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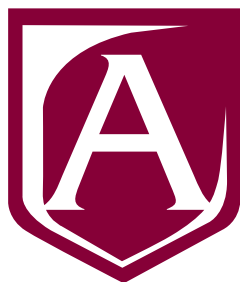
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Introducing

Foot and Ankle Specialist Dr. Ryan Lerch Looking Forward to Practicing at WHS

By Andrew Wilson

One of the new faces on the medical staff at Washington Health System (WHS), isn't really a stranger.

"I completed my residency at UPMC, which included yearly rotations through WHS," said Ryan J. Lerch, DPM. "I became very comfortable and enjoyed the environment at WHS."

Born and raised in Colorado and attending medical school in Arizona, Dr. Lerch grew up a long way from Washington County, but he identifies strongly with the work ethic in the region.

"Patients might be surprised to learn that I grew up in a very blue collar, very hard-working family," he said. "My first job was mowing lawns at 15, and I worked four jobs while I was an undergrad for living expenses and to pay for college."

Dr. Lerch worked hard in the classroom, too. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Colorado State University and was the valedictorian at Midwestern University-Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine, where he was a member of Pi Delta National Podiatry Honor Society. He also completed a fellowship at The Reconstructive Institute at Bellevue Hospital in Bellevue, Ohio, and earned numerous academic honors in college and medical school.

He was attracted to a career in medicine early on and originally thought he might practice emergency medicine or become some type of surgeon, but personal experience caused him to change his scope of practice.

"I was mostly drawn to orthopedics, but I had an interest in sports and sports-related injuries due to my personal sports-related injuries," he said. "Unfortunately, in college I was playing lacrosse and continued to have ankle sprains and ankle instability. That led me to be interested in the foot and ankle field."

Through this personal experience Dr. Lerch offers some simple advice for both the hardcore and weekend athletes who may experience foot or ankle pain.

"A lot of foot and ankle pathology can be treated with frequent and continued stretching," he recommends. "A tight calf muscle can be a driving force for multiple different pathologies frequently seen by foot and ankle surgeons."

Dr. Lerch is still active in sports. He runs and works out 5-6 times a week, as well as enjoying hiking, rock climbing, snowboarding, wakeboarding, and biking. As one might imagine, he puts a lot of thought into his footwear, particularly his running shoes. He says he runs in Brooks Levitate, but also recommends Hoka, Asics, Saucony, and New Balance. He says there are several things to pay close attention to when choosing running shoes. (See sidebar.)

Away from the office, Dr. Lerch enjoys hiking and camping with



Dr. Ryan J. Lerch

his fiancé and two dogs. When he can get away, he enjoys spending time at the cabin he, his brothers, and father built on Mount Trinchera Peak in Colorado about four hours south of Denver, near the New Mexico border.

"The elevation is about 10,900 feet," he said. "My brothers and I built it with our father as a vacation place. We are constantly continuing to upgrade it.

I went every other weekend growing up, but lately I only get there about once every couple of years."

In the office, he is dedicated to providing the best care for his patients.

"Most people tell me they are surprised I am a doctor actually," he said. "I think it's mostly because of my calm and welcoming demeanor, which tends to help with patient rapport. I appreciate the work ethic and community values in Washington County and look forward to serving the community."

> **Ryan J. Lerch, DPM**, is a podiatrist with **Washington Health System**. For more information or to schedule an appointment with him visit whs.org/footandankle or call (724) 222-5635.



How to Pick Running Shoes

"When picking a good pair of shoes there are a few things you want to check," he said. "First, the middle portion of the shoe that makes up the arch should not bend. If you can take your hands on the heel and on the toes and flex the shoe and the arch bends, it's not a great option. The toe box is okay to have some movement or flexion. Second, you should not be able to twist a shoe. It is important to have a stable midfoot portion. Lastly, a well-padded, secure heel counter is critical to avoid heel injuries."

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Rotator Cuff Injuries Can Get Better with Rest, But Need To Be Evaluated

By Andrew Wilson

James R. Mullen, M.D., knows all about rotator cuff tears from both sides of the examination table.

His first experience with a rotator cuff injury came while playing lacrosse in high school. He battled through the injury for multiple years prior to having it surgically repaired and eventually went on to play NCAA Division I football and lacrosse at Dartmouth College. Those injuries gave him a perspective that aids him as an orthopedic surgeon.

“I believe I can better relate to what my patients are going through because of my experiences receiving treatment for my own injuries,” said Dr. Mullen, who practices with St. Clair Medical Group and has treated many patients for rotator cuff injuries, both surgically and non-surgically.

While sports fans may be most familiar with rotator cuff injuries in baseball or tennis, it’s not just athletes that are susceptible. Dr. Mullen says anyone can find themselves with pain, weakness, limited range of motion, or some other type of instability around the shoulder.

The rotator cuff is a collection of four muscles and tendons which connect and stabilize the ball-shaped part of the humerus (upper arm) to the socket (scapula/shoulder blade). A rotator cuff injury usually occurs at the level of the tendons where they attach to the ball of the ball and socket joint. This bone/tendon relationship is critical in allowing for normal, pain-free movement.

“At times, a rotator cuff injury can result from a fall or some other traumatic injury. More often, however, patients can’t recall a specific event that caused the pain or decreased function,” he said. “Most commonly, people can get by without surgery after a rotator cuff injury. Especially if it’s not a complete tear – also known as a ‘full thickness tear’ – of one of the four tendons.”

While some people experience a partial or complete tear of one of the tendons that comprise the rotator cuff, a patient may also experience pain from inflammation due to repetitive activities. If that is the cause, a combination of rest, anti-inflammatory medication, therapy, and/or a steroid injection will usually alleviate the problem.

“I usually take a cue from the pain that my patient is feeling. A complete rotator cuff tear can become so painful that surgery is the only option,” Dr. Mullen said. “Once we put the cuff and tendons back in place, then the body has to heal, and that takes time. Generally speaking, recovery time is about three to six months.”

Although surgery is usually not required for most rotator cuff problems, Dr. Mullen says he regularly sees patients who wait too long to have the injury evaluated as “they believe that it can’t be a rotator cuff injury because they can still move their shoulder.” This is a mistake. “If you have pain that is not going away, it should be evaluated,” he said.



Dr. James R. Mullen



“The shoulder can move in many different directions, and the four muscles each have different roles to enable that movement,” he explains. “If you tear one or two tendons, then you may still have good movement, but, over time, these torn tendons may retract so far away from where they are supposed to be attached that the tear can become irreparable.”

Dr. Mullen has a simple rule of thumb on what to do if you’re experiencing shoulder pain.

“Shoulder pain that lasts for two to three months and isn’t responding to rest or anti-inflammatory medication needs to be checked,” he said. “If a tear is left alone for too long, it sometimes cannot be repaired surgically. The good news is, if you are within a year from the time you first had pain, it is

generally fixable. Nevertheless, even if the rotator cuff cannot be fixed, there are still excellent options, such as Superior Capsular Reconstruction or reverse total shoulder replacement.”

Assessing the injury is always the first step, but Dr. Mullen takes many factors into consideration before proceeding with surgery. If the patient has good function – meaning they can raise their arm above shoulder height and can do normal daily activities – surgery is usually not recommended and can be treated with rest, physical rehabilitation, and possibly injections. Poor function or even good function with a lot of pain may result in a different course of treatment. Even still, there are related questions to answer.

“I always take into consideration how independent the patient is and whether they have any help at home. If they are working, I consider how long will they be off work, and the impact that will have,” he said. “Most importantly, I want to tailor the treatment to the specific goals of the patient. Everything surrounding the surgical experience is important, not just what happens on the day of surgery.”

A Pittsburgh native, James R. Mullen, M.D., earned his bachelor’s degree with honors at Dartmouth College. He received his medical degree with honors from Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia and completed his orthopedic surgical residency at the Hofstra University-Northwell Health System in New York City where he served as administrative Chief Resident. Dr. Mullen also completed a fellowship in hand, upper extremity and microvascular surgery at New York University Medical Center. He has been published in numerous orthopedic textbooks and medical journals, and has presented research at national conferences. He is double board certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery and the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery – Certificate of Added Qualification in Surgery of the Hand.



Dr. James Mullen sees patients at **Dunlop Family Outpatient Center**, located at 1000 Bower Hill Road, Suite 7300. His office can be reached by calling **(412) 942-7262**.

How to Make Exercise a Standard for Your Entire Family



Katy Heslop

As a result of the pandemic, family health and wellness programs have not only become more critical than ever, they are also in very high demand. As a recreation professional with a background in health promotion, parks and recreation departments are best aligned to respond to this rising demand and to provide these important services to the communities they serve.

Over the past three years, the parks and recreation department in Upper St. Clair developed a variety of programs that help both parents and children come together to participate in fitness related activities. To name a few, **Strong MAMAs and BABEs** is a class that allows parents to bring their little ones to their exercise class. This program was designed to provide not only an exercise experience, but also a space where the "mamas" can have their children watch them as they participate in their fitness journeys while creating a learning environment for their children to teach the importance of exercise at a young age. We also created programs called **Mommy & Me Yoga** and **Dad & Me Boot Camp** where parents are able to bring their children and participate with them during a yoga and boot camp style exercise class. Both of these classes are designed for all ages so it can focus on the family unit as opposed to just the individual.

Educating youth on the importance of exercise and healthy life-

style habits is a standard that all families should strive for. A child who sees daily exercise and healthy habits in their parents' daily routine is more likely to participate in those behaviors as adults.

As a recreation department, it has become our mission to provide additional opportunities where families can utilize the parks and facilities to achieve their wellness goals together. Exercising does not need to be extreme. It does not need to be in a gym, in a training facility, or a field. Exercise can be in your living room, your backyard, or even in the grocery store. Really! The goal of exercise is to create a way in which you are exercising not only your body, but also your mind and all by making it fun for the entire family.

Examples of this can be going on a walk with your family post-dinner time, creating a backyard game of baseball or an obstacle course, or even making a scavenger hunt at the grocery store to see who can find the items on the list first.

As a parks and recreation professional, I would be remiss not to invite you and your family to one of your local parks. Parks are a terrific place to exercise; whether you decide to hike as a family, play tag on the playground, or participate in a group exercise class, something is out there for everyone!



> **Katy Heslop**, Fitness Supervisor, Township of Upper St. Clair, can be reached at (412) 221-1099 ext. 6190 or heslop@twpusc.org. For more information on programs at the Upper St Clair Recreation Center, visit https://www.twpusc.org/departments/recreation_and_leisure_services/community_recreation_center/about/fitness.php

Hypnosis: A Tool for Wellness

by Jan Lee, RN

Imagine a toolbox full of items that help you build or deconstruct; join or pull apart; create, adjust, improve, fix.

Now imagine a "mental tool" that helps you break down the barriers in your mind and creates a pathway to a healthier life. A super tool!

Hypnosis.

In very simple terms, hypnosis is a way to talk to your subconscious mind and tell it what to change. When you are hypnotized, you are relaxed, focused and suggestible to what you WANT to change. You are communicating with your deeper mind.

Let's take ANXIETY, a common issue, and use this super tool, HYPNOSIS.

A hypnotist guides you (using a soothing voice, repetition and imagery) into a relaxed focused state; helps you create a peaceful place that is so real it's as if you are there.

Imagine a field of flowers with a path that winds through it. The sway of the field; the breeze creates a rhythm with your breathing; the scent of your favorite flowers brings about good memories; the vivid colors of the field and flowers ..the reds, yellows and purples around you and perfect blue above pull you gently into this place. The sun warms you and reminds you it's always there even if hidden behind clouds. The sounds of nature



and wildlife smooth your rough edges.

