



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik Agencies and General Health

FEBRUARY '18 • ISSUE NO. 156

GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

WHEN DO YOU PUT YOUR KIDS TO BED?
A: 7 P.M.; B: 7-8 P.M.; 8-10 P.M.; 10 P.M.+

Respond to: survey@hamaspik.org

HEALTH STAT

ALZHEIMER'S: THE HERE AND NOW

105 NEW MEDICATIONS UNDERWAY	5% PATIENTS UNDER AGE 65	5.5 MILLION AMERICANS CURRENTLY DIAGNOSED
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Source: WebMD

HEALTH QUOTE

“THE U.S. JUST ISN'T THAT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN HOW MUCH HEALTH CARE WE USE. IT IS VERY DIFFERENT IN HOW MUCH WE PAY FOR IT.”

—Harvard Global Health Institute director Ashish Jha, The New York Times, Jan. 2, 2018

HEALTH TIP

Strong social support is one of the keys to happiness and good health.

Making an effort to improve relationships with people already in your life is one way to increase your social support.

INSIDE

HEALTH

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AUTISM

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HAMASPIK NEWS

HOME SWEET HOME, HOME, HOME

WITH HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY NEWLY APPROVED TO OPEN THREE NEW GROUP HOMES IN BROOKLYN, THREE NEW SETS OF INDIVIDUALS, AND THEIR FAMILIES, WILL GET THE HAMASPIK TOUCH



BLAST FROM THE PAST: MR. ISRAEL WERTHEIMER, OBM WITH COMMUNITY AND HAMASPIK LEADERS AT THE 2007 GRAND OPENING OF HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY'S 61ST ST. MEN'S RESIDENCE.

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US Postage
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Provider Hamaspik of Rockland County
Published and Copyrighted Jan. '18 by:
NYSHA Inc., 58 Rt. 59, Suite 1,
Monsey, NY 10952

NEW FEATURE! HEALTHY EATING

Break Out That Butternut Squash!

THREE EASY RECIPES FOR GREAT NATURAL DISHES



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DISABILITY NEWS

More Hudson Valley, NYC, Long Island Agencies Signing Up with Tri-County Care

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SENIOR NEWS



New York Becomes First "Age-Friendly" State in the U.S.A.

SEE PAGE E15 >>

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

LHCSA - 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

PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

In Record-Breaking \$69 Billion Deal, CVS to Buy Aetna, Turn Pharmacies Into Health Hubs



HEALTH MONOLITH, OR MONOPOLY? THE PROPOSED DEAL IS RAISING BIG QUESTIONS

Woonsocket, RI — Health retailer CVS, America's second-largest pharmacy chain, announced on Dec. 4 that it would be purchasing health insurance giant Aetna for the princely sum of \$69 billion.

The merger would give the resulting new company more clout with drugmakers and would aim to bring more health care to consumers in retail clinics. The companies said that together they want to offer more health care services in CVS drugstores.

In changing its name to CVS Health three years ago, CVS is trying to reposition itself as a health care company rather than just a drugstore.

The vision is that customers, especially those covered by Aetna insurance policies, will seek more of their basic health care at an expanded CVS Health clinic.

CVS operates over 1,100 MinuteClinics at

locations in its drugstores and within Target stores. According to CVS, its pharmacists and nurse practitioners can provide ongoing health care for people with chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure or asthma.

The companies are counting on the notion that people will prefer going to a clinic around the corner than making repeated trips to their doctors that might require appointments and long and burdensome waits.

However, numerous healthcare industry captains and public servants continue to express alarm at the proposed merger, which is expected to be reviewed and approved by the U.S. Dept. of Justice (DOJ).

But if greenlighted, the new healthcare services offered through CVS Health by Aetna will represent a watershed event in the history of the American healthcare and health insurance industries. ★

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► **DISABILITY NEWS**

More Hudson Valley, NYC, Long Island Agencies Signing Up with Tri-County Care

New York State OPWDD Urging Unaffiliated Non-profits to Partner with a CCO/HH



Tri-County Care continues to grow. The Care Coordination Organization/Health Home (CCO/HH) will be launched by the New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA) come July 2018—and a growing number of disability services providers throughout the greater Hudson Valley, New York City, Long Island and Capital regions have been signing up with Tri-County Care as it moves towards opening.

The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)—Hamaspik's long-time public-

sector partner—has also recently been actively encouraging non-profit agencies that have not yet signed up with a CCO/HH to do so.

The recently-created CCO/HH entities, as reported by the *Gazette* in recent months, are New York State's 'new and improved' models for services and supports provided to people with disabilities.

Until now, Hamaspik and others like it provided only disability programs, plus Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC).

But under the new CCO/HH, people with disabilities will continue to get their disability programs from agencies like Hamaspik and others—but will get their MSC services strictly from the CCO/HH, not from Hamaspik or others.

Medicaid Service Coordinators with Hamaspik and other such agencies will become *Care Coordinators*—employees

of the CCO/HHs, transferring to the new organizations.

The idea is that MSC services be independent and conflict-free—that is, the MSC connecting the serviced individual with the disability services or supports that are best for the individual, regardless of which non-profit provides those services.

The second major change under the new CCO/HH is that people with disabilities will also get medical services.

Under a groundbreaking plan created jointly by the OPWDD and the New York State Dept. of Health (DOH), Care Coordinators with the new entities will not just independently coordinate individuals' disability services, but also coordinate a raft of new healthcare services.

Care Coordinators will tend to each individual's needs in a more global, holistic approach.

Put otherwise, the independent new MSCs of the new CCO/HHs will ensure that each individual gets the most suitable doctor, dentist or other basic medical service—not just the most suitable housing, habilitation, employment and other disability support or service.

Besides building its infrastructure with newly-recruited disability non-profits, Tri-County Care is also building its infrastructure by laying the groundwork for new offices to open in time for the new CCO/HH's full rollout in July of 2018.

Those new workplaces, currently in the works, will give newly-hired Tri-County Care Executive Director David Mizrahi and his team the space to work most efficiently.

Most importantly, they will also allow Tri-County Care to attain and maintain its primary mission: providing conflict-free and independent Care Coordination. ★

► **HAMASPIK NEWS**

Breakthrough: OPWDD Grants Hamaspik Brooklyn Three New Residences

Trio of Group Homes to Help Relieve Community Disability Housing Shortage

Responding to a call for backup from the front lines of disability services, the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities approved Hamaspik of Kings County this mid-December for three new community residences for people with disabilities.

The long-awaited approval came in a Dec. 12 letter from the OPWDD's regional office to Mr. Hershel Wertheimer, Executive Director of Hamaspik of Kings County.

The approval, along with dozens like it, was also part of a formal announcement by Gov. Andrew Cuomo the following week outlining the awarding of \$58.9 million to 53 agencies, including Hamaspik, to create 83 new homes across the state.

With an ear keenly tuned to the community's voice, Hamaspik has been quietly pushing for new group homes for years now.

Extensive groundwork for the three homes is underway now, says Hamaspik of Kings County Director of Residential Services Cheskel (Joel) Fisher. A list of

potential placements is being compiled, with those most in need getting priority, he reports.

Those individuals typically hail from homes with aging parents and increasing difficulty of care, he says.

Unlike day-shift workers, he points out, "parents never get to go home." But with the new residences, their children will. ★



MEETING OF THE MINDS: AT 61ST'S GRAND OPENING, BROOKLYN COMMUNITY LEADERS IN CONVERSATION WITH HAMASPIK FOUNDER MEYER WERTHEIMER (R); A BEDROOM AT THE MEN'S RESIDENCE—THEN AS NOW A MODEL OF PERSON-CENTERED COMFORT



Hamaspik Gazette

Published and Copyrighted January '18 by:
NYSHA, Inc. 58 Rt. 59, Suite 1, Monsey, NY 10952
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Mail Postmaster: Return service requested
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Happening in Health Today

NEW CANCER DRUG PROMISING FOR WIDE RANGE OF TUMORS

Boston, MA — An experimental new drug called *ulixertinib* has shown potential against many tumor types in a small Phase I trial of 135 cancer patients who had not responded to earlier treatments.

Ulixertinib works by targeting a genetic flaw common to most cancer cells. It blocks the last link in a chain of “on/off” protein signals inside each cancer cell, effectively “turning off” the cell’s ability to replicate.

According to researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital, ulixertinib did seem to spur at least a partial response to the therapy, regardless of cancer type.

The trial was funded by drugmaker Biomed Valley Discoveries and published Dec. 15 in *Cancer Discovery*.

PEOPLE LIVING CLOSER TO GYM IN BETTER SHAPE: STUDY

London, England — In a new British study, middle-aged adults and seniors who had homes close to gyms and other exercise facilities tended to be trimmer than those who didn’t.

“The results of our study suggest that

increasing access to local physical activity facilities and, possibly, reducing access to fast food close to residential areas could reduce overweight and obesity at the population level,” said study author Dr. Kate Mason of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

The study analyzed weight-related data on roughly 400,000 British men and women between the ages of 40 and 70 from the years 2006 to 2010.

Researchers measured how closely participants lived to sports facilities like gyms, swimming pools and playing fields—finding that, on average, most people lived about a half-mile from a single exercise facility.

