



Western Pennsylvania

Guide to Good Health

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COVID-19 and Heart Disease

Why Stroke Rehabilitation is Important

Feeding Difficulties in Children

Urinary Incontinence

Medical Marijuana Specialists Help Patients Get Certified

Should You Have Gall Bladder Surgery?

Regional Healthcare Providers Adapt to COVID-19 with Strength, Resilience and Creativity

Add Probiotics to Your Diet

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Senior Living Guide

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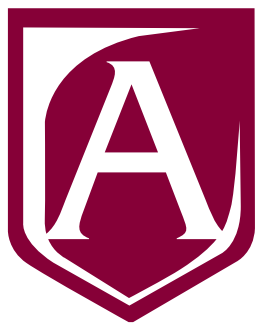


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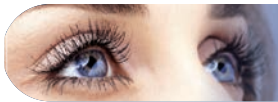
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Eye Health

Dry Eye Disease

By Christopher M. Spearman, M.D.

What is dry eye disease?

Dry eye is a disease affecting the surface of the eye, characterized by an unstable tear film along with ocular symptoms, attributable to multiple underlying factors. Dry eye symptoms include burning/stinging, pain, irritation, grittiness, scratchiness, sensitivity to cold air or wind, redness, watering/tearing, and blurred vision.

What causes dry eyes?

Risk factors for dry eye disease include:

AGE - increased age is associated with decreased tear production and meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD). Meibomian glands are responsible for producing the oil component of our natural tears. Decreased oil decreases the effectiveness of the tears.

GENDER - females are at increased risk for dry eyes due to changes in hormones that occur with pregnancy and menopause.

MEDICATIONS - many medications may increase a person's risk for dry eyes, including antihistamines and decongestants.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS - Certain medical conditions are associated with dry eyes, including Sjogren's syndrome, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, and thyroid disease.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS - exposure to dry air, wind, and smoke can increase tear evaporation resulting in dry eye symptoms. Activities like staring at a computer screen, reading, or even long distance driving can decrease the frequency of blinking, which results in increased dry eye symptoms.

How is dry eye disease diagnosed?

Dry eye disease can be diagnosed during a routine eye exam focusing on the function of the tear film and the status of the ocular surface.

Current treatment options

Ask your eye doctor about what treatment options would be right for you.

Treatment for dry eye symptoms starts with the use of artificial tears, which are available over-the-counter. Avoid "red-eye" drops that are designed to mask the redness without treating the underlying problem. Using warm compresses on the eyelids can help improve the oil component of the tears. Other options may include punctal plugs and anti-inflammatory drops.

Clinical Trials

There are many new treatments for dry eyes that are currently being investigated in clinical trials. If you are interested in participating in a clinical trial, call The Eye Research Institute at Scott & Christie Eyecare at (724) 772-3000.

➤ For more information or to schedule an evaluation, please visit www.scottandchristie.com or call (724) 772-5420 Cranberry or (412) 782-0400 Fox Chapel.

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Regional Healthcare Providers Adapt to COVID-19 with Strength, Resilience and Creativity

Jefferson Cardiology is Open and Ready to Provide Safe, Expert Care

Gennady Geskin, MD, a board certified cardiologist, treats patients with a variety of cardiovascular conditions at Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Associates, a division of Jefferson Cardiology. Dr. Geskin and his associates provide the most cutting-edge care in state-of-the-art facilities to diagnose and treat problems. Dr. Geskin discusses the impact of COVID 19 on his medical practice.

“COVID has had an impact on our patients, staff and business, with each element affected differently. Patients are reluctant to go to any medical facility for fear of contracting the virus. The number of



Dr. Gennady Geskin

patients with heart attacks is down 50% because people are simply not coming to the hospital. In Italy, they have seen a lot more cardiac arrests in the communities as a result.”

Dr. Geskin assures patients that Jefferson Cardiology is open and using telemedicine to help counteract this. “We have mostly older patients who are not tech savvy. They cancel their appointments. Normally, we see 100 patients/day but now it’s in the single digits. Patients are holding off on elective procedures, and as a consequence they have much bigger problems when they do come in. They’re

waiting too long. Even with elective procedures permitted, they are hesitant.”

“Another aspect of this is the business closures. Due to the pandemic closing down businesses, people have lost jobs and along with the job, lost health insurance. This has a negative impact on outcomes and is very stressful. Our revenues are down but we cannot close; our patients need to have access to us. We have had to reduce hours for some staff, but they are getting unemployment. They are stressed by the fear of job loss and have the same anxiety that everyone feels about the virus. There is uncertain-

ty about the future. With the loosening of restrictions, COVID cases will climb and we may get hit again in the fall.”

For Dr. Geskin, there is concern about patients not getting care and coming in later with bigger problems. “They need care, and we can provide that care safely. We take all the recommended precautions; we call each patient the night before to ask about symptoms; we check their temperature before they come inside; and we see one patient at a time. We have all the protective equipment needed. Because we operate our facilities so carefully, we can do electives safely.”



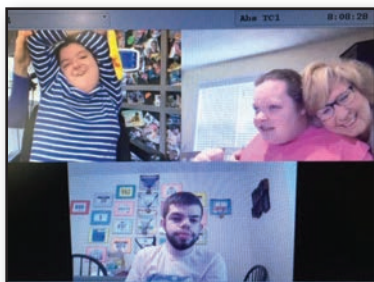
To contact **Jefferson Cardiology Associates**, call **(412) 469-1500** or visit **www.jeffersoncardiology.com**.

The Children’s Institute: Amazing Things Can Happen, Even in Challenging Times

COVID-19 has impacted lives in many ways, but individuals continue to find ways to stay positive and stay connected in unprecedented times. For families that receive services at The Children’s Institute of Pittsburgh – staying happy, healthy, and active is important to both physical and mental health as the community navigates this “new normal.”

Since 1902, The Children’s Institute has been proud to improve the quality of life for amazing individuals with physical, emotional, or intellectual challenges and their families by providing them access to expert resources and care through educational services, child and family services, outpatient behavioral health services, and outpatient therapy services – including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and nutrition.

For parents like Shannon Striner



whose 3-year-old daughter Sienna receives therapies at The Children’s Institute up to four times per week, the opportunity to continue those therapies through telehealth –

newly implemented at The Children’s Institute – was crucial.

“The Children’s Institute has done so much for us. I had a feeling that they might be our lifeline and they have been ... they really have,” said Striner.

In the midst of COVID-19, The Children’s Institute continued access to care through essential services including outpatient behavioral health and child and family services, as well as outpatient therapies. But with federal mandates closing schools for the remainder of the academic year to slow the curve of the virus, friends like Emma, Chloe, and Kai – students of The Day School at The Children’s Institute – have stayed connected virtually through video chats.

“We came up with a way to see our friends without ever leaving the house,” said Amy Marcinkiewicz, mother to Emma. For students with special educational and health care

needs, it is critically important to keep them engaged and healthy. Following the closure of the school for the academic year, the educational team at The Children’s Institute implemented Online Continuity of Instruction (OCI) to continue the learning experience in a virtual setting.

As we continue to stay safe, we all try to stay connected amidst COVID-19 – apart, but together. The Children’s Institute is here as an amazing resource for families, during this challenging time and always.

Call **(412) 420-2447** to schedule a telehealth or priority in-person appointment with a licensed outpatient Behavioral Health therapist. Call **(412) 420-2362** to schedule a telehealth appointment for outpatient physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, the feeding program, or pain program.



To learn more about educational services at **The Children’s Institute**, or if you may have interest in enrolling your amazing student for the upcoming academic year, call **(412) 420-2222**. Follow The Children’s Institute of Pittsburgh on Facebook or **@AmazingKidsPGH** on Instagram and Twitter to stay connected with resources and updates, or visit **amazingkids.org** to learn more about their programs and services.

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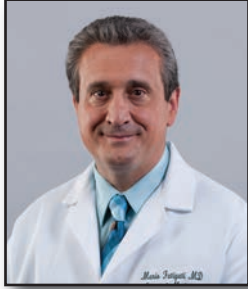
COVID-19 Boosts the Use of Telemedicine by Local Healthcare Providers

By Nancy Kennedy

The doctor is in – in your living room, kitchen or office.

Telemedicine, the capacity to connect with your physicians electronically for a virtual office visit, has surged in popularity in recent months due in no small part to the social distancing required by the COVID-19 pandemic. Doctors and patients alike are discovering the ease and convenience of electronic medical appointments. Even before the emergence of the novel coronavirus, the use of telemedicine was slowly growing across the U.S., and has been widely used by long term care facilities and by rural hospitals and health centers for consulting specialists.

Mario J. Fatigati, M.D., F.A.C.P., C.M.D., associate chief medical officer for St. Clair Medical Services and a primary care physician, believes that telemedicine deserves a place in healthcare, although it will never replace good old fashioned, hands-on primary



Dr. Mario J. Fatigati

care. “We are learning, as we use telemedicine more and more, that there are places where it is very useful. In my experience, it is best for dealing with specific, single medical issues such as a rash that can be addressed without a hands-on exam. In those cases, I can still assess my patient by getting the history and visualizing the problem on camera. Another application of telemedicine is for follow-up care, when a patient has been seen and had treatment and we are checking in with them to see how they are doing.”

Telemedicine uses a video conferencing platform like Skype or Facetime to connect the patient, at home or even at work, to their physicians – PCPs and specialists – for high tech outpatient appointments. Many hospitals and medical centers have their own systems that patients can log onto. The requirements are that the patient must have a smart phone, laptop, tablet or desktop computer equipped

with a camera, microphone and an Internet connection. Once you’ve had your first experience with it, it’s easy to do.


The advantages of telemedicine are obvious: you can receive care in the comfort of home, without leaving and having to deal with bad weather, traffic, parking and their costs; it limits your exposure to others who may be carrying a contagious infection, keeping you safe; and it’s fast and efficient. For older adults and persons with disabilities for whom mobility and access are difficult, telemedicine is an excellent solution.

There is no need to worry about the confidentiality of medical information – the technology is designed to maintain HIPAA standards. If there are technical difficulties, all is not lost – a phone conversation can substitute in many instances.

Dr. Fatigati, who is board-certified in geriatrics and internal medicine, also finds that telemedicine is a useful tool for managing the care of patients who are very ill and at home, unable to come to the office. These patients, who may have advanced cancer or heart failure,

are often receiving home health-care services. With telemedicine, he says, physicians can connect with the homecare providers and follow the patient. “The nurses have I-pads and they can send us pictures of wounds or clinical signs and keep in touch with us.”

Dr. Fatigati is the founder of Fatigati-Nalin Associates, part of St. Clair Medical Services, which is the employed physician network of St. Clair Health Corporation, and one of the largest physician practices in the South Hills. He serves as Executive Medical Director for Allegheny County’s four Kane Community Living Centers for skilled nursing and rehab care. The Pennsylvania chapter of the American College of Physicians (PA-ACP) honored Dr. Fatigati with the prestigious 2018 Clinical Practice Award.

 If you would like to learn more about telemedicine, visit www.stclair.org/telemedicine and watch the introductory video. There is also a listing of the primary care providers and medical specialty physicians who are using telemedicine with their patients.



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As an eyecare provider your vision and safety are important to us; the COVID-19 pandemic should not prevent you from receiving high quality eyecare. At Scott & Christie Eyecare Associates, we are continuing to provide complete, comprehensive eyecare for our community, while maintaining the highest safety standards. We have enhanced our appointment experience by making changes in our scheduling and check-in processes to provide for social distancing, while optimizing our meticulous cleaning protocols for the COVID-19 virus.

Eyeglasses are often necessary for people’s eyesight and are classified as essential medical devices. At Good Looks Eyewear, we have strict protocols in place to maintain customer and staff safety, so that you can update your glasses prescription and safely select the eyewear that’s best for you.

For additional information, please visit our websites www.scottandchristie.com and www.goodlookseyewear.com.

We look forward to seeing you at one of the following locations. #AllInThisTogether



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COVID-19 and Heart Disease



ABOUT THE EXPERT:

Heart disease is prevalent throughout America; it is the number one cause of death for Americans. Common heart conditions include high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, heart failure, congenital heart disease and pulmonary hypertension; these conditions, even when well managed, can elevate your risk of becoming seriously ill if you contract COVID-19. In this segment of the *Guide to Good Health's* Ask the Expert series, we spoke with Alan Bramowitz, MD, of Jefferson Cardiology about the impact of the virus on people with heart disease.



Dr. Alan Bramowitz

Cardiovascular disease is always listed as an underlying condition that puts people at higher risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19. Why is this?

All published reports indicate a high prevalence of persons at risk for cardiovascular disease as well as known heart disease among hospitalized patients with COVID-19. High blood pressure, obesity and diabetes in that order appear to be the most common existing conditions followed by history of heart disease. Cardiac complications can result from several causes. In persons with severe pneumonia and resulting respiratory failure there can be stress placed on the heart without heart muscle damage resulting in threatening heart rhythm disorders and shock. Also, the virus can cause direct heart muscle damage. The enzyme in lung tissue lining that is attacked by the virus to gain entrance to lung tissue is also present in the heart, kidneys, arteries and intestine. This is the suspected mechanism causing direct heart damage. Heart damage can be rapidly detected by checking a blood test measuring heart muscle damage.

How does COVID-19 affect the heart?

COVID-19 can cause abnormal heart rhythms which can make the heart beat erratically and ineffectively; they can also be lethal. The inflammation from COVID-19 and the body's often overwhelming immune response to the virus can cause myocarditis and pericarditis, inflammatory conditions that can damage the heart muscle. The inflammation caused by COVID-19 can weaken the heart. COVID-19 causes abnormalities in the blood clotting system and this can lead to emboli, blood clots that travel to the heart and lungs. Weakened heart performance may contribute to kidney failure requiring dialysis.

Are people with heart disease more likely to die if they get COVID-19?

There is a higher incidence of death in patients with heart disease who develop COVID 19. This has been reported in China and in Italy and we are seeing similar results in the U.S. People with cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure have worse outcomes but we are not sure exactly why. It may be that these diseases occur primarily

in the older population and older adults have weaker immune systems. We know that people who have heart damage from COVID have a higher risk of dying.

Does COVID-19 leave permanent damage to the heart?

It's possible but it's too early to know if damage to the heart muscle is permanent. It's still so new and we are learning as we go, but it probably depends on how severe your disease was. Some patients have serious damage to the heart muscle, while others have none.

What actions should I take to keep my heart as healthy as possible during this pandemic?

