



# The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik Agencies and General Health

AUGUST '18 • ISSUE NO. 161

## GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

**WHAT DO YOU DO FOR REGULAR EXERCISE?**

**A. TREADMILL; B. WALKING; C. NOTHING**

Respond to: [survey@hamaspik.org](mailto:survey@hamaspik.org)

## HEALTH STAT

### HOME COOKING ON BACK BURNER

GROWTH IN U.S. FOOD SPENDING, 2013-2016

**<2%** **20%>**

Meals prepared at home

Meals prepared elsewhere

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016 data, Wall Street Journal, June 20, 2018

## HEALTH TIP

### AVOID BRIGHT LIGHTS BEFORE SLEEP.

Bright night-time household lights disrupt production of the sleep hormone melatonin, which is produced when the body is in the dark.

## INSIDE

### HEALTH

**02** Vitamins generally do not improve overall health: study

**15** Study scientifically links breathing and meditation with brain health

### PUBLIC HEALTH & POLICY

**07** Could robots care for seniors at home? Researchers say yes

**10** NY health plans to ask for 24%-average premium raise for 2019

### HAMASPIK

**03** Tri-County Care is here—with 10,000 total beneficiaries!

**08** Hamaspik of Kings County signs on new residence for 12 people

### HOSPITALS

**14** Nurse-to-patient ratio laws back on front burner in PA, elsewhere

### AUTISM / DISABILITY

**02** Microsoft \$25 million grant to fund AI for autism, disabilities

**11** Bostonian with Down syndrome opens own successful bakery

## HAMASPIK NEWS

# PERSONAL EXPERIENCE UP FRONT

(L-R) RABBIS SHAPIRO, FUCHS, GANCZ, AND EISENBERG FIELD QUESTIONS FROM PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AT A Q&A PANEL AT THE JUNE 8-10 HAMASPIK SHABBATON—WHICH ALSO FEATURED WORKSHOPS AND SESSIONS ON ALL THINGS SPECIAL-NEEDS PARENTING .



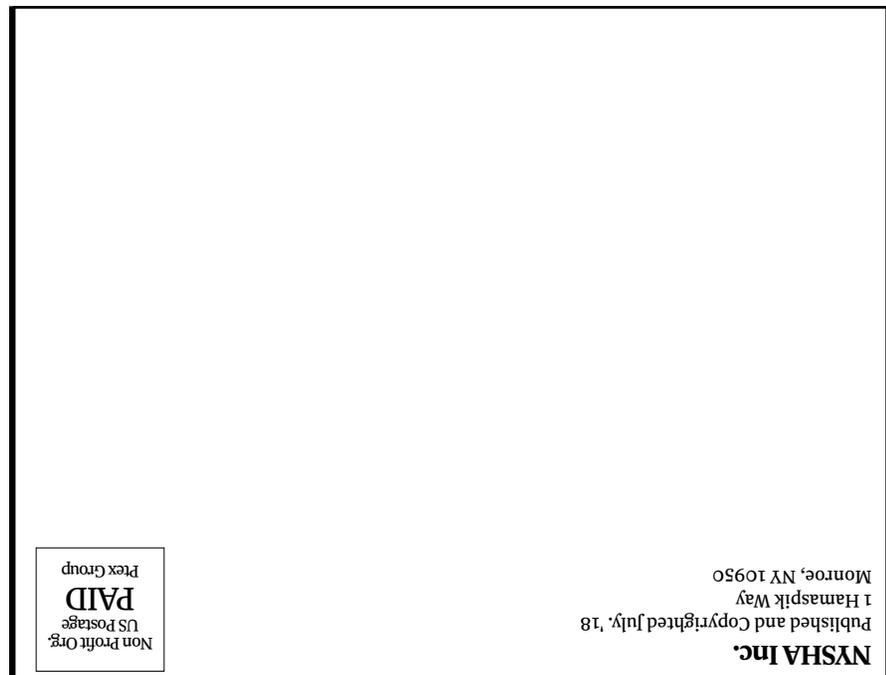
THE ANNUAL PARENTAL RETREAT HOSTED BY HAMASPIK FOR 17 YEARS NOW IS BY FAR THE MOST POPULAR SUPPORT OFFERED BY THE AGENCY, WITH PARENTS TYPICALLY SAYING IT CARRIES THEM AN ENTIRE YEAR.

SEE PAGE E4 >>

## HEALTH NEWS

# 'Good Bacteria' Promising for Type of Eczema: Gov't Study

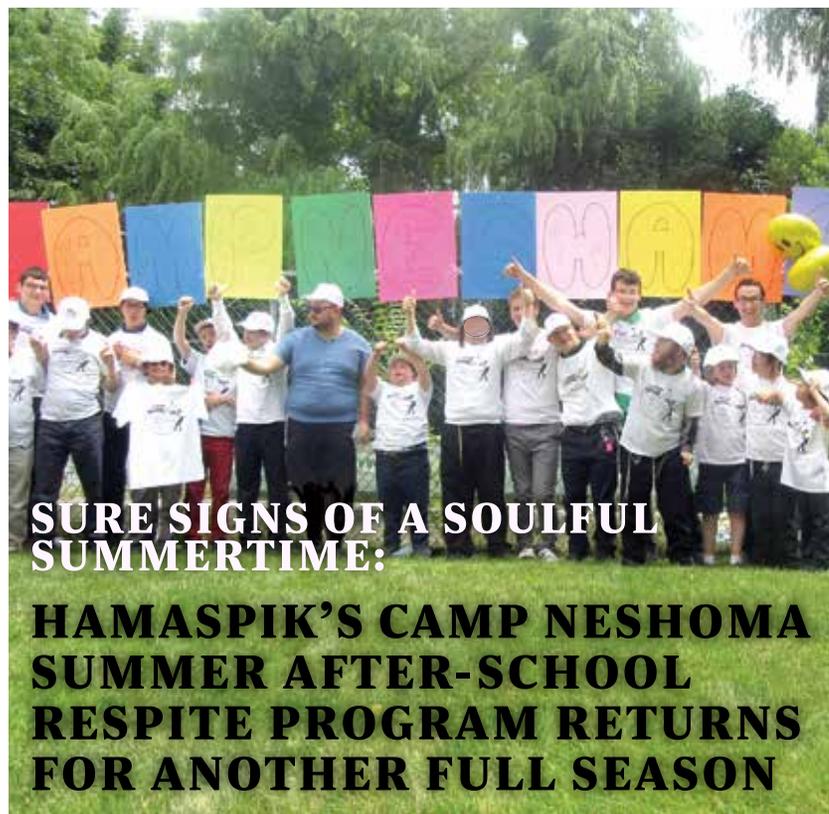
SEE PAGE E3 >>



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## HAMASPIK NEWS



SURE SIGNS OF A SOULFUL SUMMERTIME:

HAMASPIK'S CAMP NESHOMA SUMMER AFTER-SCHOOL RESPITE PROGRAM RETURNS FOR ANOTHER FULL SEASON

SEE PAGE E8 >>

# Services Provided by NYSHA AGENCIES

## OPWDD

### COMMUNITY HABILITATION (COM HAB)

Providing: One-on-one personal aides to help individuals achieve valued outcomes by means of helping them improve their activities of daily living (ADL) skills and long-term life goals

### HOME-BASED RESPITE

Providing: Relief for parents of individuals with special needs

### AFTER-SCHOOL RESPITE

Providing: A respite program for after school hours and school vacations

### DAY HAB PROGRAM

Providing: A day program for adults with disability

### SUPPLEMENTAL DAY HAB PROGRAM

Providing: An extended day program for adults with disability

### CAMP NESHOMAH

Providing: A day program for children with disability over summer and winter school breaks

### INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA)

Providing: A supervised residence for individuals who need out-of-home placement

### INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Apartments and supports for individuals who can live independently

### ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS

Providing: Home accessibility additions

### SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEMP)

Providing: Coaching and support for people with disabilities to get and keep suitable jobs

### ENHANCED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Providing: Job developing and coaching for people with any type of disability

### COMMUNITY PRE-VOC PROGRAM

Providing: One-on-one employment preparation day program for high-functioning individuals

### PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

Providing: One-on-one employment discovery program for high-functioning individuals

### MEDICAID SERVICE COORDINATION

Providing: An advocate for the individual to access and coordinate available benefits

### FAMILY CARE PROGRAM

Providing: A family to care for an individual with special needs

### INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITY (ICF)

Providing: A facility for medically involved individuals who have developmental disability

### INTENSIVE BEHAVIOR SERVICES (IBS)

Providing: Interventional services for people with behavioral issues and their family members

### PLAN OF CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Support for families of individuals with special needs

### FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Reimbursement for qualifying items or services not covered by Medicaid

### PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

### SELF DIRECTION

**Fiscal Intermediary (FI)** — providing: Accounting and billing for vendors supporting individuals who self-direct their own supports

**Broker** — providing: One-on-one, independent brokering of all necessary services and supports to individuals who self-direct their own supports

## DOH

### CARE AT HOME

Providing: nursing · personal care aides · therapy · respite · medical supplies · adaptive technology · service coordination

### EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

Providing: Full evaluations · home-based, community-based and center-based services · parent/child groups · ongoing service coordination · therapy (PT, OT, SLP, vision, nutrition, play, etc.) · special ed · social work · family training/counseling · bilingual providers

### NURSING HOME TRANSITION AND DIVERSION (NHTD) PROGRAM

Providing: Service Coordination · assistive technology · moving assistance · community transitional services · home/community support services · E-mods · independent living skills · positive behavioral interventions · structured day program

### TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY PROGRAM

Providing: Service Coordination · independent living skills training · day programs · rent subsidies · medical equipment · E-mods · transportation · community transitional services · home/community support services

### CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

Providing: Breakfast · lunch · supper · snack

### HEALTH HOME SERVING CHILDREN (HHSC)

Providing: Intensive, comprehensive care management and family/community support services for children with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care

### SENIOR DINING/SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM (SHNOIS CHAIM)

Providing: Daily onsite lunches and social/educational activities for community seniors (Orange and Rockland Counties only)

### APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)

Providing: Behavior modification for children with autism covered by private insurance

## LHCSEA - HAMASPIKCARE

### PERSONAL CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Home health aides · personal care aides · housekeepers · HCSS aides

### COUNSELING SERVICES

Providing: Diet/nutrition counselors · social workers

### REHABILITATION SERVICES

Providing: Physical therapy · speech therapy · occupational therapy

### PACE-CDPAS

Providing: Personal care aides for people in need

### SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS

Providing: Minor maintenance for those qualifying

### SOCIAL MODEL

Providing: A social day program for senior patients

### NURSING SERVICES

Providing: Skilled observation and assessment · care planning · paraprofessional supervision · clinical monitoring and coordination · medication management · physician-ordered nursing intervention and skill treatments

## HAMASPIK CHOICE

Providing: A managed long-term care plan (MLTCP) approved by New York State

## HCR

### ACCESS TO HOME

Providing: Home modifications for people with physical disabilities

### HOME REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Providing: Remodeling dilapidated homes for low income home owners

## NYSED

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Providing: Employment planning · job development · job placement

### JOB COACHING

Intensive and ongoing support for individuals with physical, mental and/or developmental disabilities to become employed and to maintain employment

## NYSHA

**ARTICLE 16 CLINIC** Providing: Physical therapy · occupational therapy · speech therapy · psychology · social work · psychiatry · nursing · nutrition

### TRAINING SESSIONS

Providing: SCIP · CPR and first aid · orientation · MSC CORE · AMAP · annual updates · Com Hab/ Respite · Family Care · Supported employment

### CENTRAL INTAKE

Providing: The first contact for a person or family in need of Hamaspik services

### THE HAMASPIK GAZETTE

Providing: A bilingual monthly newspaper keeping the community up-to-date on all major news in medicine, public health, disability, hospitals, senior care, and general Hamaspik news

## OMH

### HEALTH AND RECOVERY PLAN (HARP)

Providing: long-term social, emotional, employment, peer-support and other mental-illness recovery supports

## DISABILITY NEWS



ENABLING TOUCH: MICROSOFT'S NOW FUNDING AI PROJECTS TO SUPPORT DISABILITY

# Microsoft Invests \$25 Million in Disability Artificial Intelligence

Seattle, WA — At its recent annual Build conference for software developers, Microsoft launched a \$25 million initiative to use artificial intelligence (AI) to build better technology for people with disabilities.

According to Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, the new “AI for Accessibility” five-year initiative will include seed grants for startups, nonprofit organizations and academic researchers, as well as deeper investments and expertise from Microsoft researchers.

Microsoft president Brad Smith said the company hopes to empower people by accelerating the development of AI tools that provide them with more opportunities for independence and employment.

“It may be an accessibility need relating to vision or deafness or to something like autism or dyslexia,” Smith said in an interview. “There are about a billion people on the planet who have some kind of disability, either permanent or temporary.”

Those people already have “huge potential,” he said, but “technology can help them accomplish even more.”

“People with disabilities are often overlooked when it comes to technology advances, but Microsoft sees this as a key area to address concerns over the technology and compete against Google, Amazon and IBM,” said Nick McQuire, an analyst at CCS Insight. ★

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● ► NYSHA NEWS

# Ushering In a New Era of Care for People with Disabilities

## NYSHA's Tri-County Care CCO/HH Now Open for Business



As you're reading this very article, the front door is open. Desks are being manned. Phone calls are being answered.

Everything's the same. And yet everything is different. In the best of ways.

This July 1, mere days ago, three brand-new Care Coordination Organization/Health Homes (CCO/HHs) opened across lower New York State.

Tri-County Care—the New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA's) competitive entry spanning 25 counties, 45 member agencies and about 10,000

beneficiaries—is one of them.

People with special needs being serviced and supported by Tri-County Care are no longer being serviced and supported by the "Medicaid Service Coordinators (MSCs)" who work directly for Hamaspik and other non-profits.

In their place—and in the same persons—are "Care Managers." Same names. Same faces. Same professional advocacy and loving care. Just more of it.

Under the new CCO/HH system, every MSC is now a Care Manager. And every Care Manager works not for their previous employer but for an independent CCO/HH. Like Tri-County Care.

The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) calls the new arrangement "Conflict Free."

And under "Conflict Free Care Management," the Care Managers are doing just that—managing the care of the individuals they support, free of conflict between the agency they work for and any other agency whose supports might be better for the individual(s) in question.

From that neutral, conflict-free place, Care Managers are free to delegate individuals to resources that best suit them, eliminating predatory placement and territorial decisions.

For Tri-County Care's team of new Care Managers formerly with Hamaspik of Kings, Orange and Rockland, the shift means nothing and everything.

It means nothing because they're still essentially doing the same thing: advocating. But it means everything because the Care Managers are now advocating for a world of new services.

Mrs. Chedva Freund, a veteran former Hamaspik of Kings County MSC, is still fighting for special-needs schooling and housing for her charges, plus scheduling mental-health appointments for them with the plethora of psychiatric professionals now available through Tri-County Care.

Hamaspik of Orange County's Mrs. Tziry Daskal, now a newly-trained Care Manager at Tri-County Care, still has her desk set up the way she likes it—and is still working her phone and keyboard every day as always, seeing to it that her caseload is getting what it needs, and that Tri-County Care's new integrated software system from MediSked is put to good use.

And Tri-County Care Manager Mrs. Toby Bloch, long a stalwart MSC at Hamaspik of Rockland County, now presides over her clients' Life Plans—enhanced and expanded versions of the old Individualized Service Plans (ISPs) which now provide for so much more.

Normally, "more of the same" is hardly complimentary.

But at NYSHA's Tri-County Care, staff harvested from the cream of Hamaspik's crop as they are, it's more of the same superlative caring and compassion—plus a whole lot more. ★

● ► HEALTH NEWS

## Bacteria Therapy Tested for Common Skin Disease

**Bethesda, MD** — In a small study, a treatment using bacteria normally found on healthy skin reduced the severity of a common skin disease called *atopic dermatitis*. The results pave the way for a larger, carefully controlled study of the therapy.

Atopic dermatitis is the most common type of eczema. It can make skin dry and extremely itchy. Rashes can form inside the elbows, behind the knees, and on the face, hands, and feet. Its cause is unknown.

Recently, animal and lab tests suggest that bacteria known as *Roseomonas mucosa* collected from healthy skin have qualities that may hold promise for treating people with atopic dermatitis.

Based on said findings, investigators at NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) designed an early stage clinical trial to test the safety and potential benefit of a treatment containing *R. mucosa* for people with atopic dermatitis.

Scientists used strains of *R. mucosa* from healthy skin to make the experimental treatment. They provided the bacterial therapy to ten adults and five children with atopic dermatitis. The adults sprayed the treatment on the inside of their forearms near the elbow twice a week for six weeks. The children had the treatment applied to all affected skin areas twice weekly for 12 weeks and every other day for an additional four weeks.

The research, published recently in *JCI Insight*, found that six of the ten adults and four of the five children had over 50 percent improvement in their atopic dermatitis. ★



SKIN IN THE GAME: THE NIH'S HQ IN BETHESDA, HOME TO NEW ECZEMA RESEARCH

### Hamaspik Gazette

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● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

# One Fantastic Recharge of a Weekend, One Year's Worth of Inspiration

## *Hamaspik Hosts Its Ever-Popular Annual Shabbaton Parental Getaway*



THE SOUND OF SUPPORT: PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS SET THE PRE-SHABBOS TONE



A COMPLETE PACKAGE: HOUSEWARMING KITS TO MAKE EACH GUEST FEEL AT HOME



PUTTING FEET TO THE BEAT: THE MENFOLK SWAY AS A ROLLIICKING BAND PLAYS

Over 300 fathers and mothers, parents of children with special needs all, arrived at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Stamford, Connecticut the early afternoon of this past Friday, June 8.

Over 300 fathers and mothers departed the Crowne Plaza Hotel at noon this past Sunday, June 10, but as veritably different people—carrying with them sufficient inspiration to last a year.

Here's what happened at the annual Hamaspik Shabbos retreat for special-needs parents in the interim.

### SETTING THE STAGE

Couples arriving all afternoon were greeted as usual by Hamaspik's very own Special Events Coordinator Mrs. Brenda Katina, who was helming a welcome table just inside the hotel's main entrance.

Each new arrival received the Coordinator's trademark smile, along with a lovely welcome packet containing a variety of thoughtful items, from natural nut snacks to needle-and-thread sewing kits.

After greeting, welcome packet collection and sign-in, guests proceeded further into the lobby, where a table laden with ample reading materials for the entire weekend awaited.

Further elevating the magical atmosphere was a live string quartet, filling the air with the sweet strains of Jewish classics.

In the lobby's lovely gazebo, a long table serving refreshments was available to guests for much of the long summer afternoon.

Guests were also treated to several activities over the afternoon hours—a

workshop exclusively for women, a shoe shine for the gents, and a fun live science show for everyone.

By the time the sun set and Shabbos candles were lit at 8:09 p.m., both men and women had enjoyed separate swimming hours, as well as food for body and mind—putting all in the right state of relaxation to usher in the Day of Rest.

### A FRIDAY NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Following the afternoon Minchah prayers, Hamaspik's very own Chaim Mendel Katina welcomed the capacity crowd assembled in the spacious Crowne Ballroom. He especially thanked Meyer Wertheimer, President of the New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA) and founder of Hamaspik, for making the event possible.

