.

“We have no immediate plans to open any new locations; rather, we continue to invest in our current location, with state of the art equipment, and a focus on a positive patient experience for everyone we treat,” says Dr. Stafford.

Dr. Mary Catherine Mazi adds, “Our number one goal is to provide the best patient care we possibly can. Beyond that, our team respects and trusts each other. We consider it a privilege to be able to work together for the good of our patients.”

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A Revolution In Hearing Technology

by Dr. Lori A. Howard and Dr. Laura Di Pasquale-Gregory

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Dr. David Stapor: Delivering Cutting-Edge Orthopedic Care

By Daniel Casciato

For over 80 years, Steel Valley Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine has been an innovator and leader in orthopedic care in western Pennsylvania. With offices in both Jefferson Hills and Bethel Park, the surgeons and medical staff have long been well-respected for their best-in-class orthopedic care and their longstanding, dedicated patient base.

Technology at the practice represents the finest and most advanced in the region. Steel Valley has also maintained a strong relationship with hospitals and medical administrations from the region. In fact, all of the practice's physicians are currently on staff either at Jefferson Regional Medical Center or St. Clair Memorial Hospital. The combination of these top quality components convinced Dr. David J. Stapor to join the practice 28 years ago.

"One of my proudest professional accomplishments is that I have been at one place during my career," says Dr. Stapor, who is board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. "I love working with my partners. Over the years, we have been fortunate to have great physicians and staff join the practice. When you're working with people with the kind of experience and learning they have, it's invaluable."

Born and raised in Connecticut, Dr. Stapor is a 1979 graduate of

Duke University and completed his medical training at St. Louis University receiving his medical degree in 1983. He completed his orthopedic training at Albany Medical Center in New York in 1988.

"I chose orthopedics because it's a specialty where you have an opportunity to improve someone's quality of life either operatively or non-operatively," he recalls. "It's very gratifying to help people get better and return to activities they enjoy after you treat them. Not only can you take their pain away, but also improve their function and quality of life at the same time. That's the rewarding part of what we do."

In addition to being a partner with Steel Valley Orthopaedics, Dr. Stapor is a past president of the Medical Staff at UPMC Braddock Hospital and past Chief of Surgery at UPMC Braddock and Jefferson Hospital. He was involved in the creation of the Joint Care Center at Jefferson Hospital and continues to be active in a leadership role.

A dedicated orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Stapor devotes his time and focus to elective joint replacement procedures for patients who suffer from severe joint pain that limits mobility in their hips, knees and ankles. For the vast majority of patients, joint replacement is an effective way to reduce pain, restore normal joint function and return to favorite activities. Keeping an eye on



Dr. David J. Stapor and his wife became involved with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Societies of Western PA after their son developed lymphoma in 2006. Last year, he was named LLS's Man of the Year in Pittsburgh for raising over \$65,000 during the national organization's Man and Women of the Year Campaign.

cutting-edge joint replacement technology and research is one of Dr. Stapor's top priorities. While advancements in medical technology has led to less invasive procedures and faster recovery times, orthopedic surgery continues to evolve.

"We are trying to make patient experiences with surgeries more efficient, painless and streamlined," he says. "Being involved in new technologies is exciting from both a developmental and investment standpoint."

As an esteemed leader in the medical community, Dr. Stapor also continues to participate in numerous fundraising activities particularly for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Societies of Western PA (LLS). He and his wife became involved with LLS after their son developed lymphoma in 2006. During one of his son's treatments, a friend and neighbor of Dr. Stapor said he would like

to do a Team In Training (TNT) Leukemia & Lymphoma 100-mile bike ride in Lake Tahoe on behalf of his son. Dr. Stapor decided to join him. That began Dr. Stapor's involvement with the organization.

Since that first ride he has done three others, including one last year at Tahoe with his son, who is currently in medical school, and has participated in several sprint triathlons and marathon relays. Last year, he was named LLS's Man of the Year in Pittsburgh for raising over \$65,000 during the national organization's Man and Women of the Year Campaign.

While his son's illness was the impetus for his interest in LLS, Dr. Stapor says, "I like to have fun raising money, but what I see in my practice on a day-to-day basis affects why I stay involved with LLS."

> For more information, visit www.steelvalleyortho.com.

Good Advice... from Beaufusion Massage

Tips on How to Prevent and Treat Muscle Pain



by James Stark

"Before you clean your house or start a physical project, do some stretches to warm up your muscles before calling on them for hard work. While at work, take momentary stretches, alter your stance, and take a pause. Most of all listen to your body! If you feel a cramp, squeeze the cramping area, and drink water. Cramps are often caused by a lack of hydration. Lack of hydration can also cause migraine headaches.

After doing the work, don't just crash in the chair. Let your body cool down. If you experienced pain while doing the work and the pain is still present after a cool down period, consider getting a massage before grabbing the pills. Massage can be focused on the spot that hurts. It helps circulation, brings relief very quickly, and relaxes the body. Pills on the other hand are systemic instead of focused. They can have side effects and can interfere with other medications.

Massage improves circulation by relaxing the muscles that are tight. If muscles are tight, the nerves or blood flow may be restricted. This can lead

to neck, shoulder, back or leg pain and even migraine headaches. If you are taking pain medications that contain opioids, constipation can result. An abdominal massage may help to relieve those symptoms.

When getting a massage, be sure to tell the therapist the specific location of where it hurts. Conversations with the therapist during a massage help to make the massage more effective and to prevent discomfort. Therapists know what they feel but cannot know what you feel, so let them know if the pressure is not to your liking. If there is something that makes you uncomfortable, speak up. If you are tense or uncomfortable, you will not receive the relaxation and physical benefit of therapeutic massage. And remember that even if you are face down on the table, you are in charge. You are the customer!

Try searching for "Therapeutic Massage" on the internet. Look for a therapist who is a member of AMTA or who is recognized by the Better Business Bureau.

> For more information, you can reach James Stark at **Beaufusion Massage** at (724) 255-6610 or visit www.beaufusion.com

Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services Provide 'Independence'

By Lois Thomson

"Independence." That's how Erika Arbogast summarizes the mission of Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh (BVRS) in its effort to help people. Arbogast, president of BVRS, further stated, "Everything that we do is to help people who have lost their vision, or who have other disabilities, to be able to reach their highest level of independence. And we have many different programs that help us do that."

She said the organization is probably best known for Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training (PABT), an intensive program that attracts people from all across the country. Arbogast said that in PABT, "They learn how to do basically the same things that those of us with vision take for granted." In a classroom setting that extends up to four months, a small group of students spends the day going from program to program.

"For example, in daily living skills they learn cooking, cleaning, how to know their clothes match. Then they go to communications, where they learn things like Braille and how to dial the telephone. Then they have orientation and mobility, where they learn how to use the bus, how to use the white cane and get around independently." She added that fewer than 10 agencies across the country offer such services. "It's very expensive so a lot of organizations don't provide it. But to us it's core our mission, so it's really important."

Arbogast said that while PABT assists 40 or 50 people per year, BVRS in total serves more than a thousand, and the program that reaches the most is low vision rehabilitation. "This is for people who are at a point where nothing can be done medically to make their vision better, so they come to us. We have a low vision optometrist who does an eye exam with them, talks with them about their goals and what they want to be able to do."

The optometrist is able to prescribe different devices to help them use their remaining vision in the best way possible – anything from telescopic lenses to a special tint that goes on their glasses to other types of devices. An occupational therapist then makes sure that everybody knows how to use their devices.

"We serve many people with total vision loss, and we're teaching them different techniques that they can use to be independent. There's always something they can learn from us that will help them. I hear over and over again from people, 'I sat on my couch for years thinking my life was over, I was afraid to go outside, I was afraid to cook, I had nothing to entertain me. And then I found you, and I learned that's not the case.'"

"And it's true. Technology has changed the playing field, and individuals who are blind or who are visually impaired can do almost anything that you or I can do. It's a wonderful time to be in this field because there's so much great technology."



For more information, call (412) 368-4400 or visit www.bvrspittsburgh.org



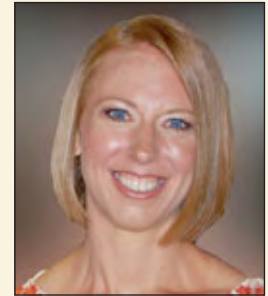
Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services' vision screening technicians use a screening device that screens both of a child's eyes simultaneously in less than a second. The device provides immediate pass/fail results for a number of vision deficiencies.



Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training client Brian learns to sort and wash his laundry.



Low Vision client Marie uses a device that mimics a telescopic lens that is implanted inside the eye. The implant magnifies images for persons with end-stage age related macular degeneration.



"We do pre-school screening for more than 12,000 kids per year in Allegheny County for different vision problems.

Specifically, there's one problem called amblyopia, or lazy eye, and a lot of times you can't see it. If amblyopia is caught by the time the child is 5 years old it has a 95 percent correction rate; but if it's caught after that time, the percentage goes down to 7 percent. So it's huge that these kids get screened at an early age."

-Erika Arbogast, President, Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh

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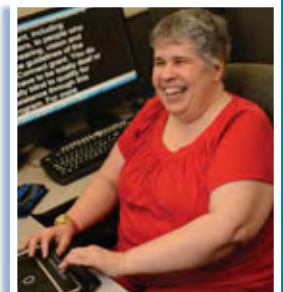
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Eagle Medical Equipment Now Carrying Mastectomy Supplies

By Vanessa Orr

Since 2009, Eagle Medical Equipment has been known for providing a wide range of health care supplies, from diabetic shoes, socks, strips and meters to transportation items, such as rollators, wheelchairs, lift chairs, scooters and more. In 2015, they introduced a new line of mastectomy products, to treat cancer patients before, during and after surgery.

"We're excited to be doing this; we want to help women feel better about themselves," explained mastectomy fitter Rose Ishman. Eagle Medical has two mastectomy fitters on staff who can help fit external breast prostheses as well as provide other post-mastectomy services; the store has recently been awarded BOC certification.

"Women come in before surgery and have their fittings so that their recovery camisoles are ready to wear as soon as their surgery is finished to

help with the healing process," explained Ishman. "We not only have prosthetics, but also Amoena bras and breast forms, nipples, camisoles, head scarves, shawls, hats and more." Eagle Medical also carries wigs for both cancer and non-cancer patients.

"We've designed a nice, private fitting room so that our clients can feel relaxed and more at home when they shop for mastectomy products," she added. "We are happy to spend time with the customer, and encourage them to see, touch and try on the products; we have a lot of different bras, so they have a lot of different choices."

Many mastectomy products are covered by insurance, and Eagle Medical staff will work with clients to help them with the process. "For mastectomy and wig products, clients will need a prescription of medical necessity, but if they call us, we'll be happy to get the ball rolling," said Ishman. "We want to

make it as easy as possible for them—to give them one less thing to worry about."

In addition to mastectomy products, Eagle Medical carries a wide range of diabetic shoes and orthotics as well as diabetic supplies, and has a certified prosthetist and orthotist on staff who design braces and prosthetic legs and limbs. They also stock items to help with mobility for patients with ambulatory problems, as well as specialty items, such as grab bars that stick to the wall without the use of screws, ostomy products, and a Guardian 911 product that allows a person to contact 911 in case of emergency without have to pay a monthly service fee. The company also carries nebulizer supplies, including pediatric nebulizers designed to look like firetrucks and other characters, which are very popular with children. "We carry all of the little things that most places don't have," said Ishman.



➤ For more information, stop in to **Eagle Medical Equipment** at 5944 Steubenville Pike in McKees Rocks. You can also visit their website at www.eaglemedicalequipmentpa.com or call (724) 218-1051.

PONSI SHOES & MEDICAL SUPPLY

Eight Decades of Personalized Customer Service

By Vanessa Orr

More than eight decades ago, Joseph Ponsi's grandfather, a shoemaker and shoe repairman, opened a business in Braddock, PA. Today, his grandson still runs the company, now located in North Huntingdon, and honors his grandfather and his father by running the business by the same principles that they held true.

"It all goes back to what my grandfather and father taught me; the most expensive thing is not always the thing that helps," Joseph Ponsi explained. "Some people sell an off-the-shelf orthotic for \$300 or \$400.

"We try the least invasive, least expensive solution first, and if that doesn't work, we go from there," he added. "We want our patients and their doctors to respect us. And we want them to come back tomorrow and the next day. We're not here for the short-term to sell products; we want to make a living by helping people who have problems with their feet. And we're here for the

long-term."

Ponsi Shoes is living proof that treating patients with respect works. Now in its 85th year, the business has morphed from a shoe repair shop to a company that specializes in providing shoes and inserts for people with foot pain, as well as providing a range of durable medical good products.

Ponsi's grandfather first started selling orthopedic shoes from his Braddock store, and his father carried on that tradition by carrying specialty footwear for people with foot issues from the North Huntingdon location he opened in 1969. "My dad further specialized by getting into custom orthotics, which are inserts that you can take in and out of different pairs of shoes," said Ponsi, adding that orthotics used to be built into the shoes in earlier times.

In 2000, Joseph Ponsi took over the business, and now, in addition to helping customers with diabetic and orthopedic shoes, he has also expanded the company to provide durable medical equipment. Pro-

ducts include power wheelchairs and power scooters, stair lifts, walkers, canes, hospital beds, off-the-shelf bracing, incontinence and medical supplies, lymphedema and vascular compression garments and made-to-measure burn and scar management garments, among other items.

"We grew into that area when we were seeking JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) status, and we needed to carry more than just footwear supplies," explained Ponsi. "It opened up a whole new line of business, and we now contract with Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Highmark, UPMC, and other insurance carriers to provide these services."

Because the company has been in the area for so long, they are well known to those looking for such products, and many patients are also referred by their doctors. Patients are helped by Filippa Ponsi, Joe's wife, who works in the office, as well as the approximately 10 to 15 people they employ. The Ponsi's daugh-



Joseph Ponsi

ter, Tessa Meenan, who is also a registered nurse, works in the burn units of various hospitals fitting compression garments.

"We make it a point to offer continuing education and training to our staff, so that they can help customers with our full line of products," said Ponsi. "We also reach out to community, doing talks to support groups and providing fittings for those who can't come to us."

➤ **Ponsi Shoes** is located on 13389 Rt. 30 in North Huntingdon, but they also travel to wherever patients need them. For more information, call **866-708-5825** or visit www.ponsishoesinc.com.

Helping People With Disabilities Achieve Greater Independence

By Nancy Kennedy

For the past six years, 58-year-old Charlene has relied upon the competent and caring assistance of a personal aide to help her manage many of the routine tasks of daily living. With severe osteoarthritis and other medical challenges, Charlene faces limits in her ability to do the essential things that most people simply take for granted – things like cooking, shopping, vacuuming and doing the laundry. Having an aide has improved her quality of life immensely, she says. “I couldn’t possibly get these things done on my own, with my disabilities. My aide, Vickie, comes every day, Monday through Friday; she helps me out at home and accompanies me to do the grocery shopping, because I can’t do any heavy lifting.”

Charlene cherishes her independence and this service is the key to her keeping it. She is a client of All Abilities, Inc., an independent agency that provides connections between people living with disabilities who are in need of help, and the services that meet those needs.

At All Abilities, new clients are given a thorough assessment to determine their unique needs and their eligibility, and then are linked to appropriate agencies that provide the services that will best help them.

According to All Abilities executive director Tina Jackson-Heacox, “We serve a range of clients. Some are young persons with developmental disabilities who have been receiving services since childhood but are turning 21, when they ‘age out’ of the system. They still need lots of support, though, and they need help to navigate this transition. We coordinate services to help them manage this. Other clients may be people who have become disabled more recently, due to a car accident or a chronic medical condition. Our goal at All Abilities is to help people maintain themselves in the community, with independence and safety, and to keep them out of institutional care.”

Many of the clients served by All Abilities have been trying to manage



Charlene (center), who has severe osteoarthritis, is able to live independently with the assistance of Vicki, (left) her personal aide. Also pictured: Ashley and Sam the cat.

on their own, despite the often severe obstacles posed by their disabilities. Some get scattered support from family, friends and neighbors but that is likely to be inconsistent.