You walk slowly through this field; skimming the tops of the long grasses with your fingertips; breathing it all in; letting all heaviness and fearfulness drift away; your eyes now shifting up to the sky, the vastness of it.

You are smiling. You are calm.

You found a new pathway. In your own mind.

Keep your toolbox close by.

Reach in and pull out "hypnosis." Change your mind. Change your life.

> **Jan Lee** is a local hypnotist. Contact her by email at janleehypnosis@gmail.com

Three Rivers Vein Center Offers Expert Vein Care in a Convenient Local Community Location

Varicose veins are more than a cosmetic problem. Vein disease, also known as chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), is an incredibly common and underdiagnosed disorder in the U.S.

The condition develops when the leg veins are no longer able to efficiently pump blood back toward the heart against gravity. The result is “pooling” of blood in the legs, particularly the lower legs. This pooling, which tends to worsen over time, eventually leads to physical signs such as spider or varicose veins on the skin surface as well as symptoms including leg heaviness, fatigue, cramps, swelling and restlessness. If left untreated, skin discoloration and open wounds on the lower legs may develop.

There are many reasons why venous insufficiency often goes unrecognized. The gradual onset may lead people to believe that their symptoms are a normal part of the aging process. Others may view spider and varicose veins as merely a cosmetic problem. It is important to remember that veins on the skin surface are often an indication of underlying venous disease that can lead to decreased mobility, skin infections and wounds that are difficult to heal. Also, venous disease may be present without any visible veins on the skin surface.

Your evaluation begins with an office consultation and ultrasound of the legs. Treatment, if needed, is also performed in the office without the need for sedation. Thanks to modern techniques, the days of



brutal vein stripping surgeries with hospitalization and long recoveries are over. Most treatment is completed in under an hour and patients are able to return to their normal activities immediately.

Treatment of symptomatic varicose veins often begins with catheter ablation of diseased veins. When performed by an experienced physician, these treatments can be nearly painless and will greatly improve quality of life. Greater than 90% of procedures are also covered by medical insurance and Medicare.



Three Rivers Vein Center, located on Vanadium Road in Scott Twp, is accepting new patients with lower extremity symptoms. For more information, call (412) 677-9842 or visit threeriversveincenter.com.

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We're Running Out Of Nurses. Here's What We Must Do

By Mary Ellen Smith Glasgow,
PhD, RN, ANEF, FAAN



The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent “Great Resignation” have been extremely hard on the nursing profession. A recent McKinsey & Company study projects dire nurse staffing issues in the next few years, as the U.S. could be short 450,000 nurses, or 20% of the nurses needed, by 2025. However, another severe, imminent shortage is not discussed widely, one that could make the problem even worse: a shortage of nursing faculty.

According to the National League for Nursing, 30% of nursing faculty active in 2015 were expected to retire by 2025. Not surprisingly, COVID-19 has accelerated retirements. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 8% of full-time faculty positions were already vacant in U.S nursing schools in 2021, resulting in thousands of nursing students being turned away each year.

The McKinsey report issued a stark warning: Nurses report planning to leave the workforce at higher rates compared to the past decade. If the U.S. does not have an adequate supply of well-pre-

pared nurses, the health of our citizens and communities will suffer

It generally takes four years to earn a nursing degree, so the U.S. is already behind. We cannot wait until 2025 to address these nursing issues or staffing will decline to dangerous levels. To meet the projected nurse shortfall, the U.S. will need to more than double the number of new graduates entering – and staying – in the nursing workforce every year for the next three consecutive years. The work of doubling the workforce is challenging enough, but

in the context of a significant nursing faculty shortage, it becomes unthinkable.

The pandemic has taken an additional toll on nursing faculty. They also bore the burden of COVID-19 – giving COVID tests and vaccines, doubling their workloads due to teaching additional clinical rotations with decreased numbers of students permitted to enter clinical sites, transitioning to online learning and testing, and instructing simulation labs by individual or small group appointment rather than by class, to limit transmission of the virus.

They also worried about their own personal health and that of their loved ones but carried on. They provided individual sessions to graduate students, working nurses who could not attend class due to work demands.

Amid the economic challenges confronting higher education, many nursing faculty have worked without merit raises or market adjustments during the last few years. The majority of nursing faculty earn less than their colleagues in practice and other professional disciplines in the academic sector.

We need to consider the level of education and clinical experience required of nursing faculty and compensate them accordingly and with a clear understanding of their earning potential in the health care setting if we want to attract nurses to academia and retain them. There must be a substantial investment in doctoral nursing education and nursing faculty positions from private and public sectors.

Nursing education accreditation bodies need to re-evaluate what they are asking of nursing faculty in terms of workload and actual impact. We need to simultaneously invest in undergraduate nursing education via scholarships and nationwide public relations campaigns about the benefits of a nursing career (in addition to the usual targeted recruitment efforts), as well as loan repayment and other work-related strategies to retain nurses once they complete their education.

The bottom line is clear: We know there are not enough nurses today, there is not enough faculty to meet the current demand and the situation will probably get worse in the coming years. Without swift action, and a major commitment from all stakeholders to rebuilding the nursing workforce, Americans will pay the price. We need to act now.

Mary Ellen Smith Glasgow's letter to the editor was originally published Aug. 25, 2022, in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Her previous letter, "It is Time to Invest in Nurses," was published Dec. 2, 2021.

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GENESIS PITTSBURGH: Fifty Years of Services for Pregnant Women *"We Are Here for Everyone"*

By Nancy Kennedy

For the past fifty years, Genesis Pittsburgh has been a sanctuary for pregnant women and their families. The social service organization provides women with a place to live, a place to learn and a place to find care and support along their journey to motherhood.

Like many caring enterprises that have been created over the years by women for women, Genesis Pittsburgh got its start in a kitchen. A home kitchen: a place where women gather, talk, solve problems and offer each other solace and support. A kitchen is the heart of a home, where women can usually find warmth, safety and sustenance for both body and soul.

Since 1973, women have been finding those things at Genesis Pittsburgh, through the organization's broad range of services for pregnant women and their families. Initially created out of concern for young women experiencing unplanned pregnancies, Genesis Pittsburgh began as a hotline to provide guidance and practical help. Often, these young women, of high school age and even younger, had nowhere to go and no resources to prepare them for motherhood. Providing shelter was a priority then, and remains so today. In the 80's, Genesis Pittsburgh opened Genesis House, a residence in Bellevue where pregnant women can live, attend classes, prepare for childbirth, receive baby supplies, and in some cases, prepare to place the baby for adoption.

"We are here to help," says Crystal Turner, executive director of Genesis Pittsburgh. "We go where the need is, and the needs are constantly changing. We adapt and modify our programs as new needs are identified in the communities. Our mission has never changed, but the services we provide change as we identify new groups of women who need our help."

Genesis Pittsburgh has grown in both size and programming. There are now four locations, with others planned. Genesis Center, also in Bellevue, is a distribution site for baby supplies and also houses the Genesis Learning Center. Anyone can come to Genesis Center in Bellevue and to a second center in Washington to receive baby supplies.

"Genesis Pittsburgh is a non-profit social service organization, and it is unique. It is not an income-based program and this was a deliberate decision," Turner says. "We recognized that many women are working two jobs to earn income, and that this may put them over the income limits that exist for many services. They may be low-income, but not low enough to qualify for services that they need. At Genesis Pittsburgh, everybody qualifies. We are here for everyone."

With creativity and exceptional responsiveness to emerging needs, Genesis Pittsburgh has established effective new programs.



At Genesis House, mothers learn the fundamentals of baby care.



There are many resources for new parents at Genesis House. This mother is choosing books for herself and her baby.

"We do much less adoption today than we did in the past," explains Turner. "More girls keep their babies now, and the high schools are doing a great job. The women who are asking for help these days are not teenagers; they are older women, in the 20 to 40 age range. Their situations are very different. We see women who are in recovery programs and more immigrant women, and for them we have added translation services.

"We have created a program for grandparents who are raising the children of their addicted adult children. This program, the Grand Family program, caught on immediately. These grandparents are doing a tremendous job."

Mothers can receive counseling at Genesis House from social workers. They are required to attend classes, and can choose among many subjects: Adoption; breastfeeding; CPR; first aid; parenting skills; newborn care; nutrition; potty training; preparation for childbirth; and smoking cessation. Fathers are welcome to attend any class.

Crystal Turner has high praise for Genesis Pittsburgh's staff of 17, who are deeply committed to the Genesis mission. "Just like the clients, we all have come here in different ways. Some of our staff have lived this experience. All are sensitive to the needs of the women; they understand that the most difficult client is the one who needs us the most." Turner, who is married and has two children, is from Kansas City and has lived in Pittsburgh since 1994. She was initially a volunteer and consultant to Genesis Pittsburgh and accepted the executive director position in 2019.

"We have so much support for our work. Our clients are grateful and want to give back in order to sustain us. This is heartwarming for our staff and volunteers. We are grateful to Bellevue and Avalon, communities which have supported us, and to our many non-profit partners."



For more information, visit www.genesispg.org or call Crystal Turner at (412) 766- 5212.

The Stigma of Addiction



By Julia D'Alo, MD

Addiction is undeniably a brain disease that is ubiquitous and knows no boundaries. With many of us either personally suffering with a substance use disorder or loving someone with one, we know the pain and loss associated with addiction, especially as our nation is grappling with the realities of unprecedented overdose rates. For us to fight this fight we need to recognize stigma remains the greatest barrier to people in active addiction getting help. The recovery community continues to face this stigma long after they enter remission.

Let us do away with the pervasive misconception that people who suffer with the disease of addiction are somehow less deserving of our love and respect. Let us remember addiction is a disease much like any other disease. Attempts at public humiliation of people in recovery have no meaningful or productive place in our world.

Addiction is a highly treatable disease and the many millions of successful, productive, beautiful people in recovery are living proof that sustained wellness is possible. In fact, I cannot think of anything to be prouder of.



> Dr. Julia D'Alo is Chief Medical Officer, Gateway Rehab. Learn more at www.gatewayrehab.org.

Log on to www.guidetogoodhealth.com to learn more from experts at Gateway Rehab on addiction and rehab.

Alcohol Use During Pregnancy



Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can increase the risk of miscarriage and premature birth or stillbirth, and can cause your baby to have a low birthweight. There is no known safe amount of – or no safe time for – alcohol use during pregnancy or while trying to get pregnant, and all types of alcohol are equally harmful, including wine and beer.

Alcohol in the mother's blood passes to the baby through the umbilical cord and can be responsible for lifelong physical, behavioral, or intellectual disabilities. These disabilities are known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), and children with these disorders might have the following characteristics or behavioral issues:

- Small head size
- Abnormal facial features
- Shorter-than-average height
- Low body weight
- Poor coordination
- Hyperactive behavior
- Difficulty with attention
- Poor memory
- Difficulty in school, especially with math
- Learning disabilities
- Speech, language delays
- Intellectual disability or low IQ
- Poor reasoning and judgment skills
- Sleep, sucking problems
- Vision, hearing problems
- Issues with the heart, kidney, or bones

FASDs are preventable if a baby is not exposed to alcohol before birth.



On July 1, 2022, Gateway Rehab acquired Greenbriar Treatment Center.



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Addiction Affects Thousands of Pennsylvanians and Families

In the United States, addiction affects millions of people, including thousands in Pennsylvania. Addiction, also known as substance abuse disorder, is a chronic medical condition characterized by a compulsion to use substances despite losing money, relationships, family members, employment, freedom, health, dignity and even life. Addiction can be a devastating condition, but there is hope. Substance abuse disorder is treatable, and there are many ways healthcare professionals can help those suffering from addiction.