Master of Ceremonies Mr. Hershel Friedman, who would proctor every speaking event throughout the weekend, was then introduced.

Following his opening comments, Mr. Friedman introduced the weekend's first featured inspirational speaker, the popular Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro.

Rabbi Shapiro, spiritual leader of the Shaarei Tefila synagogue of Miami, Florida, set the tone and theme for the entire weekend with his powerful opening words of encouragement.

In his captivating delivery, Rabbi Shapiro said that no parent of a child who has special needs should ever feel alone. He also hailed Hamaspik for being a pioneer in embracing the support-Shabbaton model for parents contending with special needs.

Friday-night prayer services fol-

lowed. With inspirational vocals by Cantor Shimon Singer backed by the Shira Choir men's chorale, the menfolk spontaneously took to their feet and danced in a circle around the room for over 15 minutes.

A "presidential" Shabbos dinner, as one guest described it, came next; another was so taken by the setting that she asked Mrs. Katina whether paradise looks like this.

The regal meal was capped by an uplifting talk by Rabbi Shapiro. The good rabbi dwelt on the concept of responsibility, likening it to a chain whose first link is the self, followed by brothers, then others, then followers, linking ultimately to all.

After the meal, men and women broke up for informal events. The men's group, marked by inspirational thoughts and impromptu singing, was led by noted teacher Rabbi Sholom Paplanos backed by the Shira Choir, while the ladies enjoyed the inspiration of Mrs. Rosenbloom, a noted educator.

Guests stayed up to the wee hours of the morning, bonding with friends old and new alike.

#### A DAY-LONG FEAST OF SUPPORT

Early coffee and breakfast was provided for early risers, followed by the Shachris morning prayers at 9:30 a.m.

A perennial "Hamaspik Shabbos" highlight came next—an informal "Kiddush" meal at which fathers share their most trying questions and get back the most amazing answers from guest panelists and fellow parents alike.

This year's "Kiddush" panel featured Mr. Friedman and Rabbi Akiva Tendler—along with parents (some of whom had never spoken publicly of their private lives) who related how they and their families overcame the challenges of special-needs parenting.

At the same time, moms gathered for one of two parallel talks (Yiddish and English) with Rebbetzin Devorah Horowitz and Mrs. Chaya Reich.

The day's anchoring Shabbos luncheon, a multi-course affair, began at 2:00 p.m. It was highlighted by an inspiring talk in Yiddish by Rabbi Aaron Gancz, himself a special-needs father.

The lengthy meal, and the following heart-to-heart conversations in twos and threes seen all across the ballroom and hotel premises, gave guests precious little time for the customary Shabbos-afternoon nap.

By the time anyone got a little shuteye, it was already 6:15 p.m.—time for separate *Pirkei Avos* (*Ethics of the Fathers*) study groups for men and women.

A surprise vocal performance for

women paid emotional and inspiring tribute to the life story and tragic end of Menachem Stark, a family man murdered on a Friday-night Brooklyn street several years ago.

Those were followed by the 7:00 p.m. Minchah prayers and a Shalosh Seudos "Third Meal" at 7:30. Rabbi Reisman "headlined" that meal with another great talk.

Rabbis Shapiro and Paplanos then delivered magnificent simultaneous speeches to respective English- and Yiddish-speaking audiences, and Shabbos closed out shortly after 9:30 on a high note—which rose even higher with the joy-filled singing and dancing to live music that shortly followed.

At 10:30 p.m., an English-Yiddish panel discussion was held, with parents passing up written questions for Rabbis Gancz and Shapiro, joined by Rabbis Aharon Eisenberg and Yisroel Fuchs, to answer from their own experience and wisdom over the years.

Delivering its powerful "keynote address," Rabbi Eisenberg presided over a formal "Melaveh Malka" post-Shabbos meal at midnight.

HamaspikCare Outreach Coordinator Joel Nojovits led a Q&A discussion that overlapped Melaveh Malka on what the home-care agency does and how it might help guests' loved ones.

Popular minstrel Yosef Chaim Rotenstreich, a masterful blender of wisdom, wit and song, led an equally uplifting and entertaining "jam session" for fathers that lasted until 4:00 a.m.

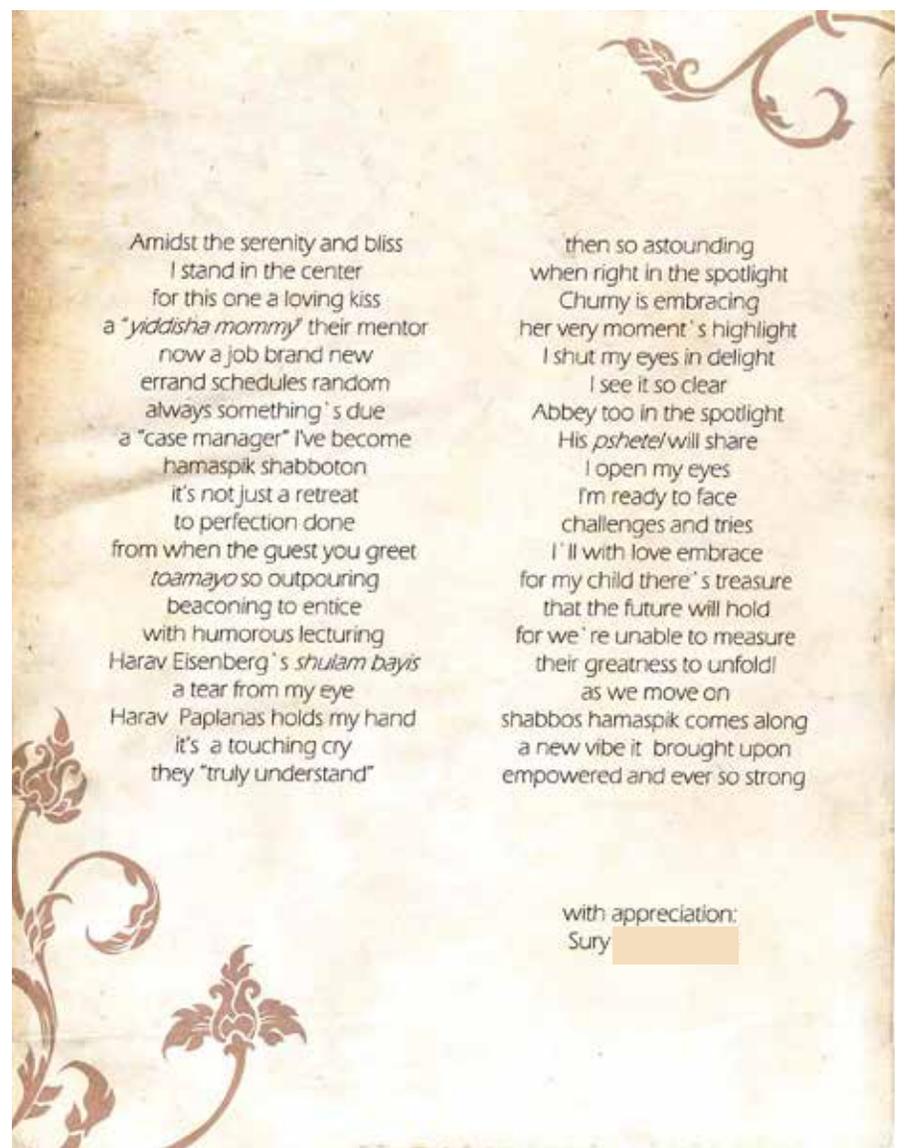
#### HEADING OUT, LOOKING UP

Breakfast was served from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Guests, many who'd gotten little sleep and some even pulling all-nighters, slid in and out of the dining room.

They were perhaps physically hungry. But as they ate, exchanged heartfelt goodbyes, checked out and headed home, they did so feeling spiritually fueled for a newly-hopeful 12 months... until the next Shabbaton. ★



HAMASPIKCARE CARES: HOME-CARE STAFF ON HAND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS



WORDS FROM THE HEART: A GRATEFUL PARENT'S APPRECIATIVE PROSE



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE CAPACITY CROWD GATHERED FOR THE UPLIFTING 'MELAVEH MALKA' MEAL

# Happening in Health Today



## HEART-MEDICINE COMMUNITY DEBATES ABLATION

**New York, NY** — Several recent studies, conferences and editorials have sparked a pulsating debate across the global cardiology community over a procedure called *catheter ablation*.

Ablation means surgically burning away small amounts of heart tissue. It eliminates the stray electric signals from that tissue that cause *atrial fibrillation* (AF), or irregular heartbeat. It is commonly done with a small surgically inserted device called a *catheter*.

But a recent major study dubbed

CABANA found that catheter ablation “was no more effective than much cheaper medications at reducing mortality, cardiac arrest, major bleeding and stroke,” according to a May 20 *New York Times* editorial by cardiologist Dr. Haider Warraich.

In late May, cardiologist Dr. Milton Packer debated electrophysiologist Nassir Marrouche at the Heart Failure Association conference over catheter ablation for heart-failure patients with AF. Dr. Packer leans away from ablation, finding it unscientific, while Dr. Marrouche favors it.

The debate was substantial and respectful, but—as Dr. Packer later

wrote in a June 6 blog post—the emotional reaction on social media by electrophysiologists and others was not. Many questioned the scientific evidence backing Dr. Packer’s disfavor towards catheter ablation or even called for the silencing of critics—apparently underscoring Dr. Packer’s view of some ablationists as almost-fanatical (despite the fact that most professionals are biased towards their chosen practices, and against critics).

Still, ablation remains a relatively new and still-evolving discipline—and a treatment that has improved the heart health and lives of a good number of patients with AF.

