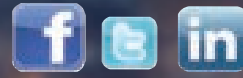




Western Pennsylvania

# Guide to Good Health

Health News You and Your Family Can Use



**FREE**  
WINTER 2022

**WHS Cameron Wellness Center Raises Awareness of Food Allergies**

**Pregnancy & COVID-19 VACCINES**

**Heart Health**  
**St. Clair Health: Making A Collaborative Effort to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke**

**Considering Adoption?**

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# 2022

**Living With A Disability**

see pages 27-33

**Medical Marijuana and Anxiety**

**Senior Guide**

*Senior Living Options, Respite Care, Home Care, Hospice, Senior Resources*

See pages 36-45

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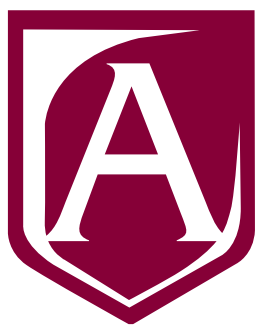


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## Publisher's Note: What has COVID taught us?

As I type these words, COVID is rampant around the country and we are anticipating a winter snow storm. Like so many others, my family has been impacted by COVID. Everyone in my family got the virus; some last year, some this year. Thankfully, we all came through it just fine. But we know that isn't true for all of you. My sincere prayer is that those of you still at risk of serious complications from this awful virus are getting the medical assistance needed to get well again.

After the past few years, it's understandable how some people have become pessimistic about the future, especially at this moment when the cost of everything—from cars to utilities and groceries and other basic necessities—are skyrocketing and inflation is at a record high.

The impact may not just be temporary. I read in a recent article that reports indicate that the Social Security trust fund is projected to run out of money in 12 years – one year sooner than previously expected, thanks to the pandemic. This is particularly frightening for Baby Boomers, many of whom are or soon will be on fixed incomes. As inflation continues to take a bigger and bigger toll on budgets, such a trend would be truly devastating for millions.

Many are understandably pointing to COVID as the cause of our recent troubles, but our challenges go much deeper than that. COVID, as problematic as it has been, has mostly served to hold a figurative magnifying glass on the issues confronting our nation. Indeed, if you have a son or daughter serving in the military, I would think Russia or China concern you more than the person next to you in the grocery store not wearing a mask. If you are now frightened to walk alone in public for fear of being mugged, you probably are not fretting over whether or not your possible assailant has been vaccinated.

We often seem like a country being torn apart at the seams. We say we are a nation that respects freedom above all else, but now it feels like we really only respect your freedom to agree with me. We now judge the entire content of a person's character based on vaccination status, what news channels they watch or who they voted for in the last election. Yet there was a time—which seems so long ago—when people accepted and respected dif-

ferences in opinions, beliefs or religion. In fact, we didn't just accept them, we welcomed them among our friends because it expanded our own knowledge and experiences and opened our eyes to a world of beautiful diversity.

Hard to believe now, but we once thought of that as a good thing. Sadly, that is no longer true.

So where does that leave us? Is the only remaining option to continue to shrink into our little tribes and only accept those who adhere to a strict list of beliefs and behaviors? Is that the world we are doomed to occupy?

What a dire picture that paints. But it doesn't have to be that way.

There is a tendency for the current generation to think that no previous generation faced hurdles as severe or insurmountable as COVID. But that's not true. In just the past century, civilization faced a Great Depression, two World Wars, a Cold War, the threaten of nuclear annihilation and even the Spanish flu.

But what they forgot to take into account are those intangible factors within each of us: Resilience and Faith. There is something about the human species that simply will not let us quit, at least not collectively. Most important, our resilience is buoyed by Hope – that tomorrow can be better than yesterday and that we can be better than we were in the past with the help of God.

Looking out the window, I think of what my neighborhood will look like in a couple of days, after the snow has accumulated on the rooftops, the lawns and the roads. I hope I remind myself to appreciate the beauty of the moment before that beautiful white veil will melt away.

Here's hoping that soon, the worst of the COVID pandemic will be over and life will return to some version of normal for all of us. Perhaps with this experience behind us, we will not be so quick to judge each other and once again try to relate as neighbors and friends. If that happens, then COVID, as awful as it has been, at least will have taught us something about ourselves, each other, and living life to the fullest.

- Nancy Lammie, [lammienancy@gmail.com](mailto:lammienancy@gmail.com)

## IBD U.N.I.T.E. 2022

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## Staying Healthy During the Winter

*It was a challenging year weather-wise for those with a chronic lung disease. The extreme heat, humidity and accompanying storms made it much more difficult to breathe, but colder weather has arrived, so here are some reminders for those with chronic respiratory problems.*



- **Keep up with all your medications and make sure you have enough for a few days in case you can't get out to get them.** Better yet, have them delivered.

- **If you don't have a rescue inhaler, get one.** The cold weather affects many folks with chronic lung disease, so be prepared for those times when you may need extra help in addition to your maintenance medications.

- **Don't stop your pulmonary rehab regimen.** Winter is no time to have your defenses down and except for the very coldest days there is no good excuse not to go. The exercise will do you good and keep you healthier all year round.

- **When you're inside more, stay in contact with friends and relatives to keep loneliness away.** Your mental health is just as important as your physical well-being.


- **Make chicken soup.** Its healing properties are documented, and it tastes so good when it gets colder outside. Make a big pot and put some in the freezer.

To sum up, stay warm, take your prescribed medications as directed, keep exercising and before you know it winter will just be something to remember while you're enjoying some old-fashioned porch-sitting.

➤ For more information, visit **Breathe Pennsylvania** at [www.breathepa.org](http://www.breathepa.org).

References:

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/what-to-do-when-winter-takes-your-breath-away/>  
<https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/10/12/the-science-of-chicken-soup/>



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# Healthy Beginnings



## New Year – Hear Your Best in 2022!

CHEERS for a New Year! As we turn the page to 2022 staying healthy is top of mind. Some very common resolutions include leading a healthier lifestyle, losing weight, and scheduling annual exams. Those annual exams should also include a hearing test.

After spending time with friends and family during the holiday, did you notice a difference in the ability to hear - either for yourself or a loved one? Did you watch a loved one isolate themselves or not participate in conversations? As we gathered around the dinner table, visited family, and attended holiday parties were you able to hear conversations clearly?

We hear with our brains and Swift Audiology wants to ensure you stay connected to loved ones. Learn the signs and symptoms of hearing loss. Optimal hearing is important to keep your mind cognitively sharp. Untreated hearing loss and cognitive decline show the same symptoms. Over time, hearing loss can also lead to brain atrophy if left untreated.

### Have you experienced these things or seen this with a loved one?

- Are you having to repeat or raise the volume of your voice to be heard? Although masks are an important protective measure against COVID-19, they can dampen sound and make communication more difficult.
- Check the volume and turn down the noise. Do you find the TV volume turned up way too loud when visiting family? Or ... do people ask you to turn down your TV volume as it's too loud for them to hear clearly?
- Withdrawing from family conversations and nonparticipation in family gatherings leads to isolation.

If you currently wear hearing aids, when is the last time your aids have been serviced? New technology allows for accommodations in hearing aid function in noisy situations. No or little professional maintenance usually leads to aids in the drawer.

Hearing aid benefits can diminish due to wax and debris from our ears, perspiration, dead skin and hair follicles, and dirt from handling. To combat this, the aids need to be vacuumed out, receiver and microphone filters, ear hooks, tubings, and domes need to be replaced.

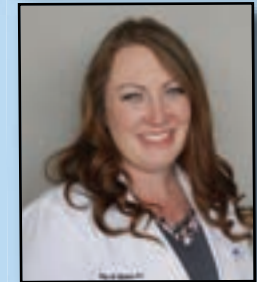
Ongoing care leads to years of better hearing from one pair of aids. It's important to have your hearing aids serviced regularly to maintain optimal results.

Hear clearly, make memories, and stay healthy in 2022!

**To learn more about hearing health and our test drive program, call (412) 851-6467 or visit [www.swiftaudiology.com/hear](http://www.swiftaudiology.com/hear).**



**Debra Swift** is Founder and President of **Swift Audiology** and **Megan Myers-Auria** is Doctor of Audiology. The practice provides hearing loss services, hearing protection, and medical hearing aid devices to patients at 4 convenient offices throughout the Pittsburgh region. For more information, visit [swiftaudiology.com](http://swiftaudiology.com) or call (412) 274-7285.



**By Debra Swift, B.C.-H.I.S., and Megan Myers-Auria, Au.D., CCC-A**

## Don't Miss Your Shot to Fight the Flu!

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cautions of a potentially severe Influenza season this year in the United States, so the Allegheny County Health Department is taking preventative measures by educating the public about the flu.

The flu season typically runs from October through May, with the peak often coming in February. Since the vaccine is most effective in the first six months following the shot, the best time to get it is before the end of October. Cases can occur as late as May, so even people who don't get it in October should still get it later in the season. Getting the vaccine not only protects the individual, but their family and their community.

The CDC is warning of a severe

flu season because last season was abnormally mild, the result of the pandemic and the onset of social distancing and masking. The Health Department advises the public to wash their hands regularly, get vaccinated, cover up when coughing and keep those masks handy. Masking protects you when you are healthy and others when you are sick.

Studies show that 8 percent of the population will get influenza and have symptoms—which means approximately 100,000 residents of Allegheny County will become ill with the flu. Others will get it and show no symptoms but could still be contagious. Being healthy in all aspects—by eating healthy, getting proper rest, exercising regularly and reducing stress—can help



boost the immune system, reduce the chance of getting sick and lower recovery time.

Finally: the flu vaccine has been around for almost 80 years, but we understand that some people have questions and concerns. We are here to listen and to provide evidence-based answers. Knowledge is power, and we want everyone to

have the correct information when deciding what's best for themselves and their loved ones.



For answers to frequently asked questions about the flu and the vaccine, visit [AlleghenyCounty.us/Influenza](http://AlleghenyCounty.us/Influenza) or contact us at (412) 578-8062.

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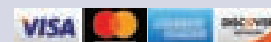
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## WHS Cameron Wellness Center Raises Awareness of Food Allergies and Food Sensitivities

By Andrew Wilson

Parents of an infant who is ready to eat solid food often fret about how to introduce new foods and avoid allergies.

“The research used to say that parents should delay the introduction of some potentially allergenic food until the child is at least two years of age,” said Michelle Campion, MS, RD, LDN, CLT, a registered dietitian with the WHS Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center at Washington Health System (WHS). “But now research shows some potentially allergenic foods, like peanuts and eggs, should be introduced around four to six months of age to greatly reduce the risk of developing a food allergy.”

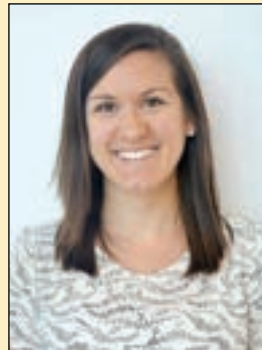
### Foods that Trigger Allergies

Campion said there are nine foods that have the highest potential of triggering allergies.

The foods are:

- peanuts
- eggs
- tree nuts (like almonds, pecans, or cashews)
- fish
- shellfish
- soy
- dairy
- wheat
- sesame

“When introducing a new potentially allergenic food to a baby, it is recommended to wait three days before introducing another one of the potential allergens,” said Campion, who explained that the new food should be given for each of the three days before introducing another new



**“But now research shows some potentially allergenic foods, like peanuts and eggs, should be introduced around four to six months of age to greatly reduce the risk of developing a food allergy.”**

*-Michelle Campion, MS, RD, LDN, CLT,  
WHS Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center  
at Washington Health System (WHS)*

food. “Introduce early and often,” she said. “For all the other foods other than the top nine allergens, the risk of allergy is very low, so you can introduce one new food per day.”

She said evidence suggests that some children may outgrow certain food allergies as they grow older. Limited research has shown that giving a child a tiny amount each day of the food causing the allergy and gradually increasing that amount over several months can lead to children outgrowing the allergy faster.

“That approach should only be attempted under a doctor’s direct supervision,” cautioned Campion. “Allergies can be dangerous and life threatening.”

While food allergies can be more dangerous, more of the U.S. population may have a food sensitivity rather than an allergic condition.

“Food allergies can be life threatening, but food sensitivities can affect the quality of life of an individual,” said Campion, who added that current estimates are food allergies affect about four to six percent of the U.S. population while close to one-third of the population

may have food sensitivities.

Reactions to a food allergy may be as mild as a skin rash or a swollen lip, but they can be as serious and potentially life threatening as having one’s throat or airway close. Such symptoms usually show up within minutes of being exposed even slightly to the allergen.

“Allergies are usually easier to pinpoint, but sensitivities can be more difficult to diagnose,” said Campion.

For one thing, she said, reactions to food sensitivities may take a longer time to develop and can often be dependent on the amount of the food being consumed. Someone with a sensitivity to wheat may not notice any reaction if the only food containing wheat that they consume over the course of a day is a piece of toast eaten with breakfast.

“However, if they have toast for breakfast, a wheat bread sandwich for lunch, and wheat pasta for dinner, they could have a reaction,” said Campion.

Food sensitivities can often be dismissed as being due to some other cause, such as food poisoning or indigestion. Signs of food

sensitivities can vary and may exhibit as diarrhea, constipation, migraines, brain fog, or irritating skin rashes, to name just a few.

“One of the things that we do at the Cameron Wellness Center is help people get their life back,” Campion said. “We can help with meal plans and food choices.”

She said that one of the hardest parts about food sensitivity is that it may be caused by an otherwise healthy food choice that simply doesn’t react well within a particular individual’s digestive tract. In addition, favorite foods may not be exempt from such reactions.

“It may be difficult to hear, but some of the foods we most crave are what can cause us problems,” said Campion, adding that while people may resist giving up a favorite food, “after experiencing symptoms for several weeks, they may be more willing and receptive to making a change.”

She said that the WHS Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center tries to educate patients about what to look for in the grocery store and restaurants.

“Reading labels is important,” Campion said. “Sometimes it can be tough to figure out if a particular ingredient is in a food, but we give them some alternative choices to substitute for the ingredient that is causing the problems.”



The Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center, part of the Washington Health System, is a community wellness center that takes a comprehensive approach to healthy living and fitness. For more information, visit [www.wrcameronwellness.org](http://www.wrcameronwellness.org) or call (724) 225-WELL (9355).