“Addiction is a complex medical condition that affects the brain’s reward, motivation, memory, and related circuitry,” said Ramez Altuwijri, MD, a psychiatrist at the Penn Highlands Behavioral Health Outpatient Center in DuBois. “It is characterized by the pathological pursuit of reward and/or relief through substance use and other behaviors, which results in biological, psychological, social and spiritual consequences. It is important to note that addiction can impact anyone. It is not associated with a certain social or economic status, age, sex or race.”

Addiction is a chronic disease that alters the brain, making it difficult to quit even for those who desire to do so. There is no single factor that can determine whether or not a person will develop a drug addiction. Rather, addiction risk is influenced by a variety of factors. Addiction is characterized by an intricate interplay between brain circuits, genetics, the environment and a person’s life experi-

ences. The more risk factors a person has, the higher the likelihood that drug use can lead to addiction.


Addiction involves cycles of relapse and remission. Without proper treatment or recovery efforts, addiction can worsen and cause significant behavioral and social dysfunction.

Addiction medicine specialists offer evidence-based prevention, diagnosis, evaluation, treatment and medical management services for individuals dealing with substance-related health conditions or unhealthy substance use. It is common for family members who are impacted by their loved ones’ substance abuse to seek help from addiction medicine specialists.

“Medication-assisted treatment is a structured approach used to treat various types of addiction, including opioids, alcohol and tobacco,” said Dr. Altuwijri. “The medication helps patients remain in treatment, abstain from drug use and stay alive.”

Treatment for alcohol use disorder involves three FDA-approved oral and injectable medications.

The initial step towards recovery is acknowledging the issue.

 **Penn Highlands Healthcare** offers outpatient and intensive outpatient (IOP) addiction care. To learn more, visit www.phhealthcare.org/addiction.

The Dangers of Vaping

The vaping epidemic among youth continues to be a significant public health concern. Despite campaigns and warnings against vaping, many young people are still drawn to the trend.

According to recent statistics, the number of teenagers who vape has increased significantly over the past few years. The 2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey reports that more than 1 in 10 middle and high school students (3.08 million) had used a tobacco product during the past 30 days - including 16.5% of high school and 4.5% of middle school students.

One of the main reasons vaping has become so popular among youth is the marketing tactics used by the vaping industry. Many companies create fruity and sweet flavors specifically designed to appeal to young people. These flavors are often marketed as being safe and healthy. However, the truth is that vaping can still have serious health consequences.

In fact, vaping can cause lung damage and other respiratory problems. The chemicals and toxins in vape juice can irritate the lungs and cause inflammation, leading to breathing difficulties. Furthermore, the nicotine in e-cigarettes is highly addictive and can lead to long-term addiction.


Schools and public health officials are working to educate young people about the dangers of vaping to combat the vaping epidemic. Anti-vaping campaigns are being launched nationwide, and some schools offer counseling and support groups for students who want to quit vaping.

Parents can also play a role in preventing their children from vaping. It’s crucial to talk to your kids about the dangers of vaping and monitor their behavior for signs of it. If you suspect that your child is vaping, it’s important to have an open and honest conversation



about their habits and to seek professional help if necessary. Check out Breathe Pennsylvania’s “A Parents Quick Guide to Vaping” for more helpful information and resources.

The vaping epidemic among youth is a serious public health concern. While efforts are being made to combat this trend, it’s essential for everyone to be informed about the dangers of vaping and to work together to prevent young people from starting this harmful habit.

 For more information, visit **Breathe Pennsylvania** at www.breathepa.org.

Reference: Results from the Annual National Youth Tobacco Survey | FDA. <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/results-annual-national-youth-tobacco-survey>



Westmoreland
Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.

Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission’s contracted outpatient treatment services *specialize in services for women, adolescents, and children* whose lives have been affected by addiction; Preferential treatment given to pregnant women.

1-800-220-1810
www.wedacinc.org

These Services Include:

- Drug & Alcohol Assessments
- Referrals to Detox and Inpatient Programs
- Education and Information on Drugs & Alcohol
- Individual & Group Therapy for Adults and Children
- Family & Marital Therapy

If you or someone you know can benefit from this service, please call Westmoreland D&A’s Case Management Unit.

Child's Way, Where Holistic Care Meets Family Empowerment

The summer season has just begun, but it's already time to think about your child's fall school enrollment.

At The Children's Home of Pittsburgh & Lemieux Family Center, you will find a very special program called Child's Way. Child's Way is a daycare for children – birth to age 21 – who have unique medical needs that require at least four hours of daily nursing care. More importantly, Child's Way is a place where medically complex children thrive with their peers, teachers, and nurses.

Child's Way is designed to help medically fragile children receive individualized on-site nursing care, speech, occupational and physical therapy, and early education in a fun, safe, and social environment. We're here to support your family by not only nurturing the social, emotional, and physical development of each student, but also to provide comprehensive, cost-effective, quality medical care.

While our daily daycare fee is only \$40 (insurance and medical assistance covers most of the medical costs), financial aid is available. We offer full and part-time schedules, in addition to before and after-school programming.

➤ Call (412) 441-4884 to reserve your child's place for the upcoming school year at **Child's Way**.



And don't just take our word for the exceptional care your child will receive. Here's what a few Child's Way parents had to say about their experience at The Children's Home.

Since Sofia started at Child's Way, her health has greatly improved, and it is not a coincidence as she has so many incredible people taking care of her there. She has already reached so many precious milestones at Child's Way, and I am so excited to watch her continue to grow there. Her nurses, teachers, students, therapists, and staff make us feel welcome to our home away from home and simply adore Sofia.

-Faith, Sofia's mom

For [our] family, it is the biggest blessing to know that all of Sam's meals are provided, medical insurance helps to offset the cost of attending, and there's peace of mind that the team continues to see his potential. We are still able to work and provide for our family because of the affordability of Sam's care at the Children's Home.

-Amy, Sam's mom

Facts about Learning Disabilities

A learning disability is a neurological disorder that affects a person's ability to process and understand information. It can affect the ability to read, write, listen, speak, spell, or do math. Learning disabilities are extremely common and can impact a wide range of people.

The top five are:

1. Dyslexia – the number one learning disability that affects people of all ages. Some symptoms include:

- Reversing the position of letters
- Struggling with reading comprehension
- Delayed speech
- Difficulty understanding directions
- Problems with spelling, proofreading, copying from text

2. ADHA (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) – the second-most common learning disability that can also affect people of all ages. More than 6 million children are diagnosed. Symptoms include:

- Inability to sit still
- Being disorganized or forgetful
- Difficulty staying quiet and paying attention
- Lack of motivation
- Mood swings or emotional outbursts

3. Dyscalculia – a learning disability that affects math skills. Symptoms include:

- Having trouble with basic math problems
- Struggling with concepts such as measuring, time, and estimating
- Difficulty following the sequence of operations
- Finding it challenging to count and group numbers together

4. Dysgraphia – a learning condition that affects a person's ability to write. Symptoms include:

- Difficulty expressing oneself in writing
- Messy handwriting
- Taking a long time to write
- Poor grammar
- Problems organizing thoughts and ideas in writing

5. Dyspraxia – a neurological disorder that affects a person's ability to plan or coordinate movement. Symptoms include:

- Affects fine motor skills, such as writing or tying shoes
- Affects gross motor skills, such as balance and coordination
- Interferes with hand/eye coordination
- Affects the ability to process information about movement and coordination

Seeking help for someone who has a learning disability is important, as early treatment can make a difference.

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At Pace School, the LEAF Program Fortifies Students for Successful, Satisfying Futures

By Nancy Kennedy

For children with disabilities and their families, Pace School is a sanctuary – a place of safety, respect and possibility, where an inspired and expert staff provides education and therapeutic services that enable any child to thrive.

That is the enduring mission of this state-approved, private, special education school located in Churchill that was launched by parents in a church basement more than 50 years ago. At Pace School, children with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional or mental health challenges and autism spectrum disorder, ages 5-21, receive individual education plans that identify their needs and help them learn and grow at their own “pace,” and, above all, to truly thrive.

“At Pace School, we exist to help children,” says Karen Shepherd, CEO. “We believe that children flourish with the right support. We create programming and implement services which make that possible. Too often, children with disabilities have heard ‘You can’t.’ Here, we say ‘You can.’ We don’t want them to feel marginalized.”

Pace School serves more than 35 school districts in western Pennsylvania. Each class has a maximum of 12 students, with three adults so that individual attention can be provided. “The staff is the engine,” Shepherd says. “We have a highly qualified, experienced staff of teachers, social workers, mental health professionals, nurses

and others. We also have a Partial Hospitalization Program that has a psychiatrist here three days a week.”

Pace’s goal is for students to transition back into the school district or continue at Pace progressing towards graduation and life after school. The LEAF (Life Education for Adult Futures) Program at Pace now provides increased services for young adults, ages 18 to 21, with an innovative program that facilitates the transition to adulthood and independence. This program helps students and families navigate the transition to adulthood, employment and community membership.

“Leaving school is a critical transition, and we want to empower the students so that they are able to move toward the future and learn to advocate for themselves,” Shepherd explains. “It takes time. We want them to have as much independence as possible. Some will have jobs; some will live with relatives and some may live in group housing. With new skills and supports, we are confident that they can successfully integrate into the community.”

The LEAF program includes training tailored to individual needs and preferences, plus fundamental skills. These skills include safety, socialization, self-advocacy, wellness habits, daily living skills, and basic computer skills. Pre-employment training and development of workplace skills are a key component, and the LEAF programs partners with local businesses and organizations to give students workplace exposure and experiences.

According to Shepherd, “Our community partners enrich our services through career exposure and shadowing experiences. Our students need to see what the possibilities are and recognize that their skills are a fit for a variety of positions in many businesses.”

Shepherd emphasizes that transition, from school to adulthood and/or the working world, is challenging for both students and their parents. Pace staff help them understand the difference in accessing services as an adult versus a student and support them through this transition.

Transitions are those moments in every life when one faces leaving a comfort zone, taking a risk and moving toward the unfamiliar. It can feel like facing a cliff, but when a strong bridge has been put in place, and gentle helpers are there to encourage and lead the way, the transition becomes an opportunity for growth. The LEAF program is one more way for Pace School to fulfill their mission and help students thrive. “Leaving the place that nurtured and educated them, and supported their families, can be stressful,” Shepherd acknowledges. “But we are here to prepare them and help them to navigate this new terrain, making the transition to independent living and working. Pace School provides the skills and supports so students can successfully integrate into the community.”

To learn more about **Pace School**, how you can support community collaboration, and the LEAF program, visit www.paceschool.org.



From kindergarten to graduation, Pace School's special education helps students gain knowledge through blended academic, social emotional learning and individualized planning.

We believe in enabling every child to thrive and preparing them for the future!

LEARN MORE @ www.paceschool.org

Teen Mental, Emotional and Physical Well-Being

Friendship Circle Announces Launch of The Beacon for Teens

The Friendship Circle of Pittsburgh announced the launch of The Beacon, a vibrant community space with a focus on uplifting and supporting the well-being and mental health of teens in high school. With an emphasis on self-care, peer support, and inclusion, The Beacon's programming will offer teens strategies they can use to support themselves and one another.