Small things become big things, says Jackson-Heacox, when they are impossible to complete. “If you can’t get your laundry done, you can’t get out to buy groceries, and you can’t get to your physician appointments, and no one is helping you, you can become overwhelmed. Often small things make a huge difference – for example, getting home cooked

meals when you cannot cook. For someone whose disability is preventing them from getting safely into the bathtub to shower, having an accessible bathroom may be life changing. We find that accessible housing and transportation are two of the most difficult issues; there isn’t nearly enough housing to meet the demand, and finding transportation, especially in rural communities, is tough.”

All Abilities serves a 15-county region. Coordinated services include:

- Personal assistance
- Home modifications
- Assistive technologies
- Skilled care
- Special therapies (physical, speech, occupational therapy)
- Community integration services

To be eligible to receive services, clients must be 18 or older and have a disability that lasts 12 months or longer. They must be clinically eligi-

(Continued on page 45)

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EMMAUS COMMUNITY OF PITTSBURGH

Young and Old Adults With a Disability Find Care, Safety and Opportunities As Residents at Emmaus Community

By Nancy Kennedy

"The spirit of community is more than a way of life. It is hope. An incarnation of love."

- Jean Vanier

For the majority of young persons, turning 21 is an important milestone and an occasion for great celebration. But not for all – for some, it marks an ending and the onset of new and daunting challenges. Young adults who have developmental and intellectual disabilities and autism are said to “age out” of the supportive systems that have guided their education, growth and development as children. They are, in a sense, abandoned by those systems but still very much in need, and very vulnerable.

This vulnerability is well understood by the perceptive and compassionate people of the Emmaus Community of Pittsburgh. This exceptional, award-winning non-profit provider of residential homes,



Emmaus residents and staff at the Emmaus Kentucky Derby Gala.

services and advocacy for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities and autism has been quietly and expertly re-writing the book on how to best meet the needs of this vastly underserved population. Guided in part by the wisdom and experience of Jean Vanier, an internationally known advocate for the disabled, the Emmaus staff strives to provide care, safety, dignity and opportunity to residents, and they succeed, with remarkable results.

The mission of Emmaus is to not only provide homes for the resi-



Emmaus residents on vacation at Seven Springs.

dents, but also to improve their quality of life, to advocate for them and to promote public awareness of their needs. This happens in the context of community – defined at Emmaus as living, working and breaking bread together. The name is based on the biblical story about the two men who walk with Jesus but fail to recognize him until they break bread with him. “We see and recognize people for who and what they are when we break bread with them and share our lives,” explains Tiffany Merriman Preston, Director
(Continued on following page.)



Emmaus resident Sidria gets a visitor from the Butler County Humane Society.



Emmaus residents and staff bake Christmas cookies together.

Debbie is at home at Emmaus



The Emmaus Community of Pittsburgh is a faith-based non-profit organization which provides residential homes, non-residential services, and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities. At Emmaus, everyone has a chance to belong!

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EMMAUS COMMUNITY OF PITTSBURGH

(Continued from previous page.)

of Development for Emmaus. "Our vision is community. How do we build community, how does it work as a whole? It is amazing to see people grow and flourish as they become part of the community."

Emmaus was conceived in 1989 by Ken and Lorraine Wagner and a group of other parents of adult children with disabilities who recognized the great unmet needs of their children. "As the parents grow older, they worry about the well-being of their children," says Merriman Preston. "Where will they live when we are gone? Who will care for them? In the past, there was only institutional care. The founding group knew this issue had to be addressed."

They began with a single home that would provide an environment of safety and acceptance. That humble beginning has evolved into a program of services, including a network of nine residences housing two dozen residents. Emmaus also provides in-home services, respite care, and advocacy initiatives. Partially funded by Medicaid waivers and licensed through the

"We want the public to understand that these people have many gifts to share. Emmaus residents have jobs, do volunteer work and participate in many activities: sports, the arts, and church activities."

-Tiffany Merriman Preston,
Director of Development,
Emmaus Community

state Office of Developmental Programs, Emmaus is an ecumenical non-profit organization.

An administrative staff along with a team of direct support staff and a corps of committed volunteers, and the individuals served by these programs, form a community of their own, driven by mission and passion for their cause. "In Pennsylvania, there are 13,000 people on a waiting list for services such as ours," Merriman Preston says.

"In Allegheny County, there are 1100 people in need of services.

Elderly parents of adults with intellectual disabilities can become suddenly incapacitated, so the need for these services are often crisis-driven. The needs are enormous, and we make a constant effort to raise public awareness. We want the public to understand that these people have many gifts to share. Emmaus residents have jobs, do volunteer work and participate in many activities: sports, the arts, and church activities. People are often surprised by this; there is still misunderstanding and fear."

Direct support staff are fully trained to meet the often complex needs of residents, including medication administration, maintaining safety and management of sometimes challenging behaviors. "It takes both head and heart to do this job," says Merriman Preston, "and we are fortunate to have an excellent and experienced team. It's not easy; you need to be patient, mature and compassionate and you need energy and common sense." Merriman Preston knows well what it takes, as she herself started out at Emmaus as a direct support worker, as did Emmaus Executive Director

Karen Jacobsen. Emmaus has been named a Best Workplace by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* three times and has been honored as Best Non-Profit by the national *Non Profit Times* publication.

"At Emmaus Community, we want everyone to plug into the community we have created. We believe that community works as a whole and that we all need each other. We have community partnerships with groups such as the Humane Society and we welcome businesses and organizations to form creative partnerships with us. Our need for volunteers and donors is great; we have a Young Professionals Advisory Group and other groups that help with capital projects and special events. We are currently hiring direct support professionals. Volunteers and staff feel greatly rewarded by their association with us, and we welcome everyone."

> To learn more about **Emmaus Community of Pittsburgh**, to volunteer or to learn about employment opportunities, visit www.emmauspgh.org or call (412) 381-0277.

ALL ABILITIES

(Continued from page 43.)

ble for admission to a nursing facility, and must meet income guidelines as determined by the County Assistance office. Most clients are referred to All Abilities by physician offices, hospital social workers, civic organizations and satisfied current clients, and some self-refer when they learn about this alternative. Currently, All Abilities has 600 clients enrolled, and the number is growing.

Ms. Jackson-Heacox emphasizes that All Abilities is not an actual provider of in-home services, but rather a connection to service providers. "We're the coordinators;

our service coordinators provide links but the clients makes the choice of service providers. We give them a list of agencies that can meet their needs. They choose the ones they prefer and they can switch later if they wish."

"Many people have it really rough," says Ms. Jackson-Heacox. "But things can be better, with our services. Our experienced coordinators are familiar with the service providers throughout the region and are ready to do what it takes to meet the client's needs. We are often told by our clients, 'You have been a god-send' - we are pleased to know that

we help our clients achieve greater independence and an enhanced quality of life."

For Charlene, and hundreds of other clients like her, All Abilities makes an enormous difference. "I couldn't manage without my aide Vickie," says Charlene. "She knows me and knows what my needs are. My life would be so much more difficult without this support. I'm very grateful to All Abilities."


> For more information about about enrollment, please call **1-844-660-8437** or visit www.allabilitiesinc.org.



"Our goal at All Abilities is to help people maintain themselves in the community, with independence and safety, and to keep them out of institutional care."

-Tina Jackson-Heacox
All Abilities Executive Director




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Upper-body strength aids wheelchair transfers.

By Lois Thomson

TRI-COUNTY PATRIOTS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (TRIPIL) HAS BEEN A HUB FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS. AS A CHAMPION OF INDEPENDENT LIVING, ITS MISSION HAS BEEN GROUNDED IN A "WHOLE PERSON" APPROACH.

While economic self-sufficiency and living at home or in the community are critical independent living "basics," TRIPIL has not lost sight of the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of every consumer, member, and staff person. With that in mind, a variety of programs and amenities are offered to contribute to that well-being.

Nan Sninsky, Chief Administrative Officer of TRIPIL, said the focus on wellness includes weekly activities designed to manage stress and increase flexibility; internal policies that create opportunities for healthy choices; a Wellness Coordinator who serves as a personal trainer; and a staff Wellness Program with incentives. Sninsky said the incentives come in the form of gift cards, and added that many staff members at TRIPIL have disabilities of their own. "As part of our funding requirements, 51 percent of our staff – or more – at any given time are people with disabilities."

One of the provisions to assist with wellness is an on-site gym that is fully accessible to people with any disability. The gym, which has been in existence for about six years at TRIPIL's Washington headquarters, is quirky: training equipment lines the ever-so-thick walls of a former bank vault! Despite the incongruous setting, the space serves as a fully accessible area with accessible fitness equipment.