Researchers determined that those with the best access to nearby exercise facilities were less overweight than those with poor access. Specifically, living near a minimum of six such facilities translated into having about a half-inch smaller waist, about a half-point lower BMI reading and less body fat.

Guess it’s more than your imagination if you’re feeling fit living right down the road from your neighborhood gym!

The report was published Dec. 12 in *The Lancet Public Health*.

FLU SHOT SAFE EVEN FOR THOSE WITH EGG ALLERGY

Arlington Heights, IL — According to the newest guidelines from the



HAVE NO FEAR, THE FLU SHOT IS HERE! THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF ALLERGY, ASTHMA AND IMMUNOLOGY NOW SAYS THAT EGG-BASED VACCINES ARE SAFE FOR ALL

American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, it’s now safe for people with an egg allergy to get the flu shot.

Doctors no longer need to question patients about egg allergy before giving the vaccine, the group now says. The guidelines

are consistent with recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

According to the group, the flu vaccine does not contain enough egg protein to cause an allergic reaction, even in people with severe egg allergy—meaning that such patients don’t need to see an allergist to get the flu shot, or require a longer-than-usual observation period after the injection.

WOMEN MAY BE BETTER THAN MEN AT BATTLING THE FLU

S. John’s, Newfoundland — Fellows, if you feel your wife’s better at getting over the flu than you, science now suggests

you’re onto something real. According to researcher Dr. Kyle Sue at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, men have a weaker immune response to common viral respiratory infections and the flu. Dr. Sue bases that on the statistical fact that men have worse and longer-lasting flu symptoms, and are likelier to be hospitalized for flu.

GENE REPLACEMENT THERAPY COULD CURE HEMOPHILIA

Atlanta, GA — Results from a small clinical trial on 13 patients found that *hemophilia*, or uncontrolled bleeding, was almost entirely eliminated in 11 of them thanks to a new gene replacement therapy.

Early results of the therapy for people with hemophilia A, created by BioMarin Pharmaceuticals, were unveiled this December at the annual American Society of Hematology convention.

FISH-EATING KIDS LIVE SMARTER

Philadelphia, PA — Regular fish consumption has long been associated with longer life—at least if the “eat fish, live longer” slogan is right. But a new study now indicates that regular fish consumption is associated with higher intelligence, too.

A study of the diet habits of 500 kids in China found that those who ate fish at least once weekly scored 4.8 points higher on a common IQ test than those who didn’t.

The University of Pennsylvania study was published in *Scientific Reports*. ★



SOMETHING FISHY’S GOING ON WITH THOSE KIDS’ GRADES: AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY’S STUDY OF 500 KIDS IN CHINA FINDS THAT THOSE REGULARLY EATING FISH AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK HAD IQ TEST SCORES HIGHER THAN THOSE OF ‘NON-FISHY’ KIDS

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

RESEARCH AREAS, 2017

Among 2017's many themes in wide-ranging autism biology research were these two strains of published studies:

- **Early brain development:** several studies showed that brains of infants and even newborns later diagnosed with autism develop differently than do typical babies.

- **Gene therapy:** Replacing defective genes is making headway in several non-autism-related conditions in recent times, and in the autism field, several studies this year underscore gene therapy's potential for reversing various autism-related conditions like Rett syndrome.

POTENTIAL NEW AUTISM DRUG SHOWS PROMISE IN MICE

San Diego, CA — Scientists at The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) have performed a successful test of NitroSynapsin, an experimental new drug, in a mouse model of an autism disorder.

In laboratory tests, the drug largely corrected electrical, behavioral and brain abnormalities in the mice.

The scientists are now hopeful that the drug may one day be able to restore a brain electrical signaling imbalance found in virtually all forms of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The research was published recently in *Nature Communications*.

BRAIN STIMULATION RESTORES NORMAL SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN MICE

Dallas, TX — Brain experiments on mice at UT Southwestern Medical Center found that social impairments in the mice were correctable by using a kind of brain stimulation called *neuromodulation*. Awkwardness and other social impairments are a common feature of autism.

Research first showed that a specific area of the part of the brain called the cerebellum is related to autism. Researchers then found a new connection between that part of the cerebellum and the *cortex*, another part of the brain. That connection was also shown to be autism-related.

Researchers next demonstrated that both mice and humans have that same connection—and that the connection is disrupted in children who have autism.

They then disrupted that part of the cerebellum in mice—resulting in autistic behaviors in the mice. But upon undoing that disruption using neuromodulation, the mice reverted to normal.

Researchers are now seeing if neuromodulation would be safe for children with autism. The brain stimulation technique has already been used to treat schizophrenia.

The research was published in the Dec. issue of *Nature Neuroscience*.

BILL WOULD CREATE MORE OVERSIGHT OF REPRESENTATIVE PAYEES

Washington, D.C. — Under recently-introduced Congressional legislation, *rep payees*, or people legally designated to collect Social Security payments for people with disabilities, would be subject to more independent and more effective oversight.

The legislation calls for additional reviews of payee performance. It would require that protection and advocacy groups in each state handle such evaluations on behalf of the Social Security Administration (SSA).

The bill would also free parents or spouses living with a person with a disability from having to complete an annual accounting form for representative payees. The bill would also codify a policy barring those with certain criminal convictions from serving as payees.

The Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2017 was introduced Dec. 8 in the House of Representatives by Reps. Sam Johnson (R-Tex.) and John Larson (D-Conn.). It was cosponsored by 20 others, including New York's Rep. Brian Higgins (D-26th Dist.) It currently has been referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

About 6.2 million individuals or organizations act as representative

payees on behalf of some eight million beneficiaries, according to the SSA.

GRADUATION RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STILL RISING

Washington, D.C. — Parents of high-schoolers with disabilities, rejoice!

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCED) now says that high school graduation rates for students with disabilities continues its upward trend of recent years.

According to figures released in December by the NCED, a division of the federal U.S. Department of Education, 65.5 percent of U.S. high schoolers with disabilities graduated in 2016, the latest year for which data are available.

That's up from 64.6 percent the year prior, marking the fifth consecutive year that the rate has increased.

The improvement for students with disabilities comes as the national graduation rate for all high schoolers reached a record high of 84.1 percent.

As in past years, graduation rates for students with disabilities varied widely from state to state, ranging from a low of 29.3 in Nevada to a high of 84.3 percent in Arkansas. Federal officials have indicated that reporting differences may contribute to the variation. ★



NEW YORK TRANSIT MUSEUM HOSTS HIGH-FUNCTIONING AUTISM PROGRAM

Brooklyn, NY — Since 2012, a little-known autism program called Subway Sleuths has been operating out of the New York Transit Museum, the Big Apple's subterranean subway museum located in a former working subway station in downtown Brooklyn.

Subway Sleuths was created after museum staff noticed trains' attraction for children with autism. Kids with the disorder tend to fixate on intricate details like train schedules or parts.

Today, Subway Sleuths consists of several weekly after-school programs each school-year semester. Playing detail-oriented clue-hunting group games, children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder (ASD) use maps, signs and other transit history-related clues to learn how better communicate and practice various other social skills.

Each group is led by a museum educator, a speech-language pathologist and a special-ed teacher. ★

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK TRANSIT MUSEUM



Happenings around Hamaspik

What It's All About



HOMECOMING VALUES: TIME STOPS AS SHOLOM RUBASHKIN, HIMSELF THE FATHER OF A SON WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, SHOWS HIS TRUEST COLORS TO A MOST SPECIAL VISITOR

On the Front Lines



FIREFIGHTERS FOR A DAY: THE GENTLEMEN OF HAMASPIK'S DAY HABILITATION PROGRAMS IN ORANGE AND ROCKLAND GET A FIRST-HAND FEEL FOR FIRE SAFETY

Hamaspik Hosts Family Care Providers on Chanukah Eve

In a show of gratitude and appreciation for their love and devotion to their precious charges, Hamaspik thanked its elite cadre of Family Care providers at an annual Chanukah party.

The fact that the "Chanukah party" was held on Dec. 11 the day before this year's Chanukah didn't matter—by the time it was over, everyone was squarely in the luminous holiday spirit.

Held on the premises of the Hamaspik Terrace social hall at 58 Rt. 59 in Monsey, Hamaspik of Rockland County's hub, the

event kicked off at 8:00 p.m. and carried on for over three fun-filled hours.

About 100 guests attended the women-only event, mingling first for refreshments and then sitting down together around tables for the ensuing program of entertainment and inspiration—emceed once again to perfection by Hamaspik's very own Mrs. Brenda Katina.

Participants laughed, cheered, bonded—and came away with enough spiritual light to illuminate any dark moments lying ahead in days to come. ★

Two-home Party on Day Two

Hamaspik of Kings County's 38th St. Shvesterheim happily hosted its sister home, the South 9th Shvesterheim, for a gala party on Chanukah, Day Two.

The exciting get-together was held on Dec. 14 at Hamaspik of Borough Park's newly-expanded central hub at the corner of 14th Ave. and 41st St—and featured food,

music, singing and dancing, art projects, and no shortage of fun and games.