The Beacon is located at 1926 Murray Avenue, next door to the Friendship Circle. It will provide a welcoming space where teens can connect, engage in wellness activities, and find support through peers and trained professionals. The Beacon will have open hours for gathering, and unique programming that introduces mindfulness and self-awareness skills and practices.

The Beacon is focused on addressing mental health as just one part of overall well-being. When necessary, The Beacon will also provide access and referrals to therapeutic support on an individualized basis.

The Beacon's programming will provide a community where teens can learn to look inward and become aware of the state of their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. The Beacon will offer inclusive groups on mindfulness, self-expression through the creative arts, befriending yourself and others, coping with social media, developing self-advocacy skills, finding purpose, setting boundaries, recognizing the need for help, and handling anxiety and



depression. Additional specialized programming will include: coffee and conversation; painting; music and drum circles; yoga and meditation; visits from service animals; food preparation; gardening and planting; book club; social gatherings like podcast, movie, and open mic nights; and self-care nights.

Starting in September, the space will function during after-school and evening hours, Monday through Thursday.



Interested teens can fill out the Contact Form at <https://tinyurl.com/TheBeaconPGH>.

Assistive Technology for Special Education Students

Assistive Technology, or AT, can help students who are in special education programs be their most productive. An AT device is something that can help to increase or improve a student's capabilities, and can be either high-tech or low-tech. Students who can be helped are those who are visually impaired or blind; deaf or hard of hearing; have speech disabilities; need assistance with mobility; or who have learning, cognitive, or developmental disabilities.

Examples of AT include:

- Wheelchairs or wheelchair ramps
- Voice-activated computers
- Communication devices
- Computer keyboards with larger font sizes
- Electronic note takers and cassette recorders
- Styluses that allow students

to operate touch screens using their mouths, hands, or heads

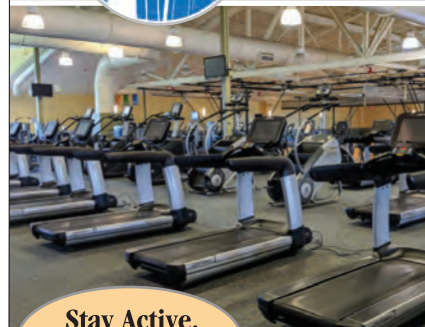
- Large-print books
- Mounts that enable students to attach an iPad to their tabletop or wheelchair
- Switches and controls for access to equipment
- Materials for visually impaired students, such as Braille flashcards, boards for teaching shapes or spatial relations, and adaptive paper that provides extra visual or perceptible feedback, such as raised-line paper
- Pencil grips
- Hearing aids

Students often learn best by doing, and assistive technology uses this concept by supplying students with hands-on learning aids to make learning fun and less stressful. It can also allow them to interact better with classmates and help to build relationships.



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Prevention Key to Ending Parkinson's Disease

By Nancy Kennedy

With the publication of *Ending Parkinson's Disease*, a book that he co-wrote, Ray Dorsey, MD, MBA, has delivered a clarion call to the world: a clear, heartfelt and inspirational appeal to create change. The change that he seeks is a world free of Parkinson's disease. In the book and in his talks to various groups around the country, Dr. Dorsey calls on individuals and society to take action now to reverse the exponential increase in Parkinson's disease cases across the globe right now. Dr. Dorsey believes that despite its prevalence and rapid growth, Parkinson's is preventable.

Dr. Dorsey is a neurologist who specializes in the study, diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the nervous system, with cutting-edge expertise in the treatment of Parkinson's disease. He is a clinician and professor of neurology at the University of Rochester Medical Center. In addition, Dr. Dorsey serves as a consultant to numerous organizations that are engaged in Parkinson's research, care, treatment and advocacy. He recently visited Pittsburgh as a guest of the Parkinson's Foundation of Western Pennsylvania.

"Parkinson's disease is a progressive, complex, severely debilitating brain disease," Dr. Dorsey explains. "It's the fastest growing brain disorder in the world, surpassing even Alzheimer's disease. No one is immune. The number of people with Parkinson's doubled from 1990 to 2015, and it is expected to double again by 2040. Your lifetime risk of developing it is about one in fifteen."

Across the globe, there are 10 million people with Parkinson's, including over one million in the U.S. Every year, another 90,000 new cases are diagnosed. The U.S. has 10% of all cases – an exceptionally large share, possibly due to environmental factors such as the persistent use of pesticides that the U.S. has so far refused to ban. The incidence increases with age and is more common in men. Parkinson's is caused by brain degeneration, with the loss of neurons that produce dopamine, which regulates movement. There are multiple causes and risk factors: age, genetic mutations, pesticide exposure, air pollution, industrial chemicals used mainly for cleaning, and head trauma. Early signs of Parkinson's include loss of smell, constipation, and sleep disorders. Eventually, a person with Parkinson's is likely to develop tremors at rest, slow movement, clo-



Dr. Ray Dorsey



Christine Plumb Haythorn

nus, stiffness and problems with gait and balance. As it progresses, disability and dependency develop.

Parkinson's was first identified in 1817 and was considered a rare disease. With industrialization came the widespread use of chemicals, exposure to environmental toxins, and a subsequent rise in cases. In 2023, so rapid and extensive is the increase in Parkinson's disease that some experts are calling it a pandemic. At the same time, new therapies have not emerged and kept pace with the spread.

"Environmental toxins such as the pesticide paraquat and a solvent called trichloroethylene (TCE) have surrounded us," Dr. Dorsey says. "They are in cleaning products, medical products, electronics, in homes, schools, farms and workplaces. All these risk factors are inhaled or ingested. They have a strong link with Parkinson's. We have known about the dangers of some of these toxicants for decades, yet in the U.S. they are still widely used. For example, over 30 countries including China have banned paraquat but the U.S. still permits it use."

Like lung cancer, Parkinson's disease takes years to unfold. The onset probably happens twenty years before symptoms appear. With increasing longevity, more people will be diagnosed with Parkinson's, but aging itself is unlikely a cause of the disease.

Dr. Dorsey envisions a grassroots effort to create a world where Parkinson's is increasingly rare. "We can make Parkinson's rare and treatable. We did it with polio. We already know what we need to do. By taking these actions, we can give future generations a beautiful gift: a world without Parkinson's, where no one gets this disease, ever again. We can alter the course of this disease with prevention, advocacy, care and treatment."

The Parkinson Foundation Western Pennsylvania (PFWPA) is a local non-profit that has been providing services and resources since 1995 for persons with Parkinson's disease, their families and allied professionals. They provide educational programs, exercise programs, support groups and connections to local resources. For more information, visit www.pfwpa.org or call (412) 837-2542.

To contact Dr. Dorsey, send an email to info@endingPD.org. To order a copy of *Ending Parkinson's Disease*, visit www.endingPD.org. Complimentary copies may be requested.

Reduce Your Risk and Help Make Parkinson's a Rare Disease

- Encourage your representatives to ban Paraquat, trichloroethylene and other toxic chemicals. Contact them through www.usa.gov/elected-officials.
- Avoid using pesticides.
- Drink clean water and use carbon filters. Test it if you have well water.
- Breathe fresh air – use air filters.
- In heavy traffic, keep your car windows up.
- Learn about Superfund sites near you.

www.epa.gov/superfund/search-superfund-sites-where-you-live

- Test your own air in your home.
- Wash fruits and vegetables well with pesticide wash. Consider organics.
- Follow a Mediterranean diet to reduce risk of heart disease and cancer.
- Be aware of your exposure to toxins and chemicals used in your workplace and use masks, gloves and protective clothing.

- Avoid traumatic head injury. Wear your seat belt, or a helmet when you bike or ski.
- If you are pre-diabetic, lose weight and get your blood glucose levels to a normal level.
- If you have high blood pressure, take your medication daily and work with your PCP to get your pressure to a healthy level.
- Stay active. Older adults should exercise and stay strong.
- Enjoy your life!

Rehab Program Helps Manage Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a chronic neurologic condition named after Dr. James Parkinson. PD is a slow progressive disease, which causes a gradual loss of the nerve cells in the brain that produce the neurotransmitter dopamine. Because dopamine carries signals to the part of the brain that control movement and coordination, decreased dopamine levels lead to symptoms including:

- Resting tremor
- Generalized slowness
- Stiffness of the limbs
- Freezing of movement

Additional signs and symptoms of Parkinson's disease may include small handwriting, decreased facial expression, quiet speech, and difficulty swallowing. As the disease progresses, posture may fail with a slow, shuffling walking pattern, which may result in falls.

While Parkinson's Disease is a progressive condition, it can be effectively managed with physical therapy, medication, lifestyle modifications, and surgery in some cases.


LSVT BIG® is one such specialized rehabilitation program for Parkinson's Disease which targets bigger amplitude movement to improve quality of walking. The letters LSVT stand for Lee Silverman Voice Training. Mrs. Silverman was a PD patient treated by speech therapists to increase the loudness of her speech so her family and friends could hear and understand her again. Physical therapists followed a similar methodology to increase the amplitude of movement to restore more normal walking. LSVT BIG® treatment is customized to each person's specific needs and goals;

it can help regardless of the stage or severity of your condition. Beginning an LSVT BIG® program before you've noticed significant problems with balance, mobility or posture will often lead to the best results, but it's never too late to start.

We Have Certified LSVT BIG® Treatment Physical Therapists

FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Centers offers one of the few locations in the Pittsburgh area with certified LSVT BIG® physical therapists. LSVT BIG® exemplifies our motto of "Exercise as Medicine." The program consists of 16 high-effort and high-energy sessions over 30 days, with (4) one hour-long sessions performed every week. It requires practice, repetition, and feedback of big movements that can be carried over into activities of daily life including dressing, getting out of bed, walking, preparing meals, and community outings. The targeted, corrective exercises and whole-body movements will change how patients control and manage their functional movements.

After the program is completed, patients will continue to exercise daily at home and return to FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Centers within nine months to ensure continued progress. LSVT BIG® improves confidence with mobility and reduces fall risk when properly administered.

 Contact **FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Centers** to learn more about the certified LSVT BIG® program for people who are managing Parkinson's Disease and our other services.



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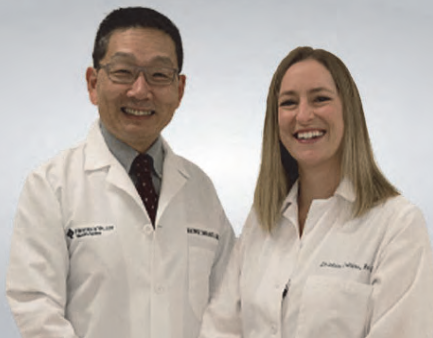
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(Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, ALS, etc.)

- Head and Neck Cancer
- Dementia
- Primary Progressive Aphasia
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We offer evaluation and treatment for:

- Dysphagia (difficulty chewing and/or swallowing), including Modified Barium Swallow Studies
- Aphasia
- Motor Speech Disorders (Dysarthria/Apraxia)
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Why It Is Important to Get 'Real' Rehabilitation

By Richard C. Senelick, MD

I am frequently asked, "Is there a difference in the types of rehabilitation that you receive?" The answer is a resounding, "Yes."

Think of it as a glass ceiling. A glass ceiling may occur because of your gender, race or physical disabilities. It means that there is a "ceiling" that limits your opportunities and career choices. If you have a disability such as a stroke and you don't get the proper type of rehabilitation, you will reach a "glass ceiling." Not one of real glass, but of opportunity. You are not going to advance beyond a certain point, achieve your goals and you will prematurely reach a plateau.

An example I like to use is that I have three grandchildren with three college funds. If I decide to take away my youngest teenage grandson's fund and give it to his sisters, I have limited his opportunities. I have created a glass ceiling for him. (Wait—please don't tell him quite yet!)