## “SMART PILL” GUT SCANNER MIGHT SPOT TROUBLE, SEND ALERT

**Cambridge, MA** — Researchers at MIT have developed a swallowed capsule packed with tiny electronics and millions of genetically engineered living cells. The “smart pill,” described recently in *Science*, might one day wirelessly spot and report health problems from inside the gut.



## HIGH-TECH IQOS “SMOKELESS CIGARETTES” MIGHT WATCH YOUR HABITS

**Tokyo, Japan/Neuchatel, Switzerland** — The sleek “heat-not-burn” IQOS tobacco device, for which maker Philip Morris is still awaiting FDA approval, comprises several electronic features.

Among them is onboard software which, according to research commissioned by the Reuters news agency, could possibly be programmed to track a user’s daily and personal smoking habits.

The possibility raises concerns that—should IQOS ultimately win approval for U.S. usage—Philip Morris will be able to remotely monitor users’ habits and even adjust device performance to make long-term habit formation likelier.

## NOT THE BRAINSTORM YOU WANT: LIGHTNING MAY FRY IMPLANTS, WARN DOCS

**Ljubljana, Slovenia** — According to a recent report in the *Journal of Neurosurgery*, a 66-year-old woman with a deep brain stimulation (DBS) implant had a close call after lightning struck her apartment building.

According to local doctors, the strike ruined several of the woman’s appliances and even turned off her brain implant. Luckily, neither the woman nor her device was harmed.

But in the report, doctors say that lightning strikes could possibly destroy implants or, worse, injure or kill patients. They call for more precautions, like surge protectors. “In the future, DBS manufacturers’ safety recommendations should specifically mention the possibility of hazards from naturally generated electromagnetic interference, such as during thunderstorms,” they wrote.

Deep brain stimulation devices are increasingly used to help treat neurological conditions like Parkinson’s, tremors, muscle spasms, epilepsy, and obsessive compulsive disorders.



## VERILY VEERING VITAMIN VERACITY

**Toronto, Ontario** — Do you really need all those vitamins and supplements?

While the parade of advertising for them is endless, studies on their benefits are likewise endless.

And while several studies in recent years have associated various health benefits with vitamin D in particular, a late-May study by the University of Toronto in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* finds that vitamins and supplements do not significantly improve overall health and well-being in general.

The study had reviewed clinical trials from a five-year period to find whether vitamins and minerals can help treat and prevent cardiovascular disease. In doing so, the study

found that multivitamins, vitamins C and D, and calcium supplements have no significant benefit overall—but, interestingly, that folic acid and B-vitamins do.

Experts say that vitamins largely work due to the powerful *placebo effect*—in which the mind’s belief that you’re actually doing something good for yourself has a positive physical effect on the body.

They also say that most vitamin/mineral deficiencies can be corrected by careful healthy daily eating—admittedly harder than simple morning pill-popping, but more effective.

This is not to say all vitamins are useless—rather, that many just make you feel more proactive about your health. ★

► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

# Robots Could Deliver Home Care to Aging Populations

S. Petersburg, FL — Among the more fascinating presentations at this year's annual International Society for Gerontechnology convention was a robot.

Casper is a humanoid machine created by researchers at the University of Toronto, who believe robots will eventually help care for the world's aging population.

"When it's lunchtime, the robot will find you in your home and say 'Let's go to the kitchen,'" the University's Prof. Goldie Nejat told Fox13 News.

The University of Toronto team was part of the approximately 150 researchers gathering from around the world at the conference—sharing ideas on how new

technology can be used to help a growing population of older people to live independently in their own homes longer.

For example, University of South Florida (USF) researchers attending the convention have been studying seniors at The Villages retirement complex, where homes have been outfitted with electronic sensors to trace residents' movements and use of appliances, chairs, beds, and bathrooms. Caregivers and even family members in other states can monitor them and be alerted to things like falls or changing sleeping, eating or bathroom habits.



★ THE NEW FACE OF HOME CARE? CASPER THE ROBOT



HEALTHY EATING

## Potatoes



**INTERMEDIATE** | YIELDS: 12-15 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:20 | READY IN: 1:20



### Potato Kugel

GOOD OLD POTATO KUGEL

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 10 potatoes
- 1 onion
- 6 eggs - beaten
- 1/2 cup seltzer
- 1 cup oil
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Preheat oven to 550°
- Heat the oil
- Peel potatoes and onion
- Grate the potatoes and onion in a food processor or blender
- Mix the eggs, salt, pepper, and seltzer in well
- Add the hot oil
- Pour into a 9 x 13 baking pan
- Bake at 550° for half hour
- Lower oven to 350° and continue baking for an additional 30 minutes

**CHEF'S TIP:**

After peeling, keep potatoes in water to prevent potatoes from browning

**BENEFITS:**

Everyone thinks of potatoes as bad food, but in fact, potatoes are full of vitamins. The potato's fiber, potassium, vitamin C, and vitamin B6 content, coupled with its lack of cholesterol, all support heart health. Potatoes also contain significant amounts of fiber.

**EASY** | YIELDS: 20-25 PIECES

PREP TIME: 0:10 | READY IN: 0:25



### Fluffy Potato Latkes

PERFECT LATKES FOR ALL YEAR 'ROUND

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 5 potatoes
- 4 eggs
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- Oil for frying

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Peel potatoes
- Shred the potatoes
- Mix all ingredients together
- In a large frying pan, heat oil
- Pour 1/4 cup or 2 heaping tablespoons to form latkes
- Fry for five minutes then flip and fry for additional 2-3 minutes

**EASY** | YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:15 | READY IN: 1:15



### Heartwarming Potato Soup

HEARTWARMING FULFILLING SOUP  
GREAT FOR ANY OCCASION

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 large onion - diced
- 4 cloves garlic - crushed
- 8 potatoes - cubed
- 1lb carrots - shredded
- 2 tablespoon corn starch
- 1 tablespoon consommé soup mix
- Salt to taste
- Dash black pepper
- Water

**DIRECTIONS:**

- In an 8-10 quart pot, sauté onions and garlic for about 5 minutes or till translucent
- Stir in potatoes and carrots
- Dissolve the corn starch in 1 cup of cold water, stir well
- Add water, just about to cover the potatoes
- Add salt, pepper and soup mix
- Stir constantly to prevent burning

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



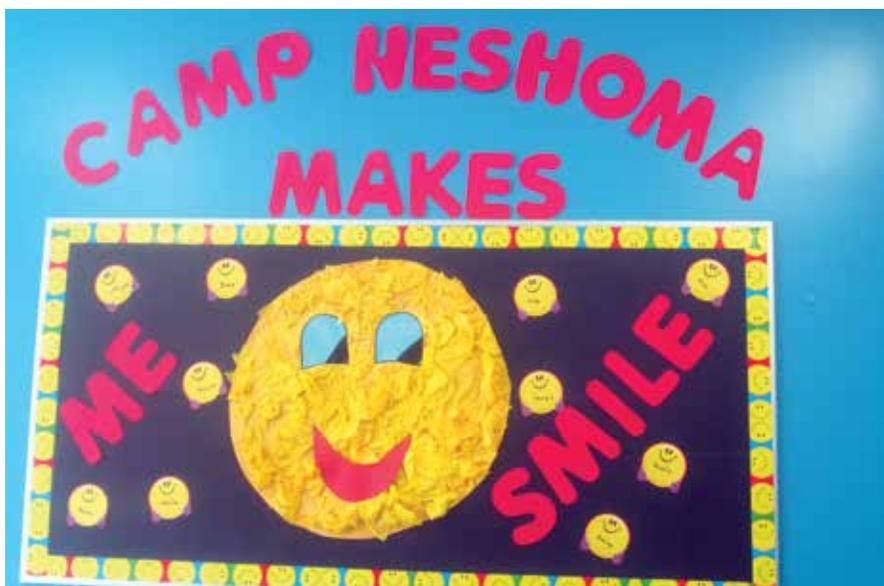
## Happenings around Hamaspik

### The Perfect Setting



JUST THE RIGHT SHADE: A LOVINGLY-CATERED OUTDOOR LUNCH AT SHNOIS CHAIM

### The Face of the Season



HAPPY IS HERE: THIS VINTAGE 2013-SEASON CAMP NESHOMA PHOTO SAYS IT ALL

## Sign(ing) of the Times: New Brooklyn Home for 12 Individuals Now a Go!

It was on December 18, 2017 that Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced 459 new housing opportunities statewide for New Yorkers with disabilities. Among the 53 provider agencies to open some 80 new homes statewide was Hamaspik.

Furthering those opportunities this past May 11 was Hamaspik of Kings County Executive Director Hershel Wertheimer, who signed a contract for his agency's newest full IRA that day.

The development is major news for 12 individuals who've been desperately waiting years for placement—and are now finally getting it.

For Hamaspik, the occasion is equally historic—culminating as it does several levels of government approval, including the local Housing Committee and Community Board 12.

Furthering community inclusion at a community's very heart, the new Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) will be opened in central Borough Park, a Brooklyn neighborhood already extensively serviced by Hamaspik.

In a "MAZEL TOV!" in-house e-mail broadcast to Hamaspik-wide staff that same day, Mr. Wertheimer hailed the development "a date that Hamaspik will forever remember."

He then proceeded to put it simplest and best: Twelve individuals "will have a new home."

And with the new initiative by the Gov. and the New York State OPWDD, in partnership with Hamaspik, twelve new sets of parents will now join their peers in gratefully contrasting life before and after supervised housing for their precious kin. ★

## Sunny Days amid 'Living Years'

"Shnois Chaim" doesn't lend itself to precise translation. But the well-chosen phrase perfectly suits the program that carries it.

