



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik Agencies and General Health

JUNE '20 • ISSUE NO. 180

GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

HOW REGULARLY DO YOU EAT LUNCH?

A. DAILY; B. SOMETIMES; C. NEVER

Respond to: survey@nyshainc.org

HEALTH STAT

LONG LIVE (IN) NEW YORK!

State	Rank	Average life expectancy:
Mississippi	51	74.9
Hawaii	1	82.0
New York	3	81.0

Source: Life Expectancy at Birth for U.S. States and Census Tracts, 2010-2015, USA Life Expectancy Project

HEALTH TIP

GIVE COVID-19 DISINFECTANTS TIME TO FEEL RIGHT AT HOME

It isn't so much what you spray or wipe on high-touch home surfaces as how long you let it sit there. Experts say that virus-killing household products need at least 30 seconds to work their magic—so when you disinfect those doorknobs, light switches, counters, faucets and phones, give it a good minute before you rinse down those surfaces.

Source: Rutgers University, CDC

INSIDE

HEALTH

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PUBLIC HEALTH & POLICY

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18 More U.S. scooter usage, more related ER visits U.S.-wide

AUTISM / DISABILITY

10 Autism saliva test developed by SUNY's Upstate Medical University; 85-percent accurate

HAMASPIK NEWS

ANOTHER PASSOVER COMMUNITY OUTING IN THE BAG MODELING NEW YORK STATE'S SOCIAL-DISTANCING AND DISEASE-CONTROL MEASURES, HAMASPIK STAFF ACROSS THREE GREATER NEW YORK (LIKE THESE SHOWN HERE AT HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY), STOOD READY TO DELIVER AN UNPRECEDENTED "CORONAVIRUS EDITION" OF HAMASPIK'S ANNUAL GRAND COMMUNITY PASSOVER OUTING STRAIGHT TO THOUSANDS OF DOORS.



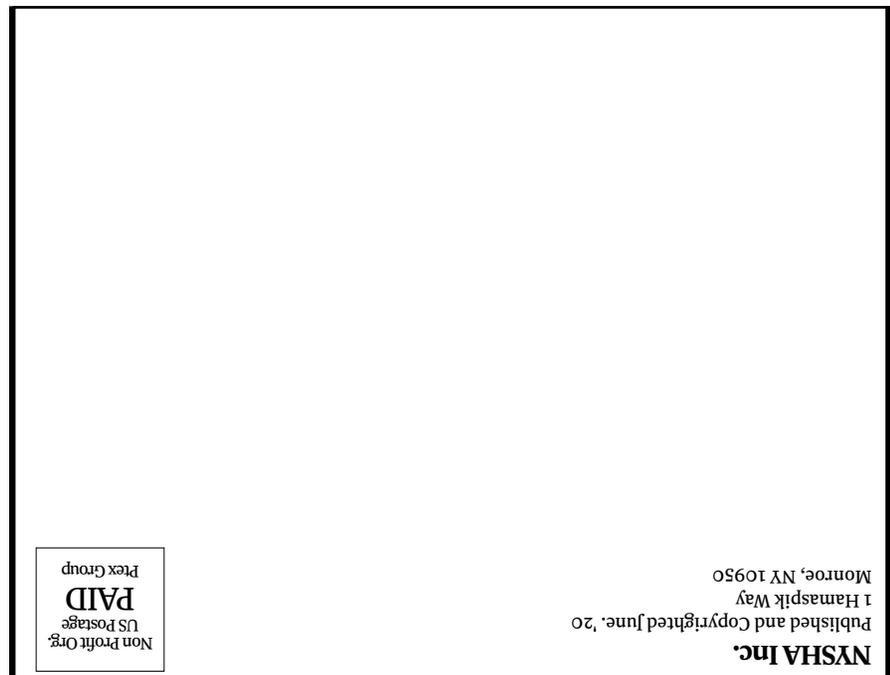
PAST NATURAL DISASTERS IN RECENT YEARS, INCLUDING SUPERSTORM SANDY, BROUGHT OUT A LITTLE CREATIVITY AND A LOT OF LOVE IN EVERYONE, INCLUDING HAMASPIK

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HAMASPIK HOMECARE NEWS

Hamaspik HomeCare on Front Lines of COVID-19 Fight

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HAMASPIK NEWS

Hatzolah Volunteer Ambulance Corps Thanked by Hamaspik in Three Counties

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SENIOR NEWS

New retinal-screening eye tests could become new Alzheimer's test standard

SEE PAGE E19 >>

Services Provided by NYSHA AGENCIES

OPWDD SERVICES

INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA)

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

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES (ISS)

Paid housing expenses and support for individuals who can live independently.

HOME FAMILY CARE (HFC)

Places individuals with developmental disabilities into private homes to care and support the individual.

DAY HABILITATION (DH)

A day program for adults with disabilities designed to develop skills, greater independence, community inclusion etc.

Site Based: Day Habilitation Service delivered in an OPWDD certified facility.

Without Walls: Day Habilitation Service delivered in a community-based setting.

Stars Day Program: Day Habilitation Service delivered in an OPWDD certified facility for higher-functioning individuals.

COMMUNITY HABILITATION (CH)

Working one-on-one with individuals in their home or in the community to achieve valued outcomes by helping them develop daily living skills and achieve long-term goals.

COMMUNITY PRE VOCATIONAL

Working with individual to prepare them for paid community employment- Teaching individuals job skills and other related social skills to enhance their ability to obtain employment in the future.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEMP)

Working with individual to support and provide them with necessary coaching so they can successfully engage in paid competitive employment.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (FSS)

Support for the individual's family by reimbursing them for certain qualifying items or services, otherwise not available to them.

INTENSIVE BEHAVIORAL SERVICES (IBS)

Short-term interventional services for people with behavioral issues and their family members.

RESPIRE:

Home and Community-based respite services to provide a relief for the individual's caregiver and family.

At-Home: Respite services delivered in the home of the individual.

After School: Respite program provided every day after school hours.

Sundays: Respite program provided every Sunday.

Legal Holidays: Respite program provided on all legal holidays when school is not in session.

Summer Break/Camp Neshomah: Full day respite program during the summer break weeks.

Stars Night Program: Respite services delivered in the evening hours to high-functioning individuals by taking them out in the community and doing recreational and stimulating activities with them.

Weekend Getaway: A weekend retreat for individuals receiving respite services.

Hamasmid: After-School program for mainstreamed individuals engaging in recreational activities.

SELF-DIRECTION

The Individual or their advocate takes direct responsibility to manage their services and self-direct their budget.

Fiscal Intermediary (FI): Assists individual or their advocate in implementing their Individual Support Agreement and to manage financial accountability and employer responsibilities.

Brokerage: Assisting individuals or their advocate in creating and managing their budget.

PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

DOH

EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

Providing a range of services to help young children (ages birth-3) who have a specific delay in their development.

Group Development Model (GDM): Providing Early Intervention services in a group-setting.

Therapy: Providing OT, PT, SLP, Vision, Nutrition, Play, Special Education, Family Training etc. to help the child develop appropriately.

Evaluations: Providing full evaluations to assess child's skills and development.

NURSING HOME TRANSITION AND DIVERSION (NHTD)

Waiver services to help individuals who need nursing-home level of care safely remain home and avoid nursing home placement.

Service Coordination (SC): Provides coordination to the individual in gaining access to needed waiver and Medicaid State Plan services, as well as other local, state, and federally funded educational, vocational, social, and medical services.

Community Transitional Services (CTS) / Moving Assistance (MA): Provides moving assistance with packing and transporting individual's possessions and furnishings when he/she must be moved from an inadequate or unsafe housing situation to a viable environment.

Environmental Modifications (EMODS): Provides Internal and external physical adaptations to the individual's home, that are necessary to assure the health, welfare and safety of the individual and avoid institutionalization.

Vehicle Modification (VMODS): Modifications to a vehicle that is used to improve the individual's independence and access to services and supports in the community.

Assistive Technology: Provides durable medical equipment and supplies for the individual to increase their level of independence, safety, and functional limitations.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

Waiver services to help individuals who had a traumatic brain injury.

Service Coordination (SC): Provides coordination to the individual in gaining access to needed waiver and Medicaid State Plan services, as well as other local, state, and federally funded educational, vocational, social, and medical services.

Community Transitional Services (CTS) / Moving Assistance (MA): Provides moving assistance with packing and transporting individual's possessions and furnishings when he/she must be moved from an inadequate or unsafe housing situation to a viable environment.

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Assistive Technology: Provides durable medical equipment and supplies for the individual to increase their level of independence, safety, and functional limitations.

SENIOR DINING/SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM (SHNOIS CHAIM)

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

HAMASPIK CHOICE

MLTCP:

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

HMO/INSURANCE

ABA

Behavior modification services for children with autism.

Social Group: ABA service delivered in a group setting.

One on One: ABA service delivered on a one-on-one basis in the child's home or community.

LHCSA - HAMASPIK HOMECARE

PERSONAL CARE SERVICES

Our PCA/HHA assist individuals with personal care needs, activities of daily living, and light housekeeping. They are extensively trained, and screened, and are supervised by RN.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Our HCSS Certified Aides assist those enrolled in the NHTD or TBI Medicaid Waiver Programs with oversight and supervision, in addition to personal care services.

CDPAS/CDPAP

As an alternative to traditional homecare, this program empowers the client to hire, train, and set the schedule of their personal assistants (PA). The PA's may be family members and can even live in the same home.

NURSING SERVICES

Providing: skilled observation and assessment - care planning - paraprofessional supervision - clinical monitoring and coordination - medication management - physician - ordered nursing interventions and skilled treatments.

TRAINING

Providing: free PCA training and competency testing for those interested in a home care career.