If we don't give people the right type of rehabilitation, we also set a glass ceiling. They will experience some spontaneous recovery,



but they will reach an early plateau. We need to provide the right amount of dose (the correct number of hours of therapy), performing functional tasks, in an inpatient rehabilitation facility. This way they will reach the goals that we have for them. Otherwise, you will create a rehabilitation glass ceiling.

Think about walking on a path in the woods and you come to a fork in the path. The further you go down one path, the farther away you get from where the other path would have taken you. The inpatient rehabilitation hospital path will lead you much closer to an optimal recovery. If you take the other path, it will lead your farther away from your

goal of recovery.

Where you go for rehabilitation is "your path" and one of the most important decisions you will make.

At Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Harmarville and Sewickley, we are committed to helping you regain independence after a life-changing illness or injury. Serving Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas, we are a leading provider of inpatient rehabilitation for stroke, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis and other complex neurological and orthopedic conditions.

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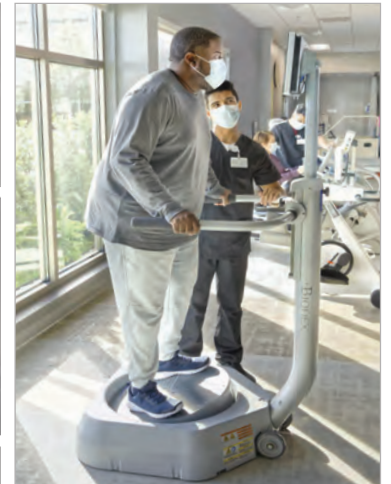
At Encompass Health, the first thing we build for our patients going through rehabilitation after an illness or injury...is trust. Here we offer advanced technologies and treatments, but what makes our programs even more powerful are the nurses and therapists who are passionate about helping patients get back to what matters most. It's why we're **the trusted choice in rehabilitation services**.



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encompasshealth.com

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Ambulance and Chair EMS' New Facility Shortens Response Times for Washington County

By Andrew Wilson

Shortening response times in a medical emergency can mean the difference between life and death.

With the opening of Ambulance and Chair Emergency Medical Services' new facility in Canton Township, residents of the western part of Washington County will see their emergency response times greatly reduced.

"Our new facility in Canton Township is a state-of-the-art facility for EMS," said Larry Pollock, director of Ambulance and Chair EMS. "We have two ambulance crews and a paramedic response truck that work around the clock. This location so close to Rte. 40 and Interstate 70 will shorten our response times greatly."

Plans for this new location were about two years in the making. Pollock says that they began searching for a new location in April 2020, and were looking in Buffalo Township as well as Canton and North Franklin. But for all the searching, it was a cracked windshield that led them to the Canton Township location.

"We needed to have the windshield on one of our vehicles repaired, so we took it to this glass repair shop," said Pollock. "We noticed that the building was for sale and thought it could be renovated to accommodate us."

The building, which also houses Ambulance and Chair EMS' business office, was ren-



Ambulance and Chair EMS opened their new facility in Canton Township in the site of a former glass repair business.

ovated to include sleeping quarters, a lounge area, and a full kitchen, amenities that are a must for crews that will be on duty 24/7. Additionally, such a top-notch facility can be used as a recruiting tool, too.

"There is a shortage of EMS personnel right now," Pollock said. "The new facility will help us attract and retain quality staff."

In addition to serving the community by responding to medical emergencies, he says the new location will allow Ambulance and Chair EMS to be more visible.

"The new building has a storefront environment, which we didn't have before, and we want to take advantage of that," he said. "We want to be part of the community and emphasize prevention."

To that end, the plan is to offer CPR classes for the community several times a year.

"I recommend that every household should have at least one person capable of performing CPR in an emergency," says Pollock, who added that if CPR can be started before the EMTs

arrive it can make a huge difference. "Data from the American Heart Association shows that even an increase of two or three minutes can cause bad outcomes for a patient."

The new facility had an open house on Saturday, May 21, and the staff were able to demonstrate CPR, Narcan, and bleeding control techniques for those who visited. Pollock says they have enjoyed great community support from the Canton Township supervisors and residents and looks forward to that continuing. One way for the public to support Ambulance and Chair EMS is by becoming a member.

"We have a membership drive every year," said Pollock. "Many people think if they have health insurance that will cover ambulance services, but it doesn't. People can be left with a large bill for ambulance services, but by becoming a member, you receive a 50 percent discount on any out-of-pocket costs that you incur."

Membership also helps to support the efforts of the ambulance service to be pres-

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

For anyone who is interested in a career in Emergency Medical Services, Ambulance and Chair can help with training. Ambulance and Chair Emergency Medical Services (ACEMS) offers three to four EMT classes annually. To discuss a career in EMS, call the ACEMS business office at (724) 225-8050, extension 3, and a team member can answer questions you may have to get you enrolled in our courses.

ent in the community, too, which Pollock hopes to repeat soon if another new location can be found to create a similar facility in Washington or South Strabane. Great plans, but it takes community support to realize those plans.

"The money we get from insurance doesn't cover all of the services we provide for the community," he said. "Membership fees make up a big portion of our budget each year. We appreciate the support we receive and encourage everyone to become a member."



Ambulance & Chair EMS, Inc. has five stations serving 34 Municipalities in

Washington County. They can be found at the website www.ambulanceandchair.com, and can be reached by calling (724) 225-8050.

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To learn more about our program and the eligibility requirements visit whs.org/lungscreening or scan the QR code.



Welcome New Provider Wesley Schettler, MD

We are delighted to announce that upon graduating Washington Health System's Family Medicine Residency Program Dr. Schettler, accepted a primary care provider position within our WHS Family Medicine Center group. Dr. Schettler's research experience includes resident process improvement projects regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, and he has researched and written about improving pneumococcal vaccination rates in patients.

For his full bio visit whs.org/Schettler

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Family Medicine Center





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Greene Plaza

WHS Center for Mental
Health and Wellbeing

Westmoreland Transit is Changing!

With help from PennDOT's Fixed Route Intelligent Transportation System (FRITS) project, the features of Westmoreland Transit's fixed-route buses are being updated. The FRITS project will bring technology that will allow Westmoreland Transit to deploy state of the art technology to provide better service and understand its customer base by improving communication between the driver and dispatch and collecting key operational data to make better service decisions.

What changes are coming for our customers? Riders will have the ability to track the bus they are riding through a mobile app; this will show where the bus is in real time. Riders will also be able to plan trips more efficiently through Westmoreland Transit's website and plan transfers to other bus systems with ease.



> The FRITS project at Westmoreland Transit is still in its early stages. Check for updates on the FRITS project through Westmoreland County Transit Authority's website at www.westmorelandtransit.com or their Facebook

Westmoreland County Transit Authority
wishes you a

WONDERFUL

Summer!





Dental Care is Not Expensive, Neglect Is!



By Dr. Joseph Gurecka

That was the first thing I learned in dental school. It combined nicely with the old axiom "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" and a pound of cure in dentistry is more costly than gold. Many patients face a cost vs. value decision on a regular basis and often the cost factor influences their decision making more heavily than long term value.

Many people spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars each year on cosmetic treatments, convenience food, or hobbies (golf!) without blinking an eye, yet balk that their insurance doesn't cover 100% of the costs of their dental procedures from a doctor that went to medical school for 8+ years. Yet they will pay 3 times more than that

for optional cosmetic procedures. Dental care is necessary for your overall health and well-being and should be a priority.

Consider the options patients have for discretionary spending: gel manicures \$40+ every 3-4 weeks, Botox minimal \$250-\$600 every 3-4 months, Air Jordans \$100+, Starbucks daily \$90+/month, golf game \$100, car hobbies thousands of dollars, hair stylist \$125-\$250 every 4-6 weeks, etc. etc. The cost of quality dental care pales with the real costs of money we spend on ourselves. And, like any quality appliance that is used daily, we expect to pay for dental procedures that work for a long period of time with regular maintenance and occasional repairs. But many times cost isn't the only factor involved.

Along with the costs Tyranny

of the Urgent often prevails in the middle decades of life where having a root canal seems more involved than having an extraction and proper treatment of gum disease is more time-consuming than our hectic schedules permit. Eventually, our office ends up seeing a number of patients who ask the impossible; "is it possible to fix this ... my appliances are loose," "I cannot chew food anymore, it hurts when I eat," and "I am embarrassed by my smile."

In some cases, there is insufficient bone remaining to do anything more than a removable denture appliance. In many cases, however, we are able to restore normal function through the use of dental implants combined with selective bone grafting techniques utilizing the patient's own stem cells and

growth factors. Dental implants offer advantages over other teeth replacement options and are the standard of care today for good reason. One of the biggest advantages is that attached appliances don't slip and slide in your mouth like regular dentures. Whether it is one tooth, an All-On-Four implant-supported bridge or an implant-supported hybrid denture, you care for them as you would your natural teeth. With proper care, dental implants can outlast many other options.

We have treated patients who have walked into the office with their hands over their mouths when they talk having not smiled in years. Once we complete their dental implant(s), they can smile again and speak with confidence. They no longer

Continued on following page

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Joseph L. Gurecka, DMD

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Mention this ad for a **FREE** Dental Implant Consult

PROFILE: So Zu Be



'Changing Lives By Sharing My Experiences'

By Lois Thomson

"My life is a drama series, but if I have to live through these things I want it to be for some good; I want to help people."

Drama has definitely been a major part of So Zu Be's life. Diagnosed with MS at age 19, she then learned seven years later that she had a brain tumor. Just one of these events would be traumatic, but Zu chose to focus on a different approach. She explained, "My diagnosis with MS happened so intensely, I had no idea what was going on. I was 19, a sophomore in college. I had lost complete mobility on the right side of my body, my parents were told I would never walk again. I had to go through physical and occupational therapy. My life changed forever."

Part of her therapy included journaling, and Zu said people encouraged her to write a book about her experiences. "I was 19 and I was trying to find my footing as an adult with this newfound disability, so I shelved that. I knew I would do it one day, but then one day I woke up and I was 30, and I thought, 'Maybe I should write a book.' So I reread what I had been journaling, and I thought maybe it would help somebody – even if it was just one person, but it's helping many."

In the book, Zu wrote about traumas she faced, along with adversities and challenges – including sexual abuse, heartbreak and betrayal – and how they forced her into survival mode. She wrote about forgiveness, and how she was able to work through her own healing process.

She asked loved ones who knew her situation to read the draft and check for content, tone, etc. One of her friends commented that it was really good, but she joked that after reading it, she was going to



have to go to therapy twice a week. Zu's reaction was, "Oh no, I want to share experiences to help, but I don't want to send anyone on a downward spiral! So I created the *Survival Guide Workbook* as a companion, to have something to support the reader if they are triggered. It gives them some activities to work with that helped me."

In addition to family and friends, Zu asked several area mental health professionals to review the content. "They gave me amazing feedback; I didn't even realize how good it was until the professionals told me. I don't have those type of credentials – just my experience with mental health and trauma – so I wanted to make sure that what I was putting out there was appropriate and effective, and I was not crossing any professional boundaries."

The result will be a series of memoirs and workbooks, including "*Survival Season I: Self-Discovery & Forgiveness After Generational Trauma*," along with the "*Survival Guide: Workbook to Help Navigate Self-Discovery & Healing from Generational Trauma*." Season II, which will be the third book, focuses on the details surrounding Zu's physical, mental, emotional and financial wellness.