"Everyone had an amazing time," reports 38th St.'s Mrs. Yona Kasnett—with special kudos, the Assistant Manager adds, going to dedicated (and aren't they all?) staffer Ms. Herman for singlehandedly presiding over the party's planning and setup. ★

Hamaspik Family Care Child Meets Man of the Hour

Among the thousands of community members celebrating President Donald J. Trump's commutation of a sentence universally viewed as grossly excessive was a precious little boy with Down syndrome who also benefits from Hamaspik of Rockland County's successful and still-growing Family Care program.

The child had long wanted to personally meet Sholom Rubashkin, the man whose

27-year sentence recently came to a joyous and unexpected end. And this past Dec. 20, he joined the hundreds spontaneously converging on a humble Monsey home to congratulate Mr. Rubashkin in person.

Mr. Rubashkin, himself the proud father of a young adult with disabilities, was visibly moved—and took the time to share a few beautiful moments with a beautiful human being. ★

"Oh, Yes, Oh, No, There is No Doubt! The Finest Fire is the Fire That's Out!"

That bit of doggerel comes to mind when reporting on the Kiryas Joel Fire Department (KJFD)'s recent visitors: The gentlemen attending Hamaspik's Day Habilitation programs in Orange and Rockland Counties.

While hardly their first time at what is probably the world's only all-Chasidic volunteer fire department, the young men getting a very hands-on tour of the several trucks at KJFD's garage were exposed once again not just to fire-fighting but to fire prevention.

Schools, and schoolchildren of all ages, are quite the common sight at firehouses everywhere, and for good reason: You want to teach them that while firefighters are your friends, fire isn't.

And in visiting their friendly neighborhood firehouse, the Hamaspik contingent got to try sitting in real fire trucks, lights and all—and hear from friendly volunteer neighborhood firefighters all about community fire safety and prevention, too. ★

▶ HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

Hamaspik's Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) Approved for Community Nursing Tasks

On Dec. 4, 2017, a brief e-mail from the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to Hamaspik of Rockland County greenlighted the agency's new level of care for people with disabilities.

The e-mail, from OPWDD Standards Compliance Analyst Ellie Smith, confirmed that Hamaspik of Rockland County was approved to provide *community delegated nursing services*.

In plain English, that means that Hamaspik's DSPs are now allowed to do certain medical care procedures on individuals with disabilities that otherwise only a nurse is allowed to do.

But to allow them to do so, the agency employing the DSPs must have a detailed written plan in place. Hamaspik's plan was professionally written by Coordinator of Governance Affairs Mrs. Paskes.

The plan requires an agency registered nurse (RN) to review the medical needs of the individual(s) in question, and then select and train DSPs in the involved medical procedures. Once the nurse oversees the DSP(s) satisfactorily performing the procedure(s) in question and signs off on it, the DSP is good to go.

The approval is important because it grants considerable medical authority to Hamaspik DSPs who support individuals in non-certified community settings—in plain English, meaning supermarkets, doctors' offices, day trips or locations otherwise outside of Hamaspik facilities.

The community delegated nursing services provision grants a lot more freedom and flexibility to the Hamaspik DSPs out in the field on the front lines of care.

Without the approval, DSPs would have to summon an on-call agency RN in the event of any minimal medical need that requires professional know-how.

But with the new approval, duly trained DSPs at Hamaspik of Rockland County's popular and successful After-School Respite (ASR) program, for example, can now change a non-sterile dressing or even provide basic respiratory care for the boys and girls they support every day.

The approval is also sure to build on Hamaspik's existing track record of compliance, with the agency's residential and day program DSPs fully versed in all current rules and regulations.

The approval just makes their excellent work a little easier to do. ★

An En-“Light”-ened Holiday at South 9th

Hamaspik of Kings County's South 9th Shvesterheim, for its part, marked every Chanukah night with a light-themed party—including that Dec. 19th, the holiday's last night, which brought the festival to a close with a theme built around traffic lights.

Green, yellow and red were everywhere: Three color-coded napkins at each setting, tri-colored pasta and fruit dishes, and even a traffic safety game. Guess when Chanukah comes to a stop, going green (and yellow and red) is the way to go! ★

Com Hab Participants Practice Life Skills at Weekend Camp Retreat

Dozens of youths benefiting from Hamaspik of Orange County's Community Habilitation (Com Hab) program recently enjoyed an exciting self-care weekend retreat upstate.

Through Com Hab, hundreds of people with disabilities—including no small number of young people—get the acclimating community exposure they need to live their best possible lives.

The Nov. 17-20 weekend event was held on the premises of Camp Nageela in South Fallsburg, New York.

The goal of the event was to further the

young participants' mainstream life skills—helping those who were determined to most need it to practice such ordinary things like making beds or setting and clearing dinner tables, among other integration, communication and social activities.

A summer camp-like atmosphere pervaded the entire event, as staff—which was one-on-one for most “campers”—turned chores things like tooth-brushing, bed-making and the like into fun activities.

Kids came home grinning ear to ear—and armed with impressive new ‘round-the-house know-how, too. ★

A Well-Rounded Chanukah



EMOTIONAL: VOCALIST ARELE SAMET AND KEYBOARDIST MEIR ADLER (BACKED BY HAMASPIK'S VERY OWN MOSHE FRIED ON TRUMPET) HAVE BEEN VISITING FOR YEARS

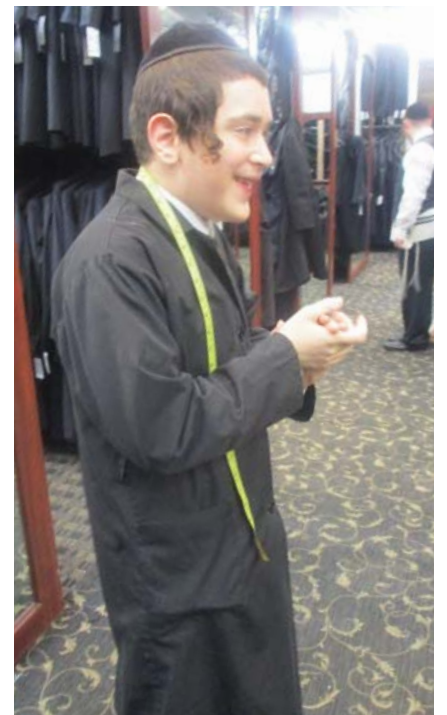


SPIRITUAL: A GUEST SPEAKER INSPIRES LISTENERS AT HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND



PHYSICAL: A HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND COUNTY 'DAY HABBER' STAYS IN SHAPE

A Look at Life-Skills Learning



COMMUNITY HABILITATION: IN THIS COLLECTION OF RECENT PHOTOS, INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED ACROSS HAMASPIK'S PROGRAMS DEMONSTRATE A VARIETY OF INTEGRATION-ORIENTED SKILLS PRACTICE, FROM BAKING AND COOKING TO SHOPPING

► HAMASPIK NEWS

Young People Have Great Time at Hamaspik's 'Kids-First' Respite Shabbaton

Dozens of children and teenagers benefiting from the OPWDD's Respite programs recently enjoyed another exciting and fun-filled Shabbaton hotel weekend hosted by Hamaspik of Rockland County.

The event, held Nov. 24-26 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, hosted a group of youths who regularly attend Respite programs in the greater Hudson Valley.

Respite is a suite of services offered to parents of children with disabilities, offering them quality care and supervision of their kids in several approved settings while they enjoy much-needed breaks.

Hamaspik has long provided beneficiaries of every agency besides its own with a good number of "Waiver" services, so dubbed for the standard rules that they waive for people to qualify. And the Shabbaton, which hosted children serviced by several regional nonprofits

besides Hamaspik, was a textbook example of a site-based weekend respite event.

Event logistics A to Z were capably handled once again by Hamaspik Special Events Coordinator Mrs. Brenda Katina, in partnership with Hamaspik of Rockland County women's Day Hab Director Mrs. Esty Schonfeld. Mrs. Schonfeld planned and executed all staffing arrangements well in advance. Special thanks also go to Mr. and Mrs. Avrumie and Goldie Holczler, who respectively served as event EMT and onsite coordinator.

From Friday-afternoon arrival welcome packages through dancing to a live band Saturday night, the children had a great time. Under professional supervision by Hamaspik counselors, guests ate, played, sang and laughed together, enjoying group games, meals and camaraderie in a summer camp-like atmosphere.

And back home, eminently relieved parents were enjoying their richly deserved

respite from the rigors of special-needs parenting. ★



POSITIVELY FLOORED: A YOUNG GUEST ENJOYS THE PROVIDED PUZZLES AND TOYS



HEALTHY EATING

Butternut Squash



EASY | YIELDS: 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:10 COOKING: 1:30 READY IN: 1:45



Butternut Squash Dish

THIS IS ONE OF MY SIGNATURE DISHES. KIDS AND ADULTS LOVE IT!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Butternut squash
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt to taste
- Dash of pepper
- 2 tablespoons honey
- Cooking spray oil

DIRECTIONS:

- Cube butternut squash and place in 9x13 baking pan
- Spray some cooking spray oil
- Season with salt, black pepper, garlic powder
- Pour honey on top
- Cover well
- Bake at 420 for 1 hour
- Uncover and bake for another ½ hour

BENEFITS:

Butternut squash delivers an ample dose of dietary fiber and is low in fat, making it exceptionally heart-friendly. It provides significant amounts of potassium, important for bone health, and vitamin B6, essential for the proper functioning of the nervous and immune systems.