Eat healthy food, sleep well, keep well hydrated, manage stress as much as possible and practice social distancing.

This is a stressful experience for all of us. If you need help or support, ask for it. The fear and isolation can be very difficult.

Keep taking your heart medications exactly as your doctor ordered. In the beginning there was concern that statins could help the virus enter the lungs, but we now know this is not true. Both the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology recommend that you continue to take your meds.

Make sure you have an adequate supply of your medications.

Think about having a telemedicine appointment with your doctor so that you can limit your exposure to the virus and help slow the spread.

If you experience symptoms that could be early signs of COVID-19, call your PCP's office and they will guide you.

The main message?

Heart disease is very common in the U.S. Having heart disease does not make you more likely to get COVID-19 but if you do get it, you will not do as well as people with healthy hearts. Heart disease does put you at increased risk of having a more severe illness.

A close-up photograph of a silver stethoscope resting on a white surface. In the background, a blue pen is visible. A semi-transparent orange heart shape is overlaid on the left side of the image.

To learn more about heart disease, visit www.jeffersoncardiology.com

CORONAVIRUS

Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sewickley Continues Safe, Quality Patient Care

Throughout the COVID 19 public health crisis, Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sewickley has continued to offer its extensive range of excellent inpatient and outpatient services. CEO Leah Laffey says that the hospital is open and caring for patients with a wide variety of conditions, with restricted visiting for the safety and protection of both patients and staff.

“Right from the beginning, Encompass has been on top of this. We have implemented all of the CDC recommendations for COVID 19, and our management team meets twice a day, every day, to review and evaluate our practices and policies. We have a very experienced management team. There is a heightened sense of anxiety, naturally, but the staff is thoroughly trained in the use of Personal Protective Equipment. We have the equipment and supplies that we need, and we have infection control rooms. Staff education is ongoing, to keep everyone up-to-date as things change.”

Care of the staff is an essential element of the Encompass Health culture, and CEO Laffey says that special accommodations have been made to meet the needs of the staff during the COVID 19 outbreak.



“We have a separate room for the staff to change their clothes before they leave; they can also shower here before they go home. We have a separate place for them to eat. We take everyone’s temperature at the entrance and we have one single entrance for now. We are providing lunch for the staff, and supporting local restaurants in doing so, and our corporate leaders have given every staff member an extra two weeks of paid vacation.”

“Encompass Health is licensed as an acute care hospital and has a joint partnership with Heritage Valley Health System. Encompass receives referrals from there as well as from other acute care hospitals,

assisted living centers and other rehab facilities. Services include physical, occupational and speech therapy and special JCAHO disease-specific certifications for rehab programs for patients with stroke, brain injury, Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis, hip fractures, amputations and other conditions,” Leah Laffey says. “We look forward to getting back to our norm as a bustling, high-quality hospital that makes a lasting difference in the lives of others.”

For more information, visit www.encompasshealth.com or call (412) 741-9500.

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PUBLISHER
Nancy Carroll Lammie

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Brenda Metal Confer
Mary Wennersten

DESIGN & LAYOUT
JMC Graphics
(412) 877-5321

EDITORIAL MANAGER
Judy Gramm

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Kevin Brown
Ron Cichowicz
Daniel Casciato
Vanessa Orr
Nancy Kennedy
Lois Thomson

WEB SITE DESIGNER
Keith Trageser
keith.trageser@gmail.com

PRINTER
Gazette Printers

HOW TO REACH US:
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goodhealthmag@aol.com
(412) 877-5321
2574 Oldfield Ave,
Pittsburgh, PA 15102



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To healthcare heroes everywhere, **THANK YOU**

We thank the many healthcare heroes who leave their homes and families every day to serve others during this time of great need. We are proud to be among them, standing strong for our community.

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Gallagher Home Health Services: Responding to COVID-19 with Skill, Compassion and Resourcefulness



Gallagher Home Health Services Staff

By Nancy Kennedy

What does it mean to be responsive? In its most basic definition, it means to answer or react, but especially to react quickly, and in a positive or sympathetic way. A responsive person is sensitive and empathetic to the needs of others, open and approachable, and quick to meet the needs of the other. We respond when we answer, acknowledge, react and take action to help and benefit others. It demands awareness of the other's need, and that is achieved through listening well, with an open mind, a desire to help, and respect. Responsiveness is an essential quality in caring for others, and it is a special measure of quality in the bustling, complex environment of healthcare.

At Gallagher Home Health Services and Gallagher Hospice, LLC, responsiveness is the philosophical foundation that guides all their operations and relationships. It is expressed in numerous ways by the administrators, healthcare professionals, support staff and volunteers, in their interactions with patients, families, co-workers and colleagues. According to Shandra Harcarik, R.N., BSN, Regional Director of Sales and Marketing, this principle guides the staff every

single day.

"Responsiveness is more than a concept on paper; we were founded on this principle 15 years ago and we apply it in everyday operations. We respond immediately to the needs of the patient. We have no answering service – if a patient or family calls us, a member of the staff will always answer, and answer live, 24/7. We apply this also to our referral sources; if someone calls to speak with us a potential patient, we will speak with them right away and will see the patient within 24-48 hours. We never make a patient wait."

It should come as no surprise that the staff of Gallagher Home Health Services derives much-needed inspiration from the responsiveness principle as they confront the COVID-19 pandemic and respond to its impact on their patients, families and the home health community. "Our staff has been amazing," Harcarik says. "They are strong, committed and brave, reaching out, wanting to do more, to help as much as possible. Patients and families are experiencing a lot of fear right now and so we are trying to address their fears, providing patient education about COVID-19. If a patient chooses to forego home health services right now, we

respect their right to make that choice. But we are continuing to provide all of our services. We recognize that isolation is not normal for most Americans and it's hard to adjust to this. Our nurses are counselors, offering hope and resources and wearing many hats, as other services have been reduced. It matters more than ever that we are there for our patients and families."

Harcarik says that COVID-19 has called upon the Gallagher staff to assume a larger role in supporting end-of-life patients and their families. "With the new restrictions on visiting, families may be unable to be with their loved one. We can go in when the family cannot, as we are considered a 'medically necessary' service, to provide palliative care, emotional support and spiritual care. Our staff may be the only support the family has."

For the past 15 years, Gallagher Home Health Services has provided excellent, customized home health services to thousands of older adults and their families throughout Western Pennsylvania. It is family-owned and operated, Medicare-certified and licensed by the Department of Health. With a strong commitment to identify and meet the needs of this population, Gallagher has grown remarkably,

expanding into a multifaceted organization with three locations, serving nine counties and offering a broad range of services, including home healthcare, private duty home care services, and end-of-life care. With a multidisciplinary staff comprised of registered nurses; physical, occupational and speech therapists; home health aides; companions; social workers; hospice nurses; hospice aides, spiritual support as well as bereavement counselors and mental health professionals, Gallagher Home Health can meet the needs of even the most complex patients with skill, compassion and creativity.

The word that motivates this exceptional team – responsiveness – is derived from a Latin word meaning "promise." Even in the face of an unprecedented global pandemic, Gallagher Home Health Services continues to fulfill its mission of uncompromising, quality home health services to seniors and support to families. It is a promise that they keep every day to every patient and family, and to the entire community.



For more information about **Gallagher Home Health Services**, visit the website www.gallagherhhs.com or call (412) 279-7800.

John Wells from Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh on Medicare

Ask an EXPERT

ABOUT THE EXPERT: John Wells is president of Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh, an Independent Insurance Agency representing many different companies for your insurance needs. Medicare Specialists carefully selected its carriers in order to provide clients with the best level of service, price and coverage. For more information, visit www.medipgh.com.

What is Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh's reopening plans post-COVID-19?

In addition to following the guidelines set forth by the state health department, we're installing sneeze guards around our desks as well as in our reception area to protect our receptionist and to protect our clients coming in. We will also have masks here when people arrive.

To minimize the number of people in our waiting area and to keep people six feet apart, we are recommending to clients that they schedule an appointment ahead of time.

What advice would you have for people who want to sign up for Medicare now?

Allow yourself more time and please be patient. You can sign up three months prior to your 65th birthday month until three months after your birthday month. Don't wait to start this process a week or two before your 65th birthday. I would strongly suggest that people utilize that three month period because if we get hit with the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic in the fall, this is going to become a slower process.

No matter what happens, we're going to be prepared and on top of things and be flexible to work with our clients. You can enroll online at www.medicare.gov or set up an appointment at your local social security office.

What is the most common question about Medicare that you tend to hear from clients?

It's more of a statement than a question—but many people find Medicare to be confusing. They may find that there are too many options to choose from or they are not clear on what the differences are. That can be addressed over a general conversation with us, explaining the differences between a Medicare Supplement and the Medicare Advantage Plan, for example, and how those choices impact you further down the road.

How can a Medicare Specialist such as yourself help our readers?

We can help you enroll in Medicare. There's a lot of misinformation about what to do when you turn 65. For instance, many people wonder if they should stay on their group employee coverage or should they drop it and go on Medicare. We can compare your current coverage with what you can get with Medicare. We are licensed with all of the major Advantage Plans, Part D plans and a majority of the Supplemental plans. We educate our clients so they can make the proper decisions on what plan they should choose.

Any final advice for our readers?

Be careful of scams. During the last two months, during the quarantine period, I've seen so many Medicare commercials that are misleading on TV, especially the Joe Namath ones saying, "There are all these changes." There are no changes mid year—none. They're trying to scare people or use scare tactics to tell people that they've missed or are missing opportunities. If you're already on Medicare, chances are, you can't change plans mid year. If you ever have any questions or concerns, you can contact us.



We can HELP you!

Educate: We can thoroughly explain how Medicare works and what your options are. Since all we do is Medicare, we are Specialists.

Medicare Enrollment: We discuss with our clients enrollment issues. Our convenient location above the Social Security Office allows us to better serve our clients with enrollment issues related to Medicare.

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

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

Extra Help: Many individuals and families face health and financial difficulties. We can help!



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CORONAVIRUS

Supporting Family Caregivers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**By Heather Tomko
Outreach Coordination,
National Center
on Family Support**

In the best of times, family caregiving is accompanied by both challenges and rewards. But what about during this unprecedented time of the coronavirus pandemic? So little is known about the effects that COVID-19 and the required social distancing will have. The National Center on Family Support at the University of Pittsburgh, funded through the Administration for Community Living and the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, is hoping to be able to provide some of these answers.

“Our team is working hard to

support families with up-to-date information and resources via our website, webinars, and social media,” said Dr. Heidi Donovan, a co-director of the Center.

In an effort to understand the impact that COVID-19 will have on family caregivers, the Center is conducting a survey of informal family caregivers to evaluate the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on financial, social, mental, and physical well-being of these caregivers. “We want to understand how COVID-19 has affected caregiving duties and the ability to provide quality care,” explained Dr. Scott Beach, one of the co-directors of the Center. “The results of these surveys will provide important information for policy makers and healthcare professionals developing interventions for caregivers to cope



(l-r) Dr. Heidi Donovan, Dr. Scott Beach, Dr. Bambang Parmanto, Co-Director, National Center on Family Support

with the current pandemic.”

The Center also understands that, in addition to providing information to shape policy and interventions in the future, family caregivers have questions that need to be answered now. Their first webinar, “Family Caregivers and COVID-19,” was designed to provide this guidance. Bringing together experts from UPMC, Pennsylvania’s Department of Human Services’ Office of Developmental Programs, and family caregiver advocates, the Center facilitated a conversation about how caregivers can keep themselves, and those they provide care for, safe and healthy. A recorded video of the webinar is

available on the Center’s website.

“By providing continually-updated resources for family caregivers and by collecting and sharing important data about how families are being affected, we hope to better understand the extent to which federal and state policies and legislation during the pandemic are addressing the unique needs of family caregivers and those they care for,” stated Donovan.

➤ For more information, visit the **National Center on Family Support’s** website at www.caregiving.pitt.edu, e-mail to caregiving@pitt.edu, or call (412) 759-1356.

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Importance of Physical Therapy After Surgery



John Evans

By Daniel Casciato

Physical therapy (PT) is a critical component to your recovery following injury or surgery. It can help you heal faster, improve your flexibility, and minimize any scar tissue development.

PT can also help you achieve and regain optimal physical functioning, according to John Evans, DPT, Director of Rehabilitation at physician-owned Advanced Surgical Hospital.

“If you had a total joint replacement, the surgery has corrected the arthritic condition of the joint,” he says. “PT will now restore your mobility, strength, balance, coordination, and gait mechanics. PT also helps to reduce and resolve your pain. Everything we do in a therapy session is designed to restore optimal function so that you can get back to doing what you want to do and improve your quality of life.”

If PT is not rendered, over time you may lose flexibility, range of motion, strength, or stabilization of the joint that was surgically repaired. Without PT after joint surgery, you may develop excessive scar tissue formation that could prevent normal motion of the joint, adds Evans.

Your doctor will have to write a script and refer you for physical therapy. During your initial examination and evaluation, the therapist will review your past medical history and perform physical assessments that include measurements of strength, range of motion, balance, coordination, and motor functioning. After comprehensive testing has been done, the therapist will develop and initiate a treatment program specifically designed for you.

“You and the therapist will discuss your goals and you will then work together to achieve those goals,” says Evans.

You are informed at the onset of therapy that everything you do in therapy is designed to help you fully recover from your injury, surgery, or functional deficits. A cookie-cutter approach is not used because each patient is different regarding health, fitness level, and pain levels.

“The treatment plan designed by the therapist is geared towards you specifically and adjustments are made as necessary so that every part of treatment is focused on achieving the patient’s goals,” says Evans.

After your initial physical therapy evaluation, the therapist will write up a report and submit the report to the physician. Patients are normally seen by the physician every four weeks initially. At that time, the therapist will submit a progress report detailing your treatment plan, progress made in therapy, and current functional status.

Patients who have had total joint surgery need to understand that they will get better and each session of PT will get them closer to their goals and closer to a full recovery. Progress can be slow at times with pain being



the main contributing factor to a slower recovery than what you may have expected.

“As pain and swelling subside, you will be able to make quicker gains,” says Evans.

Many patients are very surprised at how much better they feel and how much more they are able to do after participating in physical therapy. Some patients have the notion that PT is going to cause them more pain because of the exercises they need to do to regain their mobility, strength, and function.

“Although pain is, and can be, a limiting factor to their progress, many patients are surprised at how much better they actually feel by getting their bodies into motion,” says Evans.

Depending on your injury, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) may be required before undergoing PT. This is a safe non-invasive imaging tool that enables your health care practitioner to detect, diagnose and monitor the treatment of a variety of ailments.