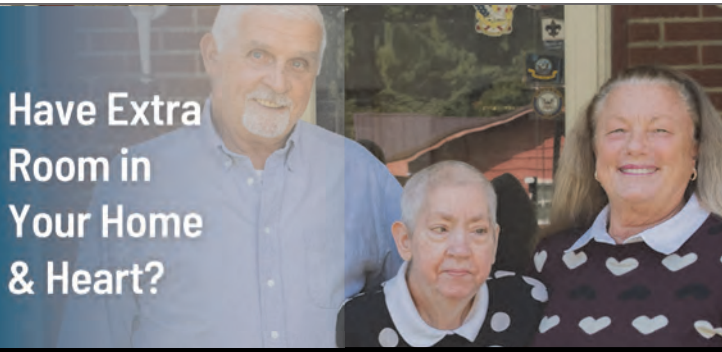
She commented, "The feedback has been wonderful. I'm literally changing lives just by sharing my experiences, and that's bringing me joy."

> For more information or to purchase books, visit www.sozube.com.

Dental Care, *Continued from previous page*

feel embarrassed about the way they look or are hesitant to engage in personal conversations. If you are missing teeth and thinking about replacing them with dental implants, we would love the opportunity to talk with you. We are offering free dental implant consultations this summer to help you get your summer smile back. Call us today to get your free consult scheduled!

> We would love to help you with your smile. If you are looking for dental implants or want to switch to a dentist who uses the latest technology and individual custom design, look no further than Dr. Gurecka (AAID credentialed) located at **Valley Brook Dental** in McMurray PA. Call us at **(724) 942-8982** or visit valleybrookdental.com.



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Living Well With A Disability

Open your Heart and Home Become a Life Sharing Provider

You've probably heard of foster care services, where adults take in children in need of a home. But what you may not be familiar with is a similar service that originated in Pennsylvania in 1982, called Life Sharing.

Life Sharing is a service where every day households open their homes to adults with intellectual disabilities. Life Sharing provides adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to become part of a family, offering an ongoing sense of belonging, as well as day-to-day care. Life Sharing is an alternative to the community home service option.

A local nonprofit, Step By Step, is asking community members to consider opening their hearts and homes through their Life Sharing program.

Colleen and George Wilkes of Susquehanna did just that. In 2003, the Wilkes family temporarily opened their home to Margie, an adult with intellectual disabilities. However, when it was time for Margie to leave, the Wilkes family's 11-year-old son, Georgie, refused.

"Margie is a Wilkes now. She is family, she's one of us," said their son.

The Wilkes family then discovered the benefits of a permanent placement through Step By Step's Life Sharing program. 19 years later, Margie has lived happily with the Wilkes ever since.

Today, the family continues to take care of Margie in their home, and Margie provides a joy in the Wilkes' lives that cannot be reduced to words. Their bond is truly unique and special. Their love radiates through every word and embrace. It is clear; relationships are what make life worth living.

The Wilkes family urges others to consider sharing their lives through the program.

A Life Sharing sponsor can be a single adult, a couple, or a family unit, supporting up to two individuals in their home. Both non-biological and biological family members are eligible for the Life Sharing program and the stipend for care that it provides.

Individuals who become a licensed Life Sharing sponsor receive a tax-free stipend to help offset costs, starting at \$2,850 for licensed homes.

Sandy Reina, Vacancy Coordinator at Step By Step shared: "Life Sharing is a wonderful program which unites adults with an intellectual disability and families. It gives people a family that may have never had one. Each family, individual and support staff have gained so much from the Life Sharing program. We invite you to increase your family by becoming part of ours."



For more information,
contact **Sandy Reina** at
(570) 829-3477
ext. 7416 or visit
StepByStepUSA.com

Step By Step, Inc., is a private, non-profit corporation devoted to the provision of community support services to individuals with intellectual disabilities, mental health diagnoses, autism, and physical disabilities. Established in 1977, the agency today provides services to over 2,000 individuals across Pennsylvania.

Employment Services Department at TRPIL Expands

By Lois Thomson

About two-and-a-half years ago, the Employment Services department of TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living) in Washington, Pa., established a dedicated staff, headed by Lead Employment Specialist Mary Petrusch, M.S., CESP, CPWIC. That staff has now grown to include two new, full-time members: Taunya Claude, Transition Coordinator for PRE-ETS Programming, and Valkyrie Williams, CPWIC, Benefits Counselor.

Steve Johnson, director of marketing for TRPIL in Washington and the affiliated Voices for Independence in both Washington and Erie, explained the responsibilities of the two new staffers. He said Claude is actually a "home-grown success story," having started as a receptionist after having gone through the program at TRPIL. Johnson explained that her role focuses on helping clients with the transition from youth into adulthood/employment, essentially answering the question, "What does someone do after high school?"

He said that Claude works with students still in high school or college, between the ages of 14 and 22, through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, who want to look for work, and assists them in understanding what they can expect when they join the workforce. "She outlines different career paths, reviewing what will help them get into a college, tech, or trade school. She also goes over professional skills, and develops curriculum and business contacts, ensuring that the youth have a wide variety of industries or businesses available to them."

Williams is somewhat following in Claude's footsteps as she replaced her as



Valkyrie Williams of the Employment Services department of TRPIL reviews paperwork with a consumer.

receptionist, but her job has transitioned to helping people understand what changes will be made to their SSI/SSDI (Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance) federal benefits, depending on how they work.

Williams also helps to dispel misconceptions. For example, she said, "Many people think that they can only work 20 hours per week, but that's incorrect. It's based on gross income." In addition, she helps them understand what will happen to their benefits, and just as importantly, when these changes will occur. They are not immediate, as some people believe, because a number of changes take time before being implemented.

Johnson pointed out that while one major aspect of Williams' role is to inform people of what to expect, she makes sure not to tell them what to do: everyone is treated like an individual who makes his or her own decisions. She also assists with reporting to Social Security, encouraging individuals to do what they can, and sharpening their

TRPIL has a cooperative agreement and holds webinars in conjunction with PA Health &

Wellness, to educate employers on employment services and hiring employees with a disability. During these webinars, employers help to educate fellow employers on how to better understand the process and what to expect. The next two webinars are **"Easier than You Think: Intangible Accommodations" (September 26)** and **"Job Coach as an Employee Accommodation" (October 17)**.

The webinars are open to anyone who wants to learn more as a business owner/provider. Registration can be found at www.trpil.com.



skills and goals, with regard to entering the workforce.

Johnson summed up the new additions to the Employment Services department by saying, "Valkyrie handles logistics from the starting point, while Taunya focuses on developing the skill set."

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Health Insurance

Take Advantage of Pennie's Special Enrollment If Need Health Coverage

Even though Open Enrollment has passed, Pennsylvanians can still enroll in health coverage or change their plan if they experience a Qualifying Life Event (QLE). Below are a few QLEs available at Pennie that will open a time-limited Special Enrollment Period:

Loss of current health coverage

- Losing existing, qualified health coverage (including job-based coverage)
- Losing eligibility for Medical Assistance also referred to as Medicaid and CHIP
- Losing coverage through a parent's plan (i.e. turning age 26)

Changes in household

- Getting married or divorced
- Having a baby or adopting a child
- Passing of a household member

Changes in residence


- Moving to a different area within PA
- Permanent move from another state into PA
- A student moving to or from the place where they attend school



- A seasonal worker moving to or from the place they both live and work

Other qualifying events

- Gaining a qualifying immigration status (a list of immigration statuses that qualify for Pennie coverage can be found here)
- Becoming newly eligible for financial savings based on a change in income

 For more details on these qualifying life events, visit pennie.com.

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For Senior Health, Practicing Good Physical and Mental Health Habits Is the Best Formula

By Andrew Wilson

Practicing good physical and mental health habits are important at any age, but particularly as you age.

“As you get older, you need to continue to be challenged mentally and physically,” said Mario Fatigati, M.D., an internist and Associate Chief Medical Officer with St. Clair Medical Group. “There are certain concerns that people have as they get older. Some people become less active, which impacts their physical health. Stress, anxiety, and depression also can be harder to manage for older adults.”

Retirement brings about more life changes than just smaller income. There’s also a change in the social aspect as the retiree is not interacting with co-workers every day. Other changes, like the death of a spouse, can bring about increased anxiety levels over fear for their own health or the safety of other loved ones.

“You need to keep your brain sharp as you age,” Dr. Fatigati said. “You may be retired but find something different to do; something fun to do.”

Some older people enjoy crossword or sudoku puzzles, but it doesn’t have to be puzzles.

“Just sitting and reading will help keep your mind sharp,” he said. “Anything that draws you in and gets you interested will help.”

It doesn’t have to be sedentary either. As an avid fly fisherman, Dr. Fatigati recommends getting outdoors and being engaged with a more physical activity.

Of course, not everyone is able to enjoy outdoor activity. Some people may have a disability or may be homebound, but there are resources online that can help. Allegheny County has a website dedicated to services and activities and even transportation for older adults (<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/human-services/programs-services/older-adults/senior-centers.aspx>) and other counties have similar services.



Dr. Mario Fatigati

Dr. Fatigati says the basics for good health as we age aren’t much different than the basics of good health at any age. “There is no magic formula,” he said. “You need to practice good health habits.”



Mario J. Fatigati, MD, FACP, CMD, is an internal medicine physician and Associate Chief Medical Officer with **St. Clair Medical Group**. He is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in both internal medicine and geriatric medicine. He sees patients at 1025 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA. His office can be reached by calling **(412) 221-3377**.



Good health habits include:

1. Eat a healthy diet. Limit fast food and watch your alcohol intake.
2. Get consistent periods of exercise.
3. See your primary care physician regularly.
4. Follow prescribed treatment for any chronic conditions like high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
5. Keep your vaccinations up to date.

“We need to preserve strength as we age, but preserving good balance is just as important,” said Dr. Fatigati. “We also need healthy interpersonal relationships, and what I mean by ‘healthy’ is eliminating or at least greatly reducing the relationships that cause you stress, anxiety, and depression.”

There is also a role to play for the adult children of senior parents. Dr. Fatigati suggests the following ways that adult children can help their parents:

- 1. Be engaged socially with your parents.** One way for adult children to help parents is by navigating the digital world with or for them. They may lack electronic skills but may benefit from setting up some electronic accounts for banking, entertainment, or social interaction.
- 2. Identify social activities for them and encourage them to participate.** Whether online or in the community, there are resources out there for seniors, but they may not know where to look.
- 3. Be an advocate for your parents.** Assisting them with their banking, shopping, and medical needs may reduce their anxiety and help them maintain a better quality of life.

Changes Continue to Improve for Medicare Prescription Coverage

By Crystal Manning

Many Medicare beneficiaries that have a Medicare Advantage or Medicare supplement plan with a separate Medicare part D plan utilized a savings of almost \$470 million in out-of-pocket costs, through lowering drug costs and copays for doctor's office visits. This year the Medicare Advantage companies provided Part D plans, which cover drugs that patients pick up at a pharmacy, with more negotiating tools so they can put pressure on drug companies and get a good deal for patients. Plans will be able to make sure that beneficiaries have access to new generic drugs.

Seniors will continue to save through upcoming improvements. According to Medicare.gov, a new prescription drug law went into effect January 1, 2023, and will help save money for people with Medicare. How will this law help seniors and what does it entail?

Seniors taking insulin will be pleased to know that Medicare drug plans cannot charge you more than \$35 for a one-month supply of each Part D-covered insulin. Medicare also eliminated the plans' deductible on applicable insulin. Also note, on July 1, 2023, the new rules apply if you get a 2- or 3-month supply of insulin your costs cannot be more than \$35 for each month's supply of covered insulin. This also applies if you take insulin through a traditional pump that is covered under Medicare's durable medical equipment benefit, which is Medicare part B.