# Coffee Break with Judy's Java Joint

## Good News! Coffee is Good for You!

By Lois Thomson

Coffee drinkers of the world, your day has come! After hearing for decades about the detriments of drinking coffee and how you should abstain, there is some good news – news that says coffee may actually be beneficial for you!

Why the 180-degree turnaround? Part of the reason is because people who consumed large quantities of coffee in the past also tended to be overweight, use tobacco, and have sedentary lifestyles – three characteristics that wouldn't be healthy even for non-coffee drinkers. However, as more and more people are paying attention to exercise and their diets, coffee isn't necessarily considered to be harmful any more, and health benefits are in fact being discovered.

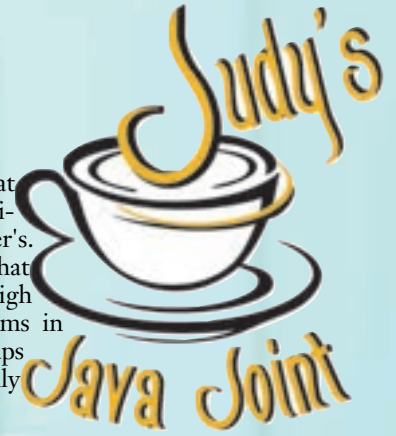
For example, a recent study showed that people who drink three to five cups a day were less likely to die from heart disease or stroke, compared with those who drank little or no coffee. Coffee can also give an energy boost, as it can help you feel less tired and increase your get-up-and-go during the day. In addition, it may have intellectual benefits by improving memory and mood.

Along with regular physical activity and watching your diet, one study found a strong connection between coffee consumption and reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes. Coffee may also help protect the liver, as researchers believe the beverage contains an ingredient that could contribute to lowering the risk of cirrhosis, while others found that people who drank two cups per day had a 43 percent lower risk of getting liver cancer.

If you're trying to keep your weight under control, coffee may give your body a metabolic boost by increasing the rate that fat burns. Finally, coffee can help lower the risk of neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, and spinal muscular atrophy.

One study in particular noted that caffeine was associated with a significantly lower risk of getting Alzheimer's.

This is not to say, however, that indulgers shouldn't be cautious, as high caffeine content can create problems in other areas. But overall, those few cups a day may not be as bad as originally believed.



**Judy's Java Joint** is a family-owned local coffee shop located in the Ruthfred Shopping Center, 3400 South Park Rd., Bethel Park. Enjoy our cozy shop to do work (free wi-fi), meet with friends or just relax with a great cup of coffee. We have everything you might be craving: gourmet coffee and tea, espresso drinks, smoothies, frappes, hot chocolate, chai tea, protein frappes, pastries and more! Mon-Fri 6:30 a.m.–2 p.m., Sat 8 a.m.–2 p.m.; **412-833-5282; judysjava.com**



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## St. Clair Health: Making A Collaborative Effort to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke



By Daniel Casciato

**February is American Heart Month making now the perfect time to learn about your risk for heart disease and stroke, as well as the steps you can take to help your cardiovascular system.**

“Stroke and heart disease are vascular diseases,” says Dr. Andy C. Kiser, Chief of Cardiac Surgery. “The vessels in the brain and the vessels in the heart are very small and don’t tolerate a lot of trauma—repeated trauma to the vessel causes plaque to form, which narrows the vessel. When that plaque in the narrowed vessel ruptures, it causes an immediate heart attack or an immediate stroke.”

**Several things can increase your risk of vascular disease, including:**

- Diabetes
- Gender (with men at a higher risk than women)
- High blood pressure
- High levels of fats like cholesterol and triglycerides
- Lack of physical activity
- Being overweight or obese
- Smoking
- Stress
- Family history of vascular disease, heart attack, or stroke

“One thing we can’t control is our genes,” says Dr. Kiser. “There’s a large component of family history that contributes to heart disease as well as stroke. And while we can’t control that, we can certainly be more aggressive about mitigating the other comorbidities.”

While vascular disease can be treated with medications that help improve blood pressure and cholesterol or help prevent blood clots from forming, people can also

incorporate lifestyle changes that make a big difference, including:

- Eating a healthy diet to help lower blood sugar or cholesterol
- Exercising regularly
- Utilizing stress management techniques
- Quitting tobacco

“Smoking is a big part of vascular disease,” explains Dr. Kiser. “We don’t pay as much attention to it now because most public places are smoke-free, but there’s still a large population of people who smoke. Smoking is a real problem with heart disease and stroke, not to mention lung disease. Blood pressure management is also a big part of vascular disease because the trauma to the blood vessel sometimes comes from higher blood pressure.”

Dr. Kiser further explains that while many people are aware of the classic signs of heart disease—such as chest tightness, pressure, or pain—one surprising cue from your body that could be a cardiovascular concern is a gradual shortness of breath.

“Many patients don’t even know it’s happening,” he says. “So many folks don’t realize they have been getting more and more short of breath over time—and it may progress so slowly that they don’t pick up on it at all. Maybe you can go up four flights of stairs without much of a problem one day, but then a month later you get a little winded. Next thing you know, you’re really struggling—but you’ve adjusted your lifestyle and maybe you’re just taking the eleva-

tor now. It could actually be an issue with your heart causing this shortness of breath.”

To help break down the impact of heart disease and stroke plus advancements in the respective fields that help mitigate the risks associated with them, St. Clair Health held a virtual Heart + Stroke Symposium in 2021 which brought together a team of their experts to discuss stroke awareness and a pair of new procedures now available at the Hospital. Dr. Maxim D. Hammer, Chief of Neurology, opened the series with a presentation on stroke awareness.

“The symposium was a way for us to put our collaborative program out in front of the community,” says Dr. Kiser. “We want patients to be better equipped to manage heart disease and stroke. With Dr. Hammer joining us, we’ve really elevated our stroke program and we’ve been able to incorporate some of the things we can do to help prevent a stroke. It’s really a team effort to make sure every patient receives what they need, and to help educate them so that we can help prevent strokes and cardiovascular problems.”

Also featured at the symposium: Dr. Kyle D. Buchanan discussing the patent foramen ovale (PFO) closure device that helps reduce the risk of stroke and Dr. Jeffrey C. Liu presenting on the Watchman™ device for patients with atrial fibrillation (AFIB) who aren’t good candidates for blood thinners.

Dr. Kiser adds that St. Clair is



**“It’s really a team effort to make sure every patient receives what they need, and to help educate them so that we can help prevent strokes and cardiovascular problems.”**

*-Dr. Andy C. Kiser,  
Chief of Cardiac Surgery,  
St. Clair Health*

making a concerted effort to bridge the gap that ensures patients in the community have access to the best care possible.

“With events like the annual Pittsburgh Heart Team Summit, we try to be as collaborative as possible with other healthcare institutions in the city such as UPMC and AHN,” says Dr. Kiser. “Our goal is to focus not on outperforming each other, but toward creating a healthcare community that outperforms the nation in patient care.”



For more information, visit [stclair.org/heart-stroke-symposium](http://stclair.org/heart-stroke-symposium).

# Heart Health

As a central component of the human body, the cardiac system sets the pace for the entire body. Made up of the heart and blood vessels, the cardiac system delivers important fuel—oxygen-rich-blood—to keep the body functioning efficiently. When conditions such as heart disease, stroke or surgery impact the system, inpatient rehabilitation can make a difference in how well the body responds to treatment and help patients regain strength as they begin their recovery.

## Who can benefit from cardiac care in an inpatient rehabilitation setting?

Patients currently in acute care hospitals who are medically stable but not yet ready to return home due to medical and therapy needs may be a candidate for inpatient cardiac care.

Conditions Encompass Health rehabilitation hospitals care for include, but are not limited to:

- Congestive heart failure
- Heart attack
- Bypass surgery
- Valve or pacemaker replacement

## What does inpatient rehabilitation for cardiac patients look like?

For patients following open-heart surgeries, sternal precautions are put in place by your surgeon to limit movement help your sternum heal after the procedure. Precautions may include:

- Lifting no more than 5 to 8 pounds
- Limiting arm movement, especially overhead, backward and to the side
- No pushing or pulling exercises

Inpatient rehabilitation can help patients learn

to navigate these precautions while still performing daily activities such as bathing, eating, getting out of bed and chairs, going to the bathroom, grooming and more, while under the oversight of clinicians who monitor the patient's vitals and overall function of the cardiac system.

Features of an inpatient rehabilitation program also include general strengthening, as the cardiac systems of these patients are often functioning at below 50 percent. At Encompass Health inpatient rehabilitation hospitals, comprehensive patient and caregiver education is also a key component of therapy, including education on diet. Dietitians not only create heart-healthy meal plans for cardiac patients, but they also educate patients and their caregivers on appropriate dietary considerations and the role diet plays in improving heart health.

## Why choose inpatient rehabilitation?

At inpatient rehabilitation hospitals, registered nurses, many of whom specialize in rehabilitation, are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Rehabilitation physicians also see patients several times weekly. This enhanced medical oversight means cardiac patients are continually monitored for signs of complications and medical staff is readily available should any chest pains or other symptoms arise during their stay.

## How Inpatient Rehabilitation Can Benefit Cardiac Patients

By Kayla Phillips  
at [blog.encompasshealth.com](http://blog.encompasshealth.com)

## What is cardiac rehabilitation?

Typically, the term “cardiac rehabilitation” refers to a medically supervised outpatient program designed to improve your cardiovascular health if you have experienced heart attack, heart failure, angioplasty or heart surgery.

According to the American Heart Association, components of a cardiac rehab program typically include exercise and training to increase the function of your cardiac system, education for heart healthy living and counseling to reduce stress.

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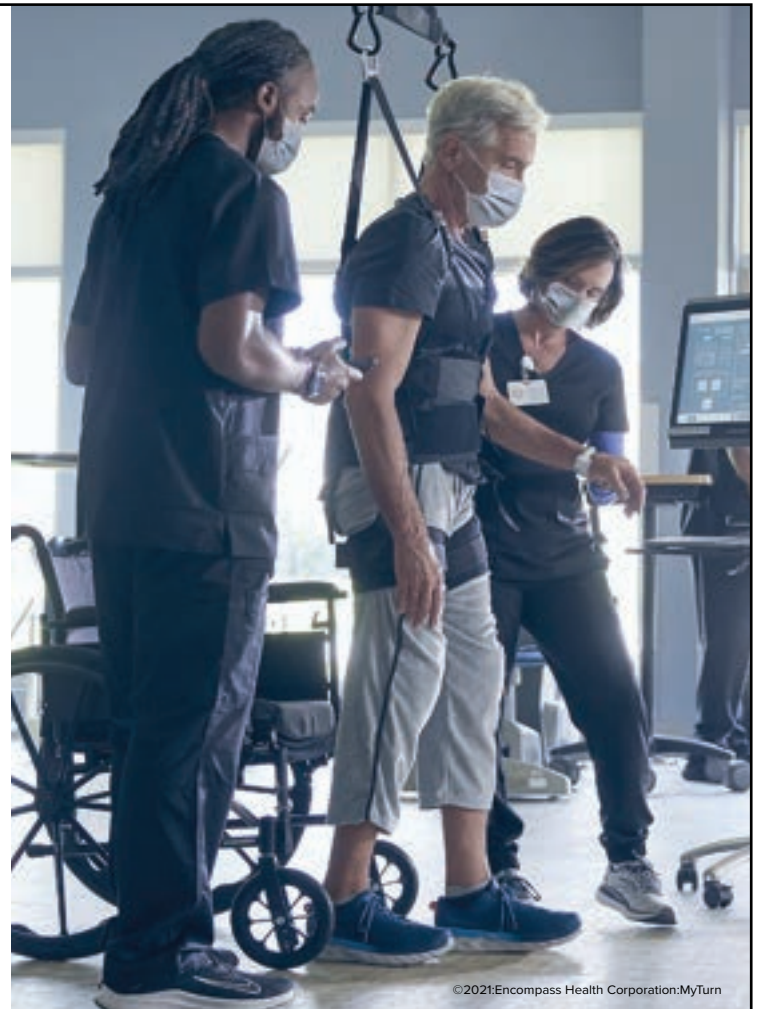
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By Nancy Kennedy

Stroke (brain attack) is the fifth leading cause of death in America, after heart disease and all cancers combined, and is the leading cause of permanent, life-altering disability. About 795,000 strokes occur in the U.S. every year, according to the National Stroke Association, with 75% affecting persons over the age of 65. Although your risk of stroke rises as you age, a stroke can happen at any age. Adults of all ages should determine their personal stroke risk, learn to recognize signs of stroke in themselves and others, and take steps to minimize their risk.

A stroke disrupts blood flow to the brain, possibly resulting in brain injury and damage and subsequent disability. There are two kinds of stroke: ischemic (blockage of a blood vessel) and hemorrhagic (burst blood vessel). Nearly 90% of strokes are ischemic strokes. The earlier that treatment is initiated, the greater the chance to limit or reverse brain damage and achieve a favorable outcome.



## ANSWERS

### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF STROKE by answering the TRUE or FALSE questions below.

Test your knowledge of stroke by answering the following true or false statements:

1. Every ten years after age 55, your stroke risk doubles.
2. Stroke is increasing in younger adults.
3. A mini-stroke is a warning that a stroke may occur.
4. Stroke is more common in men.
5. Sickle cell disease is a risk factor for stroke.
6. Strokes are potentially preventable.
7. The first eight hours after stroke is a critical period for intervention.
8. If you experience signs of stroke, you should go to bed and see how you feel in the morning.
9. Neck pain can be an early sign of stroke.
10. Atrial fibrillation is a leading cause of stroke.

Take the Stroke Risk test at the National Stroke Association website [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org).