ADVANCED | YIELDS: 15-20 BLINIS

READY IN: 0:20



Butternut Squash Blini

AWESOME GLUTEN-FREE SUBSTITUTE FOR PANCAKES!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Cup mashed butternut squash, cooked
- 4 eggs
- ¾ cup almond flour
- 2 tbsps honey
- 1 scoop vanilla sugar
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- Dash of pepper
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg

DIRECTIONS:

- Blend all ingredients together
- Heat skillet and spray cooking oil
- Add 2 heaping tablespoons of batter; flip each over after a minute or two (as you would usually do with pancakes)

CHEF'S TIP:

For easy peeling and cutting microwave for 5 minutes or bake at 420° for 15 minutes.

EASY | YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:10 COOKING: :45 READY IN: 1:00



Butternut Squash Soup

QUICK AND EASY SOUP FOR ANY OCCASION!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Onion diced
- 3 tablespoons oil for sautéing
- 3 cloves fresh garlic
- 1 butternut squash cubed or 2 bags frozen
- 3 sweet potatoes - cubed
- Salt to taste
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- Parsley flakes
- Water

DIRECTIONS:

- Sauté onion and garlic
- Add cubed butternut squash and sweet potatoes sauté for a few minutes, stirring every few seconds
- Fill pot with water, just to cover the butternut squash
- Season with salt, cinnamon, nutmeg
- Cook for about 45 min, or until everything is soft
- Blend with an immersion blender till smooth
- Garnish with parsley flakes

● ► HEALTH NEWS

Schizophrenia Drug Abilify Now FDA-Approved for Digital Tracker You Swallow

Biodegradable “Smart Pill” Tech Around Since early 2010s; Market Booming

A pill that can signal a computer that you’ve taken your medicine sounds farfetched.

But “ingestibles,” or tiny electronic tracking devices inside pills that you swallow, made headlines again on Nov. 13, when the FDA approved the MyCite system for use with Abilify.

Abilify is an existing drug made by Japan’s Otsuka Pharmaceutical. It was FDA-approved in 2002 to treat schizophrenia, a mental-health disorder affecting nearly one percent of Americans.

MyCite is made by California-based Proteus Digital Health. MyCite consists of an ingestible sensor, a skin patch and a smartphone app.

The MyCite sensor is one square millimeter, the size of a sand grain. It’s made of digestible metals copper and magnesium. It’s contained in the Abilify pill.

The small MyCite skin patch contains a battery and a signal receiver/transmitter. It is worn on the patient’s torso.

The MyCite smartphone app helps patients track their daily pill usage and communicate with their doctors.

The sensor in the Abilify pill is activated by electrolytes in the digestive system. It transmits a signal to the patch. The patch sends a signal to the smartphone app. The app then sends a signal to the doctor.

With the FDA approval, Otsuka and Proteus hope that Abilify MyCite will help more schizophrenia patients stay on top of their vital daily medication.

However, both companies note that the system is not perfect and pill detection may be delayed or may not occur—meaning that Abilify MyCite should not be used to track real-time pill ingestion.

NEW USE, NEW(-ISH) TECH

Smart pill technology has actually been around since the early 2010s in several FDA-approved mainstream usages.

The concept of Abilify MyCite and other smart pill systems is to help adults remember if they’ve taken their daily medications—or help parents or doctors know if children have not taken their medications (even if they insist that they have!).

Technological confirmation that medication is being taken is important: It helps keep doctors from concluding that “taken” medication is not working, thus preventing the changing of dosages or medications prescribed.

The Proteus Discover sensor patch was initially approved by the FDA in 2010. The ingestible sensor pill won FDA clearance in July of 2012.

In January of 2016, the California-based Barton health system began using Proteus Discover for hypertension patients—become the first U.S. user of that system.

Proteus Discover has been in use at the Children’s Health hospital system in Dallas, Texas since February of this year. Doctors there use ingestible trackers to remotely monitor medication adherence in a group of teen patients who’ve had organ transplants. Children’s Health was also reported to be working with Proteus to expand the number of medications that can be co-encapsulated with the sensor.

In recent years, MIT researchers essentially created a tiny ingestible stethoscope. The silicone capsule, roughly the size of a multivitamin, holds a tiny microphone, data processor and transmitter that collects and broadcasts heart and lung sounds from inside the body. And Scripps Health is currently developing tiny sensors that travel the bloodstream to send messages to a smartphone, alerting the user of signs of infection, an impending heart attack or other cardiovascular issues.

BOOMING MARKET

Ingestible sensing capsules are fast emerging as a critical technology that has the ability to greatly impact health, nutrition, and clinical areas.

For example, they can reveal the state of gut health and disorders as well as the impact of food, medical supplements, and environmental changes on the gastrointestinal tract.

Most ingestible sensors are currently used to measure inner body or organ temperatures, pressures and pH levels. Other smart pills, equipped with tiny cameras, actually take photos of internal organs.

Most importantly, the ingestible devices are noninvasive.

And with widespread access to smart phones connected to the Internet, the data produced by the technology can be readily seen and reviewed online, and accessed by both users and physicians.

The ingestible sensor market is growing due to the need for real-time patient monitoring, medication adherence, and an increasing number of cases of chronic diseases, as well as improved accuracy in invasive diagnosis tests.

According to a report on ingestible sensors earlier this year, the market is expected to grow from 2015’s \$198 million to \$678 million by 2022.

Another recent report actually pegged the market’s 2017 figures at over \$900 million. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

To Fill Critical Community Niche, Monsey Parents Reach for the STARS

Hamaspiik’s High-function Adult Day Program Hosts Open House

You’d be forgiven if you were hard-pressed to find the young adults with disabilities in the room.

But like their place in society, where they match none of disability’s stereotypes, the young women and proud STARS regulars didn’t stand out here, either.

It was the Dec. 6 open house event at the Hamaspiik Terrace social hall at 58 Rt. 59 in the heart of Monsey.

On hand were Hamaspiik’s very own Mrs. Esty Schonfeld, director of its STARS program for high-functioning adults, and the capable lieutenants that are her staff: Ms. Schuff, Mrs. Knobloch and Mrs. Kohn, as well as STARS night program director Ms. Mendlowitz, who spearheaded the event.

They were playing gracious hostesses to a host of enthralled mothers, both of current and future members, who were on hand to learn first-hand what STARS is and what it does. And did those guests ever learn!

REACHING FOR THE STARS

The STARS program, powered as it is by Hamaspiik of Rockland County, was conceived and realized in response to a sensitive and growing need in the community Hamaspiik serves.

Parents of post-high-school young adults with high-function and minimal disabilities were at a loss for long-term

options. Schools and programs for typical individuals were out.

But so were more-involved daytime support services for individuals on lower function levels, where both individuals and their families would feel socially and emotionally out of place.

If ever there was a call for a community need then unmet, it was here. And that’s where Hamaspiik stepped in.

Since the inception of STARS (the program celebrates its second anniversary this month), young women have been discreetly picked up each day in their own logo-marked van and shuttled to 221 Rt. 59 in Spring Valley, home to the contemporary STARS center.

Two options are currently being operated: A daytime program from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and a nighttime track from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Once inside, staff spends several hours working with the young ladies—help them gain such vital life skills as personal computing, cooking and baking, personal finance and budgeting, shopping and even knitting and crocheting.

The hands-on life-skills practice is augmented by such recreational outings like bowling—all of which not only boost self-esteem and social bonds, but also acclimate

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 >>



TAKING A STAND: STARS ATTENDEES SHINE FROM A COLORFUL DISPLAY (TOP), WHILE GUESTS ENJOYED A FEAST FOR THE EYES (AND MOUTH) AT A TASTY FALAFEL STATION

Public Health And Policy News

built a full-scale mock convenience store in a Pittsburgh mall—complete with full-size graphic anti-smoking posters.

Teens who expressed little or no desire to smoke in pre-exposure surveys were little affected by the graphic posters. But teens considered at high risk for smoking based on their pre-exposure surveys appeared to want to smoke more after seeing the posters.

“We went into the study with the idea that the graphic posters would diminish kids’ desire to smoke, and when we analyzed the data we were shocked to find that this was not the case,” RAND researcher William Shadel, PhD, told *MedPage Today*.

According to Dr. Shadel, smoking-risk teens may want to smoke more after seeing the posters because they respond defensively to them, “causing them to discount or downplay health risks.”

The study findings were published Dec. 13 in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*.

In related news, the NIH’s newly-released annual *Monitoring the Future* survey finds that nearly one in three U.S. 12th Graders reported use of some kind of vaping device last year. While teen smoking is dropping, teen vaping—or usage of electronic cigarettes (e-cigs)—is rising.

MOODY’S TAKES STOCK OF PUBLIC HEALTH

New York, NY — Ask a Wall Street institution to take stock of U.S. public health—and 30 percent of national adverse health traceable to just five conditions is what you get.

On Dec. 14, industry pillar Moody’s

Analytics released a report saying that depression, hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol and substance use disorders are responsible for 30 percent of adverse health among those covered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies.