NYC HCR

ACCESS TO HOME

Providing home modifications for people with physical disability.

NYSED SERVICES

ACCESS VR

Assist individuals to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living through training, education, rehabilitation, and career development.

PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

Employment planning and support services that provide assistance for individuals to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive employment or self-employment.

NYSHA

ARTICLE 16 CLINIC

Providing: Physical therapy · occupational therapy · speech therapy · psychology · social work · psychiatry · 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

ADULT HEALTH HOME CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Intensive, comprehensive care management for Adults with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care.

CHILDREN HEALTH HOME CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Intensive, comprehensive care management for children with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care.

ADULT HCBS SERVICES

Behavioral Health Home and Community-Based Services for eligible adults over the age of twenty one.

Community Psychiatric Support and Treatment: Support and treatment to achieve functional improvement and stability, while working to attain the personal goals in a community setting.

Family Support and Training: Family training and support to engage the family in the treatment planning process and provide them with emotional and informational support to enhance their skills to assist in the recovery.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation: Assists with rehabilitating functional deficits and interpersonal or environmental hardships associated with the behavioral health condition.

Empowerment Services-Peer Support: Peer-delivered services designed to promote skills for coping with and managing behavioral health symptoms, while utilizing recovery-oriented principles.

Habilitation: Assist to acquire and improve skills such as: communication, self-care, socialization, mobility, etc. to successfully reside in home and community-based setting.

Intensive Supported Employment: Assists to obtain and keep competitive employment.

Prevocational Services: Prepares for employment, developing strengths and soft skills that contribute to employability.

Transitional Employment: Strengthens the work record and skills toward the goal of achieving assisted or unassisted competitive employment.

Ongoing Supported Employment: Ongoing follow-along support when holding down a job.

CHILDREN HCBS SERVICES

Behavioral Health Home and Community-Based Services for eligible children from birth to twenty one.

Prevocational Services: Designed to prepare a youth (age 14 or older) to engage in paid work, volunteer work, or career exploration. Prevocational Services are not job-specific, but rather are geared toward facilitating success in any work environment.

Caregiver Family Support and Services: Teaches skills to caregiver/family's that will enhance their ability to care for the child/youth in the home and/or community.

Community Self Advocacy Training and Support: Provides family and caregivers with techniques and information not generally available so that they can better respond to the needs of the Individual related to their disabilities.

Community Habilitation: Provides assistance with learning social skills, daily living and health related duties by working with the individual on goal-oriented tasks.

Supported Employment: Designed to prepare youth with disabilities (age 14 or older) to engage in paid work.

Planned Respite: Provides short-term relief for the individual's family/caregiver while supporting the individual's mental health, substance use and/or health care goals.

Day Habilitation: Provides assistance with learning social and daily living skills in a certified agency setting.

► NYSHA NEWS

A Measure of Comfort for Everyone

How Comfort Health's Services Help Mainstream Kids

One might say, "Com Hab is not for us!" A mother might object, "Isn't Respite for, you know, *special needs*?" And a father might hesitate at being offered Pre-Vocational Training for his son.

It's one thing when you're talking about the precious individuals—people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD)—typically supported by the many programs of Hamaspik. But the child of the mother or father here—the target client of Comfort Health—is another thing.

Put otherwise, when parents enter the world of I/DD services, "Com Hab," "Respite" and "Pre-Voc" (and many other phrases) are everyday parts of the language they learn to speak. But when programs like Comfort Health bring those same services to the mainstream world, it can get a little hazy—which is why we hereby explain these services now available under Comfort Health.

Community Habilitation

Community Habilitation, or Com Hab for short, deals with the life

skills or daily living skills that kids usually learn on their own from the environment. All children begin to show mastery of such skills at different



stages; by the time a child is 12-13, we expect that they can handle personal hygiene, clean up rooms, make beds, do some basic cooking, make good use of leisure time, associate properly with others, and forge healthy social relationships. But when a child passes a certain age and still doesn't have those skills, it gets worrisome.

At Comfort Health, Com Hab first approaches those skills as goals, then breaks down those goals into smaller and more easily attainable tasks. A

trained one-on-one Com Hab aide uses several methods, including teaching, verbally or physically prompting, and encouraging. The last

step of skills acquirement is practice and maintenance, with an eye toward permanent usage throughout life.

Respite

At Comfort, Respite provides an aide to the family of a child with a medical or mental health diagnosis, temporarily relieving them of the extra attention and care demanded of them—and allowing them to recharge. Comfort's caring aide will typically take the child to a park, library,

or community center for the most productive use of their time.

Pre-Vocational Training

Most of us learn workplace skills and behaviors by ourselves, or on the job—by picking up social and environmental cues on appropriate behavior and learning our lesson if we ever cross a line.

Unfortunately, young people whose behavioral issues prevent or hinder them from picking up those cues will not learn—which is where our Pre-Vocational Trainers come in, teaching the person specific job-environment-related skills custom-tailored to him or her.

While supports for mainstream children with medical and/or mental health diagnoses is the mission of Comfort Health, programs typically used for children with I/DD—long-time Hamaspik staples like Community Habilitation (Com Hab), Respite, or Pre-Vocational Services (a.k.a. Pre-Voc)—are also a central part of those behavioral supports and services, too. ★

For more info, contact Comfort Health in Rockland at 845-503-0400, in Brooklyn at 718-408-5400 or in Orange 845-774-0300.

► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

With aging Baby Boomer population, more home-care companies catering to travelers

Orlando, Florida — As the still-growing Baby Boomer generation hits retirement and senior status (along with still-growing need for home-care services), more Baby Boomers are still healthy enough to travel, and do.

But many still need home-care services while traveling for family events or leisure—and a growing number of home-care companies are specifically catering to them.

Baby Boomers, or those born in the years immediately following WWII, are enjoying increasingly longer and healthier lives thanks to ever-improving medicine and public health.

Among those, many are getting regular aides at home from home-care agencies for set shifts—for example, two hours every morning, six days a week.

But what are they to do if they'd like to visit a daughter on the West Coast for

a grandchild's wedding, or spend a week in an Orlando hotel with the family?

That's where one of the newest trends in home-care agencies—travel-friendly aides—comes in.

A growing number of home-care agencies coast to coast will now accommodate people with home-care needs on the road.

In contrast to typical agencies, which will want a minimum of days per week and hours per day for its visiting home health aides (HHAs), personal care aides (PCAs) or registered nurses (RNs), these short-term agencies will



HAVE AIDE, WILL TRAVEL: IN A GROWING TREND, OTHERWISE-HEALTHY SENIORS ARE FLYING WITH HOME HEALTH AIDES, PERSONAL CARE AIDES OR EVEN NURSES ALONG FOR THE TRIP

provide an aide or even nurse to visit a traveling senior with home-care needs at a loved one's home or, or in their hotel room.

Most importantly, they will accompany the patient on outings and trips, coming along to events and

venues and inconspicuously blending in while at the client's side. Many will even accompany the patient on planes and trains.

There's only one drawback to such agencies: finding them typically takes a good few phone calls. ★

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Happening in Health Today

MARATHON TRAINING DE-AGES CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM: STUDY

London, England — Researchers at the Institute of Cardiovascular Science at University College London report in a new study that first-time marathon runners experience health benefits that essentially turn back time on their circulatory system.

“Training for a marathon, even as a novice runner, has significant benefits on the cardiovascular system and is able to ‘reverse’ the effects of aging that we find in the major blood vessels by four years,” said senior researcher Dr. Charlotte Manisty.

Six months of training for the London Marathon made study participants’ blood vessels more flexible and healthy, and reduced their blood pressure about as much as medications would, Dr. Manisty reported. What’s more, the

benefits were greater for people who were older or started off less fit.

POPCORN STUCK IN MAN’S TOOTH LEADS TO LIFE- THREATENING INFECTION, OPEN HEART SURGERY

Cornwall, England — Adam Martin, a 41-year-old firefighter and father of three, claims he later developed a life-threatening infection that required him to undergo open heart surgery after he attempted to dislodge a piece of popcorn stuck in his teeth using various objects.

The foreign objects in turn cut his gums, ultimately allowing bacteria entry—from which they spread to his heart and caused endocarditis, or an infection of the *endocardium*, or the lining of the interior surfaces of the chambers of the heart. He eventually underwent a seven-hour open heart

surgery to repair his mitral valve and replace his aortic valve.

“It’s crazy to think all this happened because of that,” he later said. “It was something so trivial.”

PROVIDER BELIEFS MAY AFFECT PAIN RELIEF

Hanover, New Hampshire — It’s one thing if you believe that the treatment that you’re getting is going to work. Numerous studies on a wide range of medical disciplines have shown that patients who believe in their treatment do better than those with neutral or negative views.

But what if your *doctor* believes (or doesn’t believe) that the treatment you’re getting is going to work?

Well, if the results of a small experiment by Dartmouth College are any indication, patients do experience

less pain when their provider broadcasts the expectation that a pain reliever is going to work. Researchers found that the amount of pain displayed in the doctor’s facial expressions affected the patient’s overall pain rating—with patients reporting less pain when the treatment provider expected the pain reliever to work.

“GENE SILENCING” STOPS PROGRESSION OF ALS IN LAB MICE

San Diego, California — Lab research at the University of California, San Diego finds that by injecting mice who were about to develop ALS with a certain virus, essentially “silenced” the mutated gene that causes ALS.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is neurodegenerative disease that progressively shuts down the body. It currently has no cure.

A mutation of the SOD1 gene has been previously associated with ALS; researchers now found that by injecting an *adeno-associated virus* (AAV) into the spinal cords and brain motor centers of mice who had an SOD1 mutation, long-term suppression of motor neuron disease resulted.