Sninsky said the facility has produced noticeable benefits, particularly with building upper body strength. "There are a lot of success stories. One gentleman comes in all the time to maintain his upper body strength so he can be more independent – he doesn't need an assistant to transfer him from his chair to another chair. Another one of my colleagues just got an adaptive car, and he works on his upper body strength so he can get in and out of his car independently."

She added that there is always good cardio work that can be done with Zumba or other exercise videos. "All of this can be had with the guidance of a certified trainer, who is familiar with wellness issues, disability concerns, and secondary conditions stemming from disabilities."

TRIPIL is also showing its commitment to wellness with a Walk/Run/Roll 5K event on Saturday, April 23, that is open to anybody. Sninsky said, "We do hope to make it an annual event. Come join TRIPIL at Mingo Creek Park to Walk, Run, and Roll for a good cause!"

TRIPIL's commitment to wellness is demonstrated by the ability to do more than "talk the talk" – they will truly "walk the walk"! In 2016, TRIPIL staff, volunteers, and members are literally taking that "walk" out to beautiful Mingo Creek Park, where their first "Walk/Run/Roll 5K" will be held April 23. Not only will this event encourage overall health and wellness, but it will also benefit TRIPIL's Capital Campaign to renovate the old YWCA building on West Maiden Street, Washington, into the organization's new, modern, and "green" headquarters.



	Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living – Provides the five core Independent Living services (advocacy, independent living skills training, information & referral, peer support, and transition).
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SENIOR LIFE

Helping Seniors Age in Place

By Daniel Casciato

Do you have a loved one in your life who is having difficulties with activities of daily living (ADLs) and seeking an alternative to nursing homes and personal care homes? If so, now might be the time for you to consider Senior LIFE, a provider of the LIFE Program in Pennsylvania.

“ADLs are the activities in which people engage on a daily basis that are fundamental to caring for oneself and maintaining independence,” says Megan Detwiler, Executive Director of Senior LIFE Washington. “They include things like bathing, dressing, grooming, walking, preparing meals, eating, and toileting.”

The LIFE Program is a Medicare and Medicaid approved long-term care program that provides complete medical care and supportive services for persons 55 years and older so that they can remain living in their home. Senior LIFE keeps members living in their home and community by providing medical and personal support services both in the member's home and at the LIFE Center located in their neighborhood. Some of the services provided include physicians and specialist, prescription medications, home care, personal care, therapies, social services, meals and activities—plus transportation to and from the LIFE Center and all medical appointments. Senior LIFE is the LIFE Program provider in 13 Pennsylvania Counties including Washington,

Fayette, Greene and Westmoreland.

“Senior LIFE's services are customized to meet the specific needs of each individual and include physicians and specialists, nursing care, physical, occupational and speech therapies, personal and home care, medications, meals and nutritional counseling, eye, dental and foot care, durable medical equipment and other medically necessary services, explains Detwiler. “Senior LIFE also provides transportation to and from the LIFE Center and all medical appointments.”

To be eligible for the LIFE Program, a person must be:

- 55 years of age or older.
- Determined medical eligible
- Live in an area served by a LIFE Program
- Able to be safely served in the community with LIFE Program services

According to Detwiler, one way that Senior LIFE differs from other similar programs is that the services are provided at no cost for anyone who is Medicaid eligible and meets medical eligibility guidelines. Participants in the program have no deductibles, copays, and no cost for prescription drugs. There is an option to pay privately for the services if one does not qualify financially, she



Senior LIFE provides medical and personal support services both in the member's home and at the LIFE Center located in their neighborhood.

notes.

All of the services under the LIFE Program are designed for each individual's specific needs and are coordinated through one single healthcare team. This includes all medical care and appointments, medications, dietary, homecare, and transportation. Senior LIFE also provides an on-call nurse 24 hours a day/seven days a week.

Since Pennsylvania is transitioning to mandatory managed care for the Medicaid population, all Medicaid recipients will have to choose a healthcare organization by the end of this year or be automatically assigned one.

“Senior LIFE is the best option for seniors 55 and older who want to remain in their home and community and receive health and personal care services from local people who care about them,” says Detwiler. “Senior LIFE is also designed to partner with caregivers to provide quality care for their loved ones and to give caregivers much needed help, support and peace of mind.”



Senior LIFE has locations in Greensburg, Uniontown and Washington. For more information, visit www.seniortlifepa.com.

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Ed knows his way around the dance floor. He also knows all of the pretty girls by name, and every Tommy Dorsey tune by heart. When he started missing a step in his Lindy Hop, he turned to Senior LIFE for a comprehensive care program. Now he's back on the dance floor and he hasn't missed a beat.



SeniorLifePA.com

To learn how Senior LIFE can help you or a loved one, call **1-877-998-LIFE (5433)**

LIFE PITTSBURGH



Recreational Staff at LIFE Pittsburgh's Day Health Center play UNO with a brother and sister.



Participants of LIFE Pittsburgh share lunch with their friends at the center.



Two participants work hard talking and walking in therapy at LIFE Pittsburgh.

LIFE Pittsburgh Enables Seniors to Live Independently with Top-Quality Medical and Social Support

By Nancy Kennedy

Reverence for the elderly is a cornerstone of Chinese culture. Older adults are regarded with respect and admiration, and are treated with great care. They are cherished for the life experience that is a source of wisdom for their descendants, and great efforts are made to assure that they age with dignity in a community where they are loved and all of their needs are met.

That gentle, respectful philosophy also permeates every aspect of the care and services provided at LIFE (Living Independently for the Elderly) Pittsburgh, a community-based alternative to nursing home care that provides a spectrum of high-quality services that enable frail and fragile seniors to remain independent in their own homes, despite health challenges. Often, all it takes to achieve this is a nexus of support, and LIFE Pittsburgh provides exactly that: medical, social

and daily living services provided via home care, healthcare and adult day care.

Joann F. Gago, R.N., M.S.N., CEO and founder of LIFE Pittsburgh, says that LIFE Pittsburgh is modeled after the first PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) Program, which was launched in San Francisco's Chinatown in the early 70's. The original idea was to avoid institutional care and maintain elderly loved ones in the community. The PACE program became

a national prototype, and Joann Gago began developing the first one in this region in 1997. With a strong background in critical care nursing and healthcare administration, she envisioned the need for such a program and laid the groundwork for LIFE. "Too many older adults are placed in nursing homes and assisted living when they would prefer to age-in-place, in their own homes, with as much autonomy as possible. They tend to do better when they can remain at home in the commu-

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LIFE PITTSBURGH

Continued from page 0.

community, either in their own homes or with a family member. Environment has an enormous impact on the health and well-being of the elderly," she explains. "When you change the environment of an elderly person, they often deteriorate. When you preserve their environment and maintain them in their familiar, comfortable surroundings at home, they function well and will stay healthier for a longer period of time."

LIFE Pittsburgh opened its doors in 1999 as the first program of its kind in the region, and it remains distinctive in its philosophy and range of services. Although it is sometimes misunderstood as an adult day care center, LIFE actually is licensed as a medical care provider, a day health center, by the Center for Medicare Services (CMS) and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Participants receive all of their healthcare at the center from LIFE's primary care physician and specialists, as well as from a multidisciplinary team of

nurses, therapists, dieticians, personal care assistants and others.

Services include: primary and specialty medical care, including podiatry and vision care; dental care; nursing care; social services; physical, occupational and recreational therapy; nutritional counseling and education; transportation to and from the center and to medical appointments; diagnostic studies, including lab tests; medications and pharmacy services; and assistance with grooming, bathing and dressing. Social activities and means are provided, and each participant can choose to spend their day as they prefer. Movies, card games, entertainment and visiting with friends are among the optional activities.

Each participant has an individualized plan of care, tailored to their specific needs and preferences. Participants must be at least 55 years of age. For most participants, there is no fee if they meet income guidelines.

"Our mission is to treat each participant as an individual with unique needs and to achieve the

highest possible level of good health for them. For many older adults, medical problems and disability begin to define and center their world, when they should be simply part of their world. We want to help older adults make living the center. We give very effective, person-centered, appropriate care, as determined by the person's goals and health conditions. We are proud of our low nurse: participant ratio of 1:23. Our staff develop very special, caring relationships with participants; we get to know them very well, which enables us to personalize and fine tune their care."