“MRI of the brain and neck can be used to detect brain tumors, traumatic brain injury, developmental anomalies, multiple sclerosis, stroke, dementia, infection and causes of headaches,” says David Liberatore RT(R) CT MR, Manager of Radiology for Advanced Surgical Hospital.

Imaging is also useful to diagnose sports injuries, tendon, ligament and bone injuries, tumors, infections and joint damage due to injury or aging. MRI uses powerful magnets to produce a magnet field that forces the protons in the body to align with the magnetic field, notes Liberatore.

During the MRI testing, the patient is placed inside a large machine/scanner that has a long tunnel through the center from one end to the other. The patient is instructed to remain very still during the exam so to not blur the images. Intravenous contrast may be given to enhance tissues in the body.



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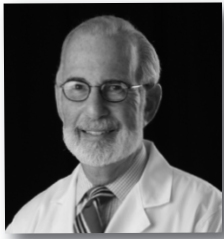
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Why Rehabilitation is Important After A Stroke



By Richard C. Senelick, MD

You never expected to get sick or injured, but now you find yourself in the hospital after experiencing a stroke. Your right side is weak, and your speech is a bit slurred. How will you ever get home and get your life back on track?

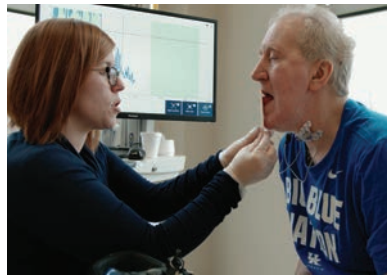
We never think we will need rehabilitation, yet there are more than 50 million people with disabilities in the United States. Rehabilitation is the key to getting back to your community and the activities you love.

Just like school

Going for therapy and rehabilitation is kind of like going back to school later in life. You may have to relearn information that you had previously acquired. You may need to learn to walk again, speak clearly or improve your memory. Like school or learning a new skill, there are certain principles that make a difference.

Dose matters

When we take a medication for a medical problem, we carefully adjust the dose. Too little or too much antibiotic and the infection worsens or never goes away. The same is true of rehabilitation. The intensity and amount of therapy you receive matters. Typically, an inpatient rehabilitation hospital will provide at least three hours of therapy a day, five days a week.



Function matters

If you want to learn to play a piano, you need to practice on a piano and not just read about it. The same is true for rehabilitation. If you had a stroke and have lost the use of your right arm, you will need to do tasks and therapy that require the use of your right arm. Performing these tasks will help rewire your brain.

Know the guidelines

According to the adult stroke rehabilitation guidelines released by the American Heart Association, whenever possible, stroke patients should be treated at an inpatient rehabilitation hospital, such as Encompass Health rehabilitation hospital, rather than a skilled nursing facility.

By using an interdisciplinary team approach, which includes physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, physicians, case managers, pharmacists and dietitians, clinicians at Encompass Health rehabilitation hospitals work together to create a customized care plan designed with each patient's unique goals at the center.

Dr. Richard Senelick is a neurorehabilitation physician and editor of Encompass Health Press.



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Ask an EXPERT

Clarence D. Lin, M.D., on **Gall Bladder Surgery** **You Have Gallstones. Should You Have Gall Bladder Surgery?**

ABOUT THE EXPERT: The *Western Pennsylvania Guide to Good Health* has consulted general surgeon Clarence D. Lin, M.D., to answer your questions about gall bladder surgery. Dr. Lin practices with St. Clair Medical Services, with partners Raye J. Budway, M.D., F.A.C.S., and Antonio J. Ripipi, M.D., F.A.C.S. He is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and received his medical degree from New York University School of Medicine.

What are gall stones and how are they formed?

Gallstones are formed in the gall bladder, the organ that sits just under the liver and stores bile, which helps break down fat from food in the intestine. The medical term for gallstone disease is cholelithiasis. Gallstones are composed of cholesterol and other substances and can vary greatly in size.

What are the typical symptoms of gallstones?

Most people who have gallstones have no symptoms and are not even aware that they have them. When gallstones produce symptoms, the most common one is pain in the right side of their abdomen just below the ribcage, or in the mid-abdomen below the breast bone. This pain may radiate farther to the right side, the back and the right shoulder blade. The pain can be sharp and intense or dull and pressure-like. Although the pain may resolve, you will most likely have repeated episodes. Many people also experience bloating, nausea, and vomiting. The pain may be triggered by eating a heavy meal or rich foods.

Who is likely to develop gallstones?

Gallstones are common. Approximately one in 10 adult Americans have one or more stones in their gallbladder; for adults over age 65 the rate is higher, with one in every five having gallstones. Gallstones are more common in women. Other risk factors are obesity; rapid weight loss; high fat and high cholesterol diet; diabetes; sickle cell disease and other hemoglobin disorders; and cirrhosis of the liver. Taking estrogen and certain medications increase one's risk.

How is the diagnosis made?

When a patient presents with these symptoms, we confirm the presence of gallstones by ultrasound or CT scan.

What is the treatment?

The ideal treatment for gallstones that are symptomatic is surgery to remove the gall bladder, known as cholecystectomy. We can live healthy lives without the gall bladder; the body compensates. When I counsel my patients about surgical options for gallstone disease, I offer the "minimally invasive" approach, which is a laparoscopic cholecystectomy. This operation involves visualizing and removing the gallbladder utilizing a light or "scope," a small video camera and thin instruments that work through several very small incisions in the abdomen. This surgery is safe and has several significant advantages: a much shorter

hospital stay, decreased postoperative discomfort, and minimal scarring. With all surgeries, there is a risk of infection, bleeding and injury but with laparoscopic gall bladder surgery the risk is very low. The outcome is that the patient gets permanent relief from gallstone pain.

What is the usual post-operative course?

I give my patients a nerve block, injecting a numbing medication that minimizes post-op pain. My patients have been very satisfied with this technique, as they have significantly less pain immediately following the operation, and pain control at home is easily managed without a narcotic prescription. Most patients use over the counter ibuprofen and Tylenol for a couple days.

After elective surgery, patients can usually resume normal daily activities the day after surgery. There are few limitations after gallbladder removal. I recommend avoiding foods that are fried or have high fat content, as this can cause abdominal pain, discomfort or diarrhea, as the body adjusts to not having a gallbladder. Some of my patients, at their follow-up visit, tell me that they have opted to continue this diet, with the goal of better wellness and health.

What happens if you have gall stones and you don't have the surgery?

Without the surgery, the symptoms will recur and may become more frequent and even life-limiting.

In addition, one percent to two percent of patients per year develop major complications from gallstones, such as cholecystitis, choledocholithiasis (bile duct cysts), cholangitis (inflammation of the bile duct), and gallstone pancreatitis.



To make an appointment with **Dr. Lin**, please call **(412) 942-7880**.

Talking About Urinary Incontinence: Types and Treatment

Urinary incontinence, the involuntary leakage of urine, is a common issue for many women. Incontinence can affect a woman's physical activity, self esteem, sexual function and can limit participation in normal day-to-day activities. Although incontinence can affect many aspects of a woman's life, many women do not tell their physician.

Why? For many women, incontinence is embarrassing. They do not feel comfortable talking with their physicians about their incontinence. For other women, they feel that incontinence is a normal part of the aging process and that they just have to "live with it." "I would encourage women to talk to their physician about their incontinence because it is not something to be embarrassed about and it is not something that they have to live with," says Damon Hoffmann, D.O., a specialist in Urology at Washington Health System.

Depending on the type of incontinence, there are a variety of treatments available that can dramatically improve leakage episodes.



"I often recommend treating the most bothersome symptoms first and then evaluating whether additional treatment is necessary."

*-Dr. Damon Hoffmann, Urologist,
Washington Health System*

Evaluation

There are several different types of urinary incontinence, and a woman may have more than one type of incontinence. A medical evaluation will help to reveal the type of incontinence and treatment options.

"A thorough history, physical examination and urodynamic testing can give a great amount of information about the type of incontinence," Dr. Hoffmann says. "This evaluation process will identify easily treatable and reversible

causes of incontinence such as urinary tract infections, medication side-effects and certain medical conditions."

"It will also differentiate the disorders of the bladder that cause long-term incontinence problems: stress incontinence, urge incontinence, mixed incontinence and overflow incontinence," he notes.

Stress Incontinence

Stress incontinence is the most common cause of urinary incontinence in younger women. Stress

incontinence refers to the leakage of urine with laughing, coughing, sneezing or with exercise such as running. Stress incontinence is caused by a weakening of the pelvic floor muscles that support the bladder and urethra. Pregnancy, childbirth, aging, chronic constipation and a chronic cough can weaken the pelvic floor muscles.

Initial treatments are aimed at increasing pelvic floor strength and minimizing stressors.

"Kegel exercises and pelvic floor physical therapy can increase pelvic floor strength," recommends Dr. Hoffmann. "Lifestyle changes such as weight loss, avoidance of caffeine, smoking cessation, and treatment of chronic constipation or cough can also significantly improve stress urinary incontinence symptoms."

"If incontinence symptoms are not sufficiently treated with pelvic floor exercise and lifestyle modification, surgical therapy, often in the form of a sling procedure, can be used with excellent results," he says.

Continued on page 17



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Add Probiotics to Your Diet

By **Kate Safin**,
East End Food Co-op

If you're looking to improve your digestive health, consider adding foods rich in probiotics to your diet. Probiotics are live microorganisms that provide health benefits (sometimes referred to as "good bacteria"); the term also applies to yeasts. One of the best

sources of probiotics are in tasty fermented foods. Fermenting is a traditional food preservation technique that uses the process of lactofermentation, where natural bacteria create lactic acid by feeding on sugar and starch in food. The process not only preserves the food, but creates beneficial bacteria, omega-3 fatty acids, enzymes, and B vitamins.

Top 10 places to find healthy probiotics

- 1. Yogurt** – fermented milk; there are lots of different flavors and styles of yogurt, from those sweetened with fruit and honey to rich and creamy Greek yogurt.
- 2. Sauerkraut** – finely shredded salted cabbage that is left to ferment.
- 3. Kimchi** – (pronounced kim-chee) a spicy pickled or fermented mixture of cabbage, onions, and seasonings like garlic and ginger.
- 4. Kefir** – A fermented drink made with kefir grains (a mixture of bacteria, yeast, and complex sugars). Yogurt kefir and water kefir are both delicious probiotic-rich beverages.
- 5. Kombucha** – a bubbly fermented tea made from bacteria called a "mother," various fruits, and black or green tea.
- 6. Sourdough Bread** – a fermented bread made with a sourdough starter.
- 7. Soft Cheese** – Gouda, Gruyere, and Cheddar cheese may contain probiotics because of the way they are made.
- 8. Pickles** – cucumbers that have been pickled in salty water and fermented.
- 9. Tempeh** – fermented soybeans; the taste is earthy and similar to a mushroom.
- 10. Supplements** – If none of the options above sound appealing, you can still get a daily dose of probiotics by taking them in pill form.

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Ask The Experts

Health Enhancing Thermography

What is Thermography?

Thermography is a cutting edge technology that has been available throughout the United States for 30 years. Digital infrared thermal imaging, also known as thermography, is a non-invasive test of our bodies' physiology. In short - thermography studies how our body is functioning. Unlike standard medical imaging tools, thermography doesn't look at structure in the body i.e., lumps, breaks, etc. Instead, thermography analyzes temperature and vascular patterns that provide an early indication of dysfunction and a unique look at how your body is functioning overall. Not only does thermography provide medical analysis outside of other diagnostic tests, but it is a radiation-free, painless, and requires NO contact with the body.

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Thermography is a valuable procedure for alerting your doctor to changes that can indicate early stage dysfunction or disease.

URINARY INCONTINENCE:

Continued from page 15

Urge Incontinence

Urge incontinence or overactive bladder is characterized by leakage of urine associated with a feeling of urgency. This form of incontinence results from spasms of the bladder muscles.

"The lifestyle modifications and pelvic floor exercises mentioned above can also help urge incontinence symptoms. When additional therapy is necessary, medications and a nerve stimulator procedure called the Interstim procedure, are available that help control the bladder spasms and decrease leakage episodes," notes Dr. Hoffmann.

Mixed Incontinence

Mixed incontinence is the most common form of urinary incontinence. As the name implies, women with mixed incontinence have both stress and urge symptoms.

"They often require a combination of the treatments that were described for stress and urge incontinence," Dr. Hoffmann explains. "I often recommend treating the most bothersome symptoms first and then evaluating whether additional treatment is necessary."

Overflow Incontinence

A smaller subset of patients experience overflow incontinence when the bladder does not contract effectively or if there is a physical blockage to the outflow of urine.

"Women with this form of leakage experience dribbling or continuous leakage. The treatment of this form of incontinence depends upon the underlying cause," says Dr. Hoffmann.

Many Treatment Options

Regardless of the type of incontinence, leakage of urine is something that can affect a woman's quality of life. Although many women feel uncomfortable discussing incontinence, it is an extremely common condition with many treatment options available. The first step to experiencing relief of the leakage of urine is to begin the discussion with your doctor.



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Go Outside and Be Happy

By Ned Ketyer, MD

The term “nature-deficit disorder” has been used by researchers to describe the lack of connectedness that humans – and especially children – feel about the natural world and other living beings sharing the environment. It appears that when children and adults fail to make, and then sustain that bond with nature, a variety of health conditions can result, including high blood pressure, obesity, and mental illness.

We examined the potential health benefits of urban green spaces for adults who are given the opportunity to soak in the great outdoors on The PediaBlog a year ago:

There may be no better way, research suggests, of lowering stress, improving feelings of well-being and preventing mental illness than spending time outdoors. And it doesn't take much time to achieve those benefits, either. About 20 minutes spent in a park-like setting, surrounded by nature (grass, trees, birds, and such), is all you need to begin feeling better about your health and yourself, and improve some important vital signs like blood pressure and heart rate. A recent study finds that exercising isn't even necessary while soaking in the great outdoors in order to realize the health benefits.

Now, new research shows just how important it is for children's social and cognitive development to form bonds with nature, especially if this younger generation is to succeed in reversing environ-



mental degradation and holding back the climate crisis that previous generations have caused. A study published in last month's issue of *Frontiers of Psychology* surveyed nearly 300 Mexican elementary school children between the ages of 9 and 12 to measure the link between nature and happiness. David G. Allan and Kristen Rogers describe results which shouldn't surprise anyone:

The researchers found children who felt connected to nature — feeling pleasure when seeing wildflowers and animals, hearing sounds of nature — engaged in altruism, or actions that helped other people. These children actively cared for the environment by recycling, reusing objects and saving water. They were also more likely to say they believed in equality among sexes, races and socio-economic conditions. Finally, these children scored high on a happiness scale, too.