The report also suggests that mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety and affective disorder may be under-diagnosed in many places.

STATE DOH: NEW YORK FLU SEASON STRONG

Albany, NY — According to a Dec. 14 statement by the New York State Dept. of



SIGN OF THE TIMES: EVERY NEW YORKER SHOULD BE VACCINATED AGAINST THE FLU VIRUS, ESPECIALLY VERY YOUNG CHILDREN, SENIORS, AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Health (DOH), flu is now prevalent across the state—and everyone should get the flu shot.

With the announcement that this year’s seasonal influenza virus is “prevalent,” health care workers who haven’t had a flu shot are now legally required to wear masks around patients.

The announcement reflects the U.S. flu season this year, which officials at the CDC have said could be tougher than usual.

Influenza is a serious illness whose season occurs primarily from October through May, often peaking in February. It is not too late to get vaccinated, and there are ample amounts of the vaccine available.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT 2018 SIGNUPS HIT 8.8 MILLION

Washington, DC — As of Jan. 1, 2018, with open enrollment closed for the year, some 8.8 million people had signed up for an Affordable Care Act (ACA) insurance plan through HealthCare.gov.

Last year’s total enrollment in HealthCare.gov plans was 9.2 million.

21ST CENTURY CURES ACT MARKS 1ST YEAR

Washington, DC — A Dec. 12 joint editorial in *CQ Roll Call* hailed the first 12 months of the 21st Century Cures Act, a

bipartisan bill that was President Barack Obama’s last piece of signed legislation.

“We began with one goal in mind: helping patients and their families,” wrote Cures co-authors Reps. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) and Diana DeGette (D-Colo.).

The Cures Act currently funds four major National Institutes of Health (NIH) initiatives: the Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot; the Precision Medicine Initiative; the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative; and the Regenerative Medicine Innovation Project, which aims to accelerate the field of stem cell science.

“Today is a day to reflect on how far we

have come, but also a reminder that we have much work left to do,” wrote Upton and DeGette. “Patients and their families are counting on us.”

CHRISTIE: DOCS SHOULD NEED ONGOING OPIOID TRAINING

Baltimore, MD — According to former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, physicians should be required to take continuing education classes on opioid prescribing if they want to keep their official prescribing licenses.

Christie, who chaired the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, made the recommendation at a late-November Congressional field hearing at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

“As a lawyer, I have to take continuing education to maintain my license,” Christie said.

“How is it that physicians could have a DEA license and not be required to take continuing medical education on this problem when 64,000 people died from it last year?”

FDA APPROVALS

● Luxturna, gene therapy for rare vision-loss disorders called *biallelic retinal dystrophy*, Dec. 19 ★

GRAPHIC WARNINGS STROKE TEEN SMOKING: STUDY

Santa Monica, CA — Anti-smoking advocates consider graphic images of the terrible effects of cigarette smoking to be highly effective in keeping people from taking up smoking.

But an unusual study by the legendary RAND Corporation indicates that, with vulnerable teens who never smoked before, the graphic images actually *encourage* them to start smoking.

Researchers at the famous think tank



PACKING IN A MESSAGE: DESPITE BLUNT WORDING AND IMAGERY, A STUDY FOUND THAT AT-RISK TEENS WERE ACTUALLY LIKELIER TO SMOKE AFTER SEEING SUCH SIGNS

Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today



EAST HARLEM'S \$300-MILLION CANCER CENTER NEARS COMPLETION

New York, NY — It's been nine years in the making, but the New York Proton Center is finally nearing completion. And when it opens, it will be Manhattan's first.

The high-tech facility, built around three 300-ton gantries rotating around patients to deliver precision radiation, is located at 126th St. in Manhattan's East Harlem neighborhood. It's expected to see its first patient in February of 2019, as well as employ 125 people and see some 1,400 patients a year.

The New York Proton Center is a joint project of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Montefiore Health System and Mount Sinai Health System.

The advantage of proton-beam therapy over traditional radiation oncology in treating cancer is that it offers another degree of precision, primarily by helping oncologists limit radiation exposure to nearby healthy tissue.

There are about 25 proton-beam cancer treatment centers nationwide, with another ten under development.

Satisfaction Report.

But an RNnetwork study earlier this year found that 70 percent of nurses feel burnt out, with half considering leaving the profession.

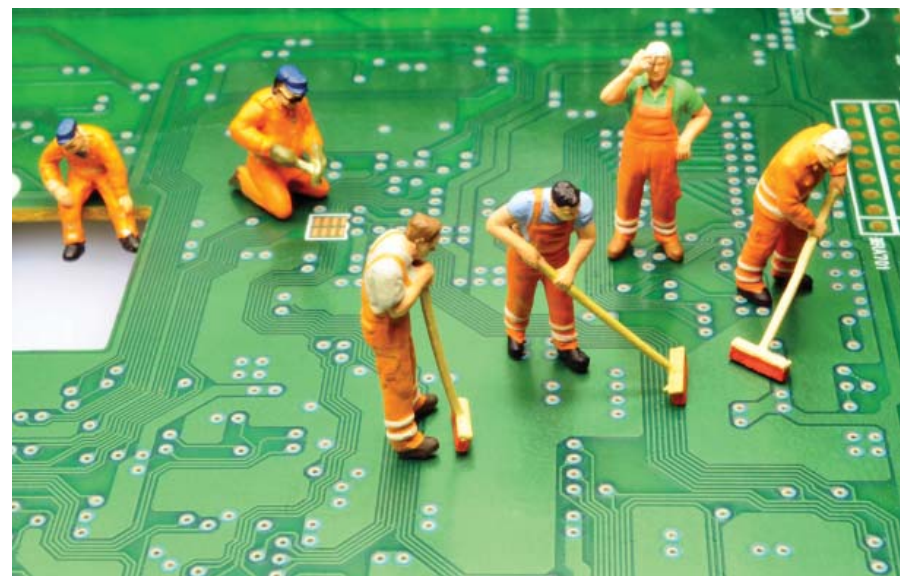
The traditional hospital nurse industry is apparently taking the hardest hit. According to a Kronos Incorporated survey earlier this year, 83 percent of surveyed nurses reported that hospitals are losing good nurses because non-hospital employers offer a better work/life balance.

So what's going on in today's nursing? In short, increased technology and increased workload.

Nurses today, like doctors, are spending an increasing amount of time using computers and other technology, which many feel gets in the way of direct patient care. And on top of that, four of every five nurses play a larger role in patient care management today than even two years ago, said a 2016 survey by the University of Phoenix.

WALGREENS OPENING NYP TELEMEDICINE KIOSKS

New York, NY — NewYork-Presbyteri-



KEEPING COMPUTERS HEALTHY: IT PROFESSIONALS ARE GETTING PAID LESS

rooms in the stores, allowing patients to access quick real-time audio/video examinations and diagnoses of non-threatening illnesses or injuries.

Exams will be provided by clinicians at NYP OnDemand Urgent Care. Pediatric emergency physicians will also be available during limited hours.

for four services by \$3.1 billion.

According to the study, conducted by Avalere Health for the Physicians Advocacy Institute (PAI), Medicare paid \$2.7 billion more for four specific cardiology, orthopedic and gastroenterology services in hospital outpatient settings over independent physicians' offices.

Medicare beneficiaries also paid \$411 million more in out-of-pocket costs for those services than they would have spent in independent physicians' offices.

HEALTH IT PROS PAID 20 PERCENT LESS IN 2017

Centennial, CO — A recent survey by Health eCareers shows that the average health information technology (IT) professional salary for year 2017 is 20 percent less

than that of 2016. Health IT pros earned an average of \$73,117 this past year, according to the survey.

While hospitals are investing heavily in healthcare IT, they aren't necessarily paying top dollar for top IT pros.

One reason for the decline may be hospitals' replacing high-paid consultants with cheaper in-house staff.

On the other hand, the survey also found that salaries for health IT executives rose in 2017, with the median annual pay of \$150,250 up from 2016's \$127,500.

DIGNITY/CHI MERGER WOULD CREATE BIGGEST U.S. NONPROFIT HOSPITAL SYSTEM

Chicago, IL — In early December, Dignity Health and Catholic Health Initiatives signed a definitive agreement to merge—which would create the largest non-profit U.S. hospital system by operating revenue.

The new health system would boast operations in 28 states and comprise over 139 hospitals, 25,000 doctors and other clinicians, and a total of 159,000 employees.

It would generate a combined annual revenue of \$28.4 billion.

The new health system will also establish its corporate headquarters in Chicago and operate under a new name that will be chosen in the second half of 2018. Local facilities will continue operating under their current names. ★



A PLACE OF HIGH-TECH HEALING: ARTIST'S RENDITION OF THE CENTER (IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK PROTON CENTER)

NURSING: IN CHANGING INDUSTRY, SURVEYS CLASH

New York, NY — Over 90 percent of U.S. nurses say they would choose nursing as a career if they knew then what they know now, says the 2017 *Medscape Nurse Career*

and Hospital is partnering with Walgreens to provide its telemedicine services in its retail locations. The first NYP telemedicine kiosk will open in a Duane Reade convenience store on Wall Street in Manhattan.