1. TRUE.
2. TRUE. The American Heart Association says that this increase is due to rising rates of obesity and hypertension among young adults.
3. TRUE. A mini stroke, or transient ischemic attack (TIA) is a warning stroke. Many people dismiss the symptoms, such as dizziness or weakness, and attribute them to fatigue. But a TIA is a medical emergency. TIA occurs before 15% of full strokes and should never be ignored.
4. FALSE. More women than men die from stroke. Stroke kills more women than breast cancer.
5. TRUE. Persons with sickle cell disease have a higher risk of stroke. African Americans have double the incidence of stroke and are more likely to die of stroke than Caucasian Americans.
6. TRUE. The key word is potentially – 80% of strokes are preventable.
7. FALSE. The first THREE hours are a window of opportunity to reverse or minimize the effects of stroke.
8. FALSE. Anyone with stroke symptoms should go immediately to the Emergency Room.
9. TRUE. Neck pain can be an early warning.
10. TRUE. Atrial fibrillation is the leading cause of stroke but it is treatable. If you have palpitations, rapid heart rate, or dizziness, you may have A Fib. See your PCP for an evaluation. If you have been diagnosed with A Fib, take your medications exactly as ordered.

\*\*\*\*\*

Half of American adults have high blood pressure. Good self-care, along with compliance with your doctor's care, can be very effective in managing high blood pressure.

#### Signs of Stroke:

- Sudden onset of dizziness or severe headache
- Nausea
- Loss of language – inability to speak or understand words
- Sudden change in vision
- Sudden weakness in an extremity
- Difficulty walking or losing one's balance
- Sudden neck pain
- Numbness of the face or extremity

#### The Classic Signs: Remember FAST

Face drooping /Arm weakness /Speech slurring /Time to call 911

#### To lower your risk of stroke:

- Manage your weight – keep it in the normal range
- Live a heart healthy lifestyle
- No smoking
- If you are diabetic, follow your regimen; stroke is more common in people with diabetes.
- Manage your blood pressure. Take your meds! Hypertension is a silent condition and your blood pressure meds must be taken every day.
- Learn to reduce your salt intake.

# In Street Medicine, Nurses Provide Loving Care and Human Connection

By Nancy Kennedy

Dr. Jim Withers is a highly regarded Pittsburgh physician who is the founder and director of Operation Safety Net (OSN), a Pittsburgh Mercy program that takes health care to the streets, to persons who are experiencing homelessness. Since 1993, Dr. Withers and his team have practiced “street medicine” – a new medical specialty that combines primary care, preventive care, mental health care and crisis intervention. Dr. Withers originated the concept and has developed the practice of street medicine, creating a global movement; he is also the founder of the non-profit International Street Medicine Institute.

Street medicine reverses the usual process of accessing health care, in which the patient finds a doctor and goes to that doctor for care. OSN takes the health care professionals to the patient, wherever they may be – and that could be a street, shelter, encampment, park or a space beneath a bridge. These patients need health care and may need it urgently. “Street medicine is an arena where you can be there for people who are truly in need,” Dr. Withers says. “You can make a difference every single time. The neediest people can’t get to the health care system.

“Street medicine is hard, gut-wrenching, physically and emotionally exhausting work,” Dr. Withers says. “We’re out there every day, immersed in suffering, injustice and death. We go toward the pain of others, rather



Operation Safety Net nurse practitioner Danielle Schnauber, MSN, APRN and Dr. Jim Withers make medical rounds on the streets of Pittsburgh.

than running away from it.” The OSN team is comprised of resident physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, and outreach workers, along with consultants such as psychiatrists. Led by Dr. Withers, this strong, deeply committed team brings medical care, practical help, sustenance, and above all, human connection, to people who need it desperately.

“The team is wonderful,” says Dr. Withers, who has high praise for the nurses who have chosen this extremely demanding specialty. Nurses are the heart and soul of street medicine, he says, and have been since the beginning. They’ve taught him a lot, he says, and his first

nurse-teacher was his own mother who taught him to treat others with respect and kindness. “Nurses are dedicated to the whole person. A nurse who chooses street medicine needs a specific skill set: experience with impoverished populations, mental health care or addiction is helpful. They need the ability to be present emotionally and to listen very well.”

Nurses practice in countless settings, but street medicine is surely one of the most non-traditional. To the nurses who practice it, it’s a deeply satisfying specialty that is about treating the person first, and the medical condition second.

One of these nurses is Danielle Schnauber, MSN, APRN, FNP-C. A former ER nurse and nurse educator, she possesses impeccable credentials and experience, and she is right where she wants to be – on the streets of Pittsburgh. “I didn’t feel fulfilled in previous positions. When I learned

*Continued on page 17*

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# Advice For Families Considering Adoption

By Lois Thomson

Adopting a child can be a long and frustrating process, so it's important for families to work with an agency that can provide support throughout. Erika Schmitt, director of adoption and permanency, says The Children's Home of Pittsburgh And Lemieux Family Center can offer that support.

Children are generally adopted either through domestic infant adoption or adoption from foster care. Schmitt explained the former is considered to be private voluntary adoption. "A woman or couple that's facing an unplanned pregnancy or has a newborn that they can't care for, makes a voluntary plan to place a baby for adoption. The baby is usually anywhere (in age) from straight from the hospital up to six months old." On the other hand, adoption from foster care is adopting a child currently in the Pennsylvania child welfare system.

Schmitt offered advice for people



**"If someone comes in open-minded, if they're open to older children, if they're open to siblings, or children with special needs, it's much easier to match as there are many more children available."**

-Erica Schmitt

who are interested in adopting, and first pointed out, "Families should thoroughly do their research before committing to agencies to find out the agency's fee structure, the placement rate, the rate of what we

call disruption when adoption doesn't go through. Make sure the program is a fit because you're investing a lot of time and money with an agency."

She also emphasized that communication and support is key with all parties involved. That may include counseling right from the beginning, as there is a support group for families who are going through infertility. There is an adoption information session for those who just want to become familiar with the process. This gives them the opportunity to see if adoption is right for them.

Counseling is offered to the biological parents before, during, and after the placement of the adoption. Post-adoption counseling is also available, which is services for children and families who might be struggling after the adoption has been finalized.

Among the two types of adoption available, Schmitt said there is usually a long wait – as much as four or

five years – for a domestic infant adoption. "There are many more families who want to adopt a baby or young child, than there are babies and young children available." The wait can be shorter for adoption from foster care, as the children are already in the system and in need of a permanent family. "If someone comes in open-minded, if they're open to older children, if they're open to siblings, or children with special needs, it's much easier to match as there are many more children available. But that's not for every family, and I tell families it's OK to know your limitations."

The important thing is to find the right match for a child. "That's what makes adoption successful, when it's the best match for family and child. Have some patience with the process."

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

## Adoptive Families Commend Care from The Children's Home

By Lois Thomson

Two area families who have benefitted from adoptions handled by The Children's Home are Jill and Dan Friday, and Jackie and Jason Blough. Both couples discovered that they weren't able to have children, and turned to The Children's Home of Pittsburgh And Lemieux Family Center for a successful outcome.

Jackie said that when she and her husband learned they couldn't have children, they looked into adoption right away. An adoption attorney provided information, but Jason said, "We didn't know what was next. We started searching agencies on our own, and The Children's Home kept popping up." One thing that stood out was that costs were listed on the website. "There is a financial impact," he said, "but it was very clear what you paid the agency for. The transparency was one of the things we liked."

After they began working with the agency an opportunity for a match arose, and while the Bloughs thought everything was ready to go, it fell through. However, a month later they found out about Thayer, their now-6-year-old son. Jason said the agency worked well with them. "One of the big questions is race. That is something we had to decide early-on, if we were open to a trans-racial adoption. We were, and that opened up more opportunities."

The Bloughs, of Whitehall, brought Thayer home from the hospital when he was five days old, and about three years later they decided they wanted to try again. Jackie said, "They told us it would be a longer wait because we already had a child," but six weeks later, Aria – who was about a month old – was welcomed into their home.

Jason said, "Both of our kids are Black, but we decided that was something we were willing to do. There were situations we turned down, and you feel horrible, but they weren't right for us." Jackie added, "You have to be honest with yourself and know your own limits. You want a child, but you have to consider their needs, too. If there's a medical situation and you know you're not equipped to handle it, you have to turn it down. That's not fair to the child or to you."

Like the Bloughs, the Fridays, of Stanton Heights, also learned they were unable to have children, but their first step was to see a fertility doctor.



Jill And Dan Friday (left) And Jackie And Jason Blough (right) both used The Children's Home of Pittsburgh And Lemieux Family Center for assistance with their adoption.

However, after three unsuccessful tries, the doctor informed them not only that they couldn't have children, but also that it wouldn't be safe for Jill to try again. "I always knew that if I couldn't have my own children, we would adopt," she said. "We looked for agencies both national and local, and The Children's Home was the best fit. It was what I needed at that time, a smaller agency that understood what I had been through, where we weren't just a number."

The Fridays were pleased with The Children's Home, but, as with the Bloughs, they encountered a few bumps along the way. They started the process in 2015, and after attending classes were selected by another couple to be the adoptive parents. However, a week before the baby was born, the parents changed their minds. Jill said her family took it harder than she did, because they viewed it as a fourth loss. A new baby was going to become available, though, but the case worker gave the caveat, don't try to replace a baby with another baby. In other words, be sure this is the baby you really want.

"Those words were so powerful. I thought, oh my gosh, The Children's Home cares about you and cares about this baby and the birth parents and making sure everyone would be okay and happy and healthy." The baby lived with a transitional family for the first six weeks, which is standard practice, just to make sure her birth parents were 100 percent certain that this was the right decision.

Cate is now 5 years old, and Jill said, "This was the daughter we were supposed to have; she completes our family. I can't imagine any other child."



## Pregnancy & COVID-19 Vaccines: What You Need To Know

By Daniel Casciato

***The COVID-19 vaccines and associated booster shots currently authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are strongly recommended for pregnant and lactating women, as well as those trying or intending to become pregnant.***

There are two levels to this, according to Dr. Michelle L. Harvison, Chair of Obstetrics/ Gynecology for St. Clair Health who practices with Advanced Women's Care. The first is at the individual level—for both mother and child.

“We know at this point in the pandemic that pregnant women are at an increased risk of adverse side effects during pregnancy when they get the coronavirus,” she says. “The main thing is really understanding just how serious that elevated risk can be. Adverse outcomes include a significantly higher risk of the following: miscarriage, preeclampsia, preterm delivery, cesarean delivery, thromboembolism, admission to the intensive care unit, stillbirth, and maternal death.”

The second level is about helping to protect your loved ones and your community.

“Looking at the betterment of society as a whole, it is undeniable that those who are vaccinated are both less likely to get the virus and less likely to perpetuate the pandemic,” says Dr. Harvison.

Data strongly indicates that the benefits of getting vaccinated far outweigh the potential side effects for those who are pregnant or might become pregnant in the future.

“We have given the vaccines to thousands of women trying to get pregnant, as well as women who are currently pregnant and breastfeeding, and we have found no significant adverse events that would warrant a reason to not receive the vaccine,” Dr. Harvison says.

Because the virus and its variants remain prevalent, Dr. Harvison recommends getting the vaccine as soon as possible.

“There’s definitely no benefit to waiting,” she says. “At any point in pregnancy, the vaccine is considered safe and effective at preventing severe side effects and death. So, the sooner, the better.”

For women who remain apprehensive and choose to wait, benefits still exist when getting vaccinated in the postpartum period. “Number one: because women continue to be at that increased risk of coronavirus complications immediately after giving birth. And number two: when breastfeeding, that immunity does transfer to the baby and help protect the baby during this time as well,” Dr. Harvison says.

**“We have given the vaccines to thousands of women trying to get pregnant, as well as women who are currently pregnant and breastfeeding, and we have found no significant adverse events that would warrant a reason to not receive the vaccine.”**

*-Dr. Michelle L. Harvison, Chair of Obstetrics/ Gynecology for St. Clair Health who practices with Advanced Women's Care*



The biggest myth about the vaccine related to pregnancy that Dr. Harvison would like to debunk is that it causes infertility.

“There is no truth to that,” she adds emphatically.

One concern some women—not those who are expecting—have had is experiencing irregularities with their periods right after receiving the COVID vaccine. “Many women are concerned about this,” says Dr. Harvison. “It is transient and resolves on its own.”

If you have already received your primary series of the vaccine, Dr. Harvison urges you to get the booster shot.

“We are seeing the effects of the vaccine start to wane at that six- and seven-month mark after initial vaccinations. So it’s definitely helpful to get the booster,” she says.

Additionally, if you previously had COVID and recovered, it remains highly beneficial to get the vaccine and/or the booster shot

“This is something that’s been tested and followed significantly more recently,” Dr. Harvison says. “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) VISION Project research has compared patients who recovered from COVID to people who are vaccinated. The vaccine is, of course, a safer way to acquire immunity and also seems to protect longer and better. So even people who have had COVID still benefit from getting the vaccine.”



For more information, visit [stclair.org](http://stclair.org).

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## Effects of Medical Marijuana on Anxiety

By Daniel Casciato

Anxiety is something that affects millions of people around the world. Many people struggle with anxiety every day.

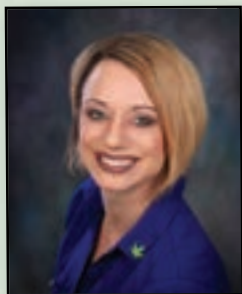
Medical marijuana has been proven to reduce anxiety and stress. In fact, there are studies showing that medical marijuana reduces anxiety better than anti-anxiety drugs. It works naturally without any side effects and relieves your body from tension and anxiety, according to Shelly Hutchison, also known as Nurse Shelly in the medical marijuana community. Nurse Shelly is the founder of Medical Marijuana Specialists.

Anxiety was only added to the list of qualifying conditions in 2019.

### What is anxiety?

Anxiety can be described as a feeling of worry or fear about future events. It's not uncommon for someone who suffers from anxiety to feel anxious all the time.

There are many different types of anxiety. Some common forms include: social anxiety, panic attacks, generalized anxiety disorder,



Shelly Hutchison

obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and more.

People often experience a wide range of symptoms when suffering from anxiety, including:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling restless or fidgety
- Having trouble sleeping at night
- Trouble falling asleep during the day
- Being easily startled by

loud noises

- Fear of being in new situations
- Avoiding certain places or things
- Not wanting to do anything

### How does cannabis affect your body?

Cannabis contains over 100 cannabinoids, which are responsible for its medicinal properties. The two most well-known cannabinoids are THC and CBD. Both compounds work together synergistically to create an effect on the human body.