“It is expected that, if an effective delivery of the silencing vector (such as AAV9) into the target cell population is achieved, it will be associated with a long-lasting therapeutic effect,” researchers wrote in their paper.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE EQUALS DECADE-PLUS OF DISEASE-FREE LIFE

Boston, Massachusetts — Researchers at Harvard University’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health report that people who adopt up to five low risk lifestyle factors—eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, keeping a healthy body weight, not drinking too much alcohol, and not smoking—have a substantially longer life expectancy free of major chronic disease at 50 years of age compared with those who follow none of them.

To arrive at that conclusion, researchers examined data on over 110,000 female and male healthcare professionals who took part in two landmark studies.

They found that women who followed four of five low-risk lifestyle factors had a life expectancy free of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes at 50 years that was over ten years longer than women who followed none.

The research indicates that, in men, the gain in disease-free life expectancy approached eight years. ★



OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD CARE: A DOCTOR ON THE GROUND TREATED AN ASTRONAUT ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS)

EARTHBOUND DOCTOR TREATS SPACE-STATION ASTRONAUT FOR FIRST KNOWN BLOOD CLOT IN SPACE

Chapel Hill, North Carolina — Dr. Stephan Moll, MD of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is one of the nation’s leading experts on *blood clots*, or the semi-solid clumps of blood that stop bleeding on the outside—but which could be dangerous when they form in blood vessels on the inside.

That’s why, when an astronaut aboard the International Space Station (ISS) developed a blood clot in the neck, NASA reached out to Dr. Moll.

Of course, it’s relatively easy to treat a patient when the doctor, and the patient, are both on terra firma. When his patient was 250 miles up in the sky, though, Dr. Moll quite

literally had to resort to “extraterrestrial methods.”

The clot in the neck of the astronaut, who’s not being identified for medical privacy reasons, was discovered in the course of an “in-house” study on board the ISS of the effects of prolonged space flight on the circulatory system.

The astronaut was prescribed two months of a daily shot of blood thinner from the space station’s onboard pharmacy, followed by an anticoagulant drug that arrived via resupply ship.

Most interestingly, the blood clot disappeared within 24 hours of the astronaut returning to earth after the six-month mission. ★

THE PROOF IS IN OUR PEOPLE



 Respite Services

Fun should be accessible to everyone. Our amazing counselors will give your child an experience to remember with our OPWDD Day Camp program.

Boro Park: 718.387.8400
Williamsburg: 718.387.8400
Rockland County: 845.503.0200
Orange County: 845.774.0300



HAMASPIK
CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES
המספיק
מרכז עזרה לצרכי הציבור

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

No Grand Family Trip, No Problem!

With Thousands of Something-for-Everyone Gift Bags for Families Across New York, Hamaspik Delivers Holiday Spirit Straight to Front Doors

“We knew right away,” says Mrs. Brenda Katina, Hamaspik’s legendary Special Events Coordinator—“from the minute the quarantine came up.”

Mrs. Katina is referring to the suspension of the grand family outing Hamaspik hosts each year for the hundreds of individuals it serves, and their families—the annual Pesach (Passover) extravaganza.

That much-anticipated event, which entails thousands of people—individuals and their family members—converging on a privately-rented amusement park or indoor family fun center to enjoy the upbeat spirit of the holiday, was not to be held this year.

In fact, with the state on lockdown, no one was going anywhere. But that didn’t stop Hamaspik from getting up and going. In fact, that’s exactly what got Hamaspik started.

Packing Plan B

The idea of bringing the outing to the greater Hamaspik family in the form of gift packages sprung from a pre-holiday meeting of the agency’s “top brass.” Executive directors of the Hamaspik divisions serving Kings, Orange and Rockland Counties met via teleconference with Mrs. Katina to figure out what to do—and together, they decided to bring the now-canceled event home.

Mrs. Katina, backed by extra involvement from Hamaspik of Kings County Executive Director Hershel Wertheimer, got right to work. Drawing upon a handful of catalogs, vast community cultural familiarity and more than a bit of imagination, Mrs. Katina cobbled together a shopping list that included Frisbees, jump ropes, kaleidoscopes, kites, pick-up sticks, playground balls (and air pumps to keep them useful), yo-yos, and—how could anyone forget?—a home cotton candy-making machine.

All of that (except for the cotton-candy machine), and more, was to be packed in huge red Hamaspik-emblazoned bags ordered especially for the extraordinary circumstances.

With all the goodies ordered from local vendors and delivered in record time, social halls and conference rooms at Hamaspik facilities in Brooklyn, Kiryas Joel and Monsey were transformed overnight into packing warehouses. Staff—including several who had been working from home by



HOLIDAY FUN ON DECK: CONTENTS ARE SPREAD OUT ON ONE GRATEFUL RECIPIENT'S PORCH



BRINGING IT HOME: A STAFFER DELIVERS



STOCKED UP: PACKAGES ALL READY TO GO



OUTDOOR CARNIVAL, INDOOR STYLE: TWO BOYS TRY OUT A HOME COTTON-CANDY MACHINE

day—gathered to assemble the care packages with diligence, face masks and gloves, and more than a little love.

In “K.J.” (as Kiryas Joel is informally known), Mrs. Katina was joined by her husband and co-Hamaspik stalwart Mr. Chaim Mendel Katina, and several of her own relatives, in packing those bags over several late-night runs. For the gift packages going to the Hamaspik of Rockland County family, agency powerhouse Mrs. Esty Schonfeld—normally the Manager

of the Women’s Division of the Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program—headed a team of staffers preparing gifts for nearly a week. At the same time, Hamaspik of Kings County’s very own Yossi Moskovits and Yaakov Kellner, respectively the 61st St. Briderheim Manager and Operations Manager, and their staff spent several nights putting together the goodie bags.

By the time the operation was completed, some 6,000 packages were ready to go.

Delivering the Goods

In the week before the Passover holiday, the operation moved to “Phase II”—delivery.

In all three divisions of Hamaspik across greater New York, the agency not only delivered “fun-in-a-bag” Passover holiday spirit to thousands of excited and gleeful families, but also provided desperately-needed local employment to dozens of drivers and others economically set back by the shutdown.

Up in K.J., Hamaspik tapped a local messenger service, which had been experiencing a work slump, to make rounds of the village. Wearing gloves and masks, messengers rang bells and left gifts at front door steps, keeping social distancing while putting Hamaspik’s brand of caring right up front and center. In Rockland County, Hamaspik had home-bound staff take on “extracurricular duties” to safely distribute the bags across greater Monsey. Meanwhile, gift bags coming from Hamaspik of Kings County were likewise delivered all across the Williamsburg and Borough Park neighborhoods of Brooklyn (and even beyond).



So what kind of feedback or reaction to the packages did Hamaspik get from parents? What sort of letters or phone calls did Hamaspik receive?

“Okay, it’s been crazy beyond, beyond, beyond...” Mrs. Katina proudly gushes, waxing animated in describing what she heard back. “The families: It kept them busy for *days*, not just Yom Tov [the holiday—ed.]!”, adding that the candy-making machine was of particular popularity.

“You have no idea what Hamaspik accomplished this Chol Hamoed [Passover middle days—ed.] in my house,” begins one voice mail provided by Mrs. Katina to the *Gazette*. “I can’t explain it.” The appreciative caller then proceeds to do just that. “The little kids jumped all over the balls and ran around with the kites and Frisbees. I don’t know what it would have looked like without this! It was a good move. Well done, and thank you, thank you, thank you!”

Normally, Hamaspik would bring the people to the holiday family fun. But this year, pandemic notwithstanding, it brought the holiday family fun to the people.



Friday Afternoons / Ages 8-9

● Social Friday.



Join us to improve your child's self-confidence and social skills in a group setting.



A project run
by Hamaspiik

Contact Reiny Steif / 845.503.0239 Rsteif@hamaspikrockland.org

FOR CHILDREN WITH ASD ELIGIBLE FOR ABA SERVICES.

Grow
today.

► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



Happenings around Hamaspik

Community Senior Status



RESPEC-"TABLE": ONLY THE FINEST AND MOST ELEGANT FOOD SERVICE IS PUT OUT FOR THE COMMUNITY'S MOST VENERATED MEMBERS AT THE SHNOIS CHAIM PROGRAM

Your Family is Our Family



HOME FRONT: HAMASPIK'S GIFT PACKAGES TO THE FAMILIES OF ITS HARD-WORKING EMPLOYEES WHO MANNED THE FRONT LINES THROUGHOUT THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Holocaust Survivors, Peers, Rejuvenate at Hamaspik of Orange County's Shnois Chaim Senior Day Program

The majority of participants are between their 60s and 80s. The oldest has been over 94.

But what these seniors, including a good few Holocaust survivors, all have in common is a still-youthful spirit—that timeless ache to drive on, fight forward, and smile through yet another glorious day of life.

At Hamaspik of Orange County's Shnois Chaim Senior Day Program, an understated but hugely successful partnership with the county's Department of Social Services, seniors from the Kiryas Joel community board Shnois Chaim's door-to-door bus every morning, literally walked from their front doors by reverential staff to waiting transportation and from there to Shnois Chaim's doors upon arrival.

A typical day, pre-coronavirus and post-pandemic hopefully soon, too, begins as seniors are seated and served their choice of freshly-brewed coffee or tea. After settling in, it's time for morning exercise led by a professional fitness instructor specializing in the

geriatric population.

Next, participants transition to the next part of their day—a cultural equivalent of a Bible study group that does for the soul what exercise does for the body, and the participants take to it like fish to water.

On occasion, interactive workshops on personal health, finance or the like will be held instead.