Starting April 1, 2023, you might pay a lower coinsurance amount for certain drugs and biologicals covered by Part B, if their prices have increased higher than

the rate of inflation. The specific drugs and potential savings change every quarter.

More vaccines will be covered at no cost to beneficiary of Medicare Part D drug coverage. The Part D plan will no longer charge a copayment or apply a deductible for vaccines that are recommended - including vaccines for shingles, whooping cough, and more.

Another benefit that seniors will be happy to know, if drug costs are high enough to reach the catastrophic coverage phase in your Medicare drug coverage, there will be no copayment or coinsurance, starting in 2024. There will also be an expansion of Extra Help payments for prescription drug coverage (the Part D Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) program) to cover more drug costs for people with limited resources who earn less than 150% of the federal poverty level.

The future of these new regulations includes for the first time, Medicare will be able to negotiate directly with manufacturers for the price of certain high-spending brand-name Medicare Part B and Part D drugs that do not have competition. Medicare beneficiaries will see these changes in 2026 and other changes in future years. Also noteworthy is the manufacturers that do not follow the negotiation requirements will have to pay a tax and penalties if they do not fulfill other manufacturers' requirements.

> There are still plans that you can change to now. If you need assistance contact **Crystal Manning** at **(412) 716-4942** or email **crystalmanning33@gmail.com**. Manning will provide specialized health insurance knowledge and represents most plans in your area.

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Safe at Home: Community LIFE's Dementia Program Facilitates Living at Home

By Nancy Kennedy

"Persons with dementia and memory disorders experience many losses, changes and transitions, but they never lose the ability to receive love and caring."

That statement, spoken by Lisa H. Jenkins, MSSA, LSW, perfectly expresses the philosophy of the Dementia Care program at Community LIFE. Jenkins, who serves as the programs Behavioral Health Coordinator, works in partnership with Tina Opina, Dementia Care Coordinator, to assure that Community LIFE participants with a diagnosis of dementia can live safely in the community, in their own homes or in the home of a family member. Making that happen isn't simple or easy, but to these two professionals, it's absolutely worth the effort. They have a passion for their work and bring years of experience to their mission: to provide excellent, individualized, patient-centered care through teamwork and commitment. At Community LIFE, participants with dementia are protected, respected and cherished.

"The team approach is the key to our program," explains Tina Opina. "Lisa and I problem solve together and work closely with our staff and the families of participants. We do extensive training and education with both families and staff members, and we offer many forms of support to families. Family education is essential. I work mostly with the families, following them to make sure their loved one's needs are being met. I call them regularly and I am always available for them to call me."

Support for families includes regular support group meetings. Coping with dementia is demanding, and families may experience significant stress, Opina says. Talking with others who share the experience, and with professionals who understand, helps family members to feel less alone. Various topics are presented at the group meetings, and a monthly newsletter, including a report on the support group, is distributed to all the families. Self-care for the caregiver is a frequent topic. Every session begins and ends with poetry.

Keeping persons with dementia safe at home is especially challenging when the person has a tendency to wander – a common occurrence that is known as elopement. Elopement can be triggered by changes in routine, changes in the environment, visitors, warmer weather and even unfamiliar furniture. Community LIFE has addressed this issue with an innovative initiative called Operation



Tina Opina (right)
and Lisa Jenkins (left)

STOP – an elopement risk management program that Opina and Jenkins designed themselves. "Operation STOP helps the team identify situations which raise the risk of an elopement," Jenkins says. "Participants with dementia can be surprisingly resourceful and determined, and we have to be vigilant for potential elopement. We also help the team devise interventions to prevent it."

Training and education for the staff members of all disciplines is ongoing. According to Jenkins, staff members must be both creative thinkers and critical thinkers. "Everyone with dementia is unique. We know the participants very well, which is helpful. It's a tough job to care for persons with dementia. Caregivers have to be able to think fast, analyze a situation quickly and make a decision about how to intervene. They have to be able to answer in the moment, and it can be urgent. You don't want the situation to escalate – how do you prevent that?"

Despite the challenges, both Tina Opina and Lisa Jenkins love their work. "It's everyone's hope to age at home, in safety and love, surrounded by familiar faces and things. This job requires you to put your heart on the line," Opina says. "You think of your own loved ones. We experience a lot of loss because we have relationships with participants and families."

"The connection we have with participants is genuine," Jenkins adds. "We see that they feel safe and loved here, they relax and smile. It's satisfying when our interventions work and we have success. People thrive here, and although there are times of sadness, we are all proud of the work that we do."

That pride was bolstered when Community LIFE's Operation STOP was presented with the Clinical Quality Improvement Award and UPMC Innovation Award from UPMC's Senior Services and Community Provider Services Fair last summer.



For more information, visit www.commlife.org



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How to Slow Down the Progression of Osteoarthritis

One in four adults is diagnosed with arthritis, which is nearly 60 million Americans. While there are more than 100 types of arthritis-related conditions, osteoarthritis is by far the most common. In fact, more than half of adults with arthritis suffer from osteoarthritis. It is a painful condition, and even though there is no cure for osteoarthritis, there are steps you can take that may slow down the progression.

What is osteoarthritis?

“Osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease,” said Ajay K. Mathur, MD, FACP, a board-certified rheumatologist at Penn Highlands Rheumatology in Monongahela. “It is also known as wear-and-tear arthritis because it causes the cartilage within a joint to gradually break down, leading to changes in the underlying bone as well as causing inflammation.”

Over time, these changes worsen, causing pain, stiffness and swelling. In severe cases, osteoarthritis can also result in reduced function and range of motion, making it difficult to perform daily tasks.

Although osteoarthritis can affect any joint, it most commonly affects the hands, knees, hips, lower back and neck. Symptoms usually appear more frequently in individuals over the age of 50, but it can also affect younger people, especially those with previous joint injuries, such as a torn ACL or meniscus. Osteoarthritis usually develops slowly over time, but some patients may experience a rapid progression after suffering an injury.

How can I reduce my risk and slow down the progression?

“At one time, we thought that osteoarthritis was simply an unavoidable part of living a long and active life,” said Dr. Mathur. “But, research has revealed that it is a complex process caused by multiple factors, some of which can be delayed or even prevented. And while most older individuals develop osteoarthritis, it is not an inevitable fact of aging. Many can stay symptom-free and live an active lifestyle.” Dr. Mathur shared the following tips to lessen the chances of developing osteoarthritis.



TIP 1: Maintain a healthy weight.

Excess weight is a significant contributing factor to osteoarthritis, as it places additional pressure on weight-bearing joints. Each pound of body weight results in nearly four pounds of added stress on the knees and six pounds on the hips. This excess pressure can gradually break down the protective cartilage surrounding the joints, leading to further deterioration over time. Even a small amount of weight loss can have a significant impact on reducing joint stress and inflammation.

Continued on following page



Dealing with incontinence can be difficult at any age, but helping a child with a disability learn to manage incontinence can be especially challenging.

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TIP 2: Keep your blood sugar under control.

Certain molecules make cartilage stiffer and more sensitive to stress. Type 2 diabetes can accelerate cartilage deterioration in the joints possibly due to low-grade, chronic inflammation caused by high blood sugar and insulin resistance. More than half of people diagnosed with diabetes also suffer from arthritis. By managing blood sugar levels through lifestyle modifications and medication, you can potentially reduce your risk of developing or worsening osteoarthritis.

TIP 3: Stay active.

It may seem like exercising would be worse for stiff joints, but it is actually one of the best things you can do. Exercise improves muscle strength, flexibility and balance, which helps better support and protect the joints. Additionally, improved flexibility can help joints move more easily while enhancing balance and preventing falls. Just 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times per week can help keep your joints flexible and your muscles strong. Before beginning an exercise routine, be sure to consult your doctor.

If you experience inflammation, swelling or pain in your joints, you may need to consult with a rheumatologist. Penn Highlands Healthcare offers comprehensive care for all types of joint conditions, including osteoarthritis and other types of arthritis.

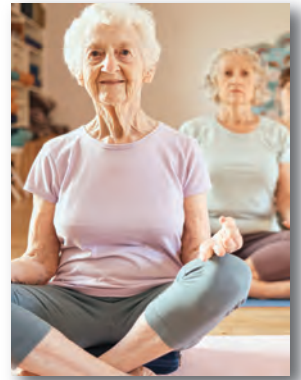


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At Providence Point, a team of wellness experts works tirelessly to support the overall wellness of all residents and staff. The Wellness Team is led by Fabiana Cheistwer, MS, CWWPM, CWP, and is committed to supporting, maintaining, and maximizing the individual wellness needs of each resident while considering their various stages of readiness to change, and their current health. Wellness at Providence Point focuses on six components: social, physical, intellectual, community, spiritual, and emotional.

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Memory and Alzheimer's Care Require Specialized Support



Caregivers may not always know where to turn when it comes to supporting a senior loved one needing memory care or Alzheimer's services. Anthology of McCandless is a trusted solution for memory care with a focus on supporting each resident's unique choices, needs and life plans.

The culture at this senior living community is rooted in values – aspirational living, smart compassion, uncompromising care, empowering connections, transparent culture and celebrating individuals. Certified, comprehensive care is available around the clock in a safe, nurturing environment. Caregivers engage with you and your loved one to learn all they can about family history, careers, hobbies and values, playing a key role in helping ensure that a resident's life remains vibrant and meaningful.



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Continued on following page



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Senior Guide

Continued from previous page

activities designed to instill meaning, assurance and purpose. Physical and mental fitness programs as well as community-focused activities keep memory care residents active and empowered to make the most of each day at Anthology of McCandless.

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Members of Anthology of McCandless' memory care team receive rigorous, specialized training in dementia care, plus additional mandatory training each year. Residents benefit from seamless care for moderate to late-stage dementia, including care for behaviors such as wandering and exit-seeking.

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Enhanced security measures are used at Anthology of McCandless, including key-padded access and real-time location systems to accommodate the evolving cognitive and physical capabilities of residents, ensuring that they maintain as much independence as possible while still remaining protected within the neighborhood.

Moving a loved one into a memory care community can be challenging. The team at Anthology is skilled at making the transition a smoother journey.

> For more information, visit AnthologyMcCandless.com or call (412) 336-8371.

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Duquesne, PA 15110
412-466-7755

Emerald Hills Retirement Residence

5785 Saltsburg Road
Penn Hills, PA 15147
412-793-3339

Retirement Residence of Glassport

220 Erie Ave.
Glassport, PA 15045
412-999-1051

The Oaks Retirement Residence

2967 Jacks Run Road
White Oak, PA 15131
412-675-0412

Morningside Crossing

1808 Jancey Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
412-441-1140

Ross Hill Retirement Residence

7500 Ross Park Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
412-847-0161

Woodcrest Retirement Residence

1502 Woodcrest Ave.
Moon, PA 15108
412-264-0918



www.cmshousing.com

TTY: 711



SENIOR RESOURCES



HEARING

Rametta Audiology & Hearing Aid Center

Tarentum - 724-604-4006
Vandergrift - 724-571-2224
Squirrel Hill - 412-422-8006

HOME CARE

LIFE Pittsburgh

412-388-8050
www.lifepittsburgh.org

INCONTINENCE

Tri-Medical

800-541-0734
www.trimedonline.com

MEDICARE/INSURANCE

Crystal A. Manning, Licensed Medicare Advisor

412-716-4942
crystalmanning33@gmail.com

Deborah Inskipt

412-694-2424 or 724-777-4152
dinskipt@healthmarkets.com

UPMC Health Plan Medicare Advantage Programs

1-844-443-7927
TTY: 1-800-361-2629
upmchealthplan.com/medicare

SENIOR LIVING

Anthology of McCandless

Personal Care | Memory Care
8651 Carey Lane, Pittsburgh, PA
412-336-8371
AnthologyMcCandless.com
You want the best for your loved one and so do we. Join us to get a glimpse of how we empower connections and practice smart compassion.