Whether it's "living years" or "years of life," the Hamaspik of Orange County program dubbed *Shnois Chaim* has been catering to a community's seniors every Sunday through Thursday for close to four years now—serving them not just with all reverence due but with a heartwarming and nutritious lunch, too.

Loneliness among seniors is a growing problem increasingly drawing the attention of public-health professionals in developed countries worldwide. But you'll find none of that loneliness here.

Every day, a group of seniors converge on the ballroom of Hamaspik's

Administration Building at the gateway to Kiryas Joel. They'll spend the next several hours nourishing their minds and hearts, bodies and souls alike—what with healthy snacks and drinks, stimulating lectures and arts-and-crafts activities, and therapeutic exercises provided by Shnois Chaim's well-trained, loving, devoted and caring staff.

Come summertime, the seniors have been enjoying all of the above—and a good few moments out in the shaded sun and in the company of their peers, courtesy of trips to local parks and waterfronts for therapeutic hand massage (including essential oils) and breathing sessions.

The weather outside may be relaxation-perfect. But at Shnois Chaim, every day is a sunny day. ★

## The Soul of Summer: Camp Neshoma Returns!

For close to three weeks every summer for years now, the children and teens supported by Hamaspik's community-based services have converged on a Hamaspik facility for... Camp Neshoma!

Camp Neshoma is the summertime version of Hamaspik's year-round After-School Respite (ASR) program.

Three seasons of the school year, participants meet each school-day afternoon for several hours of supervised therapeutic activity supported by Hamaspik's capable and caring staff.

Come the off-school summer season,

though, Hamaspik of Rockland County has always coordinated full-day non-school programs with the calendar of the East Ramapo Central School District.

Thus, from June 24th through the Fourth of July, and from August 12 through September 5, Hamaspik's ASR beneficiaries this year will be enjoying no shortage of: arts and crafts, swimming, local trips and outings, outdoor sports, indoor games, camaraderie and good-old-fashioned fun... and all with the trademark heart and soul that marks not just Camp Neshoma but everything Hamaspik does. ★

► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

## New Floor, Higher Level of Quality for Upstate Hamaspik's After-School Respite Programs

They may now be on a lower floor.

But for two of Hamaspik of Orange County's three After-School Respite (ASR) programs, everything's on a higher level.

The ASR program is long a vital staple across the communities supported by Hamaspik in three counties. It provides respite breaks to parents of children with special needs each school day, by giving their children therapeutic afternoon programs filled with stimulation and fun.

At Hamaspik of Orange County's towering Admin Building, the ASR programs for girls and boys below age ten have now "gone up"—into brand-new and richly-decorated large activity rooms of their own in the building's

spacious basement.

At that level, "the kids now have more place and private spaces custom-designed with their needs in mind," explains Respite Director Mrs. Tzippy Loeb.

The new arrangements come just in time for the seasonal Camp Neshoma program, Hamaspik's day camp-themed summertime ASR program—which, this year, will be joined by several new staffers hired to support the several dozen youths who already attend (or will be attending) Hamaspik ASR.

They may have dropped to a lower level. But with their new, improved and expanded activity spaces, Hamaspik of Orange County's ASR certainly has things looking up. ★

## A Supportive Peer Who Speaks Your Language(s)

The wonderfully talented and skilled employee can't be identified for obvious reasons.

But the relatively new Hamaspik staffer is not just fluent in three languages, but in the language of recovery from serious mental illness, too.

As a Peer Support specialist with Hamaspik of Kings County's Health and Recovery Plan (HARP) program in Brooklyn, she's been there. She knows first-hand what it's like. And that's exactly why she does what she does.

Hamaspik's HARP program went into operation this February. The complex and highly targeted program is an initiative of the New York State

Office of Mental Health (OMH), one of Hamaspik's several public-sector partners. It supplies people who have mental illness with an arsenal of tools to prevent and counteract the symptoms of chronic mental illness—including a trained Peer Support specialist.

Because it's limited in whom it helps, Hamaspik's HARP program currently serves only a handful of individuals—all of whom must meet exacting OMH criteria to qualify.

But once they're in, the program is there to help get them "through serious issues in their lives," explains Director Abraham (Muttu) Solomon, LMHC—with a little support from a peer. ★

## Planting the Seeds of Shabbos Awareness

*Shabbos*. The Sabbath. The spiritual anchor of Jewish life for eons; at once axis and compass; the weekly reboot ever vital amid the chaos of today's ever-shifting world.

You may not know that Shabbos is kept by 39 different "don'ts." And even if you know what all 39 are, you may not know what daily around-the-house activities they practically translate to.

So to plant seeds of first-hand awareness, the Men's Division of Hamaspik of Orange County's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program kicked off a months-long activity series this past April 27.

Naturally, they got right down to roots by doing the first of 39 work actions that "keeping Shabbos" in their home community means you don't do: planting.

Guided by Day Hab Director Solomon Rabi and his Direct Support Professional (DSP) team, the gentlemen spent several hours engaged in planting-related activities. They first made their own shopping choices at the gardening section of a local hardware store. Back at Day Hab, they then filled brand-new flower pots with their earthy purchases, and finally seeded and watered their own brand-new potted plants.

On Friday, May 11, they plowed right ahead with "Don't No. 2": plowing—spending a good bit of time out in the yard working that good earth with various tools.

The weekly "39 Labors" project will last until about next Passover, says Mr. Rabi. But for now, the young men are learning how to not break Shabbos, one experiential activity at a time. ★

## Room(s) to Grow



ENTRY LEVEL: THE NEW MAIN HALLWAY



MAKING A POINT: ART IS FUN HERE!



GETTING DOWN TO BASICS: A GIANT FLOOR MAP DRIVES PLENTY OF HEALTHY PLAY

## Shabbos Ground Rules



DIGGING IN: HAMASPIK "DAY HABBERS" LEARN FIRST-HAND WHAT SHABBOS IS (NOT)

# Public Health and Policy News

## UTAH FILES SUIT AGAINST OXYCONTIN MAKER

**Salt Lake City, UT** — The State of Utah filed a lawsuit May 31 accusing Purdue Pharma, which makes the opioid OxyContin, of creating an epidemic of drug abuse in the state. In its court filing, the state claims that Purdue's actions amount to fraud, negligence, nuisance and a violation of state consumer sales law.

Purdue remains on defense vis-à-vis the opioid epidemic. The company announced this past February that it has halved its sales force, and will also no longer visit doctors' offices to sell Oxycontin. It's also currently facing lawsuits from several U.S. states around the country.

## DOCTOR, U.S. SENATOR RELEASES HEALTH REFORM PROPOSAL

**Washington, D.C.** — Like many high-ranking current and past public servants, Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana is an M.D.—and one who's proposed healthcare reforms based directly on that personal experience.

In recent report entitled "Ideas to Make Health Care Affordable Again," Sen. Cassidy proposes such specifics

as: promoting comparison shopping by listing care prices; ending healthcare monopolies by boosting competition; allowing pharmacists to tell patients how to spend less for the same drug; reducing defensive medicine and frivolous lawsuits; and reducing long-term costs by focusing on prevention.

## NYS HEALTH INSURERS ASK FOR 24-PERCENT-AVG. PREMIUM HIKE

**New York, NY** — According to the state Department of Financial Services, New York health plans selling insurance to individuals have recently asked state insurance regulators to raise their premiums by 24 percent on average for 2019, *Bloomberg News* reported.

Insurers said the repeal of the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate caused them to about double their rate requests—without which, they said, they would have requested an average 12-percent hike. Without the requirement, more healthy young individuals are expected to skip buying insurance, leaving the pool dominated by older, sicker people.

Insurers selling plans to small businesses, defined as 100 employees or fewer, requested a 7.5 percent hike on average.

Fidelis Care, the most popular plan

on the state marketplace, requested the largest increase, at 38.6 percent on average. It attributed 25.9 percentage points of that to the repeal.

EmblemHealth, the Manhattan-based insurer behind HIP and GHI, asked for an average 31.5 percent premium increase, with 12 percentage points attributed to the repeal.

The lowest request among city insurers was NYHealth and Hospitals' MetroPlus, which proposed an average increase of 13.5 percent on average.

## IN "FIRST," FDA FORCES MANDATORY RECALL OF KRATOM

**Baltimore, MD** — The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently ordered its first-ever mandatory recall of a food product, after it says it unsuccessfully tried to get the company do so voluntarily.

Kratom is a plant supplement sold to treat pain, help people stop using opioids, or as a stimulant. The FDA has been warning against its use in general and later issued a large voluntary recall notice after some samples were found to be contaminated with salmonella.

The mandatory recall affects kratom supplier Triangle Pharmedicals. Recalled Triangle kratom products include the Emerald Green, Ivory White and Ruby Red brand names of its Maeng Da Kratom product line.

## SPOTTED LANTERNFLIES POSSIBLY SPOTTED IN STATE

**Albany, NY** — The New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) recently asked the public to keep an eye out for spotted lanternflies, an



SEEN ME? WATCH FOR LANTERNFLIES

invasive species that may now have spread to New York.

According to officials, a single spotted lanternfly was spotted in New York in fall of 2017. The DEC has since upped its efforts to detect the bug, which feeds on 70 plant species including maples, apple trees, grapevine, and hops.

"This pest has the potential to severely impact our forests, as well as our state's agricultural and tourism industries," DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said. "New Yorkers are our eyes on the ground and engaging the public's participation to support our efforts is a crucial step."

## ENGLAND CONSIDERING WET WIPE WIPEOUT

**London, England** — A new national policy under government consideration in England would have the popular "wet wipes" sanitary product wiped out over the next decades.