THC is the psychoactive compound found in cannabis. This compound interacts with receptors throughout the brain and central nervous

system. When THC binds to these receptors it triggers changes in behavior and perception.

Unlike THC, CBD does not produce euphoric effects. Instead, CBD works to balance out the effects of THC.

"In the right combination, they can be the perfect remedy for tons of different ailments, such as anxiety," says Nurse Shelly.

### Does marijuana help anxiety or make it worse?

Medical marijuana is one of the safest substances available. There are no known long term health risks associated with using marijuana. However, medical marijuana may still affect the way the brain processes information.

"High levels of THC have been associated with elevated heart rates and racing thoughts," Nurse Shelly says. "So, if you aren't a seasoned consumer, even a small dose can cause this. It is best to choose a strain with CBD levels to offset the THC. A professional at a legal dispensary will help you choose the right strain for your condition and tolerance."

A good rule of thumb is to always start low, she notes.

"You can always take more if you need to. You want to start with a low dosage and reach your

*Continued on following page*

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



## Cannabis, *Continued from previous page*

sweet spot,” she adds. “This is the point where you’re finding relief from your anxiety but not going overboard where you don’t like how you’re feeling.”

### ***Is marijuana safer in treating anxiety than Xanax?***

Yes, according to Nurse Shelly. The United States safety index classifies Xanax as a Schedule 4 and marijuana a Schedule 1, meaning Xanax should be safer than marijuana, but recent research shows different. In fact, benzodiazepines have been linked to a large amount of lethal overdose-related deaths.

Recent studies report decreased benzodiazepine use among patients who started medical cannabis therapy. Results show more than 45% of patients stopped using benzodiazepines completely within six months.

It was reported that marijuana therapy for anxiety provided a better overall sense of being.

“The majority of our patients are using medical marijuana for anxiety and chronic pain, but it can also be used to relieve symptoms of autism, cancer, Parkinson’s and other chronic illnesses,” says Nurse Shelly.

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

“I highly recommended that each patient sit and have a pharmacist consult when it’s their first time visiting a dispensary,” says Nurse Shelly. “Speak with the pharmacist about your diagnosis and symptoms, and let that pharmacist recommend a strain and a product that they believe will help you with your conditions.”

Currently, there are 23 conditions that can qualify you for your medical marijuana card, the entire list can be found on their website: [www.getyourIDcard.com](http://www.getyourIDcard.com)

“The process to obtaining your medical marijuana card is extremely easy,” adds Nurse Shelly. “We will walk you through the entire process – you can have your card in as little as a week!”

> For more information, visit [www.getyouridcard.com](http://www.getyouridcard.com).

## Street Medicine, *Continued from page 13*

about Operation Safety Net, I fell in love with the organization and mission. It resonated deeply with me and I knew: this is my place. In street medicine, I’m able to help people in more ways than I ever thought possible.”

There is no typical day in street medicine, Schnauber explains. “We go into the community with the outreach workers; they let us know who needs medical attention. We see a wide range of problems: dehydration, foot injuries, and skin problems are common but we also see people who have diabetes and heart disease. We refer them to Pittsburgh Mercy if they need more care. We also see people in the ER and our clinic.”

The street medicine team meets the needs of patients directly and effectively, Schnauber says, but there’s much more to it than provision of hands-on care. “We meet them where they are and recognize their individuality. We have to be resourceful and creative in order to find solutions that fit them. We keep coming back and we listen with caring hearts.”

Janice Kochik, RN, CRNP, is a nurse practitioner who specializes in caring for persons with hepatitis-C, sexually-transmitted infections and opioid use disorder. She works for Central Outreach, and previously worked with Dr. Withers in OSN. She feels fortunate to have meaningful work that she loves. “You have to have a passion for caring with persons experiencing homelessness, who are vulnerable and fragile. We have to gain their trust before they will accept help; it’s a two-way street and we have to be reachable and human ourselves. It’s a very personal connection. You learn to stay in the moment, trust your gut, be fearless and lead with your heart. If we don’t make that connection, the person might slip through the cracks.”

Kochik says that working in street medicine is a constant education. “Everyone is worthy, and we all need help at some point. We never judge. Dr. Withers teaches us to see the humanity in everyone and to be authentic and loving. We do what we can for each person in that moment. It’s amazing to experience this. It’s real, authentic care.”

> For more information, visit [www.pittsburghmercy.org](http://www.pittsburghmercy.org)



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# Medical Profile

## Dr. Ethan Kobe Joins WHS North Main Family Medicine

by Andrew Wilson

*One of the great benefits of being a family medicine physician is the opportunity to build long-term relationships with patients.*

"In my opinion, family medicine is the purest form of medicine," said Ethan Kobe, DO, a recent addition to the medical staff at WHS Family Medicine-North Main in Washington, PA. "You have the opportunity to have a direct impact on the health of your patients."

A family practice physician pro-

vides continuing and comprehensive care for a patient of any age or gender. It would not be unheard of for a family practice physician to see, during the same day, a mother with her newborn, a teenager for a wellness exam, and an older adult wondering if they can still live independently.

Dr. Kobe said that one of the things that he most appreciates is the opportunity to have a discussion with patients, not just about their own health, but maybe a health issue or treatment that they have read about or heard on the news.

"Sometimes patients may have questions about something another doctor has told them, and they want my opinion," he said. "I'm happy to have that conversation with them. It's important to ask questions to better understand your health."

When he's not seeing and caring

for patients, Dr. Kobe says that he likes to cook and enjoys building models – particularly Lego models. However, those hobbies have taken a back seat recently after the birth of his daughter, now nearly two years old.

"Most of my free time these days goes toward entertaining and caring for her. She is almost two years old and is quite active," he laughed, adding that on occasion he misses the days when he could put her down and she would stay put for a few minutes.

Dr. Kobe, an alumnus of West Liberty University and the West Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine, returned to the tri-state area after completing a family practice residency in Ventura, Calif., where he engaged in inpatient care as well as outpatient skilled nursing.

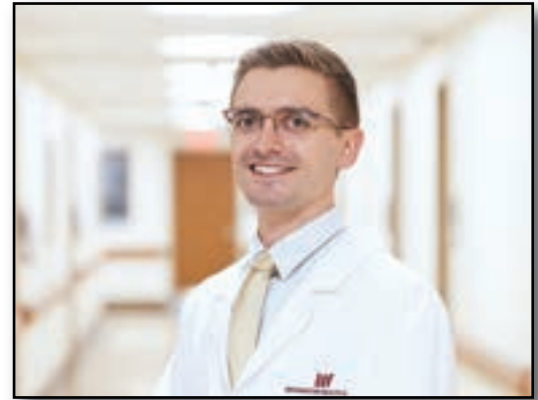
Some may not have wanted to leave Southern California's sunny weather behind, but Dr. Kobe said that he likes the change of seasons that this area offers, as well as the desire to be closer to family particularly since his daughter was born.

"Having a child will change your perspective on things," he says.

Dr. Kobe is board-certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians and anticipates completing board certification by the American Board of Family Medicine soon. He is a member of several medical and academic societies.

"One of the things that I try to impart to my patients is the necessity to get back to basics," he said, adding that good health begins with regular exercise, eating right, and annual or semi-annual physician visits.

"I like to tell my patients that their health today and tomorrow will affect their health in the future," he said. "That's why it is important for people to take the steps today that will improve their health in the future. It's never too late to practice good health."



### At-A-Glance

**Education:** West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine

**Board Certification:** American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians

**Affiliations:** Washington Health System (WHS)

**Area of Specialization:** Family Medicine

**What Inspires You to Do What You Do:** My patients and my family

**Community Involvement:** Still settling into the community, but hope to be active in the community soon.

**First Job:** Mowing grass when I was in high school.


**Pet Peeve:** My wife leaving an ounce of juice or milk in the container.

**Proudest Accomplishment:** Delivering my daughter.

**Most Valuable Lesson:** Listen to people. Some people just want to know that someone is listening to them.

**Person You Most Admire:** The first man to step on the moon, Neil Armstrong and Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield. I wanted to be an astronaut when I was a kid.

**Dr. Ethan Kobe** is a full-time family medicine physician at Washington Health System Family Medicine North Main. For more information or to make an appointment, visit [www.whs.org/northmain](http://www.whs.org/northmain) or call (724) 225-9970.



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# Medical Profile

## At Medspa PGH, Beautiful Healthy Skin Is Both Art and Science

By Nancy Kennedy

**Face forward! A brand new year has arrived, and it's the perfect time to take positive steps to becoming your best self: strong, happy and confident about your health and appearance.**

One of the best ways to achieve this is to visit the expert professionals at Medspa PGH, where an exceptional blend of medical excellence and state-of-the-art aesthetics create superlative skin care results.

Medspa PGH provides vein laser treatment and aesthetic skin care services in a unique, spa-like setting with a physician-led staff of experienced, highly credentialed medical professionals, including Gennady Geskin, MD, and Michael Mulock, MD, cardiologists with expertise in vascular care (vein care) and skin healing, and Nicole Bruno, RN, ACNP, a nurse practitioner with years of aesthetic experience. The team includes medical assistants with special training in ultrasound and laser technology, and a licensed aesthetician.

"Looking and feeling your best is not vanity," says Nicole Bruno. "It's health. People who look good feel good – your appearance impacts your health and self-esteem. When you feel confident about how you look, you make better choices and take better care of yourself. Aesthetic skin care procedures are very motivating – they give you a result which keeps you moving forward. It can be a jump start to a healthy lifestyle."

Medspa PGH's unique approach blends vein treatment expertise and the latest skin care technology with aesthetic medicine. Excellent skin care is both art and science – the best of both worlds. "We meet your aesthetic goals with a medical approach," Bruno explains. "We offer medical grade skin care, with an emphasis on safety. Laser treatments can significantly improve a broad range of skin problems: sun damage, age spots, freckles, acne, spider vein removal, rosacea, scarring, wrinkles, sagging, and under eye bags, among others. Permanent hair removal is also available. Laser treatment is quick and non-invasive."

Bruno says that an advanced treatment called micro-needling can remodel and contour the face using radiofrequency energy. This creates smoother skin and is ideal for the face. Micro-needling can penetrate skin deeper than an ordinary facial. It tightens the skin and builds elastin and collagen, which are often lost with aging. A new treatment for body contouring, Emsculpt Neo, exceeds cool sculpting by burning fat and building muscle.

Medspa PGH provides full circle care, from superficial skin care like medical grade, hyper moisturizing facials to the more advanced procedures. The demand for these services is substantial, Bruno says. "Aesthetic treat-



Nicole Bruno, ACNP, Gennady Geskin, MD, and members of the Medspa PGH professional staff are ready to help make your skin healthy and beautiful.

ments can not only correct skin problems, but also prevent future problems. We can create beautiful skin and help you maintain and protect it. Our services include the best products, from ZO Skin Health, plus patient education."

Free consultations and trials are available at Medspa PGH for those who want to improve their skin health but are uncertain about just what kind of treatment they need. All treatments are customized to the individual's needs and preferences, and care is provided in a tranquil environment by an attentive and caring staff who listen to the client. The environment is healing, with soft, restful pale blush colors, music and aromatherapy.

"Your face is unique and is the first thing people see," Bruno states. "It's important to your sense of well-being to feel that you look your best. We have tremendous knowledge of skin health and we provide science-based, clinically excellent, very personal care in a restful environment. We are highly skilled, caring professionals who practice with the highest standards of care and are passionate about serving our clients."

Medspa PGH was formerly known as Monroeville Vein and Laser Center. It is located at 2550 Mossdale Boulevard. It opened three years ago and is part of Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Associates, a medical practice that specializes in the care of blood vessel conditions.



To learn more or to make an appointment, visit [www.monroevilleveinandlaser.com](http://www.monroevilleveinandlaser.com) or call 412-373-9580.



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# Medical Profile

## FYZICAL Offers Innovative Balance and Vestibular Therapy Service That Improves Balance and Reduces Risk of Falls

One of the greatest predictors for success with balance and vestibular therapy is centered around how much challenge a patient can be provided. Ask any therapist and they will tell you that using a gait belt is NOT a fool proof technique and that degree of challenge is restricted based on fear of the patient falling. Not only does the therapist restrict challenge based on fear, but the patient also restricts their participation due to an overwhelming sense of fear of falling.

At FYZICAL, we have changed the way balance and vestibular therapy is performed. Our clinics offer a Safety Overhead Support System which utilizes body harnesses suspended from a rails system and acts as a full body weight supporting system for if a patient were to fall.


So what does that mean? We are able to challenge a patient appropriately to achieve the best possible results with balance and vestibular function without the therapist being fearful, and even better, without the patient having a fear of falling. It is amazing what can be accomplished when the fear component is

eliminated and how quickly fall risk reduces when degree of challenge is no longer the main limiting factor.

FYZICAL Therapy & Balance Centers is a full-service physical therapy provider. We have convenient locations in McMurray, Bethel Park, and Cecil. You do NOT need a prescription to start physical therapy, and we are accepted by most major insurance policies.

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# Gateway Rehab Center of Excellence Offers Addiction Recovery and Renewal

By Nancy Kennedy

**At Gateway Rehab Center, a groundbreaking recovery program is sweeping away the dark shame of addiction and replacing it with the light of hope, dignity and the healing power of human relationships.**

This month, Gateway Rehab will mark the fifth anniversary of its' Opioid Use Disorder Center of Excellence, a powerful program of addiction recovery that was launched by Governor Tom Wolf in 2016 to identify outstanding treatment centers across the state, in response to the opioid overdose epidemic. Gateway's Center of Excellence (COE) has the distinction of being one of the first facilities so designated by Pennsylvania, and it has lived up to, and exceeded, the standard of excellence. The COE provides comprehensive care coordination in support of long lasting recovery, with an innovative approach: the core of the program is peer-to-peer support, with a team of Certified Recovery Specialists (CRS) who have lived the journey of addiction recovery.

"Our CRS team members have real life experience in long term recovery," says Lori M. Nau, MA, Manager of Care Coordination. "They know the disease of addiction personally. Through their own experience they are able to provide emotional support, address treatment needs and help meet non-treatment needs, while helping individuals learn to navigate barriers to recovery. They are living proof that addiction is treatable."