There are three day health center locations: one in Green Tree, one on the North Shore, and



"Too many older adults are placed in nursing homes and assisted living when they would prefer to age-in-place, in their own homes, with as much autonomy as possible."

-Joann F. Gago

one at Allegheny Center. In 2016, a new center will be opening in McKees Rocks. LIFE has 560 participants at present, cared for by a staff of 250. Over 1500 have been served by the program since its inception. LIFE also provides hospice care, and in addition to the day center, offers home care provided by LIFE PCAs. They make home visits on weekends and in the evening as needed, and some are actually stationed at high rises for the elderly, where they make rounds and are available.



Sponsored initially by Lutheran Senior Services and Mercy Health System, the program is faith based and is open to all. For more information, visit www.lifepittsburgh.org or call (412) 388-8050.

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**CONNECTING HEARTS
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Psychologist Elaine Malec Finds Virtual Solution to Feelings of Loneliness

by Matthew Cichowicz

Growing older usually coincides with loss: loss of health, vitality, employment, a life outside the home, financial independence, friends and spouses and the ability to take care of oneself. Support may come from children and younger relatives, but these caregivers have to commit a substantial part of their time and energy to work, taking care of their own children and a variety of other responsibilities. When more pressing problems take the place of regular visits, seniors' quality of life plummets.

"You hear the same messages over and over again from caregivers about wanting to do the best for loved ones and being there for them while keeping a life of their own," said Elaine Malec, who has a PhD in psychology and more than 25 years of experience counseling patients with grief, cognitive decline and death and dying issues. "I really felt called to try to figure out a way to address this very real issue of loved ones struggling to connect."

With the senior population projected to grow steadily in Western Pennsylvania and other parts of the country, many health professionals are beginning to discuss ways to use technology to address problems related to feelings of isolation. Loss of health and mental functioning only increases the need for interaction with loved ones, but some studies have estimated that as many as 50 percent of residents in nursing homes never receive a visit.

"What we know from the research of Stanford psychologist Laura Carstensen is that when life starts to feel small or life begins to feel shorter, people want to be around someone who knows them," Malec said. "They want to have meaningful relationships. That's more important than anything."

Malec founded Connecting Hearts Senior Care Services two years ago and began developing ways to connect senior citizens and their loved ones. She realized she could use technology—not to replace human



"I really felt called to try to figure out a way to address this very real issue of loved ones struggling to connect."

-Elaine Malec

interaction—but to facilitate it. Through video call software, a laptop and an Internet connection, she began a service that offers patients "virtual visits" and eliminates many of the most common problems preventing a loved one from visiting.

A virtual visit can take place almost anywhere and is facilitated by trained care providers who not only handle the technical side of the interaction but also support seniors with communication difficulties or in need of general encouragement. During the first few visits in particular, the care provider plays the important role of adjusting the patient to the new technology. Malec has noticed that it only takes about three or four virtual visits before the seniors feel almost as comfortable as they would with their visitors physically in the room.

Although Malec believes nothing will ever truly replace the value of a face-to-face visit, she sees a promising future in making virtual visits a regular part of a senior lifestyle. She is looking forward to more research that will support her approach, but in the meantime, the reaction she has witnessed in patients is enough to keep her motivated.

"Loneliness isn't about a lack of people—it's about a lack of close, intimate people," said Malec. "When you add virtual visits to the elderly's list of amenities, you now have a way to get people visits from relatives who otherwise can only be there a couple times a year. I'm looking forward to expanding our reach to other parts of Pittsburgh and as far as we can take it."



To learn more about the home care services or "virtual visits" offered at **Connecting Hearts Senior Care Services, Inc.**, call (412) 259-0281 or www.Connectingheartsseniorcare.com.

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LifeSpring Offers A Quality Choice in Home Health Care

by Ron Cichowicz

As people throughout southwestern Pennsylvania continue to take charge of the health care provided to themselves and their loved ones, an area receiving increasing attention is home health care. And that, according to Cory Sorsdal, owner and managing partner of LifeSpring Home Care of Pittsburgh, is great news for this region, since home health care offers an efficient and cost effective alternative to hospitalization or other institutional care.

The admitted “new kid on the block,” LifeSpring entered the Pittsburgh market nearly two years ago. Headquartered in Mt. Lebanon and serving Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Washington and Westmoreland counties, the organization offers a wide range of care, including skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, recov-



“Here, a very high percentage of the people using home health care go to an agency owned by the hospital that discharged them. What many don’t know is that they have a choice and there are other providers available to them.”

-Cory Sorsdal

ery from surgery, chronic illness and disease management.

When Sorsdal decided to bring LifeSpring to this area, he was well aware of the challenges he faced.

“To begin with, when it comes to home health care, the rest of the United States doesn’t work like western Pennsylvania,” he said. “Here, a very high percentage of the people using home health care go to an agency owned by the hospital that discharged them. What many don’t know is that they have a choice and there are other providers available to them.”

But the challenge in this region, according to Sorsdal, is bigger than just a balance of competition; rather, it’s a lack of awareness of home health care and the benefits it can provide.

“Many people don’t even know that home health care even exists,” said Sorsdal. “Nor do they understand the extent of services we offer.”

According to Sorsdal, LifeSpring works with physicians and other healthcare providers to coordinate care services. Building upon relationships with physicians, LifeSpring has a team of highly trained home care professionals dedicated to going above and beyond to ensure the care and comfort of patients and their families. These include an RN case manager; skilled nurse; psychiatric nurse; physical, occupational and speech therapies; medical social work and a home health aide. Simultaneously, these professionals address individual needs and provide high quality, patient-focused and loving care.

“People need to realize this really matters,” said Sorsdal. “We’re not just talking about a nursing visit. The care, communication and medical coordination we provide enhance the patient’s health, quality of life and peace of mind.”

George K. agrees. LifeSpring has been caring for his wife since last

August after his primary care physician recommended home visits for her. “We heard of LifeSpring through our doctor,” George said. “Every time we call, they are very responsive. We found them to be very positive, personal and genuinely interested in caring for my wife. They do much more than their share and we are very satisfied.”

Sorsdal said that while Medicare covers 100 percent of the cost of home health care, LifeSpring’s services are not provided exclusively to seniors; they also include those suffering a disability, an injured athlete or anyone recovering from an operation or illness.

“We not only coordinate care across providers for those who have been in the hospital, but we also work hard to keep people out of the hospital,” said Sorsdal. “Everyone has an incentive to prevent hospitalization and care coordination is another way we can support physicians in keeping you safely at home.”

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At Gallagher Home Health Services, Clients Are Family

By Nancy Kennedy

At Gallagher Home Health Services, family means everything. The mission of this dynamic, growing home health-care services provider is to treat every client like they are family and to practice from a patient-centered, family-centered philosophy. That comes easily to owner and Executive Director Diane L. Karcz, RN and the staff of Gallagher Home Health, which was inspired by Iva Gallagher, Diane's mother and the matriarch of a large Pittsburgh Irish/Italian American family. Iva Gallagher believed that everyone deserved to be treated with compassion and kindness, which is reflected in the care provided by the agency that bears her name and is her legacy.

According to Shandra Harcarik, R.N., Gallagher Home Health Regional director of sales and mar-



Gallagher Home Health Services Staff. Gallagher Home Health was the recipient of silver and gold awards for Best Home Health Care Services in the southwestern Pennsylvania region by Trib Total Media, based on reader's votes.

keting, the company was founded in 2005 in order to offer customized, high quality home care to older adults and to relieve their families of some of the stress associated with caring for elderly parents or relatives. "Your family becomes our family, at Gallagher," Harcarik says. "We are uniquely responsive to our clients and their families."

The company provides Home Health Services, Home Care Services and very soon Hospice Services. Each division offers very specific services using a primary care model to ensure well coordinated, uncompromising care. With a multidisciplinary staff of registered nurses,

Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, Home Health Aides, companions, social workers and mental health professionals Gallagher Home Health can meet the needs of even the most complex patients.