A recreational activity follows each day's spiritual boost—challah baking, fruit garnishing, or even glass decorating, with participants coming away with a round of fine-motor exercise and something good to take home, too.

Following a warm and nutritious lunch—prepared painstakingly with highly individualized menus, right down to the protein, carb and fruit/vegetable servings—participants are helped back into their coats (on colder days, at least) and assisted back onto the bus. Shortly after 2:00 p.m., Shnois Chaim's regulars are on their way back home, rejuvenated. ★

Hamaspik Says "Thank You!" to Staff with Holiday Gifts for Their Families

Passover Packages Liven Up Households Hunkering Down Under Quarantine

They're essential in more than one way—and so are their family members.

They are the employees of Hamaspik, working on the front lines of supporting people with disabilities throughout the community—as well as manning the offices that make those "front-liners" work possible. Nowadays, they're also out working while their kids are home all day, out of regular school.

But their family members—spouses and children who see them off every morning and welcome them back to a warm home each night—are on the front lines too, in their own way. When a breadwinner works in the field of disability, the whole family invariably is drawn in, one way or another—and to honor that fact, Hamaspik gave each employee's family a holiday gift package.

Each package consisted of a large bag filled with games and toys for the entire family—giving each age and stage something fun and healthy to

spend time with.

The gifts also helped families counter the boredom and frustration of interminable days stuck at home amidst a coronavirus quarantine.

In all three greater New York City regions serviced by Hamaspik—Brooklyn, Rockland County and further-upstate Orange County—staff at regional headquarters spent several late nights on premises decked out in masks and gloves to assemble the packages.

Once ready to go, other Hamaspik staff equally outfitted in hygienic gear loaded up vans and cars to spend collective hours orbiting neighborhoods to deliver the goods.

Judging from the responses collected by phone and e-mail, the gift packages struck all the right chords—eliciting positive reactions from employee family members, appreciative spouses and excited kids alike. ★

► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

Amidst Pandemic, Hamaspik Thanks Hatzolah Heroes With Special Family Gifts

Community EMT Corps Left No One Behind Despite Flood of Coronavirus-Related Calls

Sometimes, there's no better way to thank a person than to give a gift to the people who mean the most to that person.

So if you're trying to thank the selfless EMTs, paramedics and other medical professionals of your community Hatzolah volunteer ambulance corps, giving those volunteers' children a huge package of games and toys to enjoy over the Pesach (Passover) holiday is a great idea.

Especially if they've been on-call, on heightened alert, and otherwise responding to a tsunami of calls throughout the coronavirus crisis.

Even more especially if your neighborhood Hatzolah has a history of responding with tremendous professionalism and sensitivity to calls involving the individuals with intellectual disabilities supported by Hamaspik.

And all the more especially if they've been remarkably cool, reassuringly prompt and thoroughly professional

on more than one emergency call that's both coronavirus-related and Hamaspik-related.

To convey Hamaspik's heartfelt and bottomless thanks to Hatzolah of Kiryas Joel for their heroic community service throughout the crisis, Hamaspik sent a package brimming with toys and games to the family of each active member.

The packages, like those sent by Hamaspik to its own community, were delivered the week before the Passover holiday.

Each bright red bag was adorned with a supportive message of thanks to its recipient—perfectly matching the giant banner on the Hamaspik van driving around Kiryas Joel as agency staff personally (and hygienically) delivered them to those recipients' front doorsteps.

Usually, Hatzolah comes to your door.

But here, in a sincere gesture of appreciation from the entire greater Hamaspik family, Hamaspik came to Hatzolah's door. ★

Responsive to Responders



THANK YOU IN A BAG: HAMASPIK'S SHUTTLE, BANNER AND ALL, MAKES ITS ROUNDS OF KIRYAS JOEL TO THANK ALL LOCAL HATZOLAH MEMBERS FOR THEIR LIFESAVING SPIRIT



YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO THEM: A YOUNG SON (L) PROUDLY HANDS OVER HAMASPIK'S GIFT TO HIS FATHER, ALSO A HATZOLAH MEMBER LIKE THIS GRATEFUL GENTLEMAN (R)

Swinging Right Along at Hamaspik of Orange County's Newest Group Residences

No social isolation or recreational shutdown here!

That was the atmosphere in the air recently as Hamaspik of Orange County's Catherine Briderheim and Summit Briderheim residences, which opened last year, took their holistic and well-rounded care of their residents to new heights, and almost literally so.

In turn, that was because the residents of both Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs) now have their very own brand-new backyard play sets. (It's also because Hamaspik delivered bagfuls of life-affirming activities straight to the doorsteps of its IRA group homes before Pesach—effectively banishing any quarantine gloom; see “No Grand Family Trip, No Problem!” Page E6)

The gleaming new pieces of recreational hardware each boast two “clubhouses,” several slides, a monkey bar and a see-saw, allowing them to simultaneously accommodate several fun-seekers. Most centrally, each set also features several swings, granting the individuals those carefree playground

moments and memories to last a lifetime.

The new addition reflects the constant improvement that defines regular operations, not just at the two homes but at all dozen-plus Hamaspik group homes in three counties. Managers at each, backed by their own trained teams of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), are regularly on the lookout for how to make things better, whether procuring a requested purchase for one individual resident, engaging in home improvement to make the residence more comfortable for all... or installing the playground classic that has buoyed children for centuries.

Since the installation of the play sets, Catherine and Summit residents have been putting it to good use. Backed by the careful and caring hands of their DSPs, the young men are now flying high. Because at Hamaspik, when it comes to supporting individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, even the sky is not the limit. ★

Park it Right Here!



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: THE SOON-TO-BE-ASSEMBLED PLAY SET ARRIVES IN THE YARD OF HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY'S SUMMIT BRIDERHEIM IRA GROUP HOME



KING OF THE HILL: SUMMIT'S COMPLETE AND FRESHLY-ASSEMBLED BACKYARD PLAY SET STRIKES A DOMINANT POSITION OVERLOOKING THE RESIDENCE'S GREEN PREMISES

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

CAREER HR EXPERT NOW COO OF TRAILBLAZING AUTISM-JOBS COMPANY

New York, New York — Veteran human-resources guru Ian Bazzoli has been tapped as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Integrate Autism Employment Advisors, an entity whose mission is “to help organizations identify, recruit, and retain qualified professionals on the autism spectrum.”

Mr. Bazzoli also sits on the Board of Directors for the Autism Society of Greater Cincinnati and is President of the Advisory Board for the Summit School (NYC) Work-Based Learning Program, a vocational high-school internship program focused on providing work opportunities to students with learning differences.

The COO will work out of Integrate’s Cincinnati offices, expanding its footprint to cover the Midwest and adding to the company’s presence in the New York and San Francisco areas.

“I see neurodiversity employment as a growing focus of diversity and inclusion efforts,” he says. “As the economy faces

a growing skills gap, I believe more organizations will turn to under-served talent pools like the neurodiverse workforce.”

SALIVA TEST FOR AUTISM HITS MARKET

Syracuse, New York — After seven years of research at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, as well as Penn State, a saliva test designed to quickly diagnose autism in toddlers has hit the market. Created by Quadrant Biosciences Inc., a company located on Upstate’s Syracuse campus, the test was released in December. Quadrant is a partner with Upstate through the StartUp NY program, which gives new and expanding businesses tax breaks and access to university researchers.

The test, called Clarifi ASD, is one of the first medical tests to diagnose autism. Researchers identified certain short strands of ribonucleic acid (RNA) found in saliva that differentiates children with autism from kids who are neurotypical or have non-autistic developmental delays. Tests show that it is 85-percent accurate

in identifying kids with autism.

RUSSIAN TEEN WITH AUTISM STORMS WORLD OF ART

Moscow, Russia — Other than the fact that he has severe epilepsy plus autism, and that his paintings are all the rage in various art circles, Markus Martinovitch is your average 14-year-old.

Markus is “a boy with autism who produces... bright and bold exclamations about life itself,” according to his official biography. “Despite his young age, Martinovitch brings a remarkably mature and considered approach to his works and is unafraid to tackle complex themes regarding inner and outer spaces and the often-strange relationship between existence and meaning.”

Young Mr. Martinovitch, who divides his time between Moscow and Dusseldorf, Germany, where he lives with his mother, first put paint to paper at age six. He had his first exhibition at age eight, and his artwork—for the most part, evocative and colorful renditions of his mother or himself—is now shown and sold around the world.

MOM DEcriES USE OF “BETTER” IN SPEAKING ABOUT SON WITH AUTISM

Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania—In an essay for health-support organization The Mighty, autism-activist mom Kathy Hooven stakes out a strong position for *neurodiversity*—the notion that people with autism are not “normal” and need to be or do “better.”

“The word that really bothers me now is *better*,” she opines. “This word is often ... meant to be something positive, something complimentary: ‘Wow, he’s gotten so much better!’ ‘He’s really doing better now.’ I know none of these phrases are said with malice,” she points out, “But don’t you see what ‘better’ implies? Better implies that before he was worse. Better means that before there was something wrong, broken or inferior... and now he is right, ‘fixed,’ ‘normal.’”

The essay reflects a long-running divide of the autism community into two camps.

One, the medical model, sees people with autism as “having something wrong with them” the same way people with, say, diabetes have “something wrong with them”—and need regular intervention to enjoy lives as “normal” as possible.

The neurodiversity camp, on the other hand, says that ASD is just another feature of human life, like height or eye color, and needs simply to be accepted, not treated.

RISING AUTISM PREVALENCE IN OMAN SHOWCASES GLOBAL AWARENESS

Muscat, Oman — When numbers of a specific condition rise worldwide, not always is it because more people are getting it.