The Center of Excellence Program Team at Gateway Rehab

The COE program is community-based and practical, Nau explains. "The CRS walks side-by-side with the person in treatment or early recovery, for up to a year. Each person receives a personal, strength-based support plan that addresses the non-treatment needs that could otherwise become barriers to recovery, such as transportation, child care, housing, mental health care and employment."

The Gateway COE staff includes a team of master's-level clinicians and case managers who perform intake assessments, coordinate treatment and services, and are available as resources to the CRS. But it is the CRS who is the essence of the program, according to Nau. "Our team of seven CRS are people who are personally in recovery, helping others who are trying to reach recovery. A CRS has training, with formal certification, plus personal experience. They have credibility with others in our region's recovery community. They have walked in their shoes; they have relapsed and encountered the barriers to recovery. Their experience gives them the passion to do this work."

"Addiction is prevalent in the U.S. but shame keeps many people from getting treatment. The CRS team is helping people who otherwise don't seek help. The CRS can customize the program around that

individual's strengths and barriers – to empower them."

Tess Rem-Canofari, CRS, FPS (forensic peer specialist) has been a member of the COE team since 2017. She is open about her own history of addiction and skillful in her capacity to apply her experience to help others. "Persons in recovery need life skills in addition to recovery skills. Traditional rehab teaches you how not to get high, but it doesn't teach you how to live – how to develop coping skills, ace a job interview, manage relationships or ask for help. Life skills are an essential aspect of our program and if you have been getting high, you probably haven't used these skills for a long time. Our program gives you skills plus structure. It's a solid foundation for recovery."

An ideal treatment plan, Rem-Canofari says, usually includes detoxification, rehab, and time in a halfway house or long term facility, plus outpatient follow-up. Twelve-step meetings, working with a sponsor and even equestrian classes may be part of the stepdown program. It's a long term commitment, she says, but that time investment fosters healing relationships. "What I love most is that I can plant a seed and watch the person grow. They will struggle – relapse is a reality – but when I see a person who had hit rock bottom achieve a year clean,

it's deeply rewarding."

The Gateway COE program has served over 1200 persons across southwestern Pennsylvania since 2016. "We serve opioid users and others with any type of substance abuse," Nau says. "The program is voluntary and anyone can enroll. We want to help everyone. We are a mobile team that brings the program to the person. We use social media and word of mouth; we work with the homeless; we meet people at 12-step meetings and at our treatment centers," Nau says. "To enroll, you have to have an opioid diagnosis and Medical Assistance coverage, or any substance abuse diagnosis for Aetna insurance. We're working on getting other commercial insurers on board."

Addiction is a disease that is treatable, Nau emphasizes. "Addiction is a medical condition and treatment is available and effective. There is hope. Our program is a living, breathing model of that hope. It breaks through the persistent stigma about addiction. People in recovery need a close connection and mentoring, and the relationship with their CRS empowers and inspires them. They see the success of the CRS and that is motivating. They see that recovery is possible."

> To learn more or to enroll, visit [www.gatewayrehab.org](http://www.gatewayrehab.org).

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# Valley Brook Dental Provides Advanced Dental Implant Treatment



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Dr. Joseph Gurecka has been placing dental implants at Valley Brook Dental, LLC for the last 16 years. His passion is to use dental implants to help patients connect with something that they lost: a confident smile, the ability to chew, or missing teeth. To accomplish this in the facial esthetic zone requires a degree of expertise that only comes from experience. To accomplish this, Dr. Gurecka utilizes some of the most advanced techniques for dental implant placement and bone regeneration to achieve lasting results, while simplifying the procedure and increasing the reliability of the treatment. Sometimes a patient with a broken tooth or a fractured root can have the tooth removed and the implant placed at the same time - even with a temporary crown to fill the space in their smile!

By using the most advanced dental implant systems on the market, including the VERSAH® surgical system (which uses osseodensification to preserve bone), Dr. Gurecka provides new opportunities for patients who because of poor bone levels were not candidates for dental implants. His office also uses Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP), or Platelet Rich Fibrin (PRF). This technique uses a by-product of your blood which contain growth factors and stem cells, to initiate and accelerate the healing process. PRF/PRP have been used for years by orthopedic surgeons to accelerate the body's own healing process. Dr. Gurecka applies the same PRF technique for bone and gingival grafting to improve healing and success rates.

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of restorations that fit comfortably and look natural. Dental implants support several prosthetics including Crowns, Bridges, and Hybrid Dentures (All on 4). For patients with missing, broken, or decayed teeth, the All on 4 approach refers to a combined surgical prosthodontic procedure which replaces teeth with a fixed, full arch prosthesis supported by 4-6 implants often on the same day. The final life-like prosthesis can be acrylic or zirconia which is very strong, durable, and esthetic.

To keep up with this rapidly changing field, Dr. Gurecka completed a 9 month implant program at Augusta University in Georgia, home to the Georgia Dental School.

There he was trained by some of the leaders in Dental Implant Education and completed almost 400 hours of continuing education through the American Association of Implant Dentists (AAID). In 2019 he passed the written AAID Fellowship Exam and then flew to Chicago to submit actual cases for peer review and an oral examination which he passed. In September was inducted as an Associate Fellow in the AAID.

➤ For more information about receiving dental implants using advanced technology and individualized custom design, call **Valley Brook Dental** at **(724) 942-8982**.

*Dr. Gurecka lives in Upper St. Clair with his wife Helen and daughter Diana who attends Seton LaSalle High School where she plays Lacrosse. Helen works at PNC Financial Corporation in town. Dr. G can often be seen on the Montour Bike Trail with his yellow lab "Murphy" who loves fishing.*

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Outpatient Center - Neighbor  
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# Living Well With A Disability



## TRPIL Now Provides Employment Services

By Lois Thomson

When one hears that an organization offers employment services, the likely thought is that it helps people find a job. Period. But that's not the case with the Employment Services Department at TRPIL, Transitional Paths to Independent Living, in Washington, PA.

Steve Johnson, director of marketing for TRPIL in Washington and the affiliated Voices for Independence and the affiliated Voices for Independence in both Washington and Erie, said that the Employment Services Department now has dedicated staff, resulting in more robust support. The department is spearheaded by Mary Petrusch, whom Johnson said brings considerable experience to the position.

He said the services include everything from résumé writing, helping with a job search, and

**Voices for Independence (VFI) and TRPIL provide many services besides employment. Some include:**

**Personal Assistance Services (PAS)** – in-home care to individuals with disabilities, based on their needs and schedules

**Nursing Home Transition (NHT)** – services for anyone currently residing in a nursing facility to consider independent living as an option, including helping to secure accessible and affordable housing

**Home Modifications** – completed when an individual requires accommodations to their home unit, including ramps, widened doorways, etc.

**Information & Referral (I&R)** – answers and direction for any questions regarding disability

**Peer Support** – discussions between staff living with a disability, and community members living with a disability

assisting with filling out an application, to helping prepare for the interview, supporting the client during employment, and long-term follow-along. In all of this, Johnson called Petrusch "the first stop. Consumers explain to her, 'Here's where I am, here's what I'm interested in, here's what I'm looking for.' And she helps them navigate that system for perhaps the first time." He said some people may not need assistance with writing a résumé, but those who don't have a work history wouldn't know how to approach that. Similarly, people who have previously been employed are familiar with résumés, but some have never had a job interview.

Because everyone's needs are different, each



*In addition to helping individuals find employment, Mary Petrusch continues to provide support throughout*

consumer of Employment Services meets one-on-one with the employment specialist to customize goals, and fulfill them in a way that enables them to live a most independent life. "There's no cookie cutter, everybody gets their own life plan."

Equally important as assisting with finding employment, Petrusch continues to provide support throughout. For example, Johnson said once hired, a consumer may wonder, how do I go about navigating the system to request a reasonable accommodation? Or perhaps someone may be working and receiving Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. "If you're receiving either of those and you get back in the workforce, things change in terms of what you're allowed to receive. So they can get benefits counseling from her, she can explain how benefits can be affected by work. We don't just expect consumers to figure it out for themselves."

Additionally, Johnson said the Employment Services Department "connects individuals who are getting back into the workforce with our Assistive Technology Department, to obtain any necessary equipment and instruction they need to get back into work."

As Petrusch told Johnson, the service is a lot more than paperwork; it's about helping people achieve life goals with some life skills, and being there after they get hired to support them and see it through.



For more information, call (724) 223-5115 or visit [www.vficil.org](http://www.vficil.org).



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# Living With A Disability



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➤ For more information about our services, employment opportunities, or donations, visit our website at [www.yourpathways.org](http://www.yourpathways.org) or call (724) 229-0851.

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All allowance amounts are based on the 2022 benefit year. Some benefit allowances are monthly or quarterly based. UPMC *for Life* has a contract with Medicare to provide HMO, HMO SNP, and PPO plans. The HMO SNP plans have a contract with the PA State Medical Assistance program. Enrollment in UPMC *for Life* depends on contract renewal.

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# Living With A Disability

## Community Living Care Helps Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities Meet Their Goals

By Andrew Wilson

In football, the goal line is always in the same place, but for Community Living Care (CLC) the goal line may change with the individual goals of each person for whom they care.

“We maintain a person-centered focus,” said Eric Noel, the chief operating officer for CLC, a company that provides care, support, and services for people with intellectual disabilities. He explained that individual goals are not just expected but encouraged. “Everyone is different. We always do what we can to make sure each person gets what they want and need.”

Noel says that CLC’s philosophy begins with its founder, the late Hayes Treasure, who started the company in 1987 with a simple creed: “You can’t give care without caring.” He says that philosophy is embedded in each CLC staff mem-



Eric Noel

ber, whether they provide direct care or whether they are in a supportive or administrative role.

CLC provides care for people who were diagnosed with intellectual disabilities before the age of 21, although CLC’s care may extend to people well beyond that age. That may include people with autism or Down syndrome, but not necessarily. There are four degrees of intellectual disabilities: mild, moderate, severe, and profound. How advanced the disability is will determine the level of care needed or even if any care is needed at all.

“Some people with intellectual disabilities have abilities that are comparable to others in society. They may learn quickly while other people with intellectual disabilities do not,” said Noel. “Some people may need constant 24-hour care, while others may only need help with certain activities, like cooking

or meals. It varies from person to person.”

CLC’s involvement begins with an assessment of the individual to see what the goals are and how they can best help the person meet those goals. To complete the assessment, they seek input from the individual, family members, and the support coordinator.

“We typically draw the assessment based on input from people who know them best,” Noel said. “Even after the initial assessment, we are constantly observing and reassessing what works best for each person.”

The pandemic presented a unique challenge for CLC. There were standards that had to be met to prevent COVID transmission, such as wearing masks, limiting visits, and constant cleaning of hands, surfaces, and seemingly everything.

“I’m so impressed with how we navigated through the pandemic, particularly so with our direct care professionals,” Noel said. “So many people rose to the challenge and came up with ways to do the job

safely. They came up with online resources that worked well to limit outside contact while keeping the people we care for connected to the outside world.”

That was a particular challenge when it came to dealing with families. The level of family involvement will vary from person to person, too. For some people, family stays involved daily, but for others, they play a much less frequent role.

“Family plays a role as much as they want to,” Noel said. “Typically, family support is important, but CLC always does what is best for the individual.”

He related the situation one person encountered who was living in a CLC group home but had a difference of opinion with his family about how long he would stay at home for a holiday celebration. While the family’s expectations were that he would spend several days with them, the individual wanted to spend the day of the holiday with his family and then go back to the group home.

*Continued on page 33*



## Community Living Care

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— Hayes E. Treasure, Founder 1987

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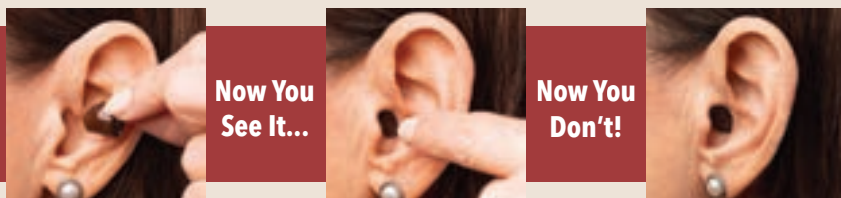
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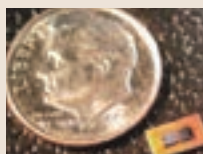
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# Living With A Disability

## Autism and Special Occasions



Adjusting plans is nothing new for many of us. Celebrations like birthdays, family parties, and holidays bring the need for modifications to a whole new level. While we're excited to see family and friends at these times, the gatherings are often overwhelming and stressful for families and people with disabilities. Here are some tips we hope are helpful for you.

### Try Hosting at Your Home

Yes, hosting a party or meal, no matter the size, can be a monumental task, with a lot of expense and planning. It can be the best option for your family to keep you or your loved one with autism comfortable.

The advantage of hosting is staying in a familiar environment and controlling the menu. Let people bring food or drinks, or if you would rather not do that, trade this idea to let them set up or help do the dishes. Some people prefer that over cooking - just ask!

If you are not hosting, try some or all of these to help make the day enjoyable.

### Make a Sensory Kit

It seems like we all have extra tote or drawstring bags around the house. Grab one and put some of your or your loved one's favorite comfort items inside. Do they or you need noise cancelling headphones if conversations/music/

singing get to be a little too boisterous? Is there a certain sensory item that always seems to calm? Grab those items, along with favorite sensory toys, throw them in your bag, and you have a sensory kit. You can keep this kit in the car and have it for any situation that may not be totally sensory friendly.

### • Check Out the Menu

We know that autism can mean special diets and sensitive eaters. Hopefully you're going to a home with an understanding host. Talk to them beforehand. Explain your or your child's dietary restrictions, and see if there is something that is already within that diet. If not, ask to bring some favorite foods to share, or that you or your loved one can eat during mealtime.

### Ask About a Safe Space


When talking to the host about the menu, also ask about a possible quiet spot. Hopefully there is a guest bedroom, home office, or quiet corner to set up with the sensory kit you have, just in case things get overly celebratory.

### Practice Flexibility

Often people are able to engage comfortably in excitement for a shorter time than those without disabilities. It is okay to leave early or show up late, just for dessert, for instance, if you talk this over with the people you are visiting. If you have the luxury of two caregivers, one could arrive late or leave early, allowing some family members different schedules on that day.