Clinical services include such specialties as disease management, wound care, enteral feedings, intravenous therapy and chemotherapy, a lymphedema program and care for patients with left ventricular assist cardiac devices. An advanced care team (A.C.T.) of highly experienced specialty nurses adds an extra layer of support to the clinical program. Gallagher also has a mother-baby

program that offers care, support and education to new mothers and fathers. The program features a lactation counselor and includes home visits for teaching infant care skills and monitoring the weight, feeding and bilirubin levels of infants.

Gallagher Home Care provides personal care services, companionship, home safety monitoring and many more services. Non-clinical services are provided by well-trained companions who help clients with grooming, bathing and dressing, light housekeeping, meals, errands and escorting to physician appointments. Services can be provided in
(Continued on following page.)



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(Continued from previous page.)

visits, or shifts, depending on the needs of the individual situation

Gallagher also offers some high-tech, state-of-the-art home care features. "We have a tele-monitoring system that we are able to install in the home if there is a high risk for re-admission," says Harcarik. "The idea is to identify a problem in the earliest stages so we can intervene and prevent things from getting worse. The program checks blood pressure, vital signs, weight and oxygen levels, 7 days a week. The data is downloaded to the office where nurses monitor it. Whenever there is a red flag, we can respond quickly and help manage the problem early and prevent an exacerbation that could require re-admission."

The goal is to keep people at home, in comfort and safety, says Harcarik, and every member of the staff shares the commitment to that vision. "Our work is deeply rewarding," she remarks. "We have the most caring, compassionate team who practice patient-centered care. We care for the family as well as the client, offering them emotional support, education and resources."

Based in Bridgeville, Gallagher Home Health Services serves clients in the greater Pittsburgh area and beyond, reaching throughout nine counties. It has been named a top-performing U.S. home health care agency by OCS Home Care, an independent research firm. Gallagher Home Health was also the recipient of silver and gold awards for Best Home Health Care Services in the southwestern Pennsylvania region by Trib Total Media, based on reader's votes.



For more information about **Gallagher Home Health Services**, visit www.gallagherhhs.com or call **(412) 279-2257**.

Good Advice... from Shandra

FALLING IS FOR LEAVES! Your Living Space and Personal Safety

by *Shandra Harcarik, RN, BSN*

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

Tips to help you prevent falls:

General Environment

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

Lifestyle Changes

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



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

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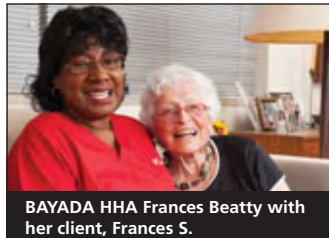
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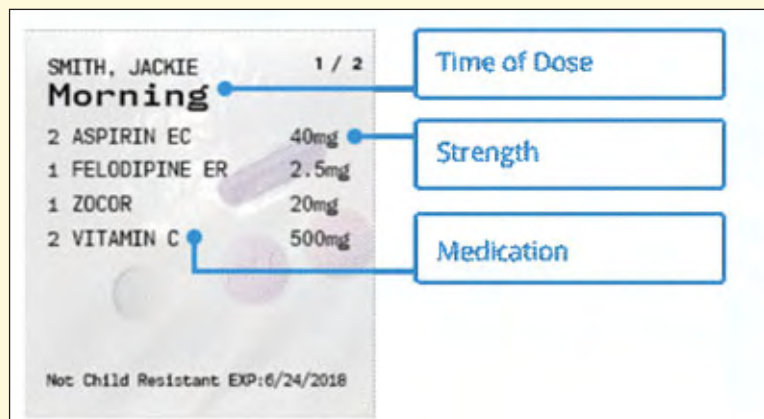
If you are one of the millions of Americans who take multiple medications, or if you care for someone who does, then you are well aware of how tedious and complicated this process can be. Taking lots of different medications, at many different times throughout the day, is not only inconvenient, stressful and time-consuming, but potentially harmful as well, as it is easy to make a mistake. Missing a dose, taking too many doses, taking it at the wrong time – these seemingly small mistakes can result in big problems, and may even lead to an Emergency Department visit or a hospital admission.

Fortunately, there is a solution that offers accuracy, safety and peace of mind – AccuPac, an ingenious medication administration system for home use that is available at no charge from AccuServ Pharmacy, right here in Western Pennsylvania. AccuPac consists of strips of packets that contain the medications you need, arranged according to time of day they are to be taken. The packets are easy to read and easy to open, and come in a one-month supply.

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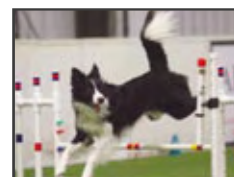
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End-of-Life Care, There is a Choice: Hospice

By Mark Katich

A main concern for most people faced with a life-limiting illness is whether they will be able to die wherever they call “home.” Hospice care helps eliminate that worry, making it possible for people to spend their final moments of life in their preferred surroundings, alongside the people they know and love, in the midst of their familiar routines.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) suggests that the best way to get others to discuss end-of-life care is to do so yourself. Studies show fewer than 30 percent of Americans take the time to develop thorough instructions for their end-of-life care and almost half of Americans say they would rely on family or friends to carry out their wishes about end-of-life care, but most have never expressed those wishes.

Hospice is an end-of-life care option—a philosophy of care—that focuses on the patient, not the disease. It is tailored to the needs of each patient and family, and aims to make life as comfortable, enjoyable and meaningful as possible. It is a total change of focus – putting patients in control and helping them make choices about their own care.

Covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private



insurance plans, hospice care can be administered at the patient’s home, hospice inpatient units as well as hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living communities or residential care facilities. It includes expert pain management by treating physical symptoms, while providing emotional and spiritual support. The care is provided by highly skilled teams of palliative care experts whose goal is to do everything they can to

improve the quality of life for patients and their loved ones.

VITAS is committed to educating the community about the benefits of hospice and other important end-of-life care resources. Covering Allegheny, and eight surrounding counties in Western Pennsylvania, the company’s trained hospice professionals work closely with patients and their families to provide the compassionate care they deserve at the end of life.

> For more information about hospice, contact Mark Katich, VITAS Healthcare General Manager at (412) 799-2101 or visit www.VITAS.com.



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PRESBYTERIAN SENIOR CARE

MyLife Program Tailored Specifically to Needs of Short-term Rehab Patients

By Vanessa Orr

Every person is different, and so are their needs when it comes to recovering from an illness or injury. The MyLife program, offered by Presbyterian SeniorCare, is tailored specifically to each individual's needs to allow them to complete short-term rehabilitation at their own pace, in their own way.

"Two people may have the same diagnosis, and even be the same age, but their lifestyles may differ greatly," explained Stacie Bornemann, senior director of sales and marketing, Presbyterian SeniorCare, comparing two people who have had a hip replacement. "The first person's goals may just be to return home to spend time with her family, and to be able to do the occasional shopping trip. The other person may walk two miles a day, and spend a lot of time volunteering; she is always on the go.

"While our goal is to help each of these patients reach their greatest

potential, they will take different paths," she continued. "That's why we tailor everything about a person's stay, from their rehabilitation plan, to when they eat and get medications, to how they like their room set up. It's all about the individual."

During the intake admissions process, each person completes a MyLife profile so that the staff can familiarize themselves with the patient's needs. "If the person wants breakfast at 10 a.m., and has eaten two scrambled eggs every day for the past 10 years, our dining team will accommodate that," said Bornemann. "Someone else may want breakfast at 6:45 a.m., and the dining team will accommodate them, too.

"It's similar to a resort stay, in that everything is tailored to the person," she added. "Therapy is the same way; if it's approved by doctor's orders, a person can have therapy up to seven days a week. A late riser may not want to attend morning therapy, but can attend longer sessions in the afternoon."

This patient-centered approach even extends to the person's home, which MyLife staff will, on an as needed basis, visit to ensure that what the person is doing in therapy corresponds to their real-life needs. "For example, we need to make sure that a person who cooks can bend to open the oven door or light the gas," Bornemann explained. "It's important that when they go home, they feel safe and comfortable."

As the largest senior living provider in western Pennsylvania, Presbyterian SeniorCare provides services to approximately 6,000 seniors annually, ranging from short-term rehab to independent residential living services. The non-profit, charitable organization often partners with hospitals that are looking for a post-acute provider to help patients after they are discharged from the hospital.