The reason the researchers undertook their investigation was based on a sense of urgency:

Explaining their motivation for conducting the research, the authors wrote: “Given the environmental problems humanity is currently facing, and considering that the future of the planet lies in the hands of children and their actions, research about the determinants of

sustainable behaviors in children become more relevant; nonetheless, studies on this topic focusing on children are scarce.”

Kashmira Gander hands out the prescription adults in this world need to take:

Lead author Dr Laura Berrera-Hernández of the Sonora Institute of Technology (ITSON) said in a statement: “Parents and teachers should promote children to have more significant contact or exposure to nature, because our results indicate that exposure to nature is related to the connection with it, and in turn, with sustainable behaviors and happiness.”

In the ultimate display of social distancing, Americans have already begun to self-quarantine themselves against the COVID-19 pandemic. Now would be a good time to remember, as we temporarily fray the interpersonal connections with each other, that a walk in the woods surrounded by nature always does a soul good. There's a good chance it will make our kids happy, too.

Article originally published on the PediaBlog.





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For a complete list of locations,
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Matt Bittner,
MS, OTR/L, on
Feeding Difficulties
in Children



Matt Bittner

ABOUT THE EXPERT: An occupational therapist with more than 17 years of experience, Matt Bittner, MS, OTR/L has worked with children with feeding difficulties his entire career.

How can picky eating effect a child and family?

Picky eating can have a significant impact as it increases stress during mealtime. Caregivers may have to make alternative meals, the child may not be able to eat the foods offered, and siblings can get stuck in the middle of the struggle. Families must transition from doing what is easy vs. what will help in the long term.

What can families do about picky eating?

Families need to know there is help. The first step is recognizing the problem. The next step is making a change. Share the problem with your pediatrician who can refer you to The Children's Institute where we do an evaluation to look at the child's skill level, how they respond to food and expectations, and learn about their routines. This evaluation is key to getting the child on the right track with eating and nutrition, and making mealtime less of a challenge at home, school, and in the community.



Picky Eaters vs. Problem Feeders

Picky eaters are able to eat foods from most, if not all, of the major food groups, but also have preferences for foods they like and do not like. They are able to eat their preferred foods at home, school and in the community, but often do not venture outside of their comfort zone.

Problem feeders do not eat foods from most of the major food groups, causing concerns with overall growth, weight gain, and nutrition. They typically eat less than 10 foods, eliminate foods, and do not add new foods into their diet.

Picky eaters and problem feeders can experience challenges with aversions to foods based on texture, sight, smell, or taste. They may not be able to eat food presented at a birthday party, buy a school lunch, or go out to eat without bringing preferred foods.

When is it time to reach for help?

The sooner we meet you and your child, the better. The younger the child, the greater the opportunity to impact their skills and provide strategies to decrease stress and improve the mealtime routine.

> Learn more about **The Children's Institute** at amazingkids.org or call **(412) 420-2362** to schedule an evaluation.

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AMAZING THINGS HAPPEN HERE.

Since 1902, The Children's Institute has been dedicated to providing services to better the lives of amazing kids and their families to further our mission: **To Heal. To Teach. To Empower. To Amaze.** We exist to help our amazing kids **recognize their super powers** and to bring them **more care, more smiles, and more amazing futures.** Visit amazingkids.org to learn more about the following services:

- Educational Services
- Child & Family Services
- Outpatient Therapy Services
- Outpatient Behavioral Health Services
- Care Coordination Services



The Children's Institute

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Efforts to Curb Teen Vaping

by Tiffany A. Babinsack, MPA, CTTS, Tobacco Free Allegheny



TOBACCO 21

On December 20, 2019, President Trump signed legislation to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, raising the federal minimum age for sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 years old. This legislation (known as “Tobacco 21”) is effective immediately, and now makes it illegal for a retailer to sell any tobacco product—including cigarettes, cigars, and e-cigarettes/vaping products—to anyone under the age of 21. This new federal minimum age of sale applies to all retail establishments and persons with no exceptions.¹

WHY IT MATTERS ...

Nearly all adult smokers started using tobacco when they were teenagers. In fact, about 95% of adult smokers began using tobacco before they were 21. Raising the purchase age of tobacco to 21 will allow for a significant reduction in the number of adolescents who use tobacco, reduce tobacco-related death and disease, and immediately improve the health of young adults.² For example, a report from the National Academy of Medicine revealed that Tobacco 21 could prevent as many as 223,000 deaths among people born between 2000 and 2019 and could reduce lung cancer deaths by 50,000.³

WHY 21?

More than 60% of 10th grade students reported that they thought it was “easy” to obtain tobacco products. Often, they get these products from friends or classmates who are over the age of 18. Since students do

not typically reach 21 years old while still in high school, increasing the age of sale will greatly reduce the number of high school students who could purchase tobacco products and then provide them to younger students.

WHAT ABOUT TEENS WHO ARE CURRENTLY USING TOBACCO?

Teens who quit with support are more likely to be successful. This support can come from a doctor, parent, school guidance counselor or nurse, a trusted teacher, or from their peers. Additionally, there are a number of free, anonymous, programs available to assist adolescents who are addicted to nicotine.

My Life, My Quit is an enhanced tobacco and vaping cessation program for teens under age 18 who want to stop using tobacco products, especially electronic cigarettes/vaping products. **My Life, My Quit** is 100% free, confidential and made just for teens. The **My Life, My Quit** specially trained coaches listen and understand teens, provide personalized support, and build relationships that promote quitting tobacco. Coaches emphasize that the decision to stop is personal, and provide information to help cope with stress, navigate social situations, and support developing a tobacco-free identity.

For more information, or to enroll in the free **My Life, My Quit** program, teens can Text “**Start My Quit**” to (855) 891-9989.

ABOUT TOBACCO FREE ALLEGHENY

Tobacco Free Allegheny’s mission is to change the community norms surrounding tobacco, making it uncommon to see, use, or be negatively affected by tobacco or tobacco pollution.



Learn more at www.TobaccoFreeAllegheny.org.

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/retail-sales-tobacco-products/tobacco-21>

² https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/what_we_do/state_local_issues/sales_21/tobacco21_factsheet_brief.pdf

³ <http://tobacco.cleartheair.org.hk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/18997-2.pdf>

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For more articles on how to quit smoking from Tobacco Free Allegheny, visit www.guidetogoodhealth.com.

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By Kelly Beddall, SLP

Do children in bilingual families experience greater speech and language delays? Not the case, says Kelly Beddall, teli Speech Language Pathologist. “There is a great deal of misinformation regarding the rate of language development in children in families where two languages are spoken,” notes Kelly. “In fact, regular experience with two different languages has been linked to some encouraging social and cognitive advantages. Unfortunately, this message still hasn’t gotten out there!”

Our world has become increasingly multilingual as more than 20% of school age children (5-17) are speaking a language other than English at home. Interestingly enough, children are able to learn both languages simultaneously.

Children as young as 2 years of age can switch languages, based on whom they are speaking with at the time. For example, in a family in which

Mom speaks English and Dad speaks Swedish, their child will know to speak in English when he hears English and to speak in Swedish when he hears Swedish,” explains Kelly. “It is also important to note that when learning a second language, your child may experience a “silent period” in which he or she does not speak in the second language. This is normal, so try not to panic! “Parents should also be aware that by learning two languages, bilingual children may develop language skills at a slightly slower pace, due in part to the greater volume of words learned when mastering more than one language.

Early Intervention evaluation is a key to understanding if your child may be experiencing speech delays. Children may learn the two languages at different rates since they are essentially learning double the content. “It is very important that your child is evaluated in both languages to understand if there is a language delay or just a delay because of second language acquisition. Often times they will catch up and learn the second language, English or other, regardless of what is spoken in the home.”

There are significant benefits, to children who are bilingual such as:

- Transfer of skills in one language (usually primary) may enhance learning in another language.
- Expanded vocabulary as they have two languages to draw upon.
- Better cognitive performance in terms of planning and good problem-solving skills.

At teli we support bilingual language and speech development by incorporating both native as well as secondary languages into activities. By reinforcing both languages, our staff is able to incorporate shared activities that help both parents and their clients improve their ability to communicate and enable parents to play a key role in their child’s success!



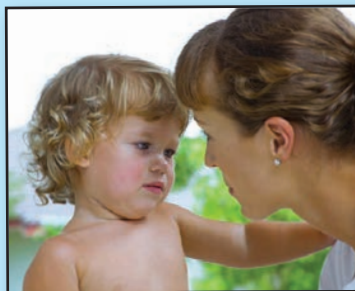
Kelly Beddall



If you have concerns about your child’s development, teli can help. Call us at (412) 922-8322.

Talking to Youngsters about Coronavirus

This is a difficult time for all of us and for children especially as they see their routine changing drastically. The Center for Disease Control has provided suggestions on how to talk to your child about the Coronavirus. While it is hard for toddlers in particular to understand, the following suggestions may help your whole family manage through this challenging time.



Remain calm and reassuring.

- Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.

Make yourself available to listen and to talk.

- Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.

- Consider reducing the amount of screen time in the household focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety, even for little ones as they take their lead from others in the family.

Provide information that is honest and accurate.

- Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
- Help them understand social distancing and how that helps keep people safe.

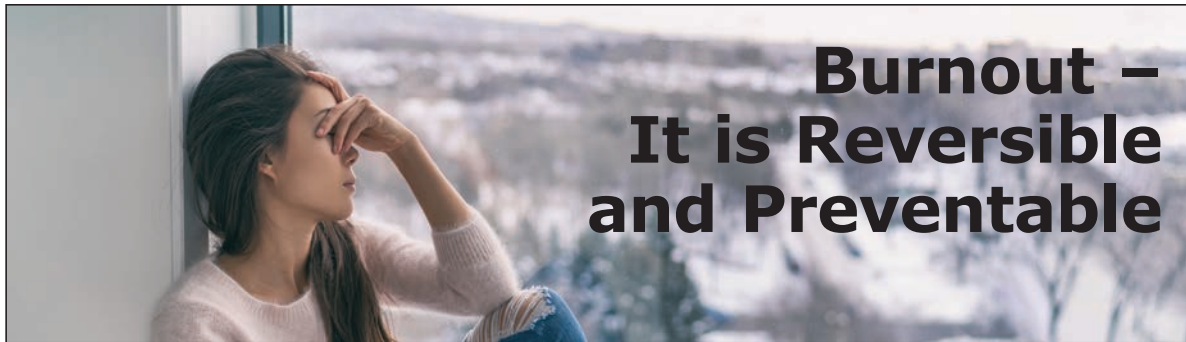
You can teach children everyday actions that they can practice helping your whole family stay healthy!

- Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick.
- Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.
- Get children into a handwashing habit.
- Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Counting to 20 or singing their favorite song or rhyme can be a great way to get them truly engaged! This is important especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- If soap and water are not available, teach them to use hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>

Contributed by The Early Learning Institute (teli)

At teli, the children and families we serve come first. Now, when in-home services are not possible and social distancing is required to stop the spread of the coronavirus, teli therapists are providing Early Intervention services through virtual interaction. If you have been approved for Early Intervention service and have chosen teli, your therapist can help you select a video talk method that works best for you. In this way your child’s developmental progress can move ahead and it is just a video call away.



Burnout – It is Reversible and Preventable



Laura Crooks

By Laura Crooks

Burnout and overwhelm suck the joy out of work and life.

DO YOU...

- feel exhausted or drained?
- feel like you don't have enough time?
- dread going to work?
- “stuff” your emotions or react inappropriately?
- question whether you are making a difference?

The more yes answers you have the more likely you are experiencing burnout.

Burnout is recognized by the World Health Organization as an

official workplace syndrome.

Common in many professional work settings, and especially within healthcare, burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion with a diminished sense of accomplishment. It can sneak up on you. Job stress and burnout occur when you feel you have too many demands, too little control and your resources have been depleted. Self-care is essential to replenishing and building resilience.

Your physical, mental and emotional health are affected, as are the people around you, your productivity, your career, your energy, mood and enthusiasm. Common responses to stress and burnout include insomnia, irritability, cynicism, anger, anxiety, GI disturbances, errors, headaches and minimal

sense of accomplishment.

Burnout has both personal and organizational factors. The culture, resources and 24/7 demands of the workplace need to shift but building your personal resources and resilience are important, too.

These behaviors help reduce burnout and stress:

- practicing self-care (proactively taking care of your body, mind and spirit)
- reprioritizing activities
- shifting your mindset and thinking
- creating work-life balance
- getting exercise
- enjoying positive social connections
- living with joy
- living your purpose

Burnout and stress both affect your productivity, mood, physical health and personal relationships.

Burnout is both preventable and reversible.

Stress and overwhelm can be managed.

Building your resilience keeps you replenished, lessens your stress and reduces your risk of burnout.

Your personal and professional lives can be harmonious.

Life can be fulfilling and fun.

> Laura Crooks, RN, is a wellness coach and speaker who helps professionals eliminate burnout, manage stress, create life balance and rekindle their sense of purpose and joy. She is the author of *Wellness Made Simple*. For more information, visit her website www.YouBloomWellness.com.

Medical Marijuana Specialists Now Offering Telemedicine Services

Medical Marijuana Specialists is Pennsylvania's premier medical marijuana certification center, offering expert guidance about the entire certification process to patients, healthcare professionals and the community. Shelly Hutchinson, RN, owner, is an experienced nurse with exceptional knowledge of the science and the medical benefits of cannabis; she is committed to helping people heal by offering services that facilitate their medical marijuana journey.

According to Nurse Shelly, as she likes to be known, the corona virus pandemic is creating tremendous stress for people, and that stress is being manifested by increased physical and emotional discomfort. “People are simply not feeling well throughout this period; many of my clients are having increased pain and anxiety, due to COVID 19. Cannabis can help with anxiety but only if it is the right strain,” she explains. “We see many seniors and people with chronic pain and anxiety, and most of them are immunosuppressed.

Until recently, we had to see

every patient in person but, with the COVID 19 outbreak, we have been designated an essential business and as a result, we can see these patients via telemedicine. The designation has allowed us to do telemedicine across Pennsylvania. We are actually busier than we have ever been as a result.”