### It's OK to Say No

Sometimes simplifying can be fun and easier. If invited somewhere, and you just don't think you or your family has it in you to pregame with all of the necessary sensory things, it's ok to say "no thanks" and have quiet fun at home. Take some time to enjoy the calm and a break from the usual hustle and bustle.

 If you have questions or concerns, contact **The Autism Connection of PA** at (412) 995-5000 x 406, email [help@autismofpa.org](mailto:help@autismofpa.org), or via our website at [www.autismofpa.org](http://www.autismofpa.org). We are here for you for all of your needs in all ages, all stages!

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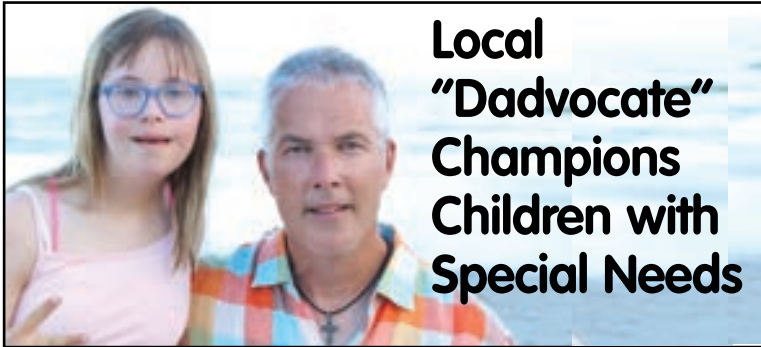
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## Living With A Disability



### Local "Dadvocate" Champions Children with Special Needs

By Ron Cichowicz

In 2003, while serving as a Pittsburgh police officer, Kurt Kondrich knew that the impending birth of his second child would change his life. But he and his wife Margie already had been through this experience four years earlier, when their son Nolan was born. So they knew what introducing a baby into their home could mean to a routine already altered by their first child.

Or so they thought.

"We didn't request any prenatal diagnosis even though we were pressured to because of our age, so we didn't know about Chloe's condition until after she was born," Kondrich recalled. "The doctor's comments were both shocking and surprising. He walked over and just said, 'Your daughter has characteristics of Down Syndrome.'

"He seemed almost confounded when I asked if I could hold my daughter."

Although Kondrich didn't know it at the time, but that day in the hospital would be the beginning of a lifelong journey of advocacy for children with special needs.

He left his 20-year career in law enforcement, returned to college to earn a master's degree in Early Intervention from the University of Pittsburgh and focused on becoming a strong advocate for the most vulnerable children.

"Early on, we heard negative

comments about Chloe's condition from some medical professionals, family members and friends," Kondrich said. "Many were well meaning, but almost mournful. But Nolan, he didn't see Chloe as his sister with Down Syndrome. He just saw her as his sister."

Kondrich said that much of what he heard from medical practitioners was in stark contrast to what he observed at home.

"We looked at Chloe not as any other child with Down Syndrome, but as a unique individual, just like her brother and everyone else," he said. "Any plans we would make were not applicable to just any child with Down Syndrome. Our plan was unique to Chloe."

"We changed our lifestyle as necessary to maximize opportunities for Chloe. We invested in the effort early and the payoffs increased massively as she got older."

Kondrich said one of the first and most critical actions his family took was to research any services available to children with special needs and take advantage of them.

"Once we connected to the available services, it helped lower our anxiety, fears and worries," he said. "It helped us to focus on Chloe's abilities and not her disabilities."

Kondrich said that as they got to know other parents of children with Down Syndrome, they discovered that many of them didn't know how to access resources available to them. "You need to do your

research, see what's out there and take advantage of the services as early as possible," he said. "I learned early that 85 to 90 percent of brain development occurs between birth and age 5. You need to move quickly to help your child."

Kondrich also recommends that anyone with a child with a diagnosed disability should set high standards and goals for that child and move forward with the best possible outcomes in mind.

"You have to push these children," he said. "You want to raise your child like any other, with set goals and discipline when needed. Our goal for Chloe was to have her ready for school at age 5. Nolan even helped us, reading with her and making her pay attention. She was reading at age 3."

Kondrich said this wasn't always easy. Parents need to commit to their child's development and stick to the plan.

"We had therapists coming to our home every week and Chloe knew who they were," he recalled. "She would try to hide from them because they made her work."

"You have to push them. We pushed Chloe and she accomplished way more than people expected of her."

Kondrich also recommends that parents with children with special

needs seek out people in similar situations to share information and support each other.

"You need to surround yourself with positive types," he said. "This will not only be beneficial for your child, but it will positively affect your own mental health."

Beyond the support and attention given to their children, Kondrich encourages parents to be advocates for them.

"You need to speak up for their rights and don't just wait for someone else to do it," he said.

And he has backed up his words with action. A self-described "Dadvocate," Kondrich—often accompanied by Chloe—has spoken frequently on this issue throughout the country. This has included a visit to the White House and two appearances at the United Nations in New York City. Kurt and Chloe have appeared on local and national television, spoken at many national conferences and have been featured in numerous media articles, podcasts and other media.

He says he finds strength from many sources, but two stand out. The first is his favorite Scripture verse, Proverbs 31:8: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves."

The second is Chloe.

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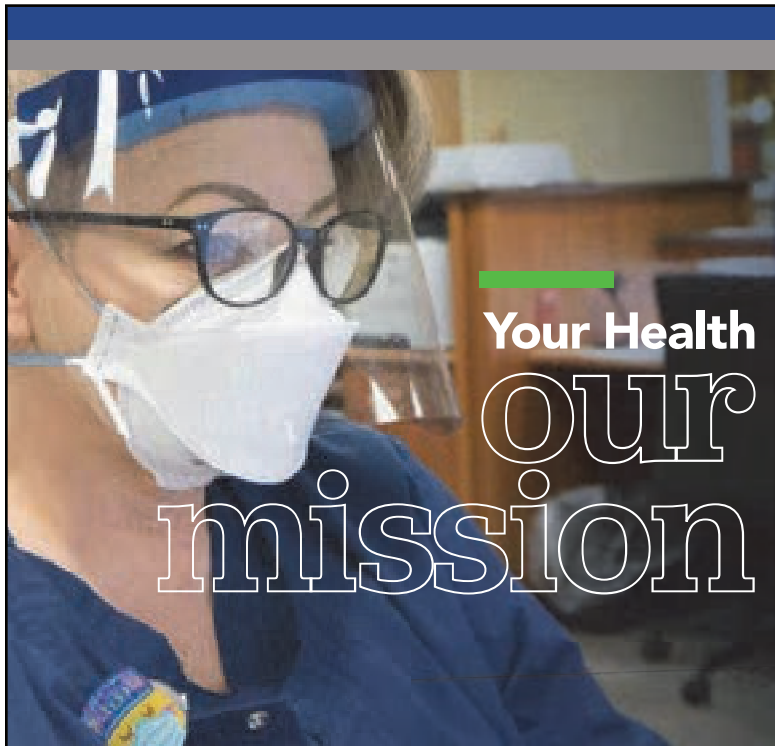
## Community Living Care, *Continued from page 30*

"He was telling them what he wanted to do," said Noel. "He was growing and making his own decisions was part of that growth. We support the individual but encourage family to be part of their growth."

It's not just the individual goals that vary, but also the length of time that CLC cares for someone. CLC has one person who has been cared for since the year of the company's founding in 1987. Others have achieved their goals and are no longer under CLC's care.

"We work with them to support where they are now, as well as how they are growing and where they want to go," Noel said. "People with intellectual disabilities can flourish, grow, and go on to do amazing things. We try to create a meaningful life for the individual."

For more information about **Community Living Care, Inc.**, visit [www.communitylivingcare.com](http://www.communitylivingcare.com) or call (724) 836-8747.



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## News Briefs... News Briefs...

### Tri-State Surgery Center Awarded on Newsweek's America's Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers 2022 List



Tri-State Surgery Center has been awarded on Newsweek's list of America's Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers 2022. The America's Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers 2022 list highlights the nation's top ambulatory surgery centers based on quality of care, performance data and peer recommendations, relative to in-state competition. Centers in the 25 states with the highest number of Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASCs), according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), were included in the study.

Based on the results of the study, Tri-State Surgery Center is ecstatic to be recognized on Newsweek's list of America's Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers 2022. "We had no idea that we were being considered for this award," says Kelly Ankrom, Executive Director of Tri-State Surgery Center. "We are blessed to have a great team who takes pride in providing excellent patient centered care. I am so proud of them for achieving this recognition."

### Baptist Senior Services Announces Rebrand to Baptist Senior Family Ahead of Leadership Transition



Baptist Senior Services announced its rebrand to Baptist Senior Family. The announcement comes as the organization welcomes a new President & CEO, Timothy L. Myers. Myers comes to the organization after most recently serving as Chief Financial Officer at Ingleside, the parent corporation of six senior services entities in the Washington, DC area.

Along with its new name, Baptist Senior Family carries a new tagline of "Life. Uplifted." The new tagline draws upon the organization's mission of helping everyone it serves experience an uplifted life. The new brand also comes with a new logo and colors. The logo portrays life, connection, growth, and joy. The plantlike figures are connected in their growth with petals outstretching lifting each other up. The text is clean and easy to read, using green to again represent life and growth. The pops of orange in the logo invoke feelings of warmth, friendliness, hope, light, and joy. The color blue represents stability, trust, and tranquility.

### MVH Offers COVID-19 Antibody/ Multiphasic Blood Screening

Were you ill earlier this year and question, "Could I have had COVID-19?" Do you wonder if you had COVID-19 and were asymptomatic? Monongahela Valley Hospital is offering COVID-19 antibody screening at its five community blood draw centers.

An antibody test can help determine if someone was infected with the virus and if the person has developed antibodies. The COVID-19 Antibody Screening is \$55. It takes less than five minutes and does not require fasting.

MVH also offers Multiphasic Blood Screening. A Multiphasic Blood Screening can reveal many conditions in the body. For example, elevated triglyceride levels may increase the risk of developing coronary artery disease; high levels of potassium could indicate kidney damage and low hemoglobin levels may indicate anemia. These tests are among the 37 standard tests performed on the blood during the Multiphasic Screening. Persons on medication should consult their physicians. The Multiphasic Blood Screening is \$30 and requires fasting. The Antibody and Multiphasic screenings are available on a walk-in basis at the following blood draw centers:

**Monongahela Valley Hospital Outpatient Lab -**

Mon.-Fri., 6:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat., 8 a.m. to noon

**Monongahela Valley Hospital HealthPlex Occupational Health -**

Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

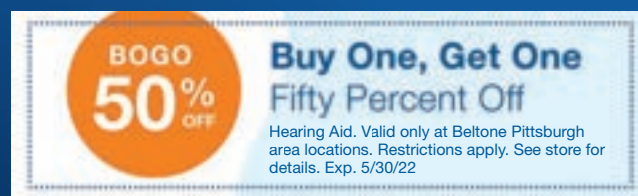
**Blood Draw Center Finleyville - Mon.-Fri., 7 a.m.-3 p.m.**

**Blood Draw Center California - Tues. and Thurs., 8 a.m. to noon**

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- You have difficulty understanding a conversation when in a large group or crowd
- You have trouble understanding all the words in a conversation
- You find telephone conversation increasingly difficult
- You have been told you speak too loudly



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# Senior Guide

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

## Respite Care Offers Reprieve for Caregivers and Change of Pace for Loved Ones

Tired caregivers may not always know where to turn when it comes to supporting a senior loved one. Respite care provides short-term relief for primary caregivers. The program allows you a couple weeks (or more) of relief if you find yourself in need of a little you time. Knowing that care is available for a loved one brings peace of mind for you and can uplift the spirits of a senior with a change of pace.

A report by the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and AARP titled Caregiving in the U.S. 2020 revealed an increase in the number of family caregivers in the United States of 9.5 million from 2015 to 2020. Family caregivers now encompass more than one in five Americans. The study also reports that family caregivers are in worse health compared to five years ago.

At Anthology of McCandless, healthcare professionals are available around the clock offering uncompromising care within an inspiring setting. Respite stays are a valuable option for families in need of a couple weeks of rejuvenation.

Located just outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, this senior living community features spacious private suites and contemporary amenities. Residents are engaged through a dynamic calendar of daily social, cultural and recreational activities and enjoy gourmet meals prepared from scratch by in-house chefs.

The Anthology Senior Living teams are continually evolving their stan-



dards to pursue better methods, experiences and services to make a remarkable impact on each life they touch. The communities are guided by their core values: delivering an aspirational lifestyle, leading with smart compassion from both the head and the heart, providing uncompromised care, transparent culture, celebrating the individual and nurturing the power of connection.

Transitioning a loved one into a senior living community can be challenging. Respite care not only provides the short-term relief a caretaker needs, but it can also be a way to test the waters to see how you and a loved one like the community in case long-term care is needed in the future.



For more information, visit [AnthologyMcCandless.com](https://AnthologyMcCandless.com), call (412) 336-8371 or email [mccandless@anthologyseniorliving.com](mailto:mccandless@anthologyseniorliving.com).



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# Senior Guide

## What Does It Mean to Age Successfully?

By Marilyn Walsh

When people talk about successful aging, there is a stereotypical image of the smiling 75 year old striding along a beach. The imagery suggests that successful aging is about physical health. The reality is, that by the time people are 65 years old, more than 50 percent require some sort of assistance or assistive device to support their acts of daily living. That number increases as we age, but it is not a good indicator of 'successful aging.'

As Executive Director of Providence Point, Pittsburgh's Life Plan Community focused on the well-being of its residents, Bob Kocent understands why health industry experts say successful aging is a multidimensional process.

"Our resident population is a broad spectrum of people who move here to find a fulfilling, active lifestyle. But, that means different things to different people. Some may never touch foot in our fitness center but take advantage of our drama club and theater outings. Others enjoy bocce, swimming, or possibly bridge club. Their individual perspective on aging is as individual as they are. Aging successfully lies in being able to do the things that make them happy and feel fulfilled."