The kiosks will be located in private

MORE MEDICARE COSTS CREATED BY HOSPITAL- EMPLOYED PHYSICIANS

Washington, DC — A new study says that between 2012 and 2015, hospital-employed physicians increased Medicare costs

In the Know

ALL ABOUT... CROHN'S DISEASE

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

INTRODUCTION

Crohn's disease is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Crohn's disease causes inflammation of the digestive tract, which can lead to abdominal pain, severe diarrhea, fatigue, weight loss and malnutrition.

Crohn's inflammation often spreads deep into the layers affected tissue. Crohn's can be both painful and debilitating, and sometimes may lead to life-threatening complications.

While there's no known cure, various treatments can greatly reduce signs and symptoms—and even bring about long-term remission. With treatment, many people with Crohn's disease are able to function well.

SYMPTOMS

Crohn's symptoms usually develop gradually but sometimes come on suddenly without warning. These can range from mild to severe. Periods of remission are also not uncommon.

Active symptoms include diarrhea, fever, fatigue, abdominal pain and cramping, bloody discharge, mouth sores, reduced appetite and weight loss, and pain or drainage near or around the opening due to inflammation from a tunnel into the skin (fistula).

Other signs and symptoms include inflammation of skin, eyes, joints, liver or bile ducts, and delayed growth or development in children.

Complications

Crohn's disease may lead to one or more of the following complications:

Bowel obstruction. Crohn's affects the thickness of the intestinal wall. Over time, parts of the bowel can scar and narrow, which may block the flow of digestive contents.

Ulcers. Chronic inflammation can lead to open sores (ulcers) anywhere in the digestive tract, including the mouth.

Fistulas. Sometimes ulcers can extend completely through the intestinal wall, creating a fistula—an abnormal connection between different body parts. When fistulas develop in the abdomen, food may bypass areas of the bowel that are necessary for absorption. Fistulas may occur between loops of bowel, into the bladder or elsewhere, or out through the skin, causing continuous drainage of bowel contents to the skin. In some cases, a fistula may become infected and form an abscess, which can be life-threatening if not treated.

Malnutrition. Diarrhea, abdominal pain and cramping may make it difficult for the patient to eat or for the intestine to absorb enough nutrients to keep the patient nourished.

Colon cancer. The disease's effects on the colon increase risk of colon cancer. General colon cancer screening guidelines call for a colonoscopy every ten years beginning at age 50. Crohn's patients should ask their doctors if they need that test earlier and more frequently.

CAUSES

The exact cause of Crohn's disease remains unknown. A number of factors, such as heredity and a malfunctioning immune system, likely play a role in its development.

Immune system

It's possible that a virus or bacterium may trigger it. When the immune system tries to fight off an invader, an abnormal response causes it to attack the digestive tract.

Anti-inflammatory drugs

Anti-inflammatory drugs are often the first treatment for Crohn's. They include corticosteroids (usually prescribed short-term); oral 5-aminosalicylate drugs (not widely used); immunosuppressants (Azasan, Imuran, Purinethol or Purixan); TNF inhibitors (Cimzia, Humira or Remicade), or Trexall (for people who don't respond well to other drugs). A psoriasis drug called Stelara has also been shown to be useful in treating Crohn's, too.

Antibiotics

Antibiotics can reduce the amount of drainage and sometimes heal fistulas and abscesses in people with Crohn's disease. Frequently prescribed antibiotics include Cipro and Flagyl.

Other medications

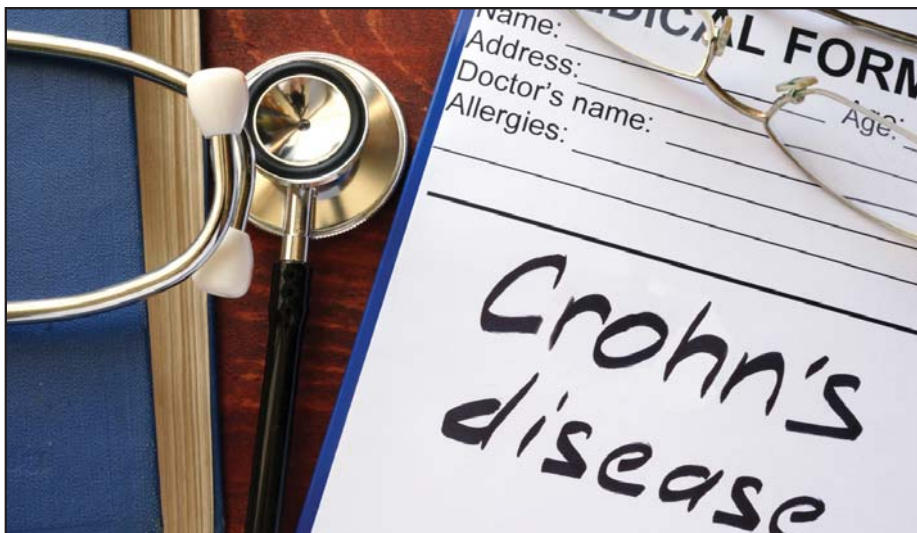
In addition to controlling inflammation, some medications may help relieve other signs and symptoms.

Fiber supplements like Citrucel or Metamucil can help relieve mild to moderate diarrhea. Imodium A-D may be effective for more severe cases.

Over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers like acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) may be recommended—but not other OTC pain relievers based on ibuprofen (like Advil or Motrin IB) or naproxen sodium (like Aleve). Ibuprofen or naproxen sodium are likely to make symptoms worse.

Iron supplements may be needed to counteract iron deficiency anemia resulting from chronic intestinal bleeding.

Vitamin B-12 shots counteract the vitamin B-12 deficiency associated with Crohn's.



Heredity

Most people with Crohn's don't have a family history, but Crohn's is more common in people who have family members with the disease, so genes may play a role.

DIAGNOSIS

There is no single test to specifically diagnose Crohn's disease. Crohn's is likely to be diagnosed only after other possible causes for signs and symptoms are ruled out.

To diagnose Crohn's, a doctor will likely use a combination of any of the following:

Blood tests will test for anemia (low red blood cell count), infection, or fecal blood.

Procedures include: colonoscopy, which looks at the entire inside of the colon with a tiny camera on an inserted tube; CT and/or MRI scans; capsule endoscopy (a tiny camera in a pill); or balloon-assisted enteroscopy, which allows doctors a better view of the insides of the small bowel.

TREATMENT

With Crohn's, there is no one treatment that works for everyone. The goal of Crohn's treatment is to reduce the inflammation behind the symptoms and improve long-term prognosis by limiting complications.

In best-case scenario, treatment may lead not only to relief but also to long-term remission.

“
BE INFORMED.
ONE OF THE BEST
WAYS TO BE MORE
IN CONTROL IS TO
BECOME A CROHN'S
EXPERT—TO TEACH
YOURSELF AS MUCH
AS POSSIBLE ABOUT
CROHN'S DISEASE.



Medication risks

Certain Crohn's drugs that block functions of the immune system are associated with a small risk of cancers like lymphoma or skin cancers. They also increase risk of infection. Work with your doctor to determine risks and benefits of various medications.

Corticosteroids can be associated with a risk of osteoporosis, bone fractures, cataracts, glaucoma, diabetes and high blood pressure, among others.

Entyvio and Tysabri work by stopping certain immune cell molecules from binding to other cells in the intestinal lining. But because Tysabri is associated with a rare but serious risk of a certain brain disease that usually leads to death or severe disability, patients must be enrolled in a special restricted distribution program to use it.

Nutrition therapy

In some cases, a doctor may recommend a special diet via feeding tube (enteral nutrition) or nutrients injected into a vein (parenteral nutrition) to treat Crohn's disease. This can improve overall nutrition and allow the bowel to rest. Bowel rest can reduce short-term inflammation.

The doctor may prescribe a combination of short-term nutrition therapy and medications like immune system suppressors. Enteral and parenteral nutrition are typically used to get people healthier prior to surgery or when other medications fail to control symptoms. The doctor may also recommend a low-residue or low-fiber diet to reduce the risk of intestinal blockage where the patient has a narrowed bowel (stricture).

Surgery

Doctors may recommend surgery if diet and lifestyle changes, drug therapy, or other treatments don't relieve signs and symptoms. Almost half of Crohn's patients will need at least one surgery—but surgery does not cure Crohn's disease.

In surgery, the surgeon will remove a damaged portion of the digestive tract and then reconnect healthy sections. Surgery may also be used to close fistulas and drain abscesses.

Also, the benefits of Crohn's surgery are usually temporary. Unfortunately, the disease often recurs, frequently near reconnected tissue. As such, the best approach is to follow surgery with medication to minimize the risk of recurrence.

Diet

While there is no evidence that what you eat actually causes Crohn's disease, certain foods and beverages can aggravate signs and symptoms, especially during a flare-up.

Therefore, it can be helpful to track what you eat and drink every day, and how food/drink makes you feel, by keeping a *food diary*. Your food diary may help you discover which food or drink cause symptoms to flare, allowing you to try eliminating them.

In the meantime, here are some helpful suggestions:

Limit dairy products. Many people with

inflammatory bowel disease find that symptoms improve by limiting or eliminating dairy products—you may be lactose

intolerant.