Nurse Shelly provides patient education regarding the certification process, the 23 approved conditions and the benefits of medical marijuana. “We can review your case, answer your questions, explain the program and walk you through the certification process. Medical Marijuana Specialists is available on a daily basis from 9 am to 9 pm. People are practicing social distancing but they can connect with us through telemedicine. We are here to help; we care about your safety and well-being so we are making it as easy as possible for you. Call us for a personal consultation.”

> For more information, call (833) 667-4665 or visit www.GetYourIDCard.com.

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Deliver inside our new WHS CARE Center for Family Birth and Women's Health

We are excited to announce the first phase of the new **CARE Center for Family Birth and Women's Health**, inside WHS Washington Hospital, is complete. The first phase of construction included centralized nursing stations, a new family lounge, an updated nursery including a level 2 special care nursery, a new lobby and 13 spacious postpartum and recovery rooms that will be utilized by obstetrics patients as well as patients having gynecological surgeries.

- a Neonatal Resuscitation team at every delivery
- a level 2 special care nursery
- larger rooms
- larger bathrooms
- more furnished space for families
- Bluetooth speakers in the rooms, for custom playlists
- complimentary snacks and drinks for parents & family members

We'd like to thank our donors, staff and our community for the generous support during this upgrade.



Questions? Call us at (724) 223-3220

Take a virtual tour of the new
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2020 Annual Healthcare Guide

This section is designed to help you in your search for quality care and resources to help you and your family, including children, the disabled and seniors.

East End Food Co-op

East End Food Co-op – Open for Everyone

By Lois Thomson

Kate Safin, marketing and member services manager of East End Food Co-op, said the Co-op focuses on a triple bottom line: "People, planet, and then profit. We prioritize people and planet over profit, and we try to create profits by utilizing goods and services, and doing things that promote the health and wellness of people and the planet."

The Co-op does this by offering products that focus on fresh, local, and organic items. "Those are our top priority. We have specific buying guidelines, we don't carry products that have artificial coloring or flavors, harmful ingredients, genetically modified organisms, or anything tested on animals; and we also try to focus on items that are packaged in things that are recyclable, returnable, or generally more sustainable."

She said the Co-op also carries food for special diets, e.g., vegetarian or vegan or gluten-free – things that are popular now, but for a long time could only be found at co-ops. "And many of our staff follow those types of diets and can help you pick the best option, or give suggestions or substitutions."

Safin said almost all meat is locally sourced – within 250 miles of the store. The Co-op also offers a variety of local cheeses. Additionally, the store has a vegetarian café and salad bar that offers healthy selections, including soup, and a juice and smoothie counter.

She added, "The store is full-service. We have every department that every other grocery store has, but it's just focused on things that are organic and have higher-quality ingredients."

Some people believe a co-op is only open to members, but Safin said East End Food Co-op is open to anyone, although people who plan to shop on a regular basis might consider becoming a member. The investment is a one-time payment of \$100, with no annual fees. "We take that \$100 and it becomes equity in our business, it helps us make improvements to our store; but if you ever want that money back, we're happy to refund it if we're not serving you any more. There's nothing to lose."

Benefits include getting 2 percent off the shelf price every day; and once a quarter, members can choose a transaction where they get 10 per-



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cent off. Buying in bulk may result in 20 percent savings, and members receive a discount on various classes that are offered.

"It's a great way to get healthy food and affordable prices, while supporting a community-focused store that keeps money in our local economy. Everyone is welcome to come and check it out. If it's something they think they will be using frequently, it makes sense to make that investment; but we don't want the Co-op to not be accessible."



For more information, call (412) 242-3598, or visit www.eastendfood.coop.



Kate Safin

INSIDE THIS SECTION:

Best Made Shoes • Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospitals • Medical Marijuana Specialists
ACORx Pharmacy • Independent Mobility • Curtis Pharmacy • Live-In Disability Solutions • Community Options, Inc
• Vitas Healthcare • USC Community Recreation Center • Presbyterian SeniorCare • Beechtree Commons

Best-Made Shoes

Relief for Your Feet for 3 Generations!

By Lois Thomson

If you are like many people, it probably hasn't been too long since you complained about your aching feet, especially if your job requires you to be on your feet all day, or if you have a health condition like diabetes. But if you decide that it's time to do something more than just complain, you might want to check out Best-Made Shoes in Bloomfield.

This third-generation store was founded in 1977 by Gene Rosen, and his son Marc joined the business in 1995. As Gene simply states, "What we do is basically help people who have foot problems, or people who just want shoes that fit well." They do that by making custom-made shoes and orthotics that can help everyone from diabetics, to those who have misshapen feet, swelling, edema, or a host of other issues.

Along with custom-made shoes, which may take about two months to make, Gene and Marc are able to make adjustments to ready-made shoes, such as some of their best-selling brands like Birkenstock, New Balance, and Alegria. "Sometimes we give you ready-made, orthopedic-type shoes, then do modifications," Marc said. "We can add arches or cushioning. If one leg is shorter than the other, we can add build-ups." Modifications may take anywhere from a day or two, to two weeks for custom orthotics.

While having comfortable, well-fitting shoes is everyone's desire, for diabetics it is imperative. As Marc explained, "They can get sores easier than (non-diabetics), they can get rubbing or irritation, they can have more complications if they have don't have a shoe that fits properly." Gene concurred. "If they don't have a shoe that fits well it can lead to amputation. That's why you want to make sure everything fits properly and has the right cushioning."

Marc pointed out that he and his father are certified pedorthists, and their company is a nationally accredited facility. "We're board-certified,

which means we're trained to know about the anatomy of the feet and biomechanics. We can modify or make custom-made shoes or inserts." He said that some pedorthists have the training and may do prescriptions, but many of them don't actually make the shoes or inserts. "We do everything right here in the store! And with being an accredited facility, we are a provider for Medicare, UPMC and Highmark insurances for diabetic shoes."

Best-Made Shoes even does shoe repair on the premises. Gene said, "There aren't many shoe repair places left," and Marc added, "We're the only ones who really do everything." As part of their service they also make house calls – to hospitals, nursing homes, and even private homes.

"It's a fun business, helping people feel better," Gene said. "They come in here with aches and pains, and then most of the time they walk out with a smile."

> For more information, call (412) 621-9363, or visit www.bestmadeshoes.com.



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Curtis Pharmacy



Curtis Pharmacy - A Better Way

By Kevin Brown

Curtis Pharmacy, locally owned and operated by Pharmacists Erich and Tina Cushey, deliver on their promise to offer customers “A Better Way.” Serving Washington County for more than 100 years, Curtis Pharmacy has locations in Washington and Claysville.

“We provide all the benefits of a major pharmacy, combined with the personalized care and concern that comes from four generations of serving families in the area,” says Erich Cushey. “Plus, you’ll always find our staff willing to take the time to help and explain options that are right for you and your budget.”

A Better Way

Central to their business success is “A Better Way,” a personalized medication management program that provides custom packaging, medication refills and delivery. After scheduling to have medication refills on the same day every month for convenience, customers decide how they want their medications packaged and they choose its delivery method – in-store pickup or in-home delivery.

The custom packaging alerts customers when to take their medication and the proper dosage makes medication maintenance worry-free. Packaging options include multi-dose packages, vials, and blister packs.

“A Better Way eliminates the need to make multiple trips to the pharmacy, calling the doctor for refills, and waiting in long lines,” notes Tina Cushey. “It’s easy, there’s no extra cost and delivery is free.”

Patient Services

Among other pharmacy services, Curtis Pharmacy offers Medicare Part D consultations to assist in finding the right Medicare Part D program, high-deductible prescription coverage assistance, and affordable prescription prices for those do not have health insurance.

“Our professional team of pharmacists reviews your medication on Medicare’s website to help you find the lowest premium and deductible, coupled with the best coverage possible for your medications,” Erich says.

If you take vitamins and supplements, quality products are available from Douglas Labs, Nutritional Frontiers, Vinco, and Solutions Rx. Curtis Pharmacy also sells affordable diabetic testing supplies.

Need to be vaccinated? Curtis Pharmacy offers flu, pneumonia, shingles, and tetanus shots. If you need a blood test, customers can have blood draws done at the Claysville location in conjunction with the Washington Health System.

You’ll also find cards and gifts for any occasion from vendors like Swan Creek Candles, Ty, Willow Tree, Corkcicle, a full selection of country/primitives featuring Primitives by Kathy, and even Sarris Candy for your sweet tooth.

Prescriber Services

For prescribers, Curtis Pharmacy is committed to patient medication adherence. No matter how difficult or non-compliant the patient may be, the pharmacists at Curtis Pharmacy can help improve your practice’s quality outcomes. Through “A Better Way,” customized packaging helps your patients manage their medications.

Curtis Pharmacy can also help prescribers’ staff with time-consuming insurance prior authorizations. “We offer customized compounding for prescribers including alternate dosage forms, supply unavailable, HRT, dental, pain, wound care, and even veterinary compounding,” Erich says.

Their extensive array of custom compounding services includes products for women’s health, men’s health, pediatrics, wound care, dermatology, oral and dental care, pain management, and veterinary. Visit the Curtis Pharmacy website at www.curtispharmacy.com for more information.

See For Yourself

“Our goal at Curtis Pharmacy is ensure that all our customers receive the personalized service each one deserves,” says Tina. “That’s why Curtis Pharmacy has been meeting the pharmacy needs of Washington County residents for more than 100 years.”



➤ Come see for yourself! Curtis Pharmacy is located in Washington at 869 Henderson Avenue - (724) 245-3520 and in Claysville at 306 Main Street - (724) 245-3520. Visit Curtis Pharmacy online at www.curtispharmacy.com.

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CANNABIS HEALTH

MEDICAL MARIJUANA SPECIALISTS: Guiding Patients Through the Certification Process

By **Daniel Casciato**



Shelly Hutchison

As a registered nurse, Shelly Hutchison spent most of her career in the neonatal intensive care unit. After 17 years, she chose a new path as a manager and marketer for a pediatric home care company. It was in this role where she learned about the benefits of medical marijuana for treating pediatric seizures and other chronic illnesses. Her mother, who had also been suffering from severe chronic pain, decided to try medical marijuana as well.

"It had amazing effects on her," says Hutchison, also known as Nurse Shelly in the cannabis community. "I knew then that I had to get involved with this natural plant-based medicine. I began researching and educating myself on the plant, on its properties, and how it was being used as

medicine."

When medical marijuana was legalized in Pennsylvania in April of 2016, she became a medical marijuana nurse and a consultant for a short period of time. In 2018, Nurse Shelly decided to start her own business, Medical Marijuana Specialists, to educate the community, patients, and healthcare professionals on all aspects of the medical marijuana certification process. She is also a member of the American Cannabis Nurses Association and takes immense pride in guiding patients through every step of their entire journey.

"We're truly about helping them find peace and comfort," she says.

Nurse Shelly is also a medical marijuana patient who suffers from anxiety and trigeminal neuralgia, and was taking over 3,600 mg of

gabapentin per day. Since becoming a patient, she only uses plant-based medicine to help cope with the pain and the symptoms.

The company has grown rapidly since its launch. Today, Medical Marijuana Specialist has eight locations in the western Pennsylvania region. Nurse Shelly also brought on board Dr. John Metcalf, the leading expert in the history, science, and benefits of medical marijuana, as her medical director. Patient education and customer satisfaction remains their number one priority.

"We passionately believe in the amazing properties in the plant and education and support is truly our passion," she says. "We want to make sure our patients are educated and knowledgeable in making their own healthy decisions. Obtaining a medical marijuana card in the state can be cumbersome process. At Medical Marijuana Specialists, we take the patient by the hand and we walk

them through the entire process."

Their team of highly knowledgeable staff of doctors and nurses will review a patient's medical records, educate them on the science and benefit of medical marijuana and thoroughly answer any questions they may have regarding their journey, and help them obtain their card.

"We're a one-stop shop and we can do this easily and affordable for patients," adds Nurse Shelly. "We truly care about their health and wellbeing as well as the education they receive."

There are so many benefits of medical marijuana, she notes.

"First, it helps us with our chronic pain patients," she says. "The majority of our patients we see are seniors who have been on a number of pharmaceuticals, who are in chronic pain, and want a more natural relief. They're reaching out to us wanting to try plant-based medicine and they're finding

Continued on following page

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Locally Owned by Nurse Shelly, RN

"Everyone was very helpful, kind and friendly. The process was easy and they walk you through everything you need to know. I had a wonderful experience here and recommend Medical Marijuana Specialists to anyone in the area who qualifies for medical marijuana. Thanks again!" - Julia R. - Google Review

★★★★★

5 STAR VERIFIED CUSTOMER REVIEW RATINGS

ACORx PHARMACY

Managing Medications and Keeping Patients Healthier

By Daniel Casciato

Studies have shown that the cost of medication non-compliance in the U.S. healthcare system can be as high as \$400 billion annually when patients don't take their medications correctly. That figure includes the cost of readmissions, ER trips, additional doctor visits, and even missed days of work because someone didn't take their medication properly.

"If you could save our healthcare system \$400 billion a year, you're on to something," says Shawn Nairn, founder of ACORx Pharmacy, a concierge pharmacy program dedicated to improving patient outcomes through enhanced compliance and ultimately, reducing the overall cost of care. "If you want to reduce people going to the hospital, going to the emergency rooms, going to nursing homes, then medication compliance is absolutely the first place to start. If you improve there, everything else will automatically improve."

Nairn's company, ACORx, addresses this problem by replacing the traditional Sunday-through-Saturday pill cases. Instead of making patients or their loved ones responsible for sorting their own medications or organize pill bottles—ACORx manages this process for them through its Medication Adherence Packaging (MAP). This packaging clearly organizes multiple medications in an easy-to-follow format, providing instant visual reinforcement of what medications to take and when.

There are several benefits, explains Nairn. First, the MAPs are filled and refilled by a pharmacist, not the patient, spouse, or other family member. This eliminates possibility of patient or caregiver errors.

"Secondly, we deliver it directly to the patient," says Nairn. "Not only is the medication in the packaging correctly, which is often a problem, but it also solves the problem of transportation when people can't get to the pharmacy. We're solving at least two problems for people, along with a certain comfort level that their medications are packed and organized and set up for them to be a success with managing their medications."

Few brick and mortar companies in the industry are following the ACORx model, notes Nairn. While there are many online pharmacies in the marketplace, he points out that one advantage is that ACORx's delivery drivers are trained to work with patients. So they are cognizant of signals, symptoms and signs that they need to convey back to management.