Eating healthy, getting sleep and exercise is important, but real aging—and doing it well—is more complex than that. Aging successfully means that we take advantage of the tools and medical advances available to us so that we can stay healthier longer. Research suggests that, despite some physical decline, older people regard themselves as happy and well when their mental, spiritual and social needs are being met. The research also suggests that people living in senior communities like Providence Point may be more likely to compress morbidity and physical disability into fewer years later in life because they have better access to an active, social, wellness-focused lifestyle. Baptist Senior Family focuses on six dimensions of wellness at both of its South Hills senior living communities and supports residents in their quest to age successfully with a multifaceted approach to wellness. Whether it is through Saturday morning cornhole, weekly art classes, evening lectures, or its quality dining options, person-centered wellness is a key component of life at Baptist Senior Family communities.



*Stan Over and Eileen Boyle compete in a Saturday cornhole matchup at Providence Point, an activity that is neither physically demanding nor too taxing on the mind but energizes like morning coffee.*

> For information about **Providence Point** or **Baptist Homes**, call **(412) 489-3560**.

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## Senior Guide

### Do Your Elderly Parents Live Alone?

#### Local health providers offer advice for seniors and family members

*"I have no one to take care of my pets."  
"I needed a ride and didn't know who to ask."*



These are just a couple excuses that medical professionals may hear when treating elderly patients who have delayed seeking treatment until it couldn't be avoided.

Sometimes what could be treated easily in an outpatient setting, turns into something that requires hospitalization.

"Caring for our patients is as much of an art as it is a science," said Randy Hebert, MD, the medical director of Community Life. "We spend a lot of time with our patients to get to know their goals and values as well as their medical issues."

Spending time with patients has become a challenge in the past two years, as many elderly have avoided making appointments due to COVID fears.

"What we've learned over the last two years of the pandemic is that the biggest spontaneous complaint from our patients is isolation," said Dr. Hebert. "A lot of families don't live nearby and if our patients can't drive any longer, they depend on public transportation, which could be frightening to use during the pandemic."

Staying at home will then appear to be the safe option and leaving home seems too risky, especially when going outside can lead to the chance of being infected with a potentially deadly virus, like COVID. For an elderly person, not taking any risks can even lead to being governed by situations that a younger person usually doesn't think about.

"If I have to get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, I don't worry about falling on the way there, but that is a real concern for many of my patients," said Dr. Hebert, who added that anxiety about the bathroom can be especially acute when they venture outside their home. "Sometimes depending on their medications or what they eat, they can be worried about where the restrooms are and whether they will be able to get there in time."

Faced with that level of anxiety, frequently the decision is made to stay home, even when it pertains to healthcare.

"For many elderly, their lives are very structured, and when something throws that structure off, it can be devastating," he said.

Dana Derosky, RN, the clinical director of Emerald Home Health Care, has heard many of the same excuses from her patients as well

It's very common," she said. "Sometimes they don't want to bother their family because 'they are so busy.'" But sometimes it is denial about what may be wrong. They explain it away as 'not getting enough rest' or 'something I ate.' Many times it can be fear of losing their independence or being taken from their home."

So what can be done to eliminate some of the isolation and anxiety?

Dr. Hebert recommends getting vaccinated against COVID and also the flu. He said that even in the event of a so-called "breakthrough case," the vaccine is preventing more serious illness. "The current numbers are showing that people who are vaccinated don't end up in the hospital."

He also recommends that the elderly not give up on the things that they enjoyed prior to the pandemic.

"Keep doing what you enjoy doing," he said. "Things that you enjoyed before the pandemic can still be enjoyed. You just might have to do it at a smaller level."

Ms. Derosky has some suggestions for the friends and family of an elderly person.

"We live in an instant and digital world where if you have access to a com-

*Continued on following page.*

puter or cell phone you can have just about anything delivered to your home including groceries. Some elderly just don't have that kind of access and if they do sometimes the upcharge is too much for them to afford," she said. "In a fast-paced society, if they are not seen regularly, unfortunately sometimes that means, 'out of sight, out of mind.' We have to make a conscious effort to stay engaged with our elderly and keep them engaged as well. Go the extra mile and include them – communicate. They are more apt to reach out when they know you care." She suggests that, if possible, family visit regularly, and when there be sure to ask the tough questions about their daily care. This includes making sure their loved one has enough easy to prepare meals, adequate access to water, and they can navigate around the house safely. She especially emphasizes going over their medications with them.

"They come from a frugal time, where you saved everything in case you might need it, and this leads to medication mistakes that could cost them their life," she said. "They are not unintelligent, just elderly. They have more to teach us than we give them credit for: listen."

**> Community LIFE** is a provider of the Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and a Medicare and Medicaid approved long-term care program. For more information, call **1-866-419-1693** or visit <http://www.commlife.org>.

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**"For many elderly, their lives are very structured, and when something throws that structure off, it can be devastating."**

*-Dr. Randy Hebert*

### Other suggested resources for Elderly Seniors and Family Members:

**Set up a medical power of attorney** - Set up a medical power of attorney as early as you can, before a loved one becomes ill. Doing a Living Will or a POLST (Pennsylvania Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment) statement to keep handy where the EMS can see it when they are called to the home for an emergency, see example attached. It is bright pink to hang on fridge and get the attention of the Medics.

**Contact your local Agency on Aging** - Your local Agency on Aging assists county residents, 60 years of age and older, to live safe, healthy and, when possible, independent lives.

Allegheny County - 412-350-5460 or 800-344-4319  
Butler County - 724-285-4731  
Westmoreland County - 724-830-4444  
Washington County - 724-228-7080

**Check out the website for the Pennsylvania Department of Aging**  
The Pennsylvania Department of Aging works to ensure that older adults across Pennsylvania have access to quality services and supports that help them age and live well. For more information please visit <https://www.aging.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

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## Therapy Dog, Angus, Brings Joy to LIFE Pittsburgh Participants

Over the past several years, the LIFE Pittsburgh centers have been enjoying visits from an incredibly special visitor, Angus, a seven-and-a-half-year-old English Mastiff. When Angus arrives at the centers, he is greeted with smiles and excitement (as well as treats from some eager participants). We would like to spotlight our friend, Angus, and his human companion, Dana, in this issue of the *Western Pennsylvania Guide to Good Health*.

Angus was certified as a therapy dog through Therapy Dog International (TDI) in August of 2016. He had to pass a test through TDI that evaluated several things, including his ability to follow commands, his temperament, and that he was able to remain calm in somewhat chaotic situations. When Dana became aware of TDI's mission, she knew she wanted to participate and knew that Angus would be a perfect fit for this type of work since he has always been a calm and loving dog.

Dana and Angus coincidentally met LIFE Pittsburgh's Outreach Supervisor Deanna, at an "Open Streets" event in Market Square in 2017. When Deanna learned that Angus was a therapy dog, she quickly suggested that he would be a perfect fit as a guest at LIFE Pittsburgh. Angus and Dana were introduced to the LIFE Pittsburgh program shortly after that and have been providing therapeutic visits ever since. He has visited several of LIFE Pittsburgh's Adult Day Health Centers – starting with the Greentree Center, then Allegheny Centers, and then McKees Rocks.

According to Dana, "Angus has personal relationships with so many of the participants." She notices that our participant's faces light up when he arrives at the center. It is very apparent that their moods brighten during their visits. Angus makes his rounds while at the center, visiting each of the participants who express an interest in him (and staff, too). Dana has seen participants become more alert and engaged when Angus spends time with them. Many of the participants at LIFE Pittsburgh are animal lovers at heart, but do not have the opportunity to interact with pets any longer, for various reasons. The time that they get to spend with Angus is precious



and may be the only pet that they get to spend time with.

When asked how Angus feels about his visits to LIFE Pittsburgh, Dana said, "Angus LOVES his people! There is no doubt that he enjoys the interactions, there is a bounce in his step and a smile on his face. Plus, he really loves the belly rubs." Angus is a laid-back dog, but once he realizes he is at LIFE Pittsburgh, he is excited and ready to go. Dana enjoys talking with the participants and sharing Angus with others. She has often said that she and Angus gain as much from the visits as the participants do.

Angus is an American Kennel Club (AKC) Grand Champion, now retired. When not at LIFE Pittsburgh, he does freelance therapy at many local Farmer's Markets and dog friendly businesses in Pittsburgh. He is the unofficial mascot for Lowe's in Scott Township.



For more information about LIFE Pittsburgh, call (412) 388-8050 TTY: 711 or visit [www.lifepittsburgh.org](http://www.lifepittsburgh.org).

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## Emerald Home Health Care Offers Steps to Explore When Elderly May Need More Care

By Andrew Wilson

For many people, gatherings with family and friends around the holidays is an annual tradition, but sometimes the anticipation of a joyful celebration turns instead to concerns about the well-being of elderly relatives or friends.

“Our elderly are precious and proud people from generations that were very strong and independent,” said Dana Derosky, R.N., the clinical director of Emerald Home Health Care. “They just don’t like to ask for help because they don’t want to inconvenience anyone.”

The difference can be particularly noticeable if it has been some time since the last visit with that person. While it may seem easy to dismiss those concerns as “just my imagination” or maybe not wanting to cause a fuss, it may be worth asking some additional questions.

Derosky says that there are subtle things that can alert you that there may be an issue like wearing the same clothes for several days, weight loss, and sudden confusion.

“With early onset of dementia, the obvious signs like forgetfulness are helpful, but sometimes they just don’t connect body cues like hunger and thirst as a trigger to eat and drink,” Derosky explains. “This will often manifest in unexplained weight loss, even though they say they eat when they are hungry. They will not remember to keep water handy to sip on and will end up dehydrated, which can lead to physical problems with blood pressure and urination, but also confusion. Confusion is sometimes also an indicator of an infection.”

So what should you do if you find yourself believing that a loved one needs additional help to be healthy and safe? She recommends starting with the primary care physician (PCP). Most doctors have agencies that they have worked with and trust to do a thorough, comprehensive evaluation.

“It is a fine line to walk because you want them to have that right to self-determination, but you also want them safe and protected,” said Derosky. “Involve them in the decisions as early as you can even before they show any signs of need help.”

She added that while home health agencies cannot self-refer, most are willing to answer your



questions when you call and can point you in the right direction. All counties also have Area on Aging contacts that provide resources for our aging population such as transportation, in-home direct care workers through waiver services, and lists of Meals on Wheels providers, to name just a few of the available services.

Emerald Home Health Care, a small family-owned home health and home care company founded in 1996 by Bill and Margaret Erb, began business as a franchise of Nursefinders, a large, national company. The Erbs wanted a company with that family feel, and renamed it as Emerald Home Health, a nod toward the “Wizard of Oz” phrase that “there’s no place like home.” In addition to the standard home health care, which is short-term nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, social work and home health aides, Emerald has private duty nursing services and home care direct care workers for longer term care and treatment.

If some sort of short-term or longer-term care is needed, Derosky recommends asking for recommendations from the PCP as well as friends and family who have been in a similar situation.

“The best thing to do first is the PCP as well as to ask friends and neighbors about their experiences with home health care, and home care,” she said. “A good clinician who gave exceptional care will be remembered.”

Emerald also encourages people to use “Home Health Compare” ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)), a website provided by Medicare, where you can compare agencies side by side for their scores in various categories, such as how well they heal wounds, how well they manage pain, how well they did at getting patients mobile again and other typical

**So what should you do if you find yourself believing that a loved one needs additional help to be healthy and safe?**

**Dana Derosky recommends starting with the primary care physician (PCP).**

issues that may require special attention.

Because it can be tough to think of all the questions that one might want to ask when looking for a home health agency, Derosky recommends starting with the following:

- Are you well staffed where I live?
- What services do you offer?
- Do you accept my insurance, and will there be a copay?
- What do I do if I need help

after business hours?

“The really great home health, and home care companies don’t set out to be the leader, they set out to make a difference,” Derosky says. “It’s never about the agency, it is about the patient. We want to be that kind of agency, patient first always. We listen to our patients’ and clients’ needs and adjust accordingly, we want them to be a part of their plan to get well and we want to make a difference in their lives.”

**Emerald Home Health** provides in-home personal care. Let us help you take care of the people you love. Emerald Home Health services Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. For more information, visit [www.emeraldhomehealthofficial.com](http://www.emeraldhomehealthofficial.com), email [info@emeraldhomehealthcare.com](mailto:info@emeraldhomehealthcare.com), or call (412) 429-5880.

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## Hospice Care for Heart Disease Patients



By **Evalisa McClure**

Hospice helps patients and their families navigate the significant impact of heart disease after curative treatment has stopped.

Your VITAS® Healthcare hospice team evaluates the patient's status and updates the care plan as symptoms and conditions change. Team members seek to manage symptoms and relieve distress so patients can live as fully as possible, retain their dignity, and remain comfortable. Hospice also offers emotional and spiritual assistance.

### **When is the right time to ask about hospice?**

Patients considered to be in the terminal end stage of heart disease have a life expectancy of 6 months or less. Only a doctor can make a clinical determination of congestive heart failure life expectancy. However, there are signs the disease has progressed to a point where all involved would likely benefit from hospice services, such as:

- The patient has advanced congestive heart failure or advanced coronary disease with frequent episodes of angina.
- The patient has an abnormal heart and suffers significant symptoms of fatigue, shortness of breath, or functional decline.
- Optimal treatment is provided, and the patient is not a candidate for further surgical/medical intervention.
- The patient has tried optimal treatment(s) and made the choice not to pursue any further specialized treatment.

### **How can I approach my hospice discussion with loved ones?**

Strong emotions and hard decisions characterize the final months of life. To express your wishes, refer to these tips to start the discussion.

- Educate yourself first. By now, you've probably done research online. Also, read and share the discussion guide, "Considering Hospice: A Discussion Guide for Families" at [HospiceCanHelp.com](http://HospiceCanHelp.com).
- Determine what family members know. Ensure family members and caregivers clearly understand your health status.
- Discuss goals. As a patient, your greatest concern might be to live without pain, to stay at home or not to be a burden.

### **What can hospice do for the family of a person with heart disease?**

Services include:

- Education and training
- Help with difficult decisions
- A VITAS nurse by phone 24/7
- Financial, emotional, and spiritual assistance
- Respite care
- Bereavement services

Most are unaware of the many benefits of hospice. In addition to those listed, hospice provides comfort, personal attention, and reduced rehospitalization for patients with advanced heart disease.

**> Evalisa McClure** is general manager for **VITAS Healthcare in Pittsburgh**. For more information about end-of-life care services, call the nation's leading provider at **(866) 759-6695** (available 24/7) or visit **VITAS.com**.