At least not with autism, which more kids on average have today than ever—because the definition of autism is now broader, and medicine is getting better at autism diagnosis.

That mechanism was on display in a recent study on autism in Oman. According to new research at Sultan Qaboos University in the capital city of Muscat, 0.2

percent of children in the developing Persian Gulf country are on the autism spectrum—an estimate actually about 15 times higher than a 2011 finding (and Oman’s only other autism prevalence study).

That jump probably reflects Oman’s efforts to diagnose, treat and raise awareness about autism. In 2017, Oman launched a mandatory national screening program, screening all kids for autism at 18 months upon getting their compulsory measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccines. ★



MORE AUTISM (AWARENESS) IN OMAN: THE PERSIAN GULF NATION HAS INCREASED SCREENING--RESULTING IN MORE DIAGNOSES

FIRST AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS AUTISM UPDATE IN 12 YEARS

Itasca, Illinois — It was in 2007 when the influential American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) last updated its official guidelines for children’s doctors on diagnosing and treating autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

But now, with the publication of *Identification, Evaluation, and Management of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder*, the AAP has thoroughly updated its official positions.

The most significant changes reflected in the update are: the increase of autism prevalence from one in 155 children in 2007 to one in 59 in 2018; the consolidation of separate diagnoses into one diagnosis of “autism spectrum disorder”; and the evidence-supported use of behavioral interventions like applied behavior analysis for building of life skills. ★

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● ► **HMASPIK NEWS**

Hamaspik's Wannamaker Group Home Thrives Despite COVID-19 Lockdown

Manager Joel Horowitz, Staff Keep Residents Safe, Healthy and Well-occupied in Isolation

While Joel Horowitz first became aware of a problem before the holiday of Purim, it was only when his community's spiritual leader, Rabbi Chaim S. Halberstam, instructed his flock to not shake his hand on Purim, March 10, that he saw that "it was serious," he says.

He confesses that many, including himself, saw that preemptive safety measure—now perhaps central to the new normal—as anything but prescient.

But about one week later, in mid-March, everything changed. Everything closed down. And if things had been serious on Purim, they were supremely serious now.

Sunday, March 22 marked the start of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's statewide executive shutdown order. On March 24, the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) officially suspended individual community outings and home visits. But before both, Hamaspik of Rockland County staff had already met to lay down in-house basics for the safety and wellbeing of the individuals residing in its group homes.

Such basics included barring entry to anyone but staff. Fever scans were to be conducted at each staff member's arrival each new shift. Residents, likewise scanned for fever daily, were also to be checked for healthy blood pressure and blood oxygen levels daily, too.

Longtime Hamaspik staffer and licensed EMT Abraham "Avrumi" Markowitz, now a Liaison with the agency's Family Care program, was tapped as the essential worker that he is to administer those medical tests—gloves, mask and all—to the residents each morning. Visiting Wannamaker early before the start of each workday, Mr. Markowitz tended professionally to staff and residents without neglecting his regular Family Care duties.

In addition, dispensers of hand sanitizer were strategically installed at several locations throughout the Wannamaker Briderheim residence—with the gentlemen explained that hands would have to be frequently washed and otherwise sanitized from now on, along with having to endure no visitors save the daily arrival of the home's Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).



For the next few weeks, those DSPs rose to the occasion as never before,



HEROIC AND HYGIENIC: WANNAMAKER DSP YITZCHOK YAAKOV GOLDSTEIN IN TOP FORM

attests Mr. Horowitz.

Messrs. Chezkel Dershowitz, Simcha Goldberger, Yitzchok Yaakov Goldstein and Shaya Stern, DSPs, along with live-in DSPs Mr. and Mrs. Moshe Y. Kupczyk, delivered a job performance marked by dedication and professionalism—evinced a newfound maturity, according to Manager Horowitz, that spilled over most positively to the residents, too.

"They became ten times more responsible," he declares. "They know that if they're going to be edgy, the gentlemen are going to act up. Thank God, we have not had any such reaction. They [the residents] are acting more maturely, and I think it's because of the staff."

Most fortunately, none of the residents took ill due to coronavirus.

In fact, in a buoyant and most welcome departure from the grim atmosphere of shutdown, DSP Dershowitz and wife welcomed a baby boy on the seventh day of Passover—a blast of happy news amidst the sobering headlines.



As for keeping residents safe, healthy and well-occupied during isolation, Mr. Horowitz starts with the backyard. "We're using it!" he quips.

Wannamaker, like all Hamaspik group homes (even those in crowded Brooklyn), boasts a rear area spacious enough to field field games (at least of the minimal variety)—even with the recreational hardware that each one has, too.

At Wannamaker, the gentlemen made full use of each day—weather permitting—of their backyard's slides and swings, hammocks and

residents making their own food in the kitchen, playing newly-purchased indoor games, and even using the recently-installed gym in Wannamaker's garage.

Hamaspik of Rockland County IRA Nurse Sarah Zucker, R.N. and Director of Residential Services Moshe Sabel have been on call 24/7 every day, with Mr. Sabel telling the *Gazette* he's "never worked this hard in my life." With the controlled chaos of COVID-19 engulfing all of greater metropolitan New York, including Hamaspik's upstate group homes, the two key staffers have been actively monitoring all residences and their residents since the crisis began.

Asked for the hardest part of the situation, the Manager humbly passes any accolades onto his DSP team—the unsung heroes who, at the end of the day, make Hamaspik everything that it is.

"I don't think I have anything hard," Mr. Horowitz says. "It's hard for staff. They're not showing signs, but I know it's hard. They're there all day and night." ★

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HEALTH NEWS

New Research Suggests Women Should Pay More Attention to Blood Pressure

Los Angeles, California — According to a new study published in the journal *JAMA Cardiology*, blood pressure in women begins to climb at a younger age and at a faster rate than in men.

That's why health experts are now saying that women as young as their 30s—and certainly those in their 40s, 50s and 60s—should routinely monitor their blood pressure, even if their levels are typically low.

High blood pressure is a leading risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, including stroke and heart failure.

Using data collected from nearly 33,000 people over 43 years, the researchers at L.A.'s Cedars-Sinai Hospital found that though women typically start out with a lower blood pressure than men, their levels start to surge in early adulthood and eventually catch up to, or surpass,

those of their male counterparts.

For their part, men tend to experience a more gradual increase in blood pressure throughout their lives.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA) says, one common misconception is that high blood pressure rarely affects women—when in fact, nearly half of adults with high blood pressure are women. What's more, according to statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more women die each year from stroke than do men, and almost as many women as men die from heart disease each year.

Catching and treating high blood pressure while it's on the rise earlier in life means that a younger person may be able to “turn off” some of the consequences later in life, like strokes and heart failure, according to experts—diseases that typically



EARLIER START: WOMEN SHOULD CHECK BLOOD PRESSURE SOONER THAN MEN, SAYS STUDY

show up from the 70s through the 90s, at a time when preventative

treatment for those really should have begun decades earlier. ★



HEALTHY EATING

SPAGHETTI SQUASH

EASY | YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:45



Spaghetti Squash prep

FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAIN INGREDIENT FOR SEVERAL DISHES!

NOTE: USE THIS PREP FOR ALL THE RECIPES HERE.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 spaghetti squash

DIRECTIONS:

- Pre-heat oven to 400° degrees
- Slice spaghetti squash in half lengthwise
- Scoop out seeds with spoon (set seeds aside)
- Place both halves on baking pan cut-side down
- Bake at 400° for 40 min
- Flip to cool
- Make spaghetti strands by scraping insides of squash with fork
- You now have vegetable spaghetti to replace regular spaghetti!

BENEFITS:

Spaghetti squash is known for the vegetable spaghetti you can make from it, plus its low calories—and high nutrition! Spaghetti squash is free of saturated fats and cholesterol but rich in antioxidants, dietary fiber, minerals and vitamins—making it commonly recommended by dieticians for cholesterol-control and weight-loss programs.

EASY | YIELDS: 2 DOZEN

READY IN: 0:20



Spaghetti Squash Patties

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 spaghetti squash
- 3 eggs
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoons black pepper
- 1/4 cup bread crumbs
- 4 tablespoons olive oil for frying

DIRECTIONS:

- Make spaghetti strands as instructed
- Mix all ingredients together
- Heat skillet and add olive oil for frying
- Spoon 1/4 cup of mixture into skillet to form patties

CHEF'S TIP:

Roast the seeds set aside earlier by first rinsing and drying them, then placing on a baking sheet, sprinkling some salt, and drizzling 1 tsp oil on top. Roast in oven at 300° for 20-25 minutes, stirring every few minutes.

EASY | YIELDS: 6-8 SERVINGS

READY IN: 0:30



Easy! Spaghetti Squash Baked Ziti

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 spaghetti squash
- 2 cups marinara sauce
- 2 cups shredded cheese

DIRECTIONS:

- Make spaghetti strands as instructed
- Mix spaghetti squash with marinara sauce and 1 cup shredded cheese
- Pour mixture back in to the shell of the spaghetti squash, or into an oven-proof baking dish
- Top with the rest of the cheese
- Bake at 400° for 20 minutes

Public Health and Policy News

NOT HIRING PEOPLE WHO SMOKE: GROWING NATIONAL POLICY UNDER FIRE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — The ubiquitous U-Haul truck rental company, with its distinct branding present in 21 states, recently announced it will no longer hire anyone who uses any form of nicotine, whether cigars, cigarettes or the still-popular (but increasingly under-fire) e-cigs.

But the hiring policy, which actually is legal and is growing nationwide among employers (including major hospitals and municipalities), is now being questioned by a number of medical ethicists—largely because the policy impacts, although perhaps unintentionally, people who are poor.