"For example, they may tell us that a certain patient didn't look well today," says Nairn. "Or that a patient still had all of her medications on her table from last month meaning that she didn't take them. So now I can call the patient, family member or caregiver to let them know. We train our delivery drivers to be aware of these concerns."

Under the current COVID-19 rules, ACORx is using no contact



Shawn Nairn

delivery. Its delivery drivers will phone the patient when they arrive to their residence to let them know they are there but to stay in the house. They will leave the medication package by the front door, ring the doorbell, and then leave.

"A minute later, the patient can come out and grab the medication," says Nairn. "It's literally no contact while we're trying to protect our drivers and trying to protect these patients in these ever-so-complicated times that we're dealing with."

Medication compliance is critical to healthy, successful, and productive people, stresses Nairn. Not taking your medication or taking it when you want can be harmful to patients. The trickle down effect is harmful to the healthcare system.

"Improving a patient's medication compliance keeps them healthy longer and keeps them living at home longer," says Nairn, adding that patients only pay their copay. "Those are the only charges that you have to pay us. Your medication review, your delivery, your refill requests, and everything we do for you is free."



For more information, visit www.acorxpharmacy.com.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA SPECIALISTS: *Continued from previous page*

a lot of relief with their pain."

Many people today, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, are also seeking help for their severe anxiety.

"There are compounds in the marijuana plant that help patients with severe anxiety and help us with pain," Nurse Shelly explains. "It's helping our veterans with PTSD. Also, among children who have epilepsy, we're seeing them have a great decrease in the

amount of seizures they're having."

While Medical Marijuana Specialists does not dispense medical marijuana, they have a comprehensive list of resource dispensaries on their website.

"I highly recommended to each patient sit and have a pharmacist consult when it's their first time visiting a dispensary," says Nurse Shelly. "Speak with the pharmacist about your diagnosis and

symptoms, and let that pharmacist recommend a strain and a product that they believe will help you with their conditions."

During the current COVID-19 crisis, Medical Marijuana Specialists is seeing patients via telemedicine, from 9am-9pm every day. In addition, Nurse Shelly hosts a weekly series, "Ask Nurse Shelly LIVE" every Thursday at 1pm for a live Zoom meeting, where people can tune in

to hear local leaders, experts and patients discuss cannabis and get their questions answered.

"It's yet another way for us to educate our patients and other people in the community," says Nurse Shelly.



For more information, visit www.getyouridcard.com. For Ask Nurse Shelly LIVE, visit www.getyouridcard.com/ask-nurse-shelly/.

Community Options, Inc

Supporting People with Disabilities

By Kevin Brown

A fulfilling job and a decent place to live are often taken for granted. For those with intellectual disabilities, employment and housing markets can be impossible to navigate, putting jobs and housing out of reach.

Community Options, Inc., a national non-profit with offices in four western Pennsylvania counties, seeks to break down those barriers to help people with intellectual disabilities find meaningful employment and clean, safe housing.

“That’s a pretty large array of services when you say employment and housing,” says Bridget Haney, regional director for Community Options in western Pennsylvania. “Services range from independent



Bridget Haney, Regional Director, Community Options



Connor Shrum, Giant Eagle employee and Community Options success story.



Jeremy and Donnie, Community Options residents in Peters Township.

living to small, single family homes where we provide staff around the clock.”

“Once we have an individual who is referred for services, we find out where in the county they want to live and that’s where we will look for a home,” Bridget explains. “We either buy homes - we own many of our homes - or we will lease a home.”

“Housing can range from an apartment where we help people to live independently with direct care staff to drop in and help them with budgeting, groceries, etc. They are very independent and pay all their own bills,” says Bridget. “We also have single family homes where individuals have 24/7, 365-day staff to help them.”

In western Pennsylvania, Com-

munity Options has offices in Butler, Greensburg, Pittsburgh and Washington. They operate 57 homes and support 97 people in those homes. That support comes from more than 400 direct care professionals who provide a variety of services.

“Our direct care professionals help with cooking, cleaning or
Continued on following page



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Community Options, Inc. is a national non-profit agency providing services to individuals with disabilities in 10 states.



Community Options Washington County staff.

Continued from previous page

laundry, grocery shopping, getting to and from medical appointments, dental appointments, work - whatever those individuals in the home need support with - administering medications, making sure they have healthy meals, those sorts of things," Bridget notes.

"We also have five maintenance personnel in the region to do whatever maintenance needs to be done in the homes," she says.

The other side of Community Options' mission is to find suitable daily activities for people with disabilities. Depending on the individual's interests, abilities and skills, that comes in the form of community services or competitive employment.

"We have many individuals involved in community services. These are folks who don't want competitive employment, but are busy every day doing something of interest to them. Some go to the gym and work out, some volunteer, and some do recreational activities," Bridget notes. Community Options currently has about 60 people enrolled in community services.

"We also have people working in competitive employment positions and we provide job coaching and on-site support to those individuals. Typically, our individuals say 'I want to get a job at such-and-such a place' and that's where the job coach will help them fill out their application and get ready

for the interview. It's driven by the interests of the person," she says.

Those in competitive employment earn minimum wage or above. "We will not place anyone into employment for less than or at least minimum wage or higher," Bridget says. The pandemic has reduced the number of people in competitive employment, but 15 individuals are still employed.

Connor Shrum is a Community Options success story. Connor, 22, recently started a new job with Giant Eagle in Peters Township. "He wanted to work during the pandemic, to give back and really do something meaningful. He started working at Giant Eagle in March and works about 20 hours a week, bringing the carts in, doing the cart organizing, and cleaning the carts, which is one of those jobs directly in the line of COVID-19," Bridget says. "That is a huge success story for us."

If you are interested in the work that Community Options does in the community, there are a number of ways to help, according to Bridget.

"Volunteers can have a huge impact on the services we provide," Bridget says. "Our Business Advisory Council meets quarterly and is made up of professionals who help us find employment, plan special events like our Cupid's Chase fundraiser, plan employee appreciation campaigns and many other things. We also partner with local businesses that are interested in providing job training experiences.

> Like most non-profits, **Community Options** has been affected by the pandemic and is working with limited resources. Donations from the public are welcome and can be made online by visiting www.comop.org and clicking on the "Get Involved" tab. Donors, volunteers and those looking for more information about Community Options' services can also contact Bridget directly by phone at (724) 825-4408 or by email at bridget.haney@comop.org.



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Independent Mobility

You Don't Have to Struggle with Stairs: Independent Mobility Has the Solution for You

By Nancy Kennedy

"Having a stair glide installed changed my life. I used to dread having to go up and down the stairs, because it made me so tired. I was afraid that I might have to move and I didn't want to do that; this has been my home for 40 years. Why did I wait so long?" - Virginia, age 84

"I wish we had done it sooner! The chair lift has made life much easier for my parents. They not only use it to go up and down the stairs, but also to transport heavy items like the laundry basket. The lift has been a life-saver and has enabled Mom and Dad to stay at home rather than move to assisted living. It's the best decision we ever made." - Lauren, daughter of aging parents

The above quotes are the testimony of highly satisfied customers of Independent Mobility, LLC, a family owned and operated company that has been a leading provider of chair lifts and elevators throughout the region for 32 years. Independent Mobility's services enable people to remain in their homes when stairs have become an obstacle or safety hazard. According to owner Sylvester Lapinski, "Stair glides can keep you in your home instead of a facility, and that's what people want. No one should have to give up their home because of difficulty navigating the



stairs. A chair glide is the solution and we can install exactly the right one for your needs. We love what we do because our services improve people's lives."

For older adults, being able to "age-in-place" in their own homes versus moving to a facility can often be a matter of a single factor. All too often, that factor is a mobility issue such as being able to climb stairs. Falling on the stairs can lead to serious injuries including fractures or head injuries, and may lead to an emergency hospital admission and disability. Fortunately, modifications can be made to adapt the home to the person's needs, helping them maintain independence, health and safety.

With decades of experience, Mr. Lapinski and his team of technicians can skillfully and efficiently install a stair glide in even the most challenging settings. "We do complex lifts that other companies shy away from," he explains. "People call us when they have tried another company and failed to get a good result. We're the problem solvers. In western Pennsylvania, many homes have steep stairs or even multiple sets of stairs, and single story ranch homes are hard to find. A chair lift solves the problem."

Independent Mobility clearly has staying power, and as the senior population in this region surges, they are in greater demand than ever. "More and more people are choosing to do this," Mr. Lapinski explains. "They hear about us through word-of-mouth, from a neighbor or a friend, and they realize it will benefit them to have one in their home." Independent Mobility also installs elevators and has placed them in over 75 churches throughout western Pennsylvania.

Some people choose to have a lift between the first and second floors, while others have one installed on the basement stairs. "It's a very individualized thing. There's no 'one size fits all' in this," Mr. Lapinski says. The process is streamlined. Simply call to make an appointment; a team will come to your home to evaluate the stairs and take measurements. The lift will then be installed within three days. The only exception is when there is a curved staircase, with a landing - that may take a bit longer. Chair lifts can be rented for short term use, such as a post-operative recovery period, or for when an older relative is visiting. Gently used lifts are available at discounted prices and are thoroughly evaluated for safety. IM has "Try It before You Buy It" guarantee, meaning that they will install your chairlift for a trial. If you don't like it, they will remove the device, at no charge.

The benefits are tremendous. A chairlift facilitates the activities of daily living, reduces wear and tear on joints, makes post-operative recovery easier, reduces the need for household help, and greatly enhances personal safety. Don't wait until you have fallen to consider a chair lift!

The benefits are tremendous. A chairlift facilitates the activities of daily living, reduces wear and tear on joints, makes post-operative recovery easier, reduces the need for household help, and greatly enhances personal safety. Don't wait until you have fallen to consider a chair lift!



Sylvester Lapinski

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Camp Laugh-A-Lot for Children and Adults With A Disability

Summer camp is a quintessential summer experience, and for many children, the choices are quite numerous. However, for parents of children with special needs, finding a summer camp that can fully (and safely) welcome their child can be a challenge. And finding a camp that also welcomes adults with special needs is usually impossible.

Enter Camp Laugh-A-Lot, an inclusive day camp for children and adults with developmental, intellectual and physical disabilities, and mental health challenges. Arc Human Services, a nonprofit provider of programs and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illness across 12 southwestern Pennsylvania counties, has been hosting Camp Laugh-A-Lot since 1999. Camp takes place twice each year; a seven-week summer camp plus a one-week winter camp during the school break. Participants must be at least five years old; there is no upper age limit.

Camp Laugh-A-Lot, which includes a wide variety of structured, supervised activities, invites campers to participate in arts and crafts, music, games, swimming, parties, and field trips. The activities provide fun, socialization, and education to help participants develop and maintain life skills and social skills, which can be lost over the summer when school is out. Campers especially love the outings to museums, the zoo, and other local attractions.

Going to camp is a traditional American experience that provides fun along with valuable opportunities to learn new things and make friends. According to Ben Zyra, "Camp Laugh-A-Lot is an incredible amount of fun but also helps campers build their confidence, social skills, and self-esteem." Low staff to camper ratios also provide the time and attention



Register today to attend Camp Laugh-A-Lot

The registration fee covers all activities, swimming, outings, and lunch. Financial assistance is available. To register for Camp Laugh-A-Lot, go to www.archumanservices.org/camp-laughalot for the online link or to download the pdf of our camp registration form.

To contact Ben Zyra, camp director, call (724) 222-6960 ext. 225, or email zyra.ben@archumanservices.org.

required to ensure safety and inclusion for all.

Camp Laugh-A-Lot welcomes about 50 participants each week and for the first time will expand to a second location. The Washington, PA camp takes place at the Vernon C. Neal Sportsplex, an indoor recreation center, and the new camp location will be the Cool Springs Sports Complex in Bethel Park. The 2020 summer camp season begins in late June and ends in early August with a carnival that is open to the entire community.



For more information about **Arc Human Services** or **Camp Laugh-A-Lot**, visit www.archumanservices.org.



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LIVE-IN DISABILITY SOLUTIONS

Kimberly Gamble on Live-In Disability Solutions

Live-In Disability Solutions provides in-home services to individuals with intellectual disability who are residing in Allegheny County. It is one of two local companies founded and operated by Adrienne Moon, RN, to provide greatly needed home health care and other services to clients who are in need of care, support and assistance in order to continue living in their homes with as much independence and comfort as possible.

Kimberly Gamble, B.S., recently became the agency's Director of Non-Licensed Services for clients with intellectual developmental disabilities, or IDD. With a degree in Rehabilitation Services from Penn State, and over 20 years of experience working with intellectually disabled individuals of all ages, Kim brings a wealth of expertise and heartfelt passion to her new role and is eager to promote growth – growth for the agency, growth for the clients and families, and growth for the staff. "Our primary role is to provide a voice for those who have been voiceless," she says, "and to help them to live their best possible life."



What is the mission of Live-In Disability Solutions?

Our name expresses our mission: we want to help our clients be able to continue to "live in" their homes with their families for as long as possible, with the supports they need. Our range of services place a strong safety net underneath each client. The type and the level of services are very individualized and are determined by what is personally important to the client. Our job is to make it work.

What types of services does Live-In Disability Solutions provide?

We provide three levels of services: Homemaker Services, Companion Services, and Home and Community Support Services. Homemaker services include basic home care such as housecleaning, laundry, meal preparation and general household activities to keep the home clean, safe and comfortable. Companion services are for those 18 and older who reside in a private home and need direct help or supervision. Companions help the client with personal grooming, household care, ambulation, recreation and other services to ensure their well-being and safety. In-Home and Community Support is a direct service to assist clients to gain and improve the skills needed to live in the community with more independence and to participate. The support includes guidance in home management, mobility and transportation, use of community resources and socialization.

Who are the providers of these services?

We hire direct services professionals, also known as DSPs. We seek providers who have experience, good communication skills, and openness to learning. We provide a lot of ongoing training so that our staff

members have the tools they need to succeed. This is hands-on work and the DSPs are constantly guiding, prompting and teaching. They should be good team workers because we must have shared goals and help each other. And most importantly, to me, they must be people who exhibit kindness towards others. Kindness is the quality that I most value in myself and others.

Are there other unmet needs that Live-In Disability Solutions addresses?

Yes. There's a tremendous need for respite services. Caregivers may need a break, or there may be a family crisis or medical situation for the family. Respite services are greatly needed. We are developing a new program called Life Sharing, which will be for clients who want to live in a family environment but not in a group home. They will live with a family in a permanent arrangement. We hope these new services will be available soon.

What is the most satisfying aspect of your work?