## Hospice Care From the HEART





Choose comfort and dignity at the end of life. Choose VITAS.

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Anyone can inquire about hospice services. You, your loved one, or your physician may request an evaluation to determine if a patient is eligible to receive hospice services.

**Call now to see how VITAS can help.**

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# SENIOR RESOURCES

Use this guide as a handy reference for long term use!



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

## FLU VACCINATION

**Allegheny County Health Department**  
425 1st Ave, 4th Floor Pittsburgh  
412-578-8062  
AlleghenyCounty.US/Influenza

## HEARING

**Beltone**  
800-BEL-TONE

**Miracle-Ear**  
866-401-2419

**Swift Audiology**  
Allison Park 412-219-7158  
North Hills 412-218-0426  
South Hills 412-219-9758  
Washington 724-731-1885  
www.swiftaudiology.com

## HOME CARE / HOSPICE

**Emerald Home Health**  
412-429-5880  
www.emeraldhomehealthofficial.com

**Gallagher Home Care Services and Gallagher Home Health Services**  
412-279-7800 • www.Gallagherhhs.com  
Medical or non-medical services.

**LIFE Pittsburgh - Living Independence For The Elderly**  
412-388-8050 • www.LIFEPittsburgh.org

**VITAS Healthcare**  
800-723-3233 • VITAS.com

## HEATING BILLS ASSISTANCE

**Peoples**  
1-800-400-WARM  
peoples-gas.com/programs  
Online ProgramFinder offers help with heating bills

## INCONTINENCE

**Tri-Medical**  
800-541-0734  
www.trimedonline.com

## MEDICARE

**Crystal Manning Licensed Medicare Advisor**  
412-716-4942  
crystalmanning33@gmail.com

**UPMC Health Plan**  
844-529-7625  
UPMCHHealthPlan.com/snp

## MEMORY CARE

**Arden Courts | ProMedica Memory Care**  
www.arden-courts.com  
Jefferson Hills - 412-384-0300  
North Hills - 412-369-7887  
Monroeville - 412-380-1300

## SENIOR LIVING OPTIONS

**Anthology of McCandless**  
412-336-8371  
www.AnthologyMcCandless.com  
Personal Care - Memory Care

**Baptist Senior Family**  
Baptist Homes 412-563-6550  
Providence Point 412-489-3560  
BaptistSeniorFamily.org

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

**Christian Housing**  
412-646-5193 • www.christian-housing.org

**CMS Housing**  
800-545-1833 • www.cmshousing.com

**Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh**  
www.hacp.org

**Community Life**  
1-866-419-1693 • www.commlife.org

**LIFE Pittsburgh**  
412-388-8050 • www.lifepittsburgh.org

**Senior LIFE**  
1-877-998-LIFE (5433)  
www.SeniorLifePA.com

## SKILLED NURSING & REHABILITATION

**ProMedica / Heartland and ManorCare**  
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manorcare.org

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**VITAS Healthcare Family and Caregiver Support**  
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412.571.2999



**Creedmoor Court**  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15226  
412.344.1540



**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



**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



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



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



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



**Fox Township Manor**  
108 Irishtown Road  
Kersey, PA 15846  
814.885.6855



**St. Ambrose Manor**  
1235 Yetta Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
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## Senior Living



## Use Peoples Online ProgramFinder for Help with Heating Bills

As heating season approaches, applicants for Peoples' customer support programs including LIHEAP, CAP and Dollar Energy have a convenient way to determine eligibility and provide enrollment information online. Instead of having to go to multiple websites or call several different agencies, Peoples' online ProgramFinder tool allows a one-stop approach to finding help with heating bills.

"The biggest benefit of Peoples' ProgramFinder is its availability 24/7," explains Rita Black, Director of Community Assistance Programs for Essential Utilities. "These programs serve customers that are in many seasons of life. We have adult children who are looking for help for their aging parents and often don't have time to research these topics until after the work day is over and the children are off to bed. We have working parents who are struggling to make ends meet, many of whom work multiple jobs or shifts. Having the flexibility to self-screen in a private way to see if help is available any time of the day and any day of the week will fill such a critical need for them."

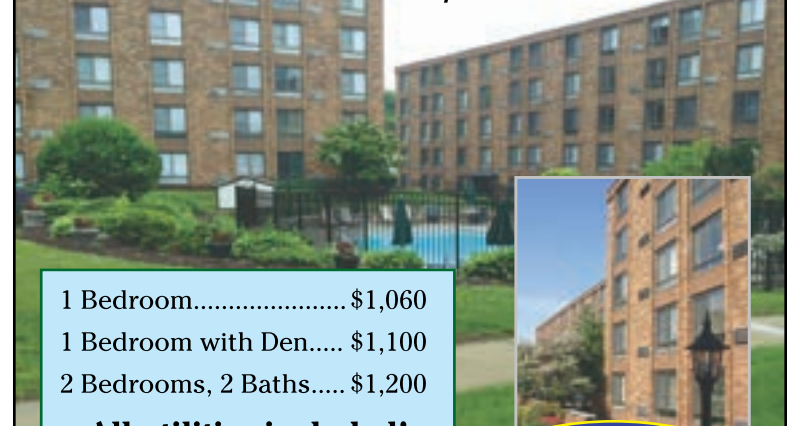
This year, LIHEAP grants are a minimum of \$500. Customers can confidentially enter income and household information in the ProgramFinder to be screened for eligibility.



If you know of someone who needs, or might need assistance, please have them use the ProgramFinder at [www.Peoples-Gas.com/Programs](http://www.Peoples-Gas.com/Programs), or call 1-800-400-WARM.

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Munhall, PA 15120  
[412-462-3200](tel:412-462-3200)

**South Hills Retirement Residence**  
125 Ruth Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15211  
[412-481-8100](tel:412-481-8100)

**Carson Retirement Residence**  
2850 East Carson Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15203  
[412-481-0700](tel:412-481-0700)

**Plum Retirement Residence**  
620 Repp Road  
New Kensington, PA 15068  
[724-339-2925](tel:724-339-2925)

**Summit Retirement Residence**  
125 South Sixth Street  
Duquesne, PA 15110  
[412-466-7755](tel:412-466-7755)

**Carnegie Retirement Residence**  
200 Railroad Avenue  
Carnegie, PA 15106  
[412-276-0102](tel:412-276-0102)

**Retirement Residence of Glassport**  
220 Erie Ave.  
Glassport, PA 15045  
[412-999-1051](tel:412-999-1051)

**The Oaks Retirement Residence**  
2967 Jacks Run Road  
White Oak, PA 15131  
[412-675-0412](tel:412-675-0412)

**Morningside Crossing**  
1808 Jancey Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
[412-441-1140](tel:412-441-1140)

**Ross Hill Retirement Residence**  
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[412-847-0161](tel:412-847-0161)

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# 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

**Gateway Rehab**  
1-800-472-1177  
gatewayrehab.org

## AESTHETIC & VEIN SERVICES

**Monroeville Vein & Laser Center**  
412-373-9580  
monroevilleveinandlaser.com

## Medspa PGH

412-373-9580  
www.medspapgh.com

## CANNABIS

**Medical Marijuana Specialists**  
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www.GetYourIDCard.com

## DENTAL/DENTAL IMPLANTS

**Valley Brook Dental**  
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724-942-8982  
valleybrookdental.com

## FLU VACCINATION

**Allegheny County Health Department**  
412-578-8062  
AlleghenyCountyUS/Influenza

## HEALTH, WELLNESS AND FITNESS CENTERS

**The Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park**  
412-221-1099  
www.twpusc.org/crc/cre-home

## HEALTHY EATING - WOMEN

**WIC - Allegheny County Health Department**  
412-350-5801  
www.achd.net/wic or  
www.pawic.com  
Nutrition and supplemental foods program for pregnant women and breastfeeding women. For more information on guidelines, appointments, and how to apply, visit the county or state's website.

## HEART & VASCULAR MEDICINE

**Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Medicine**  
412-469-1500  
www.greaterpittsburghvascular.com

## Jefferson Cardiology Association

412-469-1500  
www.jeffersoncardiology.com

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724-225-7000  
www.whs.org

## IMAGING

### St. Clair Health Diagnostic Imaging Services

www.stclair.org  
Diagnostic imaging services at the I; St. Clair Outpatient Center – Bethel Park and the St. Clair Outpatient Center - Peters Township; and the MRI Center on Broughton Road.

## INCONTINENCE

**Tri-Medical**  
800-541-0734  
www.trimedonline.com

## MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

**Eagle Medical Equipment**  
724-218-1051  
eaglemedical.us

## Sleep Pittsburgh

**Lift Chairs**  
412-462-7858  
www.SleepPittsburgh.com

## ORTHOPEDICS

**Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation**  
1-800-828-CAST (2278)  
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

## ORTHOPEDICS

**St. Clair Hospital Center for Orthopedics**  
412-942-4000 - stclair.org

## WHS Orthopedics and Sport Medicine

724-206-0610 • whsdocs.org

## PEDIATRICS

**WHS Washington Pediatrics**  
724-250-6001 • www.whs.org

## PHYSICAL THERAPY

**FYZICAL Therapy & Balance Centers**  
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Bethel Park 412-347-0022  
Cecil 724-338-2062  
www.fyzical.com

## PHYSICIANS

**St. Clair Medical Services**  
www.stclair.org

**Washington Physician Hospital Organization Provider Network**  
whs.org

## REHABILITATION

**Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation**  
1-800-828-CAST (2278)  
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

## Encompass Health

Harmarville - Sewickley  
www.encompasshealth.com  
877-937-7342

## REHABILITATION

**ProMedica / Heartland and ManorCare**  
412-498-9375  
manorcare.org

## WHS Physical Medicine and Sports Rehabilitation

724-229-2700  
whsdocs.org

## SLEEP APNEA

**Breathe Pennsylvania**  
724-772-1750  
visit www.breathepa.org  
Groups are free and currently meeting virtually. Our SLEEP Group offers topics pertaining to support, lifestyle, education, equipment, and preparation for both patients and caregivers to help families manage obstructive sleep apnea confidently.

## WOMEN'S HEALTH

**WIC Allegheny County Health Department**  
412-350-5801  
www.achd.net/wic or  
www.pawic.com  
Nutrition and supplemental foods program for pregnant women and breastfeeding women. For more information on guidelines, appointment openings, and how to apply, call the ACHD WIC Program or visit visit the county or state's website.

# resources for Children & Adults with Special Needs or a Disability

## ACCESS PRODUCTS

**Voices for Independence**  
724-223-5115 TTY: 724-228-4028  
Toll-Free: 1-866-407-0064  
www.vficil.org

## AUTISM

**Autism Connection of Pennsylvania**  
412-781-4116 - 800-827-938  
www.autismofpa.org

## Pathways

724-229-0851  
www.yourpathways.org

## DAY CARE/DAY PROGRAMS

**Childs Way** - 412-441-4884  
www.childrenshomepgh.org  
Childs Way is a daycare for medically fragile children housed within The Children's Home & Lemieux Family Center.

## DISABILITY RESOURCES

**Community Living Care**  
724-836-8747  
www.communitylivingcare.com  
CLC offers provision of care at your place of residence as needed, 24 hour residential care at one of our community living homes or community participation supports at our day program, as well as transportation to and from services.

## Lifesteps

724-283-1010  
www.lifesteps.net.  
Lifesteps is proud to be an independent, non-profit, human services agency. Lifesteps works to meet the needs of our community by helping children, families, older adults, and individuals with intellectual, developmental, or physical disabilities lead better lives by offering care and support through family-focused services and programs.

## Pathways

724-229-0851  
yourpathways.org  
For individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through innovative programs, life long services, and individual attention, we empower people of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential.

## TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living)

724-223-5115 TTY: 724-228-4028  
Toll-Free: 1-877-889-0965  
www.trpil.com  
Our Programs include Peer Support, Home Care and Nursing Home Transition, Youth Programs, Advocacy, and Information on equal access, assistive technology, education, employment, housing, and transportation. Through our affiliate TRPIL Community Services, we provide Medicaid based Home and Community Based Services.

## UPMC Disability Resource

**Center- Forbes Tower** –  
412-605-1483

## Voices for Independence

724-223-5115  
TTY: 724-228-4028  
Toll-Free: 1-866-407-0064  
www.vficil.org

## DEVELOPMENT/EARLY INTERVENTION

**Children's Therapy Center of Washington Health System**  
www.whs.org/ctc  
724-942-6100

## Pathways

724-229-0851  
www.yourpathways.org

## The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Inc.

412-885-6000 - www.aftit.org

## EMPLOYMENT/JOB TRAINING

**TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living)**  
724-223-5115 TTY: 724-228-4028  
www.trpil.com

## MEDICAID

**UPMC Health Plan**  
844-529-7625  
UPMCHHealthPlan.com/snp

## MENTAL HEALTH

**Merakey** - www.merakey.org  
Merakey is a leading developmental, behavioral health, and education non-profit provider offering a wide range of services for individuals and communities across the country.

## TRUSTS

**Achieva Family Trust**  
412-995-5000 x565  
www.achievafamilytrust.org

# Employment Opportunities



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Call: 724-283-1010



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To learn more about these opportunities, visit [www.merakey.org/careers](http://www.merakey.org/careers), email [employment@merakey.org](mailto:employment@merakey.org), or follow us on social media:

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Merakey is a leading developmental, behavioral health, and education non-profit provider offering a wide range of services for individuals and communities across the country.

Jessica,  
Cardiac Surgery Patient

# So you can be the heart of the team again.

## Expert cardiac surgery

One day Jessica was home caring for her newborn daughter. The next day, the young mother of five was being prepped for emergency open-heart surgery to save her life. Jessica's cardiac care team at St. Clair Health did just that, putting her on the path to recovery and back to being the true heart of her family.

St. Clair Health offers patients like Jessica access to some of the most advanced cardiac surgical, diagnostic and rehab procedures in a patient-first environment that's close to home. Find out more about one of the most exceptional cardiac care teams in western Pennsylvania at [stclair.org/cardiac](http://stclair.org/cardiac).

Watson Health  
100 Top Hospitals\*

 MAYO CLINIC  
CARE NETWORK  
Member



[stclair.org](http://stclair.org)

Expert care from people who care.