The wipes, used for everything from infant hygiene to facial cleansing and household surface disinfection, are also a major environmental hazard. Some 93 percent of England's "fatbergs," or enormous sewer-system clogs that weigh tons, are composed of discarded wipes. ★



FRONT-LINE EXPERIENCE: SEN. CASSIDY TALKING TO FRANK LEVINGSTON, 110, LOUISIANA'S OLDEST WWII VETERAN

# The Autism Update

*News and developments from the world of research and advocacy*

## BABY TEETH MAY PREDICT AUTISM

**New York, NY** — A new study by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City suggests that zinc and copper metabolism cycles in the layers of baby teeth may be able to predict which children will develop autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

This is the first study to generate a 90-percent accurate biomarker of autism by tracking metabolic pathways over time and could lead to new diagnostic tools, reported Icahn's Paul Curtin, PhD and colleagues.

Using novel tooth-matrix

biomarkers that directly measured uptake of elements, the researchers found that children who later developed autism had disrupted zinc-copper rhythmicity in utero or in their earliest months of life.

"We looked at the naturally shed teeth of children and explored them much as you would explore the growth rings of a tree, he told *MedPage Today*.

## AUTISM RATES CONTINUE TO CLIMB, EXPERTS DON'T KNOW WHY

**Atlanta, GA** — According to the latest data from the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), autism rates in schoolchildren jumped 15 percent between 2012 and 2014, continuing a two-decade rise.

The report does not detail the reasons for the increase.

In a count of 11 communities across the United States, about one in 59 eight-year-olds had autism in 2014—up from one in 68 in 2012. Overall, autism rates have climbed 150 percent since 2000, when the figure was one in 150 children.

The rise is partly driven by increasing diagnoses among African-American and Hispanic children,

who are narrowing the diagnostic gap with their white classmates.

In the 2012 report, white children were diagnosed 50 percent more often than Hispanic children and 20 percent more than African-American children. In the latest report, that gap shrunk to 20 percent among Hispanics and 10 percent among blacks.

The report is published bi-yearly by the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, a CDC-funded tracking system that assesses more than 300,000 eight-year-old children for the disorder. ★



WHAT MAINSTREAM SKILLS LOOK LIKE: "FRESH COOKIES GOING OUT FOR A BEAUTIFUL WEDDING IN HAWAII," MS. DIVITTO RECENTLY POSTED ALONG WITH THIS PHOTO

## BAKER WITH DOWN SYNDROME OPENS OWN BAKERY AFTER JOB REJECTION

**Boston, MA** — Collette Divitto, 26, has always been an avid baker.

Ever since she was 15 years old, Collette Divitto has been baking up a storm in her family's kitchen. She truly had a passion for baking, and she knew that it was what she wanted to do for the rest of her life.

When realized she wanted to make a career out of her passion for baking, she started applying for jobs in Boston. But she was rejected by bakeries who told her she had great skills, but was not "a good fit," according

to her website.

People who would interview her knew that she was nice but said that she didn't fit their needs. She felt rejected over the situation.

But she didn't give up and continued following her dream.

With the help of her mother and her sister, she started her own cookie company, Colletley's.

Soon after their company was started, they received a recurring order from Boston's Golden

Goose Market. By December of 2016, she had 10,000 orders for over 50,000 cookie deliveries.

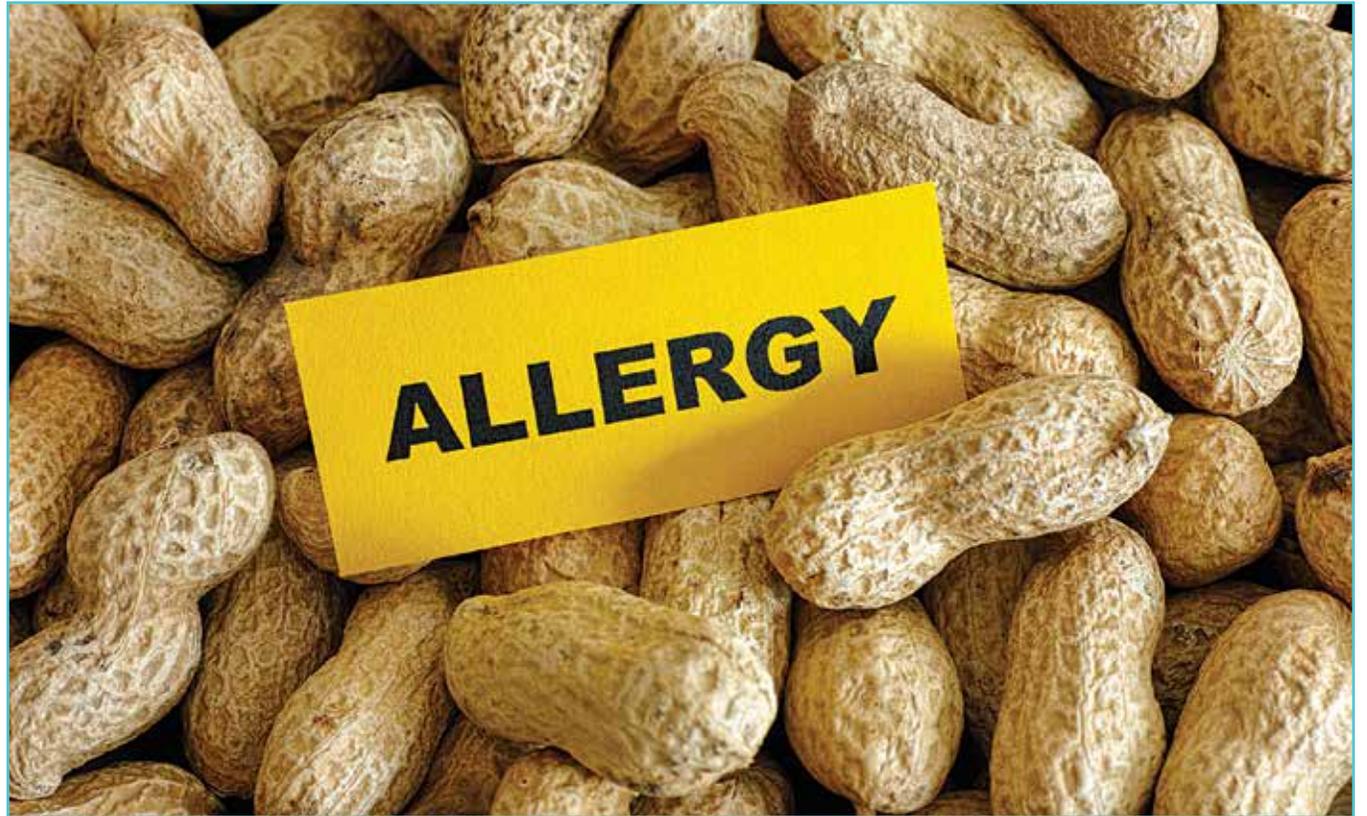
"My biggest success so far is how big my company is growing, which means I can start hiring people with and without disabilities," she says.

According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics report, 10.7 percent of people with a disability who are actively looking for work were unemployed in 2015. That's twice the unemployment rate of people without a disability. ★

# In the Know

## ALL ABOUT... NUT ALLERGIES

Information sources:  
Mayo Clinic, WebMD,  
MedlinePlus, U.S. Centers  
for Disease Control and  
Prevention (CDC)



Why allergies to nuts are on the rise is a subject worthy of its own article. But with nut allergies spreading significantly across society in recent years (this writer's son discovered an unknown allergy to coconut and walnut the hard way), this article will focus on *what* nut allergies are. So, here we go!

### DEFINITION

Most “nut allergies” involve nuts categorized as tree nuts. But not every “nut” behind allergies grows on a tree.

To preface: Most of the items we call “nuts” grow on trees; hence, for most of them, we use the scientific term “tree nut.”

But the ever-popular peanut, while both a common “nut” and the most common “nut allergy,” is actually a legume (a kind of bean), not a nut and certainly not a tree nut. It's a similar situation with the coconut—also a common “nut” but scientifically a fruit, not a nut.

Regardless, both “nuts” can cause serious or even life-threatening reactions in those allergic to them, as do tree nut allergies in those allergic to them.

From almonds, cashews and walnuts to less-popular pine nuts and lichee nuts, tree nuts come in many shapes and sizes. Along with peanuts, tree nuts are one of the food allergens most often linked to *anaphylaxis*—a serious, rapid-onset allergic reaction that may be fatal. A tree nut allergy usually lasts a lifetime; fewer than ten percent of people with this allergy outgrow it.

### SYMPTOMS

An allergy to tree nuts is one of the most common food allergies. Along with

peanuts, it is also one of the food allergens most frequently linked to anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening reaction that impairs breathing and can send the body into shock.

Symptoms of a tree nut allergy include:

- Abdominal pain, cramps, diarrhea, nausea and/or vomiting
- Difficulty swallowing
- Itching of the mouth, throat, eyes, skin or any other area
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- Shortness of breath

### DIAGNOSIS

Because a tree nut allergy can cause a life-threatening reaction, an accurate diagnosis is essential. Your allergist will start by taking a medical history, asking about any previous allergic reactions and about any family history of allergies. Skin-prick tests and/or blood tests may be used to determine the presence of *allergen-specific immunoglobulin E*, an antibody that binds to allergens and triggers the release of chemicals that cause symptoms.

If those tests are inconclusive, your allergist may order an oral food challenge. In this test, a patient is fed tiny amounts of the suspected allergy-causing food in increasing doses over a period of time, under strict supervision in an allergist's office or a food challenge center. Emergency medication and emergency equipment must be on hand during this procedure.

### TREATMENT

As with most food allergies, the best way to avoid an allergic reaction is to avoid eating the offending item.