I get to witness the clients growing in confidence and self-esteem, and to see them learning and gaining skills. I get to see their dreams coming true, and that is priceless. Knowing that I helped make that happen is the best reward.

> Families, professionals and others who would like to make a referral or know more about **Live-In Disability Solutions** can visit www.liveindisabilitysolutions.org or call (412) 704-5162.




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Duquesne University School of Nursing

At Duquesne University, we are proud to witness the compassion and bravery exhibited by nurses throughout the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses have always been at the forefront in disaster preparedness and this time in our history is no different. Fueled by a deep sense of duty to improve health and preserve life, nurses are spending more time with patients than any other health care provider.

As we witness a growing demand not only for registered nurses, but also for health care leaders who can fill the needs for clinical care and executive positions, we are taking action. This fall, Duquesne's number of master's-degree nurse practitioner tracks will double and a new DNP in Executive Nurse Leadership and Health Care Management track will launch with the goal for seasoned nurses to acquire new knowledge and skills to advance their careers into leadership positions. Nurses will gain an understanding of how business, human resources and finance fit together to improve patient outcomes, and how they can make an impact as nurse leaders. This degree can be pursued through either a Post-Bachelor's or a Post-Master's track.

At the Duquesne University School of Nursing, where we offer all graduate programs online, we are also adding Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, and Executive Nurse Leadership and Health Care Management tracks to



our current MSN offerings, which include Family Nurse Practitioner, Forensic Nursing, and Nurse Education and Faculty Role.

The career opportunities that the nursing field offers is vast which is why Duquesne's programs have been designed to equip future nurses with the extensive skills and knowledge they need to thrive in today's health care environment. Our graduates become health care leaders who will drive change and improve patient care with a holistic, culturally sensitive approach. In addition to our specialized leadership tracks, a post-master's certificate in Executive Nurse Leadership and Health Care Management will also be offered.

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to providing the kind of personalized attention found at smaller schools but in a high-tech learning environment typical of larger institutions.

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As the founders of the company that eventually became VITAS Healthcare, Esther and Hugh were developing a model of care called “hospice” to help patients near the end of life find comfort and dignity. Over more than four decades, VITAS spread the hospice model across the country and lobbied for legislation that safeguards patients’ access to their preferred care near life’s end.

Today, VITAS is the nation’s leading provider of end-of-life care, serving over 19,000 patients every day. VITAS first began providing care in Western Pennsylvania in 2005, and today cares for more than 200 patients and their families daily.

Hospice has grown since the late 1970s, yet its methods and practices are often mysterious to those who haven’t experienced them firsthand.

This arm’s-length approach to the end of life has led to some misconceptions about the care that surrounds it. Our goal is to dispel the myths with facts and hope:

- Hospice is not a place. It’s a model of comfort-focused care, usually provided in a patient’s home or preferred setting (e.g., nursing home or assisted living facility).
- Choosing hospice does not mean giving up; in fact, studies suggest that hospice patients live longer, higher-quality lives than patients who continue curative treatment until death.
- And hospice does not rely on high-dose narcotics to dull patients’ senses. While pain-relieving drugs might be prescribed to ease symptoms



as needed, VITAS offers integrative services such as music, massage and art therapy to provide relief with greater awareness and fewer side effects.

VITAS proudly offers services and treatments that other hospices cannot or do not. From veteran-focused programs to pet visits from our beloved Paw Pals®, VITAS supports patients on emotional, social and spiritual levels while providing compassionate clinical care.

Music therapy is especially popular with our patients and families. Licensed music therapists promote calm, pain relief and memory recall through evidence-based interventions such as collaborative performances, singing, active listening, writing and movement.

Even patients who struggle to articulate feelings or communicate verbally can benefit from the presence and talents of a guitar-strumming or keyboard-playing music therapist. Unresponsive patients often “light up” at a favorite song or clap to the rhythm of a new tune.

These unique professionals supplement the comfort-focused care delivered by our hospice teams, each comprising a physician, nurse, hospice aide, social worker, chaplain, volunteer and bereavement specialist. Hospice teams also support patients’ families and day-to-day caregivers.

For everyone at VITAS, from admissions to marketing, from home care to our talented music therapists, hospice is more than a job—it’s a calling. And for those of us in Pennsylvania, it’s our calling—and our honor—to help you or your loved one.



For more information about end-of-life care services, call VITAS Healthcare at (866) 759-6695 or visit VITAS.com.

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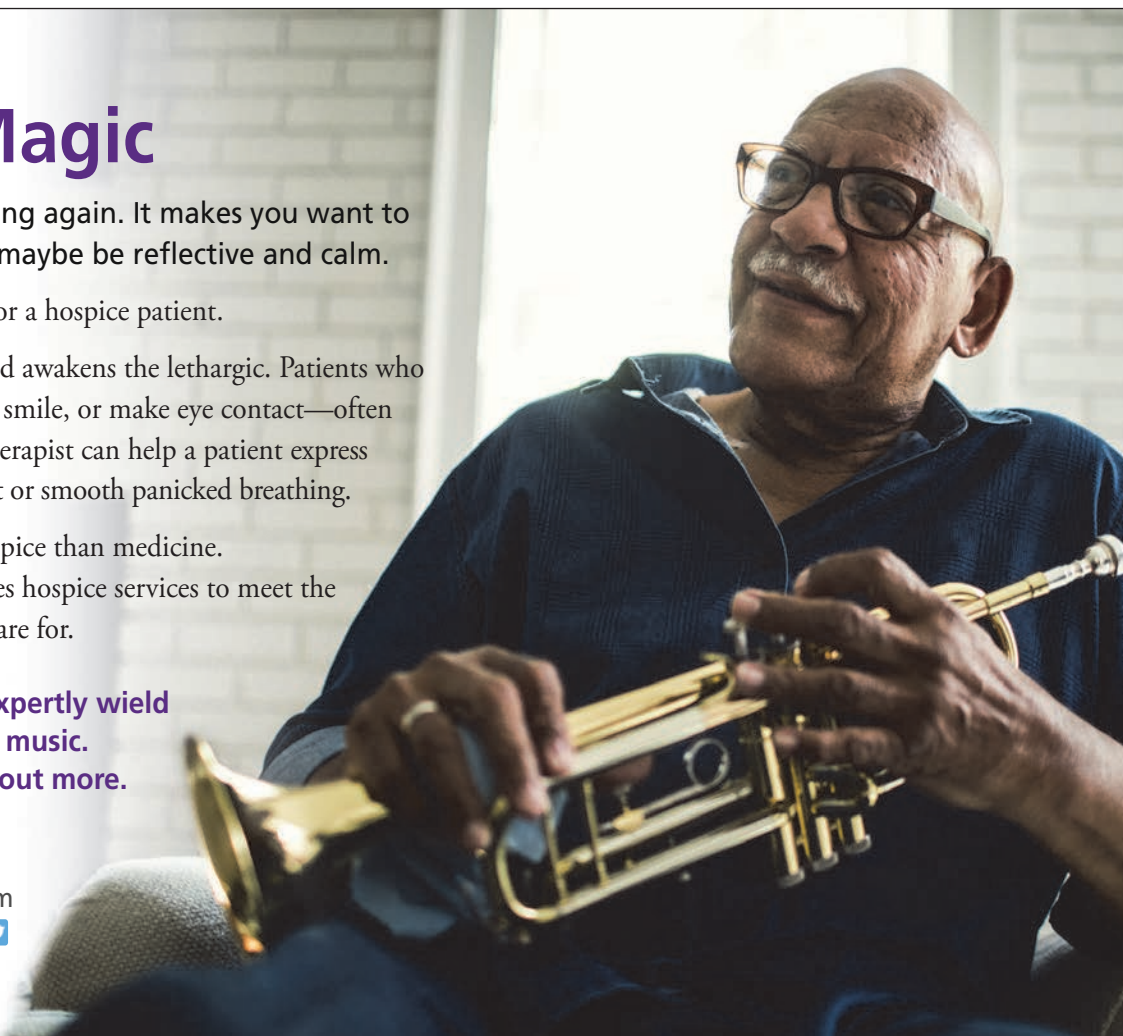
Music soothes the agitated and awakens the lethargic. Patients who can no longer remember—or smile, or make eye contact—often respond to music. A music therapist can help a patient express feelings, slow a rapid heartbeat or smooth panicked breathing.

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A Touching Hospice Wedding, Thanks to a Dedicated Hospice Team

By Evalisa McClure, VITAS® Healthcare

One of the underlying considerations for patients and families who choose hospice care for a seriously ill loved one is time—time for comfort, closure and quality of life in the time that remains.

And sometimes, the press of time inspires hospice care teams to go above and beyond their everyday roles to make patients' and families' wishes come true, even if the wish involves a last-minute wedding for a VITAS® Healthcare patient.

It began on a Wednesday, when patient Tracy was admitted to hospice. Later that afternoon, her daughter Jessica approached our social worker, Leigh Ann, with an unusual request: Would it be possible to hold her wedding, originally scheduled two months out, on Sunday, three days away? She wanted her mother to hear her say "I do" to Jacob, her fiancé.

"Trust Me, Honey. We Can Get It Done."

Leigh Anne, an experienced hospice social worker, knew that Tracy's health was precarious and that she might not survive until Sunday. She suggested a Friday wedding instead with these reassuring words: "Trust me, honey. We can get it done. It will be a team effort."

A Team Effort

Within 24 hours and with the full hospice team's support:

- Leigh Anne worked until 2 a.m. at home that night, baking a three-tier, buttercream-frosted wedding cake.



- The nursing caregivers, chaplain and other staff joined forces to hang wedding decorations and crepe paper.
- A scrumptious wedding buffet was chef-prepared for the family and guests.
- A registered nurse volunteered her day off to capture touching wedding photos.
- A local funeral home donated flowers and the county judge waived the three-day waiting period for a marriage license.

On Thursday, with Tracy's mother as officiant and family members gathered around, Jessica and Jacob sealed their vows with a kiss as Tracy watched from her bed.

"It turned out to be a very nice day," Leigh Anne says. "There wasn't a dry eye in the house."

Tracy died peacefully three days later.

"Without a doubt, this is the most gratifying job you'll ever have, even in the midst of all this sadness," says Leigh Anne of her dedication to patients, families and the hospice profession.

"When you do something for someone with no expectation that they have to do anything in return, it's a very gratifying feeling."



> Evalisa McClure is general manager of VITAS Healthcare in Pittsburgh. For more information about end-of-life care options, call VITAS Healthcare at (866) 759-6695 or visit VITAS.com.

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Why is Good Mental and Emotional Health Good for Caregivers?

by Lisa Story, Founder and Executive Director, Hope Grows

Good emotional and mental health has been well documented over the years as being vital to our overall health. A healthy mind and emotional balance help to regulate our thoughts and feelings, which results in healthy behaviors. When we identify our emotions, we can cope more effectively and become better able to adapt to the changes that occur throughout the caregiving journey.

Connecting to our emotions is not only good, but vital, in maintaining a healthy perspective while providing care. If body and soul are not working well, the mind suffers. If the mind and soul are not working well, the body suffers, and so on.

Caregivers are exhausted from the overwhelming, strenuous work they do on a daily basis. Because of the endless hours of caring for a loved one, self-care can become depleted. At this point, caregivers can feel alone, forgotten, and stressed.

Respite and self-care can alleviate some of the stresses that occur when caregiving. Self-care is the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health, particularly during periods of stress, remembering that we deserve a moment to remember that we are important, too.

By connecting to the natural world, becoming mindful about something in nature, we can reduce stress. Nature becomes a place of connection where nothing is being asked of us. During that connection, we are able to let go of control and just be in the moment of something as spectacular as a blue sky, a tree, a bird in flight, and/or yes, even the change of seasons and temperatures.

Taking a walk outside, taking in some deep breaths, and spending time in nature is good for us.

➤ For additional information on caregiver support: contact **Hope Grows** at (412) 369-4673, info@hopegrows.net, or visit www.hopegrows.net

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One year ago, we had never heard the term, ‘novel coronavirus-19.’ Now, we cannot go a day without hearing or reading about the virus that caused the current global pandemic. The effects of the virus have been profound physically, economically, and emotionally.

Among the guidelines prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and reinforced by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf is social distancing – keeping a six-foot physical distance between you and any other person. Although everyone understands the importance of social distancing in the current environment, it has the potential to create issues of isolation and boredom, regardless of an individual’s age or location.

We at Presbyterian Senior Care Network are pleased to share with you some ideas and resources to help you stay active physically and emotionally during this trying time. One year ago, we had never heard the term, ‘novel coronavirus-19.’ Now, we cannot go a day without hearing or reading about the virus that caused the current global pandemic. The effects of the virus have been profound physically, economically, and emotionally.

How to Stay Active

We at Presbyterian Senior Care Network are pleased to share with you some ideas and resources to help you stay active physically and emotionally during this trying time.

- Technology platforms like FaceTime and Zoom create opportunities for real-time discussions. Consider some of these ways to break the boredom:

- FaceTime requires only a smart phone. It provides a one-on-one opportunity for a phone call during which both parties can see each other. Think creatively about how you might make that call fun. Take your phone outside and show your FaceTime friend your garden.
- Have you done online shopping the past few weeks? If so, show your purchases to your friend.

- You can access Zoom on your computer or tablet using an internet connection and a free application that you can access either through the App Store (if you have an Apple iPhone) or Google Play for any other brand of smart phone. Multiple people can be on Zoom at the same time and everyone can see each other. Schedule a time one day a week when your kids, grandkids or friends ‘meet.’ In addition to catching up, devote one of the calls to having dinner together.

You can even take it a step further and coordinate your meal so that everyone can show how they prepared that favorite family recipe.

- Cable and satellite TV services often provide programming that can help you to move a little more. Explore offerings, and you likely will discover classes for dance, yoga, meditation, and in-home activities for all levels of fitness.

- For a comprehensive list of in-home activities, visit the website srcare.org/resident-resources. There you’ll find links to a wide variety of activities, like watching the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium web cams, listening to the Pittsburgh Symphony radio, and touring via Heinz History Center’s History at Home programming.

At Presbyterian SeniorCare Network, keeping older adults engaged and vital is an essential part of our mission. It’s a mission that extends beyond our walls and our campuses and into the homes and hearts of everyone in our community.



For more information, visit www.srcare.org or call (412) 828-5600.

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Service Coordinator Making Life 'A Lot Easier' for Seniors at Beechtree Commons

By Lois Thomson

Lindsay Glazer joined Beechtree Commons in Verona as the new service coordinator in February, bringing years of experience to the position. Beechtree Commons is part of National Church Residences, which is income-based senior housing.