Try low-fat foods. People with Crohn's disease of the small intestine may be unable

to digest or absorb fat normally. Try avoiding butter, margarine, cream sauces, fried foods and other food items containing fat.

Limit fiber. High-fiber foods like as fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains, may worsen symptoms of inflammatory bowel disease. Instead, try steaming, baking, or stewing your fresh fruits and vegetables instead.

Spicy foods, alcohol, and caffeine are also known for possibly making signs and symptoms worse.

Other dietary measures

Eat smaller meals. Patients may find that eating five or six small meals a day rather than two or three larger ones leaves them feeling better.

Drink plenty of liquids daily—water is best! Drinks that contain caffeine, like coffee or soft drinks, can stimulate your intestines and make diarrhea worse. What's worse, many caffeine-containing soft drinks are carbonated, too, which frequently produces gas that only exacerbates Crohn's symptoms. Consider multivitamins. Because Crohn's can interfere with the ability to absorb nutrients, especially on a limited Crohn's diet, multivitamin and mineral supplements are often helpful in terms of keeping your body's vitamin levels healthy.

See a dietitian. A professional registered dietitian will help you develop a diet and meal plan based on foods that agree with your system if you begin to lose weight or your diet has become very limited.

Don't smoke! Smoking increases risk of developing Crohn's—and once you have it, smoking can make it worse. Smokers with Crohn's are likelier to have relapses and need medications and repeat surgeries.

Stress. Stress doesn't cause Crohn's—but can make signs and symptoms worse and trigger flare-ups. Learn ways to help manage stress, like exercise, biofeedback and relaxation and breathing exercises.

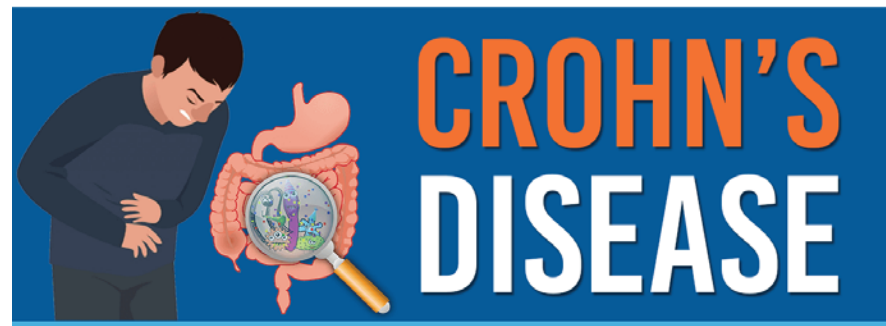
PROGNOSIS

Crohn's disease doesn't just affect patients physically—it takes an emotional toll as well. If signs and symptoms are severe, life may revolve around a constant need to use the facilities—even mild symptoms can make it difficult to be out in public. All these factors can alter life and even lead to depression. But here are some things you can do:

Be informed. One of the best ways to be more in control is to become a Crohn's expert—to teach yourself as much as possible about Crohn's disease.

Join a support group. Although support groups aren't for everyone, they can provide valuable information about your condition as well as emotional support. Group members frequently know about the latest medical treatments or integrative therapies. You may also find it reassuring to be with others with Crohn's disease.

At the end of the day, although living with Crohn's disease can be discouraging, research is ongoing—and the outlook is improving. ★



FAST FACTS ABOUT CROHN'S DISEASE



Crohn's affects close to 1 million people in the U.S.



Most people with Crohn's are under age 30

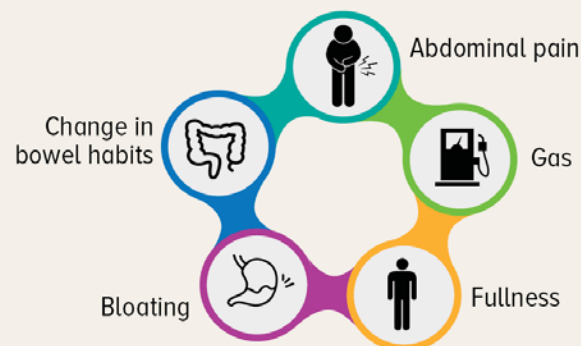


Smokers are disproportionately affected by Crohn's

What is Crohn's Disease?

Crohn's disease is part of a group of diseases known as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Most commonly affected by Crohn's is the lower part of the small intestine, although it can occur in any part of the large or small intestine, stomach, esophagus, or even the mouth.

THE SYMPTOMS OF CROHN'S DISEASE



CONDITIONS RELATED TO CROHN'S DISEASE



Arthritis



Kidney stones



Gallstones



Inflammation (swelling) of the eyes and mouth



Skin rashes or ulcers



Liver disease

COMMON SUPPLEMENTS USED FOR TREATING CROHN'S



- Vitamin B12
- Folic acid
- Calcium
- Vitamin D
- Vitamins A, E, and K
- Iron
- Potassium, magnesium, and zinc

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Exciting Pre-Chanukah Party for Hamaspiik of Orange County's Women's Group Homes

Event Held Dec. 6 at Hamaspiik Terrace hall; Full Residential Staff Also in Attendance

Not only is every successful state audit of a Hamaspiik program a cause for celebration, a recent one took place during a Hamaspiik celebration.

On Wednesday, Dec. 6, Hamaspiik of Orange County's Bakertown Shvesterheim residence hosted a pre-Chanukah party for its sister group homes in upstate Kiryas Joel ("KJ"), New York.

The party, Chanukah-themed décor and all, was designed to usher in the holiday spirit early. But on the same day, OPWDD auditors were also in town to audit Acres, Hamaspiik's sole men's residence in KJ. (Later results of that audit were flawless.)

They would also be auditing Bakertown the next day.

And since personally interviewing each

resident is central to the OPWDD residential audit, the auditors chose to meet with each Bakertown resident a day early—to catch them in action out and about in the thick of community-oriented programming.

Which is exactly what Bakertown's colorful and energetic family party was.

Auditors thus found themselves visiting the ballroom at Hamaspiik's Administration Building that Wednesday afternoon, where they found Bakertown residents excitedly setting up the well-planned party they'd shortly be hosting.

In the days before the party, the "girls" had shopped for paper settings and decorations, along with chocolate dreidels and other goodies—and now were decking the furniture in a riot of Chanukah colors.

After some 45 minutes of speaking to each individual young woman, the OPWDD officials came away "extremely impressed," reports Bakertown Manager Mrs. Appel.

The party then proceeded as planned.

Shortly after arriving at 5:00 p.m., guests found a hall filled with vibrant décor and the sound of joyful music playing in the background. A cute little welcome package could be found on each seat.

Besides Bakertown, also in attendance were residents and staff of the Seven Springs women's IRA, as well as those of the Dinev Inzerheim Intermediate Care Facility (ICF), Hamaspiik's sole such residence.

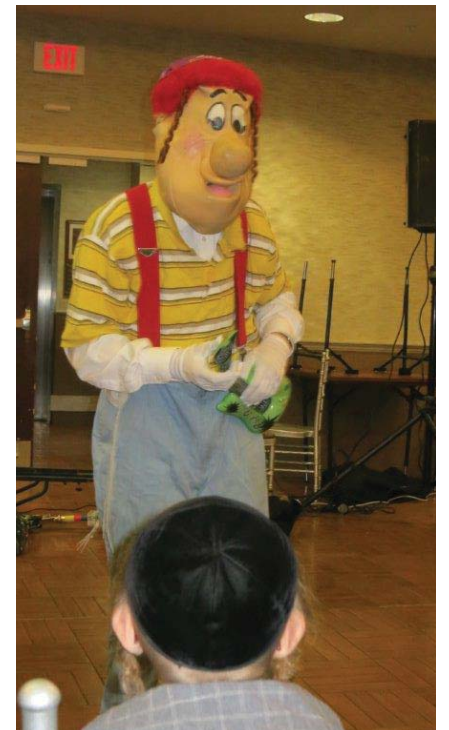
Guests were excited to see the colorful set-up, and even more thrilled to see each other. Once the sizable crowd of all ages

was seated, fresh hot pizza and French fries were served.

Guests next enjoyed "the Shmelky Show," a one-man live children's show by the costumed performer of that same stage name, laughing as "Shmelky" involved attending children in his amusing and interactive performance. "The Shmelky Show" was followed by a delicious ice cream dessert.

By 7:30 p.m., the party was wrapping up and guests were heading home.

And for residents of the Bakertown, Dinev and Seven Springs homes, it meant going home to a residence whose incomparable standards of care and excellence were officially validated by New York State authorities once again. ★



WHAT'S COOKING COME CHANUKAH AT BAKERTOWN: A SET TABLE (TOP LEFT) AND SUSHI "MENORAH" (BOTTOM LEFT) AWAIT THE HOME'S IN-HOUSE HOLIDAY PARTY, WHILE COLORFULLY DECORATED TABLES STAND BY FOR GUESTS BEFORE A GRAND JOINT GROUP-HOME PARTY, COMPLETE WITH LATER ENTERTAINMENT BY "THE SHMELKY SHOW".

To Fill Critical Community Niche, Monsey Parents Reach for the STARS

« CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

attendees to the world at large.

Which, of course, is the ultimate goal of the STARS program.