According to medical ethicist Dr. Harald Schmidt of the University of Pennsylvania, roughly half of unemployed people smoke—and quitting is hard because nicotine is highly addictive.

“It’s very hard for them to get work,” said Dr. Schmidt, “and it’s even harder for people who are already in a vulnerable situation.”

A 2017 Gallup Poll found that more than half of American smokers feel they’re discriminated against for their nicotine habit.

DOCS EXPECT ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF JOBS TO BE AUTOMATED BY 2040: REPORTS

Stanford, California — A new survey by Stanford Medicine finds that physicians, residents and medical students expect almost a third of their current duties to be automated in 20 years.

The majority of practicing physicians and medical students are thus now also seeking additional training in areas such as advanced statistics, genetic counseling, coding, population health, and artificial intelligence, according to the national survey.

Key trends that are reshaping healthcare include a maturing digital health market, new health laws opening patient access to data and AI gaining regulatory traction for medical use.

And the jury’s still out when it comes to whether the private industry’s foray into healthcare—in the form of companies such as Amazon, Google and Apple—will solve problems.

CDC: PUPPIES MAY BE MAKING PEOPLE SICK

Atlanta, Georgia — Puppies may be irresistibly adorable to millions of Americans. But according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the young dogs are also linked to a multi-state outbreak of an infection that’s resistant to multiple drugs.

An outbreak of *Campylobacter jejuni*, a bug carried by canines that can make humans sick, has been reported in 13 states—with 30 people so far being



SMOKED OUT: WITH GROWING WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION, NICOTINE USERS STRUGGLE



RISE OF THE MACHINES: TECHNOLOGY LIKE THIS CT SCANNER MAY DRIVE EVER-BETTER MEDICINE--BUT IN A SURVEY, DOCS FEEL THAT MORE AUTOMATION MEANS LESS WORK

infected and four being hospitalized, according to the CDC.

“Epidemiologic and laboratory evidence indicate that puppies purchased from pet stores are the likely source of this outbreak. Many of the cases had contact with puppies or were employees at pet stores, including Petland,” it said.

Some of the illnesses date as far back as January 2019 and people who have been infected range from 8 months to 70 years old. Symptoms include diarrhea, stomach cramps and fever and usually last for about a week.

OVER \$2.5 BILLION IN HEALTHCARE FRAUD SETTLEMENTS, JUDGMENTS IN 2019: DOJ

Washington, D.C. — In fiscal-year 2019, the federal U.S. Dept. of Justice (DOJ) recovered over \$2.5 billion in healthcare fraud and false claims, officials announced.

The recoveries involved all sectors of the industry including drug and medical device manufacturers, managed care providers, hospitals, pharmacies, hospice organizations, laboratories and physicians. It is the tenth consecutive year the department’s civil healthcare fraud settlements and judgments have exceeded \$2 billion.

Among notable healthcare recoveries for 2019 are: a \$195 million settlement with Insys Therapeutics over allegations of paid kickbacks for fentanyl prescriptions, and a \$1.4 billion settlement agreement by the Reckitt Benckiser Group to resolve civil allegations that it directly or through subsidiaries promoted opioid addiction treatment drug Suboxone to physicians who were writing prescriptions for uses that were unsafe, ineffective and medically unnecessary.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT ARCHITECT: GROWING HEALTHCARE JOBS EQUALS HIGHER COSTS

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — In a recent editorial, no less than Prof.

Ezekiel “Zeke” Emanuel, one of the prime movers of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), explains that—unlike the general rule for the economy as a whole—constant jobs growth in the healthcare industry is not good for the healthcare consumer.

Thousands of healthcare jobs added in recent months—only 40 percent of which are actually doctors and nurses directly treating patients—means that providers must pay thousands of new salaries, and then pass those costs on to health insurers, according to Dr. Emanuel. Insurers then pass those costs onto patients.

According to the public-health expert, a primary solution is actually to eliminate non-direct-care jobs in the industry by adopting more office and paperwork automation.

With less human non-medical staff, healthcare costs can be reduced, he argues.

PRIMARY-CARE VISITS BY INSURED ADULTS DROP, RESEARCHERS SUSPECT RISING OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS

Boston, Massachusetts — Between 2008 and 2016, visits to primary care doctors by insured adults dropped by close to 25 percent, says a review of insurance records.

The Harvard study looked at data from an insurer covering about 20 million people a year across the U.S.—finding a decline in primary-caregiver visits across all age groups and income levels.

While researchers are unsure as to why people are seeing their personal physicians less, they suspect it’s connected to rising out-of-pocket costs. Average out-of-pocket costs for doctor visits rose from about \$30 to nearly \$40 during the study period.

At the same time, the share of primary care visits subject to a deductible jumped, too: While under ten percent of such visits required a co-pay in 2008, over 25 percent did in 2016. ★

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In the Know

When you open your eyes and see a single, clear image, you probably take it for granted.

But in fact, clear and flawless vision is the result of a complex ongoing process that requires the many parts of your body's vision system to work together smoothly.

Double vision, or *diplopia*, can occur with one eye or both. If it's in one eye when the other is closed, it is less worrisome, but still serious. If it occurs when both eyes are open, it could signal a major disorder.

To understand what can go wrong, it helps know the parts of your eye and how they work together. Let's take a look!

DEFINITION AND CAUSE

Double vision occurs when a person sees a double image where there should only be one. The two images can be side by side, on top of one another, or both. The condition can affect balance, movement, and reading ability.

Each eye creates its own image of the environment. The eyes must work together to create depth of field, and the brain combines the representations from each eye and perceives them as one clear picture. Damage to the muscles that move the eyes or the nerves that control eye movement can create a double image, while certain illnesses can also weaken the muscles moving the eyes and produce double vision.

If double vision affects just one eye, it is *monocular*. If it affects both eyes, it is *binocular*. Treatments depend on the cause and type, but they include eye exercises, specially designed glasses, and surgery.

The cornea is a part of the eye that is the clear "window" into your eye. Its main job is to focus light.

If your double vision goes away when you cover one eye, you might have cornea damage in the uncovered eye. If only one cornea is warped, you may only see double in that eye.

Damage can be from:

- Keratoconus, when your cornea becomes cone-shaped

- Infections, like shingles or herpes
- Scars
- Dryness

With "one-eye" double vision, the problem is with the cornea, the lens of the eye—specifically, cataracts. Surgery almost always fixes them.

If you have double vision when both eyes are open, the problem is usually with your eye muscles. They control eye movement and keep the eyes aligned with each other. If a muscle in one eye is weak, then it won't move in sync with the healthy eye. When you look in a direction controlled by the weak muscle, you see double.

Eye muscle problems can be from:

- A problem with the nerves that control them
- *Myasthenia gravis*, an autoimmune illness that stops nerves from telling the muscles what to do. Early signs include double vision and drooping eyelids.
- Graves' disease, a thyroid condition that affects eye muscles. It can cause vertical diplopia, where one image is on top of the other

The problem with "two-eye" double vision can also be due to nerves. These carry information from your brain to your eyes. If optical nerves are the problem, the problem may be:

- Multiple sclerosis can affect nerves anywhere in your brain or spinal cord. If it damages the nerves that control your eyes, you may see double.
- Guillain-Barre syndrome is a nerve condition that causes progressive weakness. Sometimes, the first symptoms are in your eyes and include double vision.
- Diabetes can cause nerve damage to the muscles that move your eyes. That can lead to double vision.

Another cause of double vision can be the brain itself—because the nerves that control your eyes connect directly to your brain, where images are processed. Many causes of double vision start in the brain. They include:

- Strokes
- Aneurysms
- Increased pressure inside the brain from trauma, bleeding, or infection

- Brain tumors
- Migraine headaches

A common cause of binocular double vision is a squint or strabismus.

This occurs when the eyes are not properly aligned. Strabismus is relatively common in children. However, the condition does not always result in double vision.

Strabismus causes the eyes to look in slightly different directions. This might be because the affected eye muscles have the following difficulties:

- They are paralyzed or weak
- They have restricted movement
- They are too strong or overactive
- The nerves controlling the eyes muscles have abnormalities

Sometimes, a squint can return later in life for people who had a squint as a child. In some cases, the treatment of a squint can actually cause double vision, despite the individual's vision being normal before the squint was treated.

This is because the brain had been suppressing signals from one of the eyes in an attempt to maintain normal vision.

Other conditions can cause double vision include:

- Thyroid dysfunction: The thyroid gland is in the neck and produces a hormone called thyroxine. Changes in thyroid function can affect the external muscles that control the eye. This includes Grave's ophthalmopathy, in which the eyes can appear to protrude because fat and tissue build up behind the eye.
- Stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA): In a stroke, blood fails to reach the brain due to an obstruction in the blood vessels. This can affect the blood vessels supplying the brain or nerves controlling the eye muscles and cause double vision.
- Aneurysm: An aneurysm is a bulge in a blood vessel. This can press on the nerve of the eye muscle.
- Convergence insufficiency: In this condition, the eyes do not work together correctly. The cause is unknown, but it is thought to be due to the muscles that control the eye not lining up correctly.
- Diabetes: This can affect the blood vessels that supply the retina at the back of the eye. It can also affect the nerves that control eye muscle movements.
- Myasthenia gravis: This can cause weakness in the muscles, including those that control the eyes.
- Brain tumors and cancers: A tumor or growth behind the eye can interfere with free movement or damage the optic nerve.
- Multiple sclerosis: MS is a disease that affects the central nervous system, including the nerves in the eyes.
- Black eye: An injury can cause blood and fluid to collect around the eye. This can put pressure on the eye itself



ALL ABOUT... DOUBLE VISION

Sources: WebMD, Medical News Today, Stanford Health Care

or the muscles and nerves around it.