People who are diagnosed with an allergy to a specific tree nut may be able to tolerate other tree nuts, but allergists usually advise these patients to avoid all nuts. Tree nuts are often used as garnishes in salads, as an ingredient in Asian dishes, and as an ice cream topping. They may also be found in baking mixes, breadings, sauces, desserts and baked goods.

Tree nuts are among the eight most common food allergens affecting adults and children, and are specifically mentioned in the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) of 2004. This means that the presence of these items must be highlighted, in clear language, on ingredient lists. Some companies may voluntarily include information that their food products that don't contain nuts were manufactured in a facility that also processes nuts, though such a statement is not required by law. It is important for people with tree nut allergies to read labels carefully.

Some alcoholic beverages may contain nuts or nut flavoring added in the distillation process. Most alcoholic beverages aren't covered by the FALCPA requirements; if “natural flavors” or “botanicals” are cited as an ingredient, you may need to call the manufacturer to determine whether that indicates the presence of nuts or nut flavoring.

Tree nut oils, which may contain nut protein, can be found in lotions, hair care products and soaps; those allergic to tree nuts should avoid using these products.

### What to watch out for

Even a little bit that you swallow or inhale could cause an allergic reaction. You know to avoid the obvious foods, such as almond butter, cookies with walnuts baked in, or oatmeal studded with pistachios.

But other trigger foods, including

sauces and gravies, are more surprising. You need to know what to look for, so you can check before you buy or use a product.

Peanuts and tree nuts aren't the same. But if you're allergic to one, you may also need to avoid the other. Ask your doctor to be sure.

Tree nuts include:

- Almonds
- Brazil nuts
- Cashews
- Chestnuts
- Filberts
- Hazelnuts
- Hickory nuts
- Macadamia nuts
- Pecans
- Pine nuts
- Pistachios
- Walnuts

#### Check these foods for nuts

You may find peanuts or tree nuts in things like these:

- Baked goods. Cookies, candy, pastries, pie crusts, and others
- Candy. Chocolate candy especially; also nougat and marzipan
- Other sweets. Ice cream, frozen desserts, puddings, and hot chocolate
- Cereals and granola
- Trail mix
- Chili and soups. Peanuts or peanut butter are sometimes used as thickeners
- Grain breads
- High-energy bars
- Honey
- International foods. Nuts are common ingredients in African and Asian cooking (especially Thai and Indian); also in Mexican and Mediterranean foods
- Veggie burgers
- Sauces. These may include barbecue sauce, hot sauce, pesto, gravy, mole sauce, glazes, or marinades
- Salads and salad dressing

#### Avoid these items

Nix them when you cook, and look for them on food labels:

- Nut butters. Almond, cashew, peanut, and others
- Nut pastes. Includes products like marzipan, almond paste, and nougat
- Nut oils. Includes cold-pressed or expressed peanut oil, and others
- Hydrolyzed plant or vegetable protein. These can have peanuts in them
- Peanut flour
- Nut extracts, like almond extract

#### Four tips for avoiding nuts

1. Ask your server. Foods that don't contain peanuts or tree nuts can get contaminated if they're made in the same place or with the same equipment. It can also happen in restaurants that use lots of

ingredients, and even in ice cream parlors if scoops or other equipment are shared.

2. Check the label each time you buy a product. Food makers sometimes change the recipe.
3. Look outside the kitchen. Nuts can also be in lotions, shampoos, and pet food. Check labels before you buy or use them.
4. Carry an epinephrine auto-injector. Carry two with you at all times, and know how to inject it. For some people, an allergic reaction to nuts can become life-threatening, so always be prepared.

#### TREATMENT

There's no definitive treatment for allergy, but researchers continue

respond to a severe reaction.

#### Being prepared for a reaction

The only way to prevent a reaction is to avoid nuts and nut products altogether. But not all are common, and despite your best efforts, you're likely to come into contact with them at some point.

For a severe allergic reaction, you may need an emergency injection of epinephrine and to visit the emergency room. Many people with allergies carry an epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen, Auvi-Q, Twinject). This device is a syringe and concealed needle that injects a single dose of medication when pressed against your thigh.

#### Know how to use your autoinjector

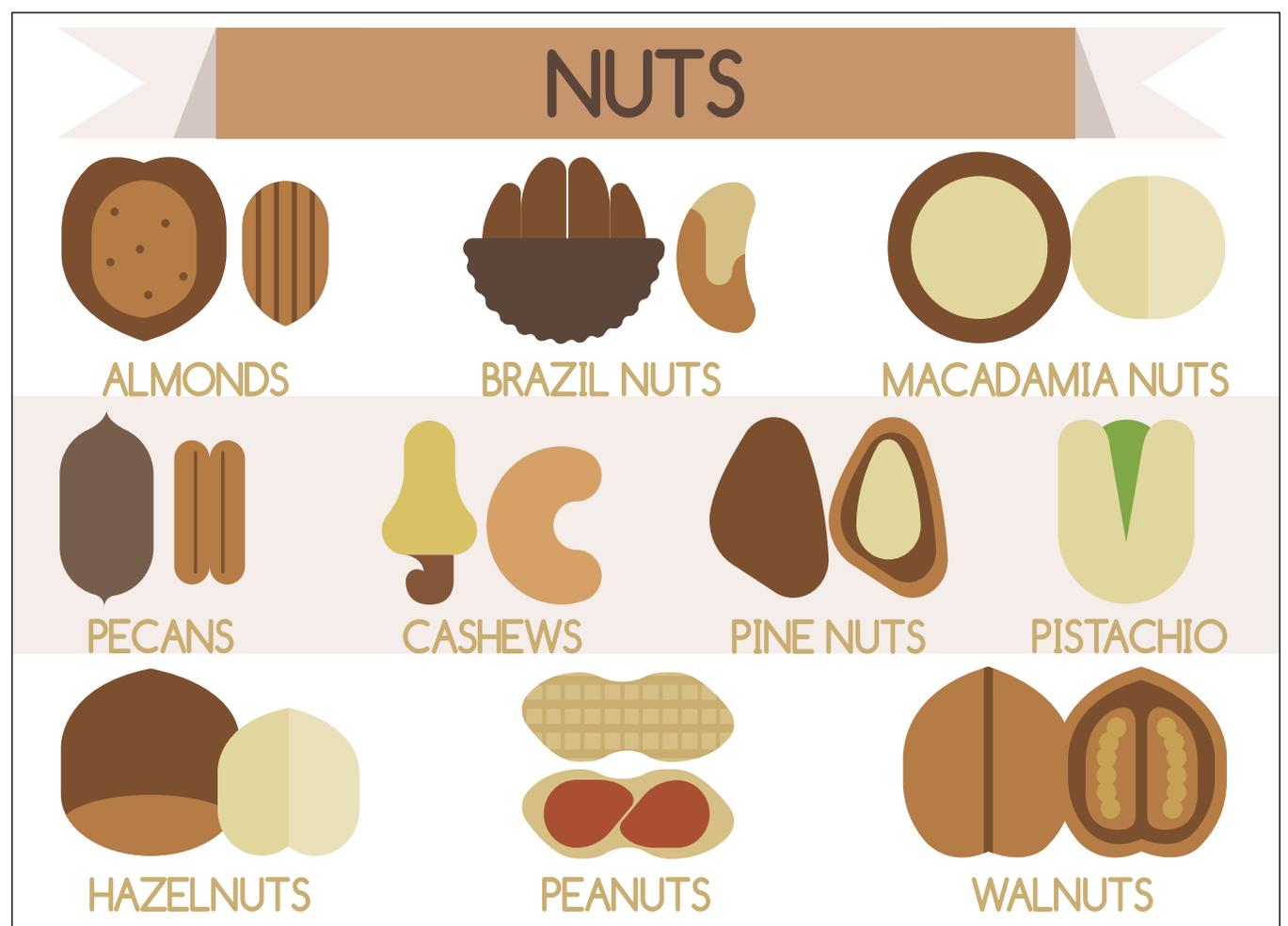
If your doctor has prescribed an

you're not sure whether you need a shot, it's usually better to go ahead and use the emergency epinephrine.

#### Lifestyle and home remedies

One of the keys to preventing an allergic reaction is knowing how to avoid the food that causes your symptoms. Follow these steps:

- Never assume a food doesn't contain peanuts. Peanuts may be in foods that you had no idea contained them. Always read labels on manufactured foods to make sure they don't contain peanuts or peanut products. Manufactured foods are required to clearly state whether foods contain any peanuts and if they were produced in factories that also process peanuts. Even if you think you know what's in a food, check the label. Ingredients



studying desensitization. Oral immunotherapy (desensitization) involves giving children with allergies, or those at risk for allergies, increasing doses of food containing nuts over time. However, the long-term safety of oral immunotherapy for allergy is still uncertain, and this treatment is not yet FDA-approved.

New research suggests that desensitizing at-risk children to peanuts between ages 4 and 11 months may be effective at preventing peanut allergy. Check with your doctor because there are significant risks of anaphylaxis if early introduction of peanuts is performed incorrectly.

In the meantime, as with any food allergy, treatment involves taking steps to avoid the foods that cause your reaction and knowing how to spot and

epinephrine autoinjector:

- Carry it with you at all times. It may be a good idea to keep an extra autoinjector in your car and in your desk at work.
- Always replace it before its expiration date. Out-of-date epinephrine may not work properly.
- Ask your doctor to prescribe a backup autoinjector. If you misplace one, you'll have a spare.
- Know how to operate it. Ask your doctor to show you. Also, make sure the people closest to you know how to use it — if someone with you can give you a shot, he or she could save your life.
- Know when to use it. Talk to your doctor about how to recognize when you need a shot. However, if

may change.