The handicap-accessible community offers one-bedroom apartments, and Glazer said the seniors are basically able to do what they want – they are encouraged to have a lifestyle that remains the same as or similar to the one they had before they moved. "We don't want to be a nursing home. The residents have control over things in their own apartments. We want them to be as independent as possible, that's our main goal."

Glazer uses her background to help make that happen, saying, "My job is basically to make the life of the residents a lot easier, a lot more simple." That includes assisting seniors who need help with making appointments – whether with transportation or learning how to set up and use Access, or helping with such things as benefits, Social Security, or food stamps. "A lot of the seniors don't really have a support system, and that's how I can help."

Along with offering assistance to individuals, Glazer plans a variety of activities for the residents that focus on anything from health problems to safety issues. "We have people come in who talk about end-



of-life services, how you can set things up to make things a lot easier for families to deal with. We'll have a talk about how to handle diabetes so it can be more manageable. People come in and have a session about building safety, as well as keeping ourselves safe within the building. The police or paramedics will come in to talk about falls. There are programs involving different services regarding phones, hearing-aid devices – things I know seniors would care about."

Glazer came to Beechtree Commons with more than 10 years of experience in social services, three of those in service coordination. She

said overall the work is the same, it's just the community or population that's different – whether the mental health population or those with intellectual disabilities, or seniors.

However, despite her considerable experience, Glazer said she is still learning from some of the residents. "It's a delicate job. I'm a lot younger than they are, 31, and I have to realize what types of things are important to them, because they've lost control over some of them. They're teaching me and I appreciate that."

She added, "I'm thankful to be in this position to help people. I love this field because I love helping people who don't have advocacy to help themselves. I'm blessed to be able to do this."

➤ For more information, call (412) 798-5589, or visit www.nationalchurchresidences.org.



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Summer Youth Programs at the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center

By Kevin Brown

Summer will soon be here in Western Pennsylvania. The Upper St. Clair Community and Recreation Center (C&RC) in Boyce Mayview Park is ready bring people back together.

Parents will want to take note of the extensive youth programming offered at the C&RC including art, science, sports, swimming and camps.

"We do have adult and senior programs, but a significant number of our summertime programs are for children," says Melissa Mattucci Lindberg, M.S., Marketing/Membership Supervisor for the C&RC.

A sampling of the C&RC summer youth programming is listed below. To see a complete listing and to register for all programs, activities and events at the C&RC, visit their website at www.twpusc.org/crc/registration and click on the image of the 2020 Summer Program Guide. Registration is currently open.

"If you are interested in any of the programs, register as soon as possible," Melissa advises. "If we don't have enough enrollment a week or so prior to the start of a program, we may cancel the program. I strongly suggest that you register a minimum of two weeks ahead, if not sooner."

Enrichment Programs

Family Art in the Park

Take an hour to relax in Boyce Mayview Park, enjoy the surroundings and spend quality time together. Each evening features a different art project in which families can express their creativity together.

Babysitter Basics

This full-day course for ages 11-13 covers skills necessary to provide safe and responsible care for younger children. Kristine Locke, a certified American Red Cross instructor, will teach basic rules, first aid and safety, handling emergencies, characteristics of children by age, age-appropriate activities, and business development skills.

Earth and Space Lab

Taught by experts from EcoExplorers, participants in grades 1-6 will take on the role of space explorers, discovering planets, stars, black holes, light, and space-time through hands-on activities, games, labs and crafts.

"We'll also explore our own little corner of planet earth with guided tours of our local flora and fauna in Boyce Mayview Park," Melissa notes.

Held August 10-14, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to noon each day. \$190 for members and \$195 for non-members. All materials included.

Red Hot Robots II Camp

Instructors from Mad Science conduct this camp for kids in grades 3-6 to let them experiment with sound-sensing robots, line-tracking robots, amphibious robots, and robots that can even play soccer. They build their very own working robot to take home.

"This program is intended for children who have completed grades 2-5, and who have experience building a robot from a kit," Melissa says.

Held July 6-10, Monday through Friday, from 1 to 4 p.m. \$185 for members and \$195 for non-members. Includes materials for assembly of robot.

Dance Explorations

Children ages 3-4 and 5-7 will enjoy every minute moving to music, learning rhythm, and body discipline and awareness. Combining ballet, jazz, and tumbling, our fun classes led by the staff of Janet Hays and Company will develop positive self-esteem and a desire to learn more.

Bicycling

Allow our highly skilled Bicycle Safety Instructors to teach you all facets of safe bicycle operation and trail riding. Parent participation in the program is encouraged for children ages 5 and up, so grab a lawn chair and your cell phone to capture these truly magical moments.

Sports Programs

Mini Kicks Soccer

Children ages 4-7 will cover the basic skills of soccer, such as passing, dribbling, and shooting. Each day, a new move and an aspect of sportsmanship will be presented to the players. Players will be encouraged to be supportive teammates and expand upon their soccer knowledge. Please bring a snack and water bottle.



Kids in the Kitchen make yummy treats.

Mini Hoops Basketball

Staff will provide instruction and fun for campers in grades 1-3 with an emphasis on fundamental skills and appropriate age level play. During the week, players will go through stations and drills focusing on different facets of the game. Participants will also get a chance to compete in games and mini competitions.



An Art Camp student shows off his work.

Aquatics Programs and Events

American Red Cross Swim Lessons

Swimming lessons are available year-round for parent and child, preschool, youth, and adult. See the online recreation guide for more information.

Lifeguard Courses

American Red Cross lifeguard certification and instructor courses are also available at the C&RC. See the online recreation guide for more information.



Participants in the DAP Strength and Conditioning program practice an exercise.

Fitness Programs and Events

DAP Strength & Conditioning

This six-week program teaches young athletes, ages 13-17, the foundations of athleticism through a fun, motivating and dynamic training environment focusing on injury prevention, developing agility, power, core strength, speed, and improved flexibility. More information will be available in June.

Mini DAP Ages 8-12

Based on the training principles of D.A.P. (Dignity and Pride), Mini D.A.P. is suited for children, ages 8-11, seeking to improve their overall athleticism.



Don't forget to register early! For more information and to register for all programs, activities and events at the C&RC, visit their website at www.twpusc.org/crc/registration and click on the image of the 2020 Summer Program Guide. You can also reach the C&RC at (412) 221-1099.

Getting to the Point of Acupuncture

One in a Series of Columns on Integrative Health and Medicine

By Nick Jacobs

Let me get right to the, uh, point, on acupuncture: while this practice has been shown to be a safe, effective method to reduce pain, hasten healing and even kick some nasty habit for many people, it remains an under-used form of medical treatment.

Despite countless studies regarding its effectiveness, acupuncture remains shrouded in mystery for many Americans, who often view this key component of traditional Chinese medicine as too antiquated, too painful, too simple or too mysterious to offer any real or long-term positive health improvements.

Yet nothing could be further from the truth. While acupuncture might not prove effective for everyone, it is providing pain relief and other benefits for an increasing number of individuals. In fact, more than 19,000 papers have been written about the efficacy or effectiveness of acupuncture.

In a recent *Time Magazine* article titled “The Mystery of Acupuncture,” author Jeffrey Kluger said, “The World Health Organization has declared acupuncture a useful adjunct for more than 50 medical conditions, including chronic stress.”

Kluger also said that the National Institute of Health (NIH) agrees with this opinion and has endorsed acupuncture as a potential treatment for migraines, menstrual cramps, abdominal pain, tennis elbow, nausea from chemotherapy and more.

“The fact the Mayo and Cleveland Clinics have embraced acupuncture and groups like the AMA have gotten states to designate acupuncture as an essential health benefit is more than significant,” Kluger said. He added that more than 3.5 million adults and 80,000 children use acupuncture in the U.S. annually and that the military is using it for PTSD, pain disruption and an assortment of ailments, not the least of which is lower back pain.

As someone who once suffered regularly from bouts of lower back pain, I became alarmed when I saw statistics on lower back surgery

that were less than encouraging, showing the procedure as sometimes as low as 30 percent effective. For me, osteopathic manipulation, exercise, weight loss and, yes, acupuncture, have all been medical gifts that have worked beautifully for me over the years.

Possibly the most powerful potential use for acupuncture is in the treatment of addiction. Considering that more than 50 million Americans suffer from chronic pain, acupuncture is one possible alternative to OxyContin and other addictive pain drugs.

So why wouldn't someone suffering from debilitating or chronic pain give acupuncture a try?

For some, hesitation is caused by ignorance, exacerbated perhaps because someone—maybe even a medical professional—ridiculed the practice, perhaps even labeling it “woo-woo” medicine. Yet simply explained, traditional Chinese medicine describes acupuncture as a technique for balancing the flow of energy or life force thought to travel through the body's pathways, also called meridians. Very thin needles are inserted along these pathways to “rebalance” energy flow. Western practitioners see these points as places to stimulate nerves, muscles and connective tissue, perhaps with the added benefit of boosting a body's natural painkillers.

Or perhaps your hesitancy is more basic: the thought of little needles dotting your body like a pincushion sounds gross and painful. Yet this fear, while understandable to a degree, is overblown. The needles couldn't be any smaller or less noticeable. Patients most often report very little to no discomfort, especially when balanced against the pain relief they gained.

But what of any risks associated with acupuncture?

Any risks are minimized if you have a competent, certified acupuncture practitioner who uses sterile needles. Since one-time-use, disposable needles are now common practice, risk of infection is minimal and most common side effects include soreness, very minor bleeding or bruising.

As is true with many treatments, acupuncture might not prove effective for everyone. But given the potential it offers, why not give it a try?

In many articles and speeches, I often quote the book *Change or Die* by Alan Deutschman, who suggests many of us would simply prefer the latter rather than change. Sound unbelievable? Just consider that every day we are inundated with advertising, political narratives and scientific positions that encourage us to remain loyal, to continue to behave in a certain way, even though we should question if doing so is in our best interest.

I recall a conversation I had with a scientist who told me that hydrogenated fats were the biggest medical experiment perpetrated on mankind without our knowledge. Yes, it prolonged the shelf life of food. It also created an inflammatory disease that was harmful to half a million American annually.

So maybe, when it comes to our individual health, we need to be more open minded and willing to

try options that, while showing positive impacts, veer just a little from the usual path of suggested treatments.

The point is, acupuncture is a valid option to consider to relieve pain and encourage healing. Even if it's done incorrectly, it releases endorphins. And that's a good thing.

What have you got to lose by giving it a try?

> Nick Jacobs is a founder of the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine, former board member and officer of the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine and served on the Executive Committee of the Integrative Health Policy Consortium. Jacobs maintains a website, Healinghospitals.com.



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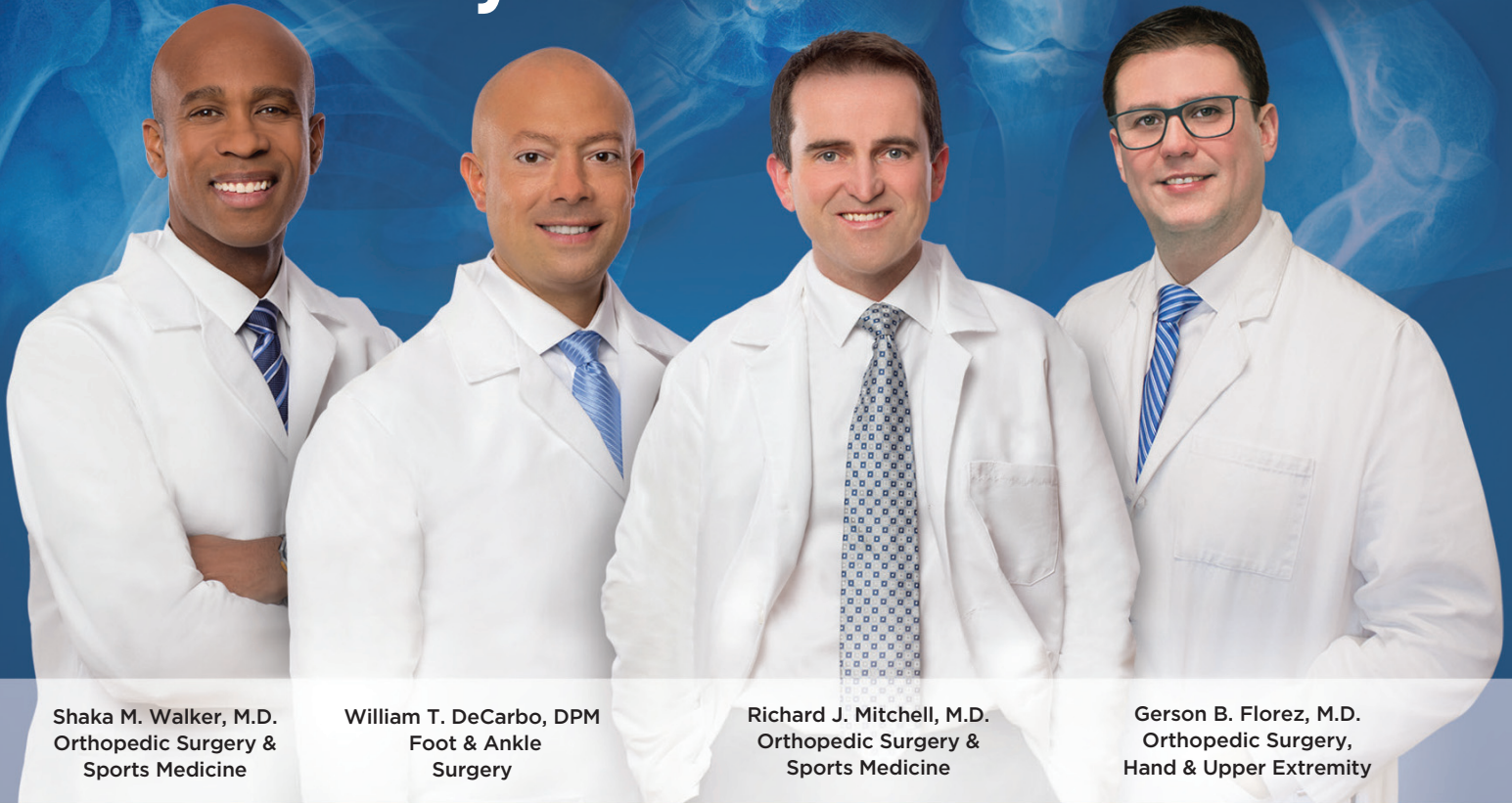
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