- Head injury: Physical damage to the brain, nerves, muscles, or eye socket can restrict the movement of the eye and its muscles.

SYMPTOMS

Double vision can happen with no other symptoms. Depending on the cause, you may also notice:

Misalignment of one or both eyes (a “wandering eye” or “cross-eyed” appearance)

- Pain when you move your eye
- Pain around your eyes, like the temples or eyebrows
- Headache
- Nausea
- Weakness in your eyes or anywhere else
- Droopy eyelids

DIAGNOSIS

Double vision that’s new or unexplained needs medical care right away. With so many potential causes, it’s important to discover the reason right away.

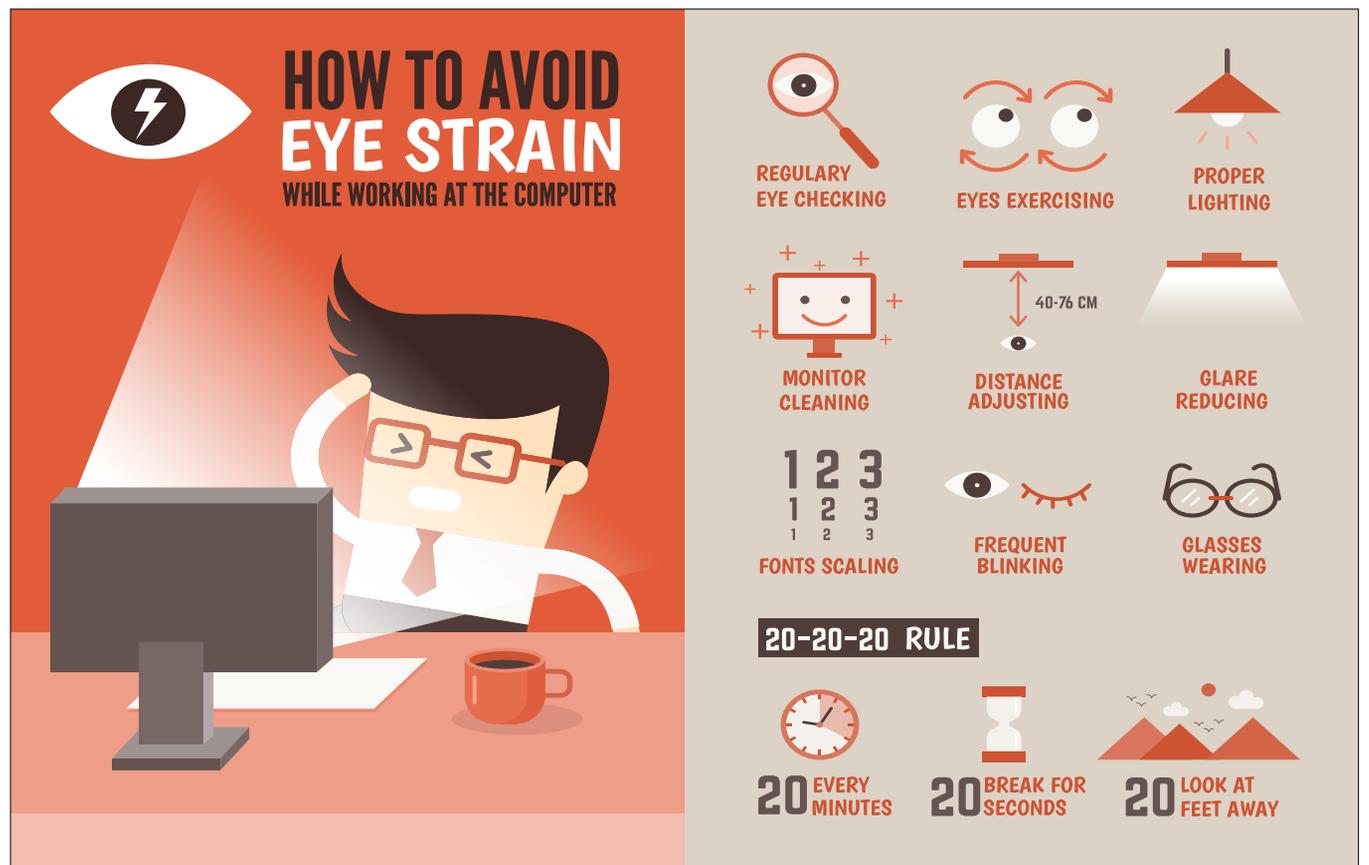
Your doctor will most likely use more than one method to find out what’s causing your problem. He might try blood tests, a physical exam, and maybe an imaging test like computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

One of the most effective tools for your doctor is the information you provide. Think about these questions before your appointment.

- When did the double vision start?
- Have you hit your head, fallen, or been unconscious?
- Were you in a car accident?
- Is the double vision worse at the end of the day or when you’re tired?
- Have you had any other symptoms besides double vision?
- Do you tend to tilt your head to one side? Look at old pictures, or ask family—you may not even be aware of the habit.
- Is the double vision only present with both eyes open or only present when one eye is open?

Now, focus on something in your field of vision that isn’t moving, like a window or a tree.

- Are the two objects side by side, or is one on top of the other? Or are they slightly slanted? Which one is higher or lower?
- Are both images clear but not in line? Or is one blurry and the other clear?
- Cover one eye, then switch. Does the problem go away when either eye is covered?
- Pretend your field of vision is a clock face. Move your eyes around the



clock, from noon to six and around to 12 again. Is your vision worse at any clock position? Does any position make it better?

- Tilt your head to the right, then to the left. Do any of these positions improve your eyesight or make it worse?

Diagnosis in children

Children cannot always express what they see, and this can make diagnosis difficult. Physical signs of double vision include:

- Squinting or narrowing the eyes to see
- Covering one eye with their hand
- Turning their head in an unusual way
- Looking at objects from the side rather than facing forward
- Flicking eyes side to side, between images

TREATMENT

The most important step is to identify and treat the root cause. Treatment will depend on the underlying cause.

- If weak eye muscles are to blame, or if a muscle has been pinched as a result of injury, surgery may help.
- Medications can treat myasthenia gravis.
- Surgery or medicine is available for Graves’ disease.

Medicines and insulin can control blood sugar in diabetes.

If double vision can’t be reversed, treatments can help you live with it. Special eyewear, like an eye patch or prism glasses, can ease the effects.

For astigmatism, or an abnormally curved cornea, corrective glasses or contact lenses often can counteract the curvature and correct the passage of incoming light into the eye.

Laser surgery is another option. This

treatment involves reshaping the cornea with a laser. However, make sure you do extensive research into laser surgery before you opt for this option—while laser surgery is quite popular, there are several types of it, as well as various conditions that would make you a poor candidate or non-candidate for it. You also need to find a good doctor with a good safety record and reputation before getting any laser eye procedure.

For cataracts, surgery is usually the best option. The surgical procedure removes the clouding and the cause of the double vision. Complications include infection, pain, and possibly continued blurry or double vision, but prompt treatment can usually resolve these.

For cases of dry eye, if the eyes do not produce enough tears or dry out too quickly, they can become inflamed and sore, resulting in double vision. Often, a prescription for tear substitute eye drops will relieve symptoms.

Binocular double vision

Depending on the cause, the treatments for binocular vision vary, but they include:

- Wearing glasses
 - Eye exercises
 - Wearing an opaque contact lens
 - Botulinum toxin (Botox) injections into the eye muscles, causing them to remain relaxed
 - Wearing an eye patch
 - Surgery on the muscles of the eye to correct their positioning
- A stick-on prism, placed between the eyes at the center of the frame, can also help realign images from each eye.

EYE EXERCISES

Exercises cannot treat many of the

conditions that cause double vision. However, some exercises can help with convergence insufficiency.

Smooth convergence

- Focus on a detailed target, perhaps a thin stick or small text in a magazine
- Hold this at eye-level, an arm’s length away from you
- Aim for the image to remain as a single image for as long as possible
- Move the target towards the nose in a slow, steady fashion
- When the single image becomes two images, your eyes have stopped collaborating. Focus intensely on bringing these images back together. Once they join, bring the target closer to the nose
- Once you become unable to rejoin the images, move your hand back to its original position and start the exercise again
- The normal convergence range is 10 centimeters (cm) away from the nose. Aim to keep the image as a single image up to the 10cm mark
- An orthoptist may provide a tool known as a Dot Card to assist these steps

PROGNOSIS

Double vision is one of all-too-many medical diagnoses in which a patient’s treatment options may be limited. That means that while some cases of double vision can be medically corrected or otherwise treated, some can only be mitigated or otherwise reduced—but not corrected completely. In such cases, the patient will have to adjust to the “new normal”—which, given the still-advancing treatments available, is not too bad in the first place. ★

Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today



REPORT: U.S. ERS TREATED 143 MILLION PEOPLE IN YEAR 2018

Chicago, Illinois — According to the American Hospital Association (AHA), some 143 million people were treated by U.S. emergency rooms in 2018.

In its 2020 edition of *Trendwatch: Hospital and Health System Workforce Strategic Planning*, the AHA provides a “National Snapshot of the Hospital Workforce,” including the following fascinating statistics for America’s hospitals and health systems in Year 2018:

- 623 million outpatient visits
- 143 million people treated by emergency departments
- 28 million-plus surgeries
- Nearly four million babies delivered

HIGH-END HOSPITAL OPENS NEW DOORS TO CITY’S NEEDIEST

Los Angeles, California — L.A.’s Cedars-Sinai Medical Center has been famous for decades for catering to the rich and famous from across the city, country and beyond, with its deluxe suites, A-list patients and world-class art collection that includes original works by Chagall and Picasso.