Brightwood Plaza Apartments

4940 Brightwood Rd, Bethel Park
412-831-9454
brightwoodplaza@verizon.net

Christian Housing, Inc

412-646-5193
www.christian-housing.org
Safe, comfortable, community living for adult seniors and persons with disabilities at 15 facilities throughout Pittsburgh area, as well as Greensburg, Elk County and Indiana, PA.

CMS Housing

800-545-1833 • www.cmshousing.com

SENIOR LIVING

Heritage Valley Senior Living

412-331-6139
https://www.heritagevalley.org/
services/senior-living/
Independent Living; Personal Care, Memory Care

Housing Authority City of Pittsburgh

412-456-5000 • www.hacp.org
Offers seniors safe housing and a high quality of life. Amenities such as security cameras, appliances, digital literacy services, Tenet Council events and more.

Providence Point

412-489-3550
www.ProvidencePoint.org

Westmoreland Manor / Eagle Tree Apartments

2480 S Grande Blvd, Greensburg
724-830-4000

SENIOR SERVICES

Community Life

1-866-419-1693 www.commlife.org

LIFE Pittsburgh

412-388-8050
www.lifepittsburgh.org

SKILLED NURSING & REHABILITATION

Presbyterian SeniorCare

1-888-448-5779
SrCare.org

Wesley Family Services

412-345-7420 or 724-205-6282
wfsa.org

Westmoreland Manor

724-830-4022
www.westmorelandmanor.org

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Westmoreland Transit

1 (800) 221-9282
Door-to-door service to older adults 65+ and people with disabilities. Older Adults 65+ ride FREE, Commuter service to Pittsburgh



A Nurturing Environment for Rehabilitation and Long Term Care

Offering 24/7 Skilled Nursing Care

- Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapies
- Comprehensive Respiratory Care including Tracheostomy & Non-Invasive Ventilation
- Respite and Hospice Care
- Surgical Recovery

Dr. Thomas DeGregory, Medical Director

**Schedule a
tour TODAY!**

Admissions Department

(724) 830-4022

2480 South Grande Boulevard, Greensburg, PA 15601

www.westmorelandmanor.org

**We also offer the Eagle Tree
Independent Living Apartments
in a Protective Environment**



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CHRISTIAN HOUSING, INC.



For 50 years, Christian Housing has provided safe, comfortable, community living for adult seniors and for persons with disabilities.

Located throughout the Pittsburgh area, as well as in Greensburg, Elk County and Indiana, Pa.

Our 15 facilities offer a variety of community services that meet the well-being and financial needs of our residents.



Alverno Apartments
98 Hawthorne Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15209
412.821.7080



Beechview Manor
1926 Pauline Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15216
412.571.2999



Creedmoor Court
1050 Creedmoor Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15226
412.344.1540



St. Augustine Plaza
230 Thirty-Sixth Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201
412.683.6155



Sto-Rox Plaza
731 Chartiers Avenue
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
412.331.4112



Alexis Manor
10100 Old Perry Hwy
Wexford, PA 15090
724.935.7411



Germaine Harbor
100 Germaine Drive
Bethel Park, PA 15102
412.833.9818



John Paul Plaza
1005 Herron Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412.683.5850



St. Joseph Terrace
45 Plum Street
Weedville, PA 15868
814.787.8772



St. Ambrose Manor
1235 Yetta Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
412.322.2111



Leo Meyer Manor
1015 Church Avenue
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
412.331.8000



Gilbert Straub Plaza
620 Reamer Avenue
S. Greensburg, PA 15601
724.832.2280



Clairvaux Commons
100 Clairvaux Drive
Indiana, PA 15701
724.349.2920



Fox Township Manor
108 Irishtown Road
Kersey, PA 15846
814.885.6855



St. Thomas More Manor
1000 Oxford Drive
Bethel Park, PA 15102
412.833.2410

We invite you to join us and experience the enriched joy of Senior Living.

*Experience
All the Comforts
of Home!*

Christian Housing, Inc.
3898 Old William Penn Highway
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Visit our website at www.christian-housing.org or call (412) 646-5193



Healthcare DIRECTORY



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

ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Gateway Rehab

1-800-472-1177 • gatewayrehab.org

Westmoreland Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.

724-243-2220
www.wedacinc.org

CARDIOVASCULAR

Heritage Valley Health System

724-773-4502
HVMG Health & Vascular Center—Beaver
HVMG Heart & Vascular Center—
Calcutta/East Liverpool
HVMG Heart & Vascular—
Ellwood City
HVMG Heart & Vascular—Kennedy
412-777-4386
HVMG Heart & Vascular Center—
Leetsdale
John “Tito” Francona Heart & Vascular
Center - Beaver
www.heritagevalley.org/services/cardiology/
www.heritagevalley.org/services/c
ardiovascular-services/

St. Clair Health Cardiovascular Services

412-942-4000
stclair.org/cardiovascularservices

WHS Cardiovascular Care

724-225-6500
whs.org/cardiovascularcare

CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE

Duquesne University School of Nursing

www.duq.edu/academics/colleges-and-
schools/nursing/

Washington Health System School of Nursing

whs.org/schoolofnursing
724-223-3167

DAY CARE/SPECIAL NEEDS

Child’s Way / The Children’s Home of Pittsburgh & Lemieux Family Center

412-441-4884/Childrenshomepgh.org

DENTAL

Valley Brook Dental

Joseph L. Gurecka, DMD
724-942-8982 • valleybrookdental.com

DISABILITY RESOURCES

Step By Step, Inc.

570-829-3477 ext. 7416
StepByStepUSA.com
Step By Step’s Life Sharing Program is a service where every day households open their homes to adults with intellectual disabilities. Life Sharing provides adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to become part of a family, offering an ongoing sense of belonging, as well as day-to-day care. Life Sharing is an alternative to the community home service option.

FLU VACCINATION

Allegheny County Health Department

425 1st Ave, 4th Floor Pittsburgh, PA
15219 412-578-8062
For more information, visit
AlleghenyCounty.US/Influenza

HEALTH, WELLNESS AND FITNESS CENTERS

The Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park

412-221-1099
www.twpusc.org/crc/cre-home

WHS Wilfred R Cameron Wellness Center

724-225-WELL
wrcameronwellness.org

HEPATITIS VACCINE

Allegheny County Health Department Immunization Clinic

412-578-8062

HOSPITALS

Advanced Surgical Hospital

724-884-0710 • www.ashospital.net
Orthopedic Surgery Hospital
Onsite MRI and PT/OT Services

Heritage Valley Health System

HeritageValley.org • 1-877-771-4847
Heritage Valley Beaver 724-728-7000
Heritage Valley Kennedy 412-777-6161
Heritage Valley Sewickley 412-741-6600

St. Clair Health

412-942-4000 • stclair.org

WHS Washington Hospital

724-225-7000 • www.whs.org

IMAGING

St. Clair Health Medical Imaging Services

Offered at outpatient centers in Mt. Lebanon,
Bethel Park, and Peters Township
412-942-8150
stclair.org/medicalimaging

Heritage Valley Robinson Twp Medical Neighborhood

Positron Emission Tomography (PET)
CT Scans available
Patients can be scheduled
by calling 866-251-0710.

LUNG HEALTH

Breathe Pennsylvania

724-772-1750 • breathepa.org

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Sleep Pittsburgh

Lift Chairs • Mattresses • Beds
412-462-7858
www.SleepPittsburgh.com

ORTHOPEDICS

Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation

1-800-828-CAST (2278)
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

Heritage Valley Orthopedics

Heritage Valley Beaver 724-775-4242
Heritage Valley Kennedy 412-787-7582
Heritage Valley Sewickley 412-262-7800
www.heritagevalley.org/services/
orthopedics/

St. Clair Health Center for Orthopedics

412-942-4000
stclair.org/centerfororthopedics

WHS Orthopedics and Sport Medicine

724-206-0610 • whsdocs.org

ORTHODONTICS

Good Orthodontics

Washington 724-225-1114
Mount Lebanon 412-344-4663
Pleasant Hills 412-655-4660

PEDIATRICS

WHS Washington Pediatrics

724-250-6001
www.whs.org

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers

McMurray, Bethel Park, Cecil
724-941-7070 • www.fyzical.com

WHS Outpatient Rehabilitation

724-250-6280 • whs.org/rehab

PHYSICIANS

Heritage Valley Robinson Township Medical Neighborhood

HeritageValley.org
Home to a variety of services and physician
practices.

HVMG Park Manor Medical Associates

2201 Park Manor Blvd
412-749-6920 • HeritageValley.org
Same Day Sick Visits, Self scheduling at
cms.hvhs.org/carelink/

St. Clair Health St. Clair Medical Group Network

physicians.stclair.org

Washington Physician Hospital Organization Provider Network

whs.org - See pages 21-24

REHABILITATION

Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation

1-800-828-CAST (2278)
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

Encompass Health

encompasshealth.com/pittsburghrehab
Encompass Health Rehabilitation
Hospital of Harmarville – 877-937-7342
Encompass Health Sewickley at Heritage
Valley Kennedy – 412-749-2396
Encompass Health Rehabilitation
Hospital of Sewickley – 412-749-2396

RHEUMATOLOGIST

Dr. Baowei Tang

Robinson Twp. Medical Neighborhood
724-773-1928 • HeritageValley.org

SCHOOLS SPECIAL NEEDS

Pace School

412-244-1900 • paceschool.org

VEIN CARE

Three Rivers Vein Center

412-677-9842 • threeriversveincenter.com



wesley family services

Older adult services at Wesley Family Services, we offer support to seniors in the community. We coordinate volunteer caregiving, care management, and provide support for better understanding medicare.

Older Adult Programs include:

- Options Care Management
- PA MEDI (formerly APPRISE)
- Senior Day Program for Adults with IDD
- In Service of Seniors & Open Your Heart to a Senior

For more information or to volunteer visit: wfspa.org

Allegheny County Call: 412-345-7420 or Email: ISOS@wfspa.org

Westmoreland County Call: 724-205-6282 or Email : OYHS@wfspa.org

For Options Care Management, call AAA Seniorline at [1-412-350-5460](tel:1-412-350-5460)





Here. For You.

Integrated Care Is Better Care

Dunlap Family Outpatient Center expands access to more comprehensive treatments for the St. Clair Health community.

The state-of-the-art facility is designed for seamless collaboration across disciplines, delivering enhanced coordination of care for patients like you.

From a full range of advanced imaging services to an optimal environment for the outpatient therapy experience, and more, St. Clair Health delivers:

Comprehensive, One-Stop Outpatient Services.

Close To Home.

Services

- Cardiac Testing Center
- Diagnostic & Imaging Services
- Endoscopy Suites
- Medical Oncology & Infusion Center
- Occupational, Physical & Speech Therapy Services
- Operating Rooms
- Pre-Admission Testing Center
- Specialty Clinics in Cardiology, Orthopedics, Urology & Ophthalmology
- Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy

Learn more about Dunlap Family Outpatient Center by visiting stclair.org/dunlap



stclair.org

Expert care from people who care.