- Don't ignore a label that says a food was produced in a factory that processes peanuts. Most people with a peanut allergy need to avoid all products that could contain even trace amounts of peanuts.
- When in doubt, say "No thanks!" At restaurants and social gatherings, you're always taking a risk that you might accidentally eat peanuts. Many people don't understand the seriousness of an allergic food reaction, and may not realize that a tiny amount of a food can cause a severe reaction. If you are at all worried that a food may contain something to which you may possibly be allergic to, just don't risk trying it in the first place. ★

## Status Report

# Happening In Hospitals Today



### DOC SUSPENDED FOR MISTAKING ANXIETY PATIENT FOR ER ABUSER

**Los Gatos, CA** — An ER patient suffering symptoms of withdrawal from anxiety medication was mistaken by a veteran doctor for yet another ER abuser seeking unneeded treatment.

Footage of the physician berating the patient went viral, resulting in a Dr. Keegstra's suspension from El Camino Hospital in this Northern California suburb.

So-called "frequent flyers," or patients who visit ERs excessively (usually for non-emergency or even non-medical needs), are a chronic problem plaguing ERs nationwide for years.

Frequent flyers commonly have no insurance and can't afford to see a regular doctor, and also tend to have with mental-health and drug-abuse issues. Studies have found that frequent flyers are likelier to be female, Caucasian, poor and between the ages of 25-44.

A 2009 study in Texas found that in a span of six years, nine patients had accounted for 2,678 ER visits, costing \$3 million.

In 2015, Maryland's Sinai Hospital identified 318 people who visited its ERA four times in as many months—referring them to primary care doctors, social services, mental health and substance abuse programs, and insurance providers. That project cost the state \$800,000 over three years—but resulted in 1,000 fewer ER visits and has since paid for itself.

More recently, officials in Indianapolis have launched a program that allows police officers to take people struggling with substance abuse issues, mental health problems and homelessness directly to a detox facility instead of jail or to a hospital ER.

### EMERGENCY-ROOM SPENDING RISES WITH INCREASING PRICES, VISIT SEVERITY

**Washington, D.C.** — New research

by the Washington-based Health Care Cost Institutes finds that costs of emergency-room (ER) visits by people with employer-based health insurance nearly doubled from 2009 to 2016—despite number of ER visits among that group staying level during that period.

According to the research, that near-doubling is due to the rising severity of ER visits and the accompanying rise in costs.

The report found that ER-visit spending per person averaged \$125 in 2009—but increased 98 percent by 2016 to \$247.

### NURSE-TO-PATIENT RATIO LAWS BACK ON FRONT BURNER

**Harrisburg, PA** — It's been a roiling debate in the hospital industry for decades.

On one side have been registered nurses (RNs) and their trade associations. On the other are hospital industry groups.

The debate is over *nurse-to-patient ratios*—with nurses calling for years



**ROLLBACK: LESS PATIENTS PER NURSE**

now for laws that cap the maximum number of patients that a nurse can be assigned to some specific low number.

Nurses and their advocates say that

imposing per-nurse patient maximums for hospitals increases patient safety/care/attention, decreases nursing errors, and saves hospitals money.

Hospital executives, managers and associations argue the opposite—that a per-nurse maximum is a one-size-fits-all solution to a complex problem that will also cost hospitals more money.

The ratio model is now back on the front burner thanks to Pennsylvania, where Gov. Tom Wolfe has voiced support for new state legislation that would mandate a nurse-to-patient ratio.

Fourteen states currently have laws that address safe hospital nurse staffing, though California is the only one with a specific ratio law: five patients per nurse. Seven other states require that hospitals set and enforce their own nurse-patient ratios, while five others require that hospitals publicly disclose their staffing ratios.

Furthering the case for ratio enforcement are studies pointing to high rates of burnout and turnover among nurses, and the resulting high industry costs—never mind patient safety.

Hospitals rebut that staffing mandates would force hospitals to close, and that there aren't enough nurses to hire, anyway. Both the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the American Organization of Nursing Executives (A-ONE) oppose any such mandate.

For now, the New York State Nurses Association is launching a \$1 million ad campaign backing a ratio mandate bill that was shot down by the state's Senate in 2016.

In the meantime, in most states where staffing legislation exists, policymakers have forged compromise between nurses and hospitals. ★



**SAME NUMBER OF PATIENTS, SKYROCKETING COSTS: GOING HERE IS GETTING MORE SERIOUS—AND SERIOUSLY COSTLIER, TOO**



# The Senior Care Gazette

News from  
the World of  
HamaspikCare  
and Senior  
Health

## Crystal Run Health Plans Partners with HamaspikCare

Crystal Run Healthcare typifies the innovator increasingly defining today's healthcare landscape—large but not clunky, nimble but not ungrounded.

The company has been organically but rapidly growing in recent years—making inroads into established markets and insular communities alike as it forges an increasing number of business partnerships at several levels.

A prime example of that is Crystal Run Health Plans' new deal with HamaspikCare.

The arrangement realizes Crystal Run's desire to do business with a reputable and well-entrenched community home-care provider. In rounding out its new Crystal Run Health Plan to include home care, Crystal Run found what it sought.

Crystal Run executives met in April with HamaspikCare COO Mordechai Wolhendler to hammer out the details. And with contract signed, members of the quality health plan have access to a quality home-care agency.

Seems that when healthcare wants to embrace home care, Crystal Run runs to HamaspikCare. ★

## For Healthy Young Brain, Just Breathe!

Dublin, Ireland — The controlled breathing of regular daily meditation has been traditionally known as a brain health booster for millennia.

But now, new research at the Dublin-based Institute of Neuroscience may have scientifically found why meditation and focused breathing seems to improve the brain's focus, concentration, attention and even overall brain health and youthfulness.

The research focused on brain levels of a natural hormone called *noradrenaline*, which is produced by a part of the brain called the *locus coeruleus* in response to stress. Noradrenaline causes the heart to beat faster and the pupils of the eyes to dilate.

Specifically, the researchers studied how controlled breathing affects levels of noradrenaline in the locus coeruleus.

Researchers scanned the brains



**BRAIN GYM:** SCIENTISTS HAVE LINKED MEDITATION, BREATHING WITH BRAIN FOCUS and measured pupil dilations of study participants while they performed mental tasks that required great focus. At the same time, they monitored participants' breathing, reaction time and brain activity in the locus coeruleus.

The researchers found that participants focusing better on tasks had better synchronization between breathing patterns and attention. They also found that activity in the locus coeruleus increased as participants inhaled and decreased as they exhaled.

According to lead researcher Michael Melnychuk, too much—or too little—noradrenaline in the brain hampers focus.

But, Dr. Melnychuk explained to *Medical News Today*, using the breath to control one of the brain's natural chemical messengers, noradrenaline, helps the brain hit the "sweet spot" of noradrenaline in which "our emotions, thinking, and memory are much clearer."

According to Dr. Melnychuk, the right "dose" of noradrenaline helps the brain grow new connections between cells. The study was published recently in *Psychophysiology*. ★

## Thrice-Weekly Exercise Hour Boosts Older-Adult Cognition

Miami, FL — A review of 98 existing studies finds that exercising for a full hour three times a week over a six-month period is linked to improvement in specific cognitive skills in seniors.

The study of 98 clinical trials found an association between walking, aerobics, strength training, and mind-body exercises like yoga and Tai Chi with improved mental processing

speed and executive function in both healthy seniors and those with mild cognitive impairment (MCI).

Only the total length of time over a six-month period was linked to improved cognitive skills, not weekly exercise minutes.

The study by the Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami was published recently in *Neurology: Clinical Practice*. ★

## Alzheimer's Research Shifting Away From Plaques and Tangles

Bethesda, MD — Alzheimer's disease, the brain-wasting condition that robs patients of memories and eventually, daily function, is commonly blamed on *plaques* and *tangles* in the brain.

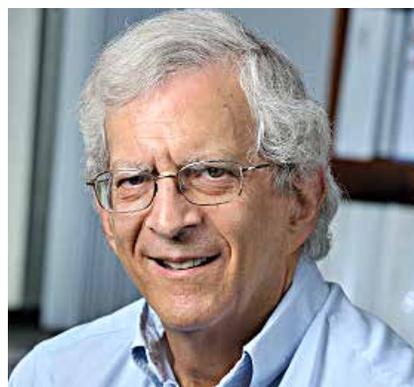
*Plaques* are buildups of a protein called beta-amyloid. *Tangles* are buildups of a protein called *tau*. Because both are found in the brains of people with Alzheimer's, it's long been believed that plaques and tangles are a primary cause of Alzheimer's.

That's why research has focused heavily on the association between plaques and tangles and Alzheimer's for

decades—under the belief that reducing or preventing plaques and tangles in the brain can treat Alzheimer's.

However, at the recent National Institute on Aging (NIA) 2018 Alzheimer's Disease Research Summit held here, precision medicine in Alzheimer's emerged as a key theme—meaning, tailoring prevention and treatment to each patient's unique risk profile.

That development is driven by growing Alzheimer's research into areas other than plaques and tangles. These include genetic and environmental risk factors, and the connection between the



**SHIFT:** NIA DIR. RICHARD HODES, M.D.

brain and bacteria in the gut (a.k.a. the microbiome).

At the same time, several high-

profile clinical trials on experimental new Alzheimer's drugs recently failed.

On June 12, pharmaceutical giants Eli Lilly and AstraZeneca discontinued a joint trial of lanabecestat, a so-called *BACE inhibitor*. The drug, should it have worked, would have interrupted the development of brain plaques and tangles at an earlier stage.

This May, Johnson & Johnson discontinued research into atabecestat, its own BACE inhibitor. And in April, vTv Therapeutics Inc. announced that study participants taking its experimental Alzheimer's drug azeliragon did no better than those getting a placebo. ★



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