But beginning Jan. 2020, Cedars-Sinai made a change by loosening the income cap for patients to qualify for free or discounted care.

Previously, the nonprofit hospital’s financial assistance policy allowed patients with household incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level to qualify for free care, which amounts to \$24,980 for an individual or \$51,500 for a family of four, based on 2019 figures.

The hospital now makes its charity care policy the most generous of the state’s ten largest nonprofit hospitals, ranked by net patient revenue from the 2017-18 fiscal year.

It has expanded eligibility for free medical care to patients with household incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.



ON THE FRONT LINES: U.S. EMERGENCY ROOMS TREATED 143 MILLION IN YEAR 2018 ALONE

HOSPITALS PLEDGE \$700 MILLION TO FIGHT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL DISPARITIES

Washington, D.C. — The 45-member Healthcare Anchor Network, a group of U.S. hospitals and health systems founded in 2017, has now pledged some \$700 million toward community-based efforts to address the economic and environmental drivers behind healthcare disparities.

In plain English, that means: donating lots of money to figure out why poorer people have less healthcare, and then fixing those problems.

The funding over the next five years will be spent on local programs nationwide that provide housing, food and local jobs.

Participants include Kaiser Permanente, RWJBarnabas Health, UMass Memorial Health Care, Advocate Aurora Health, and Intermountain Healthcare.

ALARMING SURGE IN E-SCOOTER ACCIDENTS: NEW REPORT

San Francisco, California — A new study finds that electric scooter accidents are sending droves to emergency rooms—especially young adults.

As the popularity of e-scooters has exploded, so has e-scooter injuries—skyrocketing 222 percent between 2014 and 2018 to more than 39,000. Hospital

admissions also soared—365 percent to nearly 3,300.

Head injuries made up about a third of the injuries—twice the rate seen in bicycle accidents, said researchers at the University of California, San Francisco.

Men suffered about two-thirds of the injuries. Most riders hurt for the first time were between 18 and 34 years old, the researchers found. They also note that health officials nationwide are alarmed by the number of fractures, dislocations and head injuries showing up in trauma centers from e-scooter accidents.

The study found that the likely reason for the spike is that few regulations for e-scooter use exist, particularly about the need to wear a helmet. The study found that only two to five percent of injured riders wore helmets.



SCOOT RIGHT TO THE E.R.: USAGE, INJURIES UP

PATIENTS OFTEN BRING UNDETECTED ‘SUPERBUG’ TO HOSPITALS

New York, New York — A new study by New York City’s Albert Einstein College of Medicine finds that one in ten hospital patients who develop *Clostridioides difficile* infections may already have the dangerous germ when admitted.

The new report suggests that such infections originate outside hospitals more often than believed, and that patients could be screened to prevent the spread of *C. difficile*, according to the authors.

According to a 2015 report, over 400,000 cases of *C. difficile* that result in nearly 30,000 deaths are reported in the United States each year.

In the new study, researchers tested 220 patients who showed no symptoms of *C. difficile* infection when they were admitted to a New York hospital between July 2017 and March 2018. Patients were followed for six months.

At admission, 21 patients were identified as carriers of *C. difficile*. Within six months, 38 percent of carriers developed symptomatic *C. difficile* infection, compared with 2 percent of non-carriers. The findings suggest many people carry undetected *C. difficile* and may pass it on to others and/or develop an infection themselves.

STUDY: MORE WALK-IN CLINICS, FEWER ER VISITS

Chicago, Illinois — People who live near newly-opened walk-in medical clinics are less likely to visit emergency rooms for minor health issues like the flu, suggests new research.

Walk-in health clinics like those located in stores such as Walgreens, CVS and Walmart began offering basic primary care services like flu shots and diabetes monitoring in the early 2000s.

For the new study, economists measured ER visits among people who lived within two miles of a retail clinic open at some point between 2006 and 2014 in New Jersey.

Their findings indicate the retail clinic’s effect depended on the health issue. The rate of ER visits fell by 13 percent for the flu, for example, while they declined 12 percent for sore throats and ten percent for eye infections.

Rates of ER visits for urinary tract infections, upper respiratory infections, ear infections, sprains and strains all declined by about six percent, while visits for diabetes fell by three percent, the researchers found.





The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

Hamaspik HomeCare's Staff Fight to Safely Deliver Most Service Possible Amid Coronavirus Crisis

Agency Joins Forces Over Passover with Community Volunteers, Caregivers to Care for Recently Discharged Patients Recovering from COVID-19 at Home

In his daily briefing of April 21, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo dwelt on the fact that crises tend to bring out the best in some people.

For those serviced by Hamaspik HomeCare, the pandemic put the agency in that category.

Asher Katz, Hamaspik HomeCare's Executive Director, notes that his home-care agency was one of the few—if not the only one—whose offices didn't close throughout the crisis. Though down to ten percent of on-site staff at the lowest point in March, the agency's Brooklyn offices were operating at 60 percent as April closed—and its Spring Valley nerve center was at 90 percent staffing.

"We're proud that we could ensure

that patients could stay at home and get the care they needed," says Mr. Katz.

With cases skyrocketing and a shutdown under way, Hamaspik HomeCare's entire team rapidly adapted to the new normal, recalls Chief Operating Officer Mordechai Wolhendler. Agency IT guru Simcha Klagsbrun shortly had all staff working their computers and phones from home. Director of Patient Services Rena Milgram, R.N. worked with the entire team of nurses, Home Health Aides (HHAs) and Personal Care Aides (PCAs) to ensure that as many patients as possible were getting as much home care as possible—and that caregivers had the personal protective equipment

(PPE) needed to stay safe while working, too.

The crisis' biggest challenge was aide staffing, says Mr. Wolhendler. Some front-line aides lacked childcare, requiring them to stay home. Others had gotten sick and stayed home. "It was tight," says Mrs. Milgram.

But Hamaspik HomeCare persevered.

On the front-line end, Field Nurse Leah Lichstein, R.N. exemplified the agency's dedication to above-and-beyond care—even driving her own car to repeatedly deliver PPE like gowns, gloves and masks to the private homes of aides otherwise too worried about in-house field work.

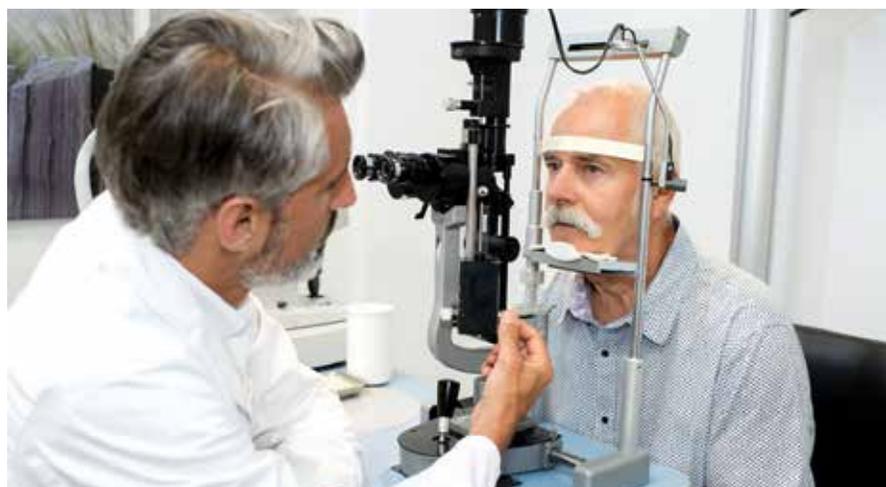
What's more, before Passover,

Rockland County's Hatzolah volunteer EMT corps and Bikur Cholim patient-support group reached out to Hamaspik HomeCare and other agencies for a joint community project: Having volunteer nurses provide at-home medical monitoring over the holiday to recovering COVID-19 patients just released from hospitals. Guided by Meir Adler, PA, the project's medical director, a number of nursing visits were coordinated.

"It was a very rewarding experience to help the community," says one participating Hamaspik HomeCare nurse.

But that goes not just for Hamaspik HomeCare's volunteerism, but its professionalism, too. ★

New Alzheimer's eye test starting \$5 million study



SEEING ALZHEIMER'S STRAIGHT: A SIMPLE NEW EYE TEST MAY DIAGNOSE THE DISEASE

South Kingstown, Rhode Island — If a joint research effort by three healthcare entities proves correct, it will turn out that a simple, cheap diagnosis for Alzheimer's was looking at us all along right in the eye.

Make that, looking right at the eye of

people with Alzheimer's.

The University of Rhode Island (URI), Butler Hospital in Providence, and central Florida's BayCare Health System are now teaming up to conduct a joint study of a simple and inexpensive eye test to determine whether the patient has

Study: People feel lives most meaningful around age 60

San Diego, California — A study by the Center for Healthy Aging at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine found that the feeling that life has meaning tends to become stronger as people grow older—and peaks around age 60.

The findings were published recently in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

The study also found that when people at any age feel that their life has meaning, they tend to be both mentally and physically healthier. It

also found that older people (those over age 60) who say their life has meaning also tend to have stronger cognitive skills.

On the other hand, the study reports, that when people are still searching for meaning in life, their psychological health tends to be poorer.

The study was based on survey data on 1,042 adults, aged 21 to 100-plus (average age: 66), who were part of a larger study on aging being conducted in San Diego County. ★

Alzheimer's disease.

If the so-called *retinal screening* tests prove reliable, they could possibly replace today's high-tech PET scans, which can detect the buildup of amyloid plaque in the brain associated with Alzheimer's before symptoms appear.

The PET scans cost thousands of dollars and are not typically covered by most insurance plans. By contrast, the retinal screens could someday be administered by optometrists and ophthalmologists at considerably less cost. ★

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