"Our goal is to make sure that these individuals don't have to go back into the hospital; that their outcomes are good and that they are



happy with the experience," said Bornemann, adding that in 2015, the organization volunteered to participate in the CMS Bundled Care Payment Initiative as a way of streamlining their operations to improve outcomes, with the result that a year later, their patients' readmission rates were lower than the benchmarks.

"The patient is at the center of everything we do," she added. "That's pretty much the MyLife program in a nutshell."

➤ For more information, visit www.srcaare.org or call 877-851-1440.

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Alzheimer's Disease: A Helping Hand

Alzheimer's disease is a journey, not just for those living with the disease, but for loved ones as well. Where do you turn if you have questions? Who truly understands what you are going through? At Presbyterian SeniorCare, we have resources to help those who are looking for a little guidance and reassurance that they are not alone.

What would you do if your spouse was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease? Jim Ruck and his wife Gail Britanik "moved into the disease" when Gail was diagnosed in 2010. Jim visits Gail, now a resident at The Willows skilled nursing care community on the Presbyterian SeniorCare, Oakmont campus, every day and uses writing to share their journey.



This feature story from Jim Ruck is the second of a four part series about Alzheimer's disease and how loved ones cope.

Why I go to the Alzheimer's Support Groups by Jim Ruck

"Looking back to when I started attending Alzheimer's Support Groups, I think that I may have been able to cope without the support group. But life would have been more pressured, with fewer resources available, and Gail would have been deprived of the insight and advice I received.

I attend because I find the interaction very helpful. Last year while Gail was still at home and her condition was worsening, I got friends to sit with her, allowing me to attend

a group close to home. Actually, I was the only participant for a few months, allowing me to get personalized help and invaluable information about emergency procedures, planning, and a host of other things I hadn't thought of. I was also given the Alzheimer's Association Hotline number which I used twice for advice to unscramble Gail's agitation and hallucinations, which had become overwhelming.

In later sessions, I connected with people whose loved ones were either further along in the disease or just beginning it. Sometimes I got insights and new ideas. Sometimes I offered my own experience. In every case, I experienced that I was not alone and came away heartened. Issues were brought up that I had not yet encountered or thought of.

Insights made coping easier. And knowing that I could phone the leader if a problem became overwhelming was like going swimming, knowing that there was a life preserver – just in case.

If you are a loved one or caregiver of someone living with Alzheimer's disease, and need a little bit of guidance or just an ear, I encourage you to attend a support group. Presbyterian SeniorCare offers support groups at both the Oakmont and Washington campuses and they are open to the public.

Support groups at the Presbyterian SeniorCare Washington campus are held the second Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. No RSVP is required. The group meets in the Hillview Chapel, right on campus, 835 South Main Street,

Washington, PA 15301.

Support groups at the Presbyterian SeniorCare Oakmont campus are held the fourth Tuesday of every month at 3 p.m. No RSVP is required. The group meets at Woodside Place, right on campus, 1215 Hulton Road, Oakmont, PA 15139.

For complete details, visit SrCare.org/events.

This story by Jim is the second of a four part series. Stay tuned for more heartwarming reflections in the next issue of the *Guide to Good Health*.

For more information about Presbyterian SeniorCare, visit www.SrCare.org or call (877) 851-1440.

THE PARENT TRAP: Home Safety Tips

Most homes are not built with the aging population in mind, and as a result, many senior citizens are injured every year because of the environment they live in. Many home safety improvements are simple and inexpensive others might involve a remodeling project to help a senior remain at home.

Adult children need to conduct a "look and see" inspection of their parent's home.

- **Examine lighting throughout the home.** Timed and motion-sensor lights outdoors can illuminate potentially dangerous pathways. Hallways and stairs should be properly lit.

- **Avoid monochromatic color schemes.** Contrast can help seniors with failing eyesight better navigate

their homes. Large red and blue buttons over hot and cold water faucet controls will help prevent dangerous mistakes. A dark green or brown toilet seat makes the fixtures more easily distinguished.

- **Look for ways to reorganize.** If that hallway table, which has been a permanent fixture, is becoming a dangerous obstacle, relocate it.

- **Look behind closed doors.** Many seniors will close off parts of a house they no longer use. Be sure to check those areas regularly for mold or water damage. Don't close vents to crawl spaces.

- **Look for ways to simplify your senior's life.** Change door knobs to levers, or purchase grips that can go on conventional knobs.

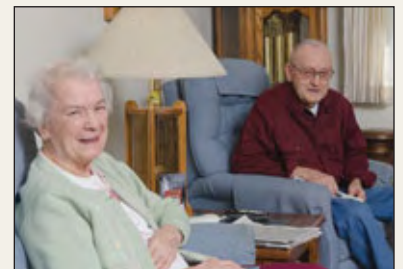
- **Consider security.** Think about the potential dangers that lurk

within your loved one's home. Lock-in switches on thermostats and stoves will keep seniors from harming themselves.

- **Keep an eye out for damage.** Look for towel bars or window sills that are pulling away or shower curtains that have torn from seniors using them to grab onto.

- **Look for ways to make entries safe.** Make sure railings into a home are in good repair and steps and sidewalks are not damaged. Or, eliminate steps altogether. Make sure that doors into a home can be set to stay open for carrying groceries and other items in and out.


- **Is clutter taking over?** Messy conditions and broken items are important warning signs. Remove area rugs and stacks of newspapers



and magazines, or other potential obstacles.

- **Contact a professional senior-care service,** such as Home Instead Senior Care, which can conduct a home safety assessment and serve as a second set of eyes for older adults.

For more information or to obtain a free home safety checklist, contact **Home Instead Senior Care** at www.homeinstead.com or by calling 1 (866) 996-1087.

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Kane Regional Centers Provide Options for Those Needing Short or Long-Term Care

By Vanessa Orr

Whether a person needs short-term rehabilitation, 24-hour skilled nursing care, Alzheimer's and memory care, or hospice or respite care, there is a Kane Regional Care Center that can suit his or her needs. "Kane Regional Centers serve as a safety net for a lot of people," said Executive Director Dennis Biondo, adding that the average age of clients is 79 years old. "As the county nursing home, many of our residents are on medical assistance, but we are also able to accept private pay, HMO, Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurances.

"There is no waiting list to get in," he continued, adding that Kane also welcomes special-needs residents. "Because our staff is from the communities they serve and are employees of Allegheny County, we have a low turnover rate compared to the rest of the industry. This is good for residents and families, because they get to know the staff well."

Short-term Rehab

Clients who need help before returning home after a hospital stay can take advantage of the services offered in Kane's short-term rehab units, whether they are recovering from a knee replacement, broken hip, heart attack or stroke. "We've been caring for people for more than 50 years, so we have quite a breadth of experience," said Biondo.

In addition to the short-term care provided at all four centers, Kane Scott Township includes a 26-bed transitional care unit with private rooms and bathrooms that is set up for shorter stays and more concentrated rehabilitation. Therapy is provided seven days a week, and physicians round daily to help patients return home as soon as possible.

Long-term Care

Residents requiring continuous care can benefit from Kane's complete range of therapeutic, treatment and diagnostic services offered at on-site wellness centers. Services



Ryan Marshall with therapist
Asked for more photos

include audiology and ophthalmology services; lab and diagnostic tests; nutrition and dietary services; physical, occupational and speech therapy; pain management and wound care, social services, therapeutic recreation, pharmacy services and more.

Kane Ross Township, conveniently located close to Ross Park Mall and McKnight Road shopping, has 240 beds as well as 97 independent senior living apartments that are operated by Pennrose Management. Kane McKeesport, which is located in a scenic area along the Youghiogheny River, contains 360 beds, and Kane Glen Hazel, located between Squirrel Hill and the

Waterfront complex, contains 210 beds as well as an additional 12 independent senior living apartments that are connected to the facility. Kane Scott Township features 314 beds located in the heart of Scott Township within minutes of St. Clair Hospital.

Memory Care

For clients who are suffering from Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and other behaviors resulting from neurological conditions or damage, Kane has 135 safe, secure beds in specially designed memory care units that are managed by a board-certified geriatric psychiatrist affiliated with Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. At Kane Glen Hazel, there are two 45-bed units; the Glen Haven unit for patients with dementia and memory loss, and the Glen Harbor unit for residents with dementia plus behaviors. The 45-bed memory care unit at Kane Scott Township opened in 2014.