THE STAR OF THE EVENING

The star (or is that STAR?) of the evening was Sarah (name altered for privacy), who took the floor at 8:00 p.m.—formally kicking off the event by sharing her personal thoughts and feelings about being a student at the Hamaspiik program.

"Let me tell you why I enjoy it," said Sarah after introducing herself. "We practice money and time-management skills. We participate in courses like art, music, dancing, yoga, computer and sometimes crocheting."

Sarah also described the fitness and nutrition programming provided by STARS.

"Twice a week, my staff accompanies me to vocational training," she continued, "and she told me the other day that I'm almost ready to go work independently. And, of course, we have shopping experiences. Most

of all, it's about the environment that I come back to every day; 221 Rt. 59 is a place full of love, happiness, hugs and my best friends!"

"Esty told me that one day, I might be her secretary—and by the way, I do fix her spelling mistakes!" Sarah concluded to smiles and cheers. "I would like to thank you for joining tonight!"

ASTRONOMY 101

After Sarah's rousing introduction, guests milled about and socialized with other attendees over refreshments, a large poster displaying STARS' regulars in action, and three hands-on arts-and-crafts activity stations. Those stations had mothers and daughters assembling costume jewelry

pieces or painting take-home knickknacks like wooden picture frames.

Most importantly, STARS staffers were on hand to answer every question. All were happy to meet their friends' moms in person.

Prospective and current parents alike came away from the event with a full picture—a constellation, if you wish—of what their daughters would get, or are already getting, at the daily program.

With regards to young-adult day programming options for her precious child, one prospective parent put it best, Mrs. Schonfeld later reported to the : "It's the first time I'm seeing my daughter smiling!" ★



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
HamaspikCare
and Senior
Health

Medicare Scaling Back Nursing-Home Fines

Washington, DC — Responding to complaints from industry groups in recent years, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has been scaling back the levying of fines against nursing homes in recent months.

This past June, CMS rescinded a rule that banned nursing homes from pre-emptively requiring residents to submit to arbitration to settle disputes rather than going to court, according to *The New York Times*.

A CMS memo in July discouraged directors of state agencies that survey nursing homes from issuing daily fines for violations that began before an inspection. Instead, the new CMS policy favors one-time fines.

In October, CMS discouraged its regional offices from levying fines against nursing homes, even for serious health violations, if the error was a “one-time mistake.” But intentional disregard for residents’ health

and safety should still merit fines, the CMS also reportedly said at the time.

And in November, CMS exempted nursing homes that violate eight new safety rules from penalties for 18 months. Homes must still follow the rules, though.

Federal records show that close to 6,500 of America’s roughly 16,000 nursing homes, or four of every ten, have been cited at least once for a serious violation since 2013. Medicare has fined two-thirds of those homes. The average fine in recent years has been \$33,453, but 531 nursing homes amassed combined federal fines above \$100,000, records show.

Nursing care advocates argue that massive five-digit fines against nursing homes—imposed on a per-day or per-incident basis—are the only way to force nursing homes to change. Industry leaders, however, say that the fines amount to burdensome over-regulation. ★

New York Becomes First “Age-Friendly” State in the U.S.A.

Albany, NY — In late December, the American Association of Retired People (AARP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared New York the first U.S. state to achieve their “Age-Friendly” designation.

The designation is based on eight age-friendly livability categories outlined by WHO and AARP, which include outdoor spaces and buildings; social participation;

and respect and social inclusion.

New York home-care agencies like HamaspikCare have furthered those variables for the state’s seniors, while managed long-term care (MLTC) plans like Hamaspik Choice—a key component of Gov. Cuomo’s Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT)—further keep New York seniors healthy. ★

Does Rain Really Cause Achy Joints?

Many people insist that their joints ache more when it rains.

To scientifically explore that notion, Harvard Medical School researchers reviewed four years of doctor-visit data by 1.5 million members of Medicare, the federal healthcare plan for seniors.

Researchers then correlated information from those 11 million doctor visits with U.S. rainfall data over the same four years, 2008 through 2012.

The study found that people were no more likely to visit the doctor with joint or back pain during rainy weeks than sunny

ones. Even among people with arthritis, the research found no connection between rainfall and patient complaints about aches and pains.

The idea that weather affects bodily symptoms goes back to ancient times—and to this day, many people firmly believe that certain weather conditions make their joint pain worse.

Specifically, rainfall—and humidity or changes to barometric pressure—is most often blamed.

The findings were published Dec. 13 in the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ). ★



A RAINED-OUT IDEA? ACCORDING TO HARVARD RESEARCHERS, NO DIRECT CORRELATION WAS FOUND BETWEEN JOINT DISEASE AND WET WEATHER

Reading Aloud Best Boosts Memory

Waterloo, Ontario — A modern Canadian study confirms what the Talmudic ancients knew millennia ago: To best remember the text, repeatedly read and recite it aloud.

The University of Waterloo had 95 study participants try to remember written information using one of four different ways: reading it silently; listening to someone else read it; listening to a recording of

themselves reading it; or personally reading it aloud.

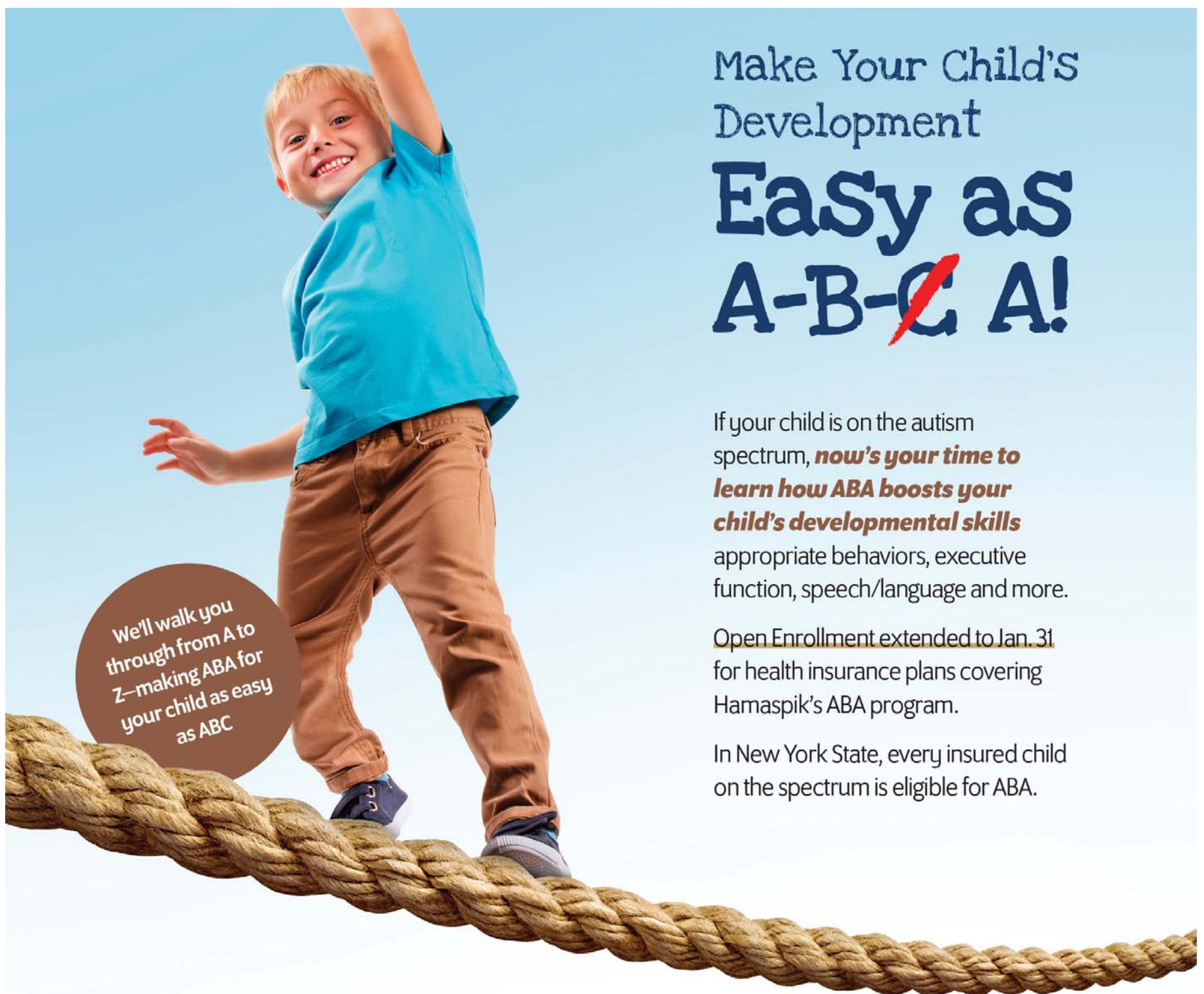
The study found that reading out loud proved to be the best way to remember the information.

Results confirm that learning and memory benefit from active involvement, researchers said.

The findings were published recently in the journal *Memory*. ★



A SKYLINE NOW BRIGHTER: WITH AMERICA’S FIRST “AGE-FRIENDLY” DESIGNATION, NEW YORK’S HORIZONS ARE LOOKING UP FOR MORE PEOPLE OF ALL AGES THAN EVER



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