To learn more or to tour a facility, call (412) 422-KANE or visit the website <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/kane/index.aspx>.



Mary Beth Semencar and Margaret Anne May.

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Kane Memory Care Unit — a part of Kane, Allegheny County's Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Centers. For information, call **412-422-KANE**.

Creating a Community Your Parents and Grandparents Will Love to Call Home

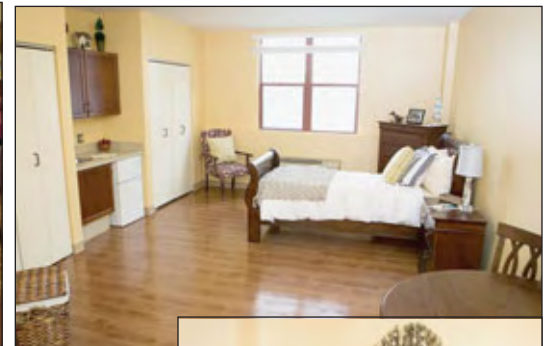
By Daniel Casciato

You may have started to notice that your dad is a little more forgetful these days. Your mom seems more tired than usual and unable to run errands during the day. Maybe your grandparents are unable to maintain their house any longer. Whatever the reason may be, there comes a time in every family's lives when they must help their loved ones find a new living arrangement to better care for them as they age.

Locust Grove is one such option. The senior living community provides a full range of exceptional senior living options in West Mifflin, PA, designed to accommodate anyone's lifestyle. Their primary focus is to go above and beyond to enrich the lives of residents every single day.

"Their range of services include traditional personal care services such as bathing, dressing, and medication management, and even includes our specialized memory care program servicing the needs of cognitive loss. All these services are housed within a safe and attentive environment complete with a 24-hour personal call system.

"We believe in giving residents control over their lives and encouraging independence while providing excellent service," says Sara Hull, Sales & Marketing Director for Locust Grove Personal Care & Memory Care. "We provide a friendly and relaxed atmosphere



where it is easy to meet and make new friends."

By offering a variety of living arrangements—three styles of personal care apartments—seniors are still able to maintain their independent lifestyle. There are three types of rooms to choose from: semi-private; deluxe semi-private with a shared common space; and private. Every room here has its own bathroom and kitchenette. They also offer a memory care neighborhood to provide a supportive environment where individuals living with dementia have the opportunity to live a fulfilling and dignified life.

"Our goal is to put the residents and their loved ones at ease," says Hull. "This is why Locust Grove offers a wide array of services and amenities to give not only the comfort of home but also peace of mind knowing your elderly loved ones have the highest level of care at their fingertips."

Some of the things you should be thinking about during conversations with your parents regarding

long-term care are the desired needs and expectations and how will the community you are interviewing meet these needs and expectations?

"Adult children should also research to see if their parent is eligible for any financial resources such as VA Aid & Attendance or long term care insurance policies," says Hull.

Through the VA Aid & Attendance, veterans and survivors who are eligible for a VA pension and require the aid and attendance of another person, or are housebound, may be eligible for additional monetary payment. These benefits are paid in addition to monthly pension, and they are not paid without eligibility to Pension.

Some of the benefits of a personal care facility such as Locust Grove include:

- Assistance with bathing, dressing, and medication management
- Convenience of restaurant-style dining

- Housekeeping and professional laundry services
- Proximity to shopping, dining and medical services
- Variety of activities on site and out on the town, such as cooking, art, crafts, and exercising

"At Locust Grove we focus on home and family," says Hull. "We strive to make your experience as close to homelike as we can. We welcome our new residents and staff members into our Locust Grove family and strive to instill this philosophy in all we do at Locust Grove."

➤ For more information or to schedule a tour, call (412) 461-7210 or visit www.locustgrovesrliving.com.

ON THE WEB: Need help finding a doctor, rehab or senior living facility?

Check out our **Healthcare Directory** and **Profiles of Local Healthcare Providers** at www.guidetogoodhealth.com

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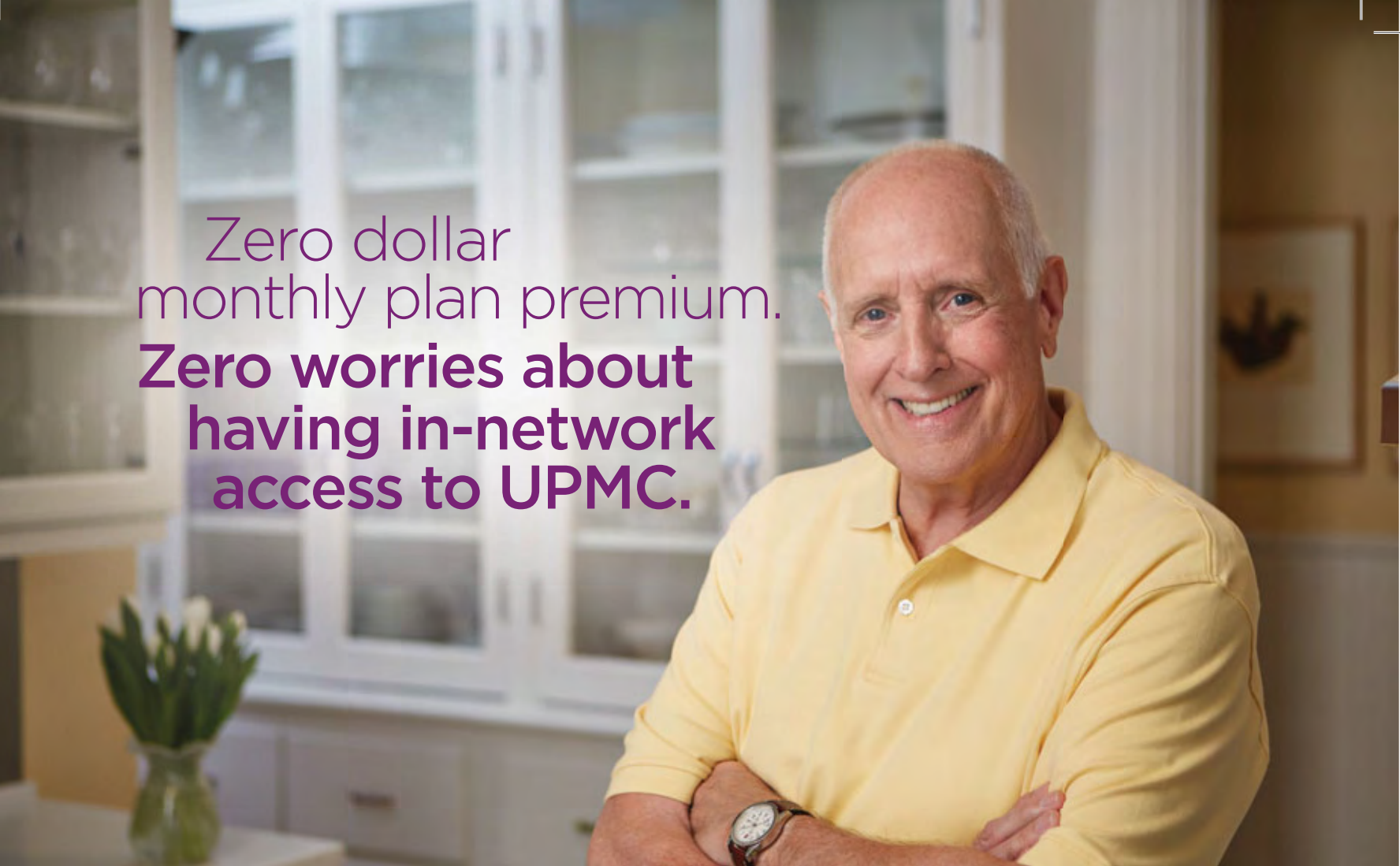
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www.upmchealthplan.com/medicare

*You must continue to pay your Medicare Part B premium. This plan does not include Part D prescription drug coverage. **The UPMC Health Plan Call Center earned the 2015 Award for Best Large Contact Center from ICMI. For more information, visit www.icmi.com. This award was not given by Medicare. For more information about UPMC *for Life*'s Star Rating go to www.Medicare.gov.

This information is not a complete description of benefits. Contact the plan for more information. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits and premium may change on January 1 of each year. The provider network may change at any time. You will receive notice when necessary.

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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